

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 6, 2016

# GATOR ON THE BEACH

From the Fernandina Beach Parks and Recreation Department's Greenway Manager Kathy Russell: "The Fernandina Beach Parks and Recreation Department received a phone call at 9:30 a.m. Thursday morning stating that there was a small alligator on the beach just north of Elizabeth Point Lodge." Russell says she immediately contacted Sherry Merritt of Fernandina Beach Animal Rescue, and noted that both had



KATHY RUSSELL/FOR THE NEWS-LEADER

responded to a similar call just over a year ago. "Upon reaching the site, just south of Elizabeth Pointe Lodge near Main Beach, (we) observed a 3-foot alligator resting in the sand amidst a small group of bystanders. The animal was clearly exhausted, dehydrated and clearly out of its preferred environment. One bystander noted that the animal had been there since early morning and that several people had been harassing it by grabbing its tail. Merritt quickly assessed the situation, then carefully placed a capture noose around the animal so that it could be immobilized and prepared for transport. The small alligator was relocated to a nearby fresh water pond."