

Our Mission | To defend the St. Johns River and advocate for its protection.



ST. JOHNS
RIVERKEEPER[®]
For the river. For us all.

WATERSHED WATCH | SUMMER 2020

THE DEEP DREDGE DEBACLE

In May 2020, a federal judge ruled against our April 2017 lawsuit and our attempt to protect our river from the impacts of the ongoing dredging project. We are obviously very disappointed, but will continue our efforts to fortify the St. Johns and secure mitigation to help offset the damage from the deep dredge.

This ruling does nothing to change the fact the dredging will cause more saltwater intrusion, destroy and damage critical wetlands and submerged vegetation, and increase water levels and storm surge in the River.

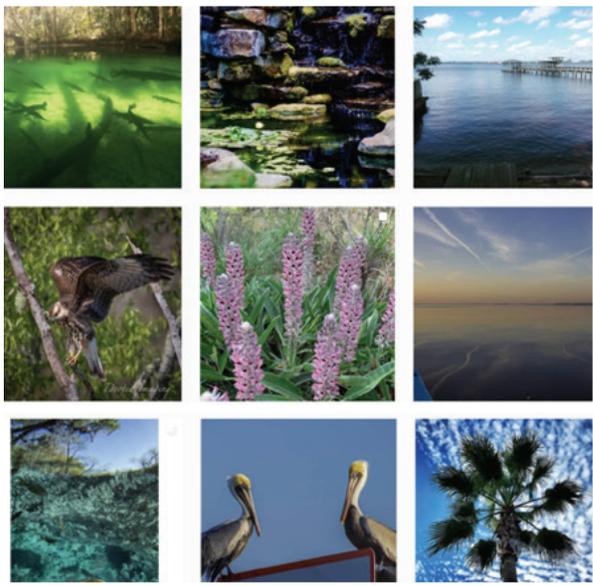
We knew heading into this that the odds were stacked against us and our River. The burden of proof weighs heavy and the law provides wide latitude to the Army Corps in these types of legal matters. But we also knew that we had sound legal arguments and an experienced legal team, legitimate scientific concerns regarding the shortcomings of the Corps' analysis (many of which were shared by the independent peer review experts and local scientists), and the best interests of the River in mind.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2.



ST. JOHNS RIVERKEEPER • 904.256.7591 • StJohnsRiverkeeper.org

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DEEP DREDGE DEBACLE, CONT.

Because of our advocacy and outreach work:

- More post-project monitoring and data will now be collected that can be used to identify potential impacts, better understand the River and hold regulatory agencies accountable.
- We've led the way regarding the impact of rising waters in the River and the need for resiliency and mitigation. Through our River Rising campaign that continues today, there is strong public support to create a more resilient community and to protect our River.
- The City of Jacksonville is currently developing strategies to address rising waters, and there is still an opportunity to secure funding for mitigation.
- A new coalition of civic and environmental groups has been created in the Jacksonville area to advocate for "the adoption of equitable and proactive solutions that address the cause and effects of climate change." Shannon Blankinship, our Advocacy Director, recently assumed the role as Chair of the Steering Committee.

Judge Howard said the decision to deepen the river "in the face of Jacksonville's existing flood risk" is up to elected officials, not something a federal court is allowed to second-guess or "substitute its own judgment on that issue."

Legislation has been introduced to provide JAXPORT with \$70 million from Jacksonville taxpayers to continue dredging the river. Wherever you live, contact Jacksonville City Council President Hazouri and Mayor Curry. Tell them NO funding should be provided from the City without mitigation. If Jacksonville taxpayers are going to subsidize the dredging, then our elected leaders must take responsibility for the damage that will occur to the St. Johns. Our River depends on us as citizens to speak up and demand actions address the impacts of the Deep Dredge, sea level rise, and Central Florida's thirst for more water. We will not give up. Future generations are depending on our collective voice.

HEY, SJRK - LOOK AT THIS!

