

THE IBIS



SEPTEMBER 2012 Jay & Donna Bushnell, editors

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

The mission of the Friends of the Lower Suwannee and Cedar Keys National Wildlife Refuges is to provide active advocacy and physical support for the successful stewardship of the Refuges.

- ***Advocating***
- ***Educating***
- ***Volunteering***
- ***Funding***



NOTES FROM PEG

Well, it certainly has been an eventful summer. The Friends' signature paddle project has been moving right along thanks to Mark Gluckman and Russ Hall. As we knew, there is a great deal of interest in paddling. We can proudly claim that we have some of the best paddling opportunities. Be sure to check out the Hidden Coast Paddling Festival Oct. 5-7 in the Town of Suwannee described in this IBIS. Even if you are not a paddler, we could use your help plus

there are plenty of non-paddle activities including a low country boil dinner.

We certainly had our share of rain this summer with Tropical storm Debbie, which forced us to reschedule our board meeting and then came hurricane Isaac. Neither storm caused major damage here, fortunately. It did help break the drought but we must still carefully monitor water consumption. As you know, a healthy ecosystem is dependent upon the conservation of quality water. We continue to face major issues with the protection of Floridians' water.

Your board has been very active. We have even incorporated conference calling during board meetings so out of town members can still contribute. Please remember that all Friends are welcome to participate in these meetings.

As mandated by our By Laws, September is when a nominating committee is appointed. It consist of two board members and at least one non-board member. Jay Bushnell, Bob Hudson, Greg Lang and Roger McDaniels have agreed to serve on this committee. Of course, you can let them know you would like to take an active part. Just give call Jay at (493-1807) or email friends@friendsofrefuges.org. The goal is to continue growing. You can be proud of your Friends organization.

Thanks to Kenny McCain, we finally have the Friends' kiosk panel at the Cedar Key boat ramp ready to be filled. The goal is to edit the kiosk frequently to keep it current with what we do or have done. Anyone willing to help with formatting materials into the kiosk, please get in touch with Jay @ 493-1807.

From the Camino in Spain, Peg

HIDDEN COAST PADDLE FESTIVAL

“Wildlife Encounters in the Lower Suwannee National Wildlife Refuge.”

Oct. 5-7th in the Town of Suwannee

Mark your calendar for the 3rd Annual Hidden Coast Paddling Festival. The guided paddle trips feature the Lower Suwannee NWR based on the paddle trails developed by the Friends’ paddle committee. With folks coming from all over the state, paddle trips have been added but you need to call Mark Gluckman (352-331-6279) to reserve a spot. Bring your own boat and safety gear or rentals may be available.

Those who don’t paddle can choose to join interesting field trips led by experts that offer botany, wildlife photography, butterfly viewing, or birding along the gorgeous

Dixie Mainline trail and Shired Island beach to the north of Suwannee. The “Shell Cultures of Shired Island” field trip led by Pam Darty, Lower Suwannee NWR

Hummingbird moth by Richard Herman



Zebra Longwing by Richard Herman



Refuge Park Ranger, traces the footsteps of the ancient inhabitants of the Hidden Coast and includes a walk on Shired Island Beach.

Friday night at the Community Center there will be a low county boil dinner at 6:30 P.M. for only \$10.00 followed by a presentation on the Gulf Sturgeon by Dr. Ken Sulak. Saturday evening, you can gather around a campfire at Anderson Landing River Camp for conversation, music and fun.

Everything is free except the meals and rentals. The sponsors, Lower Suwannee National Wildlife Refuge, Friends of the Refuges and the Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission, as well as local tourism development groups, civic organizations and businesses will rely on volunteers. Please help to make this event a success, **volunteer some of your time**. Of course, volunteering also gives you a chance to meet other like minded folks. It is both productive and fun. For more information, contact Jane Connors, 352-542-0078 or email her at hidencoastlines@bellsouth.net.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE FOR 2013

In preparation for the 2013 year, the nominating committee will be looking for members who would like to take a more active part in the Friends group. Our main goal is have a slate of officers and board members ready for the 2013 Annual Membership meeting. We would also like to identify folks who have special interests for committee participation.

You need not wait to be contacted just give us a call, (493-1807). Bob Hudson, Jay Bushnell, Greg Lang and Roger McDaniels make up the committee. We would love to hear from you and we hope you will seriously consider our request to serve.

FRANCIS S. TAYLOR OUTDOORSMAN OF THE YEAR AWARD

At the 75th annual conservation awards Banquet of the Florida Wildlife Federation, Kenny McCain was recognized as the Frances S. Taylor Outdoorsman of the Year. The FWF is a unique organization that combines the interests of those of us that hunt and fish with the importance of conservation and environmental protection.



