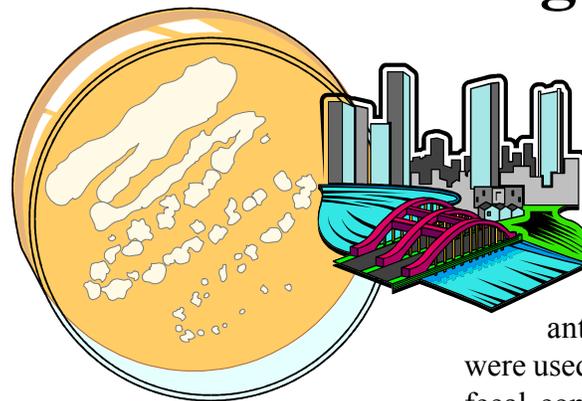




New Study Finds Tributaries Still Failing Standards

Our Mission:

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



Over half of the 106 tributaries in Duval Co. surveyed from 1993-1999 for bacterial contamination failed to meet Class III standards for surface waters.

For years, these tributaries have been contaminated by septic tank failures, illegal hookups, poor treatment at some facilities, sewer line breaks, and manhole overflows. The latest report by the Department of Health shows that the situation is not improving.

Fecal coliform bacteria serves as a marker for sewage contamination in water, producing diseases such as acute, gastrointestinal disease including vomiting and diarrhea, acute respiratory illness, eye infections and ear infections.

Until recently, there was some question as to the source of sewage contamination because fecal coliform bacteria are not spe-

cific to humans. However, in a study recently completed by Dr. Valerie J. Harwood for the City,

antibiotic resistance patterns were used to determine the source of fecal contamination in surface waters. Dr. Harwood identified Big Pottsburg Creek, Cedar River and Arlington River near Lone Star Rd. as the sites most consistently impacted by human wastes.

Using extrapolated methods, scientists expect to see 22 cases of respiratory illness for every 100 swimmers when coliform levels meet the standards. However, most of the tributaries DO NOT meet these standards and some violate the standards by huge amounts.

Children will be playing in neighborhood parks this summer, and adults will be boating and skiing in tributaries where the water should be posted as unsafe for water recreation. But it will not be posted, because there are too many miles and too few signs. Be aware that those with health problems are the most at risk. Our tributaries are not safe, and we must insist that these arteries for our river be cleaned up.

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**CAROL MATTHEWS
CHAIRPERSON**

Fortunately the St. Johns River Water Management District had the wisdom to slash a million gallon per day Consumptive Use Permit (CUP) request by Dee Dot Timberland, owned by A. Dano Davis of the Winn-Dixie Supermarket Chain.

When the last permit was issued in 1990, the project (then known as the Dee Dot Ranch) was granted 2.19 billion gallons per year for use as a hog farm and cattle ranch. Today the property usage has changed is now primarily a

Dee Dot CUP Reduced

44,000 acre tree farm.

When the current permit expired in 1997, Dee Dot asked for 368 million gallons per year (one million per day) to maintain 8 ponds full of Class 1 free, aquifer water primarily for recreational purposes such as boating, swimming, fishing and hunting.

At a time when many residents are under the threat of a \$10,000 fine just for watering their yards at the wrong time, it was unreasonable to set such a double standard. Board members and officials were well aware of the fire threat and low water pressure problems experienced in many neighborhoods.

The public finally had a chance to be heard after three years of legal maneuvering by the District and Davis' lawyers. Tom Beal did an excellent job representing the Stewards position that this CUP permit did not

meet all of the District's criteria for issuing permits. He reminded the Board (and an overflow crowd) that such a frivolous abuse of precious natural resources was unfair, inequitable, and inconsistent with the public interest.

In the end, the permit length was reduced from 20 years to 5 years; the amount of water was reduced to a still generous 219 million gallons per year and the threshold for filling the ponds was lowered.

