

The Pelican Flyer



April 2017

www.firstrefuge.org

Compiled and written by Carol Lynn Peterson and Tim Glover
This newsletter is available on our website at www.firstrefuge.org/about/librarynewsletters

From the President's Desk

Wow! What a wonderful winter we just had. The fishing has been great according to my customers. As the owner of the Wabasso Bait & Tackle Shack, I enjoy daily conversations not only with fishermen, but with people stopping in to find out about the area. Many of them have heard about or visited Pelican Island and are amazed by the fact that the country's first designated conservation site is no more than a tiny rookery in the Indian River Lagoon, visible either from the observation platform at the PINWR or by boat or kayak. They are also intrigued by background stories of the Centennial Trail and Paul Kroegel, which I gladly share with them.

I hope that everyone was able to make it to the 25th anniversary celebration of the PIPS annual Wildlife Festival on March 18th. Mother Nature smiled kindly upon us, and we thank Her. Joe Wiegand, aka Teddy Roosevelt, greatly enjoyed himself as our emcee for the day and provided us with ongoing entertainment, including a dance or two.

The kids' activities and wildlife exhibits provided children and adults alike with educational opportunities. Many thanks to the members of the Festival Planning Committee and to all the volunteers who helped make the day of the Festival such a success. It is important to note that monies raised from the Festival help fund projects on the Pelican Island NWR.

Please join us at our General Meeting on April 24th at 7:00 pm at the North County Library in Sebastian where we will be electing new Board members. Have a wonderful spring and don't forget to visit the PINWR for a nature walk. Tram tours will start up again in the fall.

Steve Massey

PIPS Annual Meeting

PIPS is not the only one to have celebrated a "Silver Anniversary" recently. Last year the Archie Carr NWR turned 25 as well! At our meeting this month, conservationist and Renaissance man Vince Lamb will join us to give a presentation on the history of the Carr Refuge, with information gathered for the 25th anniversary celebration of their Refuge last year.

Vince Lamb has served as a permitted turtle scout and walk leader for almost 10 years in the Carr Refuge. He also serves as a Board Member and Treasurer of the Friends of the Carr Refuge. Vince is a nature photographer and Florida Master Naturalist. He and his wife Helga have lived in South Merritt Island since 1973.

Fitting a theme of "If you build it, they will come", the Carr Refuge has become the most important nesting beach worldwide for loggerhead sea turtles and the most important nesting beach in the U.S. for green turtles. Vince's presentation will provide some background information regarding how the Refuge came to be established here. Naming the Refuge for Dr. Carr was a political battle that was won with the help of former Senator Bob Graham.

cont.

In addition to the usual presentation at our meeting this month, PIPS current members will be voting for this year's Officers and Directors. We are happy to have two new volunteers who have accepted the nomination to a Director's position on the Board. We do still have vacancies and are always looking for others interested in participating. Terms on the Board are two years and one only need maintain a current membership to qualify and, of course, have the time and interest to be involved.

Please contact any one of our Board members if you are interested, or would like more information on how you can help PIPS support the Pelican Island National Wildlife Refuge!

Lorna Thibeault is currently the Secretary for our Board of Directors, but has decided to take a year off. She plans to stay very involved with PIPS, though, and work on other events we have planned. Her help on the Board has been invaluable, and we will miss her efforts. We are also sad to announce the resignation of Susan King from our Board, whose efforts will be greatly missed as well.

Many thanks to our other Board members – Eileen Fretz and Sandy Peterson – whose terms do not expire this year, so the slate stands at Steve Massey for President and Tim Glover for Treasurer. Officer positions for Vice President and Secretary remain open as of publication date. Nominees for new Directors are Alexis Peralta and Eric Swenson. Alexis works for Indian River County and is the Stormwater Education and Fertilizer Enforcement person with the county Public Works Department. Eric has a background in finance and insurance. We look forward to having them on board.

This month is also membership renewal season for all members, as membership runs from April through March each year. You will find the month and year your membership is/was due, on the mailing label of the printed newsletter. If you receive our newsletter by email, we will send a separate email renewal reminder. You will ONLY receive this reminder if your membership is due. If you have any questions, please contact us at 772-202-0697 or info@firstrefuge.org.

