

## WELCOME TO FORT MYERS BEACH

We hope that you will enjoy your stay on our tropical island. As a visitor, there are things you will want to know about the beach. The beach and ocean can always be enjoyed provided proper respect is paid and a certain degree of care and public safety is maintained.

Having survived literally thousands of years from the ravages of the ocean, one would think that the beach is indeed a hardy environment.



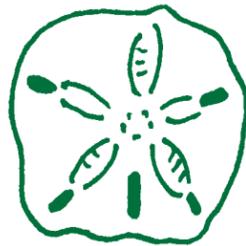
Quite the opposite is true – the beach is a fragile and ever-changing ecological wonder that belongs to all of us, residents and visitors alike. The beach needs everyone to help in its continued survival and much of that help is in refraining from activities that are prohibited by law. The following information will assist visitors and residents alike to enjoy Estero Island

while protecting the beauty and natural resources for generations to come.

## PUBLIC SAFETY & NATURAL RESOURCE PROTECTION ON THE BEACH

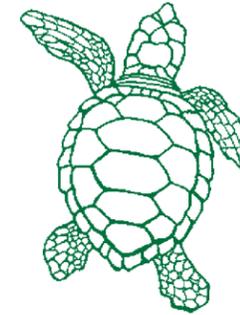
**DUNES** – Dunes are elevated areas of sand along the beach with dune vegetation such as sea oats and other grasses. Dunes function as barriers that help protect the shoreline from high tides and storm surges. Dunes rely on vegetation to hold the sand in place, since the forces of both wind and sea can cause dune migration where no vegetation exists on the beach. Fort Myers Beach regulations prohibit destruction of dunes and dune vegetation. Please stay off the dune vegetation.

**LIVE SHELLS** – Our island and the surrounding area is home for many species of sea shells. Florida law and local ordinance



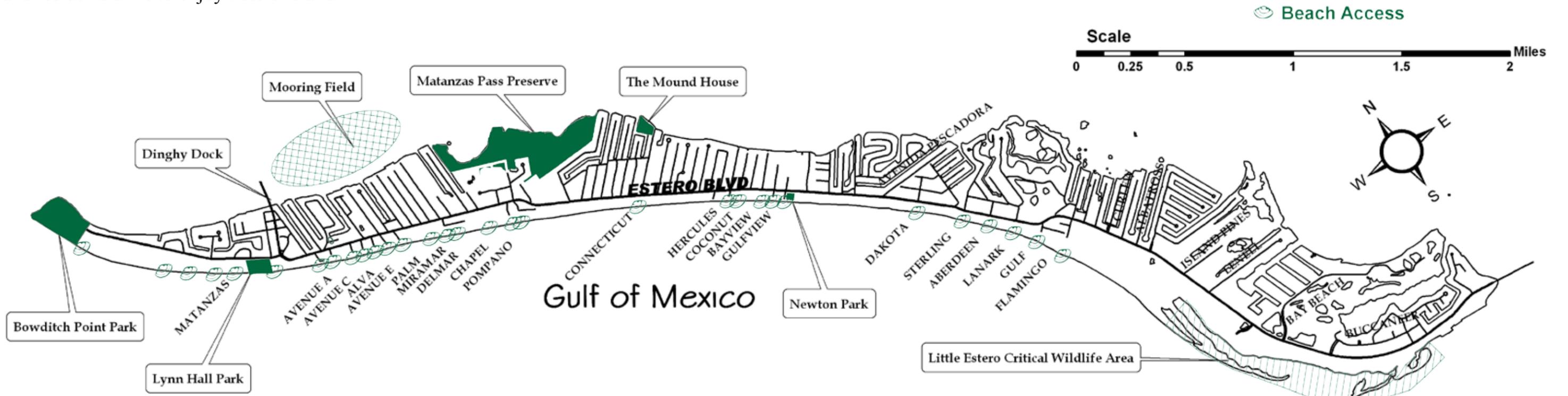
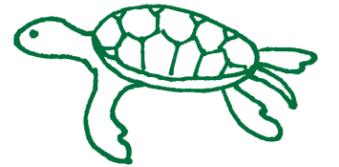
prohibit taking live shells from Florida waters. This includes starfish, sand dollars, and sea urchins.

**SEA TURTLE NESTING SEASON** – May 1<sup>st</sup> through October 31<sup>st</sup> is sea turtle nesting season on Estero Island. Female sea turtles as well as their hatchlings need a darkened beach for nesting success and hatchling survival. The hatchlings inherently head towards the brightest lit area when hatching, which, under natural conditions, is the ocean's horizon. Walking along the beach at night with flashlights and any source of artificial lighting that illuminates the beach is prohibited by state law and local ordinance. It is unlawful to disturb any sea turtle nest, turtle or hatchling. Please remain at least 10 feet away from any nest, turtle or hatchling. Thank you.



