**May 31, 2019**

**More choosing May to get away**

It’s been a very busy May at the Watermark – in fact, our busiest in recent memory from a rental perspective. From the start of turtle-nesting season and Mothers Day week through the Memorial Day holiday, the Watermark has had close to a full house as far as vacation rentals go. There were only 4 unrented unit weeks (affecting two 3-BR vacation rentals)… a significant turnabout when you consider that not that long ago rental activity at the Watermark was so slow in May that prior to last year the month was one of the more popular times for owners to schedule their remodeling projects. So what is it turning May into a pay day? Thinner crowds (schools are back in session)…mostly “no-sweat” weather (highs in 80s instead of 90s)… bargain rates (as much as $500/wk off peak-season summer rates).

**Summer outlook**

First the bad news: We’ve had an increase in summer cancellations … and now for the good: Most of those summer cancellations have been re-booked. With the peak summer season just a day from beginning, here’s a quick look at where our bookings stand: For June -- most all the renting units have at least 2 out of 4 weeks booked for June with 10 units completely booked.  For July – there is only one unit opening for the first two weeks…  and then 5 units open in the 3rd week and 4 for the 4th week.  As of July 27, things start to fall off which is normal. There is no pattern for the cancellations, but the earlier start of public school calendar adopted by some Florida counties has clearly had some effect, as everything from extra-curricular activities to graduations are moving up. Another example: more fall activities are requiring student-athletes to try out and practice during the end of summer in order to have a better chance of making the team and participating when the regular season rolls around in August.

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**Snowbird update**

Only one of our snowbirds squawked this winter about the 2020 rate hike approved by the Rental Group … but it didn’t keep her and her husband from renewing. They’ll be back, as will the rest of this year’s flock. Once again, we’re booked solid for next winter with another waiting list – 81 at last count. On tripping.com’s *20 Most Affordable Snowbird Locations in the U.S.,* NSB held down the #2 ranking behind only Clearwater. Rounding out the Top 5: Haines City, Orlando and Cocoa.



**Hurricane Season: June 1 – Nov 30**

Accuweather calls for 12 to 14 named storms, five to seven hurricanes and two to four major storms. Rental group members should be using the quieter part of Hurricane Season to check their hurricane insurance coverage, particularly their coverage for wind-driven rain; updating their photo inventories of condo possessions; and updating clean-up supplies. Packing old towels along the tracks of your sliders is known to be an effective way to cut down on water penetration, and keeping a separate box of old towels in your owner’s closet or u-room will reduce the need for the managers to use your good ones if there’s water to mop up. With the approach of the more active part of Hurricane Season right after Labor Day, owners should make plans to take their balcony furniture indoors. For a detailed tick-tock of what is expected of you, your guests and your renters when a hurricane directly threatens Volusia County, please see Hurricane Preparedness in the owner area under “The Archive” at <http://watermarkbeachcondo.com/>

**Turtle season – May 1 through October 31**

**Because** sea turtles become disoriented from bright lights, a NSB ordinance requires occupants of oceanfront property to keep their ocean-side blinds drawn after sundown from May 1 through October. Last year, 253 loggerheads turned New Smyrna beaches into their maternity ward.

**Messy garage?**

Several owners who rent out their places have been using their garages to store large items such as old furniture and old appliances. It appears that most of this is the kind of stuff that could easily be donated to a local charity. Upon occasion, other garages have power tools, surfboards and various water toys out in the open and unsecured. Because the garages are used by renters, those of us in the Rental Group take on some extra liability if our garages aren’t kept free of hazards… Best bet: If you do not intend for your summer renters to help themselves to your beach chairs, bicycles and fishing gear, you’ll need to secure those personal possessions or mark them in some conspicuous way to let your renters know what you consider off-limits.

**--Bill & Sandy (#203)**