



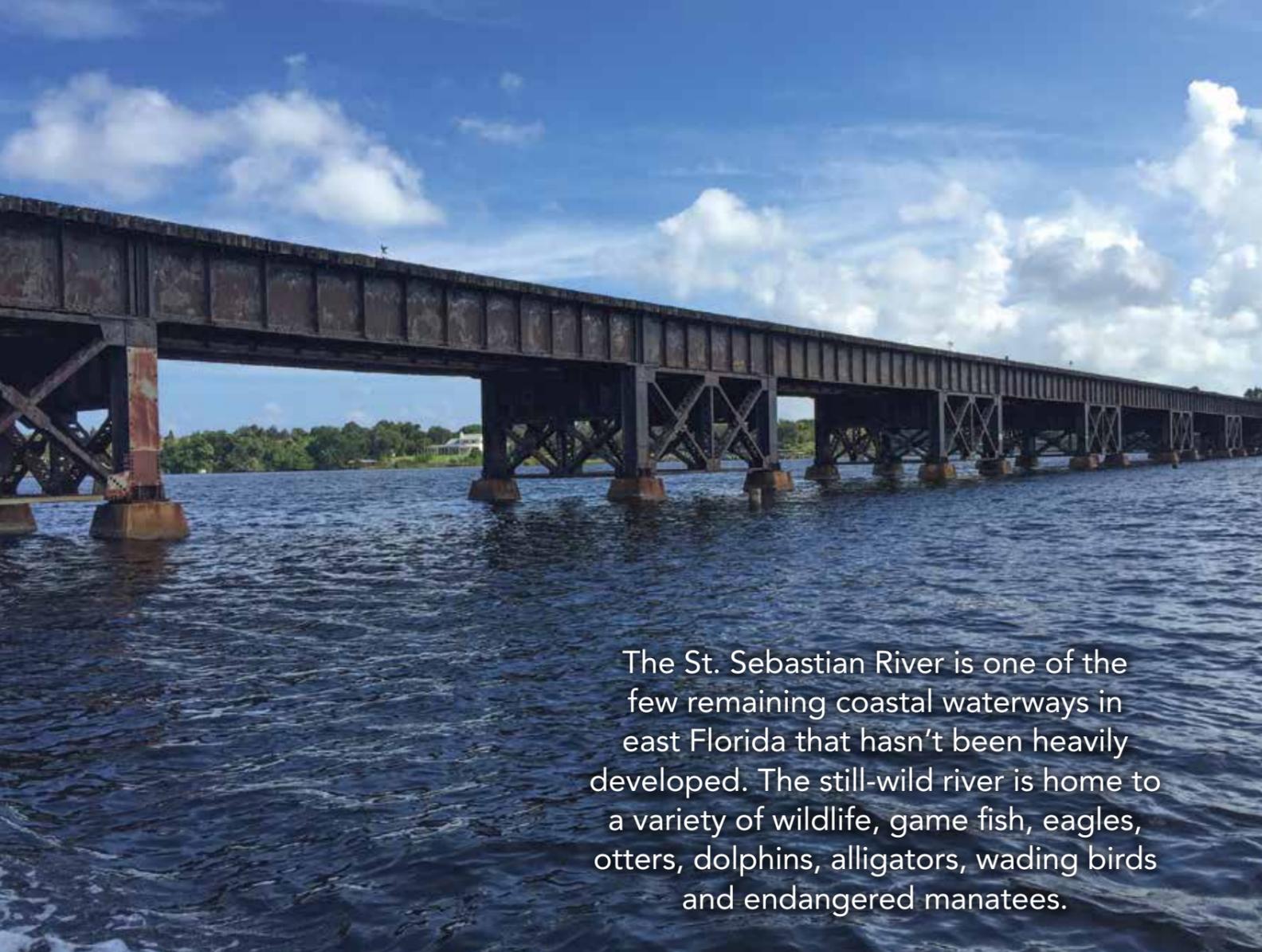
A GLIMPSE INTO *Old Florida*

THE FRIENDS OF ST. SEBASTIAN RIVER
ARE DEDICATED TO MAINTAINING AND
IMPROVING THE HEALTH AND BEAUTY
OF THE RIVER.

