

# THE IBIS



October 2014, Jay Bushnell, editor

The IBIS is the journal publication of The Friends of the Lower Suwannee and Cedar Keys National Wildlife Refuges

## **OUR MISSION**

*is to provide active advocacy and physical support for the successful stewardship of the Refuges.*

***Advocating***

***Educating***

***Volunteering***

***Funding***

***Fellowship***



## **President's Message**

It's hard to believe that we are three-fourths of the way through the year 2014. Time really does fly when you are having fun, as we all do when working to improve our Refuges! Your Friends board continues to focus on key initiatives such as improving our website and electronic communications, eradication of invasive plants, improving and expanding our trail guides, etc. The Communications Committee, led by Peg Hall and a host of other board members, continues to publish a monthly news brief for members and has published several new trail guides. They are in the final stages of examining how we can improve our website and make it more user friendly. With our Lower Suwannee Refuge partners we received grant funds that will greatly expand our ability to remove invasive plants such as Brazilian Pepper bushes. Roger McDaniels and other volunteers will continue that ongoing initiative very soon. We have

participated in several open houses at the Seahorse Key Light Station and Marine Lab. Thanks very much to the volunteers from the Friends that supported these events. One of our initiatives for 2014 is to enhance the Dixie County side of the Lower Suwannee NWR, and I am pleased to report that new information kiosks have been installed at both ends of the Dixie Mainline. Thanks and congratulations are in order for Debbie Meeks who spearheaded these projects. We are very proud of our Refuge staff who works diligently to improve both the Lower Suwannee and Cedar Keys National Wildlife Refuges. In spite of being pulled to work in other refuges due to wild fires, position vacancies, etc., they continue to make great progress here at home. Since we are approaching the end of 2014, a Nominations Committee has been formed to make recommendations on Friends board and officer positions. Their recommendations will be presented to you for approval at the Annual Membership meeting in early 2015. Roger McDaniels is chairing the Nominations Committee. A Budget committee, chaired by Peg Hall, has been formed to prepare a recommended 2015 budget. The Friends board continues to work diligently on your behalf, and we thank you for your membership and support of the Refuges. Your president, Bob Hudson



*By the Numbers*  
 2010 National Wildlife Refuge system  
 funded at \$503 Million  
 2014 National Wildlife Refuge system  
 funded at \$453 million  
 2010 there were just a little over 500  
 refuges  
 2014 there are over 561 refuges with  
 over 150 million acres-18 million  
 acres in the lower 48

**Refuge Updates**  
**Lower Suwannee & Cedar Key**  
**NWRs**

Our refuges have been combined into a refuge complex with Manager Andrew Gude now spending a great deal of time in Crystal River. Called the North Florida NWR Complex, it includes Lower Suwannee and Cedar Keys, St. Vincent and St. Marks, Crystal River, Chassahowitzka, Egmont Key, Pinellas Keys, and Passage Key. It takes 6 hours of driving to connect the refuges. This does not include the on the water time to connect the islands by boat.

**Coastal Clean-up / Red Tide Update from the Cedar Keys NWR**

Saturday, September 20<sup>th</sup> marked the 29<sup>th</sup> annual International Coastal Cleanup Day as sponsored by the Ocean Conservancy. Cedar Key Vice-Mayor Sue Colson again organized the local efforts that were attended and



supported by Refuge staff and equipment, along with Friends' volunteers. Cleanup volunteers collected several tons of trash from area coastlines, including the usual water bottles, beer cans, plastics, glass, dock materials, clam cover netting, styrofoam, mylar balloons, fishing gear, and miscellaneous debris washed up with the tides. Area efforts concentrated on the beaches and shoreline around town, and on the Refuge islands of Atsena Otie Key, Scale Key, North Key, and Seahorse Key.

Sue's own granddaughter Emily Colson, a senior at Cedar Key High School, marked the event by unveiling her exhibit on the harmful effects of trash on marine animals and habitat. Emily also distributed to boats and fisherman, for free, her own smartly decorated PVC containers made to securely hold waste fishing line and gear to keep it out of the marine environment. The containers were designed and built by Emily at her own expense. All are very proud of this young lady and her grassroots efforts for marine conservation.

Most locals are familiar with the red tide event that has been occurring off the Gulf coast of North Central Florida, and Coastal



Cleanup volunteers witnessed first-hand evidence of the blight. Many dozens of dead batfish, toad fish, puffer fish and cow fish, all slow bottom feeders, were found

in the rack line, along with small dead sharks and sea turtles. These were likely brought in by onshore SW winds last week. The red tide bloom has been recently detected as close as 3-5 miles offshore from Cedar Key, and this past Friday, the Florida Dept. of

Agriculture closed the area waters to shellfish harvest, making local oysters and clams a sparse commodity. The red tide is most evident by discolored water and weed lines of dead fish.

