

THE KINGFISHER

KEEPING WATCH OVER OUR RIVER



Vol. 8 Summer 2011



Dear Members and Supporters:

Let me begin by expressing our sincere appreciation for your membership support. Our members are the lifeblood of St. Johns Riverkeeper. Because of you, our St. Johns River has a strong voice and a dedicated team of passionate professional advocates working tirelessly every day for its protection.

Unfortunately, we are unable to fund the important work of St. Johns Riverkeeper with annual membership dues alone. As a result, we are asking that you consider an additional gift to help us continue our effective advocacy, outreach, and education programs on behalf of your St. Johns River.

Thanks to you, we are making progress for our river.

- We are still working to improve Georgia-Pacific's (GP) wastewater and stop the Palatka mill from simply building a pipeline to the St. Johns River. Learn more at www.cleanergp.com.
- Our Water Policy Group (WPG) continues to effectively educate community leaders and elected officials about the river. The WPG is a group of business and civic leaders that we formed to proactively advocate for policies that better protect our water resources.
- Our Education Director recently provided training for Boy Scouts camp counselors, assisted with curriculum development at Mayport Middle School, and helped lead the Marine Science Summer Camp at Jacksonville University.
- Our River Friendly Campaign and Rain Barrel Project has been successful in raising awareness and educating the community about how to make more informed choices for our river. Learn more by visiting our website.

These are just a few examples of the important work we are doing on behalf of you, your family, and our most important natural resource, the St. Johns River.

However, there is much left to do. Our river continues to suffer from nutrient pollution, triggering toxic algal blooms and fish kills. Plans are still in the works to withdraw millions of gallons of water a day from the river for irrigation. Governor Rick Scott recently vetoed a \$10 million investment in the budget for river restoration projects to improve the health of the St. Johns.

We are clearly at a critical crossroads in the future of the St. Johns, and we need your help to make sure that our river is adequately protected for generations to come.

By making an additional gift to St. Johns Riverkeeper (or joining if you are not a current member), you will be making an investment in your community and the future of your St. Johns River. Thank you for your consideration and ongoing support.

For the River,

Neil Armingeon
Your St. Johns Riverkeeper

* If you recently donated or are unable to make an additional gift at this time, please give the enclosed envelope to a friend and ask them to join.

* If you or someone you know is interested in applying to be the next St. Johns Riverkeeper, you can find the job description and more information on our website.

Cleaner GP Campaign Update

As of this writing, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) had not made a final decision on the permit for the Georgia-Pacific (GP) paper mill in Palatka to use a pipeline to directly discharge polluted wastewater into the St. Johns River.

As you may know, St. Johns Riverkeeper hired Dr. Bob Hayes, a chemical engineer with 50 years of experience in the pulp and paper industry, to do a peer review of a study used by GP to justify the pipeline. Hayes found significant technical errors in the study and recommends a comprehensive chemical engineering study of the mill and its entire waste stream.

DEP hired Dr. Lucinda Sonnenberg, a highly regarded chemist, to provide technical expertise that DEP needed to sufficiently evaluate the permit decision.

Both Dr. Hayes and Dr. Sonnenberg independently came to the same conclusion - more information is needed to thoroughly understand and pinpoint the sources of GP's pollution problems, such as dioxin, and to sufficiently identify and evaluate all of the alternatives to the pipeline.

DEP is not ready to issue a permit and viable alternatives have not been thoroughly explored. Visit CleanerGP.com for the latest update and to sign the petition to Governor Rick Scott and DEP Secretary Herschel Vinyard to stop the pipeline.



