



# THE KINGFISHER

A quarterly publication of the St. Johns Riverkeeper  
Volume 1, Issue 2 Spring 2003

*The mission of the St. Johns Riverkeeper is to protect, preserve and restore the ecological integrity of the St. Johns River watershed for current users and future generations through advocacy and citizen action.*

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**The Kingfisher newsletter underwritten by the M.A. Healey Foundation**

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***Kayak Amelia** partnered with the St. Johns Riverkeeper and donated kayak equipment, lessons and guided excursion to help educate the public about our watershed.*

## In Memoriam for River Advocate Fortson

Captain Thomas (Tom) Fortson, a valued advocate for the St. Johns River, passed away March 23, 2003. He will be greatly missed by the St. Johns Riverkeeper.

Capt. Fortson was born in Athens, GA and graduated from the United States Naval Academy and the Air War College. As a naval officer for 29 years, naval assignments included the command of the guided missile destroyer USS Claude V. Ricketts in 1964-1965 during the NATO mixed manning demonstration with a crew of officers and enlisted personnel of the navies of seven countries. He was also the commanding officer of the support ship USS Sacramento during the Vietnam conflict. His last tour of active duty was head of the Fleet Modernization Program for Chief Naval Operations. Medals included two Legion of Merits and two Bronze Stars.

After retiring from the US Navy, Capt. Fortson was a prominent marine surveyor, and a founding member, engineer, and chief of the Fleming Island Volunteer Fire Dept. For the last 15 years, he actively worked with state, county, and city officials as well as and the Stewards of the St. Johns to institute a plan to restore the lower St. Johns river basin.

### Riverkeeper Update

*-- By Neil Armingeon, Riverkeeper*

In my role as Riverkeeper, I've spent time on the Ortega and St. Johns Rivers, and enjoyed trips on Black, Julington, and Durbin Creeks. I've visited several other water bodies by "land" walking their banks or peering over a bridge at their individual splendor. Each has its own personality, beauty, and unfortunately, environmental problems. That's our challenge: we need to combine our love of our waterways' environmental beauty with the passion and the commitment necessary to protect them from additional harm and degradation. As the Riverkeeper, I'm ready to help you meet that challenge.

**Restoration Plan:** The St. Johns Riverkeeper (RK) was asked to be one of the 23 representatives on the River Restoration Working Group that was charged with developing a river restoration plan. The group includes elected officials, Florida Department of Environmental Protection staff, the St. Johns River Water Management District executive director, and industry representatives. RK, Stewards of the St. Johns River, and Save St. Johns River were named as citizen representatives to the restoration committee.

To involve the public in the restoration process, RK hosted several public meetings. The RK 20-year Vision document was discussed and public comment solicited to present at the planning meetings. In addition, RK membership was asked to Email the leadership of the River Restoration Working Group to: 1) include wetland protection in the list of restoration projects; 2) restore, not merely improve, the St. Johns River to swimable/fishable quality; and 3) develop goals and objectives for each restoration topic.

RK shared public input from our meetings with the Restoration Working Group at its second meeting held March 26, 2003 in Deland. There, the committee failed to reach consensus on restoration goals and whether or not wetland protection should be included in the list of restoration projects.

**60-Day Notice:** RK filed a 60-day notice of intent to sue in the Putnal Construction case for violations of the Clean Water Act and City of Jacksonville sedimentation control regulations. State and local agencies are continuing to respond to the notice. RK is evaluating additional actions.

**Sedimentation:** RK met with Kehinde Adeshile, Jacksonville's NPDES Coordinator, to discuss the city's sediment control and nonpoint pollution programs. The city has 5 NPDES inspector positions. Currently, there are only 2 inspectors monitoring all construction sites in Duval County. Full staffing is key to the success of this program.

RK is currently working with citizens on several new sediment control violations in Duval County, including sites near Fishing and Christopher Creeks. The city posted "stop work orders" for two sites on tributaries of Fishing Creek.

Violations will continue to be reported to the city, and Kehinde will keep us informed as to the status of each complaint via email.

