



THE KINGFISHER

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.

The Kingfisher newsletter underwritten by the Healey Foundation

Riverkeeper Update

-- by Mike Hollingsworth, Riverkeeper

Sedimentation Investigations

- The Riverkeeper office has monitored a total of 33 construction areas for compliance with erosion control and sedimentation laws-primarily in Duval Co.
- Of the 33 areas, 19 remain under surveillance for not yet achieving acceptable compliance with standards.
- 14 new cases have come to the attention of the Riverkeeper in two months.
- 17 have made efforts to achieve compliance, but technology not yet available in NE Florida is required.
- Two projects are owned by the same developer and are located on the Northside of Jacksonville and legal action against those two projects is being considered.
- New sedimentation cases include:
 - Caney Branch -sedimentation from a private cement crushing operation and/or residential land clearing; no erosion control structures.
 - Terrapin Creek-sedimentation from a steel fabrication plant expansion; pond overflow.
 - Hogan Creek -City of Jacksonville Arena project inadequate erosion control structures.
 - Dunn Creek -four subdivisions under construction; inadequate erosion control structures and dewatering (pumping) of turbid water from ponds into creek.
 - Pickett Branch-JIA south access road construction; inadequate structures and dewatering activity.
 - Fishing Creek -Subdivision construction; inadequate structures and dewatering activity.
 - Ortega River near Argyle Forest Blvd. -- Construction of public storage units; inadequate structures.
 - Christopher Creek -Stormwater pond construction. Inadequate structures; dike failure after 2" rain. City is taking enforcement actions against contractor.
 - St. Johns River at Margaret St. -Citizen complaint to City of Jax of turbid discharge from stormwater outfall. Source yet not determined.
 - Trout River-Subdivision construction; numerous failure areas and sediment trails going into silted-in wetland.
- DEP, City of Jacksonville, and erosion control product distributor R. H. Moore and Associates (Tampa) are sponsoring a "Stormwater, Erosion, and Sedimentation Control" workshop on January 30th and 31st at City Hall. The St. Johns Riverkeeper will be a featured speaker.

Bacteria in the tributaries

- 21 fecal coliform violations out of 100 sites in the 3rd Quarter (July through Sept.) of 2002. This is up from 3 violations in the 2nd quarter; rainfall increased during that time frame.
- 4th Quarter results should be out in time for the bacteria session of the River Summit.
- The City of Jacksonville is producing an updated Map for the Summit of tributary sample sites and septic tank failure areas. The previous map was from the years 1993-1999.
- Duval Co. Bacteria Source Tracking/Epidemiological Survey is to start January 25th.

TMDL

- River nutrient TMDL computer model scenarios almost ready to run. These will determine how much pollution reduction is required to meet water quality goals for water clarity, dissolved oxygen, and chlorophyll a (algae).
- After a series of adjustments that were suggested during the SJR Technical Symposium in October, the St. Johns River Water Quality Model now shows a good correlation between predicted results and actual water quality

measurements during 1997 and 1998.

- Nutrient allocation scenarios will be demonstrated at the TMDL Stakeholders meeting on Jan. 28th.
- Scenarios and stakeholder comments will be presented to the TMDL Executive Committee on Jan. 30th.
- The final TMDL 303(d) impaired waters list (all pollutants) for the St. Johns River Basin due Oct. 1st, 2003.

From the Helm

-Roger Bass, St. Johns Riverkeeper Chair

The St. Johns River Summit 2003 was held on January 13 - 14, 2003 at the Prime Osborne Convention Center in Jacksonville. For those who made a special effort to attend, you added your voice for the river. The River Summit was a great opportunity for the St. Johns River and we will wait to see published Summit results to make sure certain concerns will be addressed.

One concern is the proposed Freedom Commerce Center development, 200 acres of wooded wetland and streams with a relatively unaltered ecosystem of healthy plant and animal habitat. It has not received all of the needed permits yet but Jacksonville's City Council has given its "okay" which may provide the green light for regulatory agencies to also give their approval. It is totally surrounded by a large regional shopping mall, Interstate 95, a theater complex, office parks and heavy residential development. Julington Creek and Pottsburg Creek begin in these same wetlands and flow in different directions, increasing in size before eventually joining the St. Johns River.

