

THE KINGFISHER

KEEPING WATCH OVER OUR RIVER



Vol. 10 Spring 2013

Riverkeeper Update



What a first year it has been and a tremendous honor to serve as your St. Johns Riverkeeper.

My eyes have been opened fully to the mounting threats facing the St. Johns which are many and great. My commitment and resolve have only been strengthened, and I have become even more energized by the demands and the challenges of protecting our beautiful river.

Recent investigative reporting from across the state continues to reveal the widespread pollution and flow problems plaguing our rivers and springs.

Our waterways, including the St. Johns, are sick from pollution and lackluster protections. It is high time for courageous leadership and swift, bold actions to address these significant problems and restore our imperiled waters. We need leaders to recognize the economic value of clean water, to hold polluters accountable, and demand the sustainable use of our water resources.

Unfortunately, many of our state leaders' idea of protecting our environment seems to include:

- Severe budget cuts to the agencies charged with protecting our natural resources
- Gutting environmental safeguards and growth-management guidelines
- Cutting funding for monitoring, conservation and research
- Reducing enforcement against polluters
- Liquidating public conservation lands

Incredibly, they want us to believe that by making it easier and less cumbersome for industry to use water, meet water quality standards, destroy wetlands, and avoid enforcement actions that our environment will actually somehow be better protected.

This fox-guarding-the-henhouse approach to protecting our natural resources will haunt us all for generations if we allow it to continue.

We must continue to keep the pressure on our elected officials to overcome the looming threats.

Efforts are underway by the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to **streamline permitting requirements** for large water users that will result in longer permits, less oversight and no additional requirements for efficiency and conservation. These changes are being driven by lobbyists that have a mission to shift the benefit of these protections away from our natural resources to benefit a select few. Follow our fight to protect the integrity of the consumptive use permit (CUP) process on our website blog.

The **Adena Springs Ranch** water use permit is still pending at the St. Johns River Water Management District (SJRWMD). SJRWMD staff recently submitted a lengthy request for additional information that further illustrates the complexity of the spring system, severity of the ranch's potential impacts and the delicacy of the politics surrounding this permit. As we have reported before, this massive cattle operation will add harmful nitrate pollution to a severely polluted Silver Springs and Silver River and will cause further harm to an over-burdened aquifer. DEP and SJRWMD have recently started talking about possible restoration plans. However, allowing additional pollution and harm would only undermine any potential benefits from restoration projects, cheating us as taxpaying citizens and the owners to whom these resources belong. Stay tuned to our website for the latest developments.

The State of Florida is blessed with amazing waterways. We are blessed to have the St. Johns River. We must all continue to speak up for our river to ensure its protection for years to come. Thank you all for your continuing commitment to the St. Johns and for your unwavering support. Together, we can meet the challenges before us.

Hope to see you on the river soon!

For the River,

Lisa Rinaman – Your St. Johns Riverkeeper

River-Friendly Tips

1. **Create a River Friendly Yard.** Use less fertilizer and chemicals and plant native or drought-tolerant plants to reduce runoff and help prevent algal blooms and fish kills in the St. Johns.
2. **Allow only rain down the drain.** Keep gutters and storm drains free of litter, lawn clippings, leaves, fertilizers, and chemicals. Storm drains often lead directly to the river.
3. **Install a rain barrel.** Rain barrels conserve water and help prevent runoff that can wash fertilizers and chemicals down storm drains and into our waterways.
4. **Scoop the poop.** Our pet's waste can wash into waterways and contribute to the fecal bacteria pollution problem in our creeks.
5. **Use water wisely.** Install low-flow fixtures in our houses or businesses, fix leaks, and water lawns and plants only when needed.

MISSION:
SAVE THE ST. JOHNS

Learn more and take the River Friendly Pledge on our website, stjohnsriverkeeper.org.

News & Notes

Thanks to all of the businesses, organizations, and people who continue to help us raise critical funds and awareness for St. Johns Riverkeeper (SJRK) and support our advocacy efforts on behalf of the St. Johns. Want to help and get more involved? Contact shannon@stjohnsriverkeeper.org.

In October, over 100 passengers accompanied SJRK on its 32nd and 33rd Eco-Heritage Boat Trips between Palatka and Sanford. The weather was perfect to learn about the history and ecology of the river. Our next trips are **April 11-12 and 13-14** and are filling up fast. Register online.

Thanks to the Jacksonville Zoo & Gardens for installing this educational sign about the St. Johns near the Trout River, a major tributary of the river.



