

# THE KINGFISHER

KEEPING WATCH OVER OUR RIVER



Vol. 9 Autumn 2012

## Riverkeeper Update



There was no way to prepare for the wide range of emotions that charge the daily experience of serving as your St. Johns Riverkeeper. They range from satisfaction to discouragement, from optimism to cynicism, from clarity to bewilderment, from joy to heartbreak. Despite the twists and turns, I tackle each day with great conviction and pride, as we fight together to protect the St. Johns River.

Negotiating for a more protective Georgia-Pacific (GP) wastewater discharge permit has been a journey wrought with contrasting sentiments. It is difficult to feel positive about reducing the impact to the St. Johns River while the underlying threat remains. We have been able to achieve more protective conditions in the current draft permit, but the fact remains that a pipeline will be transporting pollution directly to our river. We can celebrate the fact that GP will finally be required to address its dioxin problem, by removing the most contaminated portion of its settling ponds from the waste stream. But, Florida's Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) is allowing GP too much time to implement the isolation plan.

However, we have not given up and still have an opportunity to demand accountability and convince DEP and GP to do the right thing. During the permit comment period, please contact Governor Scott and DEP Secretary Herschel Vinyard and ask them to require the contaminated pond to be isolated from the waste stream within six months and

Aerial photo of the GP wastewater treatment ponds.  
Photo: Walter Coker



that another round of testing for dioxin take place. We need to put an end to dioxin dumping in our river, and we need to know that the efforts to do so have been successful.

While we must keep the pressure on GP and DEP, other threats also remain on the horizon:

- The Adena Springs Ranch water use permit is pending at the St. Johns River Water Management District (SJRWMD). The applicant recently reduced the request from 13.27 million gallons of water a day (mgd) to 5.3 mgd. However, this massive cattle operation will still add harmful nitrate pollution to an already polluted Silver Springs and will potentially cause further harm to an over-burdened aquifer.
- There continues to be a growing appetite at SJRWMD and in Tallahassee to surplus precious conservation lands that were purchased to protect our water resources. We are closely monitoring this process to ensure that our publicly-owned lands remain in conservation, continuing to benefit us and our river.
- DEP is in the process of overhauling the consumptive use permit (CUP) process in the name of consistency and efficiency. The proposed changes would make water use permits much easier to get, longer in duration, and harder to monitor and to challenge. You can read the letter that we submitted with our concerns on our website blog.
- Also, the environmental review of the proposed river dredging to accommodate bigger ships to Jacksonville's port was recently fast-tracked. We have concerns that the expedited timeframe will compromise the ability of the Army Corps of Engineers to do a thorough review of the potential environmental impacts. We will remain engaged with all of these important issues.

We will continue to fight to protect the St. Johns, armed with facts, logic, and reason. But, we will also embrace all of the fantastic emotions that our river stirs in us. After all, it is our love for the St. Johns that will provide the motivation and resolve to ultimately fulfill our goal of a clean and healthy river.

For the River,  
*Lisa*  
Lisa Rinaman – Your St. Johns Riverkeeper

# International Coastal Clean Up Day

St. Johns Riverkeeper volunteers participated in the International Coastal Cleanup Day at McCoy's Creek, collecting a total of 229 bags of trash that weighed over two tons.

Here are some of the items collected:

20 cigarette lighters	18 shoes
2,310 cigarette butts	6 pieces of clothing
523 plastic bags	72 food wrappers
1,887 plastic lids/caps	11 balloons
247 plastic straws	5 toys
31 plastic utensils	15 cigar tips
9 six pack holders	1 55-gallon drum
1,209 foam cups	22 tires



## News & Notes

Since our last newsletter, here are some of the exciting activities that have taken place and the help we have received to raise critical funds and awareness for St. Johns Riverkeeper (SJRK) and the river.

Want to help? Contact [shannon@stjohnsriverkeeper.org](mailto:shannon@stjohnsriverkeeper.org).

- As a thank you to the restaurants who raised the most money during the Save the St. Johns campaign, we hosted an appreciation sunset boat trip. SweetWater Brewing Company presented us with a check for \$10,000, the total raised by all of the participating restaurants and bars during the campaign.



- Underbelly and Thursday Night Drinking Club generously hosted a fundraiser for us in August.

- St. Johns Riverkeeper volunteers assisted researchers from Jacksonville University for a survey of the dolphin population in the St. Johns River.

- Billy's Boathouse Grille hosted "Waterway Wednesdays" in September, collecting donations and raising awareness about St. Johns Riverkeeper. Jax Water Tours donated its boat and proceeds for nearly 100 eco-tour passengers.

