



Friends of St. Sebastian River

P.O. Box 284 ❖ Roseland, Florida 32957-0284

May 2009

website: www.fssr.org email: info@fssr.org

The mission of the Friends of St. Sebastian River is to maintain and improve the health and beauty of the St. Sebastian River and its watershed.

FISH RESEARCH IN THE ST. SEBASTIAN RIVER

It's not very often that we have a repeat performance for someone giving a presentation at our general meetings. This month though we are happy to have **Jynessa Dutka-Gianelli** back to bring us up to date on research that she and the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission's Fish and Wildlife Research Institute are conducting on some of the fish species in the St. Sebastian River.

Jynessa's last presentation to the Friends was many years ago when she was a graduate student at FIT. At the time she gave a presentation on her research on snook in the St. Sebastian River, with Dr. Grant Gilmore as her mentor. Jynessa now works for the FWRI Indian River Lagoon Laboratory office in Melbourne on fish research throughout our area. Her presentation will give us an overview of the projects they are working on. She will also be talking about their research findings on the impact to the fish in the St. Sebastian River from the muck dredging project. The dredging has been an ongoing project to improve the water quality of the river, for the last three years. This fall the dredging project should be completed.

The meeting will be **Tuesday, May 26, 7:30 PM** at the North Indian River County library in Sebastian.

GEORGE SCHUM MEMORIAL AWARD

George Schum was a long time member of our board of directors. He passed away in April 1997 and the award is given in memory of his spirit of volunteering and community service. The award is given to a Sebastian River High School senior who has participated in similar activities and has shown an interest in environmental issues.

We are pleased to announce that this year's winner is Amanda Hatton. Amanda has volunteered at the Sebastian Inlet State Park, the annual Pelican Island Wildlife Festival and the Indian River County Sheriff's Explorers. Amanda plans to pursue a degree in oceanography at Florida Institute of Technology.

This year we have also increased the scholarship that is part of the George Schum Award, to \$500. We plan to keep the scholarship at this level for the foreseeable future.

IN MEMORY OF ANNE DANN

Anne Dann, our longtime Board member, passed away in late April. Anne and her husband, who predeceased her, were longtime supporters of the Friends, having come to Sebastian several years ago from the Miami area.

Anne was a great lover of nature and was also a Master Gardener. Many of you may have been the beneficiary of her assistance through the Indian River County Extension Service. We will miss her assisting our organization too. We would like to express our deep sympathy and best wishes to Anne's family.

FRIENDS OF ST. SEBASTIAN RIVER – THE FIRST TWENTY YEARS

The Friends is turning 20 years old this year – officially in June. And we have all of you to thank for it, as we couldn't have survived without your support over these many years! We can't thank you enough, but we will attempt to do so with a celebration. We are planning a party for sometime in the fall. So if you want to help out, or have any ideas on how we should celebrate this milestone, please let us know.

Frank DeJoia, one of our founding members, provided the following history of the Friends.

“The Friends of St. Sebastian River was incorporated as a nonprofit corporation on June 30, 1989. Our name was changed in 1998, with the official recognition of the historical name of our local river.”

“The idea of forming an advocate organization to protect and improve the St. Sebastian River and its watershed originated with the Roseland Property Owners Association (RPOA). At several board meetings in early 1988 the abuses to the River and the surrounding uplands were discussed. Some of the abuses were: 1) speeding boats injuring and killing endangered manatees, 2) high coliform bacteria counts due to dairy farms in the flood plain of the River, 3) residential construction very close to the River, 4) inadequately treated effluent from the Barefoot Bay sewage treatment plant entering the North Prong of the River, etc. At the RPOA board meeting of May 10, 1988, director Frank DeJoia made a motion to organize a separate group to look after the affairs of the River. He believed that the River was very important not only to Roseland, but to a larger area of north Indian River County and south Brevard County. His motion was approved and an organizational meeting was advertised and held at the Roseland Community Center on September 20, 1988.”

“The Friends started out informally in the latter part of 1988 electing a board of directors and officers and initiating monthly board meetings and bimonthly general meetings. Our first president was Bill Rogers followed by Scott Taylor, who served as president for several terms. Our current president, Tim Glover, has served continuously since 1995.”

“John Evans, a Roseland attorney, assisted greatly, at no cost to the Friends, in getting us incorporated as a non profit group. John has continued to advise the Friends on legal matters throughout our 20 years.”

“As we near our 20th year we should be very proud of our accomplishments. We are recognized as the most respected and long lived environmental group in north Indian River and south Brevard Counties. We have played a positive role in many issues that concern the River and its adjoining habitats.”

“Perhaps the most important accomplishment during these years has been the heightened awareness that we have brought to our members and the general public in matters of concern to both the St. Sebastian River and Indian River Lagoon.”

“Some of our major accomplishments/issues we've advocated for are:

- 1) Advocating for the acquisition of the St. Sebastian River Preserve State Park (formerly Buffer Preserve), acquired through the Florida Conservation and Recreation Lands (CARL) program.
- 2) Removal of dairy farms from the River flood plain.
- 3) Adoption of boat speed limits and ban of airboats on the River.
- 4) Referendum to purchase environmental/conservation lands in Indian River County.
- 5) Building setbacks on the River.
- 6) Limit effluent discharge from Barefoot Bay sewage plant.
- 7) Dredging of the River.
- 8) Establishment of the George Schum Award for Sebastian River High School senior.”

