



Friends of St. Sebastian River

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

July 2011

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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.

SUMMERTIME AND THE LIVING WON'T AS EASY AS IT USED TO BE!

July is a vacation month for us as usual and we will not be having a General Meeting in July. Our next meeting will be September 27 and we'll have more information about that meeting in our September newsletter.

In the meantime, we suggest that you start reading up on and learning about development issues and growth management regulations. Why? Keep reading the excerpt below from an editorial by Charles Pattison, President of 1000 Friends of Florida. As we mentioned in our last newsletter, Gov. Scott signed into law legislation in early June that guts Florida's growth management regulations, and the department with such oversight responsibilities – the Department of Community Affairs, is in the process of being dismantled.

“In keeping with his campaign promise, in signing HB 7207 Gov. Rick Scott may have unknowingly created millions of new jobs for Floridians, even for those who already have full-time positions.”

“While under Florida's previous growth management system the state provided checks and balances over unwise local government planning decisions, thanks to HB 7207 this job now rests squarely on your shoulders.”

“Did we mention this position is unpaid?”

“Job responsibilities include attending local city and county meetings and public hearings. Please monitor and speak out on proposed changes to the local comprehensive plan, the plan that guides growth and development in every community.”

“Be vigilant, because while under previous law this plan could only be amended twice a year, now it can be changed at every single commission meeting.”

“In this new job, pay particular attention to who pays the costs associated with new development. It used to be that the developer had to pay for new roads, sewers, schools, and other infrastructure and services associated with the new development. Now local government can decide that the taxpayer should pick up some or all of these costs instead.”

“Developers used to have to show that their projects were financially feasible and that there was a need for the new development. HB 7207 has eliminated these requirements and local governments no longer need to evaluate feasibility or need.”

For more information, please visit the 1000 Friends of Florida website at www.1000friendsofflorida.org.

SAWFISH IN THE INDIAN RIVER LAGOON

Smalltooth sawfish are year-round residents of peninsular Florida. They occur in a wide range of habitats, most commonly those located within a mile of land, such as estuaries, river mouths, bays or inlets. In late winter and spring, females give birth to live young, each about 2.5 feet long. Adults are thought to be long-lived and may grow to be 16 to 18 feet long and weight 700 pounds.

The species was once a common sight off Florida's coastline, especially in the late 1800s to early 1900s. The population has severely declined in the United States over the last century due to unintentional overfishing (the rostrum [“saw”] becomes easily entangled in fishing nets) and a low reproductive rate,

typical of most sharks and rays – its relatives.

Smalltooth sawfish have been protected in Florida since 1992 and were listed as endangered in 2003. Most of the remaining population is concentrated in Southwest Florida, from Charlotte Harbor to the Florida Keys. But they are also seen on occasion in the Indian River Lagoon. A sea turtle research crew accidentally ensnared one in 2010 – reportedly the first recorded sighting of an adult sawfish in the lagoon since 1935! Since then there have been a handful of reported sightings and a dead sawfish was recovered from the St. Lucie area a few months ago.

John Waters, manager of the National Sawfish Encounter Database, said that sawfish encounters and reports have been increasing in Florida's waters, but that researchers have far too little information to estimate populations.

"We have reason to believe that sawfish populations are increasing, but the time frame is still 100 years before they reach historic levels," he said.

Because very little detailed information is known about the biology and ecology of the smalltooth sawfish, scientists with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) need your help. Report a sawfish sighting by sending an email to sawfish@myfwc.com or by calling 941-255-7403. Include the date and time, location, estimated length of each sawfish including the rostrum, the water depth and any other relevant details.

You can also report it to the National Sawfish Encounter Database: Phone 352-392-2360, e-mail sawfish@flmnh.ufl.edu or online at <http://flmnh.ufl.edu/fish/sharks/sawfish>.

Source: tcpalm.com, "Florida Monthly", May 2011, "Indian River Lagoon Update", Summer 2010

LOPRESTI AVIATION FIRST SATURDAY BREAKFAST TO BENEFIT FSSR

LoPresti Aviation holds a monthly fund-raising breakfast, to benefit various charitable organizations in our area. They have chosen the Friends as the beneficiary of their August event! Unlike their usual presentations on aviation topics following the breakfast, next month's presentation will be given by Florida Master Naturalist and co-owner of the Florida outdoor Center, Kristen Beck.

Kristen will give a presentation on a Sebastian Kayak Adventure. "I am a nature show host out on the water. I enjoy teaching people to enjoy the water, the woods and the wildlife", says Beck.

LoPresti's serves an excellent full hot breakfast beginning at 9 AM for a suggested donation of \$8 per person, with the presentation beginning at 10 AM. The event is held in their hangar at the Sebastian Airport, 210 Airport Drive East and there are lots of planes and toys to view too.

