

RiverWatch

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Summer 2003

JEA Turns Sewage into Fertilizer

Our Mission:

*To restore,
preserve and
protect the
waters of the
St. Johns River
Basin and to
serve as a
voice for the
River.*



JEA's innovative Buckman Biosolids project produced the first pellets at 5:40 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 3. This project has been ongoing for two years. It involves turning biological solids from waste water treatment into a marketable, granule fertilizer product called GreenEdge.

The pellets are the primary ingredient for the fertilizer. This milestone is significant because it marks the end of operation of the incinerator at Buckman that was previously used to eliminate solid waste from the treatment process.

Land application of stabilized biosolids is a common method of disposal. This method is highly dependent on suitable application sites and controls by other parties. Despite the good intentions of treatment utilities, the practice has resulted in pollutant runoff impacting state waters in many locations. The production of a more stabilized product usable in a manner similar to other

commercial fertilizer products reduces the potential for this adverse impact on state waters.

JEA has also begun recovering the waste methane gas (biogas) from the anaerobic digester and is now using it to help fuel the plant's operations, saving about \$250,000 per year in fuel costs. The biogas fuels a generator that is used on the weekends when the digesters are producing methane. The electric energy from the generator is used within the facility.

The final product, called GreenEdge®, is a complete, slow release organic fertilizer that supplies essential nutrients for turf grass and plant growth and health. Green Technologies, a technology and marketing company that develops, produces and markets technologies and products for turf grass and plant nutrition, will initially market GreenEdge® to golf courses, ball parks, and recreational parks. The company expects to introduce the product to the home lawn and professional lawn care market in the next six to twelve months.



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The “Dirt” on the River’s Biggest Pollution Problem

Taken from: *Cloudy Creeks Not the Norm*
 (Special to Jacksonville Fishing & Outdoors Magazine, Oct. 2002)

by Mike Hollingsworth

I have often been asked “What is the biggest pollution problem with the River?” One of the most widespread and intense types of pollution is simply “dirt.” Surprisingly, it is also the easiest to see and the easiest to prevent.

Have you ever driven over a creek that used to be clear or tea-colored only to have the look of chocolate milk? Have you noticed that you can no longer get your boat into a favorite creek at low tide?

You are seeing is the result of poor construction practices—namely ineffective erosion control structures that allow sand and silt from construction areas to wash off-site with the rain. Another possible cause is the pumping of muddy water from construction sites into a nearby ditch or creek. While not as dramatic as a toxic pipe killing thousands of fish, these sources of sedimentation may be the biggest threats to our

enjoyment of our waterways.

How does “dirt” affect our waterways? The larger particles of sand in a sediment slurry will usually settle out fairly quickly—sometimes burying the aquatic plants, root mats, and other animal habitats that lie on the bottom of adjacent streams. The smaller particles of silt will often travel miles downstream until they hit a slow spot—usually a wide spot in the stream or where the stream becomes tidal. The silt will then

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RiverWatch

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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**

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settle out and coat everything in mud. A boat ride up virtually any tributary in Jacksonville at low tide will reveal this effect.

Besides making the streams unnavigable, this sedimentation severely disrupts the stream's ecosystem. The sand and silt smothers the essential habitat for insect larvae and aquatic worms. Without insects and worms, there is nothing to start the food chain for the other river creatures. Then, no matter how much pollution you prevent from entering the water body, the ecosystem will simply not have the habitat available to sustain a healthy fishery.

The cloudiness in the water will prevent the aquatic plants that should be there from growing. The reduced plant life and water depth keeps out not only the insect larvae and worms, but also keeps out the manatee...and keeps them in the main shipping channels where they can be susceptible to collisions with boats—both large and small. The silt also provides an excellent growing condition for harmful bacteria. So you'll end up with a water body that does not support fishing, nor boating, nor the manatee population.

But isn't "dirt" natural? Muddy water may be natural for the Mississippi River, Colorado River, or streams passing through the red clay regions



of Georgia, North Florida streams should usually be either clear or brown, but not cloudy.

Isn't this kind of dumping against the law? Yes. Construction sites are permitted by the St. Johns River Water Management District. These techniques are relatively cheap and easy to install—but must be maintained at all times. At no time are they allowed to violate state water quality standards with anything coming off of their site. Violations in water quality standards can result in a fine of up to \$10,000 per day, per violation.

What can you do? You can learn what your favorite creek is supposed to look like—before something bad happens. Is the water clear or colored? How much sand and silt is on the bottom? What water bodies are connected to my creek? Are there any construction activities going on in the watershed? When your creek changes color to that of chocolate milk or you

witness suspicious activities and pollution incidents, immediately call the Stewards Hotline.

These are your waterways, and you can play a big role in keeping them available for all of us to enjoy.

See you out on the River!



An Evening on

The Stewards of the St. Johns River 3rd annual Recognition Dinner on May 10th was an overwhelming success. Our thanks go to all the individuals and organizations who significantly contributed during the prior 12 months. Our most sincere thanks also go to those who granted the Stewards the use of this lovely facility.



Doug Matthews (left) and Jim Love (right) were both bidding on the tennis racket during the silent auction.



