



## *Our Mission:*

*To restore,  
preserve and  
protect the  
waters of the  
St. Johns River  
and its  
tributaries for  
current and  
future  
generations.*

### INSIDE

- Partnership . . . . . 3
- Special Report . . . . . 4
- A Decade on the River  
Book Review . . . . . 6
- More Stenciling . . . . . 7

## Stenciling Efforts Top 400



Storm Drain Central has been the site of an amazing community effort started at the San Jose Episcopal Day School. As part of a millennium celebration at the school, Science teacher, Lynn Paradise and her assistant, Elizabeth Sloan, challenged the faculty, staff, students and their families to become involved in a community project to stencil 200 storm drains between January 20th and April 1.

School classes are competing to see which will stencil the most drains and win a pizza party. Mrs. Paradise said that the response has been overwhelming. The stencils have been checked out by 49 different groups, some with children as young as pre-Kindergarten.

To date, this Young Stewards project has doubled its goal and completed in 425 storm drains stenciled with the message not to dump any materials into storm drains because they flow directly into the river or into retention ponds.

We want to thank all those who volunteered their time in this worthy project. A special thanks to Mandarin Paint and Decorating on San Jose Blvd. for donating all of the paint and painting supplies. (See **Stencil** on page 7)

*Fourth grader, Paige Hamilton demonstrates how to stencil*



# Tragedy of the Commons



**CAROL MATTHEWS**  
CHAIRPERSON

Thanks to all the volunteers who worked on Saturday, March 16 to clean up the river. It's wonderful that people in 19 counties of the watershed gave up a day to clean up the river. The sad news is that some folks won't take a minute to dispose of their trash properly.

One of the first lessons in environmental studies looks at the degradation of common property, of which the river is a perfect example.

In 1968, biologist Garrett Hardin wrote an important essay entitled *Tragedy of the Commons*. In it, he discusses the logic in statements such as, "The little bit I use or pollute is

not enough to matter." Naturally the cumulative effect of many people trying to exploit a common property eventually ruins it, and this is the tragedy.

One solution is to convert common-property to private ownership. Owners tend to have a stronger incentive for preservation. Another approach is users-pay solution.

Both of these choices raise serious concern. Most of us find these choices unacceptable when applied to a river whose basin contains three million people.

However, don't think that it can't or won't happen. State officials are currently discussing the privatization

of water rights in Florida - not to individuals, but to counties.

There is a bill in the Florida Legislature (sb1022/Campbell) called the Water Rights and Permits which provides for restrictions on the sale or transfer of water rights. It also provides for restriction on permits for consumptive use of water.

This could be the biggest takings of all time. The western states' water wars could move east. The next issue of RiverWatch will feature this topic in depth, but keep in mind that our level of concern and interest in the river will protect it from "solutions" far worse than garbage pollution.

**Earth Day**  
**April 23**



This is the 30th year for Earth Day. A celebration will be held at the

Jacksonville Landing on Sunday from noon to 5 pm.

## New Directors and Assistant

Congratulations to new Board members elected to fill vacancies. There are still spots for Directors and committee chairs if members want to volunteer. Elections will be held when a slate is filled. Many thanks to all those whose terms expired after much dedicated service.

We also want to welcome our new part-time Administrative Assistant, Priscilla Martin. She is a retired teacher, who has a Master's Degree in Education with a strong background in English. We are very fortunate to have someone with her talents.

# AHR Partnership Signed

The American Heritage Rivers Initiative Partnership Agreement between the St. Johns River community, state, regional and federal agencies was signed on the evening of December 15, 1999 at DeLeon Springs State Park near DeLand, FL.

Mayor John Delaney chaired the signing ceremony, which included a variety of agencies, legislators and private citizens.

Participants enjoyed an Old Florida cookout under the stars after signing the document. John Hankinson, Region IV Director Environmental Protection

Agency, and his Blues Band, the Non-Essentials provided the after dinner entertainment.

The next day, participants attended a workshop at Stetson University. Committees were formed according to geographic areas of the

river basin and each group talked about their areas of interest.

Barbara Elkus was introduced as the River Navigator assigned to the St. Johns River by the federal EPA in Washington, D.C. She will help river partners



**Barbara Elkus**  
St. Johns River Navigator



**Carol Matthews signs on behalf of the Stewards.**

look for grants to support locally driven initiatives.

Ms. Elkus may be contacted at 410 M Street SW (4501F), Washington, D.C. 20460, by phone at (202) 260-3814 or by FAX at (202) 401-0590.

