

Mark your calendars...

- February 6-7: River Region East Science Fair (FCTI)
- Feb. 6-9: Jacksonville Boat Show
- February 8: Water education festival, MOSH, 10 am—4 pm. If you'd be willing to help volunteer, please contact Maia at 904-824-4564.
- More on back page!

What will 2003 bring?

Clean Marina designations, Science Fair judging, Water Festival and River Cleanups are among the items on my calendar for the first quarter of 2003. It looks to be an interesting year, as St. Johns County reviews its Habitat Conservation Plan based on recommendations from the US Fish and Wildlife Service, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission debates reducing the status of manatees from Endangered to Threatened, the state tries to find some economic aid for shrimpers, and FWC starts to tackle the issue of derelict traps (crab and other) and how to facilitate removal of these traps from coastal waters. I'll do my best to update you on these issues as they are addressed.

M. P. McGuire

Maia McGuire, PhD
Marine Extension Agent



Biodegradable cleaning products are featured in the Ship's store at Oyster Creek Marina

Inside this issue:

Right whales	2
St. Johns River Summit	3
Did You Know?	3
Volunteers needed	3

Oyster Creek Marina becomes St. Johns County's first Clean Marina

On December 17, 2002, Oyster Creek Marina was officially designated as a Clean Marina by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection. Oyster Creek is St. Johns County's first Clean Marina, and is the fifth in the northeast district. It joins Lamb's Yacht Center, Palm Cove Marina, Ortega River Boatyard and Whitney's Marine. There are currently four other marinas that have been recommended for designation as Clean Marinas in the district: Lakeshore Dry Storage (ceremony on Jan. 31), Amelia Island Yacht Basin (ceremony on Feb. 21), Conch House Marina Resort and Camachee Cove Yacht Harbor. For more information about the Clean Marina program, see <http://www.dep.state.fl.us/law/Grants/CMP/default.htm>.

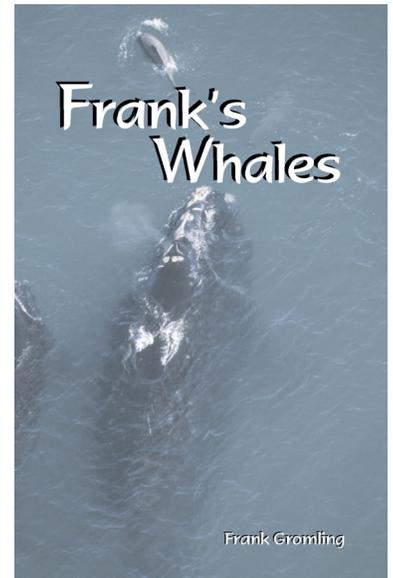
Right whales are back

If you are at the beach between now and April, make sure to take a look out at the ocean every now and then—you just might spot a right whale or two! Once again, the right whales are in our coastal waters to have their calves. They will begin their migration back to cooler northern waters in the spring. If you see a dark shape breaking through the surface of the water, or spot a V-shaped water “blow”, please call the right whale hotline at 1-888-979-4235 and be prepared to give them the following information: date, time of day, location, number of animals (calf present? dolphins present?), your name and a call-back number. This information is used to help improve the database about the right whale population, but perhaps more importantly to help the US Navy advise ships if there may be a whale nearby. Collisions with ships are a common cause of injury or death to right whales. The northern right whale has been listed as an endangered species since June, 1970 and there are believed to be about 300-350 of these whales alive today.

Right whale volunteer network at Marineland

For the past three years, a dedicated group of volunteers has braved the elements to watch for right whales off the coastline of St. Johns and Flagler counties. The efforts of these volunteers are profiled in a new book, written by Frank Gromling. Frank is a Flagler Beach resident who is himself a Right Whale Watch volunteer. The book, *Frank's Whales*, profiles the monitoring network which is coordinated by Dr. Jim Hain (Associated Scientists of Woods Hole) and Joy Hampp (Marineland). You can find out more about the book by visiting www.ocean-publishing.com. If you are interested in helping with the right whale monitoring, please contact Joy Hampp at 904-471-1111.

For more information about right whales, you can start at the website for the Marine Resources Council: <http://www.mrcirl.org/whale/whale.html>. This site contains links to sighting maps and other right whale websites.