For more information about this event, please see the LoPresti online newsletter at www.speedmods.com/newsletter/11/fs-reminder-aug.htm or call 772-562-4757. You will also find information on LoPresti Aviation's facebook page at www.facebook.com/pages/First-Saturday/165186736852292.

ENVIRONMENTAL ENHANCEMENT AWARD

This award is given annually by the Friends to an individual or business, that has enhanced the environmental quality of the St. Sebastian River area, by one of the following criteria: 1) Landscaping – using environmentally friendly plants (i.e. mostly natives), or pest plant removal projects; 2) Water quality projects – storm water runoff control, muck removal or pollution reduction (i.e. fertilizers/chemicals, installation of sewers, etc.); 3) Open land conservation – donation or purchase of conservation easement; 4) Erosion control – planting of appropriate plants along vulnerable areas.

If you know of someone or a business in our area that you believe qualifies this year, please let us know. Look for our application forms at our September meeting, on our website, at our display at select public events, or you can call Anne Putman at 772-388-3666. Nominations need to be received by October 31st.

MONTHLY FRIENDS GATHERING

Just a reminder that we continue to meet monthly, following our Board meetings, at Capt. Hiram's for a friendly "gathering". We hold our Board meetings at Hiram's and adjourn to the beach at 7 PM to meet up with any Friends members who want to join us for a social get together. Please feel free to join us on the beach

for a visit and a relaxing bite or drink. And we'd love to hear your thoughts and a how goes it on things you observe on and around the St. Sebastian River. Our Board meetings are the second Tuesday of the month, except August – we'll be on vacation next month.

FLORIDA WILDLIFE MAGAZINE NOW ONLINE

For many years the Friends has been sponsoring the "Florida Wildlife" magazine at the North Indian River County Library. The magazine is published by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) and contains a wide variety of articles and information on wildlife watching and conservation, outdoor recreation, hunting, fishing, along with great photography.

In a cost saving measure, the FWC has discontinued production of the magazine in print but will now make it available only online to everyone for free. You can access the current and back issues at www.floridawildlifemagazine.com. You will need the free Adobe Flash Player in order to view the magazine online. Flash is free, safe and quick to download and install.

NATIONAL RIVER CLEANUP

Our American Rivers "National River Cleanup" event was held on May 7 and we thank everyone who helped out! We collected lots of trash as usual, but perhaps less "unusual" items this year.

Thanks to the volunteers who helped out on the water; some of them bringing their own kayaks to join it. And thanks to Mike & Kristen Beck of the Florida Outdoor Center for providing kayaks for free for the volunteers. Also thanks to Bruce Zingman and the Sebastian Property Owners Association folks for their efforts to cleanup up along the lagoon front. The members of the City of Sebastian Natural Resources Board also joined in and cleaned spoil island IR 1 in the lagoon. Finally we thank Keep Indian River Beautiful (KIRB) for the cleanup supplies and t-shirts they provided to our volunteers! All help is appreciated and thanks to everyone for helping us keep our river clean.

You may find more information on other cleanup events throughout the country on the American Rivers website at www.amrivers.org/cleanup.

FINANCIAL UPDATE

May 1, 2011 – June 30, 2011

Balance 5/1/11	\$5770.37
Receipts	15.00
Total	5785.37
Disbursements	1112.85
Balance 6/30/11	\$4672.52

George Schum Memorial Award Fund

Total to date \$8.00

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Saturday, July 23,
8 AM – 12:30 PM

Treasure Coast Waterway Cleanup

Marine Industries Association
of the Treasure Coast
info:
<http://tcwaterwaycleanup.com>



Saturday, July 23, 2 & 7 PM
Florida premier of the
new documentary

This Is Your Ocean: Sharks

Jim Abernethy,
Scuba Adventures
Harbor Branch
Oceanographic Inst.
5600 US 1 North, Ft. Pierce
Fee, rsvn. required call
772-242-2559 or online at
www.fau.edu/hboi
info: www.thisisyourocean.com



Saturday, August 6, 9 AM
LoPresti Aviation
"First Saturday" Breakfast
Sebastian Kayak Adventure
Kristen Beck, FL Outdoor Center
210 Airport Drive East
772-562-4757
info: www.speedmods.com



Ocean Conservancy's 26th
Annual International
Coastal Cleanup
Saturday, September 17, TBA
info:
[www.oceanconservancy.org/
coastalcleanup](http://www.oceanconservancy.org/coastalcleanup)

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

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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 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.

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Officers for 2011

President Tim Glover
Vice President Mike Beck
Secretary Gayle Heath
Treasurer Sherry Shipley

Directors for 2011

Paul Barker Tom Bauer
Buzz Herrmann Anne Putman
Lynn Stieglitz Bruce Zingman

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Lucas/Lisa/Colin Kline

CORPORATE SPONSORS

Roseland Community Association
Kayaks Etc.