



Friends of St. Marks Wildlife Refuge

NEWS

CALENDAR

ABOUT US

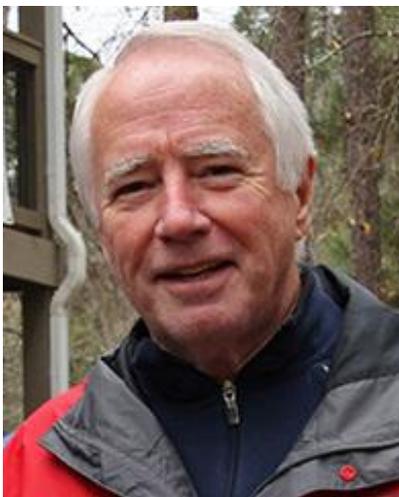
SUPPORT US

Friends Update - June 2016

One (VERY) Dedicated Volunteer - Paul Hamilton

With this issue of the Update online newsletter, Paul and I are transitioning the duties as editor of this monthly publication. As I lead the Friends on happenings related to the Refuge, I will attempt to be the faithful steward that Paul has been for so long. He has helped me greatly during this transition, and I want to thank him publicly, here, for his patience and extensive knowledge. Let me also say how grateful I am to Betsy Kellenberger for writing the following dedication about Paul and for providing the photograph.

- phillip pollock



Paul Hamilton has done so much for the Refuge and the Friends of St. Marks Wildlife Refuge that it would be difficult to include it all here! He has helped maintain The Florida Trail on the Refuge for five years and been involved in trash pickup as well as feral hog management. He has led natural history tours in the Wilderness areas which are always well attended.

Paul has obtained several important grants through NEEF (National Environmental Education Foundation) to improve the experience on the Refuge. One involved design and guiding construction of a kiosk to inform visitors of the importance of wildflowers and the Florida Trail and The St. Marks Wilderness Areas. He also obtained a NEEF

Capacity Building Grant to modernize the tracking of members and donors by our Friends group. This grant allowed us to purchase software (Giftworks and Constant Contact) as well as hardware (laptop and printer) to communicate with members. (In fact, this newsletter has been presented to you and created using Constant Contact software.) We were also able to hire a consultant to who specializes in development of boards of nonprofit organizations. He learned the software and has trained other volunteers to assist with the updating and sending out of messages and newsletters.

As head of the Friends Development Committee, Paul meets with members and other individuals considering bequests, planned giving and various other donations. He secured a \$10,000 annual gift that enabled the Refuge to hire Wildlife Conservation interns who help with projects involving endangered species. This funds six interns per year and is now in the third year. Along with other volunteers he produced a booklet showing the interns at work on the Refuge to thank the donors for their generous support.

He met last year with the owner of a 160 acre inholding that the Refuge wanted to acquire. Through his negotiations the owner donated the property to the Friends group and it was then transferred to the Refuge. This property has important archaeological attributes and has been identified by experts for further study.

Thank you, Paul, - we greatly appreciate your extensive volunteer contributions.



Only ONE WEEK Remains in the 40 Days of Giving Campaign.

On May 14th the Friends Group launched a Crowdfunding Campaign in an attempt to raise additional funds needed to repair the lighthouse lantern room. Even with the current work that has been completed, there is still more expense involved that hadn't been anticipated.

Our cat-napper, Gingie, (at left), has been appearing on Facebook with regularity to help us. When you see her there again, share her

with your friends. (The "sharing" concept is how crowdfunding works most effectively.) Her last appearance garnered over 1700 "hits". So even though she appears snoozy, she's doing her job.

So far the giving campaign has been a huge success. We have reached nearly 80% of our \$12,000 goal. Thank you to everyone who has made a contribution.

We have only one week remaining to hit the top or go beyond it. In order to do that, we still need your help. (The campaign ends June 23.)

If you have not made a contribution and would like to:

[GO TO THE INDIEGOGO WEB SITE NOW.](#)

NEWS



Construction Continues along Lighthouse Road

The heavy equipment is still visible just off Lighthouse Road north of Stoney Bayou Pool #1. Thanks to funds from the Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission, construction is well under way to restore a fresh water fish habitat for the benefit of wildlife and visitors. A gently sloping, family-friendly area will be the end result along the canal for youth fishing clinics when the project is completed. The North and South levees will be closed during the excavation and landscaping time needed for the project.



Friends Come to the Refuge to Practice Watercolor Techniques

Saturday, June 4, marked the third watercolor class that has been offered in the past year. Phillip Pollock, Friends' Board member and volunteer, provided instruction for over two hours. Students had numerous, important techniques

demonstrated (that they attempted to mimic), leading to a completed work at the end of the session. Watercolor painting is often a difficult medium to master, yet all of the students created colorful and well-thought-out paintings by the end of the session. Another class will be offered again in the fall. Check here or on our [Friends web site](#)



often to see when the next date is announced.

(Captions: Karen Willes painted a purple gallinule from a photo she had taken, at upper left; Marcia Bjerregaad painted a colorful dragonfly)

New Interns

We have two new Carney interns working with us over the upcoming months: Tori Stackhouse (left) from Auburn University and Amanda Kearns from the University of Florida. Be sure to say hello to Tori and Amanda when you have an opportunity.



New Logo

In an effort to promote the Refuge support organization and to make the public aware of our name change, the Friends' Board of Directors recently voted to adopt a new logo. You can see it now on our [Friends' web site](#) and elsewhere as appropriate.

COMING SOON

Look For Your Next Update Newsletter in September

We're going to take our usual two-month summer break to catch our breath. Look for us again very soon.

WHAT THE REFUGE HAS MEANT TO ME (US!) - THE GRANTHAMS

Typically, if you talk to people who visit the Refuge on an average of once a month, you might expect them to be local residents. However, Dr. Bill Grantham and his wife Susan visit at least that often. They live in Ramer, Alabama, and they come this way for no other reason than to visit the Refuge. If their schedules allow, they come twice a month. Now, that's dedication.



"I first discovered the Refuge in the 1980s," said Susan Grantham. "We saw a 'St. Marks Wildlife Refuge' sign, and that's what brought us here."

The next time I came, I brought my camera, and I have never stopped coming back," she continued.

Susan is a former dental hygienist of 30 years, and she is now armed with a Canon camera and 800 mm of optical extension to get beautiful photos of our feathered residents.

About 1998, Susan brought her husband to the Refuge. Dr. Grantham is Associate Dean for the College of Arts and Sciences at Troy University. He teaches anthropology and archaeology, among other duties. When he is on the Refuge with Susan, he often makes sound recordings, similar to ones sold in our Nature Store. "I just love to listen to them; I like anything related to wildlife. Recently, I've started making some little GoPro videos as well," Dr. Grantham said.

If the Grantham name sounds familiar, it is because his ancestors settled the Newport area in the mid-1800s. In addition, in the 1930s, a couple of his distant relatives stayed overnight in the Keeper's House at the lighthouse while in the region.

If you see Dr. Grantham and Susan on the Refuge in the future, please stop and introduce yourself. We are happy to have them as frequent visitors.

Have you included the Refuge in your will? If so, we'd appreciate knowing. If not, the Friends Group can provide information and guidance. Just call the Refuge (850/925-6121) and ask to be contacted by the Friends Development Committee, or email us at development@stmarksrefuge.org

Text by Paul Hamilton, Phillip Pollock and Betsy Kellenberger. Photos by Paul Hamilton, Phillip Pollock, Jonathan Chandler, and Betsy and Lou Kellenberger.