News & Notes

In March, Neil Armingeon, your St. Johns Riverkeeper received the annual Mayor's Award for Environmental Achievement. [Photo: Wes Lester]



Thanks to the following businesses, organizations, and individuals that recently raised funds and awareness for St. Johns Riverkeeper: Pier 17 Marine Inc. donated 48% of sales on its 48th anniversary. The European Street Cafes, Bold City Brewery, and Intuition Ale Works collected donations and displayed rain barrels and coasters to promote the River Friendly Campaign. Local Mellow Mushroom locations donated a portion

of net proceeds on a designated day in April. Whole Foods collected donations for us through their Donate your Dime campaign. Sweetwater Brewing Company and Native Sun held a social event fundraiser for us. Kayak Amelia donated all proceeds from their June 18th kayak trip. Native Sun Natural Foods Market made us their Green Apples Charity in March. Down to Earth Farm sold flowers. Thursday Night Drinking Club provided donations from its monthly social event in June. PB&J Productions hosted a community benefit picnic. Bold Bean Coffee, Black Creek Outfitters, Commercial Diving Academy, and Sadler Point Marina continue to donate a percentage of sales on an ongoing basis. In total, \$8,340.86 was raised to support our advocacy work!



Education is the Key

By Greg Nagel, St. Johns Riverkeeper Education Director

Youth education is a key component of our work to protect the health of the St. Johns River.

In just the past few months, we have partnered with many organizations and schools, including the Rainforest Alliance, Suzie Tolbert Elementary, Mayport Middle School, Cathedral Arts Project, Solace for Children, JU's Marine Science Research Institute (MSRI), Jewish Community Alliance (JCA), Boy Scouts of America, and the Jacksonville Zoo, to name a few. Thanks to our members and donors, we continue to provide valuable educational services, such as educator training, curriculum development, boat trips, cleanups, and river-related programming.

This summer, we are developing a River Exploration backpack to help teachers, students, and groups access and learn about the St. River near where they live. We are grateful to CSX for supporting the backpack project and our education department.



Derek Trucks and Susan Tedeschi designated St. Johns Riverkeeper as the recipient of a \$20,000 donation from a concert that they performed in June. Thank you Derek and Susan for your generous support and great music!



Volunteer Genora Crain-Orth led a River Friendly Cleaners Workshop sponsored by Grassroots Natural Market to teach participants how to make their own green household cleaners.

More than 30 people attended a River Friendly Yards Bike Tour in April. Thanks to our partners, Jake and Pam Ingram, Robert and Victoria Freeman, Riverside Avondale Preservation and e2ride Bike Tours.

We are grateful to Eco Latino and Panache for making St. Johns Riverkeeper the beneficiary of the Love Ur Mother Conservation Fashion Show, celebrating our river and environment. Models wore clothing all made from repurposed and recycled materials like plastic bottles, newspapers, bags, and soda tabs!

We recently partnered with River Network and our local Anheuser-Busch plant for a river clean-up of Blue Cypress Park and Reddie Point Preserve. Over 65 employees and family members participated.



Elite professional bass angler, Peter Thliveros, wrapped his boat to raise awareness for St. Johns Riverkeeper.



On July 17, Riverkeeper member, Jim Alabiso, will swim 3.5 miles across the river from Fleming Island Marina to Mandarin's County Dock to raise awareness for the St. Johns. Go, Jim, go!

Calendar

- Sunset Boat Trip
July 22, 6:30-8 pm
- Bluegrass and Barrels
July 29, 5-9 pm
Southlight Gallery, Jax
Live music and rain barrel auction.
- Young Professionals Event
Aug 5, 6-8 pm
Bold City Brewery
- Oyster Roast
Nov 18, 7 pm
Garden Club of Jacksonville

For info: Kelly@
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Bluegrass and Barrels

Friday, July 29, 5-9 pm
Southlight Gallery
100 N. Laura Street, Jacksonville
(gallery entrance on Forsyth St.)

Live bluegrass music by Grandpa's Cough Medicine, art, beer, wine, and light hors d'oeuvres. Silent auction includes river paintings by Jim Draper, Paul Ladnier and Allison Watson. Bid on one of our artistically wrapped or painted rain barrels from our River Friendly Campaign to take home with you.

2-Day Eco-Heritage Boat Trips

ALL ABOARD! Spend two days traveling and exploring the majestic St. Johns River!

October 20-21
(Palatka to Sanford)

October 22-23
(Sanford to Palatka)



Trip includes:
Historical re-enactors, fascinating speakers (including author Bill Belleville), stops at Blue Springs and Hontoon Island, wonderful wildlife-viewing opportunities, lodging, delicious lunches, and chartered bus transportation.

Cost: \$325 per passenger.

Reservation forms are available on our website or call 904-256-7591.

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