

River Watch



Newsletter of the Stewards of the St. Johns River, Inc.

Winter 2002

Our Mission:

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

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Expanding Stewards' Community Involvement

Annual Report by
Donald M. Loop, Executive Director



Since 1990, the Stewards of the St. Johns River Inc. have been the most consistently, proactive, non-profit organization functioning to protect and improve the health of our unique St. Johns River. We felt you might like a summary of what we have been doing in the interests of our members and all the citizens of north Florida .

Stewards serve on a host of committees including the Lower St. Johns River Technical

Advisory Committee (TAC), the Lower St. Johns River Executive and Planning committees, the American Heritage River Initiative, the Mimi and Lee Adams Environmental Board, the Environmental Protection Board for the City of Jacksonville, the Department of Environmental Protection monthly Stakeholder Meetings,

and the Mayor's Environmental Action Board.

A major role of the Stewards' is to help educate our elected and appointed officials about issues vital to the River's health.

In 2003, formal presentations were made to the Clay County Board of Commissioners, Clay County Utilities Board of

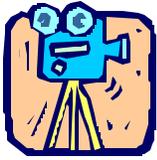
Directors, Governing Board of St. Johns River Water Management District, Putnam County Board of Commissioners, Flagler County Board of Commissioners and civic organizations too numerous to list.

We maintained a booth at the annual Earth Day and provided free pictures for children with Drippy, the water drop mascot of the Environmental Protection Board.

Our newsletter contains
(continued on page 2)



Video and Party Announced



information about river issues that you will not see in other publications. We always try to recognize those organizations and individuals who have demonstrated real leadership in improving the river water quality.

Our agenda for 2003 is exciting. We plan to increase our education outreach by producing a first class video documentary called *The River Returns* (see pages 4-5 for details). This important project, headed by Mike Hartman, is the first video ever developed that takes a comprehensive look at river issues from a recreational, commercial value, and long term environmental perspective.

Please save the date for our third annual fund-raising party scheduled for Sat. May 12th at the Florida Yacht Club.



We are trying a new venue and time this year to take better advantage of the River. It promises to be an evening of good food, music, and bargains at our silent auction. It also provides the Stewards with an opportunity to publicly recognize those folks who have made significant contributions to the river.

Our most sincere thanks to those of you who have renewed your



Stewards membership honoring our new November renewal date for everyone. We hope that those of you who have not renewed will do so very soon so we can prepare our operating budget for 2003.

Many thanks from the Stewards Board of Directors for your past and current support. Please join us as we move forward with the worthwhile initiatives we have planned for 2003.



Board of Directors

- Donald LoopExecutive Director..... 284-7378
- Carol Matthews..... Chairperson 464-0095
- Nelson HellmuthTreasurer 269-5909
- Tom Beal 284-5250
- Noble Enge 287-2820
- Michael Lurie 284-7987
- Michael Hartman 273-6408

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
Donald Loop**

Member of River Network
National Environmental Group



**by Carol Matthews,
Chairperson**

My Reflections After 8 Years

The end of the year and the holidays are a natural time for reflection. Looking back, it is hard to remember a time when I lived in Jacksonville that I wasn't a Steward. The organization began in October 1990 with eight people who were encouraged by the Water Management District to volunteer their time educating the public about water quality of the St. Johns River. We have come along way since the days of single digit membership and double digit finances. For nearly 8 of those 12 years, I have served as Chairman of this organization. There have been many successes and a few failures, and now the organization is ready for new leadership. It is time for me to turn over the reins to new board members.

Our generous membership has provided for an executive director who came on board last year. Don quickly learned the ropes and shares my vision for the Stewards' future. We now have the funds to publish a first-class newsletter and have a new website that will provide information to our members, interested citizens, school children, legislators and government officials. We are supporting events at Earth Day, the River Celebration Cleanup, and we sponsor the Youth Awards of the Adams Environmental Board. We have represented our members' interest in the river at hundreds of meetings and have reached thousands of citizens with educational materials about the St. Johns. The Stewards have received six major awards and given six "Friends of the River Awards" to

community leaders who share our mission and are active voices for the river.

I have worked to build a good relationship with the Mayor's office, the Water Management District, and the DEP. The tone that I try to convey is that we are passionate about the river, but conservative in our approach. We have enjoyed a reputation of being informed about the issues and willing to work within the system to improve the river basin. We do our homework and do not reaction just on emotion. Only once in the past twelve years, have we had to resort to litigation.

It has been a great time in my life, and I have enjoyed being a voice for the river and working as your Chairperson. The new co-chairs, Mike Lurie and Tom Beal, have the experience and heart to carry on the work and grow this organization. I will remain on the Board as newsletter editor and encourage any of you to become involved. We can use a variety of talents.

