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South Carolina Nonprofit Awarded Funding to Protect Nesting Sea Turtles

SOUTH CAROLINA — Turtle Island Restoration Network (TIRN) held the Summer Sea Turtle Sustainability Grant Contest this summer to offer nonprofit organizations emergency funds to help protect endangered sea turtles in the United States. One \$5,000 grant was awarded to South Carolina's The Friends of Hunting Island State Park, Incorporated.

"From the loss of volunteers to beaches being closed down, groups that work tirelessly to monitor and protect endangered sea turtles as they return to beaches to nest have been directly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic," said Elizabeth Purcell of Turtle Island Restoration Network. "Turtle Island Restoration Network is honored to support fellow nonprofits to ensure at-risk sea turtle species in the United States do not go extinct in our lifetimes."

The mission of The Friends of Hunting Island State Park, Incorporated, is to support Hunting Island State Park in the conservation, protection and interpretation of its natural and cultural resources. Grant funds will be used to engage underserved communities in the area to provide more access to the park and more education about sea turtles and conservation in general.

Friends of Hunting Island Marketing Director, Linda Miller, stated that "Friends of Hunting Island is honored to be the recipient of this grant, and we are humbled to be in the company of so many prestigious research organizations. We look forward to sharing the benefits of this grant with people in our community who have not been able to engage with our turtle project. In that way we hope to widen the scope of our volunteers and in the process to inspire future scientists and environmental activists."

Of the seven species of sea turtles, six are found in U.S. waters and nesting beaches: the green, hawksbill, Kemp's ridley, leatherback, loggerhead, and olive ridley. Sea turtle nesting beaches face threats from uncontrolled coastal development, vehicle traffic on beaches, and other human activities that have directly destroyed or disturbed sea turtle nesting beaches.

To learn more about the Summer Sea Turtle Sustainability Grant, visit <https://seaturtles.org/>.

Turtle Island Restoration Network (TIRN) is a leading advocate for the world's oceans and marine wildlife whose mission is to inspire and mobilize people around the world to protect marine biodiversity and the oceans that sustain all life on Earth.

Friends of Hunting Island State Park

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