WRITTEN BY ANN TAYLOR

*Much of the land bordering the
St. Sebastian River has been
untouched by development and
retains its wild character.*

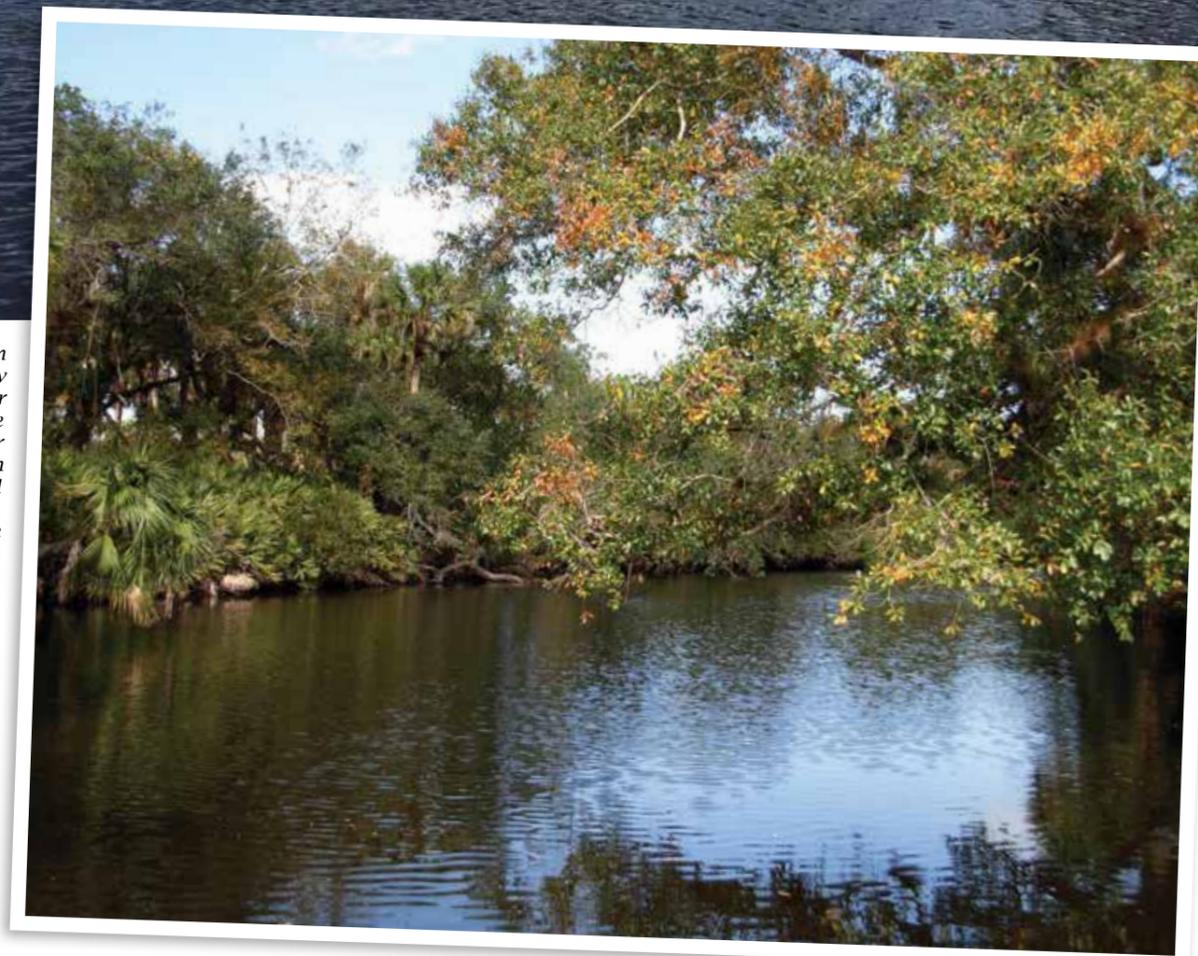
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The St. Sebastian River is one of the few remaining coastal waterways in east Florida that hasn't been heavily developed. The still-wild river is home to a variety of wildlife, game fish, eagles, otters, dolphins, alligators, wading birds and endangered manatees.



The St. Sebastian River is a tributary of the Indian River Lagoon. The brackish water houses both freshwater and saltwater species. Just inland, the river divides into two branches or prongs.



Tim Glover wasn't sure what he would find when he went to his first Friends of St. Sebastian River meeting. What he was sure of was his desire to protect the waterway that runs along his property. "I had seen a blurb in the newspaper about the program; and since I live on the river, it was something I was interested in." Tim grins as he recalls that night 22 years ago. "When I got there, some of the members came up to me and said, 'You need to be on the board,' so I got on the board. I've been president now for over 10 years."