Approximately 170 acres would be destroyed in the Freedom Commerce development and ruin the majority of the ecosystem. Although the St. Johns River needs clean water, hand in hand with water quality is habitat. A river that has no functioning wetlands will be like a glass of clean, bottled water. Clean but lifeless, and you can't catch fish in either of them.

To that end, it is hoped that the River Summit will not only address clean water but habitat. A healthy river needs wetlands and a natural buffer along its edges. Much of the life in a river reproduces and grows to adulthood in the shallow wetlands along the shoreline. If we want our grandchildren to be able catch and eat fish from the St. Johns River then we need to make some changes now to restore and maintain habitat. Consider this:

- * Wetland buffers for construction and development should be increased from the normal current requirement of 25 feet to a minimum of 75 feet. The natural vegetation along the shore and surrounding wetlands decrease storm water runoff and sedimentation, and provide protection and food for animal life. Trees in this buffer provide cover for shallow areas, preventing over heating. The increased buffer will greatly lessen the damage that occurs during construction, as in the case of failing protection devices (silt fences, hay bales, etc.) that regularly fail during large rain events.
- * Restrictions on the loss of wetlands and the cost of mitigation should be increased. At present, permitting authorities allow wetlands to be filled in, as long as other wetlands are protected or created with a ratio of three protected acres per wetland acre destroyed. Sometimes high quality productive wetlands are replaced with distant, marginal wetlands.
- * Water Management District and at FDEP enforcement staff should be increased along with the number of on site visits. Presently the small, hard working enforcement employees can barely keep up, driving by a proposed site one time in the permitting stage and then another quick drive by during construction. Once construction runoff and sedimentation suffocate a wetland, the damage is done. A productive wetland is then converted to a barren area that is a wetland in name only.
- * Levels of fines for violations of existing laws and rules should be increased. The construction industry should be educated and then it should be more painful for those who ignore the law.
- * Alternatives to vertical sea walls at the water's edge should be rigorously pursued. There are legitimate needs to protect the shoreline from washing in to the river from boat traffic and natural causes. However, less drastic ways of protecting the shoreline need to be brought to the attention of homeowners, developers and installers of sea walls. This will lessen damage to underwater grass beds and emergent vegetation that provide habitat for reproduction, birds, etc.

Randolph Academy Students Celebrate Clean Water Act

In October, 75 Duval County ninth-grade students from the Health Academy at A. Philip Randolph High School tested samples of water collected from the Trout River to help evaluate conditions in local watersheds. The tests, part of the National Clean Water Act's 30th Anniversary activities, enabled students to monitor levels of dissolved oxygen, pH, turbidity/clarity and temperature in the collected samples. This effort was made possible through funding by JEA, Building

Community.

Riverkeeper Mike Hollingsworth begins water sampling instruction with Randolph Health Academy students.



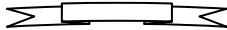
The results are posted on the National Water Monitoring Day web site (www.acwf.org) along with other data from across the nation.

The Health Academy students received a water test kit and instructions from the St. Johns Riverkeeper. The hands-on experience also helped students understand the link between water quality and public health, providing students much more than a classroom learning exercise alone.

“Students learned that we must care for natural resources that benefit us locally,” said Mike Hollingsworth, St. Johns Riverkeeper. “What each of us does on a daily basis affects water quality. The impacts of pollution upstream in a river can adversely affect people hundreds of miles downstream. Through activities such as these, students can become part of a solution by joining a national monitoring partnership of citizens and local, state and federal government agencies.”

Randolph is part of the Duval County School System’s Career Academy initiative. In partnership with the Jacksonville Regional Chamber of Commerce, the goal of the Career Academies is to produce skilled, motivated graduates for high-demand career fields such as technology, health care, finance, aviation, and manufacturing.

