



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

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► *Generous Riverkeeper supporters help put the RK boat back in the water.*

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► *Ralph Mitchell thinks the St. Johns River is our best kept secret...shhh.*

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► *By all reports, the Oyster Roast was a success and soulful Susan Tedeschi was a huge hit.*

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○ VOLUME 1 | ○ WINTER | ○ 2004

# THE Kingfisher

*Keeping watch over your river*



## RIVERKEEPER UPDATE

*We just completed our busiest, and most successful, fall season at the Riverkeeper office. Our message is resonating with citizens throughout northeast Florida, and our efforts are gaining momentum. The New Year brings hope that the St. Johns River will continue to experience revitalization and increased recognition as the true jewel of the First Coast. Happy New Year, and thanks for all your hard work and support. Here's a quick update on our recent activities.*

**Freedom Commerce Center:** We continue our fight to save nearly 130 acres of mature, forested wetlands and the headwaters of Julington and Pottsburg Creeks. The SJRWMD Board of Governors will finally vote on the permit request at their January meeting. For the latest information and how to help, visit the Riverkeeper web site.

**Nutrient TMDL for Lower St. Johns River:** St. Johns Riverkeeper and Clean Water Network have filed suit in the U. S. District Court against the U.S Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for failing to set pollution limits for the St. Johns River that

will provide suitable habitat for fish and other aquatic species. The groups are being represented by the Mid-Atlantic Environmental Law Center. The suit is part of RK's campaign to require the State of Florida and the EPA to establish meaningful nutrient reduction goals for the lower river.

**Georgia Pacific :** RK and Clean Water Network hosted a press event in Tallahassee requesting the Florida Department of Health (DOH) issue a fish advisory for dioxin in Rice Creek and the St. Johns River. State officials have known about dioxin in St. Johns' fish since 1993, yet have done nothing to inform the public about the problem. In addition, RK and

other citizen groups continue to oppose the issuance of Georgia Pacific's (GP) wetland permit to construct a pipeline to discharge up to 60 million gallons a day of paper mill waste water to the St. Johns River. RK has vowed to continue the GP pipeline fight into the future.

**Construction Site Runoff:** Construction site runoff continues to be one of the biggest threats to the health of our rivers and streams, and we continue to work with citizens to monitor construction runoff sites and report them to the proper agencies. Recently, Jacksonville Mayor John Peyton pledged to strengthen runoff regulations in Duval County. The mayor's plan calls for hiring additional inspectors and



At a press event on December 14, Riverkeeper was joined by community partners in opposition to the proposed Freedom Commerce development.

## Why is the St. Johns River important to you?

### ○ | RENEE TYREE

*I was born in St. Johns County, and I can remember when St. Augustine and surrounding areas were pristine and free of overpopulation. I'd like my grandchildren to be able to enjoy the river and beaches.*

### ○ | CLARK MCCAMMON

*Water is the river of life. Protection and restoration of the entire river system is essential. Uplands must be preserved and development managed from an ecological perspective. Also, federal and state agencies must be monitored for accountability.*

### ○ | FRED AND HELEN WRIGHT

*The St. Johns River is the reason we are in Jacksonville. Being on the water is a big part of our lives.*

### ○ | MICHAEL CHALUT

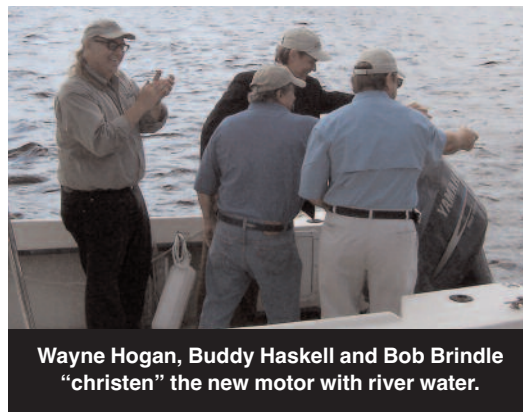
*I have owned riverfront property since 1978 and have seen an improvement in the river quality. I believe more effort should be made to identify properties that pollute with old septic systems and direct dumping of grey water into the river. My young neighbor, Katherine Foley (age 11), encouraged me to join your organization.*

## RIVERKEEPER UPDATE, CONTINUED

consolidating the sediment control program into a single department. RK supports Mayor Peyton's plan. Currently, RK is working with citizens in old Mandarin and residents of Greenfield, Fishing, Big Fishweir, Fairchild Branch and Julington Creeks to protect these waterways from further damage.

