



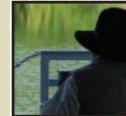
► *Neil Armingeon provides an update on St. Johns River issues.*

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► *The 2006 River Advocate Award is presented to Barbara Ketchum.*

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► *Come aboard and explore the magnificent St. Johns River.*

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○ VOLUME 3 | ○ SUMMER | ○ 2006

THE Kingfisher

Keeping watch over your river



RIVERKEEPER UPDATE

Wow, what a spring! Things have really been hopping around the Riverkeeper office. As I mentioned in the last newsletter, 2006 could be the “year of the river”. Well, its official; the St. Johns River is now one of the most discussed topics in northeast Florida. It seems multiple efforts are lining up to focus the community’s energy and resolve on restoring our river. St Johns Riverkeeper has led the charge to take back our river, and as you’ll read below, our efforts are paying off.

Funding for the River

Senator Jim King, Representative Mark Mahon, and Mayor John Peyton worked the halls of the state Capitol during the recent session, and their hard work was successful. The St. Johns River received a \$10 million appropriation to begin a ten-year effort to restore the health of the river. These funds were matched by a \$10 million grant from the St. Johns River Water Management District for other river related projects. The District has also committed to a ten-year funding cycle. The majority of these funds will be used to

upgrade wastewater treatment plants and to encourage increased reuse of wastewater. I encourage you to thank Senator King, State Representative Mahon and Mayor Peyton for their efforts. We also want to thank David Graham, chairman of the St. Johns River Water Management District Governing Board, for his effort to secure District funding for the river’s restoration.

On July 27, Mayor John Peyton plans to unveil his River Initiative. Recently, Mayor Peyton said that the river “will be his primary initiative” if he is re-elected for a second term. We have not been involved in the development of the Mayor’s plan, but we have been briefed by his staff about the problems that it will address.

DO Water Quality Standards/TMDL

Ironically, the release of the good news concerning river restoration was accompanied by the disappointing news the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) lowered minimum water quality standards for dissolved oxygen, or DO, in the marine section of the river.

Adequate DO is important for the health of fisheries and other aquatic life.

The DEP is trying to overturn the January 2006 Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) nutrient pollution reduction plan, or TMDL, for the lower St. Johns River that requires a reduction of nutrients that are discharged into the river, or “loading”, by 40 to 60 percent.

The EPA plan would substantially reduce nutrient loading, and more importantly, would meet current water quality standards for a healthy St. Johns River. Unfortunately, the DEP, with support of major polluters, is working to overthrow EPA’s pollution reduction plan and implement a less protective plan that would allow more pollution to enter the river. In other words, polluters would be able to discharge higher amounts of nutrients into the river if the minimum DO standards are lowered.

The Environmental Regulation Commission met in Jacksonville and voted 6 – 0 to lower DO levels, thus allowing more pollution to enter the river.

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Why is the St. Johns River important to you?

○ | SUSAN TEDESCHI

Because it is a beautiful example of nature with all the life and types of creatures and plants that it is home to.

○ | MR. AND MRS. CHARLES T. THOMPSON

It's our elemental, primordial treasure and so beautiful. When we owned a sailboat, we called the wide area north of the Buckman Bridge our St. Johns Lake. It sufficed for a full day's sailing enjoyment. Thanks for getting it cleaned up!

○ | KAREN COGBURN

Growing up in Ortega was sheer paradise with the St. Johns River all around. Numerous hours we spent sunbathing on the trunks of the fallen oak trees at Ortega Beach – listening to the water lapping below.

○ | ELAINE HALE

I grew up in Central Florida and have fond memories of canoe trips with my dad on the St. Johns.

○ | E. ROGERS INGRAM

It is a gift from God.

RIVERKEEPER UPDATE, CONTINUED

Riverkeeper, and our partner, Clean Water Network of Florida, are continuing our fight to keep the more stringent DO standards in the lower St. Johns River. For the latest on this issue, check our website: stjohnsriverkeeper.org.

Freedom Commerce

On May 1, the Army Corps of Engineers issued the Goodman Company a federal wetland permit to fill 36 acres of wetlands for the proposed Freedom Commerce Centre. While this is a substantial decrease from the 265 acres originally proposed for destruction, it remains a significant loss of wetlands. In addition, an 80-acre tract of high-quality wetlands on the southern end of the property has been left unprotected, leaving open the possibility that it could be proposed for development at a future date. We have made progress with the FCC project, but we are not ready to fold up our tents and go away.

In late April, Riverkeeper and Sierra Club filed an appeal of the Water Management District's approval of the state wetlands permit which would allow Goodman Company to fill over 130 acres of wetlands. We expect a ruling on our appeal this summer.

In addition, RK and Sierra Club met with Mike Saylor, Jacksonville's new planning director, to discuss the local permitting issues associated with the FCC project. In our opinion, the local

approvals of the FCC project are no longer valid due to substantial changes to the project.

FCC has been one of RK's major issues, and we will continue to follow it. We believe the FCC tract should be protected as a preserve, and we will continue to work toward that end. We really appreciate your continuing interest and support concerning the FCC project.

Get out there!

Now that summer is here, find some time to get out and enjoy our beautiful river and its tributaries. These waterbodies are really the heart and soul of our communities. We are blessed to have been given these treasures, and we all need to do everything we can do to protect and restore them for those that follow us. Thanks for all your support; I really appreciate it.

Did you know?

