

# THE KINGFISHER

KEEPING WATCH OVER OUR RIVER



Vol. 11 Spring 2014

## Riverkeeper Update



So often, we make decisions without considering the big picture. Just look at the proposals to dredge the river significantly deeper, put a massive cattle operation next to Silver Springs, and withdraw millions of gallons of water a day from the St. Johns. Each could have major impacts on the St. Johns River system. Together, they could send the health of our river into a tailspin. Throw in future growth and the addition of more pollution, sewage, manure, fertilizers, chemicals, trash, and loss of

important wetlands, and you have a recipe for disaster. We can't afford to continue making these critical decisions in isolation. Now is the time to utilize a more holistic approach that takes into consideration the entire watershed, both water quality and quantity, and the cumulative impacts of our actions.

We must also begin to address the root causes of our problems and stop ignoring what should be obvious.

**Fact:** We are using water faster than our aquifer can be recharged. It is clear that we must reign in new water permits and allocate our water resources more judiciously. However, the water management district recently gave a new permit to California-based Niagara Bottling for nearly a million gallons of water a day and is likely to say yes to Adena Springs Ranch, the sprawling, water-guzzling project next to Silver Springs.

**Fact:** We have a water use problem, not a supply problem. Instead of prioritizing conservation, our water managers are focused on new

sources, such as risky withdrawals from an already suffering St. Johns.

**Fact:** Dredging will increase the likelihood of saltwater intrusion. Withdrawals will slow the river's flow. This double whammy will mean that pollutants will likely remain in our river longer and in greater concentrations. As the salinity moves farther upstream, we will lose important wetlands, grasses, and trees.

**Fact:** The St. Johns is polluted. Dredging the river, withdrawing surface water, and allowing more development in sensitive areas will only make the nutrient pollution problems worse, potentially increasing the frequency of toxic algae blooms.

**Fact:** The economics don't justify the harm. These projects provide speculative, if not limited, economic benefits for the public. Taxpayers will be forced to pick up the tab for costly cleanup and restoration efforts, and in the case of dredging and withdrawals, expensive infrastructure and construction costs, too. Unfortunately, these projects also do nothing to offset the damage that is likely to occur.

The bottom line is that protecting our river often requires us to step back, take a look at the big picture, consider the facts, and ask ourselves – do the ends justify the means? In the case of these projects, I think the answers are quite obvious – No.

For the River,

*Lisa*

Lisa Rinaman – Your St. Johns Riverkeeper



# Happy Anniversary!

In February of 2004, Jimmy Orth joined St. Johns Riverkeeper as Executive Director. During Jimmy's tenure, we have more than quadrupled our membership and we now have six talented staff members working hard every day to protect and restore the St. Johns.



More importantly, the organization is well regarded as a trusted and credible voice for the river, having successfully tackled many challenging issues and problems impacting the St. Johns. As a result, we have gained significant support from the community and become more influential and effective with each passing year.

Under Jimmy's leadership, our outreach and education programs have also expanded significantly, with full-time education and outreach professionals now on staff. As a result, we have developed numerous highly successful programs and resources, including the St. Johns River Exploration Backpack Project, three award-winning documentary films, lesson plans and curricula, online St. Johns River virtual tour, the Get Your Feet Wet guidebook, and our River Friendly campaign. Jimmy has always believed it is extremely important to get folks out on the river, too. In the last 10 years, we have led nearly 200 boat trips for almost 10,000 people!

Congrats, Jimmy, and here's to 10 more!

## News & Notes

Once again, March is St. Johns River Month! Take our River Friendly Pledge and do your part by using water wisely, chemicals sparingly, and fertilizers responsibly. Plant natives and allow only rain down the storm drain. Visit our website for more River Friendly tips and information about upcoming events and workshops.

The 12th annual Oyster Roast may have been the best yet with over 600 people in attendance! Thank you to our many sponsors and supporters who made it such a success. Want to sponsor the 2014 Roast? Contact [jimmy@stjohnsriverkeeper.org](mailto:jimmy@stjohnsriverkeeper.org).



Thanks to Henry Von Genk III for generously donating an original painting for our Oyster Roast raffle that raised over \$8,600!

The annual Holiday Mingle at our offices allowed us to thank our members and recognize our volunteers. The 2013 award recipients are: Volunteer of the Year – Walton Cheney, River Patrol Chair; Advocate – Jim Draper for his advocacy through art; Educator – St. Mark's Episcopal Day School for their ongoing efforts to educate students about the St. Johns.



The Kingfisher made appearances at the Florida/Georgia game, Julington Creek Boat Parade, Jacksonville Light Parade, and the Yachty Gras Boat Parade. Did you see us?