I hope you will follow President Bush's call to volunteer for your community. We have a great country that often needs our help of people who appreciate the free time to help others.

I sincerely appreciated your support and friendship through the years. Have a blessed holiday and prosperous New Year.



Stewards Initiating a Document

by Michael Hartn

Without Broad Citizen Interest and Support the River Will Not be Restored

Restoring the St. Johns River depends mainly on the citizens of central and northeast Florida understanding the value of the river and why it needs to be restored. Without strong citizen support, the Florida Legislature is not likely to pass the funding, and regulatory agencies will not carry out the tough enforcement actions to see that the river is cleaned up. The 3 million plus people living along this magnificent river need to better understand and value the natural integrity of this unique resource. Thus,



the citizens must care enough to bring it back to good health. A prerequisite to caring is to understand the value of this resource and why it needs to be restored.

Need for a Documentary to Tell the Pollution Story

In order to get this understanding, the Stewards of the St. Johns have teamed with an award winning video production firm, Digital Video Arts, to film a documentary about the pollution story of the river. This story will be told in simple words, with clarity and with objective information about the river.

Since the River Summit in December 1997, government officials from the St. Johns River Water Management District, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, and the City of Jacksonville have been meeting with a few representatives from

environmental public interest groups, like the Stewards, and with a few industry representatives. These on-going meetings are held to help understand the pollution problems in the river from a water quality stand-point and to gain a consensus about what restoration actions are needed. At this point, water quality problems are well known to only around 300 government and scientific officials. Thus, there is a need to get the message out about the rivers complex pollution problems to a much larger audience of citizens. Essentially none of the meetings have been covered to any degree by the local print or TV media.



Since 1940 when Pierce (1947) first started measuring water quality in the river, nutrient levels have increased 2 to 3 times, while water clarity has been cut in half. Between 1910 and 1957, two-thirds of the upper St. Johns River marshes were lost to agricultural development. By the early 1970's, after massive spraying with herbicides, the water hyacinth problems of the 1960's had been replaced with an algae bloom problem (Moody, 1970). The estuarine section of the river from the Main Street Bridge to the river's mouth was found to have higher phosphorus levels (greater than 0.1 mg/L) than other rivers in the southeast (Bricker, 1996).

The river is clearly eutrophic, which is a Greek word meaning *well nourished*. While progress has been made in eliminating 70 sewage discharges that existed up until

Mike has a Masters Degree in Biophysics from Emory and a Law Degree from Catholic University. He worked for 37 years in various environmental management positions in government and industry. He is now retired but works part time at Jacksonville as Director Research for the Division of Science

Story on Restoring the River



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1959, the river nitrogen and phosphorus levels remain high enough to nourish continuing algal blooms.

Currently the river exceeds state water quality standards for several parameters (i.e. fecal coliform bacteria, suspended particulates, and several trace metals). Some officials are concerned about the negative

publicity, short-term economic impacts and political fallout if one of the state's most historic and economically important streams is widely seen as impaired. The Stewards' concern is that unless the facts are made known, public support to restore the river will not materialize. Only by knowing the facts, in language that the public can understand, will demand arise to make restoration improvements.

Documentary Objective and Plan

Thus, this documentary is aimed mainly at the citizens of Florida and others who are concerned about the impacts of development on Florida's diminishing natural ecosystems. We hope to serve as a positive example of how to begin to turn a polluted river around. Success will depend upon how we can gain broad participation from all elements of the community.



We plan to tell our story of turning a river around through the eyes of a history professor, a commercial fisherman, a retired person who lives on the river, the Mayor of Jacksonville, and a scientist with the Water Management District. This documentary is not intended as a negative expose about sources that contribute pollution to the river. Rather, we want the documentary to show that with the help of the community, and scientists and government planners, we have the potential to turn this river around so it becomes a healthy symbol for the region. Thus, the title and theme of the documentary is *"The River Returns"*.

Current Status

The documentary is expected to cost around \$190,000 to \$200,000 to produce. To fund this large of an undertaking, the Stewards will be asking various public and private foundations and commercial enterprises for help. We hope to find entities that recognize the value and importance in restoring the river and working with a citizens group to get objective information out to help do this.

The Stewards have funded a "teaser" video which will be used as a marketing tool to help induce the funding for the full documentary. About 4-5 hours of filming has been completed some of which will be edited to use for the 5 minute teaser video. The filming is being done in high definition so the quality of the river shots is excellent. Arrangements have been made with officials of Jacksonville PBS affiliate WJCT-TV to air the completed documentary sometime next year. As funding is obtained we will keep all Steward members informed of the progress on this important endeavor in mass communication about this wonderful river that we are blessed to be Stewards over.