The lower basin committee agreed to hold quarterly meetings with Mayor Delaney as Committee Chair and Nancy Harris, Mayor of Palatka, as Vice-Chair.

## Board of Directors

Carol Matthews	Chairperson	464-0095
John Ster	Vice-Chairperson	247-9617
Nelson Hellmuth	Treasurer	269-5909
Roger Bass	Riverkeeper Com.	262-4015
Kristi Helow	Stencil Campaign	733-0730
Janice Gold	Membership	391-1031
Pat McNulty	Hotline	292-2385
Eva Maria Schwarz	Young Stewards	260-0072
Tom Beal	Political	284-5250

## Committees

Shelly Kautz	Newsletter	284-3519
Anne Payne	Newsletter	645-7217
Ellen & Jay Sherline	Events	396-6522
Adam Williss	Public Relations	247-4805

## RiverWatch

P.O. Box 54123, Jacksonville, FL 32245-4123

RiverWatch is a publication by the Stewards of the St. Johns River, Inc., a not-for-profit corporation dedicated to serving as a voice for the St. Johns River and its tributaries since 1990. The newsletter is published quarterly.

We welcome comments from our readers. Please share our message with your friends. Invite them to become a Steward.

**NEWSPAPER STAFF**  
**Shelly Kautz**  
**Anne Payne**  
**Carol Matthews**

Member of River Network  
National Environmental Group

by Anne Payne

# Our First Decade in Retrospect



## Serving as a Voice for the River...

The turn of the millennium has inspired us to review our newsletter archives to recall the top Stewards achievements and issues in the 1990s. Just as the St. Johns, to borrow a phrase, keeps on rolling along, river related stories have twists and turns and are sometimes murky, but they roll on and on.

On **October 4, 1990**, eight people signed Articles of Incorporation to begin the Stewards of the St. Johns River, Inc. Three of those founders are still active today. The tax exempt status of a 501(c)3 was completed in the following year, and we were on our way.

With backing from the St. Johns River Water Management District, the Stewards received a \$24,000 grant from Keep Florida Beautiful that allowed for a paid staff person who organized river cleanup groups and worked with the Adopt-a-Shore program.

In **1992**, the Stewards developed the St. Johns River Lower Basin Water Quality Commission. It provided a regional forum to discuss water quality issues in the five lower basin counties. That same year, we started publishing the RiverWatch a quarterly newsletter to the membership and other

decision-makers.

The Hotline, instituted the following year, provided the public with a toll-free number, good throughout the entire length of the river. It is used in reporting river problems such as toxic spills, sewage discharge, fish kills, and illegal dumping. The Hotline (800-338-7757) can also be used to get information about meeting dates and times, and volunteer opportunities.

The Young Stewards program was created in **1993** to present educational programs to elementary school children. Chapter were started at Loretta Elementary School, St. Marks School, and San Jose Episcopal Day School. The Florida Wildlife Federation named the Young Stewards "Youth Conservationists of the Year **1994**". They received several service awards from Adopt-a-Shore and in **1996**, the City of Jacksonville awarded the Young Stewards "Best Environmental Service Club". Young Stewards Director, Mrs. Eva-Maria Schwarz, was presented with the Bob Owens Citizen Award by the SJR Water Management District for her outstanding community service.

In January **1997**, President Clinton announced the inauguration of the American Heritage Rivers program in his State of the Union address. The concept designated a federal employee as "Navigator" for each of the selected rivers.

By mid-1997, the American Heritage River designation had turned into a bit of a brawl. A few elected officials were vociferously against it because it was a directive of the federal government. However,

## ...and Having Fun!

most civic and environmental groups, including the Stewards actively supported it.

After much suspense, on **July 31, 1998**, the St. Johns River was officially added to the list of American Heritage Rivers.

As the American Heritage River designation saga drew to a close, a new controversy heated up. Early in 1998, the public became aware that Georgia-Pacific Corporation in Palatka proposed to build a wastewater discharge pipeline into the middle of the river for its pulp and paper effluent discharge.

Historically, the contaminated waste water was dumped into Rice Creek, a tributary of the St. Johns. However, because the mill could no longer meet water quality standards in the creek, they applied to move their effluent into a larger body of water. The Stewards continue to strongly opposed this proposal. EPA officials and Georgia-Pacific have yet to reach an agreement acceptable to both.