We sincerely appreciate the hours of time and effort Mr. Beal spent on behalf of all the citizens. Many other Stewards also made a special effort to show their support by attending the hearing and previous informational meetings with District officials. This was another great example of Stewards serving as a voice for the river and we were heard.

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RiverWatch

P.O. Box 54123, Jacksonville, FL 32245

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
Carol Matthews
Priscilla Martin
Roger Bass**

Member of River Network
National Environmental Group

Tree Preservation - Preserve or Replace

Stewards are working to support the Citizens for Tree Preservation to amend the current tree ordinance put into place in late 1999. More than 20,000 signed petitions are needed to place this amendment on the ballot in a general election. We urge you to consider this amendment.



A Clear-cut Issue

"I believe in the Initiative and Referendum which should be used not to destroy representative government, but to correct it whenever it becomes misrepresentative."

—President Theodore Roosevelt

<http://www.treamendment.com>

SUMMARY OF THE AMENDMENT

The minimum standards proposed in the amendment are similar to regulations set forth in a *previous* city ordinance that was changed in December 1999. The proposed standards would apply to all development, including commercial and residential development, and would designate trees with a circumference of three feet or greater, as **protected**. Pine trees and palm trees, except for the Long Leaf Pine and the Cabbage Palm, will not be protected. In addition, any tree identified as an invasive species will not be protected.

Unfortunately, despite even the best planning efforts to save trees at a development site, sometimes construction does require that a **protected** tree be removed. If that should occur, the minimum standards proposed in the amendment would require that the tree be replaced, on-site if practicable, at a ration of 1:3. In other words, if a protected tree with a trunk diameter at breast height of eighteen

inches had to be removed, the developer would be required to replant trees with caliper trunk diameters totalling at least six inches. In the case of Live Oaks, which often live 300-500 years or more, a ratio of 1:1 would be required. If a developer is unable to plant replacement trees at the construction site, the minimum standards allow the developer to plant the replacement trees at an off-site location. Furthermore, the developer may instead contribute the monetary equivalent of the cost of the replacement trees to the City of Jacksonville's Tree Protection and Related Expenses Trust Fund. Finally, developers may receive "conservation credits" for preserving small non-protected trees and thereby have those trees applied toward their actual replacement requirements.

Existing **single-family homes** will remain **exempt**, as will property used for bona fide agricultural purposes, under the minimum standards set forth in the proposed amendment.



Mayor John Delaney has proposed a half-cent sales tax for “The Better Jacksonville Plan”. This initiative will allow the City to manage growth, protect natural lands and waterways, improve public facilities and promote economic development. It is the type of program going on in many southern cities and one that is needed to keep Jacksonville thriving. A major component of the plan is a \$1.5 billion work program for roads, infrastructure and transportation, but it designed to offer something for everyone.

The mayor has promised that money allocated for the 19 projects will only be spent for these projects and no “emergencies” will be declared. Further, the tax will have a sunset date of December 31, 2031. Part of the money, estimated at \$750 million, will have to come from taxpayers, who will vote on the referendum on September 5, 2000. Other funding will come from bonds and a restructuring of the Jacksonville Transportation Authority (JTA) that will provide another \$750 million.

Some people are worried that they won’t get the things promised with this tax. The three mayors preceding Mayor Delaney had problems with similar improvement programs that either didn’t deliver the promised items or left the tax in place after the tasks were accomplished. However, the Better Jacksonville plan is fundamentally different because a referendum will put the improvements into law. They can only be changed by a vote of the people. Only the roads portion of the plan has any flexibility. It can be amended by a 2/3 vote of City Council to provide necessary flexibility for such a long-term project. All the improvements will have started in the next 7-

10 years and will be accountable to a financial oversight committee, an annual audit and an operating committee.

