

# River Watch



Visit us at [www.Stewardsonline.org](http://www.Stewardsonline.org)

Spring 2002, Volume 6. No.2

## Tributary Signs Go Up

### *Our Mission:*

*To restore, preserve and protect the waters of the St. Johns River basin and serve as a voice for the River*



Citizens will finally be informed about the critical condition of Jacksonville's tributaries. Signs warning about high bacteria levels are scheduled to go up in all waterways that do not meet state water quality standards.

Over half of the 100 tributaries in the Jacksonville area have an average fecal coliform bacteria count that exceeds state water quality standards.

The City posted the first of several signs in Boone Park near Fishweir Creek. Boaters, skiers and swimmers should be careful of water contact if an individual has an open cut or is already ill.

The City's Environmental Protection Board (EPB) paid for a study over two years ago to confirm that elevated bacteria levels in the tributaries were human generated - not background levels or from animal sources. The research indicated that for every 100 swimmers, 22 individuals would contact upper respiratory or gastrointestinal infections.

The topic of producing sign to warn the public traveled a circuitous route from the EPB to the Health Board to City through the Environmental Advisory Board and finally back to City's RESD. After several requests from citizens including Riverkeeper, Mike Hollingsworth, signs were *continued on page 2*

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# Tributary Signs

finally drafted and the first one planted at Boone Park.

The major pollutants contributing to poor water quality are leaking and illegal discharges from septic tanks and waste treatment plant overflows.

The current plan of the Department of Environmental Protection is to identify and limit pollution in impaired waterways. Measurements for impaired water designation is called a TMDL (total maximum daily load of pollutants) that a water body can assimilate without exceeding water quality standards. The requirements for TMDLs are spelled out under the Clean Water Act.



by **DON LOOP,**  
**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

Coordination of the TMDL plan has just begun with the appointment of an environmental management consultant to coordinate and implement the TMDL plan.

It is hoped that this plan will produce more positive results than the numerous plans that have been put forth during the last 10-15 years. The DEP has the final regulatory authority to mandate the changes needed to meet the standards dictated by the TMDL plan.

## Troubled Tributaries

Assessment of monitoring sites by the St. Johns River Water Management District identifies these tributaries as having poor to fair quality water in the Jacksonville area:

- Fishing Creek
- Butcher Pen Creek
- Williamson Creek
- Willis Branch
- Cedar River
- Six Mile Creek
- Nine Mile Creek
- Little Trout River
- Strawberry Creek
- Cedar Point Creek
- Hallowes Cove
- Six Mile Creek
- Durbin Creek
- Julington Creek
- Black Creek (Hwy 209)
- Swimming Pen Creek
- Doctors Lake.
- St. Johns River near Picolata, south of Shands Bridge

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### RiverWatch

P.O. Box 54123, Jacksonville, FL 32245

RiverWatch is a publication by the Stewards of the St. Johns River, Inc., a not-for-profit corporation dedicated to serving as a voice for the St. Johns River and its tributaries since 1990. The newsletter is published quarterly.

We welcome comments from our readers. Please share our message with your friends. Invite them to become a Steward.

**NEWSPAPER  
STAFF**  
*Carol Matthews  
Donald Loop*

Member of River Network  
National Environmental Group



# Governor Bush Must Veto Tainted Everglades Bill and Georgia Pacific Pipe

by Carol Matthews

Governor Bush faces a tough decision. He must veto the Everglades Restoration Bill, one of his pet projects, or allow it to pass with the egregious remains of Senator Jim King's SB0270. In a slick maneuver when his bill failed to pass the legislature, Senator King quickly added his unpopular bill as an amendment to the Everglades legislation that would bring much needed funding for Florida's environment. King sent an unmistakable message that he is trying to limit the public's right to challenge proposed development.

Senator King's amendment seems to fly in the face of the First Amendment. When government tries to prevent citizen groups from opposing development by requiring more professional (and costly) legal services and making legal standing more difficult, it terminates our citizens' rights. Legislators, especially the next president of the state Senate, should not tell citizens that he doesn't want to listen to their concerns.

The amendment also requires that organizations be formed for one year in advance of proposed development, and that opposing views must come only from Florida corporations (Sierra Club is incorporated in California).

Think how many homeowner's groups will not

be a working organization with 25 members and papers filed a year in advance of development. This will give the developers a free year and the incentive to get their permits early. Groups like the Stewards may have to become umbrellas for committees of smaller, less organized citizens who will be disenfranchised by this bill.

