



Sea Turtle nonprofit gets new moniker

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When you hear the name Caribbean Conservation Corp., what comes to mind?

If you've never heard of the Gainesville-based nonprofit, then you might not think sea turtles. And therein lies the rub.

"We realized for a long time the old name doesn't really explain what we do," Executive Director **David Godfrey** said.

For 50 years, CCC has studied and protected sea turtles, but its mission is not reflected in its name.

Today, Godfrey is in South Beach announcing a new name that better reflects what the nonprofit is all about: [The Sea Turtle Conservancy](#).

Though the name change makes a lot of sense, getting everyone onboard took some doing.

"There was a lot of tradition," Godfrey said. "The name goes back to 1959, and there was a lot of recognition of that tradition."

Godfrey said he and the organization's staff and board of directors had to come to grips with the fact that the old name was actually a liability and, if they were going to survive, they needed to find a name that more accurately conveyed their mission and broader geographic scope.

Today's announcement at the Betsy Hotel coincides with World Sea Turtle Day and is particularly significant, given the events in the Gulf of Mexico.

"The oil disaster raging in the Gulf of Mexico threatens to undo a half-century of sea turtle protection," Godfrey said.

The nonprofit's role in the disaster has continued to evolve. The Sea Turtle Conservancy has been dealing with federal agencies and BP, but Godfrey said there are tight controls over what they can do. Volunteers need to be properly trained in handling hazardous materials, which his organization's people are going through now.

"It is frustrating in that we want to help right away," Godfrey said, adding that his frustration is somewhat tempered by the fact that it's a disaster that's unfolded slowly, and that there has not yet been any direct impact to sea turtles.

That's given his organization time to determine what the best course of action will be as sea turtle nesting gets under way and down the road as the hatchlings make their way out to sea.

Godfrey is also frustrated by the slow response of the Obama administration, as well as the fact that the oil industry has proven to be ill prepared to handle the disaster.

"I place a lot of blame on the oil industry on being ill prepared and misleading the American people, and on the federal agencies responsible for making sure these things were in place," he said. "They have all fallen down on the job."



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