



Friends of St. Sebastian River

P.O. Box 284 ❖ Roseland, Florida 32957-0284 September 2013

website: www.fssr.org email: 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.

AN UPDATE ON CONSERVATION AND RECREATION AT THE ST. SEBASTIAN RIVER PRESERVE STATE PARK

Samantha McGee, Park Biologist at the St. Sebastian River Preserve State Park will be the guest speaker at our September General Meeting. Sam will give a presentation about changes at the Preserve and an overview of their continuing efforts of habitat restoration, prescribed burns, conservation of scrub jays and red-cockaded woodpeckers, and recreational opportunities.

The meeting is Tuesday, September 24, 7:30 PM at the North Indian River County Library, 1001 Sebastian Blvd. in Sebastian. The meeting is free and all are welcome to attend.

October is our annual membership renewal month and dues may be paid at the meeting. Please see the article elsewhere in this newsletter for more information about membership renewal.

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL REMINDER

October is our membership renewal month. All our memberships run from October through September each year, and are pro-rated, depending on the time of year you joined. The date following your last name on the mailing label of our newsletter is the month/year 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 an email or letter to the address in this newsletter.

You can mail your membership to the address in this newsletter or pay at an upcoming meeting. 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 for your continued support!

Current members also have the option of receiving our newsletter by email only! That helps us save paper, time, and adds to your support of our activities. If you would like to stop receiving the printed newsletter, just email us with your request.

FLORIDA WATER & LAND LEGACY CAMPAIGN

As we've reported to our members by email, the Florida Water & Land Legacy Campaign now has a copy of the constitutional amendment petition available on their website. Several hundred thousand more signed petitions will be required in the next few months, in order to get the amendment on the 2014 ballot. If you are a Florida resident, please visit their website at <http://floridawaterlandlegacy.org> for more information, and consider submitting your signed petition. There is also a link on the home page of our website.

WHAT'S HOT

As you may know, there was a major improvement made to Indian River County's fertilizer ordinance this summer! The IR County Commission approved adding the recommendations of several people and organizations, strengthening the ordinance to help prevent lawn fertilizers from being leached into our local waterways during the rainy season. Thanks to all who spoke up and made your voices heard, to impress upon the commission the concern that most everyone shares for the lagoon.

Other local communities have also revisited their ordinances recently, some taking similar steps to help minimize fertilizer runoff. The City of Sebastian this month though voted 4 to 1 to reject any improvement to their ordinance, which is the state's "model" fertilizer ordinance. Not that strengthening the model ordinance is the silver bullet to correcting the crisis in the lagoon, but it would seem to be a simple and logical step, that many coastal communities around the state have undertaken, and appears to be having a positive effect.

The DEP's model fertilizer ordinance is not the "ideal" for minimizing fertilizer runoff. Rather it was the best the state was able to negotiate with stakeholders in this issue – the result of the political "sausage-making" – a compromise or lowest common denominator. But in the end, ultimately it is up to us, the public, to do what we can to help our severely ailing lagoon. And this month starts the busy season with lots of events and activities already on the calendar! On Sep. 21st is the International Coastal Cleanup, sponsored by the Ocean Conservancy. Local host for the cleanup in Indian River County is Keep Indian River Beautiful (772-226-7738) and Keep Brevard Beautiful in Brevard County (321-631-0501). For more information about this international event, visit the Ocean Conservancy website at www.oceanconservancy.org/cleanup, or call KIRB or KBB to find out how you can participate.

On Sep. 28th there are multiple events around the lagoon to help educate folks about our lagoon and estuaries (National Estuaries Day), show your support for efforts to restore the lagoon (Hands Across the Lagoon), and participate in hands-on volunteering to help improve our public lands (National Public Lands Day). We've listed details of many of the events on our website, so be sure and check out the "Meeting Info/Events" page. And be sure to get out to show your support, and learn more about our lagoon and how you can help!

Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institute (HBOI) and the Ocean Research and Conservation Association (ORCA), both of Ft. Pierce, are working on research in the lagoon to help with the understanding of what has caused the sudden decline in lagoon habitat and water quality. HBOI is conducting research work with the assistance of some graduate students. One is working in and around our area and is looking for volunteers to help with water testing. Please contact us if you are interested and we can put you in touch with the right person.

