



# Friends of St. Sebastian River

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P.O. Box 284 ❖ Roseland, Florida 32957-0284      November 2011

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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.

## **FISH IMPACTS OF RIVER DREDGING**

A dredging project to remove muck deposits from the St. Sebastian River was conducted from 2006 to 2012. Dr. Richard Paperno of the Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission's Fish & Wildlife Research Institute will give a presentation on their research of the impacts to the rare and endemic fish species in the river.

Concerns that the dredging activity may cause a long-term impact on the river's fauna, particularly the rare neotropical fishes (e.g., opossum pipefish, bigmouth sleeper) prompted the study by the state, which ran from 2004 until March of this year, with monthly sampling in the river.

Dr. Paperno has been at the FWRI since 1989 and has served as Research Administrator of the Indian River Field Laboratory since 1990. His areas of research interest and expertise are in fisheries science and fish ecology, with a focus on estuarine systems.

The meeting will be Tuesday, November 22, 7:30 PM at the North Indian River County Library at 1001 Sebastian Blvd. in Sebastian. The program is free and all are welcome to attend.

## **NEXT ON THE STATE'S HIT LIST – WATER QUALITY/MANAGEMENT**

Mass layoffs at the state agency most responsible for protecting Central Florida's waters and wetlands were ordered by Gov. Rick Scott and lawmakers as a break for taxpayers, but the forced departures of key regulators appear to be driven by backlash from the development industry.

At the St. Johns River Water Management District, a development consultant on the agency's citizen board of directors asked last week that all senior staff members resign because the district has gotten a "black eye" for the way it treats those who apply for permits to consume large quantities of water or destroy wetlands. (Orlando Sentinel, August 15, 2011)

A black eye for protecting wetlands? I hope this board member is aware that the first President Bush declared "no net loss" of wetlands as far back as 1988!

The United States Geological Survey stated in 2002 on wetland resources: "The people of the United States have begun to recognize that wetlands have numerous and widespread benefits. However, many of the goods and services wetlands provide have little or no market value. Because of this, the benefits produced by wetlands accrue primarily to the general public."

Since then more people have begun to recognize the "ecological services" that not only wetlands, but all natural resources and ecosystems provide the "general public." These services have such high value that it would not be financially feasible or virtually impossible to replace their functioning through some sort of man-made, high-tech innovation on a scale to support the recent

record-breaking, now 7 billion humans on our planet. How do you replace the function of sedimentary filtering/purification of water, the production of oxygen by photosynthesis, the carbon sequestration of the oceans or the climate regulation (or lack thereof) of so-called green house gases?

Statewide, on November 2<sup>nd</sup> the EPA gave preliminary approval of Florida's inventive water quality rules. The rules do not designate criteria for nutrient levels at the "end of the pipe", which means discharges of particular sources are not specifically monitored (and therefore not effectively regulated –ed.). Linda Young, of the Clean Water Network, said the lack of source-specific limits means that water bodies are turned into large mixing zones that literally dilute the harm caused by specific polluters.

"The state government's single-minded focus in protecting the economic and political goals of the regulated interests in Florida is short-sighted and undemocratic," Young said in a response to the October 6 (water rules) revisions. "The citizens and taxpayers of Florida understand the importance of clean water to our health, economy and quality of life."

Monica Reimer, an attorney for EarthJustice, which filed the (2008) lawsuit that forced EPA to enforce the clean water standards (in Florida), said the proposed rules appear to contain a number of loopholes that will allow the state to acknowledge the federal standards while maintaining more flexible state standards. "It appears they are saying that, we don't think there is a cause and effect relationship between nutrients and bad things happening in the stream," Reimer said.

The Sierra Club reported: "Nutrient pollution is one of the most widespread causes of Florida's declining water quality; leading to harmful algae outbreaks and fish kills that foul our bays and beaches, lowers real estate values and impacts our tourism-based economy. The toxins produced by nutrient-fueled harmful algal blooms can also make our waterways unsafe for livestock and pets and cause various human health problems."

"To more effectively control nutrient pollution, the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) asked Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) over a decade ago to develop numeric nutrient criteria (NNC) –proactive pollution limits that require pollutant reductions before water quality becomes seriously degraded. After 11 years of the FDEP not doing so, the EPA proposed effective nutrient criteria for Florida."

