



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

PAGE 1, 2



► *Andy Wojcicki pens a Riverkeeper tribute to founder, Roger Bass, and Ben Williams.*

PAGE 3



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

PAGE 4

○ VOLUME 2 | ○ WINTER | ○ 2005

THE Kingfisher

Keeping watch over your river



RIVERKEEPER UPDATE

Well, it's that time of year when we are looking back at what we have accomplished and looking forward to the challenges ahead. We definitely had many successes and made progress in fulfilling the mission of Riverkeeper. Yet, the summer's unprecedented algae bloom signaled to all of us that much work remains if we are to save our beloved St. Johns River and its tributaries.

TMDL

St. Johns Riverkeeper and Clean Water Network had a major clean water victory in October. As a result of a federal suit by the groups, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) reversed its initial approval of a state TMDL (Total Maximum Daily Load) rule that would have legalized excessive amounts of pollution and allowed unhealthy levels of oxygen in the St. Johns River.

The EPA has determined that their initial approval of the TMDL pollution reduction plan developed by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) was a mistake, because the DEP plan allowed

low dissolved oxygen levels in the lower section of the river. The EPA must establish a nutrient TMDL for the lower St. Johns by January 23, 2006. Riverkeeper is hopeful that the outcome of this action is one step in the long journey to restore the river's overall health.

Freedom Commerce

Riverkeeper and the Sierra Club have filed an appeal of the September 13 decision of the St Johns River Water Management District Board of Governors to issue a state wetland permit to destroy over 130 acres of high quality wetlands that include the headwaters of Pottsburg and Julington Creeks. The appeal will be heard in the Florida District Court of Appeal. Meanwhile, the Goodman Company's appeal of the Army Corps of Engineers' denial of the federal wetland permit for the Freedom Commerce site is still ongoing.

Friends of Thornby

Riverkeeper's mission involves the entire St. Johns River watershed. We spend most of our time in the lower St. Johns, but we try and assist citizens from throughout our

basin to protect the waterways and wetlands in their community. We've been working with a citizens group, Friends of Thornby, from a small community on the east side of Lake Monroe. The "Friends" have been fighting a 227-unit development on the lake's shore for almost two years. Their hard work paid off. On November 2nd, the Volusia County Growth Management Commission, charged with reviewing projects for compatible land use as prescribed in local comprehensive growth plans, voted to deny approval for the project. I attended the meeting and spoke on behalf of protecting water quality in Lake Monroe.

The Friends of Thornby is now a Riverkeeper member group. Thanks everybody! If you have an issue you would like our help with, give me a call at the office.

Going Forward

I want to thank each of you for your continuing support in 2005. It means a great deal to Jimmy and me. We're not resting on our laurels – we have big plans

continued on page 2

Why is the St. Johns River important to you?

○ | ALEXANDRA WEEKS

*I grew up on Munsungan Lake, the source of the Aroostook River in the state of Maine. That experience has given me great respect for the connection between bodies of water and people's appreciation of nature. I wish for generations that follow us to enjoy that awareness and connection. Since I live in Florida for now, I feel I must help **here** while I am **here**.*

○ | MARY C. DAVIDSON

I've lived on the St. Johns in three different locations for 32 years – currently I live in Plummer's Cove. We are as close to the bluff as allowed, and the river is the first thing I see every morning when I open my eyes and sit up in bed, and the last thing (and the lights of the bridge) I see when I close them at night.

○ | JOHN NOONEY

The St. Johns River, an American Heritage River, is important to me because we live in the United States of America, and public access to this natural treasure is for everyone.

RIVERKEEPER UPDATE, CONTINUED

for 2006. Riverkeeper is currently developing a River Health Report Card for the river. In spring 2006, Riverkeeper will release its "River-Friendly Yard" program to educate the public about fertilizers and runoff from lawns. Be sure and watch for our live "River Cam" on our website.

I say this all the time, and I mean it – I have the best job in Jacksonville. I'm working with a great group of people trying to save one of this planet's greatest waterways, the St. Johns River. Thanks to you, we're making progress. Happy New Year to you and your family!

Remembering Ruth Daniel – Champion of Julington Creek

We lost a great voice for Julington Creek with the passing of Ruth Daniel. Ruth was the president of the Mandarin Community Club and a longtime community activist. I met Ruth at a meeting on Freedom Commerce hosted by the community club. She immediately joined our struggle to save the headwaters of her beloved Julington Creek, and she became one of our strongest allies. Ruth's impassioned pleas at our FCC rallies for the protection of Julington and Pottsburg Creeks provided inspiration for all of us involved with this issue. Ruth, you will be missed by so many. We were proud to stand beside you.