Dr. Brian LaPointe of Harbor Branch gave a presentation at one of our meetings last year on his work in the lagoon. His preliminary results show that nutrients leaching from septic systems may be significantly contributing to water quality issues in the lagoon. So we are glad to see the City of Sebastian considering ways to provide county sewer service to waterfront locations. There is no quick, short-term solution and costs could be substantial. The federal government will likely mandate such improvements, but significant grant funding may be available.

For more information about lagoon issues and how you can help, there is a wealth of information on the St. Johns River Water Management District's website at www.floridaswater.com, the Indian River County Stormwater Division website at www.ircstormwater.com, and Live Blue at www.livebluefl.org in Brevard County. In addition, the University of Florida and the Florida Sea Grant program have produced a new brochure entitled "A Practical Guide to Estuary-Friendly Living." Capt. Ron Presley, president of the Florida Outdoor Writers Association says it "...should be required reading for Florida residents." The guide can be downloaded for free at www.flseagrant.org/images/PDFs/sgeb64_estuary_friendly_living_web.pdf, or as a Kindle download for 99 cents.

As we mentioned in our last newsletter, we are tentatively planning on a fund-raising yard sale in late October or early November. If you would like to donate an item, please let us know! We can take it off your hands now, if you really would like to get rid of it. Otherwise save it for event. Also let us know if you would like to help with the event. Any yard sale "junkies" out there who can help is with pricing?

We are also working on developing some walking tours in and around the St. Sebastian River area for the coming season. We are working on mapping out walking trails and notating habitats and plants along the way. If you are interested in helping us organize, or even leading a future walk, please contact us.

FLORIDA SURPLUS CONSERVATION LANDS ASSESSMENT

The Florida Department of Environmental Protection has undertaken an assessment of state owned conservation lands, for the purpose of determining if any properties can be considered “surplus” and sold. This assessment was mandated by this year’s Florida Legislature as a condition for approving funding for the Florida Forever program – a national leading program for the acquisition of lands for the purpose of conservation.

The Acquisition and Restoration Council, the state’s committee reviewing the properties being considered, met on September 13th to review the listed properties, and initial public comments were solicited. There are two islands in the South Prong of the St. Sebastian River that are currently on the list and we submitted comments regarding these islands. We received an immediate response from the DEP, which is too lengthy to include here in our newsletter, but you will find the full text on our website, under “Local News”, dated September 13, 2013, on the “News and Information” page of our website.

Additional public meetings will be scheduled in the next few months to present information and receive public input; one of which will be scheduled in the Melbourne area. You will also find more information about the lands assessment process and the listing of properties, on the DEP’s website at www.dep.state.fl.us/lands/assessment.

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, 2) Water quality projects, 3) Open land conservation, or 4) Erosion control. If you know of someone or a business in our area that you believe qualifies, please let us know. More details as well as an application form can be found on the “About Us” page of our website. You may also leave us a message at 772-202-0501. Nominations need to be received by October 31st.

FINANCIAL UPDATE

May 1, 2013 – June 30, 2013 (corrected)

Balance 5/1/13	\$2885.17
Receipts	0.00
Total	2885.17
Disbursements	320.30
Balance 6/30/13	\$2564.87

George Schum Memorial Award Fund

Total to date \$0.00

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Tuesday, September 24, 7:30 PM
SSR Preserve State Park Update
Samantha McGee, Park Biologist
FSSR

1001 Sebastian Blvd.
info: www.fssr.org



Saturday, September 28
Hand Across the Lagoon
Indian River Lagoon
info: www.facebook.com/pages/Indian-River-Lagoon-News-and-Events/393530587419823



Saturday, September 28,
10 AM – 3 PM
National Estuaries Day
Smithsonian Marine Station
420 Seaway Dr., Ft. Pierce
info: www.sms.si.edu or
772-465-3271



Saturday, September 28
Florida Wildflower Symposium
Enchanted Forest, Titusville
info: www.flawildflowers.org



October 4-6
Wings & Wildflowers Festival
Tavares, Florida
info:
www.wingsandwildflowers.com

Saturday, October 12
Native Plant Garden Tour
Conradina Chapter, FNPS
Brevard County
info: www.maplestreetnatives.com
or 321-729-6857

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.

Printed on 100% post-consumer recycled paper

Officers for 2013

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

Directors for 2013

Tom Bauer Jane Schnee
Lynn Stieglitz Bruce Zingman

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Carol Lynn & Sandy Peterson
Dave Davis

CORPORATE SPONSORS

Roseland Community Association
Tropical Kayak Tours