The Stewards and the 3 million citizens in the St. Johns River basin have just suffered a huge blow when the Florida Department of Environmental Protection supported a permit allowing Georgia-Pacific to build a pipeline for discharging industrial waste into our river that only recently was named an American Heritage River.



An administrative hearing where experts who work and study the river every day were not allowed to testify shed little light on the real issues of the enormous amount of discharge from the paper mill and the negative effects it will have on water quality for years to come.

Both of these issues are now in the Governor's hand. Please write Governor Bush and tell him that he has your support to veto the needed Everglades legislation because it contains such destructive, unrelated measures. The Governor should know that the Stewards and other environmental groups will support him at this time when his opponents will scream that he is unfaithful to the Everglades issues.

The Governor knows that listening to concerned citizens is part of the job. We must not let Florida lead the nation in telling citizens that free speech is no longer included in democracy.

The Second Annual Charity Ball for the Stewards was again hosted by the generosity of the Jacksonville Society of Clubs. The event, entitled "A Taste of Jacksonville Society", was held at Queens Harbour Country Club on February 22 and featured the specialities of chefs from seven different Jacksonville Society Clubs including Queens Harbour, Deercreek, University Club, Windsor Parke, St. Johns Golf, Sea Turtle Inn, and Hampton Golf. Guests visited the buffet, selected auction items, and then danced until midnight to a DJ in the Kings Tavern Bar.



Board Members in attendance were Carol Matthews, Chair; and Tom Beal, (back row, left to right) Pat McNulty, Mike Lurie, Nelson Hellmuth, Don Loop, Executive Director and Mike Hartman.



Guests await the results of the auction worth over \$20,000 in merchandise, services and jewelry. **Mr. Joe Dillon** donated a \$5,000 membership to Serenata Beach Club.



Mr. and Mrs. Doug Thornblun over \$2,500. Barbara Milkey







**Mr. Walt Bussells**, Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of JEA was the 2002 recipient of the **Voice of the River Award** in recognition of his efforts to reduce nutrients in the river from waste water treatment plants.



;) won a 3/4 carat diamond valued with Chuck and Nancy Jantz.



Jax. Society 2001 President, Doug Matthews, Stewards Chair, Carol Matthews and Patricia Vane, 2002 Jax. Society President present the Voice of the River Award to Walt Bussells.



**Mike Weinstein**, mayoral candidate and Super Bowl Committee Chairman, spoke about the river's role in getting the Super Bowl in Jacksonville. Celebrity Masters of Ceremony were **Mary Baer** of WJXT-TV4 and **Arthur Crofton** of WEJZ-FM.

# Clay County Leads in Reclaimed Water

by Don Loop

The Clay County Utility Authority has been providing highly treated wastewater, that would otherwise be pumped to the St. Johns River, to residential customers and golf courses for irrigation. Although this practice is new to northeast Florida, it has been used very successfully for many years in other parts of the State. Since its inception in 1994, the Authority's program has helped to conserve our extremely valuable drinking water supply and significantly reduced discharges to the St. Johns River.

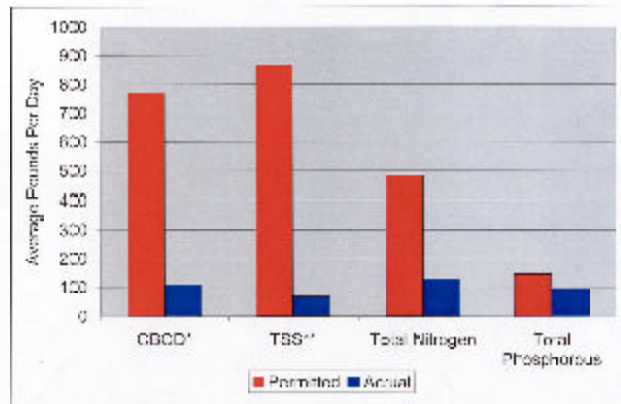


According to Ray Avery, Executive Director of the Authority, the commitment to conserve drinking water and improve the environment is a reflection of the values of the community as a whole. In 1995, the Board of County Commissioners passed a resolution requiring all wastewater treatment facilities constructed after 1995 be built to advanced wastewater treatment standards. The Authority's Board of Supervisors



has invested over \$5 million in reclaimed water infrastructure and wastewater treatment process improvements. According to Avery, "we treat to our own higher standards which far exceed the minimum treatment requirements." Avery contends that the additional cost of treating wastewater to advanced standards is only slightly higher than treating to lower standards.

The results speak volumes. A comparison of what the Authority is allowed to discharge versus what actually goes to the river shows their program is very effective.