At high bloom levels, many people also experience mild to moderate respiratory discomfort. The 'Red Tide' phenomenon in Florida is caused by blooms of the acrid toxic algae *Karenia brevis*. Interestingly enough, CC volunteers also witnessed, with some chagrin, the presence of several large water moccasin snakes, or cottonmouths, on the beaches of Seahorse Key. Presumably these snakes were lured out of the woods of Seahorse Key, where they live in high numbers in a symbiotic relationship with the island's nesting wading birds, to feast on the bounty of dead fish courtesy of the red tide bloom. by Vic Doig

### **Other refuge news of note**

Members of fire crews from all refuges are often called to help fight forest fires in other states. No doubt you know about the tinder box conditions out west because of the continued drought conditions. George Pelt and Anthony DiMaggio both were helping fight fires out west this year.

The refuge has selected a law enforcement officer to replace Kenny McCain. David Murphy comes to us from the Tennessee NWR Complex, the Fort Campbell Military Reservation, and at the North Mississippi NWR Complex. Once he is on station, you will learn more about David to be covered in our next issue of the IBIS.

Speaking of Kenny, there was a special recognition ceremony at St. Marks NWR for him. Of particular interest, is that Kenny is the first law enforcement officer to ever be recognize as employee of the year for the FWS. Just think of all the years the award has been done plus the some 3,500 for this

year. Wow, what an accomplishment. You may remember that Kenny retired after this



year annual meeting. Yet, he is still very much with us since he is working for the Seahorse Key Marine Lab.

One final note: Seahorse Key will again be open to the public Oct. 18-19 during the Cedar Key Seafood Festival. If you visit Seahorse, be sure to check out Kenny's work.

### **A Unique Opportunity for Friends of LS&CKNWR Members** **Sunday, Nov. 2 -Monday, Nov. 3**

If you want to explore Seahorse Key with scientist whose expertise is focused on the marine life and the unique habitat of the island, spend a night in a remote historic lighthouse, support the Seahorse Key Marine Lab with your fees for the trip, and enjoy the fellowship of other Friends members, **this**



**opportunity is for you.** To hold your spot, be sure to submit application ASAP. Last year's event was very successful. This years hosts will be Dr. Maria Sgambati & Dr. Coleman Sheehy.

**Costs:** Overnighers-\$100 donation (\$95 if willing to use topbunk), \$60 for day trippers to Seahorse Key Marine Laboratory which covers cost of transportation, Lab fees, Electric, Water, Personnel, Supper, Etc. All participants will be responsible for bringing sack lunch for Sunday. Overnighers bring contributions for Monday's breakfast and lunch, plus bedding and personal items. We have room for a total of 22 overnight campers (if some are willing to use top bunks). There are 13 bottom bunks available. Plus we have room for at least 5 day trippers. We have to have a minimum of 10 overnighers to sponsor the trip.

**Pre-trip meeting and pot-luck supper** is Tuesday, October 28, 6 p.m. at Maria Sgambati's home. For questions, schedule etc. contact John McPherson:

[jkmcperson@att.net](mailto:jkmcperson@att.net)

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Return this form immediately by email to [Friendsofrefuges.org](http://Friendsofrefuges.org) or mail to Friends of Refuges. P.O. Box 532, Cedar Key, FL 32625  
**Deadline for Registration: October 24, 2014**  
 Record the number of people you would like to include in each option. Make checks payable to University of Florida.

\_\_\_ Overnight(bottom bunk)-\$100,

\_\_\_ Overnight(top bunk)-\$95,

\_\_\_ Day Trip-\$60

Name or names: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact \_\_\_\_\_

email: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

**Looking for Helpers**

The Friends will again set up our tent for the **Seafood Festival Oct. 18 & 19**. This is one of the events we use each year



to spread the word about our refuges and the refuge system. Alan Pither is coordinating the effort and he is dividing the time into 2 hour blocks. This is a great time to meet the public. Call Alan 352-231-0748 to volunteer.

It is beginning to get cool enough to again go after the **Brazilian Pepper**. You may



remember that Roger McDaniels succeeded in getting a grant last year to go after the invasive pepper bush. Give Roger a call to become a "pepper buster" as they call themselves. It is wonderful dirty fun. He will be sure to keep you on his list (352-543-5232).

