

The Pelican Flyer



June 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--

Memorial Day--a day to reflect back and thank our veterans who saved our country and allowed us to have the freedom we celebrate daily. This past Memorial Day in Vero Beach was hot, sunny, and beautiful, a perfect day for everyone to get outdoors and enjoy the natural beauty. I heard from remarks at the bait shop that there were so many boats on the Lagoon that one could have crossed it on foot and not gotten wet! I believe it!

I was recently at the Pelican Island NWR. The new construction is well under way and the foundation is being laid. There were a number of people on the Centennial Trail under breezy, but hot, conditions. Summer has arrived.

I want to give my personal thanks to Bonnie Swanson, David Cox, and others involved with leading a summer camp on the Refuge to introduce children to the summertime flora and fauna, the Centennial Boardwalk, and a view of Pelican Island from the upper platform. We are extremely happy to have Bonnie involved again with Pelican Island and children's activities as a former elementary school principal.

PIPS will be meeting with the city of Sebastian soon to discuss the upcoming Pelican Island Wildlife Festival, which will be celebrated on March 3, 2018.

Please plan to join us at our general meeting on Monday, June 26th when Ruth Stanbridge, County Historian, will discuss the history of the Jungle Trail and present-day issues with its use. Ruth's environmental stewardship over the years has helped contribute to the pristine conditions we experience every day in Indian River County. We look forward to her presentation.

Have a great summer and travel safely,

Steve Massey

Jungle Trail Then and Now

Ruth Stanbridge will give a presentation on Jungle Trail at our meeting this month. She will talk about the heritage of this historic roadway in Indian River County, and recent issues of a few residents who would like to limit public access to the road. As you may know, the Trail provides access to the Pelican Island NWR.

Ruth is not only a native Floridian, she hails right from Indian River County, and has been recognized as the County's official "historian." Ruth was directly involved with efforts to save and preserve Jungle Trail as a historic resource, in the 1980's.

Please join us to learn more. The meeting takes place at the North Indian River County Library, 1001 Sebastian Blvd., on Monday, June 26th, 7pm.

Pelican Island Breakwater Installation

Dozens of people got their feet wet in the Indian River Lagoon in Florida recently while building an oyster reef breakwater. The reef is designed to prevent further erosion of iconic Pelican Island, which has already decreased in size 60 percent from its original 5.5 acres.

Over a span of about six hours, staff and volunteers from several agencies transported (by truck and by boat) about 600 bags of fossilized shells and stacked them around a small mangrove island near Pelican Island proper at the national wildlife refuge that bears its name.

“We expect oyster spat, that is very young oysters, to attach themselves to the reef, but it remains to be seen if they survive to become adults. Regardless, the shell we’re laying today will provide habitat for a variety of oyster community species and will provide a breakwater to protect Pelican Island,” says biologist Patrick Pitts of the Service.

The above is excerpted from an article written by Ken Warren, Public Affairs Specialist, USFWS Ecological Services Office, Vero Beach. The article is posted on the “News” page of our website with a link to the full story, with photos.



Photo: Ken Warren, USFWS

Refuge Update from Project Leader Bill Miller

Pelican Island National Wildlife Refuge is expanding with the construction of a new crew quarters facility. Completion of the roughly 1,800 square foot structure is targeted for August, 2017 and is presently planned to house interns and personnel supporting Refuge management.



Photo: Pelican Island NWR

The new building will be equipped with a solar array to generate electricity to help reduce one’s carbon footprint, and the potable water and sewer systems will be tied in to Indian River County infrastructure, thereby removing the Pelican Island administration facility from septic and well systems to help protect groundwater. In addition, phone and electric lines will be buried and all overhead lines will be removed to protect bird populations and offer tropical cyclone resiliency.

The building was designed to provide for multiple uses if needed -- from a meeting space to crew quarters to office spaces -- to support the widest range of uses and different programs of the First Refuge.

Internship Recruitment -- Pelican Island National Wildlife Refuge is in the process of recruiting a new Refuge Intern. This would be a paid position with opportunities to conduct outreach and visitor service efforts as part of our Refuge family. The internship is planned to begin this summer. Please contact Deputy Project Leader Jeremy Edwardson at 772-581-5557x8 if you know of someone who may be interested, or for details.

2017 Paul Kroegel Refuge Manager of the Year

In April, the National Wildlife Refuge Association announced the 2017 National Wildlife Refuge System Awards exemplifying the outstanding conservation management skills and volunteer leadership found throughout the Refuge System. The annual awards honor the Refuge Manager, Refuge Employee, Refuge Volunteer and Friends Group of the Year. “We are extremely proud to honor these individuals who have demonstrated exceptional dedication to enhancing and protecting America’s national wildlife refuges, said Geoffrey L. Haskett, Acting-President of the National Wildlife Refuge Association. “They are an inspiration to all of us to remain positive and continue promoting the Refuge System.”

