



Reflections

FEBRUARY, 2017 NEWSLETTER FOR FRIENDS OF ST. MARKS WILDLIFE REFUGE

Reflections newsletter is a benefit of membership for Friends of St. Marks Wildlife Refuge. It also serves as an important supplement to the Friends' web site, www.stmarksrefuge.org. Both the newsletter and the web site provide members and the public information about volunteer activities and events at the Refuge.



Special Refuge Appreciation Issue

February 14 isn't the only day that you can show your love for the Refuge, but it's a great start!

Though we typically attempt to issue Reflections on the 15th of each month, we are sending it your way a day early to coincide with Valentine's Day. On this date, people historically show their love and



appreciation for others in their lives.

This issue of Reflections expands on the Valentine's Day theme by including a variety of features and news shorts that revolve around a love for the Refuge. Whether that love comes in the form of volunteering, giving or donating, capturing a photograph or simply communing with people and the environment, the Refuge

is a special place. And, as our February kiosk (at the lighthouse, left) message says, you can "Love the Refuge every day" - not just Valentine's Day. We hope you enjoy this issue, and that you will visit us often.

Editor's Note: As always, the Reflections newsletter relies on the participation of a number of volunteers. In particular, I would like to thank both Betsy Kellenberger (former board member and photographer) and Paul Hamilton (former board member and newsletter editor) for ALWAYS assisting me without hesitation whenever I need their help. Thank you both.



The Friends' Board of Directors Brings a Diverse Array of Professional Talent to the Refuge

In the past several issues of Reflections, a number of really great volunteers have been highlighted. And, as we said at the time, our intent is not to pat each other on the back but to simply let our Friends know that all of our volunteers bring skill, knowledge, or personality traits forward that are important in the volunteer work they perform.



The members of the Friends' Board of Directors, similarly, each bring strong expertise (from years of past professional experience) to the forefront as they provide direction and leadership in the board's decision-making.

Mary Smallwood, President

Mary Smallwood (at far left) is a retired environmental attorney. In addition to being president of the

Friends group and volunteering in the Refuge Visitors Center, she also volunteers for the Florida State Parks system and the Leon County Humane Society..

Tom Baird Vice President

Tom Baird (far right) is Vice President of the Friends Board and procures the funds to restore the St. Marks Lighthouse. His career as an educational administrator give him the experience of managing large projects, writing proposals, training faculty on proposal writing and serving on boards and proposal review panels.



Melissa Jacoby, Secretary

Melissa Jacoby (near right) retired after 39 years in human services including stints in direct social services, administration, and senior management. Melissa has been a board member since 2013, is board secretary, and serves on the executive, communications, and nature



store committees. She also volunteers on Fridays in the Refuge Visitor Center.

John Haines, Treasurer

John Haines (left) manages the Friends' finances and the annual board budget planning process. He uses the skills gained as a non-profit manager by providing information that assists the board in supporting Refuge programs by making prudent financial decisions.

Susan Cason

Susan Cason (very bottom, center) is a retired Nurse Manager with experience in resource management, database usage, and training. SMRA Life Member, Refuge Ambassador.

Sue Conte

Sue Conte (right) chairs the Communications Committee bringing a wealth of experience from her career in overseeing operations, marketing and communications in health care.



Betty Hamilton

Betty Hamilton (very bottom, far right) is a retired university Compliance and Grants Coordinator, background in counseling psychology. Immediate Past President. SMRA Life Member.



Carol Phillips

Carol Phillips (left) is retired from the Southeast Regional Fish and Wildlife Service Office with 32 years of service. Was Chief of the Division of Information Management. Allocated \$50 million each fiscal year to over 100 wildlife refuges and prepared future year budget requests for Congress.

Phillip Pollock

Phillip Pollock (right) administers the Friends' web site and edits this document, the Reflections newsletter. His career work as a web administrator, professional writer and graphic designer facilitate his work with the Refuge.



Nicole Zampieri

Nicole Zampieri (below, left) is entering graduate school at FSU this fall. She has served the board as our student representative. She is also a Refuge volunteer, and *Ground Pounder* (student group that undertakes environmental projects on the Refuge), and former Milkweed Intern for the Monarch-Milkweed Initiative. She has also recently been hired as a field biologist with the Florida Natural Areas Inventory.



Photo credits: John, Nicole, Susan Cason, and Betty images are credited to Betsy Kellenberger; the remainder are editor files.



Serenity



When you can find it nowhere else

People come to the Refuge for all sorts of reasons: to watch birds and other wildlife, to enjoy wildflowers, and for various forms of exercise. Sometimes, though, visitors come here just to enjoy smells and sounds carried on the breeze, its expansive vistas, and the opportunities to relax and think. Woven through these experiences is an often under appreciated benefit of the Refuge, that is, the soothing and sometimes healing that derives from coming here. Of course, being with nature makes us slow down, something that is more and more important every day as our lives become busier. But, it's more than that.

