



VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

Dear Volunteer,

On behalf of the Board of Directors and staff of St. Johns Riverkeeper, thank you for donating your time and talents to help us protect, preserve, and restore the ecological integrity of the St. Johns River watershed for the current users and future generations through advocacy and citizen action.

St. Johns Riverkeeper, its members and volunteers, are dedicated to ensuring our right to a clean and healthy St. Johns River. Because we are a grassroots non-profit organization with limited resources, we rely on the support of businesses and concerned citizens like you to effectively accomplish our mission.

Thank you for being one of those concerned citizens who understands the value of our river and the value of Riverkeeper's work, and wants to make a valuable contribution to our community. With your help, we can leave a lasting legacy for generations to come: a clean and healthy St. Johns River. We hope the following handbook will give you all the tools needed to increase awareness about our beautiful St. Johns River.

Sincerely,
St. Johns Riverkeeper Staff

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Riverkeeper History



The origins of the Riverkeeper concept go back to England during the middle ages when villages would hire a private citizen to look after trout streams so that nobody would abuse the waterways enjoyed by all. The first Riverkeeper was introduced in the US in the mid-1980s when the Hudson River Fisherman's Association hired John Cronin, a former commercial fisherman, to patrol the Hudson full time. This blue-collar association of commercial and recreational fisherman began to identify and bring to justice the Hudson River polluters that were destroying their family fishing grounds.

Today, the Hudson Riverkeeper serves as a model for over 170 other Keeper organizations around the world that are independent members of the Waterkeeper Alliance.

In 1999, St. Johns Riverkeeper, Inc. was founded based on a similar philosophy, and the first St. Johns Riverkeeper was hired in 2001. St. Johns Riverkeeper is a non-profit, non-governmental 501(c)(3) organization. We do not receive government funding and are not affiliated with any government agency. We are a membership-based organization that is funded through private contributions from concerned citizens and businesses.

The mission of St. Johns Riverkeeper is to work on behalf of the community for clean and healthy waters in the St. Johns River, its tributaries and its wetlands, through citizen-based advocacy.

What Does St. Johns Riverkeeper Do?

- ◆ Ensure that our environmental laws and regulations are implemented and enforced.
- ◆ Participate on important committees, in public meetings, and other venues where decisions are made that impact the St. Johns to represent the interests of the river and the public to whom it belongs.
- ◆ Provide educational materials, resources, activities, and programs to schools and the general public about the river and the issues affecting its health.
- ◆ Patrol the river when necessary to identify and investigate pollution problems and make sure responsible parties are held accountable.
- ◆ Respond to citizen complaints and work with them to resolve problems.
- ◆ Engage the public and our public officials to raise awareness about the St. Johns River and the issues impacting its health and to advocate for solutions to those problems.

River Facts

- The St. Johns is the longest river in Florida, at 310 miles long.
- The elevation drops less than 30 feet from the river's source to its mouth. This represents only about an inch a mile.
- The St. Johns flows so slowly that it can have a reverse tidal flow as far south as Lake Monroe! This also means it is not efficient at flushing pollutants.
- The river's watershed is divided into three drainage basins: Lower, Middle, and Upper. Because it flows north, the northeast Florida region (Putnam County to the river's mouth at Mayport) is its Lower Basin.

Upper Basin

- ◆ The river in the upper basin is characterized by indistinct banks, many swamps and shallow lakes.
- ◆ The river in the upper basin is fed by rainwater and springs.
- ◆ The larger lakes in the upper basin include: Lake Hell 'n' Blazes, Sawgrass Lake, Lake Washington, Lake Winder, Lake Poinsett, Ruth Lake, Puzzle Lake, Lake Harney, Lake Jesus, and Lake Munroe.
- ◆ The Timucuan Indians named the St. Johns River Welaka, or chain of lakes, because there are so many inter-connected lakes that comprise the river.

Middle Basin

- ◆ The middle basin begins in east-central Florida where the river begins to widen after it is joined by the Econlockhatchee River.
- ◆ In the middle basin, the St. Johns runs through Ocala National Forest.
- ◆ Lake George, the largest lake found on the St. Johns River, is located in the middle basin.