Ruth Daniel (*right, front*) spoke against the Freedom Commerce development at the rally on the steps of the Water Management District office. She was the former President of the Mandarin Community Club and has recently passed away. She will be sorely missed.

Thanks!

Beverly Chapman, Jeanne Shaw, Seth Chipman, John November, Maryellen and Lance

Moore, Ruth Ann Davis, Genora Crain, Jessica McKinsey, Hutch and Ann Hutchins,

Lynda Orth, Mo Shaughnessy, Beverly Fleming, Tammy Shaughnessy,

Nan Jobson Armingeon, Laurel Pierpont, Sue Hinson,

Greg Samuel

Totes for the River

Black Creek Outfitters is currently selling organic cotton tote bags from Patagonia for \$10. The proceeds from the totes will benefit the Riverkeeper organization.

A RIVERKEEPER TRIBUTE

Roger Bass was not the first person to imagine a sustainable, clean, healthy, and enjoyable St. Johns River. And, Roger Bass was not the first person to imagine a full-time Riverkeeper working on the St. Johns to achieve this goal.

However, it was Roger Bass who first followed this idea up with a plan, action, and the perseverance enough to achieve the effort and organization we now call the St. Johns Riverkeeper.

Roger Bass founded St. Johns Riverkeeper (SJRK) in 1999 and served as Chairman of our Board through two consecutive three-year terms (the maximum allowed by our bylaws).

Under Roger's leadership, we have seen SJRK grow from a handful of volunteers to two full-time employees, a part-time college intern, and over 800 member families and individuals.

Roger Bass has established an organization and a culture of scientific integrity and perseverance that will serve his river forever.



The St. Johns Riverkeeper could not have evolved to what it is today without a set of white rubber boots under the table at every board meeting. These boots have been filled by **Ben Williams**.

As a commercial fisherman, entrepreneur of the Fisherman's Dock, professional bass fisherman, and general outdoorsman, Ben shares an intimate relationship with his river.

Ben's humble nature, his down-to-earth business sense, his passion and commitment to a healthy St. Johns River for ALL USERS to enjoy, and his ongoing generosity continues to serve this organization well.

Along with Roger, Ben has recently completed his second three-year term on our board. Both men continue to serve our organization with intelligence and generosity.

To Roger and Ben - the St. Johns River and the St. Johns Riverkeeper are forever grateful for who you are, the work you've done, and the work you continue to do. Thanks!



This article was written by Andy Wojcicki, our newly elected Chairman. Andy works as an Internal Auditor for the University of Florida Jacksonville Healthcare. Andy has been on our board nearly three years, having served most recently as our Treasurer.

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.

- Water Education Festival at MOSH, February 4
- River Celebration at Walter Jones Park, March 11
- St. Johns River Cleanup, March 18
- Earth Day at The Landing, April 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.

GO FOR A PADDLE

See the calendar of events or visit our website.

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

Join St. Johns Riverkeeper for a three-day Eco-Heritage cruise along the St. Johns River between Jacksonville and Sanford. Each day, passengers enjoy spectacular scenery and wildlife, delicious lunches, fascinating speakers and historical re-enactors. We will stop along the way to visit interesting and beautiful places, such as Hontoon Island, 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.



The next trips are scheduled for April 18-20 from Jacksonville to Sanford and April 21-23 from Sanford to Jacksonville. Your reservation includes: boat travel, ground transportation, lunch, entertainment and overnight accommodations. Enjoy this once in a lifetime experience for \$515 per person. For more information, call Jeanne Shaw at 904-270-0340.

CONTACT US ANYTIME

phone 904-256-7591

fax 904-256-7573

RK CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- | **Simpson Creek Kayak Tour, March 25, 1-4 p.m., Kayak Amelia, 904-251-0016**
100% of proceeds benefit Riverkeeper.
- | **Pablo Creek and St. Johns River Kayak Tour, February 26, Outdoor Adventures, 904-399-2882, 50% of proceeds benefit Riverkeeper.**
- | **Celebrate the River! Saturday, March 11, 11- 4p.m., Walter Jones Historical Park, 904-256-7591**
- | **St. Johns River Cleanup Saturday, March 18, 8 a.m. - Noon , 904-630-3420**

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




ST. JOHNS RIVERKEEPER®
2800 University Blvd.
Jacksonville, FL 32211

NONPROFIT ORG.
U.S. Postage Paid
Jacksonville, FL
PERMIT NO. 4700