**JCCI River Study:** The latest Jacksonville Community Council, Inc. (JCCI) study entitled "River Dance: Putting the River in River City" is looking at how our community can benefit the most from our river while protecting it for future generations. Several RK members are participating in the study, and the Riverkeeper is a member of the study's management team. You can learn more about the study on the JCCI web site, [www.jcci.org](http://www.jcci.org).

**Kingfisher back in the Water:** After a much publicized failure of the old motor, Riverkeeper, benefactors, boat patrol members, and citizens



Wayne Hogan, Buddy Haskell and Bob Brindle "christen" the new motor with river water.

gathered at the riverfront to rechristen the boat's new 4-stroke, 200 Hp Yamaha outboard engine. Thanks to generous donations from Jacksonville Marine Association, Jacksonville Marine Charities and a very generous grant from Attorney Wayne Hogan, the Riverkeeper boat is once again patrolling the river and responding to citizen complaints.

**Mercury Pollution:** RK joined the U.S Public Interest Research Group (PIRG) and Jacksonville University's Dr. Quint White to publicize the risks associated with eating fish contaminated with mercury. In September, the State of Florida released a health advisory that noted people are at risk from consuming fish tainted with mercury. St. Johns Riverkeeper is a member of the Waterkeepers' Alliance. The Alliance has recently kicked off a national campaign to fight for reductions in mercury emissions from coal-fired power plants, educate the public about the dangers of mercury contamination, and force federal and state environmental and public health agencies to fulfill their stated missions and take actions that will truly protect human health and the environment.

**Super Bowl!** Look for the Kingfisher patrolling the river, assisting visiting media, and educating visitors about our city's greatest resource, the St. Johns River. Look for additional information as we get closer to kick-off.

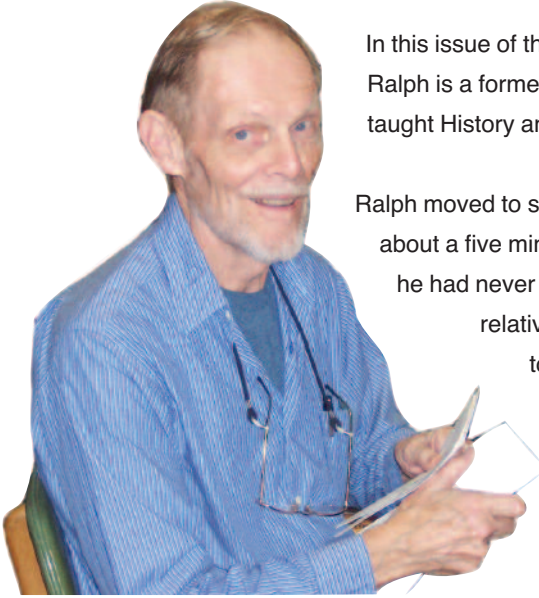
## Thanks!

Adam Butler, Kirk Chamberlain, Beverly Chapman, Odile Gracey, Carolyn Henkemeyer, Lisa and Charlie Hughes, Bill Kirill, Deborah Lamir, Jessica McKinsey, Lance and Maryellen Moore, Rob Morris, Carrie Schultz, Eddie and Debi Watson

## Congrats!

Congratulations to Neil Armingeon for receiving the "Congressman Charles Bennett Champion for the Environment Award." Neil was presented with this prestigious award at the Florida Coastal School of Law Environmental Summit on November 19.

# VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT: Ralph Mitchell



In this issue of the Kingfisher, RK would like to honor Ralph Mitchell. Ralph is a former school teacher from the Chicago area where he taught History and Government for 38 years.

Ralph moved to southwest St. Johns County in 1993 and now lives about a five minute walk from Colee Cove on the river. He said that he had never even heard of the St. Johns River until he visited relatives in North Florida prior to retiring here. According to him, the beauty of the St. Johns River is one of the best kept secrets in the United States.

Ralph has been coming into the Riverkeeper office to volunteer once a week for about two years. Thanks for all you do for the Riverkeeper, Ralph!