*The United Nations has declared 2003
the Year of Fresh Water*



Oyster Roast A Success

If you joined us in November to hear featured speaker Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., you enjoyed his warmth, wisdom, wit and charisma. Speaking in downtown Jacksonville, Mr. Kennedy drew an audience in excess of 100 people who wanted to hear what he had to say at a public rally, despite a rainy and cold day. The following day, Susan and Bruce Smathers hosted an Oyster Roast at their beautiful home on the St. Johns River, where another 100 guests were inspired by Mr. Kennedy. Those guests who were not Riverkeeper members quickly signed up to become a member; event proceeds fund Riverkeeper programs.

Mr. Kennedy compared the St. Johns River with the Hudson River in his home state of New York and recounted the Hudson Riverkeeper history, which was started in the mid-1980’s by Hudson River fisherman. These local fishermen were losing their family fishing grounds to industrial and domestic waste polluters. By organizing citizen patrols, collecting evidence, and filing lawsuits, the efforts of the Hudson Riverkeeper have now brought vast stretches of the Hudson River back to life. Today the Hudson Riverkeeper relies upon a network of citizens including fishermen, scientists, boaters, and legal experts to help stop polluters of the public waterways – as does the St. Johns Riverkeeper.

Origins of the Riverkeeper go back to England in the middle ages. The roots of the Public Trust Doctrine can be found in the Magna Carta. This gives the citizens--not the noblemen, not the government, and not the Church--the ownership of the waterways. Villages would hire a private citizen to look after the trout streams. This way, no one could abuse the waterway that was owned, utilized, and enjoyed by all of the people in the villages.

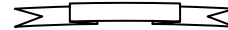
Waterkeeper groups are spreading steadily throughout the country and now operate in over 90 waterways in the U.S., Mexico, and Canada under the Waterkeeper Alliance.



Robert F. Kennedy, Jr.

Here in our community, the main issues addressed by the St. Johns Riverkeeper currently include the removal of harmful bacteria from urban tributaries, the setting up of procedures to reduce pollution entering into the River basin, and engaging citizen involvement with government agencies to ensure that existing environmental laws are followed.

The St. Johns Riverkeeper thanks Mr. Kennedy for sharing his valuable time, our host and hostess Bruce and Susan Smathers, the public relations assistance provided by Robin Shepherd Group and our host committee: Mayor John Delaney, Bruce and Susan Smathers, Sheriff Nat Glover, Honorable Louis H. Ritter, Carol W. Pitman, Nancy R. Seely, Elizabeth Saugustus, Robin Shepherd, James F. Bailey, Eric Smith, Laurie Casaday, and Susan Towler.



Riverkeeper Boat Ride

St. Johns Riverkeeper and the public enjoyed an exploration by boat of Julington Creek, Durbin Creek, and Pottsburg Creek during the past quarter. Riverkeeper Mike Hollingsworth, St. Johns County Park Naturalist Beverly Fleming, and Historian Sarah Bailey provided amazing information on these beautiful tributaries to the St. Johns River. The weather was perfect (the chill was invigorating?) and the sunsets unbelievable. But the best is yet to come.

Join us for a Valentine's boat ride on February 15 and on Friday, Saturday and Sunday May 9, 10, 11, the Riverkeeper will host a tour from Sanford to Jacksonville, complete with delicious lunch, interpreters, and educational



From the bow of the tour boat, Riverkeeper guests were able to witness the unique part of Julington Creek, undeveloped and beautiful!

entertainers! If you only have one day, you can choose from the last day of the trip which ends in Jacksonville, or go from Jacksonville to Sanford in one day on Thursday, May 8. Contact Katey for your reservations: 256-7591 or kbreen@ju.edu.

GOT COMPLAINTS OR SEE VIOLATIONS?

