



# Friends of St. Sebastian River

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

January 2017

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website: [www.fssr.org](http://www.fssr.org) email: [info@fssr.org](mailto:info@fssr.org) ph: 772-202-0501

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.

## GOPHER TORTOISES – A FLORIDA KEYSTONE SPECIES

Gopher tortoises are a “threatened” species in Florida, and they are also considered a “keystone” species, as they share their burrows with more than 350 other species. Please join us for a presentation by Chuck Toll of the Environmental Learning Center, to learn more about this unique Florida reptile. The meeting is **Tuesday, January 24**, 7:30pm, at the North Indian River County Library, 1001 Sebastian Blvd in Sebastian and all are welcome to attend.

Our January meeting is also our Annual Meeting and current Friends members will be voting for this year’s Board of Directors. If you are interested in being on our Board, please let us know, or attend the meeting. Board terms are for two years and the only qualifications are to maintain a current membership, and to have the time and interest to be involved. The current proposed slate of nominees is as follows: Bill Brennan, Tim Glover, Buzz Herrmann, and Bruce Zingman, who are all incumbents. In addition, Bob Stephens is running for election to our Board for the first time.

Finally we would like to offer a big thanks to Gayle Heath who is leaving our Board this year, after many years of being involved. She has served at one time as our President, and most recently served several years as our Secretary. Gayle has finally decided to take greater advantage of her retirement and travel more, but promises to help out when she is in town. Thanks Gayle for your service and help over these many years!

## YARD SALE – FEBRUARY 11<sup>TH</sup>

We will be holding our annual yard sale again this year at 8am on Saturday, February 11<sup>th</sup>. This is one of our largest fund-raising events of the year and we are asking for your assistance in making it a success once again. If you would like to help in any way, we would appreciate your donations, or just stopping by the day of the sale to find that perfect something you can’t live without!

The sale will be held at the About Storage facility across from Dale Wimbrow Park on Roseland Road. The folks at About Storage have been most generous in donating the use of a storage unit the week of our sale, to collect and organize donations prior to the sale. We would ask that you collect and store items prior to us learning if a storage unit is available this year. If you have something that you just can’t wait to get rid of, or need assistance in moving, please contact us (see the front page of this newsletter). If you would like to help with organizing donations, pricing, or selling the day of, please let us know.

## **ARBOR DAY IN FLORIDA**

Arbor Day is an annual observance that celebrates the role of trees in our lives and promotes tree planting and care. As a formal holiday, it was first observed in 1872, in Nebraska.

The national Arbor Day celebration is the last Friday in April, but Florida celebrates Arbor Day on the third Friday in January. Due to Florida's warmer climate, it is convenient, and even advantageous to plant trees at this earlier date in the season. As a result, Florida's observance of Arbor Day is one of the first in the nation; an event which it has celebrated since 1886.

The City of Sebastian though celebrates Arbor Day closer to the national April observance date, in conjunction with its annual Earth Day celebration. This year, that event will be Saturday, April 22 at Riverview Park in Sebastian.

The Arbor Day Foundation has lots of information about planting trees, and as a benefit of donating to their organization, you will occasionally receive free trees! They are interested in you sharing your tree planting with them too. Your tree does not have to be from Arbor Day. They are interested in your "unusual," or perhaps just your favorite, large, beautiful tree. You may submit photos to them at [www.arborday.org/mytree](http://www.arborday.org/mytree).

There is also a national register of champion trees – the superstars of their species. They are the largest tree of a particular species that has been identified. These trees are located and reported by citizens all around the country. For information, visit the American Forests' website at [www.americanforests.org/explore-forests/americas-biggest-trees](http://www.americanforests.org/explore-forests/americas-biggest-trees). Florida also has its own registry of champion trees. To learn more about where Florida's biggest tree species are, or to nominate a tree to see if it measures up, visit [www.freshfromflorida.com/Divisions-Offices/Florida-Forest-Service/Our-Forests/Florida-Champion-Trees](http://www.freshfromflorida.com/Divisions-Offices/Florida-Forest-Service/Our-Forests/Florida-Champion-Trees). Locally, McKee Gardens in Vero Beach is home to several state champion trees.

## **INVASIVE PLANTS IN YOUR YARD**

In our last newsletter we mentioned about coordinating with local residents who live along the river, to address invasive plants in their yards. We have put together a mailing with information and handouts about some of our most invasive plants species. The mailing is targeted to residents along the river, but the removal of these species is beneficial in any location. If you are interested in learning more, you will find most of the flyers and publications available on the "Library/Newsletters" page of our website. If you are interested in helping coordinate efforts to assist homeowners with removal of invasive plants, please let us know.

## **PHARMACEUTICALS IN OUR WATERWAYS**

In recent years there has been mounting concern about the presence of chemicals from pharmaceuticals and personal care products, such as cosmetics, in the nation's streams and rivers.