It's not surprising. Tim found kindred souls who cared as much about the St. Sebastian River and its tributaries as he did. One of the few remaining coastal waterways in east Florida that hasn't been heavily developed, the river is home to a variety of wildlife, game fish, eagles, otters, dolphins, alligators, wading birds and endangered manatees. The group got its start 27 years ago when

members of the Roseland Property Owners Association - now the Roseland Community Association - met to express concerns about what they saw happening to the river and surrounding uplands.

Speeding boats were injuring and killing manatees, residential construction was encroaching, a dairy farm adjacent to the river was releasing bacterial runoff, and inadequately treated waste from the Barefoot Bay sewage treatment plant was leaching into the north prong of the river.

With so many matters to monitor, members decided to form an advocacy group to protect and improve the river and its watershed. The name, "Friends of St. Sebastian River," was a natural fit. Through its programs, participation in community events and conservation partnerships, the nonprofit organization has worked to protect the environment by promoting public education and awareness, which Tim says is critical.



Tim Glover, Lynn Stieglitz, Gayle Heath, Bill Brennan and Jane Schnee have all worked tirelessly to preserve and protect the St. Sebastian River; and their efforts have been highly successful.

"There's a 1943 aerial photo that's very important to us because it shows what the river looked like back then, pre-development. There's quite a difference in what Indian River County looks like today. In a recent aerial photograph, you can see where all the developments are and how they affect drainage. People need to know what's happening. A few years ago a major dredging project removed tons of muck from the bottom of the river. The muck had been consuming oxygen that fish and other wildlife need to survive," says Tim, noting one of the major accomplishments the Friends put their efforts behind.

Other accomplishments include establishing building set backs on the river in the City of Sebastian, the adoption of boat speed limits, a ban on airboats, a referendum to purchase conservation lands in Indian River

County, the acquisition of the St. Sebastian River Preserve State Park through the Florida Conservation and Recreation Lands program, and establishing the George Schum Award in honor of a former board member known for his community service. The annual \$500 scholarship is presented to a Sebastian River High School senior who exhibits a volunteer spirit and has an interest in the environment.

"We started out awarding one scholarship a year, but now we have two because Kimberly Maxwell, a former recipient, is funding the second one. She went on to West Point and is now a pediatrician in the military. Kimberly is also on our scholarship committee," says Tim. "Some of our former recipients have kept in touch, like Alexis Thomas, who is Indian River County's storm water educator and the one responsible for enforcing the fertilizer ordinance."



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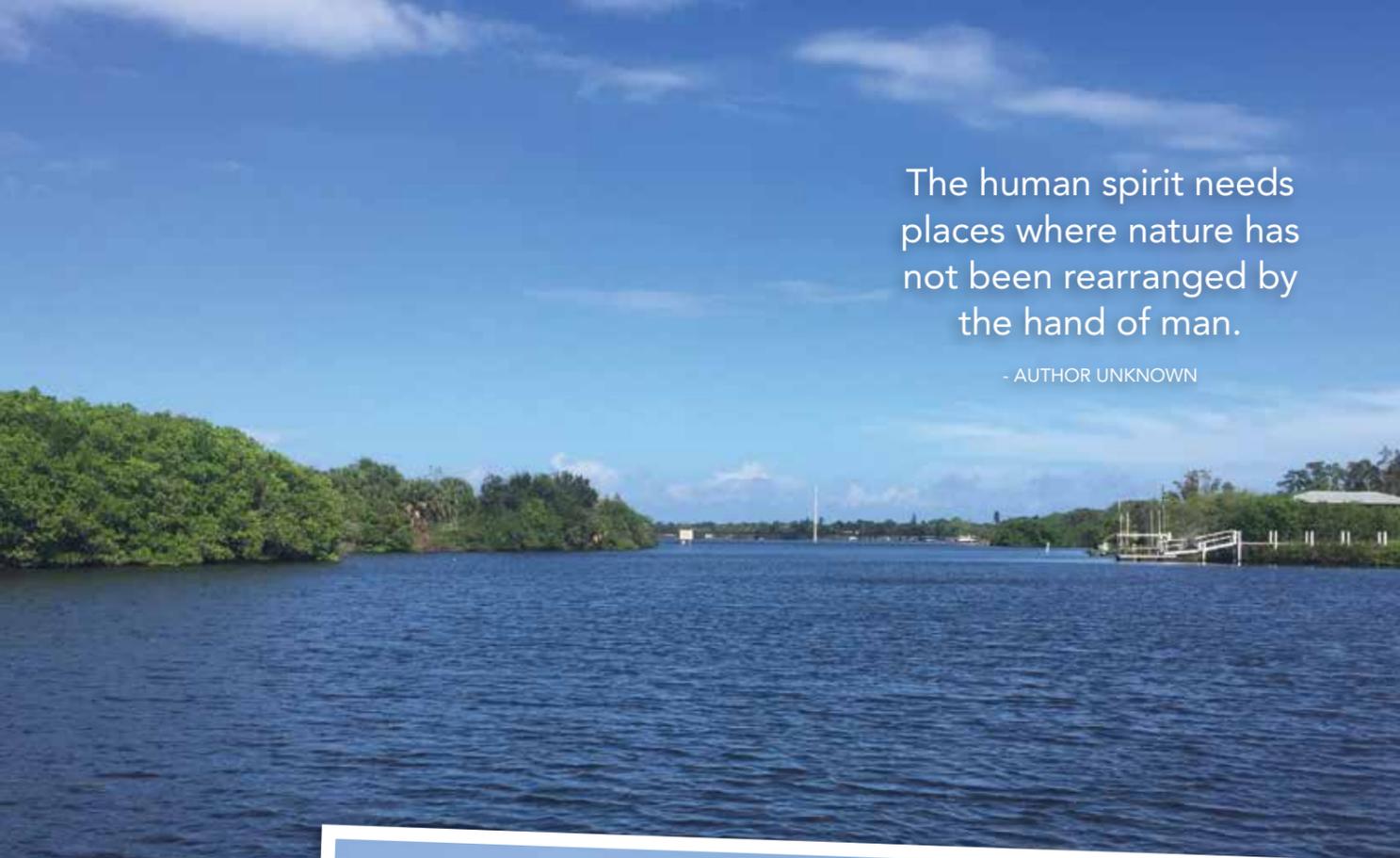
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- AUTHOR UNKNOWN