In **Summer 1998**, the Stewards' storm drain stenciling campaign received stepped up publicity from donated billboards. With the active help of the Young Stewards, the stenciling program has been very successful and is a true example of effective grass roots work.

The Stewards were awarded the **1998 Environmental Organization of the Year** by the Mimi and Lee Adams Environmental Board and Chairman, Carol Matthews, received the Outstanding Environmental Citizen of **1999**

see **Decade** on page 6



*Tom Beal, Tom Fortson and John Adsit have been major players in the Stewards' history and are still great friends*

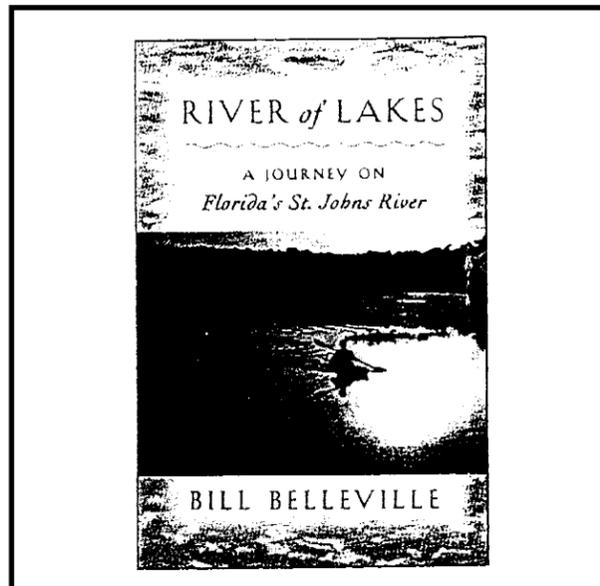


*First of many Clean Ups*



*The first Young Stewards*

# River of Lakes by Belleville



filmmaker whose work has earned the acclaim of the Florida Magazine Association and a Telly Award, among other honors. An expert scuba diver and kayaker, Belleville travels frequently to research his writing projects and has explored sites ranging from the underwater caves of northern Florida and the rain forest of the Amazon to the coral reefs of Australia and the White Sea of Russia.

He has written documentaries for Florida's NPR affiliates and has worked on several Discovery Channel expeditions. In addition, Belleville has written for the New York Times Syndicate and has published nearly one thousand magazine articles and essays in Sierra Magazine, Audubon, Newsweek, Christian Science Monitor, Aqua, Islands, Sports Afield, and other publications. He lives in Sanford, Florida.

*"A wise and inspired book ... Belleville has the journalistic skill to render complexity into lucid and lyrical story-telling, and he has the heart to discover that the river still can be a salve, even against the wound one experiences in witnessing its destruction. This is an important and beautifully written work that deserves to be widely read as a lesson in learning to know and love the damaged places that surround us."*

-Alison Hawthorne Deming

from page 5  
**Decade**

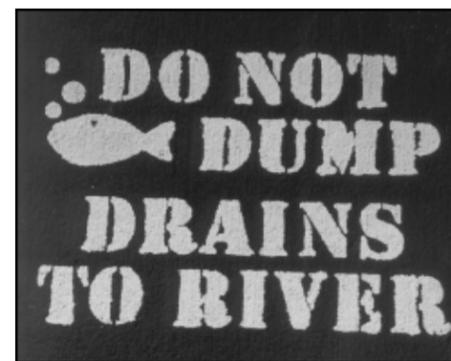
from the Environmental Protection Board. Steward's members serve on too many committees to list, and are fortunate to meet with the Mayor on a monthly basis. Mrs. Matthews serves on the Environmental Protection Board in a regulatory function and is a Commissioner on the Preservation Project. Past-Chairman, Roger Bass, now heads the effort to bring a Riverkeeper to the lower basin.

The last few years have seen the emergence of new advocates to the river, but also a major new threat and the continuation of perennial hazards. The stage is set for the Stewards' vigilance and grass roots action to be more necessary and perhaps more powerful than ever.

In the first contemporary book about this American Heritage River, Bill Belleville describes his journey down the length of the St. Johns, kayaking, boating, hiking its river banks, diving its springs, and exploring its underwater caves. He rediscovers the natural Florida and establishes his connection with a place once loved for its untamed beauty.

Belleville involves scientists, environmentalists, fishermen, cave divers, and folk historians in his journey, soliciting their companionship and their expertise. River of Lakes weaves together the biological, cultural, anthropological, archaeological, and ecological aspects of the St. Johns, capturing the essence of its remarkable history and intrinsic value as a natural wonder.