Two additional complaints regarding projects near Julington Creek were filed with the St. Johns River Water Management District, with no results.

Maintaining the partnership between Riverkeeper and the citizens who care about their communities and waterways is the most important thing I've learned in my first few months as Riverkeeper. Please continue to monitor actions that may negatively impact our lands and waters, and notify us when if you need assistance with resource agencies. If you don't currently monitor, will you please join our efforts? That's what we're here for, but you hold the key to our success. Remember:

***your rivers, your responsibility, your Riverkeeper.***

### From the Helm

*-Roger Bass, St. Johns Riverkeeper Chair*

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The St. Johns River is many things to many people. To some of us it is a large component of our sense of place, what makes North Florida the unique and beautiful place that it is. To others it is just an abstract thing that requires us to cross bridges whenever we go anywhere. Some see the St. Johns River as a beautiful backdrop at the Landing, Metropolitan Park

or even their backyard. What does it take to change a persons perception of the river?

I think that experiencing the St. Johns River first hand is the key. I am fortunate that my occupation gets me on the river on a daily basis and it is a fact that I pass up very few opportunities to get on the river in my spare time. Not everyone has the luxury to see the river first hand in her many moods and many variations from large river, lake or marsh. That is the reason that we make a strong effort to provide opportunities for members to experience the river first hand.

Every month or so we charter a water taxi to explore a tributary. So far we have explored Durbin Creek, Julington Creek, Pottsburg Creek, Black Creek, and kayaked on Simpson Creek. Upcoming trips will include an Intercoastal trip from Sisters Creek up to Kinglsey Plantation and more kayak excursions.

Call us and make other suggestions. And don't wait too long to make reservations because the trips have been very popular. If you are up for the high intensity full experience then make reservations for the three day St. Johns River Boat Excursion from Sanford to Jacksonville May 9-11, 2003. The rumor is there will be some very unique entertainment along with an unmatched opportunity to experience the St. Johns River.

### **Have you received our Emails lately?**

**If not, we may not have your Email address. Help us save paper and postage by Emailing us at [kbreen@ju.edu](mailto:kbreen@ju.edu) with your address.**

## **RIVERKEEPER LAW CLINIC**

The Florida Coastal School of Law has agreed to form a student law clinic in partnership with the St. Johns Riverkeeper and Sierra Club. Law students led by ProBono, a student organization chaired by Mega Seitz, will be working with us to review regulatory permits, research case law and legal questions, and assist in the preparation of legal strategies and law suits.

### **River Cleanup a Success**

*BELOW: Pictured are Jacksonville Boy Scouts who helped clean up the River on Saturday, March 15. The St. Johns Riverkeeper hosted this booth at Metro Park afterward.*





ABOVE: Pictured here are St. Augustine residents who volunteered as a family to clean up the waterways. They brought their own trailer and completely filled it!!

#### GOT COMPLAINTS OR SEE VIOLATIONS?

Sewage call the Dept. of Health.....	630-3274 or 630-3251
Water quality/fish kills inside Jax call the City of Jacksonville.....	630-CITY
Water quality/fish kills outside Jax call the FL Dept. of Environmental Protection.....	807-3300
Construction call St. Johns River Water Management. District.....	730-6270
Hazardous waste spills call FDEP Bureau of Emergency Response.....	807-3245
OR The state Warning Point.....	800-320-0519
OR U.S. Coast Guard.....	232-2648

#### ARE THE MAYORAL CANDIDATES GREEN?

On March 3, 2003, the St. Johns Riverkeeper mailed the seven Mayoral Candidates for Jacksonville, Florida the following questions, as well as background material for each question in order to solicit an informed response. These are the respondents:

1) Restoration Vision Will you place a high value on restoration of the St. Johns River?

**Carlucci:** Absolutely, Yes. The St. Johns River is the core and heart of our city. So much of the image of our city, it's recreation, its health depends on the St. Johns. For a variety of different reasons, it must be tended to and tended to promptly. I believe that we are working toward doable solutions to the problems the river has. It has to be done promptly.