Lower Basin

- ◆ The lower basin is located between Putnam County and the mouth of the river in Duval County.
- ◆ The lower basin begins where the Ocklawaha River, the largest of the St. Johns' tributaries, joins the river.
- ◆ At Jacksonville the river turns east and meets the Intracoastal Waterway and forms an estuary. This is the only part of the river that flows east.

- The St. Johns River is a blackwater river because of the tannic acid it contains, which is released by decomposing plants (leaves, bark, etc.).
- Over 180 species of fish have been identified in our river.
- Florida has the 2nd largest population of bald eagles in the US and nearly 70% nest along the river, mostly in Volusia County.
- There are 85 springs in the river's watershed. (SJRWMD)
- In 1998 the river was designated an *American Heritage River* by Bill Clinton, one of only 14 rivers in the US to receive this prestigious national recognition, due to its tremendous historical, cultural, recreational, ecological, and economic benefits that it has provided Florida for many generations.

Common Wading Birds include: great blue herons, great egrets, snowy egrets, wood storks (the only real American stork), white ibis, anhinga (aka snakebird or water turkey), double-crested cormorants, little blue herons, reddish egrets, black crowned night herons, yellow crowned night herons, limpkins, pied-billed grebes, least bitterns, American bitterns, rails, common yellowthroat warblers, red-winged blackbirds, wrens, common moorhens (aka gallinules), American coots, wood ducks, water thrushes, barred owls, osprey, American bald eagles. *The snail kite, a type of hawk, also lives around the St. Johns River and has been on the endangered species list since 1967.*

Common Plants include: Cardinal flower, pickerelweed, spatterdock, alligator lily, duck potato, maidencane, giant bulrush, jointweed, eelgrass, coontail, alligatorweed, aster, mosquito fern, button bush, muskgrass, wild taro, water hyacinth, spikerush, hydrilla, iris, duckweed, water primrose, baby tears, southern naiad, yellow water lily, pond lily, waterlettuce, Illinois pondweed, sago pondweed, widgeon grass, marsh pink, dwarf arrowhead, water fern, lizard's tail, cattail, horned pondweed.

Common Mammals include: West Indian Manatee (aka sea cow), bottle-nose dolphin, river otter, round tailed muskrat (aka Florida muskrat), mink, nutria (aka Coypu).

Common Fish include: Pickerel, sun fish, warmouth, bass, bluegill, catfish, mudfish.

Other Wildlife found in the watershed: Wild turkeys, white tailed deer, opossums, marsh rabbits, gray squirrels, raccoons, bobcats, gray foxes, alligators, turtles, mosquito hawks, dragonflies, frogs, lizards, snakes.

What Are the Issues?

There are two major areas of concern that have the most impact on the health of the river and its watershed: (1) water quality and (2) the loss and degradation of important aquatic and terrestrial habitat.

WATER QUALITY

Nutrients: The river is suffering from being over fed with nutrients from many different sources, including: excess of nutrients from wastewater plants, industrial discharge, storm water runoff, and fertilizers that regularly wash into the river.



Microcystis Bloom - East bank of the St. Johns River - Mandarin - 08.19.05 - 2:42pm
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Algae bloom of 2005

Result: The green monster! These nutrients feed uncontrolled algae blooms that use up a lot of oxygen so there is not much left for fish, and they also reduce the amount of sunlight that can penetrate down to the vegetation in the river. This can threaten the health of aquatic life as well as human life.

Bacteria: The tributaries to the river throughout the St. Johns River Water Management District, and especially in Duval County, often carry dangerous levels of fecal coliform bacteria from failing septic tanks, wastewater treatment plants, and animal/pet waste.



Result: These high bacteria levels can cause an array of illnesses in children, adults, and pets ranging from ear infections to Hepatitis A.

Sedimentation: Construction site runoff is one of the most significant problems facing waterways in the St. Johns' watershed and also the most preventable by simply properly setting up barriers.