During my time as a refuge volunteer, I've often encountered visitors by themselves, and I've sometimes engaged them in a bit of low key chit-chat. After they figure out that I 'work here' and that no one else is around, more often than not, casual chit-chat has led to a visitor opening up about something big that's been going on in their life. I remember one fellow whose close friend had recently been killed in a motorcycle accident. Hours later on the same day, I encountered another fellow who had just broken up with his long-time girlfriend. Both guys were trying to deal with the loss of these significant people from their lives. One July day I encountered a woman sitting by herself on one of the Picnic Area tables, who was trying to decide whether or not to return to her job as a middle school teacher - she'd had a rough year. And finally, I remember a beloved Refuge employee, who was raising a daughter alone, and who came down to the lighthouse area with her on a regular basis, to have serious discussions about all the things that go on in a teenager's life.

My guess is that the Refuge has saved many lives. It has certainly made many lives better.

Article, Paul Hamilton; photo, David Moynahan



Important Volunteers Needed

Nature Store Financial Assistant

We are looking for someone who wants to get more involved with the Refuge to help the Friends Treasurer organize and track our financial operations. Basic Excel spreadsheet literacy is needed and prior experience tracking budgets using Excel helpful but not required. You will spend 3-5 hours per week at the Visitor Center on Mondays helping with closing out the Nature Store cash register for the week, paying bills, tracking Friends membership payments and donations, and keeping financial records up to date. This is a great opportunity to spend time with Refuge staff and get to know more about the amazing things going on at St. Marks. Interested individuals should contact Friends Treasurer John Haines stmratreasurer@gmail.com for more information.

Nature Store Manager and Assistant(s)

Your Friends group invests all its time, energy and funds to support the Refuge. Many of us already enjoy the "paycheck of the heart", that comes from volunteering directly for the Refuge. Now we are asking for a few volunteers to help.

Profits from the Nature Store are the major recurring source of revenue for the Friends and hence the Refuge programs we support. *We need two or three people who can help operate the store.* Assistants help keep shelves stocked and organized, identify items needing to be reordered and unpack and price merchandise, improve displays, and generally work to enhance the operation. We're hoping that one person will want to take over as store manager. Commitment is part time, just two days a

week. You don't need experience. Training will be provided, and members of the Nature Store Committee and other volunteers will help.

If you think you might be interested in helping in the Nature Store and want to see what it's like, please contact Melissa Jacoby at mjacoby37@comcast.net. It's a great place to volunteer as you get to know some of the Refuge staff and other volunteers. And, you'll be helping the Refuge - a place we all love.

Lighthouse Communications Committee Member

One or several volunteers are needed who enjoy writing (articles, FaceBook, etc.) and who are good writers and would enjoy communicating with the local and larger community about the restoration efforts at the St. Marks Lighthouse. We are at a stage when a lot is happening and we want everyone to hear about it. The individual(s) would be part of the St. Marks Lighthouse Steering Committee. We are a friendly group of volunteers and Refuge staff who love the Lighthouse and the Refuge. Ranger Robin Will chairs the committee, making sure we complete important business in an open, fun atmosphere. The Steering Committee meetings take place at the Refuge on the second Wednesday of each month. If you are interested, contact Robin at Robin_will@fws.gov.



**THANK YOU
Cason Environmental
and Demolition
Services of
Tallahassee**

Cason Environmental and Demolition Services of Tallahassee conducted removal of the hazardous

asbestos laden linoleum from the lighthouse floor on January 27 - 28, revealing deterioration of floors underneath. The photos here were taken from the north room of the keepers' quarters.

It was rumored that there was a cistern beneath the lighthouse floor and these photos confirm that, indeed, a cistern was in place.

As restoration advances, the entire flooring and floor supports will need to be removed and replaced - an extensive and expensive procedure.

We sincerely appreciate the work provided by Cason Environmental and Demolition Services of Tallahassee for conducting the necessary asbestos abatement pro bono. Thank you so much.



Article, Tom Baird, Board Vice-President; photos courtesy Craig Kittendorf



WHO Festival Revisited



At the recent Wildlife Heritage and Outdoors Festival, held February 4, the public was treated to a beautiful day of pleasant, seasonal



temperatures. Grilled food was available for lunching at the Refuge, and there was contemporary acoustic music played nearby (thank you *Hot Tamale* - Adrian Fogelin and Craig Reeder). Wildlife exhibits were set up outside the Visitors Center to provide ample information about many outdoor events and organizations. As always, the fly and bait

fishing casting, fly tying and archery how-to demonstrations were very well attended. Also, this year, more than 15 children participated in the duck calling contest. Thank you to all of the many people who volunteered their time to make this a really fun-filled day. This was truly an event where "love was in the air" well in advance of Valentine's Day.