"Now, FDEP is proposing its own rule that weakens Florida's already ineffective nutrient pollution standards. The FDEP draft rule lacks true numeric nutrient criteria for all fresh and marine waters, does not protect downstream waterbodies, and does not require nutrient pollution reductions in waters that exceed nutrient pollution thresholds."

Why is the federal government continuing to reward Florida for dragging its feet on cleaning up dirty waters? The latest gift to the state's big polluters and their enablers in Tallahassee came this week when the Environmental Protection Agency gave tentative approval to new state pollution standards. The rules are far short of what Florida waterways need — a testament to politics winning out over science.

Environmentalists are right that the EPA's concessions need to be seen in their totality. The agency agreed to exempt entire industrial operations from the clean-water rules. It created loopholes for meeting the law, a waiver process for polluters to wiggle out from it, and delayed enforcement. Even this week, the EPA almost apologized to the state for having to intervene as part of complying with a court order. EPA has also signaled to the state that it would be flexible in how it enforces the cleaner standards. (St. Petersburg Times, November 4, 2011)

It was "obviously a political decision that's going to be a real blow to the environmental movement in Florida," said Nathaniel Reed, a Florida Republican and longtime environmentalist who was an assistant Interior secretary under Presidents Nixon and Ford.

The EPA's tentative decision does not exactly match the federal standards that have been set out in the Clean Water Act since 1972, and is a change in the position the EPA has taken with regard to Florida's efforts to draft it's own water quality standards – something the EPA has denied other states. (Poliltico.com, November 4, 2011)

This water quality issue is something that we have been reporting on here in our newsletter for many years. It is all part of the issue that we have been involved in with the Clean Water Network, and joined their lawsuit to require Florida to set pollution limits for the state's water bodies, known as TMDLs or Total Maximum Daily Load limits.

**ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL REMINDER**

October is membership renewal time. All our memberships run from October through September each year. If you initially joined and paid dues between April 1 and September 30, we credit your membership through until October 1 in your second year of membership. The date following your last name on the mailing label of our newsletter is the month in which our records reflect that your membership either did or will expire. If you feel the date is not correct, or have a question about your membership, please give us a call at 772-202-0501, or send us an email or letter at the addresses in this newsletter. Please include a phone number or email address where you can be reached.

You can mail your membership to the address in this newsletter or pay at our meeting this month. You may also renew your membership online through our website using PayPal! Please see the "Membership Info/Renew" page of our website for more information. Thanks again to all of you for your continued support!

**FINANCIAL UPDATE**

September 1, 2011 – September 30, 2011

Balance 9/1/11 .....	\$5770.37
Receipts .....	0.00
Total .....	5770.37
Disbursements .....	199.50
Balance 9/30/11 .....	\$5570.87

George Schum Memorial Award Fund

Total to date .....	\$23.00
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**CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

Tuesday, November 15, 6 PM  
**Arctic Meltdown: Climate Change in the Arctic**  
 Dr. John Trefry, FIT  
 Pelican Island Audubon Society  
 North IR County Library  
 1001 Sebastian Blvd., Sebastian  
 info: [www.pelicanislandaudubon.org](http://www.pelicanislandaudubon.org)  
 or 772-567-3520



Monday, November 16, 7:30 PM  
**History of Pelican Island**  
 Kristen Beck, Pres., PIPS  
 Sebastian Area Historical Society  
 North IR County Library  
 1001 Sebastian Blvd., Sebastian  
 info: 772-581-1380



Monday, November 21, 7:30 PM  
**Owls of North America**  
 Sam Fried  
 Pelican Island Audubon Society  
 Vero Beach Comm Center  
 2266 14<sup>th</sup> Ave, Vero Beach  
 info: [www.pelicanislandaudubon.org](http://www.pelicanislandaudubon.org)  
 or 772-567-3520



Tuesday, November 22, 7:30 PM  
**Fish Impacts of SSR Dredging**  
 Dr. Richard Paperno, FWRI  
 FSSR  
 North IR County Library  
 1001 Sebastian Blvd., Sebastian



Wednesday, December 7, 4 & 7 PM  
**Diving with Goliath**  
 Dr. Sarah Frias-Torres, ORCA  
 Harbor Branch Oceanographic Inst.  
 5600 N. US 1, Ft. Pierce  
 info: [www.fau.edu/hboi/Events.php](http://www.fau.edu/hboi/Events.php)  
 or 772-242-2559

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



## 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

Russell & Susan Frawley  
Rick & Ellen Patterson  
Donna Stark

## CORPORATE SPONSORS

Roseland Community Association  
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