

September 25, 2006

Ms. Vivian Steele  
President, Friends of St. Andrew State Park  
4607 State Park Lane  
Panama City, FL 32408

Dear Ms. Steele,

I regret that I didn't get to meet you in person last Tuesday night, September 12, at the DEP meeting about Shell Island. As we all witnessed that night, one thing we have in common is that we love our park. I made special note of your testimony during the meeting, about needing better education for visitors, and that is why I am writing.

Our organization, Bay Families with Dogs, Inc., is a Florida non-profit corporation established to improve education and awareness for both dog owners and the non-dog owning community, and to obtain and maintain recreation zones on area beaches for Bay County families to enjoy responsibly with their dogs.

We have both a responsibility and a passion for protecting the Shell Island portion of St. Andrews State Park that we want to continue enjoying with our family dogs. Our organization has grown to over 300 members in just four short months, and continues to grow. We are engineers, writers, medical professionals, realtors, biologists, attorneys, marketers – from all walks of life - with a lot of volunteer value to offer. I would like to extend an offer to work in partnership with the Friends of St. Andrews State Park as we move forward to work with local and state government to preserve our access.

At the meeting, the US Fish and Wildlife Service provided some excellent information about the predominant problems for sensitive species at Shell Island. Specifically, they are:

- Predators
- Foot traffic in improper places
- Trash that attracts predators

We would like to become a volunteer partner organization to the Friends of St. Andrews State Park. I'm not aware of any coyote trapping experts in our membership, but we definitely could help educate the humans who may inadvertently contribute to problems for the area. We could, for example:

- Work jointly on ways to provide predator-resistant trash receptacles with signage
- Develop and distribute material such as brochures to boat and jet-ski renters
- Provide citizen "educators" at Shell to educate visitors on site
- Document and track problem occurrences on the site so that we can jointly develop plans to mitigate them
- Provide free publication of outreach materials on our web site

Those are just a sampling of ideas. We'd of course work with your organization and the Park Service to fine-tune the ways in which we could help the most.

Please let me know when we can discuss this issue further. As a gesture of my resolve, I have also included my own family's application and dues for membership in the Friends of St. Andrew State Park.

Regards,

Stephanie Somerset, Executive Director  
Bay Families with Dogs, Inc.

Cc: Carl Keen, Park Manager, St. Andrews State Park  
Albert Gregory, Director of Park Planning, Florida DEP