

The Pelican Flyer



Pelican Island
PRESERVATION SOCIETY

October 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

It's hard to believe that October has finally arrived. What a summer season of bad weather it has been for Florida and the rest of the world. Since Hurricane Irma visited our shores, I walked the Jungle Trail and it is still in pretty bad shape. Please be careful when you try to go onto the Refuge on foot.

The birding festival is on the horizon. This year, we are sharing the event with Pelican Island Audubon Society. Please go onto our website for details. It is scheduled for the weekend of October 12th. We hope to see all of you there, as it entails numerous birding walks and an art show, a wonderful way for two environmental groups to come together. Much time and effort has gone into the planning of this event. Many thanks to Debbie Avery for all her hard work.

Our quarterly meeting is coming up on Oct. 23rd. In honor of Natl. Wildlife Refuge Week (Oct. 8-14), Cathy Allen will be our featured speaker. She will share photos and stories of her visits to more than 50 refuges throughout the country.

Finally, I would like to remind you of the upcoming Pelican Island Wildlife Festival on March 3, 2018 in Riverside Park, Sebastian. We are in need of volunteers to assist us with finding sponsors, requesting donations, and assembling raffle baskets prior to the event. As always, we need volunteers to help us on the day of the festival.

As always, many thanks in advance for your support of PIPS and what we aim to accomplish in support of the country's first national wildlife refuge--Pelican Island.

Have a safe and productive fall,

Steve Massey

National Wildlife Refuges Around the Country

Join us for a trip through the National Wildlife Refuge System and learn about its origins, functions, and management as well as the challenges it currently faces, with our presenter this month, Cathy Allen. Cathy will share pictures and stories from her visits to more than 50 national wildlife refuges, from Alaska to Oklahoma to Delaware and more. Together, we will explore how and why each of our 566 national wildlife refuges was established and what we can do as citizen supporters to make sure the system stays strong for current and future generations of people and wildlife.

Cathy wears many hats. She is a consultant by profession and assists nonprofit organizations with board governance issues, development, and strategic planning. A lifelong nature enthusiast, Cathy is a former executive director of the Ohio League of Conservation Voters and has consulted with numerous refuge Friends groups through the National Wildlife Refuge Association and the National Conservation Training Center. She currently resides in the Melbourne area and is a member of the Board of Directors of the Friends of the Carr Refuge. Our meeting is on Monday, October 23rd at the North Indian River County Library as usual, but due to a change in the rules for use of library facilities, our meetings will now be starting at 6pm. PLEASE NOTE THE NEW START TIME! The library is located at 1001 Sebastian Blvd. in Sebastian and more information can be found on our website at www.firstrefuge.org.

National Wildlife Refuge Week

Throughout the week of October 8–14, national wildlife refuges across the country will be hosting free events for you to discover and connect with your National Wildlife Refuge System!

Did you know that the National Wildlife Refuge System is the largest protected area system on planet Earth? If it were a country, it would be the 7th largest country in the world!

The good news for you is that you can find a national wildlife refuge within an hour's drive of most major cities.

Of the more than 560 refuges around the country, only 31 charge a fee for admission or activities on their refuge. During National Wildlife Refuge Week, many of those activities will be free, in celebration of the more than 150 million acres that make up the refuge system around the country.

Use this refuge locator at www.fws.gov/refuges/refugelocatormaps to help guide you to the nearest one. Give wings to your wild side!

The Pelican Island NWR has scheduled some special events in celebration of National Wildlife Refuge Week. They will be holding a Bird Identification Walk on Sunday, October 8th from 9 to 10:30am. In addition, they will have Refuge Volunteers staffing information tables from 9am to noon, at "Joe's Overlook" on October 8th, as well as Tuesday through Thursday, and Saturday, during Refuge Week. The week concludes on Saturday October 14th, with a Wildlife Educational Walk with Janice Broda, from 9 to 10:30am. For more information, visit the Refuge Facebook page at www.facebook.com/PelicanIslandNWR or call them at 772-581-5557.

In celebration of National Wildlife Refuge Week, PIPS, in coordination with the Pelican Island Audubon Society, is hosting the third annual Indian River Birding Festival & Nature Art Show. Please see the accompanying story below.

Source: National Wildlife Refuge Association

Indian River Birding Festival

We introduced you to our 3rd Annual Indian River Birding Festival & Nature Art Show, in our June newsletter. As noted, we are partnering with the Pelican Island Audubon Society for this year's event, and the Audubon House will be the headquarters for the event.

As usual, a plein air paint-out will take place at the Audubon House, as well as the display and sale of artwork submitted for the festival. In addition, a few of the tours will take place on the Audubon campus, as well as a special mural dedication and artists' reception on the opening night of the festival--Friday, October 13th. There is a reservation and fee required to attend this special ribbon-cutting event. Please visit the Audubon website at www.pelicanislandaudubon.org for details and reservations.