## Back Off Suckers

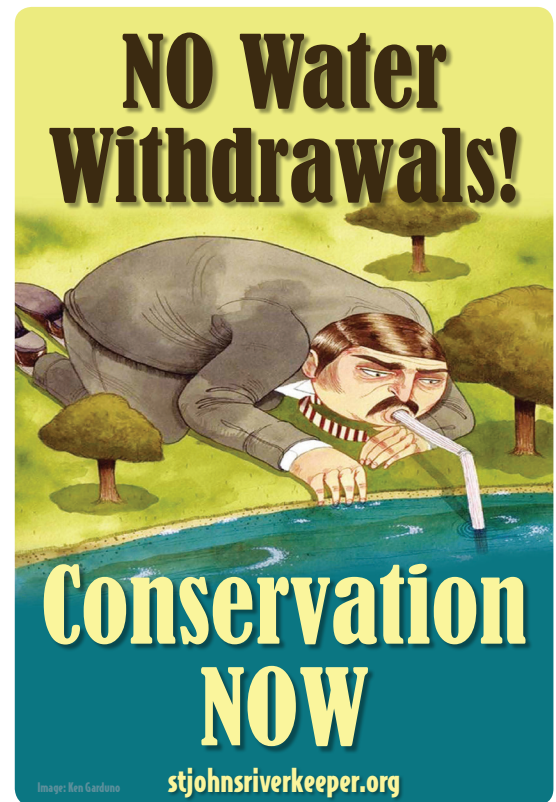
Two draft regional water supply plans (RWSPs) have been released that could forever change the future of our river.

The Central Florida RWSP calls for potentially withdrawing more than 150 million gallons of water a day from the St. Johns and also identifies the Ocklawaha River, the largest tributary of the St. Johns, as a source for potentially millions of additional gallons of water.

The St. Johns River Water Management District RSWSP identifies an additional 125 million gallons of water a day from the St. Johns at an estimated cost of \$1.8 billion and more than 85 million gallons from the Ocklawaha River at an estimated cost of \$2.1 billion.

Join us in letting our elected officials and the water management district know that our rivers are not the solution to our water supply problems, or should we say - water use problems. Help us advocate for the more efficient use of our water resources.

Visit our website for contact information and to learn more.



Last year, we participated in the Citizens Summit where water advocates from around the state collectively created the Floridians' Clean Water Declaration Campaign. We helped launch the campaign in Northeast FL and participated in a rally on the steps of the Historic Capitol in Tallahassee in February. Learn more at [www.wewantcleanwater.com](http://www.wewantcleanwater.com).



River Patrol, our volunteer river watch program, continues to grow, helping us keep a close eye on the St. Johns. Last year, these dedicated volunteers put in nearly 900 hours patrolling our river! Contact [roger@stjohnsriverkeeper.org](mailto:roger@stjohnsriverkeeper.org) to get involved.



Thanks to Boris Kiriloff for making us the beneficiary of his birthday bash! Boris and his Pearl Jam tribute band provided guests with a rockin' concert and great food and

libations. Over \$3,000 from donations and a silent auction benefited St. Johns Riverkeeper!

April is Aveda Earth Month. Numerous Aveda salons in North and Central Florida are organizing events to raise funds for SJRK to protect clean water. Make sure to make an appointment at your local salon!

It's not too late to register for the April Eco-Heritage Boat Trips. We still have a few spots left. Spend two days cruising and exploring the river between Palatka and Sanford. Trips dates are April 10-11 and 12-13. Register online from our Events page or call Shannon at 904-256-7613.

Our college interns, Steven Cerri and Jesse Hanson, have created some outstanding videos that are available on our YouTube channel. Check them out! [www.youtube.com/StJohnsRiverkeeper](http://www.youtube.com/StJohnsRiverkeeper)

Whole Foods of Jacksonville raised nearly \$1,500 for SJRK through their "Donate Your Dimes" program.

SJRK was one of the organizers of the annual Water Education Festival at the Museum of Science and History. Approximately 1,800 adults and children attended the event, and SJRK provided free boat tours of the river.

As part of their 25th anniversary celebration, Black Creek Outfitters raised nearly \$3,000 to help support our advocacy work.

The inaugural Inshore Xtreme Kayak Fishing Tournament, March 21-22, at Browns Creek Fish Camp benefits Riverkeeper! [inshorextremechallenge.com](http://inshorextremechallenge.com)

## Calendar

- March 21-22  
Inshore Xtreme Kayak  
Fishing Tourney  
Proceeds benefit SJRK  
inshorextremechal-  
lenge.com for more info
- March 29  
River Friendly Boat Tour,  
Jax Zoo
- April 5  
Arlington History  
Boat Tour
- April 10-11 and  
April 12-13  
Eco-Heritage Boat Trips  
between Palatka and  
Sanford
- Learn more on our  
website.



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## 19th Annual St. Johns River Cleanup

Saturday, March 22  
8 a.m. – Noon

\*Times may vary at some locations.

Join Keep Jacksonville Beautiful, The City of Jacksonville, and St. Johns Riverkeeper for the largest cleanup ever with over 70 site locations throughout Duval County.

Beautify your neighborhood and streets and prevent trash from entering storm drains and making it to the river. Clean one of the many riverfront parks and shoreline of the St. Johns. Get out on the water in your kayak, canoe, or boat and help remove that hard to reach trash and debris.

Get a team together from your office, church, scouts, or civic group and join the effort. Cleanup supplies will be provided.

[www.stjohnsrivercleanup.com](http://www.stjohnsrivercleanup.com)

- Clay County St. Johns River Cleanup is March 15.  
For more info, call Tania Jolley at 904-269-6374 or 284-6374.
- Volusia County St. Johns River Cleanup is April 12.  
For more info, contact Darrell Abrahamson at 386-736-5927, ext. 12424.



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