

THE KINGFISHER

KEEPING WATCH OVER OUR RIVER



Vol. 10 Summer 2013

ACTION ALERT



Dear Members and Supporters:

On one point we can all agree – everyone wants a productive economy that affords opportunities for good jobs and economic prosperity. However, we won't achieve that objective by killing the goose that laid the golden egg. The bottom line is that safeguarding our river is good for our economy and quality of life. We also must recognize that some economic activities are simply not compatible with the goal of having a clean and healthy St. Johns.

Unfortunately, many of our legislators in Tallahassee have been working overtime to eliminate or weaken environmental safeguards, under the guise of economic stimulus. In reality, these changes are counter to the economic interests of our state and are putting our already imperiled waterways and aquifer at even more risk. The fact is that our economic well-being, health, and quality of life are inextricably linked to how effectively we protect our environment.

We simply cannot afford to sacrifice our state's most valuable assets for the politics of the moment and the fortunes of a few.

A classic example is Adena Springs Ranch. This massive cattle operation owned by Frank Stronach, a politically-connected Canadian billionaire, is seeking a permit to withdraw millions of gallons of water a day from the aquifer to raise more than 15,000 head of cattle within several miles of Silver Springs.

Tragically, these world-famous springs have already experienced significant declines in flow and increases in nutrient pollution over the last several decades. Historically, Silver Springs has been a major tourist attraction and economic engine for surrounding communities and an important source of freshwater for the St. Johns River.

Despite their importance, Silver Springs and the Silver River are nearly on life support. This is due to impacts from encroaching development, over-pumping of groundwater, runoff of fertilizer from farms and lawns, and poorly treated sewage and manure.

We must focus on restoring these national treasures, not making things worse by adding more nutrient pollution and pumping more water from our already stressed aquifer. Adena Springs Ranch is simply the wrong project, in the wrong place and could be the final nail in the coffin of our beloved Silver Springs.

We are asking for your help to stop Adena Springs Ranch from causing further harm to Silver Springs, the Silver River, and the St. Johns. Please, read the enclosed fact sheet and make a generous contribution today. We need your help to hire the technical and legal support that are needed to fight this ill-conceived project. Please, join with us to Save Silver!

WE NEED YOUR HELP!
*Please, read the enclosed factsheet
and make a pledge of financial support.*

For the River, Lisa Rinaman
Your St. Johns Riverkeeper

To Dredge or Not To Dredge

As you probably know, the Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) is studying the possibility of dredging the St. Johns River from 40 to 47-feet. Thirteen miles would be deepened, from the mouth of the river to just west of the Dames Point Bridge.

As a result, we have assembled a team of experts to analyze the ACOE's draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and assess the harm that may occur to the St. Johns. We have serious concerns about salinity changes, erosion, impacts to fisheries, more frequent algal blooms, and the loss of wetlands, aquatic grasses, trees and habitat. In addition, the mitigation plan to offset the anticipated damage to the river is woefully inadequate, doing virtually nothing to offset the harm that would inevitably occur.

We are also concerned that the report lacks necessary detail and analysis. Some conclusions are vague, some concerns are not even addressed, and many critical studies have not yet been completed.

It is imperative that we make our voices heard and ensure that this proposal is thoroughly vetted and evaluated. The community must have all of the facts and must give careful consideration to all potential costs and impacts to our region's most important natural resource, the St. Johns, when weighing this important decision. We simply can't afford to roll the dice with our river's future.

News & Notes

Thanks to all of the businesses, organizations, and people who continue to support St. Johns Riverkeeper (SJRK).

During St. Johns River Month in March, St. Johns Riverkeeper (SJRK) sold nearly 200 rain barrels, partnered with area garden centers to promote River Friendly plants and products, collaborated with the Cummer Museum of Art & Gardens on numerous River Friendly programs, expanded the annual St. Johns River Cleanup in partnership with Riverside Avondale Preservation and Keep Jacksonville Beautiful, provided a River Friendly Yards lunch and learn workshop at CSX, and hosted a River Friendly Bike Tour with e2ride Bike Tours.

SJRK partnered with two project entries in the first annual One Spark event in Jacksonville. Brunet-Garcia is creating the Riverwalk Project app to showcase health, history, fitness, and the ecology of the river along the Riverwalk. Kathy Stark's Wilderness Project is using art to raise awareness about the unique natural areas of Northeast Florida.



