



**For Immediate Release**

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## **Georgia Sea Turtle Center Celebrates Grand Opening on June 16**

*Public invited to join a day of celebration and discovery on Jekyll Island*

**Jekyll Island, Ga. (June 12, 2007)** – World Sea Turtle Day, June 16<sup>th</sup>, has special meaning in Georgia this year. The state's first, and only, facility devoted to sea turtle rehabilitation, research and education, will officially open to the public on June 16<sup>th</sup>. The Georgia Sea Turtle Center on Jekyll Island will provide state-of-the-art emergency care to sick and injured sea turtles alongside opportunities for scientific and medical research. The facility will also have ongoing education programs including exhibits on sea turtle life history, conservation and rehabilitation, and a variety of outdoor educational programs including evening and morning beach walks exploring the nesting habitat.

"We have had tremendous support in taking the Georgia Sea Turtle Center from concept to the incredible facility we have today," said Dr. Bill Irwin, Director of the Georgia Sea Turtle Center. "It is very exciting to be able to open the doors so that we can all learn and benefit from what the Center has to offer."

Construction of the \$3 million Georgia Sea Turtle Center was funded by donations with efforts led by the Jekyll Island Foundation. The Grand Opening Festivities will take place in conjunction with the Foundation's 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Family Weekend, a family-oriented celebration filled with activities that will also raise additional funds for the Georgia Sea Turtle Center as well as ongoing conservation and preservation efforts of Jekyll Island.

“The Annual Family Weekend is one way the Foundation is able to celebrate both the island and its supporters,” said Cindy McDonald with the Jekyll Island Foundation. “We’ve designed a weekend where everyone can come and enjoy the unique natural setting of Jekyll Island.” Activities include kayaking, dolphin watching, and leisurely strolls along the beach. Guests can also enjoy golf, a two-hour shrimp trawling aboard a shrimp boat, fishing along the Jekyll Island Marina and more. Family Weekend activities are open to the public. Details about the events and a schedule can be found online at [www.jekyllislandfoundation.org](http://www.jekyllislandfoundation.org).

The mission of the Georgia Sea Turtle Center is to protect sea turtles and other marine animals through rehabilitation, research, and education adds Irwin. While the doors officially open June 16<sup>th</sup>, the Georgia Sea Turtle Center currently has three sea turtles under its care. Dylan, a hatchling found on Jekyll Island almost 8 years ago and on display at the Georgia Aquarium, returned to Jekyll May 15<sup>th</sup> to begin transitioning needed to return to the wild later this summer. Nick also arrived on May 15<sup>th</sup>, suffering severe injuries believed caused by a boat. Golden Boy, a debilitated turtle that was rescued in Christmas Creek, was transported to Sea World Orlando in 2006 because there was no facility to care for sea turtles in Georgia; he arrived at the Georgia Sea Turtle Center on Thursday, June 7 for the final phase of his treatment before being released.

The Georgia Sea Turtle Center will be open to the public each day from 10 a.m. – 7 p.m. Admission is \$6 for adults and \$4 for children ages 4 – 12. Children ages 3 and under will be admitted at no charge. The Georgia Sea Turtle Center is located 214 Stable Road in the former Power Plant building in the Historic District of Jekyll Island.

For more information about the Georgia Sea Turtle Center, visit online at [www.georgiaseaturtlecenter.org](http://www.georgiaseaturtlecenter.org). A blog has also been created chronicling activities at the Georgia Sea Turtle Center, and can be viewed at <http://gstc.blogspot.com>.

### **About the Georgia Sea Turtle Center**

The Georgia Sea Turtle Center officially broke ground in Jekyll Island, Ga.’s Historic Landmark District in early 2006 on the site of the original 1903 Power Plant building, much of which will be preserved and incorporated into the new facilities. The ambitious, \$3 million center – offering an outstanding,

museum-style learning experience and a state-of-the-art rehabilitation center and veterinary clinic – will be the first of its kind in Georgia. The Center will officially open this summer. For more information about the Georgia Sea Turtle Center and related programs, visit [www.georgiaseaturtlecenter.org](http://www.georgiaseaturtlecenter.org).

### **About Jekyll Island.**

Jekyll Island is a barrier island on Georgia's coast – midway between Jacksonville, Fla.; and Savannah, Ga. Accessible by car just minutes from I-95, Jekyll Island offers a variety of amenities, including 10 miles of beach, four golf courses, a 250-acre Historic Landmark District, water park, tennis center, an array of lodging options including hotels, cottages and campgrounds. Owned by the State of Georgia, and managed by the Jekyll Island State Park Authority, Jekyll Island has had development limited to just 35 percent of its available land area. This unique aspect of Jekyll Island serves to preserve the critical barrier island ecosystem, as well as provides guests with a unique escape from the crowds and complications of other beach resort destinations. Please visit [www.jekyllisland.com](http://www.jekyllisland.com) for more information or call 1-877-4JEKYLL.

### **About the Jekyll Island Foundation**

The Jekyll Island Foundation is a tax exempt, public, non-profit that offers participatory opportunities in planned giving, private donation, legislative education, corporate support, and philanthropic foundation support. The Foundation serves to raise, receive, manage and disburse funds for the stewardship of the historic and natural resources of Jekyll Island. This stewardship includes preservation and improvement of historic sites, conservation of the undeveloped portion of the island and development and improvement of amenities for visitors to the island. The Jekyll Island Foundation's current project is a major capital campaign to help fund the construction of the Georgia Sea Turtle Center. Activities include the Georgia Sea Turtle Center "Walkway to Wonder" program, where personalized bricks can be purchased for \$50 and placed permanently in the walkway outside the Center. For additional information on the Jekyll Island Foundation or to learn more about the "Walkway to Wonder" commemorative brick program, please visit [www.JekyllIslandFoundation.org](http://www.JekyllIslandFoundation.org) or call (912) 635-4402. The Foundation office is located in Villa Ospe at 381 Riverview Drive, Jekyll Island, Ga., 31527.

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