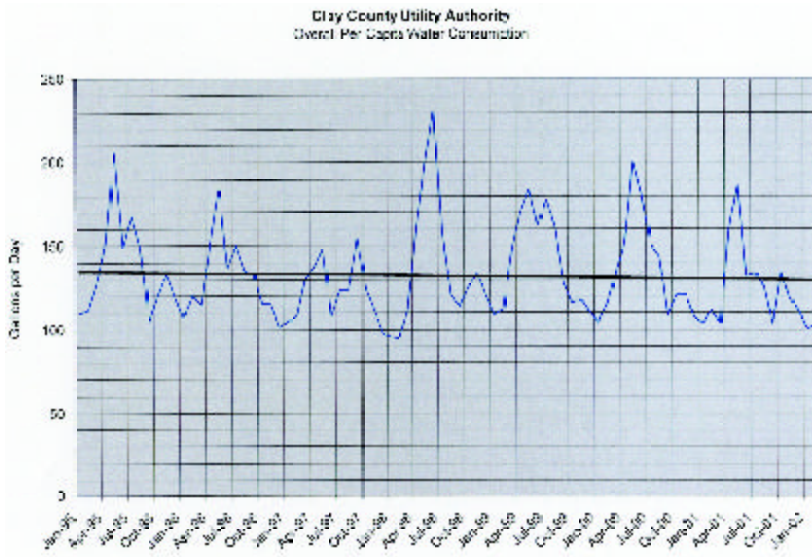


2001 Discharge to the St. Johns River

\* Carbonaceous Biochemical Oxygen Demand

\*\* Total Suspended Solids

Source: Clay County Utility Authority



Source: Clay County Utility Authority

Avery reports that the reuse water program is already saving significant amounts of drinking water, and it is growing every year. During 2001, reclaimed water customers used an average of 1.2 million gallons per day for irrigation. In 2002, the Authority expects to conserve an additional 500 million gallons of drinking water. According to Avery, “we are beginning to see reductions in how much drinking water an average household uses every day. “We believe it is critically important to take a proactive approach to water conservation so we avoid some of the problems they are experiencing in south Florida today”.

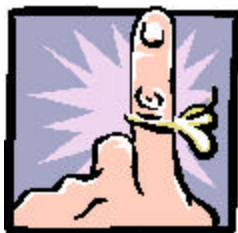
Avery estimates that the reclaimed water program and wastewater treatment effectiveness will eliminate nearly 8,000 pounds of nutrients from the St. Johns River in 2002.

The ultimate goal of the Authority is to interconnect all of its wastewater treatment facilities to one massive reclaimed water distribution system. “Our long range objective is to completely eliminate all discharge to the river, except during wet weather conditions” says Avery.

In summary, we congratulate the Clay County Utility Authority on their reclaimed water program. We appreciate their efforts to help clean up the St. Johns River and to conserve our drinking water supply.

## BENEFITS OF USING RECLAIMED WATER

- It saves millions of gallons of drinking water each day
- Its use for non-potable (non drinking) purposes is less expensive for the majority of customers
- It delays the need for developing costly new water sources and building expensive treatment plants
- There is no odor or staining associated with its use
- It allows the City to comply with permits relating to its water supply and wastewater treatment
- It minimizes negative effects around underground water sources, preserving quality of life for plants and wildlife
- It reduces fertilizing costs, because reclaimed water is rich in nitrogen and phosphorus



Have you renewed your membership this year?



*YES! I want to join the Stewards of the St. Johns River and serve as a "voice for the River". Enclosed is my tax-deductible contribution of:*

- |  |   |                                       |
|--|---|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$25 Member   | <input type="checkbox"/> \$100 Steward  | <input type="checkbox"/> \$250 Patron |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$500 Captain | <input type="checkbox"/> \$1000 Admiral | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____  |

My area of interest is in \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (h) \_\_\_\_\_ (w) \_\_\_\_\_ FAX \_\_\_\_\_

- Membership:  New  
 Renewal

Office Use:

Date

Ck. #

Mail to: P.O. Box 54123  
Jacksonville, FL 32245-4123



"The CEO and Board of Directors wants to sue DEP and start a SLAPP suit, but the kids and the teachers at Billy's nursery school all agree that we should clean it up."

DIAL 800-EDU-SSJR

## RiverWatch Hotline

### 800-338-7757

**For all communication, such as reporting spilled fuel, sewage discharge, illegal dumping or any hazards. Call to volunteer or request meeting times and date. A Steward will provide information, or direct your call to the proper authority and follow up.**

**STEWARDS OF THE ST. JOHNS RIVER, INC.  
P.O. BOX 54123, JACKSONVILLE, FL 32245**

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