



BOCA RATON BEACH & PARK DISPATCH

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PLAYGROUND A USA TODAY TOP 10 NOMINEE

Boca Raton residents know Sugar Sand Park's Science Playground is special. Now there's a chance to let all of America understand what a jewel it is.

USA Today selected Sugar Sand's Science Playground to be one of 20 parks nationally to contend in its 10 Best's Reader's Choice Awards in the Best Public Playground category.

"It's an honor to be listed among some of the great playgrounds in America," District Executive Director Briann Harms said. "We're extremely proud of Sugar Sand's Science Playground and how much it's loved by our community."

The Science Playground is competing against playgrounds from much larger cities, including New York, Los Angeles, Philadelphia, St. Louis and Seattle.

Voting is already underway at <https://10best.usatoday.com/awards/science-playground-sugar-sand-park-boca-raton-florida/>. Under contest rules, voters are allowed to cast one vote for the Science Playground per day.

[READ MORE ABOUT THE CONTEST](#)



Blending Science and Crafts

The Lab program at Sugar Sand Park's community center erupted on a mid-March Sunday morning.

Sort of.

Children in attendance learned about how and why the earth creates volcanoes, then made one of their own.

The Lab is a monthly STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Mathematics) program that teaches children various aspects of science through hands-on activities and innovative projects.

After learning about how volcanoes work, attendees assembled their own laser engraved shadow box lit to resemble an erupting volcano.

Every month The Lab explores different topics that spark creativity, curiosity, critical thinking, and problem solving.

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Turtle Nesting Season Begins

As the snowbirds prepare to depart Boca Raton, the turtles are moving in to take their place. The Gumbo Limbo Nature Center discovered the first turtle nest of the season in the final days of February. A leatherback turtle deposited her eggs a little earlier than would be expected but not unusually early. Prime sea turtle nesting season doesn't occur until late May. Gumbo Limbo will begin holding their Turtle Walks on May 26, during which participants will learn about



Smaller Pickleball Tourneys

Upcoming pickleball tournaments at Patch Reef Park will cater more to members and residents, limiting the amount of outside tournament organizers who bring large tournaments to the facility.

The new philosophy will be on display beginning with the Spring Smash Pickleball Tournament scheduled for April 5.

There's no question that Patch Reef's new covered pickleball complex is in demand.

The Pickleball Is Life Boca Open held in late February drew more than 600 participants from around the nation. A few weeks later the World Pickleball Open held its two-day tournament at Patch Reef.

While those larger tournaments can be fun and draw some of the nation's best players, they also limit the number of courts available for play by non-tournament players.

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Sleeve Me Alone

Have you noticed the plastic sleeves encircling the palm tree trunks in the pool area of the Boca Raton Swim Center and wondered why they are there? You can thank one of Florida's most prevalent invasive species for the new look. Many iguanas had taken residence in the palm trees and were not even paying the membership fee. The slick plastic sleeves keep the lizards from digging their claws into the trunk, preventing them from

sea turtles and be guided to see a turtle nesting, when possible. Online registration to attend a Turtle Walk begins on April 21. (Above photo courtesy Gumbo Limbo Nature Center)



Lendl A Winner At Boca Open

Ivan Lendl had an excellent reason for delaying his pickleball demonstration scheduled for the opening evening of the Pickleball Is Life Boca Open. Participating in the tournament as a player, the former World No. 1-ranked tennis player had advanced to the Men's Masters Open doubles division finals, occurring at the same time. Lendl and playing partner Dean Packard claimed the gold medal in the division for players 60 and older, then took center court for the demonstration. Organizers said approximately 600 players participated in the Boca Open, held over four days at Patch Reef Park.

climbing. Since installation, lifeguards report a noticeable drop in the number of iguanas attempting to use the pool deck or even the pool itself.



Not That Pet Visits StoryWalk

A family ready to choose a pet lets their young daughter choose what kind of animal will become their new family member. She makes some terrible choices. That's the plot of Not That Pet, the newest children's book on display at Patch Reef Park's StoryWalk. Written by Smriti Halls and illustrated by Rosalind Beardshaw, Not That Pet tells the story of Mabel, who it turns out is very bad at choosing pets. Mabel selects an elephant, ants, a bear and a wolf among other animals before settling on a – well let's not spoil the ending. The StoryWalk's first station is located outside the all-inclusive playground.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

MONDAY APRIL 6
Commissioners' General Public Meeting, 5:15 p.m.

MONDAY APRIL 20
Commissioners' General Public Meeting, 5:15 p.m.

MONDAY MAY 4
Commissioners' General Public Meeting, 5:15 p.m.

**Meetings at Boca Raton Swim & Racquet Center
21618 St. Andrews Boulevard Boca Raton, FL**

Ode To Open Space

"A walk in nature walks the soul back home." — *Mary Davis, author*



LINKED INTO BOCA RATON



It's never too early to start planning for summer. Boca Raton offers a wide variety of summer camps for children, including camps focusing on acting, athletics, science and nature. The registration period for residents is already open. Non-resident registration opens March 30.

[View Boca Raton Spring Camps](#)

**GREATER BOCA RATON
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