**Myers:** Yes

**Weinstein:** Yes, absolutely

2) How will you lead this effort for our community?

**Carlucci:** I will lead this effort as I have led in other areas, as a consensus builder who can bring diverse views to the table and move people forward for the good of the city.

**Myers:** Yes

**Weinstein:** The Mayor must use his *bully pulpit* to bring attention to the need for river restoration. Additionally, he must use his influence with local and state agencies to insist on enforcement of laws designed to improve the health of the river and, where City ordinances are concerned, the Mayor must adequately train and fund enforcement officers.

3) Will you support the St. Johns Riverkeeper vision for restoration?

**Carlucci:** I support the Riverkeeper's vision of the critical need for a healthy St. Johns River where the health of the river is measured in prolific stocks of fish, submerged plants and abundant habitat for the life that depends on the river and a community of people that are proud of the health of the St. Johns River. And, I pledge to work with the Riverkeeper as well as with other parties concerned about the river to achieve that vision.

**Myers:** Yes

**Weinstein:** I fully support the tenants of the Riverkeeper's vision for restoration and commit to continuing the emphasis and initiatives which protect watershed, tributary health and promote citizens involvement.

4) Will you continue Mayor Delaney's environmental / preservation programs?

**Carlucci:** Yes

**Myers:** Yes, and improve it

**Weinstein:** Absolutely. I will also seek to identify a permanent and recurring funding source (not a new tax however) for the Preservation Project so that the goals of the program can be exceeded beyond even Mayor Delaney's expectations.

5) Will you continue the citizen's Environmental Advisory Board?

**Carlucci:** Yes

**Myers:** Yes, I wish to expand effort

**Weinstein:** This citizens committee was formed during the administration of Mayor Austin where I was his Chief of Staff. I fully support and recognize the role of citizens groups such as the Environmental Advisory Committee who give of their time to represent an important constituency – the St. Johns River.

6) *What will you do to protect public health from waterborne bacteria?*

**Carlucci:** I have already worked hard to reduce the number of leaky septic tanks in the city. I have been a longtime and consistent advocate to extended sewage and water lines to areas of the city that rely on septic tanks. I would continue this as mayor.

**Myers:** We must be more constantly aware of our water quality

**Weinstein:** Eliminating illicit outfalls and point source pollution will greatly aid in this regard. The City of Jacksonville conducted a study to identify illicit outfalls and I would commit to moving the effort to shut illicit discharges forward. As to point source pollution, coordination between municipalities, the River Steering Committee and the regulatory agencies should be a priority. There must be the will to enforce once these sources have been identified and I commit to doing the City's part, if I am elected mayor.

7) *What will you do to cleanup the coliform bacteria in our waterways?*

**Carlucci:** I have already worked hard to reduce the number of leaky septic tanks in the city. I have been a longtime and consistent advocate to extended sewage and water lines to areas of the city that rely on septic tanks. I would continue this as mayor.

**Myers:** Track to source – litigate

**Weinstein:** As in the answer above, identification and elimination of the sources of coliform is paramount. Additional resources may be needed for mitigation of damage caused by coliform and I commit to making these resources available.

8) *Will you ensure that sewage treatment upgrades and septic tank improvements are carried through to completion?*

**Carlucci:** I will work hard to ensure that required treatment upgrades and septic tank improvements are made.

**Myers:** Yes

**Weinstein:** Yes, absolutely

9) *What will you do to stop sedimentation from entering the city's waterways?*

**Carlucci:** On construction sites around town there are numerous examples when appropriate and required measures are not taken during construction projects. That's a perfect example of where the city needs to adequately fund enforcement of those ordinance. It doesn't have to be a hostile confrontation with builders and contractors, many times it's a matter of education with contractors and better monitoring by city officials.

**Myers:** We must make it more cost effective for construction to not allow this runoff

**Weinstein:** The most important way to eliminate sedimentation from entering waterways is through effective control of building sites. Grading and land preparation in development is the primary factor in allowing sedimentation and siltation to enter the waterways. Laws and regulations are on the books sufficient to control this. Adequate enforcement is the key. Additionally, I recommend an awareness program for the building industry and the public so that consciousness can be raised about the challenges this creates to the health of our waterways.