“Our success depends on your support and we thank everyone for helping over the many years. We need your continued support, volunteering and vigilance to safeguard the St. Sebastian River. There is always more work that can be done and your help and support makes it possible for us to do more. So here's to another successful 20 years!”

EARTH DAY SHIRTS

We hope you had the chance to stop by the Earth Day Celebration in Riverview Park last month. It was a beautiful day and a fun event, with a dedication of a plaque in the park to Pete Harris.

We had a new Earth Day shirt this year with an image of a frog. Wow, the shirts were so popular that we sold out of most of them in a flash! Therefore we ordered a bunch more right away. They should be available later this month – check with us at our upcoming meeting on May 26. If you can't make the meeting, we will be glad to take your request and get one to you as soon as they arrive.

To see an image of what this year's shirt looks like, you can view an image of it on the "Merchandise" page of our website. Shirts are available in adult sizes large through 2XL.

PHARMACEUTICALS IN DRINKING WATER

We have often written about and even had presentations to our membership on how to help prevent stormwater runoff into our local waterways. Hopefully you all are aware of the problems with nutrients and other contaminants that can easily get washed into storm drains, canals and rivers, which eventually end up in the Indian River Lagoon. Those contaminants are then concentrated in the Lagoon and cause algae blooms and other water quality problems.

Another water contamination problem has been growing though. That problem is of pharmaceuticals in our waterbodies and even drinking water. The Associated Press reported recently that small amounts of pharmaceuticals have been found in the drinking water of 41 million Americans. They get there of course from the normal process of excretion, but also because for years the recommended procedure for disposing of old/unusable medications was to flush them down the toilet. This practice has caused medications such as hormone-disrupters, antibiotics, and narcotics to be detected in widespread areas. Some wildlife are showing the effects of "feminization" due to hormone-disrupting drugs.

The effect of chronic low-level exposure in humans is not understood but may include hormonal cancers, reproductive disorders and antibiotic resistance. More information can be found on the Internet. For some basic additional information, please visit the EPA website at www.epa.gov/ppcp.

FINANCIAL UPDATE

March 1, 2009 – April 30, 2009

Balance 3/1/09	\$5072.87
Receipts	878.25
Total	5951.12
Disbursements	892.68
Balance 4/30/09	\$5058.44

George Schum Memorial Award Fund

Total to date \$519.00

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Monday, May 18, 7:30 PM
FL Panther History and Mgmt
 Chris Belden, USFWS
 Pelican Island Audubon Society
 Community Center, Vero Beach
 info: www.pelicanislandaudubon.org
 or 772-567-3520

Tuesday, May 19, 7 PM
Adapting to Sea Level Rise in FL
 Randy Parkinson, Space Coast
 Climate Change Initiative
 Turtle Coast Chapter, Sierra Club
 North IRC Library, CR 512,
 Sebastian
 info: <http://florida.sierraclub.org/turtlecoast/>
 (Note – this presentation will be repeated by the SCCCI at the Melbourne Beach Community Center)

Tuesday, May 26, 7:30 PM
IR Lagoon Shoreline Restoration
 Jynessa Dutka-Gianelli,
 Friends of St. Sebastian River
 North IRC Library, CR 512,
 Sebastian

Saturday, June 13, 9 AM
Coastal Preserves Alliance
Kayak Poker Run
 Dale Wimbrow Park, Sebastian
 Reservations – call Kayaks, Etc. at
 772-794-9900

Monday, June 22, 7 PM
Hubbs-Sea World Research
Institute/Florida
 J.B. Kump, Executive Director, FL
 Development
 North IRC Library,
 CR 512, Sebastian
 Pelican Island Preservation Society
 info: www.pelicanislandfriends.org

Please visit the "Meeting Info/Events" page of our website for more events!

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Roseland, Florida 32957-0284



APPLICATION FORM

The Friends of St. Sebastian River depends on member support for programs of conservation and education.

**Individual \$10/year Family \$15/year
Corporate \$50/year**

Name: _____

Address: _____

_____ Phone: _____

Email: _____

Special interests, concerns or expertise: _____

Please check here to allow us to use your contact info on our membership list in the "Members Only" section of our website. To restrict use of any info, list here: _____

Please mail your completed application and dues to:
P.O. Box 284, Roseland, Florida 32957-0284

NOTE: The date on your mailing label is the month/year when your dues are next due. Thank you.

Officers for 2009

President Tim Glover
Vice President Frank Wegel
Secretary Gayle Heath
Treasurer Sherry Shipley

Directors for 2009

Paul Barker Tom Bauer
Mike Beck Buzz Herrmann
George Koraly Anne Putman
Lynn Stieglitz Bruce Zingman

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Jerry & Susan Olson
Bonnie & Ital Veron

CORPORATE SPONSORS

About Kayaks/Steve Philipson
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