For a full listing of tours, events, and tour leader bios, please visit our website at www.firstrefuge.org/indian-river-birding-fest-nature-art-show to download a copy of the event flyer. Reservations are required for tours with a fee, and can be made on the above web page, or by check, by delivering the completed form to the Audubon House during their regular business hours, at 195 9th Street SE (Oslo Road). Please call them at 772-567-3520 to confirm hours. An event flyer can also be obtained by stopping by the Audubon House.



PIPS has received several donations this summer, in memory of two people who have recently passed away – Michael Hess and Patricia Smith. Neither of these people were familiar to most of us, but they obviously enjoyed their time spent at the Pelican Island NWR, and perhaps other refuges. We are very grateful to their families for their consideration of naming PIPS for donations in memory of the loved ones. We offer our condolences to the Hess and Smith families, and their friends.

Earlier this summer, PIPS changed the method for delivery of our emails. We established a formal email service with “MailChimp.” The MailChimp service allows anyone to subscribe to our email updates and electronic newsletters, and allows for self-maintenance of your email subscription. You may subscribe (or unsubscribe, but why would you want to!?) at any time. Please encourage all your friends and family to do so as well! Look for the link near the bottom of each of the pages of our website.

Kids' Summer Camp on the Refuge

Because of their long-standing relationship to the Refuge, Pelican Island Elementary School children were treated to a three-week summer camp experience, under the guidance of Bonnie Swanson, PIAS board member and former school principal. The day campers were made aware of the following during the course of their experiences:

- 1) historical significance of the Refuge
- 2) the role of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, rangers, and volunteers in protecting and overseeing all of the country's national wildlife refuges
- 3) the need for conservation lands to protect threatened species of plants, birds, and animals
- 4) the flora and fauna living on protected refuges
- 5) the need for passive recreation for enjoyment of wildlife refuges



Most importantly, the children took away from their time spent on the Refuge the importance of becoming stewards of the earth both as children and adults through education and healthy environmental behaviors. Children can mobilize and change the course of the future!

Accompanying photos by David Cox.



Refuge Update and Hurricane Damage

We here on the east coast of Florida were lucky, once again, as Hurricane Irma wobbled and came up the west coast of the state. It would appear the worst damage in our local area, is salt burns on many plants close to, and even some not so close to, the coast. Extended strong easterly winds appear to have carried salt spray a few miles inland.

A couple of refuges most directly in the path of Irma were the Key Deer and Ding Darling NWRs. Since Hurricane Irma, Key Deer have been spotted on Big Pine Key, home to the Key Deer NWR. And according to reports from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Ding Darling mostly suffered from lots of debris and trees down on trails and paths.

The USFWS has created a page with news about hurricane damage and update reports at <https://www.fws.gov/southeast/news>.

Pelican Island NWR update from Project Leader Bill Miller - Bird's and Joe Michael Trails were closed due to trees damaged by Hurricane Irma. A Service strike team from North Carolina was detailed by the Service's Irma Incident Command unit and removed the damaged vegetation, readying the trails for visitor use. The Team also rescued an apparently exhausted sandwich tern during trail recovery efforts. The tern was taken to the Treasure Coast Wildlife Center in Palm City Florida for rehabilitation.

Refuge staff remotely evaluated Pelican Island NWR by boat during a post Irma survey of Refuge interests within the Indian River Lagoon. A derelict vessel was discovered grounded on one of the Three Sister's Islands. Fortunately, Pelican Island proper appeared to receive minimal damage, and at the time of survey pelicans, great blue herons, great egrets, and a pair of roseate spoonbills were all utilizing the island and surrounding submerged aquatic habitats.

Hurricane Irma flooded Jungle Trail and the surrounding Refuge landscape is currently saturated from recent heavy rains since Irma's passing. As a result of the extremely wet conditions, periodic closures of Jungle Trail, Centennial Trail and the Pelican Island Orientation Area have been necessary. The Refuge is working closely with our Indian River County partners and plans to provide safe, dependable access to Pelican Island NWR's trail systems as conditions improve.

More Than 3000 Acres to be Added to the Everglades Headwaters NWR

On August 16th, the Florida Cabinet approved the purchases of two significant conservation properties that will protect more than 3,000 acres of pristine habitat within the Everglades Headwaters National Wildlife Refuge and Conservation Partnership Area. These purchases will be made through the Division of State Lands (DSL) Florida Forever Program and serve as models of conservation partnerships that show what is possible when agencies and stakeholders work together to conserve our most important landscapes.