10) *Will you oppose the destruction of 200 acres of wetlands at the headwaters of Julington and Pottsburg Creeks?*

**Carlucci:** I have worked closely with the parties on both sides of the effort to develop the Freedom Commerce Center. I have and will continue to do everything I can to reduce the damage the project causes to the environment and minimize its impact on these critical tributaries.

**Myers:** Yes, I must know the story behind this question

**Weinstein:** The Freedom Commerce Center development proposal is troubling and I oppose this development and others like it.

11) *Do you support the use of the river as a drinking water source?*

**Carlucci:** I am very concerned about the movement at the state level to allow massive amount of the St. Johns river to be drawn in Central Florida for drinking water. I am familiar with the effects of such usage on rivers like the Colorado River that essentially no longer reaches the ocean because of over usage in places further upstream. As the mayor of a North Florida city highly dependent on this river, I would be very diligent in monitoring and, if necessary, fighting such efforts.

**Myers:** As long as we will always be in the lower basin we will receive from middle and upper. I prefer desalination such as Tampa has just constructed.

**Weinstein:** This question was unimaginable several years ago, but with the Floridan aquifer challenged and consumption at an all time high rate, there may come a time when we will look to the river as a drinking water source. This is a matter that requires vastly more study and public debate.

12) Will you work to ensure that drawing water from the river does not reduce the river's flow and degrade the river's ecological health?

**Carlucci:** As, I wrote above, I am very concerned about the movement at the state level to allow massive amount of the St. Johns River to be drawn in Central Florida for drinking water. I am familiar with the effects of such usage on rivers like the Colorado River that essentially no longer reaches the ocean because of over usage in places further upstream. As the mayor of a North Florida city highly dependent on this river, I would be very diligent in monitoring and, if necessary, fighting such efforts.

**Myers:** With your help, every way possible

**Weinstein:** Again, I view drawing water from the river as a last resort, and only after careful and thoughtful study. In the event that it is determined that this is necessary, I would work to make certain that drawing out of water impacted the overall health of the river as little as possible.

### What Riverkeeper Volunteers Do

- (and you can too!) -

- ✓ Norma Guthrie transferred our membership database to ACCESS and collected enough money to do an "update" mailing
- ✓ Dave & Shirley Bailey volunteer on the RK boat patrol; plus they distributed RK brochures with a letter to all of their neighbors urging them to become RK members and prevent pollution with good landscaping practices
- ✓ John Burns hosted a wonderful Cajun party for his friends and RK members, proceeds benefiting RK
- ✓ Regan Bartley reviewed the entire RK membership to identify and organize those wanting to volunteer
- ✓ Kay and Bob Evans assist by leading the volunteer RK boat patrol
- ✓ Beverly Fleming handles press releases
- ✓ Jacksonville University students Paige Perkins and Kimberly Cummings volunteer in the office and receive community service credit
- ✓ Bob Griffin leads the membership effort
- ✓ RK board members put forth hundreds of hours each year helping staff with planning, accounting, marketing and donations

### Illicit Connections

*"Where observation is concerned, chance favors only the prepared mind." -- Louis Pasteur*

Kehinde Adeshile, NPDES Coordinator for the City Of Jacksonville (COJ), is asking you to please help them locate and report Potential Illicit Connections (PICs).

NPDES inspectors might not observe turbid discharges, or drain pipes, during their routine inspections to construction sites. However, in many places in the City, "connections" to the storm drain inlet, ditches, or waterways are commonplace. For example, some people have connected a swimming pool discharge pipe to the storm drain-inlet or a creek or river. This is an example of an "illicit connection".

It is unlawful to run any "waste" water, like a swimming pool discharge or a washing machine discharge, to the waterways. **Only rain water/non-contaminated water should be traveling through the storm drains and waterways.**

You can help Jacksonville eradicate illicit connections by reporting them to (630-3611) or to the City's Care Center at (630-CITY). The COJ will investigate and will report their findings to you.