Construction runoff into Willowbranch Creek

Result: The tremendous amount of soil leaving construction sites is burying aquatic life, disrupting the food chain, and impacting citizens' ability to enjoy the river.

Pollutants: Heavy metals, including mercury and organic compounds such as PCBs or Polychlorinated biphenyls and dioxins, both of which are environmental toxins that are entering our waterways from numerous sources, including industrial wastewater discharges and air pollution. Pesticides and herbicides also make their way into our river.

Result: These toxins are found in the sediment and make their way up the food chain; many fish species are unsafe for human consumption because of the high level of pollutants in their tissues, affecting the health of all organisms in the river.

HABITAT LOSS & DEGRADATION



Wetland Impacts: Construction projects often involve the destruction of wetlands, which are imperative to the health of our river.

Result: This loss can effect water quality, increase erosion, reduce natural storm water retention, impact fish populations, and eliminate the release of important nutrients that are critical to the ecosystem of a creek or river.

Illegal Filling of Wetlands: Because of a lack of enforcement and/or knowledge, many property owners illegally fill wetlands and areas adjacent to the shoreline of their property.

Result: These activities, often performed without a permit, cause irreparable damage by **permanently** destroying important habitat

Meet the St. Johns Riverkeeper Staff



The Riverkeeper: Neil Armingeon

Neil is the public face and voice for the organization. His primary responsibilities as the river's advocate include holding polluters accountable for their actions, ensuring compliance with our environmental laws, and working to resolve problems and issues that impact the health of our St. Johns. Neil Armingeon previously served as the Environmental Director of the Lake

Pontchartrain Basin Foundation in New Orleans. For over 10 years, he galvanized diverse coalitions of citizens in support of a clean, sustainable Lake Pontchartrain Watershed and developed and directed grass-roots campaigns that integrated science, advocacy, and public policy.

Neil has a Bachelor of Science degree from North Carolina State University and a master's degree in Environmental Management from Duke University.



The Executive Director: Jimmy Orth

In addition to assisting the Riverkeeper in the field, Jimmy Orth maintains overall responsibility for budget, staffing, program development, fund-raising, and community involvement.

A native of Jacksonville, Jimmy has extensive experience working on environmental issues in Northeast Florida through his involvement with other environmental groups, including the Sierra Club, where he served as an executive committee member for over eight years and as a regional

chairman. In 2003, Volunteer Jacksonville awarded Jimmy its Nature of Caring award.

Jimmy received his undergraduate degree from Florida State in Marketing, and his master's degree in Public Administration from the University of North Florida.

Sarah Shelley: Development Director



Sarah Shelley joins St. Johns Riverkeeper from a background in arts and culture organizations to serve as Director of Development. Born and raised in South Carolina, she recently returned to the East coast after living on the "other" coast in Northern California and Oregon for twenty years. Her diverse professional experience has included work with professional theatres, colleges and universities, in

ethnic dance, classical music radio and Native American telecommunications. No stranger to rivers, she has lived or worked near the Connecticut, Columbia, Allegheny, Ohio, Monongahela, Willamette, Waccamaw, Eel, Trinity, and Matanzas and is thrilled to be working with the jewel of Florida, our own St. Johns River. Sarah has a strong track record in involving community in her work and thinks that is one of the reasons SJRK is so successful.

Sarah received a BFA from Wesleyan College in Macon, Georgia and a MFA from Florida State University. She currently lives in St. Augustine in an historic house on the bay front with her old dog named Dizzy.



Education Director: Tracey Manno

Tracey Manno is a native born Floridian with lifetime passions in the following areas: her family, outdoor adventure, and Florida’s natural history and environment. Tracey is a fourth generation Floridian with roots deeply embedded in our state. She grew up in central Florida where her love for the great outdoors was cultivated. While at Florida International University in Miami, Tracey earned a

Bachelor’s degree in Elementary and Early Childhood Education. During her 15 years in South Florida, she married her husband, Vince and had 2 sons while also teaching in the public school system. The family moved to Jacksonville in 2000 and Tracey was employed by the St. Johns School District as a teacher. Throughout her teaching career, Tracey has had a passion for science education and has worked diligently to instill that in her students so that they, too, could develop an awareness of their natural surroundings. Upon leaving the formal teaching field, Tracey became a certified Florida Master Naturalist and volunteers as an advisor with BSA Venture Crew 474.



