

# THE KINGFISHER

KEEPING WATCH OVER OUR RIVER



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## Riverkeeper Update



At the recent Speak Up for Florida Forever rally in Jacksonville, former Governor and U.S. Senator Bob Graham implored that we must begin to treat Florida's waterways and environment "as a treasure and not a commodity."

Unfortunately, we have often viewed our natural resources as something to exploit for financial gain, not to cherish. For decades, we have given away our groundwater to

just about any business or person who asks for it. The St. Johns River continues to be used to dispose of wastewater from utilities and corporations like Georgia-Pacific. Polluted runoff from farms and roads is routed to the river. Wetlands are filled in, habitat paved over, and rivers dredged deeper with little thought about the cumulative and long-term impacts.

The recently released Lower St. Johns River Report ([sjrreport.com](http://sjrreport.com)) shows that some progress is being made, but persistent problems remain and some are even getting worse. When we look to our springs or south Florida, the effects of profits over protection are even more evident. According to the water management district, the Indian River Lagoon is "an estuary of national significance," yet it has been devastated by algal blooms and fish kills. The flow and water quality in most of our springs has significantly declined and a few have stopped flowing altogether. On the west coast, a massive sinkhole recently opened at the Mosaic phosphate mine, allowing over 200 million gallons of radioactive wastewater to potentially contaminate the aquifer, our primary source of drinking water. At the same time these environmental disasters are occurring, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection recently increased the limits for numerous carcinogens in our surface waters, putting Floridians at greater risk of developing cancer. This clearly was not done to benefit the residents of our state or our environment. To make matters worse, a recent study by the University of Florida and 1000 Friends of Florida found that projected population growth will increase

the amount of developed land in our state by over 81% by 2070. The inevitable impacts that will occur to our state's waterways will be potentially devastating.

We are essentially killing the golden goose. An economic study released by University of North Florida found that the St. Johns River's wetlands result in almost \$3 billion dollars in savings for flood prevention, and the wetlands provide an economic value for nitrogen removal that exceeds \$400 million per year. Riverfront properties in the four counties studied increased in value over \$1 billion due solely to river or tributary frontage, and nearby neighborhoods benefited with an \$837 million increase in value. The study goes on to quantify additional benefits, and this is just for the lower section of the St. Johns!

Consequently, the cost of pollution is immense. A report by the Stockholm Environment Institute at Tufts University found that algae and red tide outbreaks caused by water pollution cost Floridians between \$1.3 and \$10.5 billion each year.

However, this doesn't have to be. We can have a strong economy AND protect our environment. In fact, Florida's economy depends on clean water and a healthy environment. We, the citizens, have the power to forge a more sustainable and "river friendly" path forward. By holding polluters and our government accountable and joining together to make our voices heard, we can turn things around. If we do, the St. Johns and Florida's environment will sustain us for generations to come. It's not too late.

Learn more about what you can do on our website.

For the River,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lisa".

Lisa Rinaman – Your St. Johns Riverkeeper

# Welcome Education Director Emily Floore!

This summer, we wished a fond farewell to Jennie Busey, who decided to return to teaching, and welcomed Emily Floore aboard as our new Education Director. Emily is passionate about getting youth outside and on the water. For over eight years, she worked for non-profits in Charleston, SC, Chestertown, MD, and Bivalve, NJ, taking students on sailing classrooms focused on estuary and river health. In 2013, Emily moved to Jacksonville to pursue a second degree in Coastal Biology with a minor in Chemistry from University of North Florida.

Emily has hit the ground running, providing classroom presentations and programs, leading field trips, and gearing up for the second year of our successful STEAM Boat Education Program. During the 2015-2016 school year, we provided educational boat trips for nearly 4,000 Title I 5th grade students in Duval County. Thanks to CSX, the Edna Sproull Williams Foundation, and our volunteers for making this possible. This school year, we are anticipating nearly 6,000 students to participate!

For more information about our education programs, contact [Emily@stjohnsriverkeeper.org](mailto:Emily@stjohnsriverkeeper.org).



## News & Notes

SweetWater Brewing Co. helped raise over \$5,000 through the annual Save Our Water campaign. Thanks to SweetWater and all of the participating businesses, including the Mellow Mushroom for selling over \$2,000 in paper fish and Alewife Craft Beer Bottle Shop for hosting multiple events.

We are grateful to Laura Bearl and Sun-Ray Cinema for donating the proceeds from the inaugural Swim Shorts Film Festival.