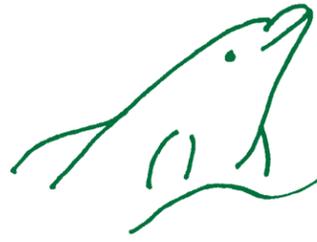
**VEHICLES ON THE BEACH** – With the exception of emergency and public service vehicles, permitted local beach vendors, and permitted beach cleaning vendors, motorized vehicles are not allowed anywhere on the beach or dunes. This prohibition includes golf carts, club cars, scooters, Segways, and motorcycles.

**DOGS ON THE BEACH** – Dogs on the beach must be on a leash and under the owner's control at all times. Owners must clean up after their animals and deposit animal waste in the trash receptacles located at each public beach access. **Dogs are not permitted in the Little Estero Critical Wildlife Area**, which includes all wetlands, beaches and land extending southward from the Holiday Inn to the boundary signs at Mulholland Point. Lee County provides a Dog Beach Park on



Lover's Key, located just south of Fort Myers Beach on Estero Boulevard, where dogs may run free.

**LITTLE ESTERO ISLAND CRITICAL WILDLIFE AREA** – The Little Estero Island Critical Wildlife Area, at the southern end of Fort Myers Beach, is a state-owned wildlife area that provides nesting habitat for federally listed, threatened species of shorebirds and sea turtles.



Pets and all motorized vehicles (except for law enforcement and emergency vehicles) are prohibited throughout the Critical Wildlife Area. Officials protect bird colonies by roping off nesting areas and posting signs to indicate which areas people may not enter. From the time the area is posted in April, through August 31, posted areas are closed to public access. Please help protect wildlife by adhering to these regulations. Thank you for your cooperation.

**BEACH ACCESS** - All waterfront property on the island is privately owned. Public use is permitted from the water to ten feet landward of the high tide line (wet sand). Twenty-five beach accesses and three public parks (Bowditch, Lynn Hall and Newton) are provided to allow legal access to enjoy the beaches on the Gulf of Mexico. Numbered Gulf-side banners on Estero Boulevard designate each public beach access, noting parking and accessibility information.



**OPEN CONTAINERS AND ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION** – The drinking establishments along Fort Myers Beach have specific boundaries within which you may consume or have in your possession an open container of alcoholic beverage. An exception to these boundary requirements may occur during certain permitted special events, where event officials shall communicate such exceptions. It is unlawful to consume or have in your possession an open container alcoholic beverage on a semi-public or public street, sidewalk, parkway, beach, or parking lot located in the town of Fort Myers Beach.



**FIREWORKS AND FIREARMS** - It is prohibited for any person to detonate any explosive devices, including fireworks, or discharge any firearm on a beach, dune or in the water adjacent to a beach.

**CAMPING, SLEEPING AND FIRES** - Camping or sleeping overnight on a beach, a dune, or in the water adjacent to a beach is prohibited. Open fires are prohibited on the beach and Little Estero Critical Wildlife Area. Permits may be applied for through Town Hall for small cooking fires (12" x 12") on the beach, excluding Little Estero Critical Wildlife Area, from November 1<sup>st</sup> through April 30<sup>th</sup> of each year, at Town Hall, 2523 Estero Boulevard. The permit will require a \$30 deposit for cleanup. No fires are permitted on the beach during sea turtle nesting season (May 1<sup>st</sup> through October 31<sup>st</sup>).

**TRASH & LITTER** – Trash and litter must be removed from the beach and deposited in the trash receptacles located at each beach access. Discarding cigarette butts and paper

and plastic items on the beach not only is unsanitary and unsightly, but adversely impacts our native bird, fish and turtle population. Plastic can be ingested by birds, turtles and other native animals and can cause severe injury and even death. Fish and sea turtle entanglement in plastic frequently leads directly or indirectly to premature death. Plastic straws, cups, cup lids, six-pack rings and bags present a non-biodegradable threat to our pristine island landscape. Please take all your trash with you when you leave the beach. "Leave nothing but footprints" to make your future visits more enjoyable and safer.



**Please leave this brochure for the next visitor**

Sea Turtle artwork courtesy Turtle Time Inc.  
Additional artwork courtesy Joanne Shamp  
Map by Keith Laakkonen, Environmental Sciences Coordinator, Town of Fort Myers Beach



# WELCOME TO FORT MYERS BEACH

A GUIDE TO THE TOWN OF FORT MYERS BEACH BEACHFRONT ORDINANCES & REGULATIONS FOR VISITORS & RESIDENTS

*Provided by the Marine Resources Task Force of the Town of Fort Myers Beach to promote conservation of our Island's natural resources.*