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<http://www.HomosassaRiverAlliance.org>

### *Message From the President*

Taking on the role of President of the Homosassa River Alliance has been a rewarding and challenging endeavor. CHANGE has been constant. We have been moving forward very quickly in re-establishing the Alliance as a proactive community-friendly organization focusing on the health and well-being of the Homosassa River. We have re-organized the Alliance and have identified teams and focus areas needed to quickly respond to the needs of the river. We have partnered with the Florida Freshwater and Game Commission (FWC) and the County in ways which have opened lines of communication. Officers and Directors met throughout the summer working on the future direction of the Alliance. During these meetings we applied for a grant from the FWC Foundation to support our efforts in the future.

This year we will be participating in the Seafood Festival, promoting the Alliance, while seeking new members. We purchased a new tent with canopy, banner backdrop table signs, and t-shirts to bring attention to this effort. Southwest Florida Water Management District agreed to and printed over 800 pamphlets to hand out during the Festival. With these efforts and more, the community is beginning to recognize the importance of the role the Alliance can and will play in protecting the future of the river. This summer has also been a season of CHANGE.

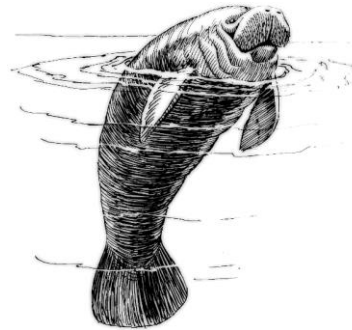
The efforts of many in our community and the Alliance are beginning to pay off in ways which will benefit Homosassa and the river for years to come. Our Historic Water Tower has been painted, bringing it back to life for all to see, while providing a landmark long recognized by boaters and folks living in surrounding areas. The funding of the first 25 acres of river bottom, to be cleaned and planted with Rockstar grass, has been awarded to the Homosassa River Restoration Project. The future of our working waterfront park is looking bright. The Access to Old Homosassa Park committee is working hard to make this park a reality. The plan is to leave in place the shrimp boats and Shelley's Seafood Market, making it one of only three working waterfronts in the State. The Civic Club continues to add new members while providing the community with activities and programs which attract participation from throughout the county. The FWC and the County, permitted, developed and placed signs saying, "Do Not Discard Scallop Shells into Our Outstanding Waterways used for recreation, such as the

Homosassa and Crystal Rivers. This is a time of many CHANGES along our River. Cooler weather means that leaves will change color and fall, manatees will make their way into the Blue Waters, schools of Mangrove Snapper, Snook and Drum will seek the warmer waters of the spring run. Waterfowl will arrive from their long trip from their Northern nesting grounds. People from around the world will come to Homosassa, to travel the river, view the manatees and fish in our outstanding waters. All of this is made possible by one - and only one thing, - a healthy Homosassa River. I look forward to working closely with the Board of Directors, members, FWC and Citrus County as we move forward with this task.

Let the Voice of the River Be Heard,  
 Frank Kapocsi, President,  
 Save the Homosassa River Alliance

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**ATTENTION MEMBERS**



**HOMOSASSA RIVER ALLIANCE  
 ANNUAL FUNDRAISER**

Please be watching the mail for information regarding the Homosassa River Alliance Annual Fund Raiser.

You will receive an envelope explaining how you can purchase raffle tickets to win a gift basket(s). The drawing for the basket(s) will take place on November 11, 2018 at the Homosassa Seafood Festival. You do not need to be present to win.

This is our main fundraiser and we hope you can support our organization. These funds help us continue in our effort to save our waters from further degradation.

If you have any questions, please call:.

Bob Jeeves at 628-0991

**FWC**

**- OUR QUESTIONS AND THEIR**

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 Board of Directors**

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 Steve Minguay, Vice President  
 Iris Rose, Secretary  
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Four Freshwater and Game Commission officers were present at the June 14<sup>th</sup> River Alliance Meeting. Captain Ronald Schuster is the area supervisor for several counties, which includes Citrus. Our questions for Captain Schuster were varied and addressed several issues concerning the Homosasa River, in particular. In summary, these are concerns which were mentioned:

- Noise pollution on river
- Law enforcement on the water
- Drinking on the river
- Camera on FWC boats to capture dangerous behavior
- Safety checkpoints on river
- Numbers to call with concerns
- Who do we call with concerns/complaints
- Does the FWC have power to enforce laws
- How can we help

In the 2016-2017 year, the FWC issued 505 warnings and 53 citations were issued in the Homosassa area. They prefer to educate the general public about safety and feel that a warning is more beneficial. They choose which laws to enforce. The FWC has no method of measuring sound as far as noise pollution is concerned on the river. The FWC does not operate as a 911 agency, however, they encourage the public to call and report any concerns so they can document the event. They are limited due to legal issues, especially dealing with cameras on their boats and mandatory checkpoints. The courts today support the general public and its rights.