Dues remain unchanged at \$10 for an individual or \$15 for a family. You may renew your membership online through our website by using a credit or debit card or by mailing a check to us at PIPS, PO Box 781903, Sebastian, FL 32978-1903. We will be accepting dues at our meeting this month as well.

Sea Turtle Nesting Season Now Underway

March 1st marked the beginning of sea turtle nesting season on our Treasure Coast beaches. Because sea turtles are protected under state and federal laws, human beings are forbidden from "taking, possessing, disturbing, mutilating, destroying, selling and harassing all types of sea turtles, their nests and their eggs." Treasure coast communities also have light restrictions to help protect sea turtle hatchlings which naturally follow the light reflected off the ocean waves by the moon and stars. If they respond to artificial lights and get turned around, they become so disoriented that they head away from the ocean (rather than toward it) and are easily killed by predators (and cars) or die of exhaustion.

Here are a few interesting facts about sea turtles as well as how they fared on our beaches in 2016:

- 1) Loggerheads laid 27,413 nests, shattering the previous record set in 1995 by more than 5000 nests. Since female loggerheads don't lay eggs every year, there should be a smaller number of nests in 2017.
- 2) Since green sea turtles nest every other year and they had low nest numbers in 2016, they should have much higher numbers in 2017. Also, since green turtles are the last of the three varieties to nest on our beaches, many of their nests may have been lost to the erosive beach damage caused by Hurricane Matthew in October of 2016.
- 3) While loggerheads and greens are listed as "threatened" by the federal Endangered Species Act, leatherbacks are listed as "endangered." Leatherback nesting habits are unpredictable and are the least common of the three varieties nesting on our beaches.

2017 PIPS Wildlife Festival Celebrates 25th Year

We were treated to a picture-perfect day on March 18th when we celebrated our annual Wildlife Festival for the 25th year in a row at Riverview Park in Sebastian!

The PIPS headquarters tent was filled with eager buyers of our merchandise, including hats/visors, tee-shirts, hooded sweatshirts, wind shirts, and kids' wear. On the other side of the tent were the raffle/silent auction items. There were 20 raffle items in colorful baskets and gift bags, with a total of 1373 tickets sold. The 6 silent auction items included: a Park Hopper Disney



"Do the Teddy," with Paul Tritaik, Tim Brown & Teddy Roosevelt
Photo: Sandy Peterson

Package; a kayak tour for four from About Kayaks; 9 tickets with Indian River Lagoon Boat Tours; a “Gone Fishin’” package from Wabasso Bait & Tackle Shack; 18 holes of golf for four at American Golf Club; and an acrylic painting by Bill Bollinger of the current Wabasso Bait & Tackle. Many thanks to Susan King who created all 26 items with donations from local businesses and to the volunteers and Festival Committee members who assisted her with distribution on the day of the Festival and afterwards.



Kids’ Activities volunteer Suzanne Valencia and assistants
Photo: Sandy Peterson

Suzanne Valencia and her team of volunteers ran the kids’ activities tent this year, and what a terrific time everyone had! The Japanese art of Gyotaku was practiced with kids taking a dead fish, painting it in wild and weird colors, and then transferring it to a white tee shirt or tote bag. Shirts and totes were then hung on a clothesline to dry, which created a very colorful display. Making clothespin butterflies and caterpillars and paper plate jellyfish were other activities available to the kids, but Gyotaku won out overall!

Other kids’ activities included a Sea Turtle Crawl and Fish Casting. Overall, it was a terrific day for young people to learn about nature and the environment.

The Indian River County Historical Society was well-represented as always. County Historian Ruth Stanbridge likes to remind us that they were participants in the first PIPS Wildlife Festival which, because of the “storm of the century,” ended up with their displays in the Pelican Island Elementary School, instead of Riverview Park! This year, they also teamed up with Old Vero Ice Age, which displayed mastodon and camel bones. Numerous booklets were handed out to the public, including the booklet “One Person...,” the Story of Paul Kroegel, and “Our Roads into History,” a tour guide to historical and environmental resources in Indian River County.

Three boat tours, conducted by Capt. Hiram’s River King were filled to capacity, and many birds were seen nesting on the island. As people left the tours, they offered many positive comments. Many thanks both to Capt. Hiram’s and to Mulligan’s Restaurant for the use of their boat dock, as the town docks were unavailable as a result of damage from Hurricane Matthew.