During Earth Month, Aveda salons throughout northeast and central Florida organized a variety of fundraisers as part of their Clean Water initiative. All told, the Aveda salons raised over \$20,000 for our advocacy work for the river!



Engine 15 brewed their second annual Amber Waves brew to benefit SJRK, and Kayak Amelia donated proceeds from an amazing guided tour of the river's estuary.



For the past 6 years, Black Creek Outfitters has donated 1% of all kayak and paddling accessory sales to SJRK. This year, BCO donated \$10,000! They continue to demonstrate an unwavering commitment to the local community and our St. Johns River.

We partnered with FSCJ and Home Depot to install Florida-Friendly plants, garden boxes, and rain barrels at Justina Elementary School.



SAVE SILVER SPRINGS

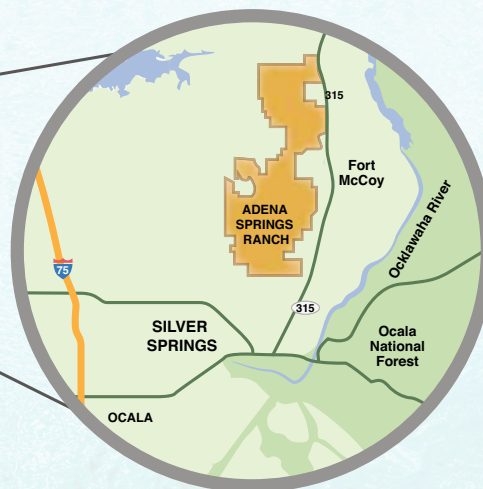
Tragically, the world-renowned Silver Springs have experienced a significant reduction in flow and a devastating increase in nutrient pollution over the last several decades. **Now, a massive cattle operation, Adena Springs Ranch, is seeking a permit to withdraw millions of gallons of water each day from the aquifer that feeds the springs.** The Ranch, located within miles of this National Natural Landmark, will use the water for a slaughterhouse and more than 15,000 head of cattle.

Silver Springs, Florida's first major tourist attraction, has drawn visitors from all over the world to its magical waters. For centuries, the springs have also provided an important source of freshwater to the St. Johns River. Water flows from the aquifer out of spring vents into the Silver River, a Florida Outstanding Water, and then to the Ocklawaha, an Aquatic Preserve and the largest tributary of the St. Johns.

Despite its importance, the health of Silver Springs has declined significantly over the last several decades.

Flow has declined by over 50%, nearly 92% of the fish biomass has disappeared, and algae covers most of the spring and river bottoms. This is the result of encroaching development, over-pumping of groundwater, runoff of fertilizer from farms and lawns, and poorly treated sewage and animal waste.

How could anyone consider causing further harm to this beloved natural treasure? Adena Springs Ranch would further reduce the flow and increase the nutrient pollution in Silver Springs, the Silver River, the Ocklawaha, and the St. Johns River from excessive groundwater withdrawals and runoff and leaching from massive amounts of manure and fertilizer. Please, help us Save Silver and protect the St. Johns by stopping this permit and working towards restoration!



Concerns

- Average flows at Silver Springs during the past decade have **declined by 32%** compared to the average of the previous 70 years, and are **down by 50%** during the past two years.
- Adena Springs Ranch is seeking to withdraw an average of **5.3 million gallons of water per day** (mgd). Under certain conditions, Adena could pump up to nearly 25 mgd and 14.4 mgd over the course of a month. That is more water than is used by the entire city of Ocala.
- Silver Springs is already suffering from nitrate-nitrogen concentrations **more than 25 times higher** than historic levels, a result of excessive fertilizer use, manure from area farms, and poorly treated sewage.
- According to the 2011 Silver Springs Restoration Plan, "limestone is at or near the land surface in large portions of the Silver Springs basin, meaning **"nutrients applied to the land surface can reach the Floridan Aquifer rapidly."**
- The state has developed a pollution reduction goal (TMDL) that **calls for a 79% reduction** of nutrients going into Silver Springs and the Silver River from existing sources.
- Adena Springs Ranch will include over 15,000 head of cattle, creating massive amounts of manure and requiring tons of fertilizers. This will make the existing water quality problems in Silver Springs and Silver River much worse and restoration efforts more difficult and expensive to accomplish.



Here Is What You Can Do

1. Contact Governor Rick Scott and the St. Johns River Water Management District (SJRWMD).

- Ask them to **OPPOSE** the permit for Adena Springs Ranch.