Captain Schuster said they are very proud of their accomplishments with such limited resources. There are 2

lieutenants and 8 officers assigned to Citrus County.

The FWC takes calls 24/7 and he emphasized that any calls they receive help them plan for the future. He asked for patience and mentioned that if anyone witnesses anything to record time and day and kind of boat. They will follow up when they can.

Call 1-888-404-3922 with concerns/complaints. Calls go to a Jacksonville central dispatch.

**RIVER ALLIANCE MEMBERS  
CLEANED UP NEAR THE  
SPRINGS DURING SAVE OUR  
WATERS WEEK**

Save Our Waters Week began on Saturday, September 15th. Six members of the River Alliance participated in helping to clean the river. Cindy and Steve Minguy, Bill and Iris Rose and Janet and Bill Garvin picked items out of the Homosassa River which ranged from boat parts to diapers. We began at the headsprings and proceeded downwards towards Seagrass.

We are hoping that we can have a bigger group to do this next year. It doesn't take long and all one has to do is traverse the waters near where you live, pick up the trash and deliver it to a checkpoint. It took up about two hours of our day and it was not much of a chore. The Save Our Waters folks give you a free shirt, gloves, bags for trash and trash retrievers. Not bad for a good cause!!

**NEW PROJECTS FOR THE  
ALLIANCE – WE NEED YOU.....**

We are trying to establish teams to help carry out projects and initiatives which we have identified as our goals, such as promoting education and awareness of water quality in the schools and community. Focus areas include habitat restoration, water quality and spring flow, fundraising but most importantly, being a voice for the river.

We need more member participation to comprise these teams and accomplish these goals. Join us so we can plan for a successful new year in the Alliance.



**BE A VOICE OF THE RIVER!!  
Become an Active member of the  
Homosassa River Alliance!**

Attend meetings to help identify new projects and express concerns. If you can't attend meetings, send us an email at [homosassariveralliance.com](mailto:homosassariveralliance.com)

Our monthly meetings are held on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of each month.

We meet at the Civic Center in Old Homosassa at 7 p.m.

**MEMBERSHIP DUES**

Dues for membership shall be ten dollars per member or twenty dollars per family or as established by the Board of directors.

The membership period shall be the calendar year i.e. January 1. Dues are payable at the time of application of new membership and then in the first quarter of each following year.

Members whose dues remain unpaid after March 31 will be dropped from this corporation's list of members.

To see if your membership is current, just check the mailing label of this newsletter. The number to the left of your name represents the year you last paid your dues (see sample below).

**2017** John Smith  
123 Any Place St.  
Homosassa, FL 34448

Your membership in the Homosassa River Alliance helps in the continuation of its goal. That is, to help restore, protect, and perpetuate the native ecological integrity of the Homosassa River system.

**On the membership form please add under the 'Yes! Count me in!'**

Annual dues: \$10 per Member of \$20 per family. Dues are due January 1st

**NOTE:** Dues can also be paid via Paypal on our website: [Homosassariveralliance.org](http://Homosassariveralliance.org)

## **FLORIDA SPRINGS RESTORATION SUMMIT**

### **2018 Florida Springs Restoration Summit to Feature Springs Regional Panels and Keynote Addresses by Dinah Voyles Pulver and Jacqui Thurlow-Lippisch**

Ocala, FL – The Florida Springs Council (FSC), with support from the Fish and Wildlife Foundation of Florida and Jelks Family Foundation, is hosting the Florida Springs Restoration Summit from November 2<sup>nd</sup> – 4<sup>th</sup> at the College of Central Florida to report on the status of springs health in Florida and to develop a roadmap for springs restoration and protection.

The Summit will consist of a series of panel discussions arranged into seven major springs regions. Panelists will address the current knowledge about springs science and management, as well as the tools and activities needed for meaningful springs restoration and long-term protection. Conservationist, Jacqui Thurlow-Lippisch, and environmental journalist, Dinah Voyles Pulver, will provide keynote addresses on Friday and Saturday.

“The Florida Springs Restoration Summit is the only conference in the state that focuses on identifying the next steps needed to protect our springs,” says FSC President, Dan Hilliard. “Anyone who has an interest in the future of our springs should make attending this conference a priority.” A poster session will be held on Friday evening and will offer the opportunity for students, young professionals, and

nonprofit organizations to showcase new ideas and examples of tools and activities being implemented or proposed throughout the state to improve the health of our springs. The 2018 Florida Springs Conservation Plan, a result of the 2016 Summit, will also be released during the conference and provided to all participants.

The desired outcome for the 2018 Summit is a highly-informed audience of decision makers, scientists, advocates, and laypersons who can work together to recognize the threats to Florida’s springs and follow through on implementing meaningful springs restoration and protection actions.