Outreach Coordinator: Kelly Savage

Kelly loves all things water, hence her move from Kansas City, Missouri to Rhode Island, where she earned her bachelor’s degree in Marine Biology at Roger Williams University. During a visit to Jacksonville, she fell in love with the St Johns River, and decided to make this her new home. Kelly's past experience includes working as a pre-kindergarten teacher's assistant, conducting fisheries research for the New York State Department of

Conservation, and serving as the Curator of Natural Sciences for the Museum of Science and History.

Kelly received her bachelor’s degree in Marine Biology from Roger Williams University.

Volunteering with St. Johns Riverkeeper

St. Johns Riverkeeper is a grassroots organization. We cannot accomplish our goals without the help of volunteers like you. We have a diversity of volunteer opportunities available. We should have something that will appeal to just about anyone, all of which help the organization to be successful. Together, we can be one voice for the river!

St. Johns Riverkeeper Volunteer “Positions”

The following is a list of regular volunteer opportunities and what they entail. There are always new opportunities that come along, so be sure to check the *Volunteer Information Center* for more opportunities.

Speakers Bureau

Using our *Presentation in a Box*, deliver presentations to a variety of audiences and settings, including garden clubs, business clubs and community groups. *Speaking engagements will be scheduled by SJRK staff and will be listed under Speaking Engagements in VIC.*

Further training can/will be provided.

Educational Presentations

Utilize a variety of resources (lesson plans, hands on activities, PowerPoint presentations) to provide educational programs for school groups, class visits, or school functions.

Educational Presentations will be scheduled by SJRK staff and will be listed under Educational Programs in VIC.

Further training can/ will be provided.

Community Events

Community outreach is extremely important for spreading the word about SJRK and our work. These events are perfect opportunities to talk to the community and inform them about who we are, what we do, and why we care about the river.



Hand out brochures, talk to attendants about SJRK, have petitions signed, share upcoming events, and sell SJRK merchandise at a variety of functions including ArtWalk, local festivals, and seasonal events.

Educational Community Events

Some community events are more family-orientated, and offer an excellent opportunity to educate children about the river with informative games and activities, as well as engage parents in our efforts.

Utilizing our educational games and activities, such as Magnetic Fishing and River Bracelet, share interesting information about the river. Also answer any questions parents might have.

*All events will be listed under **Events** in VIC.*

Further training can/ will be provided.



Field Trip Assistants



Our field trips offer groups an unforgettable experience with the river that

they could not gain in the classroom.

Volunteers assist in setting up, passing out materials, facilitating activities and socializing with guests.

Field Trips include: Boat Trips, Walking-tours, and River Clean-ups, and will be scheduled by SJRK staff.

*Field Trips will be listed under **Education Programs** in VIC.*

Further Training can/ will be provided.

Can't make it to event? Uncomfortable speaking to the public? There are plenty of other ways to volunteer for St. Johns Riverkeeper!

Errand-runners

We are always in need of supplies for our office or upcoming events. Volunteers can purchase, pick up and deliver supplies, replenish educational activity materials, pick up and deliver food, set-up and breakdown displays at event, etc. Volunteers completing these tasks allow SJRK staff more time to focus on other projects.

*These tasks will be listed under **Administrative Assistance** in VIC.*

Administrative

Administrative volunteer opportunities include our monthly renewal mailings, thank-you notes, phone calls, filing, organizing supplies and database upkeep. These tasks are very important for organizing upcoming outreach programs and managing current projects.

Further details for each task will be provided once you have volunteered for a specific task.