Manley Fuller, Mrs. Taylor, Kenny, Jim Schuette

Held at the St. Pete. Bayfront Hilton it was a very enjoyable evening. Governor/Senator Bob



Graham was the keynote speaker. Kenny has a very interesting and positive story about Bob Graham. Get him to share it with you sometime. The food was great, although not as good as Kenny's barbecue and swamp cabbage. It was wonderful to see so many of Kenny's family were able join the celebration. It was also great to see Kenny smoozing. Oh, if you did not recognize him, Kenny is the big man in the suit, with his wife, mom, brother and grand daughter.

by Jay Bushnell

MEET OUR NEW STAFF MEMBER



Christina Diaz is the refuge's new Administrative Officer. Essentially, she helps keep the books straight. She grew up in Indiana graduating from North Justine

San Pierre high school in 2003. While in high school is was a member of the National Guard program which then she carried over into the Army. For seven years, she served as a Chaplain's assistant in the Army. She quickly learned that this job dealt mostly with accounting issue which was not exactly

what she expected. She joined the USFWS August of this year and has only been here about two weeks. From the looks of her desk, she appears to be settling into her new job well.

Christina is married to Victor and she has a step son, Joshua. She lives in Gainesville and likes many sports, as an observer.

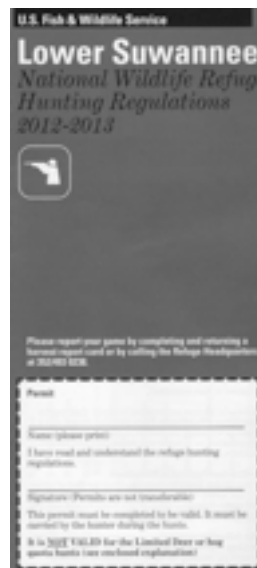
We want to welcome Christina to our team. Be sure to say hello when you visit the headquarters. by Jay Bushnell

MANAGEMENT VISION

Manager, Andrew Gude and his staff will be working to expand the refuge's ability to face future conservation challenges. He states that, "Of all the refuges in Florida, the SE US, and even the larger US, LSWR has the unparalleled opportunity to expand inland and north to address climate change and future development impacts and build a true, large landscape-ecosystem conservation series of connections via working landscapes." His approach would be to work with a coalition of land owners to develop a conservation management plan.

HUNTING SEASON IN THE REFUGE

Starting Sept. 14th with archery, hunting will begin in the Lower Suwannee. There have been some positive changes to this year's schedule of hunts, with a greater emphasis on family hunting. Be sure to get your free permit from the refuge headquarters and check it out.



Another hunting goal is to evaluate the health of the deer herd. One of the ways to do this is to check the age and overall health of deer being harvested. Contact the refuge (493-0238) about a time when you would be willing to work with the refuge staff at check stations.

There has been a question of whether prescribed burning may affect turkey's nesting in the spring. It is a great conservation question.

Vic Doig, Fire Management Officer provides a good

explanation of this question. "Wild turkeys have evolved over the millenia with frequent and regular fire in their upland habitats. But they invest a lot of their energy in a clutch of eggs, and are typically less

likely than some other birds to re-nest, if a fire destroys their nest in a later stage of incubation. What they typically do instead is nest in swamp edges or thickets embedded within the pine uplands that are "fire shadows", these areas typically do not burn under normal prescribed fire conditions. Although an occasional turkey nest is undoubtedly burned, the net affect of fire in their habitat is very positive. Numerous studies over the past 20 years have demonstrated higher pullet production and survival in recently burned areas, and that wild turkeys prefer to forage in southern pine lands burned in the past 2 years (Prevencher et al 1998, Palmer and Hurst 1998, Sisson et al 1990, Juhan 2003). I would also point out the fact that the wild turkey population on the Lower Suwannee is absolutely thriving, with the frequent burning that has taken place in the refuge pine lands over the past 20 years.

The National Wild Turkey Federation has been a strong and vocal supporter of the use of prescribed fire in turkey habitats, during any time of year, not just before the nesting season. Dr. James Kennamer, Senior Vice-President for Conservation Programs, states 'The use of prescribed fire during the growing season is a win-win situation for wild turkeys'. I hope this will ease the minds of turkey hunters the next time they smell the smoke of a spring fire."

I might add that the story surrounding the wild turkey is a major conservation success. My 'cracker' dad never was able to kill one because they were not available. Today, it is very common to see turkeys when driving the loop road, especially on rainy days. So much for the saying, "that turkeys are so stupid they will drown by looking up into the rain." by Jay Bushnell



RULE DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP: CONSUMPTIVE USE PERMITTING CONSISTENCY REPORT

On August 8th, I attended a meeting conducted by the State Dept. of Environmental Protection and the Water Management District where they presented the work being done on water consumption. They are working on standardizing the rules to be consistent state wide (Chapter 62-40, F.A.C. [DEP]).

They were soliciting public comments at these meetings. They also encouraged written comments by Sept. 14 @ email (CUPCON@dep.state.fl.us).

The emphasis seems to be entirely on the quantity of water used. The issue of quantity is certainly important, but there should be equal concern about quality. There was no mention about the quality of our ground water. A major emphasis was on the mitigation of permitted water consumption with credits from using reclaimed water.