Governor Rick Scott
400 S. Monroe St.
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0001
(850) 488-7146
rick.scott@eog.myflorida.com

SJRWMD Governing Board
4049 Reid Street
Palatka, FL 32177
Member profiles and e-mails:
sjrwmd.com/governingboard

Submit public comments to the SJRWMD staff:
sjrwmd.com/facts/AdenaSpringsRanchCUP.html
Hans Tanzler, Executive Director
(386) 329-4104, htanzler@sjrwmd.com

2. Make a tax-deductible contribution to St. Johns Riverkeeper to help us hire technical experts and legal support and to advocate for the protection of Silver Springs and the St. Johns River.

Donate online at stjohnsriverkeeper.org
or mail check to:
St. Johns Riverkeeper
2800 University Blvd. N.
Jacksonville, FL 32211

3. Learn more and get involved.

stjohnsriverkeeper.org
904-256-7591
jimmy@stjohnsriverkeeper.org

DREDGING THE ST. JOHNS : BUT AT WHAT COST?

A FORUM ABOUT THE POTENTIAL IMPACTS FROM DEEPENING THE RIVER

www.stjohnsriverkeeper.org

TUESDAY, JULY 23, 2013 AT 6 P.M.

Wyndham Jacksonville Riverwalk
1515 Prudential Drive, Jacksonville 32207

St. Johns Riverkeeper is hosting a forum to discuss concerns and potential impacts from the proposed Jacksonville Harbor Deepening Project. A panel of experts will provide an overview of the proposed dredging and its impacts and the shortcomings of a study recently released by the Army Corps of Engineers that assesses the environmental impacts, and economic costs and benefits, of the project. Learn more about the forum and this important issue on our website. This is a free event and open to the public. Please join us.

We continue to partner with UNF on an ongoing St. Johns River oral history project. In May, Dr. Jillian Smith and her UNF students screened "River Lives," a series of documentary films that celebrate the cultural life of the river.

In June, our staff and volunteers organized a cleanup for over 50 Anheuser-Busch employees and their family members.

On July 6, we partnered with Riverside Arts Market (RAM) to host the first annual River Ruckus, a family festival to celebrate the St. Johns River.

It was a huge success. Thanks to JumpingFish, Freedom Boat Club Jacksonville & St. Augustine, All Wet Sports, First Coast Outfitters, Expedition Florida 500, and so many more for making it all happen!



awareness for SJRK as part of SweetWater's annual "Save Our Water" campaign. Learn more on our website.



This summer, our Education Director and volunteers are providing programs for numerous summer camps and youth programs, including JU's Marine Science Camp, Communities in Schools, Lutheran Social Services, Breaking Ground Contracting, Cummer Museum of Art & Gardens, Museum of Science & History, and Jewish Community Alliance. We also have developed partnerships with numerous schools and organizations, such as St. Marks and the Rainforest Alliance.



Rising Tides, our young professionals group, continues to partner with the Jacksonville Jaycees to organize monthly cleanups of McCoy's Creek.

Contact Roger@stjohnsriverkeeper.org to join our River Patrol and learn more about other volunteer opportunities. Find out about Rising Tides and how your business or organization can partner with SJRK by contacting Shannon@stjohnsriverkeeper.org.

Calendar

- July 21
Rising Tides McCoy's
Creek Cleanup
- July 23
St. Johns River
Dredging Forum,
Wyndham Jacksonville
Riverwalk
- July - Labor Day
SweetWater "Save Our
Water" Campaign
- Oct 10 - 13
Eco-Heritage Boat Trips
between Palatka and
Sanford
- Nov 22
Oyster Roast at Garden
Club of Jacksonville

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Eco-Heritage Boat Trip

Join us for the 35th and 36th Eco-Heritage boat trips along the majestic St. Johns River. Cost is \$350, which includes boat and bus transportation, overnight stay, incredible speakers, wonderful wildlife-viewing opportunities, and delicious food.

October 10 - 11 Palatka to Sanford

October 12 - 13 Sanford to Palatka

Call 904-256-7591 to reserve your spot today.



Oyster Roast Raffle

Enter the drawing for an original painting by the 2013 Oyster Roast featured artist, Henry Von Genk, III. Retail value is \$7,500. Each entry is a suggested \$100 donation, with only 100 entries available. Learn more and enter online. Call 904-256-7591 for more information.

Note: the image above is a sample of the artist's work, only. We'll post the actual piece on our website when complete.

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