



# Friends of St. Sebastian River

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

March 2012

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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 INDIAN RIVER LAGOON – WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED IN THE LAST 50 YEARS?**

Dr. Grant Gilmore, Senior Scientist, Estuarine, Coastal and Ocean Science (ECOS) will be the speaker for our General Meeting this month. Dr. Gilmore has been studying the Indian River Lagoon and surrounding estuarine habitats for almost 40 years. He specializes in ichthyology or the study of fishes and has spent much time researching some of the rare and endemic species of the St. Sebastian River.

One of the obvious impacts affecting the health of the Indian River Lagoon is development along its shoreline and within its water shed. One important indicator of the health of the lagoon is its seagrasses. Much research has been done on seagrasses, especially over the recent past, and there were observations of increasing coverage and improving water quality, until the last couple of years. Dr. Gilmore will be talking about some of the recent changes that are causing concern for the lagoon. He will also be talking about some of the recent threats to fish in the St. Sebastian River, some of which are only found in our river, in the U.S.

The meeting will be Tuesday, March 27, 7:30 PM at the North Indian River County, 1001 Sebastian Blvd. in Sebastian. The meeting is free and all are welcome to attend.

## **FLORIDA WILDLIFE CORRIDOR EXPEDITION**

On January 17, 2012, a 1000 mile expedition over a 100 day period was kicked off to increase public awareness and generate support for the Florida Wildlife Corridor project.

The Florida Wildlife Corridor aims to protect and restore connected landscapes throughout the Florida peninsula to create a viable corridor from the Everglades to Georgia.

Some of the goals of the project are to: protect and restore habitat and migration corridors essential for the survival of Florida's diverse wildlife, continue to safeguard the St. Johns River and water supply for central and north Florida, and sustain the food production, economies and cultural legacies of working ranches and farms within the corridor.

For more information on the expedition and project, please visit them online at [www.floridaswildlifecorridor.org](http://www.floridaswildlifecorridor.org).

*Florida Fish and Wildlife News*, February 2012, Florida Wildlife Federation

## **FEDERAL JUDGE RULES FLORIDA MUST ENFORCE LIMITS ON SEWAGE, MANURE AND FERTILIZERS**

A decade of delays in settling limits on sewage, manure and fertilizer contamination in Florida waters ended in mid-February with a ruling by the federal court in Tallahassee.

"Florida political and environmental leaders have been struggling for 20 years to come up with a way to stop huge green toxic algae outbreaks that plague Florida lakes and rivers," said Earthjustice attorney David Guest.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency decided 14 years ago that limits on the pollutants that feed slime outbreaks on lakes and streams were necessary. Three years ago, EPA and the Florida Department of Environmental Protection agreed that specific pollution limits must be quickly implemented – but efforts to establish limits were met by a massive campaign by polluting industries to stop or delay the new rules.

The judge agreed that the EPA's approach was necessary to replace a 35-year-old Florida rule that required studies when algae outbreaks take place but did nothing to prevent them.

Earthjustice is now challenging the ineffective standards to control this pollution proposed by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection. Like the old rules, the proposed rules only require studies when an algae outbreak takes place, which can take five to ten years.

*Florida Fish and Wildlife News*, February 2012, Florida Wildlife Federation

## **NATIONWIDE LAWSUIT ATTEMPTS TO FORCE EPA TO LIMIT NUTRIENT POLLUTION**

Environmental groups are suing the Environmental Protection Agency to force the federal government to curb an overdose of nutrients from farms and cities that end up in the nation's rivers, lakes and coastal waters. The groups say the nutrients cause toxic algae blooms and the massive low-oxygen "dead zone" that crops up every summer in the Gulf of Mexico.

Environmentalists said Wednesday they hope lawsuits in federal courts in New Orleans and New York will force the EPA to stem the influx of nutrients such as nitrogen and phosphorous into the waterways.

The suit, filed in New Orleans, asks the federal agency to set nutrient standards for states in the Mississippi River valley while the suit in New York aims to get the agency to update its nutrient standards for publicly owned sewage treatment plants.

Nutrient pollution isn't only a Gulf problem, said Glynnis Collins, the executive director of the Illinois-based Prairie Rivers Network.... She said nutrient-rich waters have led to toxic algae blooms in many places.

"They can sicken people, pets and livestock," Collins said. "It's a worldwide story. We have to get a handle on it. It's crazy not to."

Robin Craig, an environmental law expert at Florida State University College of Law, said nutrient pollution is "definitely on EPA's radar as the next step forward in implementing water quality protection."

Associated Press, March 15, 2012

## **FLORIDA LEGISLATIVE SESSION UPDATE**

One of the pieces of legislation that we reported on here in our last newsletter would have redefined the high-water mark and the designation of what is public or private property. Rep. Tom Goodson, whose district covers much of the area in the St. Sebastian River watershed, introduced this legislation. We are happy to report that this legislation died in committee.