### Riverkeeper Calendar

**Saturday, April 19, 2003 - 10 am to 5 pm**

**Earth Day 2003 Ecology Fair**

Visit the Riverkeeper's booth at Jacksonville Landing, downtown on the west side of the St. Johns River. Other exhibits include earth-friendly products and services, clean-up efforts and energy conservation.

**April 21, 2003 – 6 pm**

Riverkeeper Board Meeting - 2003

**May 6, 2003 – 6:30 pm**

**Riverkeeper Information Meeting**

Carol Pitman - Update on the Waterways Commission

**May 9, 10, 11 2003**

**St. Johns River Boat Excursion**

Join us for a River boat excursion down the St. Johns River, from Sanford to Jacksonville for either a three day trip (F/S/Sun) or a trip on the last day only (Sunday, May 11.)

**May 10 - 26, 2003**

**American Heritage River Festival**

*for information, click [www.epa.gov/rivers/](http://www.epa.gov/rivers/)*

**May 19, 2003 – 6 pm**

Riverkeeper Board Meeting - 2003

**June 3, 2003 - 6:30 pm**

**Riverkeeper Information Meeting**

Scott Schultz - Buckman Plant - Wastewater treatment

**June 16, 2003 – 6 pm**

Riverkeeper Board Meeting - 2003

**July 21, 2003**

Riverkeeper Board Meeting - 2003

**August 5, 2003**

David B. Elliott - Certified Hydrographic Surveyor - NOAA – Updating nautical charts for the St. Johns River

**August 18, 2003**

Riverkeeper Board Meeting - 2003

**September 15, 2003**

Riverkeeper Board Meeting - 2003

**November 17, 2003**

Riverkeeper Board Meeting - 2003

**\*\* Riverkeeper Board Meetings - 2003**

These meetings are at 6:00 pm for Riverkeeper board and steering committee members and will be held at the NE Florida Regional Planning Council Building, 6850 Belfort Oaks Place, Jacksonville, FL (Former Acosta Building)

**\*\*Riverkeeper Information Meetings**

From February through June, meetings are held at:

Blue Cypress Community Center, 4012 University Blvd. N, just over 1 mile North of Jacksonville University.

From July through January, meetings will be held on the Southside – location to be announced.

THE PUBLIC IS WELCOME FREE OF CHARGE

**St. Johns Riverkeeper**

2800 University Blvd.

Jacksonville, FL 32211 904-256-7591

<http://www.stjohnsriverkeeper.org/>

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Roger Bass, *Chair*

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Ben Williams

**Staff**

Neil Armingeon, *St. Johns Riverkeeper*

Katey Breen, *Administrative Director*

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The St. Johns Riverkeeper is a 501©(3) nonprofit membership organization dedicated to maintaining an on the water presence to investigate pollution, respond to citizen complaints and be an advocate for the St. Johns River.

The *Kingfisher* is a quarterly publication of the St. Johns Riverkeeper and is printed on recycled paper.

**VOLUNTEER WITH US!**

St. Johns Riverkeeper needs **YOU**. Won't you please clip, complete and return the form below? If you have contacted us before with an interest in volunteering, we thank you and ask that you confirm your interest by completing the form below.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Day Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Circle preference: Mail me    Email me    Phone me

1) I am able to volunteer:

\_\_\_\_ weekdays    \_\_\_\_ evenings    \_\_\_\_ weekends.

2) Please indicate number of hours you are willing to donate per

\_\_\_\_ week    \_\_\_\_ month    OR    \_\_\_\_ by project

3) I am interested in:    \_\_ boat patrols    \_\_ site monitoring

\_\_ river cleanup    \_\_ assisting with events    \_\_ office work

4) I am interested in attending monthly meetings with invited speakers.    \_\_\_\_ YES

5) My special skills are: \_\_\_\_\_

*Volunteers are encouraged to attend one or more of the monthly meetings. Some volunteer positions will require training, which St. Johns Riverkeeper will provide.*

**YOUR THOUGHTS**

What presenters or information would you like at the Riverkeeper's monthly meetings?

