



# Friends of St. Sebastian River

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

March 2017

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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.

## **MICCO/WHEELER STORMWATER PARK FILTERS WATER TO THE NORTH PRONG**

The Micco Stormwater Park, also referred to by the name Wheeler from its previous owner, is a new stormwater treatment area the St. Johns River Water Management District has been developing over the last few years. And while the water treatment functions of the park were completed last year, the recreational improvements are running behind schedule and have yet to be completed.

Plan to attend our meeting this month for an update on the project and learn more about how the park improves the water quality of our river, and when the recreational features of the park are expected to be available to the public. A representative from the St. Johns River Water Management District will join us for our meeting this month, to give a presentation about the 300-acre stormwater park, and an update on when it is expected to open.

We will also be presenting our Environmental Enhancement Award at our meeting this month. Presentation of the award was delayed from our January meeting, as the recipient for 2016 is the Wheeler project/St. Johns River Water Management District, and we look forward to being able to present it directly to the folks who have been involved with its development.

The meeting is Tuesday, March 28<sup>th</sup>, 7:30pm at the North Indian River County Library, 1001 Sebastian Blvd. and all are welcome to attend. For more information, visit our website or call 772-202-0501.

## **FSSR 2017 BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

At our annual meeting in January, attending Friends members voted for this year's Board of Directors. As per our Bylaws, we elected our Officers at our February Board meeting. There was no change of Officers, other than Gayle Heath chose not to continue as our Secretary, so that she could enjoy spend more time traveling in her retirement. We have yet to fill that vacancy. Anyone have an interest/talent in that area?

Two new members who have joined our Board are Lee Ann Kluepfel and Bob Stephen. Thanks to everyone for your help and participation, and congratulations to all.

## CONSERVATION LAND IN SEBASTIAN THREATENED

The Indian River County Metropolitan Planning Organization is working on consideration of a new North County Transit Hub that would provide an upgrade/improvement to the current hub, located on Dryden Ave. The county contracted for an assessment of several sites in the vicinity of the current hub, and the MPO is apparently focusing primarily on a site that was ranked #2 – the Ansin Tract, which is an approximately 32 acres site, at the northeast corner of routes 512 and 510, adjacent to the county canoe launch on the South Prong of the St. Sebastian River.

The Ansin Tract was acquired by the county in 2005, with the use of state and local public funds, for the purpose of conservation. The proposed transit hub would require approximately an acre and half for its facility. The neighbors in the area are concerned about the focus on this site for several reasons, including quality of life issues, and conservation. We are concerned about the use of conservation land being used for purposes other than for which it was acquired. We believe it is a violation of the public trust to abrogate the provisions put in place to protect the property, and for the use of public monies for its acquisition.

The MPO will be holding its next meeting on April 12<sup>th</sup> to further discuss the site assessments for locating the new transit hub. There are options for the location of the hub and we believe one that would be more appropriate is the North County Pool, within about 30 seconds travel time from the Ansin Tract. We encourage you attend the MPO meeting to comment on this project. The meeting is scheduled in Building B at the county's administration complex in Vero Beach. For more information about the MPO, visit their website at [www.irmpo.com](http://www.irmpo.com).

More information about the sites under consideration by the MPO can be found in the agenda packet from their previous meeting here - [www.irco.gov/Boards/CAC/2017/agendas/CAC020717.pdf](http://www.irco.gov/Boards/CAC/2017/agendas/CAC020717.pdf). If you have a Facebook account, you can access a Facebook page called "Save the Ansin Tract," created by the residents of Fischer Lake Island, at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/171102886718569/>.

## WATER MANAGEMENT IN FLORIDA

There is a dangerous myth underlying recent water management in Florida. The myth has various manifestations but a consistent theme, that we can manage any one component of our multifaceted water resources without considering the other components. Those who have spent their careers working with water resources know this myth is absurd. One needn't be a hydrologist to understand Florida's water resources. Anyway who has paddled a river in north Florida has seen groundwater "boiling" to the surface along one reach of a river, and then sinking into a swallet along the next reach of the very same river. Ground water and surface water become nearly indistinguishable. While it may not be as easily recognizable elsewhere, this same phenomenon occurs everywhere in Florida.