Although people live along the river, much of the area has been given over to nature. Oaks grow along its banks and a pine meadow is alive with wild flowers.

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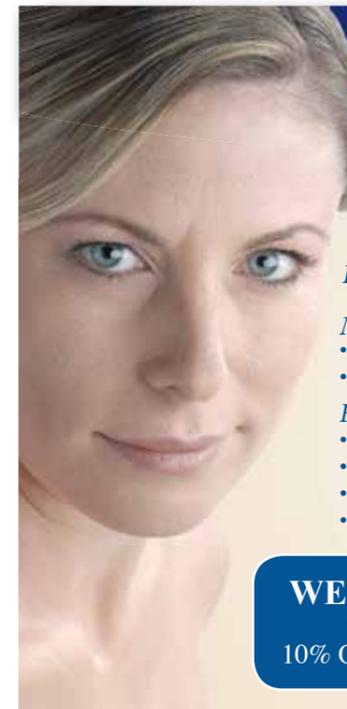
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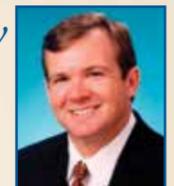
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The north prong of the river has been channeled and dammed while the south prong has been kept natural. This south section of the river is lined with sawgrass and mangroves. Sections of the river are part of the St. Sebastian River Preserve State Park and offer excellent canoeing, kayaking, fishing and paddleboarding.

Tim not only feels strongly about the work Friends of the St. Sebastian River does, he personally goes the extra mile when it comes to protecting the environment. His home, which borders the north prong of the river, is a perfect example. To minimize storm water runoff impacts, Tim built an elaborate wetland that incorporates spartina grass and coquina rock to slow water flow and capture sediments.

In addition, Tim installed energy-efficient toilets, faucets, showers and appliances in his home. A 5,200-gallon rainwater collection system takes care of all his indoor needs, including drinking water. He also has a hydro-geothermal system that heats and cools his house using groundwater as the cooling agent. Friends' board member Jane Schnee gives Tim high marks.

"We as individuals need to do all we can to preserve our natural resources, our wildlife, birds and native habitats. Our water, in particular, is so critical right now with pollution showing up everywhere," says Jane, a longtime Florida resident. "I grew up in Jacksonville Beach, and I've seen way too many negative changes everywhere I go. It doesn't look like Florida anymore. We need to do all we can to reverse the trend."

If Jane's name sounds familiar, it may be because six years ago she made front-page headlines when she purchased 10½ acres on Barber Street in Sebastian. When Jane learned that up to 80 homes had been permitted for the site, she took matters into her own hands. "I had become involved in monitoring scrub jays for Indian River County. When I noticed that the property, which had scrub jays living on it, was in foreclosure and for

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