

Bio of Beth Coppedge
President of Friends of South Walton Sea Turtles

Beth Coppedge is the founder and President of Friends of South Walton Sea Turtles, a 501c3 nonprofit organization, established since February 2014. The organization's mission is sea turtle conservation through awareness and education. She has been a volunteer with South Walton Turtle Watch for seven years, monitoring and marking nests on South Walton Beaches. The head of Turtle Watch requested Beth to form an education group to help educate the 3.2 million visitors and 61,000 locals that visit South Walton each year or call this area home.

Beth took on the challenge and started with a handful of volunteers and a few thousand dollars in donations, to design an education campaign for Walton County. Seven talented volunteers designed and developed our turtle post cards and clings for the vacation rentals, children's placemats for the restaurants, and turtle activity books for the schools. The Friends of South Walton Sea Turtles could not afford a designer for their logo, so they had a contest and selected a perfect logo. They applied for 501c3 non-profit status and received it in record time, and immediately began fundraising. In their second year, they applied for the Sea Turtle License Plate Grant and were awarded the grant for their successful education efforts. In the 3rd year, Beth's organization placed over 10,000 placemats in restaurants, 6,500 activity books in schools, and over 100,000 postcards and door clings in the rental properties. The educational programs include the Seaside Mentoring Program, Ohana School in Rosemary Beach, and Bay Elementary. The group also conducts Girl Scout and Boy Scout programs and participates in special events throughout the season.

The next phase in Beth Coppedge's journey with sea turtles is her new venture with Gulf World Marine Institute, where she will be trained to rescue and rehab sea turtles, as well as dolphins and other marine mammals.