



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**The St. Joe Community Foundation and The St. Joe Company Join Alliance  
to Protect and Preserve Gopher Tortoise in NW Florida**

*\$150,000 donation to support 'keystone species' - vital to building sustainable  
communities*

*Watersound, Florida August 5 2014:* The St. Joe Company, Northwest Florida's leading residential and commercial property developer and The St. Joe Community Foundation have signed an agreement with The Humane Society of the United States, Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission, and Freeport based Nokuse Plantation to support the relocation and rehabilitation of the Gopher Tortoise, one of Florida's threatened species.

The Gopher Tortoise is unique in the way it creates its home. While most tortoise simply shelter under vegetation, the Gopher Tortoise digs and creates extensive burrows, typically up to 30ft. These burrows are important habitats for not just the Gopher Tortoise but for other species of wildlife that share or use them too – including burrowing owls, frogs, lizards, rabbits and snakes. Many of these habitats are now threatened and the project aims to relocate more than 2000 tortoises over the next three years.

Park Brady, CEO of The St. Joe Company said: "Gopher tortoise are an important part of an environmental ecosystem in Northwest Florida. They build homes that support and encourage up to 350 other species of wildlife. At St. Joe we also see it as our responsibility to encourage and promote communities, so we are proud to support this worthwhile venture."

The St. Joe Company has a long history of responsible stewardship of the land and environment in Northwest Florida. The St. Joe Community Foundation provides vital funds to support this effort.

"The Foundation assists in funding non-profit organizations to protect, improve or educate the community on the environment or environmental issues." said Janet Greeno, Executive Director of The St. Joe Community Foundation. "Our donation of \$150,000 to The Humane Society of United States will support and enable the responsible collection and relocation of gopher tortoises to designated sanctuaries."

Since its inception, The St. Joe Community Foundation has donated in excess of \$18M to charities and nonprofits in the Northwest Florida region. The Foundation has supported other environmental programs with Choctawhatchee Basin Alliance, E. O. Wilson Biophilia Center, South Walton Turtle Watch as well as environmental activities with local schools.

The Gopher Tortoise will be rehoused on land at the Nokuse Plantation, a 53,000 acre preserve located in Walton County, Florida and owned by Mr. M.C. Davis. Nokuse is dedicated to the preservation, protection, and restoration of Florida's native species, including gopher tortoises.

“The gopher tortoise is considered a keystone species and is an essential part of our overall restoration of the longleaf pine sandhill ecosystem. We are grateful to be part of this unprecedented program between The St. Joe Community Foundation, The St. Joe Company, The Humane Society of the United States, and Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission to relocate gopher tortoises from development sites throughout Florida to our preserve,” said Matt Aresco, The Nokuse Plantation’s Director.

**ENDS**

Notes to Editors:

**About The St. Joe Company**

The St. Joe Company is a Florida-based real estate developer and manager. The Company owns land concentrated primarily in Northwest Florida and has significant residential and commercial land-use entitlements in hand or in process. The Company also owns various commercial, resort and club properties. More information about the Company can be found on its website at [www.joe.com](http://www.joe.com).

**About the St. Joe Community Foundation**

Since its inception, the St. Joe Community Foundation (STJCF) has provided more than \$18million in grants to improve the quality of life in the communities it serves. STJCF provides charitable grants primarily in Bay and Walton Counties that embrace the arts, strengthen education, protect the environment and improve healthcare. These efforts help build healthy, caring, long-lived communities. For more information, visit [www.stjcf.com](http://www.stjcf.com).

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