



Friends of St. Sebastian River

P.O. Box 284 ❖ Roseland, Florida 32957-0284 September 2015

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.

HOW ARE SEPTIC AND SEWAGE SYSTEMS IMPACTING OUR GROUND AND SURFACE WATERS

At our meeting in May, we learned about the research of Dr. Brian Lapointe, Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institute and his graduate students, to track sources of nutrients that are impacting the water quality of the Indian River Lagoon and the St. Sebastian River. Dr. Lapointe's research is indicating that onsite sewage disposal (i.e. septic) systems are having a much greater impact than perhaps has been realized. In 1983, Florida revised state standards for design and installation of these systems, so there has been some acknowledgement of their impact, and the need for improvement. But we are perhaps finally realizing the unique issues for the operation of these systems in Florida.

At our meeting this month, **Cheryl Dunn, Environmental Health Manager for the Florida Department of Health in Indian River County** will be our guest to give a presentation on sewage disposal systems. She will show how these systems work – and are supposed to work, how to protect and maintain septic systems, inspections and what failures looks like, types of systems and new/alternative technologies, including the “hybrid” systems being talked about recently. Cheryl will also address one of the most important issues for our area and the St. Sebastian River – the protection of ground and surface waters, and what the risks are to the health of our environment.

Please join us on **Tuesday, September 22, 7:30 pm** at the North Indian River County Library, 1001 Sebastian Blvd. in Sebastian – everyone is welcome. It's not as “yucky” as you think!

GIMME GREEN

Gimme Green is a humorous look at the American obsession with the residential lawn and the effects it has on our environment, our wallets and our outlook on life. From the limitless subdivisions of Florida to sod farms in the arid southwest, Gimme Green peers behind the curtain of the \$40-billion industry that fuels our nation's largest irrigated crop—the lawn. Visit www.gimmegreen.com to watch the documentary and more information.

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.

KILROYS – REAL-TIME MONITORING OF LAGOON POLLUTION

The Ocean Research and Conservation Association (ORCA) of Ft. Pierce, has begun deploying the Kilroy water monitoring devices in the Indian River Lagoon, and as of next month, they expect to have about 25 (of the 50 planned) throughout the lagoon. Two of the devices have been installed in the St. Sebastian River.

Over the last few years, we have had presentations at our General Meetings from representatives of ORCA about their Kilroy program, and others about water quality issues in and around the St. Sebastian River. If you recall, the Kilroy device monitors many parameters on a continuous and real-time basis, helping to pinpoint issues that result in degraded water quality, and ultimately locate sources of pollutants.

“The information we are getting so far has been incredible. We now have an instrument package reporting to our database even during bad weather when hand sampling isn’t possible. The information to date has provided early insight into the effect individual discharge canals have on the Indian River Lagoon as well as provided information that until these instruments were deployed was unknown...” according to an ORCA statement.

With no significant industry to blame, the documented decline of the Indian River Lagoon can be traced primarily to non-point source pollution. Storm water runoff, sewage spills, leaky septic tanks, fertilizers and pesticides are just a few of the suspected sources of pollution. Present day efforts to identify sources of pollution rely predominately on hand sampling that only provides a snapshot of the area sampled. This information is then distributed to the public in formats that are often difficult for nonscientists to understand.

ORCA is working to change the way information is obtained and presented. Mapping pollution is the best way for us to understand all of the attacks on our diverse water habitats so we can find the right solution for each environmental challenge. Using their Kilroy technology, they are producing maps and graphics that will help the public understand the problem. “We don’t intend to simply observe what’s happening, our goal is to make pollution visible for all to see... and fix!” Data from the Kilroy devices that have been deployed is available online through ORCA’s website at www.teamorca.org.

The challenge for ORCA and other organizations working to understand the complex problems degrading our lagoon, and find solutions to restore the sustainable ecosystem that lagoon inhabitants need to survive, will depend on continued funding and public support for their efforts. As the need and opportunities arise, we will do our best to keep you informed and let you know how and when to speak out. One way is to let our state representatives know that we support the use of funds dedicated to conservation efforts throughout the state, by the passage of Amendment 1 on last year’s ballot!

