

# The Pelican Flyer



October 2014

[www.firstrefuge.org](http://www.firstrefuge.org)

Compiled and written by Carol Lynn Peterson and Tim Glover

## From the President's Desk

By Steve Massey

I attended the Cultural Council's "Celebrate the Arts Festival" on Sept. 27th in Riverside Park, Vero Beach. Many individuals new to the area visited the booth and expressed an interest in learning about Pelican Island and its history. I shared brochures with them on both the Pelican Island NWR and the Archie Carr NWR, as well as USFWS, which manages our Refuges. Although storms threatened us throughout the day, I was still able to make some new contacts and to pass out PIPS membership forms. Earlier in the week, I took a wonderful walk along the Centennial Trail, enjoying the quiet, undisturbed beauty of the Refuge and of the birds nesting on the island.



Photo credit: Lorna Thibeault



## Bats--Myths and Reality

Our October General meeting is about bats--just in time for Halloween! Shari Bissett-Clark of the Florida Bat Conservancy and Bat Belfrys, Inc. will give a presentation on the myths and reality of bats. The program includes vivid images of the fascinating world of bats and outlines the important role they play in healthy, balanced ecosystems. Bat biology, public health concerns, and conservation efforts will also be discussed.

Shari has a long career in bat education and conservation. She and her partner also build, sell, and install bat houses throughout the state.

The meeting is Monday, October 27th, 7 p.m. at the North Indian River County Library, 1001 Sebastian Blvd. in Sebastian, and all are welcome to attend. For more information, visit our website at [www.firstrefuge.org](http://www.firstrefuge.org).

## **Wilderness Act Celebrates its 50th Anniversary**

Readers may be interested to know that President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the Wilderness Act into law on Sept. 3rd, 1964. "That a society would decide to set aside lands and waters and not actively manage them was a remarkable concept" explains National Wildlife Refuge System wilderness coordinator Nancy Roeper. Designated wilderness areas comprise about 109.5 million acres in 44 states and Puerto Rico. About one-fifth or twenty million acres of designated wilderness areas are managed by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. Ninety percent of the Refuge System wilderness is in Alaska and, ironically, our own Pelican Island is the smallest Refuge System wilderness area at a mere two and a half acres!

Johnson also signed into law on the same day as the Wilderness Act the Land and Water Conservation Fund, which provides revenues from offshore oil and gas extraction to fund national, state and local parks, wildlife refuges, monuments, even Civil War battlefields--all without any taxpayer money!

In the words of American conservationist Wallace Stegner, "Something will have gone out of us as a people if we ever let the remaining wilderness be destroyed...We simply need that wild country available to us, even if we never do more than drive to its edge and look in. For it can be a means of reassuring ourselves of our sanity as creatures, a part of the geography of hope."

## **President Obama Creates World's Largest Marine Sanctuary**

Located in the middle of the Pacific Ocean, halfway between Hawaii and Australia, lies the world's largest protected marine area, which President Obama recently designated as a marine monument comprised of five interconnected protected areas. They provide an important habitat for endangered species like leatherback and green sea turtles, and sei and blue whales.

Fourteen million seabirds representing nineteen species use these areas as feeding and breeding grounds, including the black-footed albatross and Phoenix petrel. Coral ecosystems up to 5000 years old and over 130 unexplored underwater mountains will also be protected. Barry Stieglitz, the son of Walt (one of our founding members), is the Refuge Manager of the Pacific Island National Wildlife Refuge Complex, including this most recent addition of 490,000 square miles.

Congratulations to Barry in helping to oversee this amazing new marine sanctuary! If you wish to view a slideshow of the expanded marine monument, you may visit the following link:  
<http://goo.gl/7y1l96>

## **Volunteers Make a Difference at the Pelican Island NWR**

Throughout the past summer, various volunteers from local groups, including the Environmental Learning Center and the Brevard County Marine Biology Camp, coordinated by the Marine Resources Council and supported by the FL DEP, planted mangroves and grasses as a shoreline stabilization project at Paul's Island, a small island just southwest of Pelican Island.