Lance Peterson is shown here putting some fine-detail cutting strokes on the lantern room of his lighthouse-in-progress . Lance was participating as part of the Capital City Carvers who were demonstrating their exacting craft.

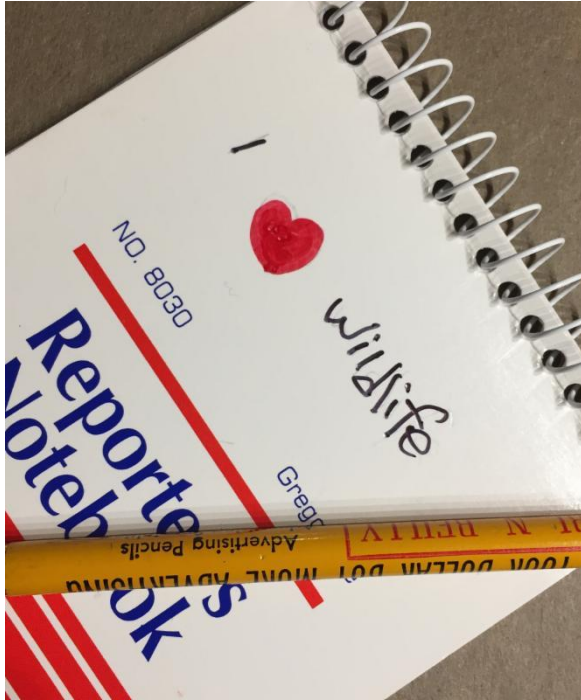


Journaling

Notes you take today can be inspiring years from now

The concept of journaling is fairly self-explanatory. We've all probably done this in our lives at one time or another when we've loved some place that we have traveled to or when we've chronicled exciting events. It's simply a matter of keeping a small notebook that can be used to record information.

Wildlife journaling is a more specific type of record-keeping that is useful to help us remember our sightings when we are bird watching or simply hiking and enjoying nature.



Whether it's a plant or a bird, or a simple wilderness adventure, writing down information can be used months or years later. Small sketches of what you've seen are, obviously, very valuable.

The journal needs to be rather small, but still large enough that you can write legibly, close it up and stuff it into a vest pocket. There is no exact note-taking style used. Journals are very subjective. There is no right or wrong way to create one. The notes you take only need to be interpreted by yourself, so indicate a plant or animal species (if you know it), give little snatches of color information, note

the date recorded and weather conditions, plus odd nuances of movement where animals are concerned, or maybe early blooming in a plant - these are all details you can jot down in your own shorthand. No one will stand behind you to take away points because you haven't written a complete sentence.



The real fun of a journal is to reflect on your notes at later times. By doing this over longer intervals, comparisons and indications of established patterns of activity or distribution can be recorded. In general, a journal can simply allow you to relive the

excitement you experienced when you first wrote something down that was significant.

In the above photo of Wallace Hughes' (former and longtime art editor for Florida Wildlife Magazine) Bachman's Warbler illustrations, he obviously took his notes seriously and made some very exacting and descriptive mention of the bird in question. You can go from that extreme to my diminutive wild strawberry plant sketch made sometime in the early 1980s, where I noted that the stem and leaves were "medium green". Vague as that is, I still remember when I made the sketch and where I saw the plant.



Sometimes if you love what you see and love what you are doing in the moment, a journal can preserve that excitement for a time further on down the road. Start a journal now. It's fun.

For more information, read about [keeping a bird watching journal](#). But, remember, you can create a journal related to almost any interest. Here is a second article focusing on [reasons journals are helpful](#).

Credit, the editor



Friends and Refuge News

Biscuit Brunch

Membership Chair, Susan Cason, plus several other volunteers, created a warm biscuit brunch for members on February 5 at the Refuge. There were 35 members in attendance. It was a great opportunity to have members get together, enjoy good food, and chat late into the morning. "It was a great success, and we may make this an annual event," said Susan. We appreciate everyone's attendance, and we really appreciate the hard work that Susan and others put in to make this happen.

Birding Tour Will Be Led By Don Morrow February 18


Winter Birding Tours - 9 am and 1:00 p.m. Behind the gates with Don Morrow. Call 850-925-6121 to register.

Civil War Re-enactors, March 3

The annual re-enactors' march from the Lighthouse as part of the Battle of Natural Bridge history, takes place March 3. Call the Refuge at 850-925-6121 for more information.

First Sunday at the Refuge, March 5

This 2 pm event takes place at the Visitors Center - Celebrating the legacy of Aldo Leopold's land ethic and how to apply it to present and future land, water, and wildlife protection with Gail Fishman. [First Sunday](#).



Have you considered including the Refuge in your will? We would appreciate hearing from you if so. The Friends of St. Marks Wildlife Refuge can provide information and guide you through the process. Just call the Refuge at 850-925-6121, and ask to be contacted by the Friends' Development Committee, or [email us](#).

Reflections Editor, Phillip M. Pollock