- The fifth annual "State of the River Report for the Lower Basin of the St. Johns" was recently released by researchers from UNF and Jacksonville University. The report shows improvement in some areas but continuing threats in several critical categories. Learn more at [www.sjrreport.com](http://www.sjrreport.com).



- Sun-Ray Cinema donated use of the theatre and the proceeds from "Last Call at the Oasis," a powerful film about the global water crisis. Thanks to everyone who attended.

- We launched a Facebook membership campaign in October to encourage our social media fans to become members. "Like" us on Facebook and join the conversation.



# Clean Water Act Turns 40

In 1970, Florida Governor Claude Kirk said, "If you fall in, you will die of pollution before you drown." Kirk was referring to the 15 million gallons of raw sewage that was dumped into the St. Johns River each day.

Thanks to the passage of the Clean Water Act (CWA), we finally began the process of cleaning up our nation's heavily polluted waterways, including the St. Johns. While the CWA has fallen short of its goals, much progress has been made since it was passed with overwhelmingly bipartisan support in October of 1972.

Join us at Sadler Point on October 24, as we celebrate the anniversary of this landmark legislation and recommit ourselves to the goal of making ALL of our waterways "fishable, swimmable!"

Read more about the Clean Water Act on our website blog: [stjohnsriverkeeper.org/blog](http://stjohnsriverkeeper.org/blog)

SADLER POINT MARINA • OCTOBER 24 • FROM 6 - 9 PM



- Rising Tides organized a 17-mile "Save the Ferry" bike ride from Mellow Mushroom to the St. Johns River Ferry and back.



- St. Johns Riverkeeper staff attended a Citizen's Advocacy Training Workshop led by former Governor Bob Graham and Senator Lee Constantine.



- SJRK and Rising Tides hosted a sunset cruise on the river, featuring river trivia and beer donated by SweetWater Brewing Company.

- Forty-six kindergarten students from St. Mark's Episcopal Day School visited Jacksonville University to learn about the St. Johns River from Jennie Busey,



our education director. The next week, Jennie provided a program and organized a cleanup at Reddie Point Preserve for teachers and staff from the school.



- We have developed a River Friendly Pledge and backpack tag for kids that are distributed during classroom visits and at events. We have received positive feedback from teachers and parents regarding the "river friendly" behavior of the kids who have signed the pledge.



## Calendar

- October 24  
Clean Water Act  
Birthday Party  
Sadler Point Marina
- November 1, 6-9pm  
Pint Night at  
Black Creek Outfitters
- November 3  
Two-hour Boat Trip  
Friendship Fountain
- November 13  
4:30-6pm  
John Moran Presentation  
Jacksonville Main Library
- November 16  
Annual Oyster Roast
- For more info:  
[stjohnsriverkeeper.org](http://stjohnsriverkeeper.org)



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## 11th Annual Oyster Roast

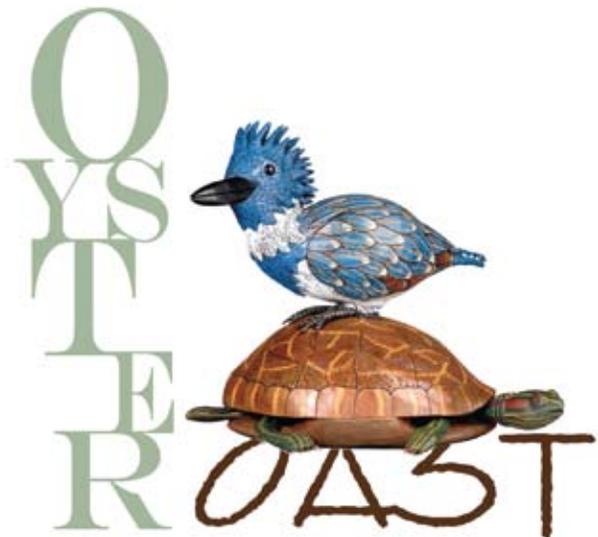
Friday, November 16, 2012, 7 pm  
Garden Club of Jacksonville  
1005 Riverside Avenue

The annual Oyster Roast has become known as one of the best parties of the year.

Join us for delicious food and outstanding entertainment, as we celebrate the St. Johns River and raise funds for the continuation of St. Johns Riverkeeper's effective advocacy, outreach, and education programs.

Tickets are \$125 per person or  
\$75 if you are 35 years of age or younger.

Purchase tickets online at [www.stjohnsriverkeeper.org](http://www.stjohnsriverkeeper.org).



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