

THE KINGFISHER

KEEPING WATCH OVER OUR RIVER



Vol. 8 Fall 2011

Riverkeeper Update

St. Johns Riverkeeper has prided ourselves on our willingness to work to find solutions to complicated river-related issues. While we are single-minded in our belief that the St. John's health must be protected at all cost, we temper our principles with efforts to find common ground. Nowhere is that model more visible than with the Georgia Pacific (GP) pipeline issue.

I've spent the past three years trying to work with GP to find a solution to the Palatka paper mill's continuing pollution problems. GP believes it has a solution – build a four-mile, 36" diameter pipeline to move its discharge from Rice Creek to the St. Johns River. Of course, GP's solution is based upon the archaic and outdated belief that dilution is the solution to pollution.

Moving pollution in 2011 is unacceptable to us. So, we have spent countless hours of staff time and great financial resources trying to find a workable alternative to the pipeline.

GP hired a consultant to examine alternatives, and to no one's surprise, that report stated the only cost-effective alternative is the \$30 million pipeline. St. Johns Riverkeeper hired our own experts to review GP's study. They found the study was flawed and it contained technical errors. More importantly, Riverkeeper's technical review indicated there are indeed alternatives to the pipeline that may even save GP money. GP begrudgingly met once with our consultants, but ignored their findings.

Other experts expressed concerns over the proposed pipeline, as well. One, Dr. Lucy Sonnenberg, was hired by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) to provide technical assistance for the GP issue. She raised questions, similar to St. Johns Riverkeeper's experts, and her concerns were largely dismissed by GP and the FDEP.

Look, the pipeline allows GP to use the St. Johns to dilute its 24 million gallon-a-day discharge, making enforcement difficult if not impossible, and preventing us from knowing exactly what is coming out of its pipe. The FDEP

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Left: Aerial photo of the GP holding ponds.

Right: Rice Creek and the Georgia Pacific plant.

Photos: Walter Coker



even acknowledged having concerns about dioxin in GP's effluent, ordering another round of dioxin testing in 2009. Unfortunately, additional sampling still has not taken place.

At this writing, we are still waiting for our valid questions regarding the ongoing pollution problems at GP's Palatka mill to be answered, including those about dioxin. Despite obvious flaws in the analysis and viable alternatives that do exist, it is beginning to look like the issuance of a discharge permit for the GP pipeline may be imminent. If that is the case, we will shift our focus from cooperating and seeking solutions to pursuing other options to stop GP, FDEP, and Governor Rick Scott, including legal action.

The St. Johns River and the communities of Northeast Florida deserve nothing less.

For the River,

Neil Armingeon
Your St. Johns Riverkeeper

RIVER ACTION ALERT:
Contact Governor Rick Scott and ask him
to protect your St. Johns River.
(850) 488-7146
www.flgov.com/contact-gov-scott/

News & Notes

By Kelly Savage, Outreach Director

Award

In August, Neil Armingeon, your St. Johns Riverkeeper, received the Christi P. Veleta Environmental Award from Mayor Alvin Brown and the Jacksonville Environmental Protection Board (EPB).



Bait Tank

Volunteer Sara Nan got The Bait Tank company to donate a cigarette butt disposal receptacle to St. Johns Riverkeeper. The bait tank has been installed along the riverwalk in Jacksonville to help eliminate this noxious litter.



Bluegrass & Barrels

This summer, a huge crowd joined us for our Bluegrass & Barrels event to celebrate the success of our River Friendly campaign and to bid on our artistically-designed rain barrels. Thank you to Sweetwater Brewing Company, Chew, Take Away Gourmet (TAG), and Southlight Gallery for helping to make the event a huge success.



Rising Tides

We now have a young professionals group – Rising Tides! Members support St. Johns Riverkeeper through a range of social and civic activities. Rising Tides members aren't afraid to get their hands dirty or their feet wet! Check out our



calendar of events and volunteer opportunities and follow us on Facebook: www.facebook.com/SJRK.Rising.Tides

River Report Issued

Recently, Jacksonville University and University of North Florida released the 4th annual State of the River Report for the Lower St. Johns River Basin. You can access the entire report and an easy-to-read brochure at www.SJReport.com.