## WAYS TO HELP

Riverkeeper relies on your financial support and the help of volunteers to continue our important work. Here are ways you can support your Riverkeeper:

### ○ VOLUNTEER

You can help staff a table at an upcoming event, stuff envelopes for a mailing, plan or coordinate a fundraising event, or help monitor the health of our river as a member of the RK Boat Patrol.

### ○ WRITE A LETTER

Write a letter to the editor in support of an issue that Riverkeeper is working on. The editorial page is the most widely read section of the newspaper.

### ○ SHOW YOUR SUPPORT

You can show your support for Riverkeeper by wearing an RK shirt or hat or by giving RK merchandise to someone as a gift. Place a Riverkeeper sticker on your car or boat.

### ○ GIFT MEMBERSHIPS

A RK membership makes a wonderful and meaningful gift for a birthday, holiday, or special occasion. The Riverkeeper staff will send a letter acknowledging your gift to the recipient.

### ○ MEMORIAL GIFTS

Honor a friend or loved one with a gift in their name.

### ○ ISSUE SPECIFIC GIFT

Contribute to our Freedom Commerce fund and help protect the headwaters of Julington and Pottsburg Creek.

## RIVERKEEPER OYSTER ROAST

Thanks to everyone who made the 2004 Oyster Roast at The Cummer Museum of Art and Gardens on November 12th a success!

### Sponsors:

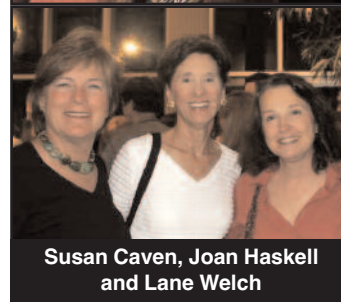
Oracal, USA  
Jacksonville Greyhound Racing  
Dale and Mary Lewis  
Catering by Liz  
The Fisherman's Dock  
*Thank you to everyone who contributed items for the silent auction.*

### Host Committee:

Lane Welch, Chair  
Preston and Joan Haskell  
C. Ford Riley  
Dr. Dekle and Jeanne Taylor  
Wayne Hogan  
Susan and Bruce Smathers  
Helen Lane  
Dr. Quinton White, Jr.  
Karen and Buddy McCombs  
Susan Caven  
Howard C. Serkin  
Myrtice Craig & Bob Broward  
Dick & Leslie Pierpont



Susan Tedeschi



Susan Caven, Joan Haskell and Lane Welch

A special thanks to Susan Tedeschi for sharing her soulful music with us.



*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.*

# RK THREE-DAY BOAT CRUISES: What are people saying?

- You folks are doing an awesome job of offering a spectacular immersion to the St. Johns River and informing citizens about the need for its protection.
- I've learned more than I expected and came away with a new appreciation of the river and its lakes/tributaries.
- Great idea. Great trip. Great river!
- It was a great trip - very informative and wonderful staff!!
- Super experience – well organized and so informative.
- Very delightful trip. Exceeded expectations.
- The trip was beautifully planned in every detail – Riverkeeper has done a grand job.
- This was a wonderful experience, and I'm so thrilled that I could share it with my granddaughter.

- This has been a wonderful experience. I thank all involved for helping me to get to know my home better.

**For more information about upcoming Riverkeeper Boat Cruises, call Jeanne Shaw at 904-270-0340 or go to [www.stjohnsriverkeeper.org](http://www.stjohnsriverkeeper.org).**



**Neil Armingeon and Eleanor King.  
A cruise was given to Eleanor as a present for her 90th birthday.**

**CONTACT US ANYTIME**

phone 904-256-7591

fax 904-256-7573

## RK CALENDAR OF EVENTS

○ | **Water Education Festival at MOSH, Saturday, Feb. 12, 2005, 10 a.m.- 4 p.m.**

**Help develop a cool activity for kids for the event or help staff our table. For more information, call 904-256-7591.**

○ | **The St. Johns River Celebration and Cleanup, March 19, 2005, 8 a.m.- 12 p.m.**

○ | **St. Johns River Celebration Party, March 19, 2005, 6 p.m.**

**Come celebrate the river and the work of Riverkeeper. Check the RK website for details.**

○ | **The next 3-day Boat Cruises between Sanford and Jacksonville are scheduled for March 29-31 and April 1-3.**

**For more information, visit our website or call Jeanne Shaw at 904-270-0340.**

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

  
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