Capt. Hiram’s River King departs for Pelican Island tour
Photo: Sandy Peterson

As usual, the Photography Contest was very impressive and inspiring, with beautiful works of Mother Nature. Thanks to event organizers Patty Corapi and Vince Lamb and, of course, the photographers who contributed their skills for this great feature of our Festival. We are working on putting together a slideshow of the entries, which we will display on our website, once completed. In the meantime, here is a list of the winning entries and photographers: Nathan Adams, Best in Show; Marc Szczesny-Pumarada, 1st Place, Landscape; John Furlong, 2nd Place, Landscape; Louis Lower, 3rd Place, Landscape; Chuck Palmer, 1st Place, Macro and 2nd Place Wildlife; Laurel Robertson, 2nd Place, Macro; Jim Urbach, 3rd Place, Macro and 3rd Place, Wildlife; and Ted Schultz, 1st Place, Wildlife. Additionally, watch for a feature story about the contest and the winning photos in the June issue of the Vero Beach Magazine! We hope to have copies available at our June General Meeting.



Tim Brown, Treasure Coast Wildlife Center, with
gopher tortoise
Photo: Sandy Peterson

Finally, our Festival would not have been the success it turned out to be without the tireless efforts of the Festival Committee, which spent many long hours of planning. Festival Committee members include: Steve Massey; Tim Glover; Susan King; Eileen Fretz; Liz Landrum; Gini Prasch; Ruth Stanbridge; Vince Lamb; Patty Corapi; Carol Lynn & Sandy Peterson; and Lorna & Dick Thibeault. Our Sponsors play a big part in the success of the Festival as well. Major Sponsors included Capt. Hiram’s, Disney’s Vero Beach Resort, FPL, Greg Hills Photography, Sebastian River Medical Center, SpringHill Suites by Marriott Vero Beach, Vero Beach FLASH, Watercrest Senior Living Group, and Windsor. Our volunteers should also not go unrecognized. Our “regulars” helped with setup and breakdown, parking, merchandise sales, silent auction, raffle, memberships, photo tent, fishing booth, boat tickets, boat tours, and greeting the public. We eagerly anticipate our 26th year next March 10th – save the date. It’s never too early to let us know you would like to help out!

Pelican Island Preservation Society
P.O. Box 781903
Sebastian, Florida 32978-1903

Pelican Island Gets New Assistant

As we congratulate Oliver Van Den Ende on his recent promotion to Assistant Manager for the Everglades Headwaters and Lake Wales Ridge National Wildlife Refuges, we welcome Jeremy Edwardson to the Everglades Headwaters NWR Complex, arriving in February as the new Deputy Project Leader. Jeremy has a Master's in Wildlife Management from Texas A&M. He began his career with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service in 2008 and has worked at several refuges throughout his career. Pelican Island and the other refuges in the Complex are still understaffed but we are hopeful for more new staff, with the recent lifting of the federal hiring freeze. Welcome, Jeremy, and we hope you enjoy many years of service at Pelican Island and the rest of the Complex!



The PIPS newsletter is published in the months of January, April, June and October. Subscription is included with membership and delivered by e-mail only, unless requested otherwise, or no useable e-mail. Please contact us to notify of change of address or e-mail.

Board of Directors

Steve Massey, President, Apr '18
 vacant, Vice President, Apr '17
 Lorna Thibeault, Secretary, Apr '17
 Tim Glover, Treasurer, Apr '18

Eileen Fretz, Apr '18
 Sandy Peterson, Apr '18
 vacant, Apr '18
 vacant, Apr '18

info@firstrefuge.org

772-202-0697

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The date above your name is the month/year that your membership renewal is/was due.
 Thank you!

**Pelican Island Preservation Society
 Membership Application**

Please check one:

- ☐ Student (under 18) - \$5/year
- ☐ Individual - \$10/year
- ☐ Family (joint) - \$15/year
- ☐ Contributing - \$50/year
- ☐ Corporate/Business - \$100/year
- ☐ Supporting - \$250/year
- ☐ Life - \$500

Name(s) _____

Company _____

Street _____

City/State/Zip _____

Phone _____

E-mail _____

Send completed application and dues to:
PIPS Membership
P.O. Box 781903, Sebastian, FL 32978-1903

Or use your credit/debit card to make a donation via our website.