



**FLORIDA STATE PARKS
FOUNDATION**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Monday, December 30th, 2019

Contact: Julia Gill Woodward, Chief Executive Officer

julia@floridastateparksfoundation.org, (850) 559-8914

**Major Grant will allow Hurricane Michael-damaged Group Camp at
St. Andrews State Park to be restored**

The Florida State Parks Foundation announced today that a major grant from the St. Joe Community Foundation will allow the primitive group camp at St. Andrews State Park to be restored and improved.

Over the years, the camp has served hundreds of organized youth groups, many from local communities, but it was severely impacted by Hurricane Michael in October 2018. Hundreds of trees were lost along with many of the facilities needed to support important recreational activities.

Thanks to the \$60,000 grant from the St. Joe Community Foundation, the camp will be restored, and major improvements made. These will include a new activities pavilion as most of the shade trees were destroyed, picnic tables, grills, safety lighting, access improvements, improvements to the restroom, and rebuilding the fire circle. The improvements will allow for longer stays and better experiences for Group Campers.

“The camp is important to provide youth, many of whom are increasingly removed from the natural environment, the opportunity to camp overnight in the wild outdoors of Florida, to connect with nature and to build lasting relationships with their friends and the environment”, said Julia Gill Woodward, CEO of Florida State Park Foundation.

While at the camp, youth participate in swimming, fishing, hiking, nature observation and many additional resource-based recreational activities. For many of these children it is the first time they have slept outdoors under the stars, she added.

“We are very pleased to assist with enhancing this educational venue within St. Andrews State Park,” said April Wilkes, Executive Director of St. Joe Community Foundation, “it is sure to be

another one of the great little hidden gems to experience within the park for both locals and tourists to enjoy.”

St. Andrews State Park offers remarkable resource-based public outdoor recreation opportunities unique to its location at the confluence of St. Andrew Bay and the Gulf of Mexico. Last year it had over 650,000 visitors.

The Foundation, founded in 1993 as Friends of Florida State Parks and renamed in 2018, is a 501(c)3 nonprofit corporation whose mission is to support and help sustain the Florida Park Service, its 175 award-winning parks and trails, local Friends groups and more than 20,000 park volunteers.

It does this through programs that preserve and protect state parks, educate visitors about the value of state parks, encourage community engagement and active use of state parks, and advocacy.

The volunteer Board of Directors represent private and public sectors as well as local and statewide interests.

###