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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Englewood Waterfest wins the Southeast Tourism Society “Signature Event of the Southeast” Award!**

Southeast Tourism Society has named Englewood Beach Waterfest one of the Signature Events of the Southeast for 2023. The Signature Events of the Southeast, formerly known as Top 20 Festival and Event Awards, was launched as part of the 40th Anniversary celebration of Southeast Tourism Society. STS has recognized events and festivals around the Southeast since 1985. From multiple submissions, travel industry experts select 20 events to be highlighted for the year, and STS publicizes them throughout the United States. The complete list is published on the Escape to the Southeast® website and on all Southeast Tourism Society’s social media platforms.

“What an honor for Englewood Beach Waterfest to be yet again, recognized as a Signature Event in the Southeastern United States by the Southeast Tourism Society! Our entire volunteer-driven organization works hard every year to bring this world-class sponsored event to our area of the Gulf Coast of Florida. Our board of directors collaborates with hundreds of sponsors, local businesses, ambassadors, and other non-profits to organize and execute the event in November. This award highlights our commitment to fortifying the community, our natural water resources, and abundance of recreational opportunities they provide.” said Steve Gardiner, President of Englewood Beach Waterfest, Board of Directors.

For 40 years, STS has been spotlighting the best festivals and events in the Southeast. Our goal is to highlight the efforts of devoted event organizers and provide additional media exposure and accolades for their events,” said Monica Smith, President and CEO of Southeast Tourism Society. “The Southeast offers so many unique, year-round, opportunities for tourists and festivalgoers to create memories and support the tourism industry—a vital economic generator for communities.” Events considered for the STS Signature Events of the Southeast recognition must be at least three years old and have an attendance of at least 1,000.

**Our Best Side is Outside.™**

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SoutheastTourism.org. STS, founded in 1983 and headquartered in Roswell, Ga., is a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting travel and tourism within 14 states – Alabama, Arkansas, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia.



Photo (left to right): Sean Doherty – Executive Director, Punta Gorda/Englewood Beach VCB  
Steve Gardiner, President of Englewood Beach Waterfest, Board of Directors  
Doug Izzo, Executive Director, Englewood Chamber of Commerce  
Lois Croft, Public Relations Manager, Punta Gorda/Englewood Beach VCB  
Jay Henderson, Englewood Beach Waterfest Board of Directors

#### **ABOUT PUNTA GORDA / ENGLEWOOD BEACH**

**Punta Gorda/Englewood Beach** is Florida's best-kept secret of a charming natural paradise located on the idyllic Southwest Gulf Coast. This coastal community surrounding the state's second-largest harbor sits conveniently between Tampa and Naples. Outdoor enthusiasts will find a haven of vibrant experiences in the sun-soaked oasis of the Southwest Florida islands, characterized by almost year-round sunshine and sub-tropical weather. Relaxation and discovery await in miles of waterways and inland exploration trails filled with unspoiled natural beauty. From beaches to boating, hiking to harbor tours, fishing to nature paths; to sun, shelling, and fossilized sharks' teeth, Punta Gorda/Englewood Beach immerses lively locals and active adventurers in a pure island experience. Most notably known for its 830 miles of pristine unparalleled shoreline, including captivating river passages, a mangrove-edged aquatic preserve, and more than a dozen miles of natural Gulf beaches, the Charlotte Harbor Gulf Island

Coast includes the areas of Boca Grande, Don Pedro Island, Englewood-Cape Haze, Little Gasparilla Island, Manasota Key, Knight Island, Placida, Babcock Ranch, Port Charlotte, Charlotte Harbor and Punta Gorda.

To learn more about Punta Gorda / Englewood Beach, visit [www.PureFlorida.com](http://www.PureFlorida.com), call 941.743.1900 or discover the destination on Instagram, Twitter and Facebook @RealPureFlorida.