As Jacksonville reaches the one million mark in population, we will either have to plan for growth or suffer because we did not plan. Cities like Atlanta, Los Angeles and Orlando are examples of what happens

when growth spirals out of control because the leadership and citizens were not looking into the future. Those cities would love the luxury of returning to Jacksonville’s size and correcting their mistakes. We can learn from them and plan for the type of improvements that growing cities in the 21 century will have to do anyway. This plan contains many environmental aspects that will improve the quality of life along the river.



Mayor Delaney



www.betterjax.com

The plan promotes the Stewards' goals of restoring water quality in the river by getting homes on tributaries off septic tanks. It will give Jacksonville a vision for the future instead of reacting to crisis management strategies. Mayor Delaney is right when he says, "This plan allows voters to decide

the fate of our community."

"We, as a community, must decide whether we want to build a strong and viable city for our children and grandchildren."

1. New, expanded, widened roads, interchanges, overpasses and intersection improvements	\$1,162,000,000
2. Courthouse	190,000,000
3. Arena	125,000,000
4. Road Resurfacing	105,000,000
5. Rapid Transit right-of-way	100,000,000
6. Main Library	95,000,000
7. Septic Tank Remediation	75,000,000
8. Drainage	70,000,000
9. Library Branch Improvements	55,000,000
10. Land acquisition (The Preservation Project)	50,000,000
11. Safety Grade Crossings	25,000,000
12. Environmental Clean Up	25,000,000
13. Development Trust Fund	25,000,000
14. Cecil Field	25,000,000
15. Baseball Park	25,000,000
16. Sidewalks/bike paths	20,000,000
17. Landscaping Road Improvements Projects	18,000,000
18. Neighborhood Parks	15,000,000
19. Jacksonville Zoo	10,000,000
Total:	\$2,215,000,000





by Roger Bass

ON THE ST. JOHNS RIVER

The Spray

On a recent Friday morning we put the “*Electric Explorer*” in at the Ortega Farms Boulevard ramp on Fishing Creek and hung a right onto the Ortega River. Our goal was to head south all the way to the I-295 bridge across the Ortega River where it turns into McGirts Creek. Boat traffic was light but we still saw an occasional jet skis, boats pulling skiers and one canoe.

We approached the Timaquana Road bridge and could not ignore the large wooden ketch tied up to a dock. Of course, I had been eyeing that boat for years every time I crossed the Timaquana and so moved in for a closer look. It is obvious to any nautical aficionado even before seeing “SPRAY” written across that big wide transom that this was a replica of Joshua Slocum’s “SPRAY”.

Joshua Slocum was the first person in the world to sail all the way around the world by himself. A solo circumnavigation was unheard of when he did it in

1898. His vessel, “SPRAY” has been copied time after time by sailors appreciative of her kindly seakeeping abilities. Slocum’s book about his circumnavigation “Sailing Alone Around The World” is a classic. It brought fame and admiration for its enigmatic author, who only had a third grade education. The book has been translated into six languages and Slocum was called a sea-locked Thoreau”. Mike Martel of the Joshua Slocum Society International claims, that his book did more to promote small boat sailing and voyaging for the common man than any book that ever been

written. Be sure to read it before boating on the Ortega River so you can properly appreciate the “SPRAY” as you go by.

The owner of the “SPRAY” told us a little of the history of the property where she was docked. In the 1930’s a log cabin was built (he is just now tearing it down) there was a hunting lodge. It seems that there was also a whiskey still there for a number of years next to a log ramp for loading the inventory on boats. Until recently the property deed had as its only restriction “No manufacture of illegal alcohol” so that history could not be repeated. There is just no limit to the uses that a good river can be put to.

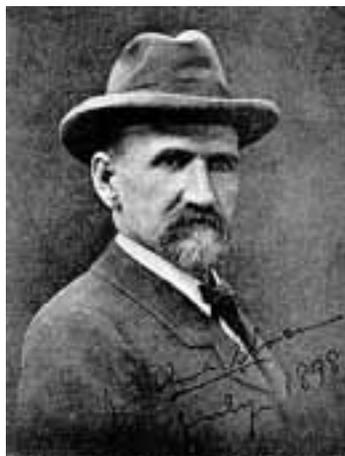


Photo of Joshua Slocum taken the year he sailed around the world alone.