Our River Patrol recently created a River Patrol Geocache Trail in the Jacksonville area. This is a land-based program so no watercraft is necessary. More info on our website.



Thank you Kayak Amelia for once again making us the beneficiary of a guided paddle through the estuary.

We participated in Riverfest, a celebration of the St. Johns, on Memorial Day as a part of our ongoing outreach efforts in Clay County.

The 4th annual River Ruckus featured boat trips, fishing workshops, SUP lessons, a kayak flotilla, waterless carnival for kids, and more. Thanks to Riverside Arts Market and our sponsors, including Deutsche Bank, Sadler Point Marina, and Jacksonville University.



During the 2015-2016 school year, we provided educational boat trips for nearly 4,000 Title I 5th grade students in Duval County. The program was well received by teachers: "This was by far one of the BEST experiences that our students have had all year! The content was aligned to the curriculum, the setting was phenomenal, and the staff was kind and informative. Hope we are able to take advantage of this AWESOME experience next year." This school year, we are anticipating nearly 6,000 students to participate!

This year during Earth Month, Aveda salons throughout the watershed collectively raised over \$40,000 to support our advocacy programs. The Aveda mission is "to care for the

# Get Involved

We continue to build on the success of the Save the St. Johns Tour by expanding our reach into more communities throughout the watershed. We are also developing new volunteer training programs to better leverage our tremendous volunteer base to play an even bigger role in our advocacy efforts for the St. Johns.

- **Waterway Cleanup Team**

Workshops are offered to train volunteers on how to lead local cleanups and identify locations that need cleanup attention.

- **Algae Bloom Monitors**

During the "Know Your Green" workshops, scientist Robert Burks trained volunteers to identify and sample algae blooms, so that we can quickly activate when they arise. The goal is to document the frequency of these events and alert the public when and where toxic blooms occur.

- **Microplastic Citizen Scientists**

Microplastics are an emerging health concern, and without the knowledge and data about where these pollutants exist, it is difficult to develop solutions. Volunteering involves sampling, filtering and analyzing samples under a microscope to count how many microbeads, microfibers and plastic fragments are present in our waterways.



Look for these programs and others we are developing as we continue to activate our members and the public through volunteer training and engagement opportunities throughout the watershed. To volunteer, contact [Justina@stjohnsriverkeeper.org](mailto:Justina@stjohnsriverkeeper.org).

world we live in, from the products we make to the ways in which we give back to society." Anyone who has visited an Aveda salon knows that they live by these words, and we are thankful for our partnership with them. Find your local Aveda salon and help support clean water!



We are grateful to Automaton Prints for donating the proceeds from their "Block Party" to us.

Area leaders joined St. Johns Riverkeeper for a paddle through Hallows Cove, a haven for eel grass beds and manatees in St. Johns County. The area is threatened by a proposed 250-slip marina from the nearby Rivertown development. We are watching closely and will engage

our members when the time is right. Stay tuned.

Thanks to Central 28 Brewing Co. for making us the beneficiary of the inaugural DeBary Craft Beer Festival. We also participated in the DeBary Bayou Bash and the Water Festival in DeLand. Look for us at more events in Volusia County and other communities throughout the watershed.



Our Marine Exploration boat cruises are a great way to learn about the ecology of our river and estuaries with science tools aboard the Research Vessel Larkin. Join us for our next adventure!



## Calendar

- November 16  
Reception with Oyster  
Roast featured artist  
Margaret Tolbert
- November 18  
15th Annual  
Oyster Roast
- November 20  
McCoys Creek  
Cleanup
- December 8  
Holiday Mingle and  
Volunteer Orientation
- December 15  
McCoys Creek  
"unique finds"  
showcase



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# 15<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL Oyster Roast



Join us for delicious food from Fisherman's Dock and Biscottis,  
live music from Cloud 9, and an outstanding Silent Auction!

**Tickets available on our website, [stjohnsriverkeeper.org](http://stjohnsriverkeeper.org).**

### Oyster Roast Featured Artist Reception with Margaret Tolbert

Wednesday, November 16, 7-9pm  
DeLo Studios, 420 Broad St, Jacksonville

### 15th Annual Oyster Roast

Friday, November 18, 7pm  
Garden Club of Jacksonville

Become a member or donate online at [www.stjohnsriverkeeper.org](http://www.stjohnsriverkeeper.org).