Some of my expressed concerns that I submitted:

- Water quality is of equal importance for a healthy eco system (the degradation of the springs by nitrogen overload is a case in point).
- The concept of minimum flows seems to imply that there is an excess of water that can be exploited elsewhere.
- Once a permit is issued, how do they plan to monitor and enforce usage?
- What considerations of water usage for future large development projects have they made? From what was said at this meeting when asked, I got the impression that it would be left up to local governance. Since we no longer have a Dept. of Community Affairs in Tallahassee to evaluate Comprehensive Land Use, we seem to be heading back to the Florida of the 1950s with few restrictions on development and no regard for the environment. Folks at the local level find themselves with major restrictions on their ability to challenge proposed developments. At this meeting, it seemed to have been acknowledged that the developmental permitting process could be done in 30 days by local governments!
- Are there restrictions on using water on lawns?
- What measures are taken to insure the quality of reclaimed water?

While it is past the deadline for submitting comments, we all need to be continually vigilant about how Florida's water is being consumed. With

this in mind, a coalition of organizations has created a grassroots movement called Florida's Water & Land Legacy. They are working on a ballot initiative that will need your active participation. by Jay Bushnell

COASTAL CLEANUP

With Vic Doig and Pam Darty captaining refuge boats and Admiral Andrew Guda overseeing the efforts, two NWR boat loads of volunteers tackled the annual coastal clean. The Ocean Conservancy initiates this worldwide effort and Sue Colson manages the shore operation in Cedar Key each year.



Once the trash is collected it is sorted into categories. This provides data to identify the source of the trash. One interesting example Sue gave me was when high school kids in the Bahamas discovered a large



portion of the trash was from cruise ships, pressure was then put on the cruise lines to quit dumping the garbage into the ocean.

Notice the really nice restoration on the Seahorse Lighthouse.

LOOKING AHEAD

Cedar Key Seafood Festival will be Saturday and Sunday, Oct. 20-21. This is always a great event. We will again have a booth set up to tell the refuge story. It is a great opportunity to let the public know about our conservation mission. It also a great time

to enjoy Cedar Keys' yummy seafood. Of course we rely on our members to man the booth. Please contact Peg Hall 252-335-0162 or Pam Darty at 352-0238 ex 223 if you would like to volunteer for a 3 hour shift



The third annual **Great Suwannee River Cleanup** is taking place. The Friends and Refuge staff will again tackled the lower reaches of the Suwannee River from Camp Azalea, Fowlers Bluff to the Town of Suwannee. We tentatively are scheduled to kick off our clean up the first week of December. More details will be made available once the plans have been finalized.



ELECTION YEAR

No matter what your political affiliation might be, the challenge is in determining the truth in the political rhetoric. The first rule of thumb is not to believe anything just because it is emailed or advertised. Two unbiased sites that are available to check claims are: FactCheck.org and PolitiFact.com.

NEW MEMBERS

We would like to welcome the following new members:

Jim Tomkins,
Roger & Judith Powell, and
Andy & Cherie Fischer.

FRIENDS OF THE LOWER
SUWANNEE & CEDAR KEYS
NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGES
P.O. BOX 1306
CHIEFLAND, FL 32644
WEB PAGE
www.friendsofrefuges.org

BOARD MEMBERS

Peg Hall, President, 352-335-0162, peg@peghall.com, Marci Wilcox, VP, 813-215-0050, marciwilcox@verizon.net, John McPherson, Secretary, 352-543-5682, jkmcperson@att.net, Jerry Salamon, Treasurer, 352-543-5897, salamon@indiana.edu, John Thalacker, 352-543-6738 or 515-573-8398, johnthalacker@gmail.com, Sean Dowie, 352-591-4644, smdphoto@msn.com, Bob Hudson, 352-332-6373, bobhudson@bellsouth.net, Ed DeHaan, 612-590-4414, cdrkey@gmail.com, Richard Herman, 352-542-9075, raherman@bellsouth.net, Mark Gluckman, 352-331-6279, markgluckman@att.net, Russ Hall, 352-335-0162, randphall@cox.net, Carmelo Echevarria, 352-486-2543, cecheva@hotmail.com, & Kirby Alexander, 904-412-9280, ckirby.alexander@gmail.com, Directors, and Jay Bushnell, Immediate past President, 352- 493-1807, djbushne@bellsouth.net

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION-ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP DUE IN JANUARY

NAME/S:

ADDRESS:

PHONE: EMAIL:

Species of membership-please check level of membership

*** __Swallow-tailed Kite--\$1000 or more, *Life membership*; * __Bald Eagle--\$500-999**

Life membership*; * __River Otter--\$250-\$499 *Life membership

*** __White Ibis--\$20 annually *Family membership*; * __Gopher Tortoise--\$10 annually**

***Individual membership*; * __Other--annual plus any additional contribution.**

I understand and agree to abide by the Friends' Code of Ethics: available on our webpage.

Signature Date:

Please check one of the follow: __1. Send my IBIS in printed hard-copy through the mail __2. Send my IBIS digitally in an email (except for the one with the Annual Renewal Form)