



MARTIN COUNTY

Info Release

Bathtub Reef Beach Reopens May 17

STUART, Fla (May 14, 2021) Martin County's Bathtub Reef Beach is scheduled to reopen on Monday, May 17 after a two-month renourishment project.

During the dredging project, a total of 182,000 cubic yards of sand were returned to the beach, including 145,000 cubic yards from the federal navigation channel and impoundment basin in the St. Lucie Inlet. Dredging these areas helped to provide sand to restore a 1-mile stretch of beach and to provide additional safeguards for marine navigation through the inlet.

Kathy FitzPatrick, Martin County's Coastal Engineer, credits Weeks Marine, a national marine construction company, for a quick and successful job. "The work was done efficiently and reached completion before our May 1 sea turtle nesting season deadline for this stretch of beach," FitzPatrick says.

Community partners for the project include the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, the Martin County Board of County Commissioners, the Sailfish Point Property Owners Association and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Renourishing Bathtub Reef Beach was designated as a FEMA Hurricane Recovery Project in response to the impacts from Hurricane Dorian in 2019.

As Bathtub Reef Beach opens, it will offer more than 100 parking spaces to beach visitors, and Martin County Ocean Rescue lifeguards will be on duty each day. We encourage beach patrons to avoid the marked sea turtle nests on the restored beach and the protective dune, which has been replanted with sea oats.

For more information about Bathtub Beach and other Martin County beaches, visit the Martin County website at www.martin.fl.us.

About Bathtub Reef Beach

Martin County's Atlantic beaches span nearly 22 miles along our coast and include Jensen Beach, Stuart Beach, Sailfish Point, St. Lucie Inlet State Preserve, Hobe Sound National Wildlife Refuge and the Town of Jupiter Island.

These beaches are an integral part of the quality of life in Martin County, generate considerable revenue to the economy of Martin County and support homes, businesses and related infrastructure (roads, utilities) for many residents and visitors.

Bathtub Reef is located just offshore at Bathtub Beach Park and is a popular spot for snorkelers due to the large numbers of marine creatures and fish that congregate there. Its presence is also a key factor in creating the "bathtub effect" of very shallow waters during low tide that make it a favorite swimming location for families with young children.

Bathtub Reef is a fascinating reef system, created by tiny tube-building Sabellariid sea worms. It is not only an incredibly unique system, but also an extremely fragile one. The worms cement sand grains together, creating a vast network of tube dwellings. Colonies build on top of one another over time and create a reef system that helps break waves and reduce beach erosion. This habitat is used by more than 500 marine species including endangered sea turtles that forage on and around the reef.

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About the Martin County Board of County Commissioners

The five-member Board of County Commissioners is the legislative governing body of Martin County. Each Commissioner is elected to a four-year term by voters in the countywide area. Chapter 125.01 of the Florida Statutes establishes the specific duties and powers of the Board of County Commissioners. Exercising their legislative powers, the County Commission adopts ordinances (local laws) and resolutions to establish policies and programs to protect the health, safety and general welfare of Martin County residents.

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