



## MISSION

Be an independent voice that defends, advocates, and activates others to protect and restore the St. Johns River.

*We appreciate your support and want to provide you with an update of our activities and our progress. We also want to make sure you know about all of the exciting upcoming events and ways we are engaging and activating the community to help protect the St. Johns.*

### 2017 HIGHLIGHTS

- Last year, our education staff provided programs for 12,266 students – a 74% increase from 2016! Of those students, 6,565 were 5th graders in Title I schools who participated on one of 140 educational boat trips on the St. Johns River. For most of these students, it was their first time on a boat and first chance to experience our river.
- Our staff and volunteers also helped lead 30 cleanups, participated in 181 community outreach events, and implemented several new volunteer training programs to empower our members and expand our capacity. Our volunteers logged 4,041 hours in 2017!
- We opened a new office in DeLand and hired a Middle Basin Advocacy Director to expand our reach into Central Florida and our ability to more effectively address the myriad of issues that affect the St. Johns and its springs and tributaries throughout the watershed.

*Of course, we also continued to lead the charge on issues such as the proposed dredging, water withdrawals, and pollution problems that continue to harm the health of our river.*

## 2018 UPDATE

### EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

- For the third year in a row, St. Johns RIVERKEEPER is providing educational boat trips for Title I fifth-grade classes in Duval County. For the 2017-2018 school year, over 6,000 students from 76 different Title I schools will be eligible to participate in the STEAM Boat Trip Program.
- We are entering our fourth year of a partnership with Clay County to provide educational and outreach programs to Clay public schools and communities.
- We recently hired a new Outreach Director, Kelly Patton. With a strong passion for conservation, Kelly received her Bachelor of Science in Biology from Rhodes College. Before joining the St. Johns Riverkeeper team, she worked as a Naturalist and Sea Turtle Technician and spent four years working in outreach and education with One Hundred Miles, an environmental advocacy group for the Georgia coast.
- During the month of April, Aveda salons throughout the watershed are hard at work raising awareness and funds for St. Johns Riverkeeper as part of the annual Earth Month campaign. This critical partnership helps to expand our network of advocates and provide important funding for our ongoing outreach, education, and advocacy programs. Last year, our Aveda partners raised over \$32,000!

# 2018 UPDATE (cont.)

## ADVOCACY

- Although our motion for an injunction to temporarily stop the dredging was denied in January, our lawsuit will continue due to the unmitigated harm that will occur to the St. Johns River and its tributaries and an insufficient environmental and economic assessment of the dredging project by the Army Corps of Engineers. One major concern, magnified by the impacts of Hurricane Irma, is the conclusion by the Army Corps that the Deep Dredge will increase the water level in the St. Johns by up to one foot in some areas due to increased tides and storm surge. This could result in a significant increase in damage to property and infrastructure from future storms.
- The Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) recently withdrew a dangerous state rule that would have allowed increased levels of toxic chemicals in Florida's surface waters. St. Johns Riverkeeper and Miami Waterkeeper, represented by Earthjustice, have been campaigning against this rule since it was proposed in 2016.
- In Central Florida, our Middle Basin Advocacy Director, Jane Durocher, continues to advocate for strong county fertilizer ordinances, water conservation initiatives, springs protections, smart growth practices, and the limited use of harmful chemicals by state and federal agencies to control invasive aquatic plants. Jane is also busy raising awareness and building a team of Riverkeeper advocates and volunteers throughout the region.
- Our Headwaters Advisory Council, comprised of local scientists and advocates, is working with Lisa Rinaman, the St. Johns Riverkeeper, to identify major pollution problems and issues that impact the headwaters of the St. Johns and advocate for solutions.
- Shannon Blankinship, our talented Outreach Director since January 2012, will become our new Advocacy Director, advocating for projects that improve the health of the St. Johns River. Shannon will work directly with the St. Johns Riverkeeper, utilizing her legal training and strong communication and strategic planning skills to further advance our advocacy initiatives for the river.

Throughout the year, we also offer an array of exciting opportunities to get involved through events, volunteer programs, cleanups, and boat trips. See the enclosed calendar of upcoming events and check our website frequently for current updates on issues and calls to action.

[www.stjohnsriverkeeper.org](http://www.stjohnsriverkeeper.org)

If you are not receiving regular email updates from us, contact [carol@stjohnsriverkeeper.org](mailto:carol@stjohnsriverkeeper.org) and provide a current email address to stay informed with the latest news and action alerts.

Thank you again for your dedicated support and for making this important work possible. Don't hesitate to contact us with any questions or for information about how you can get more involved.

*For the River,*

**The St. Johns  
RIVERKEEPER Team**

