

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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St. Joe Community Foundation Grant Provides Accessible Mobility Mats and Rollers to Four Northwest Florida State Parks

Deer Lake State Park, Grayton Beach State Park, St. Andrews State Park and Topsail Hill Preserve State Park receive new mats through grant of more than \$27,000.

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. – Deer Lake State Park, Grayton Beach State Park and Topsail Hill Preserve State Park in Santa Rosa, as well as St. Andrews State Park in Panama City, are expanding their accessible experiences through new mobility mats and rollers provided by the St. Joe Community Foundation. The Florida State Parks Foundation worked with the St. Joe Community Foundation to secure a grant of \$27,630 for purchase and installation.

“Mobi-Mats” are made from recycled materials and are designed to make beach terrain easier to traverse and navigate for people with disabilities, people who use mobility devices, and anyone who has difficulty walking on sand. The mats’ accompanying rollers will allow park staff to deploy or temporarily remove the mats as necessary.

“Providing access for all is one of the most important aspects of our mission,” Florida State Parks Foundation CEO Julia Woodward said. “Some of the world’s best beaches are found within Florida’s state parks, and we want everyone to be able to experience and enjoy them.”

Since launching its Access for All campaign in 2012, the Florida State Parks Foundation has provided beach and trail-accessible wheelchairs, floating wheelchairs and trams at several parks, as well as an accessible fishing pier at Oscar Scherer State Park and the first ever accessible glass-bottom boat at Silver Springs State Park.

The St. Joe Community Foundation in 2021 awarded a grant of \$30,000 for an 11-person, accessible electric tram at Topsail Hill Preserve State Park.

“Enhancing access to our area state parks is perfectly aligned with the values of the St. Joe Community Foundation,” said April Wilkes, Executive Director of the St. Joe Community Foundation. “We are happy to team up again with the Florida State Parks Foundation to further accessibility and help ensure that everyone can enjoy the amazing beaches in Northwest Florida.”

“Everyone should have an opportunity to experience Florida’s white sand beaches,” said Chuck Hatcher, director of Florida State Parks. “We appreciate the efforts of the St. Joe Community Foundation and Florida State Parks Foundation to expand accessibility at these four parks.”

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The Florida State Parks 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 represents private and public sectors as well as local and statewide interests. This project was completed by the Florida State Parks Foundation Services LLC, which is a limited liability company affiliate of the Foundation.