Linda and Bob Uible danced the night away.



Heather Sosa and her Mom, Kay Schryer, (above) helped with raffle tickets. Linda and Jeff Bunnell (right) enjoyed the excellent buffet.



Denny and Ginny Lafer toasting with friends for raising

the River Gala

...tion/Fundraiser dinner held at the Florida Yacht Club
to the 370 Stewards members, guests, and volunteers
this event, as always, is to recognize and honor those
...buted to improving the health of the St. Johns River
...o the Yacht Club and Commodore John D. Lockwood
(See pg. 8 for the 2003 Friend of River Award winner.)

Former Mayors Hans Tanzler and John Delaney

A very special “thank you” is due Mayor John Delaney who graciously served as our Master of Ceremonies for the evening and presented the Stewards “Friends of the River Awards”. The Plaque to Mayor Tanzler read: “In Recognition of your efforts to cleanup the St. Johns River and raising the public’s awareness of the issues.” Mayor Delaney also received a Lifetime Steward Award for consistently serving as a champion for improving the health of the St. Johns River and the lasting environmental legacy he gave the citizens of Florida through the Preservation Project.



Steward’s Executive Director, Don Loop, congratulates Mario Taylor, the new Director for Northeast Florida Department of Environmental Protection, who accepted the Outstanding Governmental Award for his Industrial Wastewater Supervisor, Jim Maher.



Laura Matthews and Jeremy Coffey were impressed by the premier of the new Stewards’ video entitled “The River Returns—America’s First River” produced by Board member Michael Hartman and Digital Video Arts.



...asted the Stewards
...nearly \$8,000.



Don and Linda Gilbert chatted with Tom and Connie Carroll

Whitney's Marine—A Clean Marina

Candis Whitney (left) and manager, Carol Ellis, Whitney's Marina manager, receive the Clean Marina Certification

Whitney's Marine on Highway 17 at Doctors Lake has been designated a Clean Marina under the Department of Environmental Protection's stringent guidelines. A brief tour around Whitney's will demonstrate visually what a Clean Marina is all about. The grounds, buildings, boat yard, and docks are immaculately clean. A closer look will reveal the environmental protection measures that are practiced to help protect the River and the surrounding environment, such as recycling, xeriscaping and proper disposal for pollutant materials.

The Clean Marina Program requires a rigorous educational and evaluation program before a marina is allowed to be



officially certified as a Clean Marina. The DEP views the program as educational, not regulatory, and works in partnership with the marina personnel as well as offering grants to help defray the expense to the business owner.

Why is the Clean Marina Program important to the health of the St. Johns and all Florida waters? A marina and its boaters have the potential to contribute a significant amount of harmful pollutants to the River if proper safeguards are not known and used. Products such as petroleum, cleaning compounds, boat bottom cleaning debris, and storm water runoff all can contribute to pollution.

Currently, Florida has nearly 2000 marinas and hundred of

thousands of boaters use Florida's waters every day. The Clean Marina Program provides education and clear cut standards and guidelines for managing the pollution potential for all areas that could cause harm to the health of our waterways.

Carol Ellis, Marina Manager at Whitney's, explains that part of the company mission since it was established in 1975 has been to maintain a clean and peaceful environment for its customers and friends, and receiving the Clean Marina designation is recognition of that commitment.

The entire marina staff participates in understanding and maintaining Clean Marina standards. "Certification is just not a one time achievement,"

continued pg. 7 - Clean Marina

The 2003 Steward's Friend of the River Award goes to Ray Avery, who has been the Executive Director of Clay County Utility Authority since 1993.

Since 1995, the Clay County Utility Authority, under Avery's leadership, has received over 20 awards for waste water improvement and water reuse, including 1st Place for Water Reclamation and Reuse 2003 from the EPA.

The CCUA currently reuses more than 51% of all waste water which conserves 500 million gallons annually. Avery's goal is 100% reuse and zero discharge to River.

The plaque read: Friend of the River for 2003, Ray Avery, In Appreciation of your River Restoration Efforts.

2003 Friend of the River Award Ray Avery



Clay County Utility Authority Team: *Kim Raye, Distribution and Collection Supt.; David Bolam, Chief Engineer; Gayla Denmark, Backflow Prevention Administrator; Ray Avery, Ex. Director; Don Parker, Lead Inspector; Celeste Laffy, Customer and Public Relations Manager; Tom Morris, Chief Operations Officer.*

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Clean Marina

explains Carol Ellis, "It's an ongoing commitment to maintain the high standards required for the protection of our environment." An important objective of the program is to help transfer this knowledge to boating customers on operating guidelines that help protect the River and surrounding areas. At Whitney's Marine, educational materials are made available to all customers.

The Clean Marina Program is a voluntary program that

requires considerable employee training and participation. Implementation of a Clean Marina program requires considerable initial investment and requires a higher level of ongoing maintenance costs.

Why do it? Marina manager Carol Ellis explains: By meeting Clean Marina standards we help protect our River, wildlife and the environment. Accepting personal responsibility has always been quite simply 'the right thing to do'!"

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 _____

Membership: New
 Renewal

Office Use:

Date

Ck. #

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**