Education is the Key

By Greg Nagel, St. Johns Riverkeeper Education Director

St. Johns Riverkeeper, JU's Marine Science Research Institute (MSRI), and the Museum of Science and History (MOSH) are partnering with Nemours Children's Clinic to educate the patients and their families about the St. Johns River. Initially, we have provided fun coloring and fact sheets for kids and St. Johns River guidebooks for adults. We are also developing interactive, educational exhibits for several of the patient waiting areas.

The education department is working with the North Florida Council Boy Scouts of America to deliver environmental badge workshops. This has included a kayak trip of Black Creek in Middleburg.

Our comprehensive teacher education initiative funded by CSX is under-way! Educators will receive training, educational materials, an instructional video, and an exploration backpack that includes various "tools" that can be used to explore the river and its tributaries. Contact the education department at 904-256-7022 for more information.

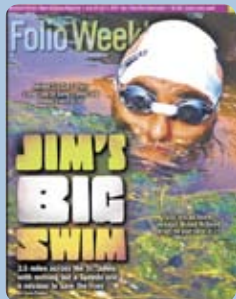
Photos, from top: Guidebook and coloring pages, Greg filming instructional video for teachers, and the classroom backpack.



Fundraising Thank You's!

Thanks to the following businesses and individuals for raising funds and awareness for St. Johns Riverkeeper:

- Sweetwater Brewing Company and Mellow Mushroom collected donations at three Jacksonville Suns games. Sweetwater also held the Jam for the St. Johns, a fundraising event with music and brews aboard a casino boat to benefit St. Johns Riverkeeper.
- Seven Bridges Grille and Brewery made us the beneficiary of a tapping party.
- Jim Alabiso swam 3.5 miles across the river to raise awareness for the St. Johns and the GP pipeline issue.
- Local swamp rockers JJ Grey & Mofro held a fundraising raffle.
- First Coast Outfitters led a benefit kayak trip for 20 people.
- The Alhambra Dinner Theatre and columnist Ron Littlepage designated us as the beneficiary from Ron's celebrity guest appearance during a recent Dirty Rotten Scoundrels show.



- Paul Garfinkel, is donating a portion of sales from his new CD, Songs From Sand Lake.
- Henry Von Genk III donated an amazing painting of the river for our ongoing Oyster Roast raffle.
- Artists and photographers contributed to our rain barrel project, including Will Dickey, Michael Cenci, Marie Thompson, Paul Riley, Joanelle Mulrain, Brandon Pouch, Wendy Houser, Native Sun staff, Miss Kay, and Cathedral Arts Project students.
- Sadler Point Marina donated a portion of boat haul-out fees, Commercial Diving Academy a portion of registration fees, and Bold Bean a percentage of coffee sales.

In total, \$15,611.46 has been raised so far from their efforts to support our advocacy work!

Pint Night

Black Creek Outfitters (BCO) is hosting their first ever Pint Night to benefit St. Johns Riverkeeper on Nov 11 from 6-9 pm. Purchase a pint glass at BCO before or at the event for only \$10 and get one FREE fill up from the guys at Intuition Brewery. The event includes live local music, beer, and food and special Pint Night deals throughout the store.

Calendar

- 2-Hour Boat Trip
Nov 5, 10 am - noon
- PINT NIGHT to benefit
St. Johns Riverkeeper
Nov 11, 6-9 pm
Black Creek Outfitters
- Holiday Boat Trip
Dec 17, 10 am - noon
- 2012 Eco-Heritage
Boat Trips
April 12-13, 14-15

For info: Kelly@
stjohnsriverkeeper.org

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10th Annual OYSTER ROAST



Friday, November 18, 2011, 7 pm
Garden Club of Jacksonville
1005 Riverside Avenue

Join us for live music, silent auction, fabulous food
by Pastice and succulent oysters!

Purchase tickets online at www.stjohnsriverkeeper.org.

\$125 each, or \$75 for ages 35 and younger



Our River of Life by Henry Von Genk III
Oil on Canvas, 36" x 48"

You can still enter the drawing on our website to win
this stunning painting by the featured artist of the
2011 Oyster Roast. Each entry is a suggested
\$100 donation, with only 100 entries available.

Become a member or donate online at www.stjohnsriverkeeper.org.