

# THE KINGFISHER

KEEPING WATCH OVER OUR RIVER



Vol. 8 Spring 2011

## Riverkeeper Update

I am frequently asked what it will take to protect and restore the health of our river. Adequate funding, effective policies, and rigorous compliance and enforcement of environmental laws are certainly necessary if we are to clean up the St. Johns. However, the most important factor may be the involvement and commitment of each of us, the citizens to whom the river belongs.

With so many people now living within the watershed of the river (over 4 million people), our actions collectively add up to have a significant impact on the health of the St. Johns. When we flush our toilets, fertilize our lawns, use bleached paper products, turn on a light, drive a car, or build a home, we potentially contribute to the problems facing our river. But, by each doing his or her part and being "river friendly," there is no doubt that together we can save our St. Johns River.



So what does it mean to be river friendly? River friendly is carefully considering the consequences of our actions and making thoughtful and wise choices with the health and well-being of the St. Johns River in mind. This involves "getting to know" our river, learning about the issues that impact its health, and using our votes to elect legislators who will work to protect our St. Johns.

It also means using our voices to communicate our concerns and our support for a clean and healthy river. Our river is facing numerous threats, from nutrient pollution to the Georgia-Pacific pipeline to cuts in funding for important restoration projects. The bottom line is that the St. Johns needs us now more than ever before. We need to stand behind our greatest natural resource and economic asset, and let it be known that protecting the St. Johns River is essential to our economy and quality of life.

While being river friendly requires commitment, it doesn't have to be that difficult to achieve. Without too much trouble or expense, we can all be river friendly, and we might just save money in the process. We also receive the satisfaction of knowing that we are doing our part to protect the river and leave a lasting legacy for generations to come.

*Please see page 4 of this newsletter for more information about rain barrels and the St. Johns Riverkeeper River Friendly Campaign.*

# Cleaner GP Campaign

Recently, we launched the Cleaner GP awareness campaign to encourage Georgia-Pacific (GP) to abandon its plans to build a pipeline to the St. Johns River and to pursue alternative solutions to its wastewater pollution problems. We are calling on our members and the public to sign a petition to Governor Rick Scott asking him to require further toxicity testing of Georgia-Pacific's wastewater and to require GP to find an acceptable alternative that will protect the health of the St. Johns River. We also hired a team of water quality and engineering experts to conduct a technical peer review of a key Georgia-Pacific (GP) study that is being used to validate the need for a pipeline to the St. Johns River. The results of this independent engineering analysis indicate that the Georgia-Pacific study is incomplete and does not adequately address important questions regarding GP's wastewater effluent and treatment ponds. You can read the peer review analysis, learn more about this issue, and sign the petition at [www.CleanerGP.com](http://www.CleanerGP.com).



## News & Notes

The new **KIPP** (Knowledge Is Power Program) middle school came on a boat trip with us to experience the river in December 2010.



Our **Jaguars tailgate party** was a blast! Thanks to Sweetwater Brewing Company for donating beer, and to all who braved the rain for a good time at the stadium and the game. We plan to do it again for the upcoming football season!



In March and April, European Street restaurants, Bold City Brewery, and Intitution Aleworks will be collecting donations to help us raise awareness about the river and our work to protect it. Stop in and "raise a glass to a clean river!"

We recently partnered with the Riverside Avondale Preservation Society to present new awards that recognize yards that exemplify river friendly landscaping practices. The recipients of this year's River Friendly Awards are Jake and Pam Ingram and Victoria and Robert Freeman.

# New Website

St. Johns Riverkeeper is excited to announce the launch of our new and improved website. We have incorporated our blog and our interactive virtual tour of the St. Johns River into the new site, so you can find everything you need in one location.

We hope you will find it informative and helpful in providing timely updates about important issues and exciting events. Take a tour of the new site and let us know what you think.



Recently, St. Johns Riverkeeper Neil Armingeon received the annual **Carol and Bob Grimes Environmental Activist Award**. The Grimes Foundation and the award were founded in honor of the late Bob Grimes, Carol's husband, to support the protection of the environment and its wildlife.



A new club, the **River Dogs**, has been formed at the Bolles School to help save our river. Coleman Lay, president and founder of the River Dogs, stated, "My home and my school are on the river and I have seen firsthand the 'green monster'. We would like to bring to the forefront the importance of taking care of our river now." St. Johns Riverkeeper is working with the students to develop projects and activities.



The Bolles School River Dogs

## Volunteer Spotlight

Thanks to all of our incredible volunteers who work so hard for the river. In 2010, our volunteers donated over 2,100 hours! The following volunteers each donated 50 or more hours of their time: Kathy Vaughn (pictured), Maria Barton, Louann Williams, Tom & Vicky Anderson, Chandler Burroughs, Dunncan Pullen, Sarah Nan, and Marti Pounder.



## Calendar

- River Friendly Workshop  
March 9, 6:30 – 8 pm  
Willowbranch Library, JAX  
Attend this FREE workshop to learn how to create a river friendly yard.
- River Day at RAM  
March 12, 10 am – 4 pm  
Riverside Arts Market  
Boat trips, rain barrel art competition, performances, and more.
- River Celebration Day Clean Up  
March 19, 9 am – 11 am  
Find a clean-up site near you: [www.coj.net](http://www.coj.net)  
  
For info: Kelly@[stjohnsriverkeeper.org](mailto:kelly@stjohnsriverkeeper.org)



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## For the River

We are launching the River Friendly Campaign to raise awareness about the impact of our actions upon the health of the St. Johns River and to encourage residents and businesses to adopt river-friendly practices. A key component of the River Friendly Campaign is the Rain Barrel Project, featuring artistically-designed rain barrels located throughout the community to promote water conservation and educate the public about how to be river friendly. We hope to provide informative resources and tools that will help you to make more informed choices to better protect your St. Johns River.

Visit our website for:

- Helpful River Friendly tips and information,
- Information about where to purchase a rain barrel or how to make one yourself,
- A calendar that includes fun and informative River Friendly events and workshops,
- Sign the River Friendly Pledge.



*Sign the pledge and show your support, today.  
Together, we WILL protect our river!*

Contact Kelly at [kelly@stjohnsriverkeeper.org](mailto:kelly@stjohnsriverkeeper.org) to let us know what you do to be river friendly. Also, send pictures of your river-friendly yard and rain barrels.

A special thanks to St. John & Partners for their time and talent in support of this campaign.

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