When asked why an event like this is important, 2016 Summit attendee Kathleen Lamorte says it best: “We need to save these valuable resources; take care of them so that other families can have the same kind of history that we had visiting them”.

To purchase tickets or learn more about the Florida Springs Restoration Summit, visit <https://www.springsrestorationsummit.org/>.

For questions, contact Brenda Wells at [floridaspringscouncil@gmail.com](mailto:floridaspringscouncil@gmail.com).



## **DID YOU KNOW THAT.....**

Geologists claim that with over 700 springs, Florida may have the largest convergence of freshwater springs on the planet. Homosassa Springs is listed as one of 33 first magnitude springs. **Springs** are often classified by the volume of the water they discharge. The largest **springs** are called "**first-magnitude**", defined as **springs** that discharge water at a rate of at least 2800 liters or 100 cubic feet (2.8 m<sup>3</sup>) of water per second.



## **SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT**

The simplest way to determine if your yard needs water is to look for these visual clues:

- Grass blades are folded in half lengthwise on at least one-third of your yard
- Grass blades appear blue-gray
- Grass blades do not spring back, leaving footprints on the lawn for several minutes after walking on it.

During the summer months of June, July, August and September, yards need no more than ¾ inch of water every 2 to 3 days. If your lawn has received enough water from rainfall, then you can turn off your irrigation system and turn it back on when needed.

Every time you mow your lawn and blow the loose grass into the canal behind your home, you are blowing harmful nitrates into the water.

## **ORDINANCE ON WATERFRONT SETBACKS**

The Planning and Development Commission (PDC) is a Board which reviews development applications and makes recommendations to the BOCC on changes to the Citrus County Comprehensive Plan and Land Development Code. In May, the PDC approved part of an ordinance - (OA-18-02) – which is to consider that setbacks be reduced. Originally, waterfront setbacks were 50' from either mean high water lines or ordinary high water lines with an exception which was 35' if a berm and swale was present. The new proposal was 35' from high water lines or a minimum of 15' from proposed structures such as slabs or decks. However, the PDC did have concerns about stormwater runoff and wanted these concerns be known to the BOCC.

At the BOCC meeting in June, the County Commissioners agreed to hold off on part of the ordinance which proposed to change setbacks. There was a lot of public opposition to this and the commissioners felt they needed more information to make that decision. In particular, they need to have more studies done on the impact of stormwater runoff and water quality. The section of this ordinance which had to do with setbacks will be brought back at a later date; the anticipated completion date is November 13, 2018. You may want to think about going to that BOCC meeting if you are concerned about setbacks.

**BUFFERS AND SETBACKS – ARE  
THEY THE SAME?**

According to Mark Green with the Department Management, Citrus County, the answer is NO.

The purpose of setbacks is aesthetics and primarily used within the built environment, i.e where houses and lots already exist or are planned. Setbacks are more typical in neighborhood settings found in subdivisions and are used to define the “fit and feel” of a community. This is done by requiring separation distances or “setbacks” for homes from adjacent roads, neighbors, and waterfronts.

Buffers are typically required to protect more sensitive areas such as wetlands and springs. Their primary purpose is to ensure that the biological and wildlife species habitat remains protected however these systems do provide some filtration and absorption of runoff.

**HELP NEEDED AT  
BLUEBIRD SPRINGS**  
**Bill Garvin**

The water testing at Bluebird Springs started about thirteen years ago in conjunction with Lakewatch of the University of Florida. The original group was Ron Miller, Jim Bitter, Rolf Auerman, Georgeanna Phelps, and Bill Garvin. The rest of the group fell away and I continued till I was no longer able to get my kayak to Bluebird. About a year after I started water testing I asked Lakewatch if I could do the Homosassa River. They said yes and I picked out 5 spots via GPS and they approved the spots and I started doing the Homosassa

River. As of now all information provided to virtually any state agency for water quality comes from Lakewatch. The data from Lakewatch was compared and verified to other agencies data and Lakewatch was the same data. They use volunteers not paid employees. So as a cost cutting measure the other agencies use Lakewatch data and provide some monetary aid.

I need assistance to continue this work. I am no longer able to get my kayak to Bluebird Springs and need someone with a kayak to help. I have sent letters to the Chronicle about three times with no response. I still have hopes that we can continue testing Bluebird Springs in the future. **All it takes is a person with a kayak who's willing to bring their kayak to Bluebird Springs once a month and take it out in the spring to gather water samples and use a depth line, called a Sochi Disc.** The entire process takes about one hour. Bluebird Springs is located at the intersection of West Yulee Drive and West Bradshaw Boulevard in Homosassa. I will supply all items needed for the water sampling and direct the person assisting me to the correct spot to take the samples and I will process the water samples for Lakewatch and deliver them.

I can be contacted at 352-628-4685. Please Help!