Florida has been blessed with a magical array of water resources. We have lakes, springs, rivers, bays, swamps, and more. They are all interdependent and interconnected with water flowing above and below ground. Many years ago we put in place the most advanced system of statutory and administrative law in the country for protecting our water resources. But our politicians of late have been progressively dismantling the system and replacing it with mythical water management. It's time to reaffirm our commitment to protecting water resources with sensible water management.

source: "Managing without Myth," Jim Gross, Executive Director, Florida Defenders of the Environment, [The Monitor, December 2016](#)

## THE URBAN WATER LANDSCAPE

Urban river conservation is unique. Urban rivers, their tributaries, and how they connect to groundwater, often have been rerouted, their channels armored, and entire streams pushed into pipes, or simply buried, to allow for streets and buildings. Add city wastewater systems, pipes for drinking water, and all other infrastructure, and it becomes clear that what we have created is very different from what nature intended. Efforts in cities often focus on complying with regulatory mandates, reducing pollution and bringing more people to neighborhood waterways, but given the issues we face, these efforts can be made more effective by taking a comprehensive

approach.

The Charles River in Massachusetts flows into Boston Harbor, and its local watershed protection organization was formed in 1965, in response to public concern about the abysmal condition of the river. A critical take-away from the organization's 20 year science and engineering research project which began in 1994, "...has been the realization that our entire perspective on pollution issues, climate change, and sustainability is based on the wrong premise. Since 1972, with the passage of the Clean Water Act, the premise in both regulation and design engineering has been that by adding to or subtracting from existing urban water infrastructure we can clean up and restore the waters of the United States."

"We have certainly improved the waters of the United States since 1972 by eliminating or severely curtailing the most egregious polluted discharges. The bottom line, however, is this: if every surface water body in the United States currently met the requirements of the Act, rivers in the United States would remain in big trouble. From instream flow and groundwater hydrology, to flooding, drought, habitat, and climate change, the regulatory framework on which we rely is simply inadequate."

The Charles River Watershed Association's research clearly indicates that water sustainability must begin with understanding and restoring historic natural hydrology. If we begin with the premise that our water use must serve and restore nature, then how we design and engineer infrastructure for water supply, stormwater capture, and wastewater collection and treatment must change.

The article continues with five principles of infrastructure design the CRWA developed in their efforts to save and improve the water quality and habitat of their river. More information can be found on the CRWA website at [www.crwa.org/water-transformation-series](http://www.crwa.org/water-transformation-series).

source: "River Voices," July 2015, River Network

## MANATEE APPRECIATION DAY

Manatees are aquatic mammals known for their immense size and jowly appearance. Manatees might not make the list of cutest animals, but enough manatee enthusiasts exist for there to be a Manatee Appreciation Day.

Manatee Appreciation Day is devoted to raising awareness about these quirky creatures. Unfortunately, manatees are endangered. Although hunting manatees is usually illegal, they continue to be poached for their meat and hide. Manatees are also often fatally injured in collisions with boats. It is important to increase manatee awareness so that these fascinating animals will continue to exist in the future.

Manatee Appreciation Day is celebrated on the fourth Wednesday of March – March 29<sup>th</sup> this year. You can view an online video at the USA Today newspaper website here - <https://goo.gl/AY37mv> that features a segment on the Crystal River National Wildlife Refuge, where you can swim with manatees as long as you don't harass or interfere with them. And the latest addition to the Refuge is the Three Sisters Spring, which is an amazing site to see.

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Saturday, March 25, 9am-3pm  
**Florida Wildflower Festival**  
Downtown Deland  
info: [www.floridawildflowerfestival.com](http://www.floridawildflowerfestival.com)



Tuesday, March 28, 7:30pm  
**Wheeler Stormwater Park,**  
**Doug Voltolina**  
FSSR  
North IRC Library  
1001 Sebastian Blvd.  
info: [www.fssr.org](http://www.fssr.org) or  
772-202-0501



Tuesday, April 4, 12pm  
**Conserving Marine**  
**Ecosystems in the Southeast**  
Marine Resources Council  
Brown Bag Lunch  
Lagoon House, Palm Bay  
info: [www.mrcirl.org](http://www.mrcirl.org) or  
321-725-7775



Saturday, April 22, 9am-4pm  
**Sebastian Earth Day/Arbor**  
**Day Celebration**  
City of Sebastian Natural  
Resources Board  
Riverview Park, Sebastian  
info: [www.sebastiannrb.com](http://www.sebastiannrb.com)

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

# Friends of St. Sebastian River

P.O. Box 284

Roseland, Florida 32957-0284



**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**

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## Officers for 2017

President . . . . . Tim Glover  
Vice President . . . . . Buzz Herrmann  
Secretary . . . . . vacant  
Treasurer . . . . . Bill Brennan

## Directors for 2017

Tom Bauer . . . . . Mark Bondy  
Lee Ann Kluepfel . . . . . Judy Orr  
Jane Schnee . . . . . Bob Stephen  
Lynn Stieglitz . . . . . Bruce Zingman

## WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Jerry & Vickie Colbert  
Dr. Henry Fischer  
Tommy & Kathy Knight  
Archie Laird  
Jerry & Judy Severin  
Ken & Melissa Stone

## CORPORATE SPONSORS

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