The focus of this project was to complete the lagoon enhancement of ten acres of coastal wetland fish nursery habitat through restoration at the Pelican Island Refuge in the Indian River Lagoon, an Aquatic Preserve and an Estuary of National Significance. Goals of this project included:

- treatment of invasive Brazilian pepper and Australian pines
- planting of 400 mangroves and 1,100 spartina grasses and other wetland species to restore critical habitats vital to the survival of rare, listed, commercial and recreational fish species.

The enhanced habitat will recruit a variety of wildlife, including juvenile fish, invertebrates, oysters, and wading birds. Funding from the Atlantic Coastal Fish Habitat Partnership was used to assist with the removal of invasive plant species, and to monitor invasive and native plants as well as fish and



Photo credit: Marine Resources Council

wildlife species within the boundaries of the Pelican Island NWR.

Volunteers could not have succeeded in their endeavors without the aid of Capt. Hiram's River King tour boat, Dolphin Eco-Tours and Jason Gardener of SeaDek Marine Products. PIPS wants to thank all involved for their time and effort.

### **PIPS is Awards Sponsor for 3rd Annual Treasure Coast Bird & Nature Art Show**

The Vero Beach Women's Club will be the site of the 3rd Annual Treasure Coast Bird & Nature Art Show October 17th-19th. The juried art show is hosted by the Cultural Council of Indian River County. PIPS has donated the cost of supplying ribbons and prizes, which will be awarded at the artists' reception Friday evening from 5:30-7:30 p.m. Bob Montanaro will be the guest speaker Saturday evening at 6 p.m. on "The Secret Life of the Florida Scrub-Jay".

Birding and Kayak tours will also be available. Visit [www.cultural-council.org/BirdArt.html](http://www.cultural-council.org/BirdArt.html) for more information and to reserve tour space.

### **Pelican Island NWR Visitors' Center Project Update**

Over the past few years, the staff of Pelican Island NWR have grown to accommodate the increased responsibilities that have come with the new Everglades Headwaters Refuge and Conservation Area. This growth has been so much so that they have outgrown their existing office space. Refuge staff are currently planning on constructing an interim office/visitors' center just off the Jungle Trail, opposite the entrance to the Centennial Trail parking lot. Construction for the facility should occur during 2015. The Refuge is also developing preliminary site plans and design for a permanent office and visitors' center. They hope to use these preliminary plans during outreach efforts to raise support for a permanent facility.

As mentioned in a previous newsletter, the Refuge staff had been working to acquire a location on the mainland in downtown Sebastian, for a new Refuge visitors' center. Unfortunately, negotiations for that site were not successful, but the project is still a priority and therefore PIPS will need to remain involved, and would appreciate any donations or volunteer help to make the project a reality.

### **PIPS Founding Member Receives Pelican Island NWR Challenge Coin**

During PIPS' June general meeting, Pelican Island NWR Project Leader Charlie Pelizza presented Walt Stieglitz with a Pelican Island "Challenge Coin." Based on a military tradition of bestowing a specially minted coin to trusted and honored friends and compatriots, the Pelican Island Challenge Coin was presented to Walt for his years of passionate devotion to PIPS in support of the Pelican Island Refuge.



Photo credit: Sandee Dawdy

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### **Board Vacancies and Other Ways to Volunteer**

PIPS can always use the help of more volunteers, and we encourage you to let us know what your interests/expertise are, and how you may want to become more involved. With the recent resignations of Megan Adams, Sandee Dawdy, and Bonnie Swanson, we are looking to fill those board positions. We thank these folks for their service and look forward to working with them in ways that better fit their schedules. Volunteers are also needed for the upcoming Pelican Island Wildlife Festival on March 14th, 2015 to help in the organizing, as well as to participate on the day of the festival. For more information, please visit our website at:  
[www.firstrefuge.org/get-involved/volunteer](http://www.firstrefuge.org/get-involved/volunteer).

### **Michelle and Fred Kiesel Navigate their Way Down Indian River Drive in the Sebastian Fourth of July Parade Showing off the New PIPS Banner!**



Photo credit: Sandee Dawdy

### **Free Pelican Island NWR Tours**

Weekly free tram tours at the Pelican Island NWR resume this season on Wednesday, November 5th. The tours are from 8 to 10 a.m., and binoculars and field guides are provided. Space is limited and reservations are required. For more information and to reserve, call the Refuge at 772-581-5557, ext. 2.

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.