REMINDER: Whales and manatees are protected by state and federal regulations which prohibit any actions which might “disrupt normal behavioral patterns.” These actions include approaching the animals in the water, and attempting to feed them, touch them or give water to them.



St. Johns River Summit

The City of Jacksonville, St. Johns River Water Management District and Florida Department of Environmental Protection teamed up to host the St. Johns River Summit on January 13 and 14, 2003. The meeting was attended by a total of over 1,000 individuals and addressed topics including ecotourism, water supply, and water quality. Breakout sessions discussed the feasibility of creating a St. Johns River trail for kayaks/canoes and hikers, and management issues such as sources of pollution, water supply and TMDLs (Total Maximum Daily Loads). For information on the state's Greenways and Trails program, see <http://floridagreenwaysandtrails.com/>. Information about TMDL's is available in many locations—you might start at the DEP's site— <http://www.dep.state.fl.us/water/tmdl>. Much information about water quality and conservation is available at the St. Johns River Water Management District site— <http://www.sjrwmd.com>. Results of the Summit will be posted at the City of Jacksonville site— <http://www.coj.net>.



Did You Know? (info from the SJR Summit)

- The St. Johns River watershed covers 1/6 of the area of the state of Florida.
- The Office of Greenways and Trails offers liability insurance for private landowners who are willing to give public access to their property as part of a trail system.
- 55% of the available reclaimed wastewater in the SJRWMD area is being used.
- There is a high probability that parts of the Upper St. Johns River will be tapped as a source of drinking water in the near future

Volunteers needed

- Feb. 8, 2003—Water Education Festival at the Museum of Science and History. Sea Grant will have an interactive display (an electronic quiz board) and static display about marine debris. Volunteers are needed between 10 am and 4 pm to help staff the display.
- Fishing survey teams needed—the Sea Grant Extension program is looking for a few volunteers in each county (Nassau, Duval, St. Johns and Flagler) to survey recreational anglers about their awareness of the monofilament recycling program. Volunteers will receive training, surveys and incentives to give to those anglers who participate in the surveys.
- Spring 2004—I know it's a long way off, but I will be putting out a call for people with boats to help with a fishing program for physically challenged youth. If you are interested, you can check out www.castforkids.org. We will need sponsors for funds and supplies (including food) for this event.
- Volunteers needed to empty monofilament recycling stations along Heckscher Drive (Between I-95 and Talbot Island) and in the Ortega area.
- For more information on any of the above items, or to volunteer, please call Maia or April at 904-824-4564.



UNIVERSITY OF
FLORIDA
IFAS EXTENSION

NE Florida Sea Grant Extension Program
3125 Agricultural Center Drive
St. Augustine, FL 32092

Phone: 904-824-4564
Fax: 904-829-5157
E-mail: mPMCguire@mail.ifas.ufl.edu
<http://stjohns.ifas.ufl.edu>

*Science serving
coastal Florida*

More “Mark your calendars”

- February 14: Green Cove Springs (BCC) 4-6 pm—Public workshop regarding trap retrieval and trap debris removal issues. For more information, call Lee Schlesinger (FWC) at 850-487-0554.
- February 20: Envirothon at Lake Fretwell, 8:30 am—1:15 pm.
- February 21: Clean Marina designation ceremony—Amelia Island Yacht Basin, 1 pm.
- March 15: St. Johns River Cleanup—watch your local newspaper for announcements of locations and times
- March 21-23: League of Environmental Educators of Florida annual conference (see <http://leef-florida.org/> for more information).
- April 9: Monofilament recycling workshop (Panhandle region)—contact Maia at 904-824-4564 for more information
- April 9-11: State Science Fair, Jacksonville. To volunteer, see www.Kiwanissciencefair.org.
- May 2-4: Florida Marine Science Educators’ Association annual meeting (Cedar Key). See www.fmsea.org for more information.
- May, 2003-St. Johns River boat trip from Sanford to Jacksonville (3-day excursion). For details, see www.stjohnsriverkeeper.org or call Katy at 904-256-7591.

Aqua Notes is provided as one of the many services relating to educational programs offered by the University of Florida/IFAS cooperative extension service. This publication is available on the Web at <http://stjohns.ifas.ufl.edu> or in an alternate format on special request. The use of websites or product names in this publication is not a guarantee, warranty or endorsement of the sites/products named and does not signify that they are approved to the exclusion of others. For more information about this document, contact Maia McGuire at the St. Johns County Extension Service at 904-824-4564