St. Johns Riverkeeper is a membership-based organization. We do not receive government funding but must rely on your support. If you are not currently a member, please join the Riverkeeper team today.

Thanks!

Edith and Torben Andersen, Susan Caven, Beverly Chapman, Brenda Csencsits, Bruce Darnall, Victoria Freeman, Barbara Ketchum, Mike Kogan and jaxkayakfishing.com, Jim Mitchell, Ralph Mitchell, Frances Reilly, Jean Schubert, Jeanne Shaw, Susan Smathers, St. John and Partners, Lane Welch, Ben Williams, Andy Wojcicki, The Cummer Museum

RK Online

Visit our website for valuable information about the river, places to go kayaking or boating, the issues impacting the river's health, upcoming Riverkeeper events, river friendly yards, and more. www.stjohnsriverkeeper.org

THE GREEN RIVER BLUES ON

On Thursday, July 27 at 8 p.m., WJCT public television and radio will dedicate an evening to the St. Johns River. Tune in to see and hear Riverkeeper Neil Armingeon who will be a panelist on the live broadcast of the First Coast Forum. Then, watch Riverkeeper's *The Green Monster* and Wes Skiles' *The River Returns* that will immediately follow the Forum.

Approaching the one year anniversary of the horrendous algae bloom in the river, "First Coast Forum: Green River Blues" will explore the many impacts each of us has on the St Johns, the importance of continued improvement of its quality, the many challenges ahead, programs and efforts underway, and the economic and quality of life issues supported by the river. The Forum panel will include Mayor John Peyton, Senator Jim King, Dr. Quinton White, and Riverkeeper Neil Armingeon, among others.



In case you miss it, The First Coast Forum: Green River Blues and The Green Monster will be rebroadcast on WJCT public television on Sunday, July 30th at 2pm.

2006 RIVER ADVOCATE AWARD

Every year, St. Johns Riverkeeper presents its River Advocate Award to a volunteer who has demonstrated outstanding service and commitment toward the resolution of an issue or problem that is impacting the health of the St. Johns River and its tributaries. The 2006 River Advocate Award was presented to Barbara Ketchum.



Distressed by the massive algae bloom of last summer, Barbara resolved to do something about it. She understood the harmful effect of nutrient pollution and how lawns and yards contributed to this serious problem. Barbara decided to team up with Riverkeeper to create the public awareness campaign, River Friendly Yards, to educate the public about simple and inexpensive "river friendly" lawn maintenance solutions. Thanks in large part to her hard work and

dedication, Riverkeeper was able to develop River Friendly Yards brochures, a website, and even a television program, The Green Monster.

Barbara also recently received an award from The Florida Lake Management Society in recognition of her work "promoting the protection of Florida's aquatic resources."

WAYS TO HELP

There are plenty of opportunities to help out. Come join us.

VOLUNTEER

Volunteer at an upcoming event. Call 256-7591 for more information.

- Greater Jacksonville Kingfish Tournament, July 17 – 22

GIVE A GIFT

Give someone a gift membership, a Riverkeeper t-shirt or hat, or passage on our three-day Eco-Heritage boat trips.

JOIN THE BOAT PATROL

Help Riverkeeper patrol the river and its tributaries. Contact Bill Kirill for more information at 707-1511.

INVITE RK TO SPEAK

Invite Neil to speak to your civic group or homeowners association.

JOIN, TODAY!

If you are not a member, return the enclosed envelope with your check or credit card number.

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.

ECO-HERITAGE CRUISE DATES ANNOUNCED

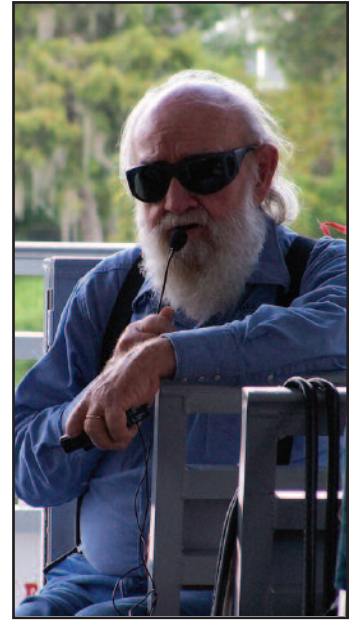
Come aboard for an experience of a lifetime! Each day of the trip, passengers enjoy spectacular scenery, delicious lunches, fascinating speakers and historical reenactors. We will stop along the way to visit interesting and beautiful places, such as Trout Creek, Mount Royal, and Silver Glen Springs. Experience the true beauty and essence of the St. Johns River. Learn about its history, flora and fauna from naturalists, authors, historians, storytellers, and a third generation native Floridian!



Jacksonville to Sanford
October 17 - 19

Sanford to Jacksonville
October 20 - 22

For more information or to make reservations, call 904-256-7591. Check out photos of past trips on the Calendar page of our website.



CONTACT US ANYTIME

phone 904-256-7591

fax 904-256-7573

RK CALENDAR OF EVENTS

○ | This newsletter was made possible by a generous donation from an anonymous donor.



○ | **Three-day Eco-Heritage Boat Trips, October 17-19, and October 20-22. For reservations call 904-256-7591**

○ | **Riverkeeper TV Show. Every Friday at 5:30 p.m. on Comcast Cable Ch. 29.**

○ | **5th Annual St. Johns Riverkeeper Oyster Roast, November 17.**

Mark your calendars. You won't want to miss out on one of the best social events of the year!


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