The purchase of Triple Diamond Ranch will place approximately 2000 acres into conservation, including some of Florida's last remaining dry prairie habitat, and will allow for recreational access. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) is partnering with DSL to purchase an additional 2000 acres.

The Pelican Island NWR is part of the Everglades Headwaters NWR Complex, managed by Project Leader Bill Miller. For more information about this purchase, visit <https://goo.gl/voXjKc>.

Source: Press Release, August 16, 2017, National Wildlife Refuge Association

Update on Jungle Trail, Present and Past

This past June, one of Indian River County's most historic and scenic roads, and a Florida landmark, was under siege. Several members of a local cycling club were trying to use safety fears to convince the County Commission to close a segment of the 7.5 mile Jungle Trail, allowing only bicycles and foot traffic to use what would then become a private bikeway and park.

No public discussion of this proposed plan ever took place; in fact, individual County Commissioners were even lobbied separately, as discovered by members of the Indian River County Historical Society. Newspaper reports made

it sound like the "closure" was a done deal, but the true story came out after the IRCHS made a Public Record Request. The proposed plan was for locked gates, with keys available only to certain people, and "bollards" placed in the middle of the roadway to block vehicular traffic. The final insult was the allowance of cars driving this segment one Sunday of each month!

The IRCHS were outraged and so were the public at large. The Society discovered that there had been only 12 accidents between 2005 and 2017, according to the Sheriff's Dept., on the Jungle Trail. The one fatal accident that did occur was determined not to be related to the road or its conditions.

Ironically, the IRCHS fought another battle almost thirty years ago to save the Jungle Trail, this time from greedy developers. They were successful in their appeal due to a furious public outcry and a very strong County Commission.

In 1989, the late John Dean, a beloved local architect, drew up the Historical Society's "conceptual plan" for Jungle Trail and designed the bumper sticker--SAVE JUNGLE TRAIL. That "conceptual plan" is a reality and plays a major role in Indian River County's larger Blueway/Greenway. For nearly a hundred years, this narrow public, dirt road has overlooked the Indian River Lagoon and meandered through the maritime hammocks of the barrier island.

For decades it was known as A1A and served as the only connecting road to Sebastian Inlet. Built originally to open Orchid Island to farmers, tourists, and land speculators, it remains a vivid reminder of "Old Florida." Today it serves as an upland buffer to Pelican Island National Wildlife Refuge and the Indian River Lagoon and is still dotted with old shell mounds, four public county parks, and pioneer homesteads. It is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

On June 16th of this year, the issue of closing a segment of Jungle Trail was finally scheduled under Public Discussion at the Indian River Commission meeting. The Historical Society, along with members of PIPS and other organizations, came out in large numbers to "SAVE JUNGLE TRAIL, AGAIN." Wisely, the cyclist group withdrew their request and the County Commission on June 13th gave clear direction to staff that new "official" signage be placed at all major entrances to the Trail. With text provided by the Historical Society, County staff created signs designating Jungle Trail "A QUIET DRIVE FOR ALL." Once again, the County Commission and the public came together to save Jungle Trail for future generations!



Photo: Indian River County Historical Society

One of Florida's Great Conservationists Passes

The conservation movement lost a hero. Alto "Bud" Adams didn't necessarily look the part with his cowboy hat, boots, and dusty jeans, but he was every inch the conservationist in his quest to protect the magic of Everglades Headwaters, from just south of Orlando to Lake Okeechobee.

Bud understood the value of conserving important habitat and joined the Refuge Association in 2012 to create the Everglades Headwaters National Wildlife Refuge and Conservation Area. The Refuge is a unique partnership where landowners can voluntarily sell or enroll their lands in conservation easements. The easements will both protect important habitat for endangered species, but also keep working lands on the landscape to protect the Florida ranching way of life.



Bud Adams led other pioneering and dedicated private landowners to protect their resources before they are gone forever. We could not have asked for a more passionate and effective conservation leader for Florida's Everglades Headwaters than Alto "Bud" Adams. Rest In Peace, Bud, and thank you for all you gave to the world.

Source: "Refuge News," September 27, 2017, National Wildlife Refuge Association

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

In Memory of Helga Lamb

PIPS has learned of the passing of Helga Lamb, the wife of Vince Lamb. Many of you may know Vince from the many hats he wears, in his efforts on behalf of wildlife, conservation, and the environment.

In addition to being a well-known local photographer, Vince is involved with many conservation causes in our area and is a Board member of our sister group, the Friends of the Carr Refuge. One of his many contributions to the Carr Refuge, is as a certified summertime sea turtle walking tour guide.

The Lamb family has requested that donations may be made to the Friends of the Carr Refuge in memory of Helga. Donations may be mailed to FOCR at 11590 Dragon Point Dr., Merritt Island, FL 32952 or online at www.carrrefuge.org.

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
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