\_\_\_\_\_

What type of Riverkeeper events and celebrations would you like?

\_\_\_\_\_

What type of volunteer opportunities would you like?

\_\_\_\_\_

Tell us your favorite memory of the St. Johns River which will let us know why you appreciate the work that we do.

\_\_\_\_\_

**Interested in St. Johns Riverkeeper merchandise?**

T- Shirts: (indicate quantity) S \_\_\_\_ M \_\_\_\_ L \_\_\_\_ XL \_\_\_\_ XXL \_\_\_\_ @ \$10.00 each = \_\_\_\_\_

Hats..... @ \$10.00 each = \_\_\_\_\_

Screen Saver..... @ \$15.00 each = \_\_\_\_\_

Book: *The Riverkeepers*..... @ \$20.00 each = \_\_\_\_\_

Videos..... @ \$20.00 each = \_\_\_\_\_

TOTAL:

\$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please send the above completed form to (please make any checks payable to the St. Johns Riverkeeper)

*St. Johns Riverkeeper*: 2800 University Blvd, Jacksonville, FL 32211

2002-03 St. Johns Riverkeeper Contributors

*Please let us know if we have made an error in your name*

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Please update your Email address with us.  
 It is the most cost effective way we have of contacting you with River issues and events.

## **St. Johns River Boat Excursion May 9, 10, 11 2003**

### *For a once-in-a-lifetime experience down the St. Johns River*

Join the **St. Johns Riverkeeper** on a boat trip from Sanford to Jacksonville May 9, 10, 11 2003. All those interested in an opportunity to experience the beautiful St. Johns River, learn its history and hear from flora and fauna experts are welcome!

- √ Bill Belleville, author of *River of Lakes*, will share the history of our beautiful St. Johns River – this is an exceptional opportunity
- √ Hear noted authority Bill Dreggors talk about steamboats
- √ Wayne Sims will delight you with his impersonation of famed William Bartrum
- √ Dave Jones from the Department of Health will take water samples along the way to illustrate how River conditions change
- √ Park attendant Shorty Robbins will do a segment as the wife of the Captain of the Mapleleaf Ship which sunk off Mandarin Point, in addition to telling us about public lands along the river
- √ And Riverkeeper Neil Armingeon will point out the causes of water pollution

Reservations are limited to 50 passengers and children under the age of 18 years must be accompanied by a guardian. You can enjoy all three days by traveling the St. Johns River with us on Friday, Saturday and Sunday May 9, 10, 11. You can travel only one day on May 11 for the last “leg” of the trip or travel the entire length of the trip in one day from Jacksonville to Sanford on May 8.

***Priority will be given to full three-day reservations. Payment reserves your trip.***

Your trip begins the first day in Sanford, the beginning of navigable waters of the St. Johns River. The second day, boat travelers will embark at Astor and on the third day travel from Palatka to Jacksonville.

The excursion boat is a USCG inspected water taxi with comfortable seating, tables, excellent River viewing, and expanded toilet facilities. This secure boat will travel at approximately 15 mph, unless restricted by speed zones, to offer maximum viewing opportunities.

Each day you will enjoy a glorious morning and afternoon excursion with delicious lunch. For each day of the three-day excursion, the trip will end in time for dinner and overnight arrangements. Lunch, daily entertainment and boat travel are included as part of your trip reservation. Although each traveler is encouraged to make their own arrangements for overnight accommodations and dinner ashore, St. Johns Riverkeeper will provide a list of suggestions.

The three-day excursion, including lunch and entertainment, is \$225.00/pp, one day is \$85.00/pp.

**Please complete the following and send check made payable to:  
 St. Johns Riverkeeper, ATTN: Katey, 2800 University Blvd., N, Jacksonville, FL 32211**

Or email this information to [kbreen@ju.edu](mailto:kbreen@ju.edu)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Day phone \_\_\_\_\_

**ALL ABOARD!!**

**St. Johns River Boat Excursion generously underwritten by CSX Corporation**