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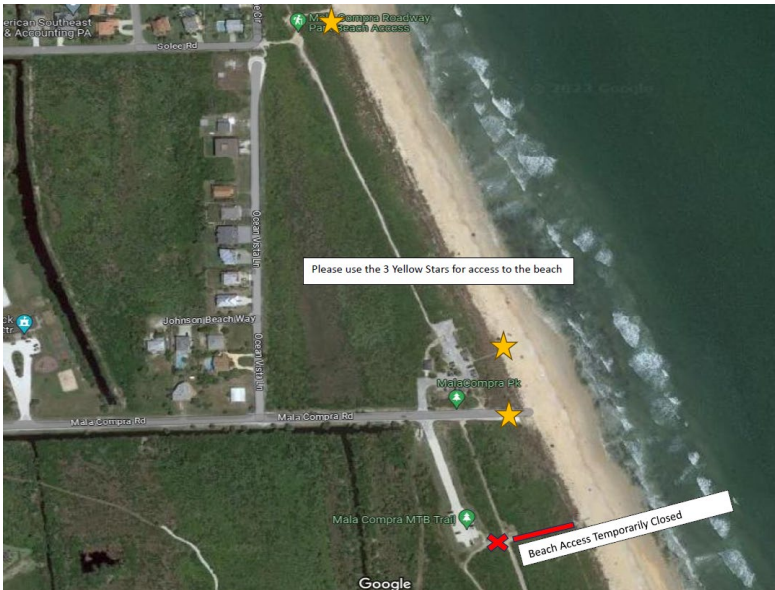
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Flagler County urges nighttime beachgoers to use MalaCompra Road access or north parking lot during turtle-hatching season

July 27, 2023 – Flagler County officials are urging nighttime beachgoers in The Hammock to use either the MalaCompra Road access or the north parking lot during turtle-hatching season, which is now, instead of the south parking lot leading to the Mountain Bike Trail.

The Volusia-Flagler Turtle Patrol reported that hatchlings from three different nests became disoriented because of light and crawled towards the dunes rather than the ocean.

“We are concerned about this and want to do what we can to educate our residents and visitors about how to help our beloved sea turtles,” said County Administrator Heidi Petito.

Sea turtle nesting season is from May 1 through October 31.

Andy Dance
District 1

Greg Hansen
District 2

David Sullivan
District 3

Leann Pennington
District 4

Donald O’Brien, Jr.
District 5

The Volusia-Flagler Turtle Patrol website, www.turtlepatrol.com, provides the following information to protect both adult turtles and hatchlings:

- Remove obstacles from the beach as nesting turtles and hatchlings can get caught and injured on beach chairs, umbrellas, and the like.
- Pick up trash. Sea turtles often mistake plastic bags and other waste as a source of food – a floating plastic bag looks like jellyfish to a turtle – and ingesting non-food items can kill them.
- Do not build bonfires on the beach. The light from beach fires can confuse the turtles coming to shore to lay their eggs, which causes them to return to the water instead of laying their eggs. Fires can also confuse hatchlings, causing them to head towards the glow of the fire instead of the ocean.
- Lights out. There are many other light sources that can confuse the turtles as well. Those living along the beach are asked to close the blinds at night. Nighttime beach walkers are asked to consider walking by the light of the moon rather than using a flashlight.
- Fill in those holes. While it's great fun to build sandcastles and dig holes on the beach, knock down sandcastles and fill in holes before leaving. Both sandcastles and the holes dug to create them are obstacles to laying turtles and hatchlings.

The Volusia-Flagler Turtle Patrol is a non-profit organization dedicated to the protection of sea turtles in two counties on the east coast of Florida. It patrols 25 miles of beach in Volusia County, 18 miles in Flagler County, and 2.5 miles in St. Johns County.

Did you know that different survey ribbon colors mean something, according to the Volusia-Flagler Turtle Patrol website.

“The color of the ribbon around the nest denotes the month in which the nest was laid,” it states. “Nests laid in May have pink ribbon, June has blue, July has orange, August has green, and September returns to pink again.”

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