Bill Belleville is an award-winning environmental journalist and



from page 1

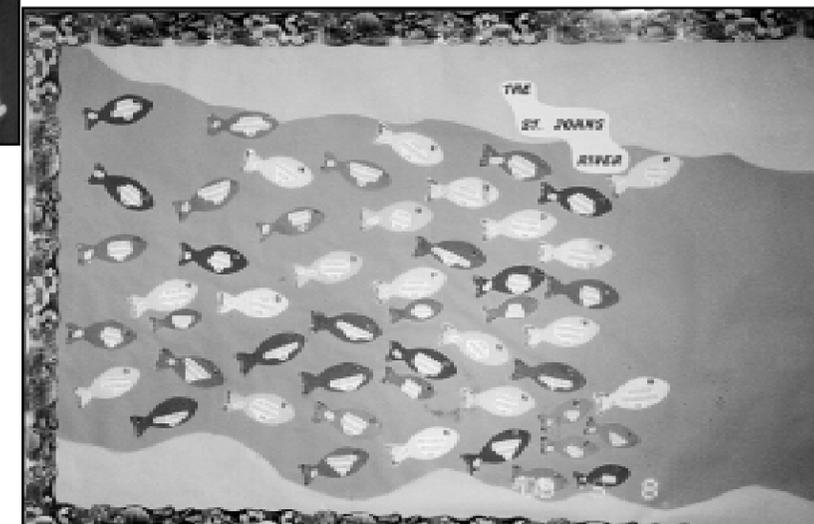
## Stenciling

The Science Room at San Jose Episcopal has a St. Johns River bulletin board and each child who participates has a fish with their name on it. The fish also has the number of drains they have stenciled. The science room's river is very healthy as you can see from the photo.

Stewards Director, Kristi Helow, took an active role in educating the public at MOSH on February 18, 2000. The free admission day at the Museum of Science and History was sponsored by the Environmental Protection Board to raise public awareness about the environment.



The "river" of Young Steward stenciling volunteers at San Jose Episcopal Day School under the direction of Mrs. Paradise and Mrs. Sloan.



At the Stewards' booth, Mrs. Helow showed participants how to stencil. The cut-out of Star Trek's Dr. Spock modeled the safety vest provided for stenciling. Volunteers are loaned a kit, free of charge, that contains black and white paint, 2 rollers, a traffic safety vest, masking tape or chalk, a paint brush, door hangers, Stewards' brochure and directions.

Participants are asked to fill out data cards so that locations and number of drains completed can be tracked. Comments on those cards have been very positive. Some examples were, "It was an activity our whole family did together." "It promoted good discussion with neighbors and awareness of the problems." "I finally met my neighbors".

The challenge now is for other groups to follow these Young Stewards' examples. Call the Hotline to see how your group can help the river. We will even send a Steward to your group to explain all of the details. Materials are loan free. We do ask that you closely supervise young children - make it a family event.

**Kristi Helow explains the stenciling program at MOSH**

YES! I want to join the Stewards of the St. Johns River and serve as a "voice for the river". Enclosed is my tax-deductible contribution of:

- |  |   |                                       |
|--|---|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$5 Student         | <input type="checkbox"/> \$15 Individual  | <input type="checkbox"/> \$25 Family  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$50 Small Business | <input type="checkbox"/> \$100 Sustaining | <input type="checkbox"/> \$250 Patron |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$500 Captain       | <input type="checkbox"/> \$1000 Admiral   | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____  |

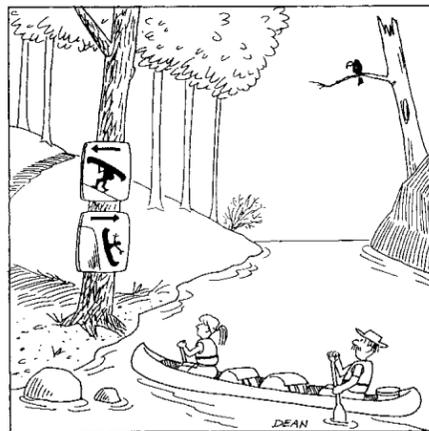
My area of interest is in \_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City/State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone (h) \_\_\_\_\_ (w) \_\_\_\_\_ FAX \_\_\_\_\_

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JAN AND DAN BOONDOCK by Dean Norman



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the third Tuesday of each month at the  
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Blvd. near Julington Creek at 6:30 PM

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