	Sewage call the Dept. of Health:	630-3274
	or 630-3251	
CITY	Water quality inside Jax, call the City of Jacksonville:	630-
	Water quality outside Jax, call the FL Dept. of Environmental Protection	807-3300
	Construction, call St. Johns River Water Mngmt. District	730-6270
	And if the job doesn't get done, call the St. Johns Riverkeeper	256-7591

From St. Augustine to Bermuda: A New Look at the Triangle

by Leslie Pierpont of Native & Uncommon Plants, a NE Florida Native Plant Nursery

Grass is a four-letter word and a major environmental problem. It's close to impossible to grow grass in NE Florida without using a tremendous amount of water and pesticides. It costs money in labor for lawncrews, uses gasoline, pollutes the air (the engines are not under the Clean Air Act regulations), and provides no food or cover for birds or butterflies. It does attract bugs like chinch bugs and sod web worms. The CO2 emissions from running a gas powered lawnmower for 1 hour equals a 350 mile car trip (not in an SUV or pickup). The pesticides and fertilizers used on our lawns pollute our waterways and are absorbed by pets & children through the skin of their feet. There is a reason a sign is put on your lawn after chemical applications.

If your yard needs to have some grass for children to play, then here are some tips:

“Lawns Have a Drinking Problem”

- 1) Water only in the morning before 10 am on the days your side of the street is allowed – it's the law! Water only ½” worth each time. Check by putting out a tuna fish can & timing it. Water only once or twice a week in the hottest months and once every 2 weeks (if needed at all) when the grass is dormant approximately Nov. to Feb. It's not supposed to be bright green in the winter. Use a rain sensor on your watering system. Put out a rain gauge to measure rainfall received. When it rains, mark your calendar with date & amount.
- 2) Let the grass grow longer before cutting it. If you have a lawncrew, they need to be told to raise the mower blades and not cut the grass as low. 3 ½” to 4” high is ideal – get out a yardstick and show them. Be an active & informed consumer. Insist their blades are sharp – torn grass blades invite disease. If you're doing the mowing, it will be less work for you, because of fewer mowings. Leave the grass clippings on the lawn, because they provide free nutrients. Overfertilization and soil compaction causes thatch. Grass clippings contain about 4% nitrogen, .5% phosphorus and 2% potassium. Clippings decompose quickly, thanks to earthworms and soil microorganisms. The lack of earthworms is due to the harsh fertilizers & pesticides used on lawns.
- 3) Fertilizing should be done in the spring only with a slow release organic fertilizer containing trace minerals. Most fertilizers are manufactured from petroleum-based chemicals. Artificial iron and magnesium are often added, because they are known essential trace elements, but other important elements are left out. Artificial fertilizers contain acid salts, which burn the grass and destroy the balance of soil microorganisms in the soil. The nitrogen is a quick-release form to quickly green-up the grass. With rain or watering, this quick release fertilizer runs off into our sewers, streams, ponds and rivers causing eutrophication of our waters.
- 4) Weeds are a plant growing somewhere you don't want it. If you're not sure if a plant is a weed, pull it up, if it comes back – it's a weed. Hand-picking is the most enviro-friendly, but also most labor intensive. Certain weeds like dollar weed & crabgrass may not be tolerable. If you must use chemicals, read & follow the labels, wear protective gloves, mask & eyeglasses, and use discriminately on the target areas rather than blanketing all your grass.
- 5) Bugs like chinch bugs & grubs can destroy your lawn. Soaking an area with a soap solution is an organic method for chinch bugs. Milky spore can be applied for grubs. The least toxic chemicals should be used and only after positively identifying the pest.
- 6) Reduce your lawn size by planting ground covers or creating islands in the lawn with trees, shrubs & perennials. Don't try to do the conversion all at once. It's easier on your back and budget to tackle a section like 10 feet by 10 feet. Lay down a heavy newspaper right over the grass to be eliminated, and then top with pine bark mulch (small size not nuggets). In a couple of months the newspaper will disintegrate and you can plant right into the mulch. Research which native plants to use – books recommended below. Learn from your mistakes & successes and then

tackle another section. The big box stores and most nurseries have no clue what's a native plant to NE Florida.