But it was time for us to move on. After we passed under the Timaquana Road Bridge the development thinned out and before too long we were transported back to old Florida. That is a Florida without sea walls, manicured grass lawns and endless houses. The banks started getting closer together. We passed by a dirt beach at Bluff Landing, now known by some as “Redneck Riviera” by the kids who party there on weekends. In fact, a large pile of cans and broken bottles located there was the only trash we saw on the whole trip.

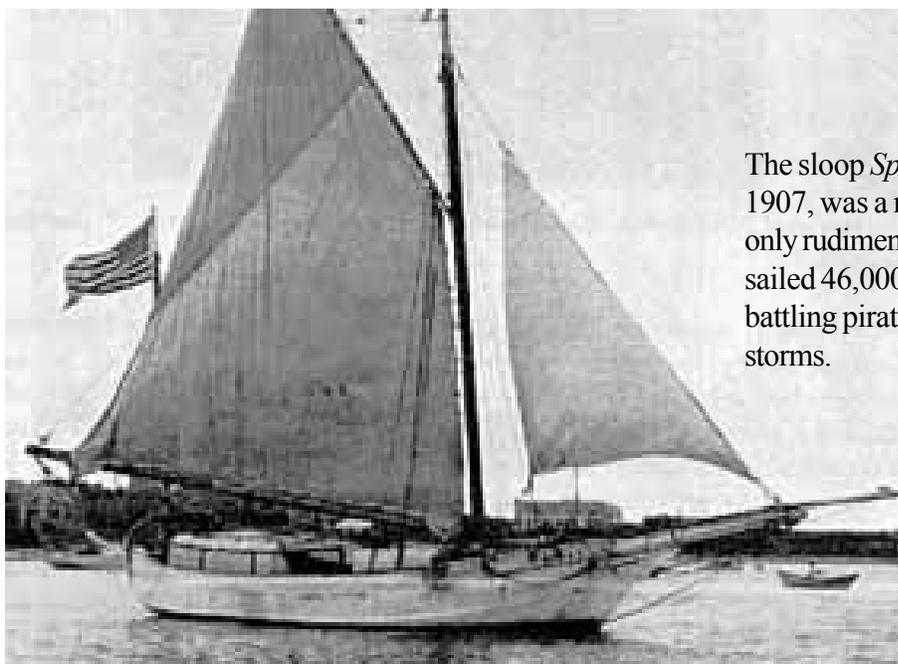
As we approached a narrow bend a jet skier at full speed suddenly came around the corner and quickly dodged around us before we could even react. Maybe that is today’s equivalent of attack by a wild animal in old Florida.

The trip back was a little faster with the current behind us but the scenery was just as stunning. It was hard to realize that this wilderness tributary of the St. Johns River was just minutes from urban Jacksonville. I can’t believe more people don’t take advantage of our beautiful St. Johns River.



Slocum, seen here with his wife on the Spray, disappeared in 1909 at sea in the Bermuda Triangle.

Joshua Slocum Society International is a non-profit organisation founded in 1955 by cruising sailors, writers, and people interested in the historical personage of Captain Slocum.



The sloop *Spray* in Hyannis Port, MA in 1907, was a refurbished oyster boat with only rudimentary equipment when she sailed 46,000 miles around the globe, battling pirates, jagged reefs and deadly storms.

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 _____

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Renewal

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DIAL 800-EDU-SSJR

RiverWatch Hotline

800-338-7757

For all communication, such as reporting spilled fuel, sewage discharge, illegal dumping or any hazards. Call to volunteer or request meeting times and date. A Steward will provide information, or direct your call to the proper authority and follow up.

**STEWARDS OF THE ST. JOHNS RIVER, INC.
P.O. BOX 54123, JACKSONVILLE, FL 32245**

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