For more information about ORCA, their Kilroy program and how you can help, visit their website above, or call them at 772-467-1600.

RESIDENTIAL LAWN MAINTENANCE RULES

In addition to the app in the article above, home owners need to be aware of local lawn watering and fertilizing restrictions. Current homeowners are allowed to water their lawns two days a week – it changes to once a week with the change to Eastern Standard Time in November. For more information about watering restrictions and which days watering is allowed, visit the St. Johns Water Management District website at <http://floridaswater.com/wateringrestrictions>.

Additionally, Brevard and Indian River Counties (as well as many local municipalities) have passed ordinances restricting the use of lawn fertilizers from June 1 through September 30. You may

contact your local UF/IFAS County Extension Service office to help with information on these ordinances. You will also find information online about the Brevard County fertilizer restrictions at <http://brevard.ifas.ufl.edu/Horticulture> and in Indian River County at www.ircstormwater.com/fertilizer.htm.

UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA DEVELOPS IRRIGATION APPS

The University of Florida, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (UF/IFAS) has developed a suite of smart device applications for irrigation estimating/scheduling. One of the apps is for urban lawns, as well as others for food agricultural products. Results show that the turf app can cut water use by 30 to 40 percent.

Fresh water shortages are increasingly common in the southeastern U.S. A 2010 report indicated that by 2050 much of Florida is projected to be at “high” or “extreme” risk of water shortage. For more information, visit www.smartirrigationapps.org.

Source: “Florida Gardening,” September/October 2015

MARINE RESOURCES COUNCIL LOOKING FOR VOLUNTEERS

The Marine Resources Council always has a need for volunteers. They have various projects and programs ongoing and can always use your help, for both inside/operational activities, as well as in-the-field, get-your-hands-dirty projects. One of their current needs is for Indian River Lagoon water quality monitors. If you are interested you can visit them at the Lagoon House, 3275 Dixie Hwy NE (US 1) in Palm Bay, or call them at 321-725-7775.

NEWSLETTER CHANGE

We made a slight change to our newsletter this month – did you catch it? We’ve removed our “Financial Update” for two reasons. One is that it is always a challenge to glean the correct information from our Treasurer’s reports, and provide you accurate information in a simplified format for the newsletter. Second is to allow more room for news and information, that is timely and hopefully of interest to our members and readers.

Our financial information is not a secret and will be made available each year at our Annual Membership meeting in January. You are welcome to contact us for more information or for a financial update at any time.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Saturday, September 19
International Coastal Cleanup

Sponsored by the
Ocean Conservancy
Hosted locally by
Keep IR Beautiful and
Keep Brevard Beautiful
RSVP:
www.kirb.org or 772-226-7738
www.keepbrevardbeautiful.org or
321-631-0501
info: www.oceanconservancy.org/cleanup



Tuesday, September 22, 7:30 PM
**Cheryl Dunn, Environmental
Manager, IRC/FL Health Dept.**

FSSR
North IRC Library
1001 Sebastian Blvd.
info: www.fssr.org



Saturday, September 26, 9am – 1pm
**National Estuaries Day
Celebration**

Environmental Learning Center
255 Live Oak Dr., Wabasso
info: www.discoverelc.org or 772-
589-5050



Saturday, Sept. 26, 10am – 3pm
**Indian River Lagoon Science
Festival**

Museum Pointe Park, Ft. Pierce
info: www.irlsciencefest.org



October 16-17, 2015
Indian River Birding Festival
Pelican Island Preservation Society
at the Environmental Learning
Center
255 Live Oak Dr., Wabasso
info: <http://firstrefuge.org/events/4th-annual-indian-river-birding-festival>

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

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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.

Printed on 100% post-consumer recycled paper

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

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