On **Dec. 6th**, there will be the **4th Great Suwannee River** cleanup. This year the cleanup will again concentrate on the Fowler's Bluff stretch of the River. The Town of Suwannee and stretches of river by Camp Azalea are scheduled at different times in Nov. The



refuge staff will have a couple of boats for those who register. Of course, we rely a lot on individuals who provide their own boats. Pam Darty is keeping track of folks who will be participating. For planning, please give Pam a call (352-493-0238, ex.223) to let her know if you will join the effort and whether you have your own boat.

## Book Reviews

by Jay Bushnell

Only one Chance: How Environmental Pollution Impairs Brain Development (2013), Oxford University Press by Philippe Grandjean & The Hockey Stick and Climate Wars (2014) Columbia University Press, by Michael E. Mann

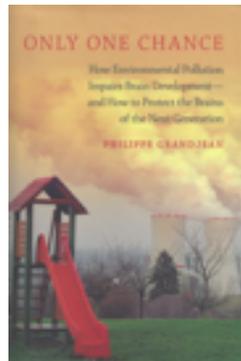
Unfortunately, both authors describe a shared problem with doing scientific research in a climate where vested interest only want to hear the results they like. Each author outlines the results of theirs and others research. They also describe how the nay sayers manipulate the data and try to intimidate scientist.

Grandjean's, a neurologist, focuses on how a child's brain development is adversely affected by chemicals like lead, arsenic, mercury, solvents, pesticides and many industrial compounds. He calls this process, "brain drain," meaning that children do not develop a fully functioning brain that allows them to self actualize to their genetic potential. He carefully outlines the research that indicates potential brain drain situations. He also list over 200 chemicals that either do or are suspect but have not been tested for brain drain.

Okay, you maybe saying, let's take steps to correct this. Well, we have to a certain degree but we continue to introduce new untested chemicals into our environment. It is almost like we replaced germs that cause diseases with chemicals that cause diseases.

You would think that culturally, we would want to protect our children. Yet vested interest argue that toxins have not been shown to be damaging. Of course, there is no attempt by the manufacturers to prove that the chemicals do not harm. Perhaps a poster child example would be the lead industry. In the 1920s, Robert Kehoe authored what became the mantra for all nay sayers for anything they did not want to hear, called the 'show-me-rule' or 'innocent until proven guilty'. Even more egregious, the victims all too often are blamed for the malady. You know these children just don't try hard or they are lazy.

One has to ask, why would we not err on the side of caution! Any culture's future is based on the health and intelligence of their children.



Mann, a professor of meteorology, focuses on the issue of climate change. Read about his own research as well as the overwhelming consensus among "qualified scientist" who study the subject. The hockey stick is a visual that represents the dramatic rise of CO2 due to human use of fossil fuels in less than 200 years.

Mann provides a blow by blow history of the entire debate from the time he completed doctorate in 1995 until the present. He describes how he entered into an arena filled with contrived controversy, character assassinations, fabricated lies and even potential physical threats.

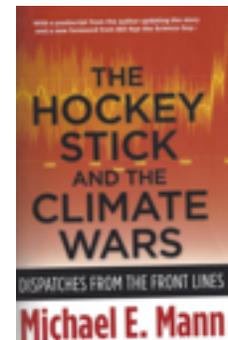
He admits that he had no clue that any of this would happen. After all, as comes out in his writing, he was excited by the opportunity to do original research, a passion since childhood.

Despite a rude awakening, he was a quick study. Even more important, he was not going to be bullied even by congressional committees. He carefully identifies and tracks the nay sayers.

Both authors identify supposed 'scientific experts' who have made a living as nay sayers whether it was with lead, smoking or climate change. Some of the same people are involved with denial. Their attacks are scripted and read the same no matter what they attack. Too often, it is mean spirited and slanderous. Just cut and paste the script to whatever is 'the flavor of the day.'

Now, being a scientist requires honesty and willingness to self-correct when the data suggest to do this. Willingness to do this is a form of skepticism that nay sayers prey on as if the result of any study is flawed. They might say, 'ah, see, the scientist admits further study is needed'. This plants a seed of doubt in public minds not versed in the scientific method. Both Grandjean and Mann stress that scientist need to be more forceful in presenting scientific results.

**Climategate** is an example of how far vested interests are willing to go. This was a very sophisticated and illegal hack job on climate scientists' emails. Bits and pieces of these emails were then reconstructed into messages that were completed fabricated lies. They were then circulated to falsely accuse scientist of hiding the truth. Any guess who might be behind this? We do know who used the messages to denigrate climate scientists. Any guess about their motives?



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