Black Creek Outfitters hosted a Pint Night to benefit SJRK with special guest Mark Woods, Florida Times-Union journalist, who spoke about his recent project exploring and writing about the future of the US National Park system.



Donations from Intuition Ale Works and On the Fly Catering, plus 1% of the day's sales all went to benefit SJRK.

Recreation Equipment Inc. (REI) is opening a new store location in Jacksonville and gave a \$5,000 grant to SJRK to support our volunteer and outreach programs. The new store opens on March 1.



Oyster Roast

Nearly 600 people attended the annual Oyster Roast, helping us to raise critical funds for our effective outreach, education, and advocacy programs. We are grateful to all of our sponsors, silent auction and in-kind donors, volunteers, Host Committee, Chair Kelly Anderson, featured artist Mindy Hawkins, and everyone who attended.



For the 2012 volunteer awards, we recognized Jim Alabiso as Advocate of the Year and Alicia Smith as Volunteer of the Year at the Mayor's Environmental Awards Luncheon. Later that evening we also gave special recognition to Peter and Beth Welch for their hard work maintaining the San Marco Bioswale at the annual Holiday Mingle at our offices at Jacksonville University.

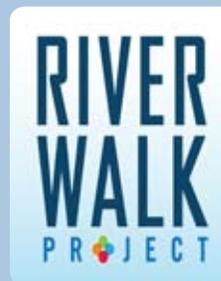


On February 16, SJRK, Florida Conservation Coalition, Friends of Wekiva River, and League of Women Voters held a "Speak Up Wekiva" rally at Wekiwa Springs State Park to raise awareness about the need to restore the impaired Wekiva River, the troubled springs that feed it, and all of Florida's treasured waterways. Over 1,200 concerned citizens attended to call for action to protect one of the St. Johns River's most important tributaries.



Thanks to a generous grant from EverBank, our Education Director, Jennie Busey, was able to provide a boat trip and educational activities for 45 kids from S.P. Livingston Elementary at the JU Marine Science

Research Institute. Most of the students who attended had never even seen the St. Johns River!



In April, we will partner with Brunet-Garcia Advertising and other nonprofits in One Spark, a 5-day event in Jacksonville where creators will showcase ideas and projects seeking community support. We are entering Riverwalk Project, a concept to create an interactive app and website to enhance the

downtown and riverwalk experience by providing relevant content related to health, environment, arts & entertainment, and history.

Calendar

- See below for fun (and free!) March River Month events.
- March 30. River-friendly Bike Tour, RAP and The Cummer, 9:30-noon, \$10 BYOB, \$40 without
- April 6. Arlington River History Boat Trip, Friendship Fountain, 10-noon
- April 11-14 Eco-Heritage Boat Trips
- April 26, Reel Paddling Film Festival, MOSH, 7pm, sponsored by Black Creek Outfitters, proceeds benefit SJRK.



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March is River Month*

*Actually, every month is!

Jacksonville Mayor Alvin Brown has issued a proclamation that March is St. Johns River Month. With the onset of spring, this is a great time of the year to implement River Friendly practices in your yard and at home and get out and explore the St. Johns.

March 2.

Community Day at The Cummer Museum of Art & Gardens will include a plant and rain barrel sale, and we will be providing information about River Friendly practices. 10am-2pm. Free

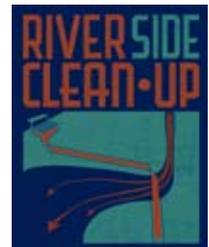


March 5.

River Friendly Landscaping and Native Plants Workshop: Bob Chabot, Director of Horticulture for the Jacksonville Zoo, and Jake Ingram, retired landscape architect. The Cummer, 6:30-8pm Free.

March 16.

St. Johns River Celebration & Riverside Cleanup: The 18th annual St. Johns River Cleanup is going to be the biggest yet! With 12 new locations in Riverside alone, Riverside Avondale Preservation (RAP) and SJRK are partnering to keep our neighborhood and river clean. 9 am -Noon Free.



March 26.

Maintaining a River Friendly Yard Workshop: Matt Eaton, North Florida Irrigation; Eric Lycke, landscape architect with Haskell, and Jimmy Orth, Executive Director of St. Johns Riverkeeper. The Cummer, 6:30-8 pm Free.



We are also partnering with Philips Garden Store, Trad's Garden Center, Earth Works Garden Center, Reflections of Nature, and Native and Uncommon Plants to help you find River Friendly products and plants.

More events and info available on our website and on Facebook.

Become a member or donate online at www.stjohnsriverkeeper.org.