



# Friends of St. Sebastian River

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

January 2016

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website: [www.fssr.org](http://www.fssr.org) email: [info@fssr.org](mailto:info@fssr.org) ph: 772-202-0501

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.

## **THE MAGICAL, MYSTICAL, MANATEE TOUR!**

Mistaken for mermaids, eaten by pioneers, loved by children, and saving lives in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, manatees are possibly the world's most misunderstood and underestimated creature. They've been called stupid, fat, non-native, slow, and graceless. But is any of that true? Discover the myths and uncover the strange facts about our state marine mammal: solid bones, marching molars, clutching flippers, and surprising feats of intellect.

John Warner is a manatee expert and both he and his wife, Diane Morgan, are docents at the Manatee Observation and Education Center in Ft. Pierce, and have been involved with the Manatee Project at Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institute, also of Ft. Pierce. Mr. Warner will provide a presentation of amazing manatee facts, and perhaps some mermaid lore, but undoubtedly more than you ever realized you didn't know about manatees!

You'll also have the chance to get a close up, hands-on view of a manatee skull, flippers, and rib. Mr. Warner will also discuss the manatee's current conservation status, and discuss the safeguards for human-manatee interactions.

The January meeting is also our Annual Meeting, at which current Friends members will be voting for this year's slate of Directors. Please see the related article in this newsletter for more information.

The meeting will be Tuesday, January 26th, 7:30 pm at the North Indian River County Library, 1001 Sebastian Blvd. in Sebastian and everyone is welcome to attend.

## **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON MANATEES**

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission website offers lots of information on manatees, as well as educational resources and downloads. Visit them online at <http://myfwc.com/manatee>.

In our newsletter a couple of years ago, we had an article about the "Manatee Alert" app. Here is the story once again, with a link to more information:

A Florida-based corporation, EarthNC, through their conservation venture Conserve.IO, has teamed up with Save the Manatee Club to help boaters reduce the chance of hitting and harming manatees in Florida waterways, with the free "Manatee Alert" app. This smart phone-based map displays instructive visual alerts, notifying boaters when they are approaching manatee speed zones. It also helps facilitate the reporting of injured manatees and manatee harassment to the proper authorities to ensure urgent help where needed. See more at:

[www.savethemanatee.org/news\\_feature\\_app\\_alert\\_10-13.html](http://www.savethemanatee.org/news_feature_app_alert_10-13.html)

## **2016 BOARD OF DIRECTORS ELECTIONS**

The election of our Board of Directors is held at our annual meeting in January each year. The nominees for 2016 are Tom Bauer, Jane Schnee, and Lynn Stieglitz, all incumbents.

Current Friends members are eligible to vote for Directors. If you have not renewed, you may do so at the meeting, by mailing your dues (see the membership form on the back of this newsletter), or online via our website, through the PayPal service. As of January, memberships are considered delinquent. For more information about membership and renewal, please visit our website at [www.fssr.org/membership.htm](http://www.fssr.org/membership.htm).

There are openings available on our Board and we welcome new ideas and help. If you are interested in being a Board member, the only requirements are to maintain a current membership, and have the time and interest to participate. If you are interested in being on our Board, let us know, or attend the meeting.

As per our bylaws, Officers are selected by the Board at our February Directors' meeting.

There are opportunities to help in other ways too. If you are interested in more information, see the "Contact Info/Volunteer" page of our website, or contact us – see the contact information on the front page of each newsletter. Also see the related article below for a couple of new volunteer opportunities.

## **2015 ENVIRONMENTAL ENHANCEMENT AWARD**

Each year we review applications for our annual Environmental Enhancement Award. Consideration is given to individuals, businesses, or organizations that we believe have done the most in the past year, to help protect and preserve the St. Sebastian River and its surrounding habitat.

The recipient of our Award for 2015 is the City of Sebastian. The City has been addressing ongoing issues with stormwater for many years; a difficult issue within the City, due in part to early development, when regulations were less than adequate to address stormwater issues. Today the City has established a Stormwater Utility to help with ongoing maintenance of stormwater conveyance, mitigation, and treatment.

The City of Sebastian was the first municipality in Indian River County to establish, and subsequently strengthen, a fertilizer ordinance. The ordinance is a helpful component of efforts to protect and heal our surrounding waterbodies, due to the unique soil conditions of Florida.

Sebastian has also been a strong proponent of the Indian River Lagoon Coalition and the establishment of the Indian River Lagoon Council that will manage the Indian River Lagoon National Estuary Program, offering space within City facilities for the offices of the new Council.

Additionally, the City has received the Florida League of Cities 2015 Environmental Stewardship Award for its stormwater monitoring program. Therefore we are pleased to present the City of Sebastian with our own 2015 Environmental Enhancement Award, and encourage the City to continue its efforts to improve water quality and habitat for all residents and species that call Sebastian home!