The National Wildlife Refuge Association awarded Kevin Godsea of Florida Panther National Wildlife Refuge with the 2017 Paul Kroegel Refuge Manager of the Year Award. He is a visionary, an innovator, and an advisor for fellow conservation partners, community leaders, landowners, and his staff when it comes to conserving Southwest Florida’s critically important landscape. Kevin has been instrumental in developing strong relationships to build and uphold the integrity of critical Florida panther habitat. He empowers his staff to innovate, to be creative, and to think outside of the box to address important challenges. Refuge staff admire Kevin’s leadership and dedication to the mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System. He is approachable, patient, trustworthy, and has grown into an inspirational leader among his peers. The NWRA is proud to present Kevin Godsea with this prestigious award.

For more information about the 2017 NWRA Refuge System awards, visit <http://refugeassociation.org/2017/04/conservation-leaders-recognized-with-2017-refuge-system-awards-washington-d-c>

Source: National Wildlife Refuge Association "Refuge News," April 11, 2017

A Beginner's Guide to the National Wildlife Refuge System

The National Wildlife Refuge System has created an online slideshow, displaying some of the amazing places and wildlife, on Wildlife Refuges throughout the country. In addition, the slideshow provides a brief overview of the System, with links to additional resources and information. To view the slideshow, visit <https://www.fws.gov/refuges/features/beginners-guide.html>.

3rd Annual Indian River Birding Festival & Nature Art Show

PIPS will once again be hosting the Indian River Birding Festival in October. This is our third annual festival, and there are a few changes to this year's event. The venue for the Nature Art Show portion of the event will take place this year at the Audubon House in Vero Beach. PIPS is partnering with the Pelican Island Audubon Society for this year's event, who will be assisting with some of the tours, and helping to promote the event.

The festival includes a Nature Art Show, with local artists displaying various forms of nature, especially bird-themed artwork. In addition, there will be a "plein air" paint-out, where artists will be creating unique works of art on and around the Audubon House campus. Submitted works of art will be judged and also available for sale at the event.

Event coordinator Debbie Avery is working on developing the various tours and programs for the event. One of the more popular tours has been the sunset wine and cheese boat cruise to Pelican Island. We anticipate this tour being part of our event once again this year. You may watch for details as they become available, on the Facebook page for the festival; you will find a link on the Birding Fest page of our website, under "Events."

Our Birding Festival also takes place during the National Wildlife Refuge System's "National Wildlife Refuge Week," which is October 8th through 14th. We are hoping to be able to include some activity during our festival to feature our own Pelican Island National Wildlife Refuge. You may also wish to visit the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service's "Special Events Calendar" website at www.fws.gov/refuges/SpecialEvents/FWS_SpecialEvents_Search.cfm, to find more special events taking place around the country, during Refuge Week.

Featured Refuge Volunteers

As staunch environmentalists and dedicated USFWS volunteers with Everglades Headwaters NWR Complex/Pelican Island NWR, making a difference through volunteerism is a way of life and has been for nearly four decades for Sandee and Steve Dawdy. Now that they are both retired, they have become a formidable team at the PINWR.

Steve enjoys creative and educational projects, such as contributing technical and creative writing for the Refuge web page, editing the first official Tour Guide Manual for volunteer tour guides, conducting Refuge tram tours, and training new volunteers. Sandee also organizes projects, manages events and groups, and provides computer applications for specific projects. Together, they have created a flora and fauna photography page, which appears regularly on the Pelican Island NWR Facebook page. In the words of Sandee, "we want to share through our photos the story of the Refuge. They might feature a roseate spoonbill catching the sun through its spanned wings, a gorgeous sunset over Centennial Pond, children on a guided tour, a pelican diving for a meal in the Lagoon, or USFWS dignitaries placing a new plank on the Centennial Boardwalk. The images are meant to give people a feel for life on the Refuge and to trigger in them a desire to return and enjoy all it has to offer."



Steve Dawdy, Sandee Dawdy, Doug Sutherland
Photo: Sandee Dawdy

On any given day, the Dawdys may be found cleaning up the shop, traversing the Refuge on ATV's picking up refuse, participating in a bird survey, replenishing brochures in the information kiosks, or engaging in maintenance duties, such as sign replacement.

In the words of Sandee, "volunteering for PINWR is unique. We work with volunteers as a team and participate in a wide variety of tasks to support the staff. It's not often glamorous, even sometimes down and dirty, but always very rewarding." We at PIPS are please to honor the Dawdys this month as our featured volunteers for their dedication to the Refuge and its needs.

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

Park Fee Increases

An "America the Beautiful" pass is your key to free entrance and amenities at national parks, wildlife refuges and many other federal lands around the country, that have entrance fees or charge for certain amenities. There are several levels of passes available, but one of the best deals is expected to increase significantly before the end of the year.

Seniors are eligible for a \$10 lifetime pass, but the fee is expected to jump to \$80, the same price as a regular annual pass. For more information about available passes and how to purchase, visit the National Park Service website at www.nps.gov/planyourvisit/passes.htm.

Summer is No-fertilizer Season

It's the rainy season here in Florida and, like most coastal communities, Indian River County bans the use of fertilizers on residential yards from June 1st through September 30th. Please help the Indian River Lagoon by not fertilizing your lawns during the summer. The pelicans of Pelican Island, and the rest of the critters in the Lagoon, will thank you!

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.

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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 _____

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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.