There is no question that these chemicals are present in the nation's waterways. The USGS conducted the first major investigation in 2002 and found, on average, seven chemical compounds in the streams they surveyed.

American drug consumption has increased rapidly in recent years, and Americans fill 3.7 billion prescriptions every year. The chemicals in these drugs end up in waterways after being excreted from the body or when unused medication is flushed down the toilet.

Most municipal sewage treatment facilities do not remove the pharmaceutical compounds from your water, and major upgrades would be required to do so. The federal government hasn't stepped in to require testing or set safety limits, leaving many questions unanswered.

You can help prevent pharmaceuticals from entering our waterways by properly disposing of unused medications. Please check with your local pharmacy about the correct way of disposing of these unwanted drugs, or visit the “Meeting Info/Events” page our website for resources listed in the “Operation Medicine Cabinet” article posted there.

source: “American Rivers” newsletter, Fall 2016

## ANNUAL ENVIRONMENTAL AWARD

The Friends of St. Sebastian River presents an award once a year to someone or project who we believe has contributed the most to the environmental enhancement of our river or its watershed. For 2016 we have chosen the Wheeler Stormwater Park, constructed by the St. Johns River Water Management District. The park is located off Micco Road in Brevard County, and filters water draining to the North Prong of the St. Sebastian River, from the Sotille Canal. The canal extends west of Barefoot Bay, crossing Babcock Road near the Deer Run development. This area is in the vicinity of where the new interchange at I-95 will be constructed, and future development in the area will likely increase as additional infrastructure is built, including the Palm Bay Parkway which is already underway ([www.palmbayparkway.com](http://www.palmbayparkway.com)).

The opening of the stormwater park is expected soon, after being delayed due to additions to the recreational aspects of the project. We are currently expecting a presentation on the status of the park at our March General Meeting, therefore we will delay the presentation of our annual award until that meeting, when we will be joined by a representative of St. Johns.

## BOAT DONATION

The Friends recently received the generous donation of a used boat from one of our members! The boat is powered and we hope to be able to use it for surveillance, cleanup, and other projects on the river.

As mentioned in our last newsletter, the St. Sebastian River Preserve State Park has been working on an invasive plant removal project along the west shore of the South Prong of the river. The funding they received from the state did not provide for follow-up or replanting along the shoreline. Therefore we hope that with this boat we will be able to periodically monitor for regrowth of invasive species, until the native vegetation has the chance to establish itself and stabilize the shoreline. If you are interested in helping with these efforts, please contact us.

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Thursday, January 19, 7 PM  
**Butterflies, Pollinators & Native Plants, Tim & Ana, Native Butterfly Flowers**  
Eugenia Chapter, FNPS  
Audubon House  
195 9<sup>th</sup> St. SE/Oslo Rd.



Tuesday, January 24, 7:30pm  
**Gopher Tortoises, A Florida Keystone Species – Chuck Toll, Environmental Learning Center**  
FSSR  
North IRC Library  
1001 Sebastian Blvd.  
Info: [www.fssr.org](http://www.fssr.org)  
Or 772-202-0501



Wednesday, January 25, 4 & 7 PM  
**Sharks with Spectators, Matt Ajemian, FAU Harbor Branch**  
Harbor Branch Oceanographic Inst.  
5600 US 1 North, Ft. Pierce  
Info: [www.fau.edu/hboi](http://www.fau.edu/hboi)  
or 772-242-2559



Monday, February 6, 6 PM  
**Indian River Lagoon: Problems and Potential Solutions, Duane DeFreese, Ph.D., IRL Council**  
Pelican Island Audubon  
River House  
305 Acacia Rd., Vero Beach  
info: [www.pelicanislandaudubon.org](http://www.pelicanislandaudubon.org)



Tuesday, February 7, 12 PM  
**Ocean Plastic: The Problem, The Science, The Solutions, Patty Goffinet**  
Marine Resources Council  
Brown Bag Lunch  
3275 Dixie Hwy NE, Palm Bay  
Info: [www.mrcirl.org](http://www.mrcirl.org)  
Or 321-725-7775

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**

This newsletter is available on our website and delivery by email for current members. We encourage email-only delivery to save funds and paper! Email us at the address on the front to request email delivery.

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## Officers for 2016

President . . . . . Tim Glover  
Vice President . . . . . Buzz Herrmann  
Secretary . . . . . Gayle Heath  
Treasurer . . . . . Bill Brennan

## Directors for 2016

Tom Bauer . . . . . Mark Bondy  
Jane Schnee . . . . . Lynn Stieglitz  
Bruce Zingman

## WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Stephen & Linda Popyack

## CORPORATE SPONSORS

About Storage  
Roseland Community Association  
Tropical Kayak Tours