*These tasks will be listed under **Administrative Assistance** in VIC on listed on Mondays on the calendar.*

How to Get Started

To become a volunteer, visit our website: www.mystjohnsriver.com/links and click on the volunteer application link. Once you have filled out an application, you will receive login information for our *Volunteer Information Center* via email. On the VIC site you can update your information, check for upcoming volunteer opportunities, and more!

To get to the login page, click on *Volunteer Login* on our website: www.mystjohnsriver.com/links

VIC: Volunteer Information Center Instructions

Accessing the Volunteer Information Center from Home

The Volunteer Database will allow you to:

- Input & update your contact information
- Schedule yourself for shifts and/or tasks
- Check your volunteer schedule
- Receive messages
- View hours volunteered

ALL FROM YOUR HOME COMPUTER!

Logging In From Home

1. Go to www.mystjohnsriver.com/links.php
2. Click "Volunteer Login" under that heading. This is the login screen, which will take you to the "Online Volunteer Database."
3. Enter your Login Name and Password, then click "go" to sign on.

Once logged on, you will be taken to the Volunteer Information Center, or VIC. By clicking the tabs located across the top, you can navigate messages, your profile, and scheduling information.

By clicking the buttons on the left, you can schedule yourself, check messages, check your hours or post hours you have volunteered.

Checking Your Schedule

To view your schedule and selected assignments press the "Check Your Schedule" button. This will show you a calendar and you can see all the dates you have signed up for.

Signing Up To Volunteer

1. Click the "Sign Up" button.
2. If you know what assignment you would like to volunteer for, then click the [blue underlined](#) assignment on the right hand side. That will bring

- you to a calendar with dates on it. If we need volunteers on a specific date, the days will be **outlined in green**, if it is an open assignment all of the days will be green and you can choose when you are interested in coming to volunteer.
3. If applicable, choose which shifts work best for you and click on it.
 4. Once you have chosen a time, you will receive a confirmation page. If you are ready to commit to that date and time click *Yes* and it will sign you up. If not, click *No* and it will bring you back to the assignment page.
 5. You will then see your new assignment on the calendar.

You can print this calendar and see previous and upcoming schedules. If you need to **cancel**, click on the date you cannot come in on your calendar and follow the instructions.

Posting Your Hours

1. Click the "Post Your Hours" or "Time Sheet" button. On your time sheet enter the date, the assignment you participated in and the total hours you volunteered (round to the nearest ¼ hour, please).
 2. Once you enter that info, click the Continue button.
 3. Confirm your service by clicking *Yes*, or *No* if you want to make a change.
- On this page you can see your recent service entries, but for your complete service history click "My Service History" tab.

This feature allows you to post your hours from home up to 30 days after you volunteer. Instead of signing in and out you can do everything all at once.

Checking Your Messages

To check your messages for updates click the "Check Messages" button. You will see a section for new and old messages.

Updating Your Information

By clicking "My Profile" you can update your information. It helps to keep us in the loop and also can tell us the best way to contact you.

Changing Your Password

Click the "Account" button to change your password.

This system has the same security level as online banking and even we do not have the power to see your password. If you ever forget your password we can clear it for you and send you the link to make a new one.

Need Assistance?

Call or email the Outreach Coordinator; she will be your Technical support!
Kelly Savage: kelly@stjohnsriverkeeper.org or 904.252.7336

Volunteer Appreciation Rewards

The greatest reward to volunteering is knowing that YOU are making a difference by participating in a cause that you feel passionate about, and helping to further that cause. By volunteering for SJRK, you will have the opportunity to participate in community events and be where the action is! Along with talking to people about our beloved river, you can help educate the public with the current issues affecting its health. Or, you can help us “behind the scenes” to more efficiently and effectively accomplish our projects and goals.

Though it is just a small token, we would like to offer our gratitude through the following *Volunteer Reward System*.

Hours per year	Appreciation Reward
First Time	St. Johns Riverkeeper T-shirt
10-20	St. Johns Riverkeeper Tote Bag
30-40	St. Johns Riverkeeper Hat
50+	St. Johns Riverkeeper Name Badge