American homeowners have created a landscape around their homes that can't survive without them. Watering required 2-3 times a week all summer; mowing 1-2 times a week; periodic pruning & weeding; ongoing applications of herbicides, pesticides, and artificial fertilizers. Humorist Dave Barry noted "The average American homeowner would rather live next to a pervert, heroin-addict, communist pornographer than someone with an unkempt lawn". The New American Lawn's 6 steps provide the homeowner a way to move toward a more environmental way of managing their property. These will provide long-term benefits for a family, society and the environment. The homeowner can help change the course of our history with lawns as landscape fragmentation, loss of biodiversity, and water pollution and depletion become major biospheric issues.

Books: Native Florida Plants by Robert Haehle & Joan Brookwell, Florida Wildflowers in their Natural Communities by Walter Kingsley Taylor, A Gardener's Guide of Florida's Native Plants by Rufino Osorio

1-eutrophication: the nitrates in fertilizers cause plants to proliferate. When the plants decay, it reduces the oxygen in the water, causing fish and other organisms to die.

VOLUNTEER WITH US!

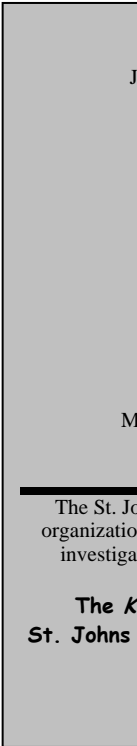
St. Johns Riverkeeper needs **YOU**. Won't you please clip, complete and return the form below? If you have contacted us before with an interest in volunteering, we thank you and ask that you confirm your interest by completing the form below.

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)

Please update your Email address with us.

It is the most cost effective way we have of contacting you with River issues and events.

Riverkeeper Calendar

February 4	<i>Information meeting:</i> Jennifer Sagan, Submerged Aquatic Vegetation Volunteer Program*
February 15	Riverkeeper Creek Boat Tour (Location TBA)
February 24	Riverkeeper Steering Committee and Board Meeting**
March 4	<i>Information meeting:</i> Jim Maher/DEP and Eric Suma/Army Corps of Engineers, Permit review and compliance*
March 15	St. Johns River Cleanup
March 17	Riverkeeper Steering Committee and Board Meeting**
April 1	<i>Information meeting:</i> Larry Wagner, JEA, Solar power and other options to improve residential water use*
April 21	Riverkeeper Steering Committee and Board Meeting**
May 6	<i>Information meeting:</i> Carol Pitman, Update on the Waterways Commission*
May 9, 10, 11	St. Johns Riverkeeper Boat Excursion
May 10 – 26	American Heritage River Festival
May 19	Riverkeeper Steering Committee and Board Meeting**
June 16	Riverkeeper Steering Committee and Board Meeting**
July 21	Riverkeeper Steering Committee and Board Meeting**
August 8	Riverkeeper Steering Committee and Board Meeting**
September 15	Riverkeeper Steering Committee and Board Meeting**
October 10	Riverkeeper Steering Committee and Board Meeting**
November 11	Riverkeeper Steering Committee and Board Meeting**
December	No Riverkeeper Steering Committee and Board Meeting will be held

WHAT HAPPENED AT THE RIVER SUMMIT?

The City of Jacksonville is posting results/information on their web site:

www.coj.net

Let us know what you think!

*Riverkeeper monthly information meetings are held at 6:30 on the 1st Tuesday of every month at 6:30 pm at the Blue Cypress Community, 4012 University Blvd., 1 mile N of Jacksonville University

**Riverkeeper Board Meetings are held at 6850 Belfort Oaks Place, Jacksonville, FL (Former Acosta Building)

What one attendee to Riverkeeper's monthly information meeting thinks:

... I wanted to tell you that I thoroughly enjoyed this evening's presentation. I've already emailed Leslie and we're making plans to get together. My yard has hardly been a garden these last few years -more on the order of a disaster - and I look forward to starting over with plants that make ecological sense. The meeting tonight was just what I needed! *Leslie Pierpont presented native landscaping and water conservation techniques at February's Riverkeeper monthly information meeting.*

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, during the river wide St. Johns Riverfest 2003 celebration, sponsored by the American Heritage River Committee.

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! 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. Only full three-day reservations will be accepted until March 31, 2003. 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**

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Email _____

Day phone _____

ALL ABOARD!!