Some additional legislation that was being considered in this year's session, was a bill that would have preempted local statutes and ordinances having to do with restrictions on fertilizers. In many areas of Florida, there is no big pipeline dumping pollution into our waterways. Because of the low elevation/high water table and the porosity of Florida's soils, inappropriate use of fertilizers is a major contributor to water quality degradation. So we were happy to learn that this bill also failed to pass. But it is not the first and likely the last time that this type of legislation will be introduced, with backing from the fertilizer industry.

Governor Scott signed into law, the legislation that allows Florida to override federal water quality standards, in favor of a more flexible threshold. This issue is one that we have participated in with the Clean Water Network for a number of years. It is currently under litigation from the Florida Wildlife Federation, so we hope for improvement in the standards the state has passed.

There was some legislation favorable to Florida's water quality. A bill passed that improves the restrictions signed into law last year, restricting the way the state's Water Management Districts operate. This year's legislation reverses many of those limitations. We are grateful this legislation passed as other legislation had been proposed that would have further increased the legislature's oversight and politicization of WMD's operations.

This year's legislature also provided some funding for Everglades Restoration, but less than proposed by Governor Scott. And the Florida Forever program received some minimal funding that will at least keep the program alive.

**2012 OFFICERS, DIRECTORS AND MORE**

At our January 2012 meeting, current FSSR members elected this year's Board of Directors. And as per our Bylaws, Officers were selected by the Board at our February Directors meeting. Russell "Buzz" Herrmann was selected to replace outgoing Vice President Mike Beck. We would like to thank Mike for his service to the Friends as a Director and VP, and congratulations to Buzz as our new VP.

We would also like to thank Paul Barker for his many years of service as a Friends Board member. Paul did not run for re-election this year as he and his wife Meg recently moved out of the area.

We could always use new members for our Board or any of our Committees. If you are interested, please let us know! You can contact us at the email address on the front of our newsletter, or give us a call at 772-202-0501.

As mentioned in a recent email to our members, we put out a call for help with some upcoming events that we are participating in the next few months. Thanks to those who helped at the Pelican Island Wildlife Festival! The next event we will be participating in is the Goby Fest on March 24 from 10 AM to 4 PM at the St. Sebastian River Preserve State Park. Then on April 21 we will participate in the City of Sebastian Earth Day Celebration at Riverview Park in Sebastian. If you would like to help at the FSSR booth at either of these events, please call Buzz at 772-589-9811.

Finally we are planning a St. Sebastian River Cleanup. We usually hold this event in May each year, but are planning to hold the event on Saturday, April 28 this year, as part of the Indian River County "Day of Service" event. The details are yet to be worked out, but if you are interested in participating in the cleanup, either on land or on the water, let us know by email or call 772-202-0501.

<b>FINANCIAL UPDATE</b>	
January 1, 2012 – February 29, 2012	
Balance 1/1/12 .....	\$6730.53
Receipts .....	0.00
Total .....	6730.53
Disbursements .....	434.09
Balance 2/29/12 .....	\$6296.44
George Schum Memorial Award Fund	
Total to date .....	\$561.00

**CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

Tuesday, January 24, 7:30 PM  
**50 Years of Indian River  
 Lagoon Research**  
 Dr. Grant Gilmore  
 FSSR  
 North IR County Library  
 1001 Sebastian Blvd., Sebastian



Monday, March 26, 10 AM  
**Goliath Grouper**  
 Sr. Sarah Frias-Torres,  
 Ocean Research & Cons. Assoc.  
 Majestic Theater  
 940 14<sup>th</sup> Lane, Vero Beach  
 info: www.teamorca.org  
 fee and reservations,  
 772-467-1600



Saturday, April 21, 9 AM - 1 PM  
**Earth Day Celebration**  
 Natural Resources Board  
 City of Sebastian  
 Riverview Park, Sebastian  
 info: 772-589-5330



Monday, April 9, 6 PM  
**Right Whale Research**  
 Jim Moir, Marine Resources  
 Council  
 North IR County Library  
 1001 Sebastian Blvd., Sebastian  
 info: www.pelicanislandaudubon.org  
 772-567-3520

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

# Friends of St. Sebastian River

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.

## 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 2012

President . . . . . Tim Glover  
Vice President . . . . . Buzz Herrmann  
Secretary . . . . . Gayle Heath  
Treasurer . . . . . Sherry Shipley

## Directors for 2012

Tom Bauer . . . . . Anne Putman  
Lynn Stieglitz . . . . . Bruce Zingman

## WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

David & Maureen Henkel  
Don & Kathy Horner

## CORPORATE SPONSORS

Roseland Community Association