Stewards 2002 Legislative Issues Work sheet

| Support | Oppose |
|---|---|
| <p><u>True Cost Accounting</u></p> <p><u>Streamlining State/Regional Oversight</u></p> <p><u>Water and Land Use Planning/Water Supply</u></p> <p><u>Air Quality</u></p> <p><u>Wetland Mitigation</u></p> <p><u>Growth Management</u></p> <p><u>Arsenic</u> – strengthening drinking water standard for arsenic</p> <p><u>Shared Title - CARL Acquisitions</u> – legislation that allows for local governments to share title with the State on lands acquired through CARL.</p> | <p><u>Preemption</u> – efforts that diminish the regulatory authority of local governments.</p> <p><u>Utility Deregulation</u> – MONITOR utility deregulation for environmental impacts.</p> <p><u>Performance based permitting</u> – OPPOSE DEP’s legislation which failed last year and MONITOR any new proposals this year.</p> <p><u>ASR – (Aquifer Storage and Recovery)</u> allows for injection of water that violates federal drinking water standards</p> <p><u>Septic Tanks</u> – legislation that weakens existing septic tank laws or rules</p> |



Home Rule – **SUPPORT** local governments home rule authority and **OPPOSE** efforts to weaken or preempt existing home rule authority for environmental programs. **OPPOSE** efforts to impose Chapter 120, Florida Statutes, requirements on local environmental programs.

Self Audit – **SUPPORT** environmental self audits and **OPPOSE** privilege and immunity for polluters.

Brownfields – **SUPPORT** legislation that provides for additional financial incentives and more efficient administrative procedures to encourage redevelopment. **OPPOSE** relaxing existing environmental standards. **MONITOR** risk based corrective action (RBCA) legislation.

Water – **SUPPORT** existing state water laws and **OPPOSE** threats that lessen protection of the State’s water resources. **MONITOR** any proposed changes to TMDL legislation.

Everglades Funding - **SUPPORT** funding of CERP from general funds and **OPPOSE** any use of P2000 or Florida Forever funding.

Funding for Environmental Restoration/Land Management/ Exotic and Vegetation Removal – **SUPPORT** funding for environmental restoration/land management/exotic and vegetation removal from general funds and **OPPOSE** any use of P2000 or Florida Forever funding.



Millennium, First Tee and the River: A Success Story



By Jim Maher

Supervisor of the Industrial Wastewater
Northeast Florida District Office
Department of Environmental Protection



When Millennium Specialty Chemicals started having compliance problems with their non-process waste water discharge to Moncreif Creek, creative solutions were put on the table.

A DEP sampling inspection found coliform bacteria levels in the wastewater discharge exceeded state of Florida water quality standards and there were intermittent low levels of metals exceedances that also began to be detected.

After extensive efforts at source reduction, it was discovered that forest critters and birds were attracted to the warm water in the collection basin from the cooling water discharge, and they were leaving their mark. Corrective action required separating the wastewater from the storm water and constructing a basin to settle out the metals, then



treating it with UV disinfection and state of the art filtration. Space constraints made it necessary to locate the new treatment facility at the far side of the plant property and then pump the water back across the property again to the outfall.

Company engineers noticed that a CSX railroad track and the new First Tee golf course were adjacent to the settling basin. First Tee is a non-profit organization that provides free greens fees and monitoring programs for at-risk and disadvantaged kids. Instead of pumping their treated discharge water across the plant into the Creek, Millennium proposed sending the water down the tracks to use on the First Tee greens.

But there were safety, liability and economic hurdles. Reuse of industrial wastewater had never been done before; there weren't even any rules or guidance for it. Then there was the cost. To provide the reuse water would cost much more than Millennium would have to pay to simply correct the original problems. Still, it was a great idea - too good to give up on.

The valuable real estate right of way owned by CSX Transportation was needed to transport the water from Millennium to the golf course for irrigation. The parties involved discovered that not only could the project benefit the First Tee of Jacksonville golf course, but also a Habijax community being constructed right next to the golf course. CSX agreed that Habijax could share in the free reuse water and CSX would donate this valuable right of way.

One year later, the treatment plant is working as hoped and Millennium is fully in compliance. A new reuse pipeline parallels the CSX railroad, and the First Tee of Jacksonville has free water for their greens.

It also was a benefit to Moncreif Creek because about 225,000 gallons per day of wastewater discharge has been removed from this tributary of the St. Johns River. And as a bonus, Habijax will have a free sprinkler system with free reuse water for their community.

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"/> \$25 Member | <input type="checkbox"/> \$100 Steward | <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 _____

| |
|------------------------------|
| Office Use: Date Ck. # |
|------------------------------|

- Membership: New
 Renewal

Mail to: P.O. Box 54123
Jacksonville, FL 32245-4123

DIAL 800-EDU-SSJR

RiverWatch Hotline

800-338-7757

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

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

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