Nature and our St. Johns River are the healing we all need right now. The natural world's remedies are all around us - we just have to notice.

Take time to notice Nature and beautiful outdoor moments in your home, neighborhood, or wherever you might be. A flower, a bee, or a bird - whatever brings you joy when you're in Nature - we want to see!

We have been blown away by the Nature videos and images from citizens coming in on all areas of social media. Give us permission to share using #HeySJRKLookAtThis so we can brighten up our feeds.



DIGITAL ST JOHNS RIVER PROGRAMS

Research shows that you don't have to travel far (or go anywhere at all) to experience the mental health benefits that Nature provides. Amidst this new digital reality, our team has embraced the challenge. We've been hard at work to consistently develop content that brings the River to you through digital educational webinars, nature videos, and at-home science experiments and River Friendly workshops.

St. Johns Riverkeeper's digital programs are designed to connect River citizens of all ages to our River in hopes that they'll take action - big or small. From advocacy to environmental education, we hope you find a program that inspires you to get more involved and spend more time with our River.

Our digital programs can be accessed on our Home Page at StJohnsRiverkeeper.org and our YouTube page - subscribe now and never miss a video!



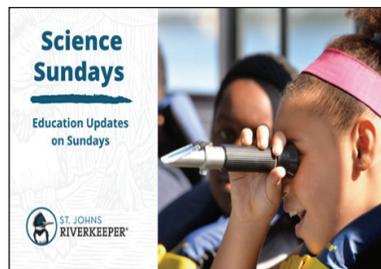
WEBINAR SERIES



SOLUTIONS SERIES



NATURE SKILLS SERIES



SCIENCE SUNDAYS



RIVER FRIENDLY SERIES



NATURALIST SERIES



CENTRAL FLORIDA WATER INITIATIVE

As we all are sheltering at home protecting our families, water planners in Central Florida are busy paving the way to make it easier to withdraw millions of gallons of water from the St. Johns River to fuel unbridled growth.

St. Johns Riverkeeper is meeting with state leaders, attending virtual hearings, and submitting comments calling out errors within the Central Florida Water Initiative (CFWI) 2020 Water Supply Plan that put our River at risk. Permit allocations have been authorized for more than 1 billion gallons of water a day (1064 MGD) putting our springs, our river and our drinking water at risk.

Unfortunately, this plan does not prioritize water conservation, does not incorporate sustainable growth practices, and relies heavily on surface water withdrawals instead of proven, cost-effective conservation strategies.

We continue to urge the CFWI to remove surface water withdrawal projects from the water supply plans and prioritize living within our water means with conservation and sustainable growth. Read more online and take action at stjohnsriverkeeper.org/conservewater.

PLEASE CONSIDER A DONATION TO SUPPORT OUR ADVOCACY WORK FOR THE ST. JOHNS RIVER.



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OYSTER ROAST UPDATE

For over 20 years, we have been the voice and chief advocate for the St. Johns River. We have encountered numerous challenges over the years, but we have never stopped advocating for your river. The current crisis is no different.

Despite the uncertainty posed by the pandemic, we are busy developing plans for this year's Oyster Roast event. We all still need the opportunity to gather in solidarity for the St. Johns - even if we do so virtually. Stay tuned for more information and how you can help. The Roast must go on!

FREE THE OCKLAWAHA

FREE THE OCKLAWAHA

In April, the Ocklawaha River, the largest tributary of the St. Johns, was named among America's Most Endangered Rivers of 2020 due to the ongoing harm caused by the Rodman Dam.

Add your name to our growing list of advocates. Help us reach our goal of 10,000 sign ups by visiting FreeTheOcklawaha.com.

“Restoring the Ocklawaha is bigger than the Ocklawaha. It would help restore the entire St. Johns River.”

Lisa Rinaman, St. Johns Riverkeeper



ADD YOUR NAME TO OUR LIST AT FREETHEOCKLAWAHA.COM AND HELP US MEET OUR GOAL!