## **PROJECT UPDATES WITH VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES**

Several years ago, the Friends participated periodically in removing invasive Brazilian pepper plants in and around the St. Sebastian River. We worked for a number of years removing the peppers at Dale Wimbrow and Donald MacDonald Parks, with a member who provided his dedicated service and chain saw skill. In addition to our own work days, a few of our members also worked with a Marine Resources Council employee dedicated to Brazilian pepper eradication throughout the St. Sebastian River area.

The MRC has not had a dedicated coordinator for work in our area for some time, and the Pelican Island Audubon Society has suggested that our two organizations should coordinate to begin this habitat restoration work once again. We are interested in finding folks who would like to help, and at least one person to be a liaison to the MRC to coordinate efforts and materials needed. The MRC may also be able to provide a volunteer to help coordinate the efforts, and it requires at least one person certified to apply the necessary herbicide, to kill the pepper plant.

If you are interested in helping in any way with this work, please contact us, the Pelican Island Audubon Society, or the MRC at 321-725-7775. The MRC always has a need for volunteer assistance in many areas and activities, so if you are not interested in getting involved in this project, check with them for other opportunities.

Another recent project we have been working on is to develop an informational handout for each of several trails around the St. Sebastian River, to begin leading walking tours in the near future. We are working on mapping the trails and overlaying them on maps and aerial photos, along with other details, for each walk/trail. Expanded details, information, and photos will also be posted on our website, and ultimately we would like to be able to create “virtual tours” for each trail, so that everyone can enjoy our beautiful river! If anyone is interested in volunteering for this project, one opportunity is to help photograph wildlife, scenery, plants, etc. along the trails. This will be an ongoing effort to capture the changing habitat, flora, and fauna that can be seen in the different seasons throughout the year. You would need to provide your own camera, and the ability to take macro shots would be very helpful.

#### **FRIENDS FEATURED IN THE VERO BEACH MAGAZINE**

For those of you who receive the Vero Beach Magazine, you probably have already discovered that we are featured in the January 2016 issue! We thank the Magazine for their interest, and especially their Senior Writer, Ann Taylor, for her complimentary article, and photographer Greg Hills. Greg is a wonderful photographer (especially considering what he could do with our mugs!) and you may be interested in seeing more of his work by visiting his new gallery in the Village Shops of Sebastian, or online at [www.greghillphoto.com](http://www.greghillphoto.com).

We will have a few extra copies of the magazine at our meeting this month, and we should have a “reprint” of the story available on our website in the near future. Thanks to Vero Beach Magazine, and all our great members, for your support!

#### **YARD SALE**

We are holding a yard sale once again this year, to help raise funds for our annual George Schum Memorial Award, which is presented to a graduating Sebastian River High School senior each year. We would greatly appreciate any items you may have to donate to the sale. The event will be held Friday, February 12<sup>th</sup> (one week later than originally advertised), and we will be accepting items the week prior to the sale. If you have items you need to get rid of prior to that time, or something large that needs to be picked up, let us know and we will work on arranging for pickup and storage.

If you would like to help with the sale, we would welcome any assistance. And be sure and stop by and buy! The event will be held at About Storage, 25 Airport Dr. West, across from Dale Wimbrow Park on Roseland Road.

### **CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

Monday, January 18, 7:30 PM  
**Bitten: My Unexpected Love  
Affair with Florida, Andrew  
Furman, Ph.D.**

Pelican Island Audubon  
Vero Beach Community Center  
2266 14<sup>th</sup> Ave., Vero Beach  
info:  
[www.pelicanislandaudubon.org](http://www.pelicanislandaudubon.org)



Thursday, January 21, 7 PM  
**TBA**

FL Native Plant Society,  
Eugenia Chapter  
195 Oslo Rd at the  
Audubon House  
info: 772-567-1565



Monday, January 25, 7 PM  
**Indian River Lagoon, Did You  
Know/Status Update – Heather  
Stapleton, Environmental  
Learning Center**

Pelican Island Preservation  
Society  
North IRC Library  
1001 Sebastian Blvd.  
772-202-0697



Tuesday, January 26, 7:30 PM  
**Magical, Mystical,  
Manatee Tour – John  
Warner**

FSSR  
North IRC Library  
1001 Sebastian Blvd.  
info: [www.fssr.org](http://www.fssr.org) or  
772-202-0501

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

# Friends of St. Sebastian River

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

## APPLICATION FORM

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

**Youth (under 18) free — Individual \$10/year**

**Family \$15/year — Corporate \$50/year**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Special interests, concerns or expertise: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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

This newsletter is available on our website and delivery by email for current members. We encourage email-only delivery to save funds and paper! Email us at the address on the front to request email delivery.

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## Officers for 2015

President . . . . . Tim Glover  
Vice President . . . . . Buzz Herrmann  
Secretary . . . . . Gayle Heath  
Treasurer . . . . . Bill Brennan

## Directors for 2015

Tom Bauer . . . . . Jane Schnee  
Lynn Stieglitz . . . . . Bruce Zingman

## WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

George Shaw

## CORPORATE SPONSORS

About Storage  
Roseland Community Association  
Tropical Kayak Tours