



Reflections

NOVEMBER, 2016 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.



Two Very Dedicated Volunteers
Carol and Royce Phillips



Volunteerism is often highlighted by great dedication and taking responsibilities seriously. Both of these attributes fit Carol and Royce Phillips perfectly.

The Phillips' give their service to the Friends group and the Refuge as a result of a reciprocal "RV Park Program" exchange. The Refuge provides the couple with free

utility hook-up in exchange for an average of four days a week, each, of volunteer service.

Carol serves on the Friends' Board of Directors, and she is a key member of the entrance fee program. Carol said, "I love to be busy, and I am proud of helping with the entrance fee work, because it involves a very high degree of accountability. As a Federal Refuge property, this is so important, and I take that responsibility very seriously." Carol also brings a certain continuity to the Visitor Center where she greets the public about four days each week. She possesses a warm, welcoming manner that puts visitors at ease instantly. Plus she is extremely patient with new volunteers; she is someone who simply does what needs to be done.

She comes by her talent logically, since she worked for the Southeast regional office (Atlanta) of the National Wildlife Refuge System performing a variety of complex analytical work. "In my work, we had visited a lot of the refuges in the region, though we had never been to St. Marks," said Carol. "In 2003, once we retired, we came to St. Marks as a result of a conversation I had with James Burnett. We have been here every year since then, spending several months of the year volunteering. However, in the past year, we've been here throughout the entire year. We love it here." Carol's work at the regional office gives the Refuge the advantage of having a volunteer in place who is extremely knowledgeable of the inner-workings of the Refuge system at large.

Royce brings a lifetime career in commercial contracting work to the Refuge. He tends to be a bit quieter than Carol, but his work speaks loudly. It is visible throughout the Refuge. Currently, he is building cabinetry for law enforcement officials and their offices. He also has a very strong rapport with the Refuge fire crew. "They put my name on one of their crew vehicles," he remarked in what could be the closest he ever comes to tooting his own horn. Carol is never shy about helping him with that, however. "He is very good at what he does, though, he doesn't say so," she said.

In addition to the more structured work that Carol performs, she has a great love of the biological initiatives at the Refuge. "I really like the wildlife initiatives here," she said. "I love the salamanders and the cranes, but I really like the ducks."

Both Carol and Royce say they enjoy every aspect of the Refuge work, and they look ahead in their concern for its future. "Increasing awareness and membership will really help us here. Funding is often stretched a lot to get important work accomplished. We want to promote the involvement of the local community as much as possible so that the Refuge continues to thrive," said Carol. We are so fortunate to have her and Royce as volunteers. Thank you both.



Holiday Shopping at the Nature Store



Friends of St. Marks Wildlife Refuge Nature Store is a great way for you to support a great cause and get wonderful



gifts. Now that the holidays are upon us, the Nature Store is a terrific way to find the perfect



gift for a friend or loved one, while at the same time, help the Refuge.

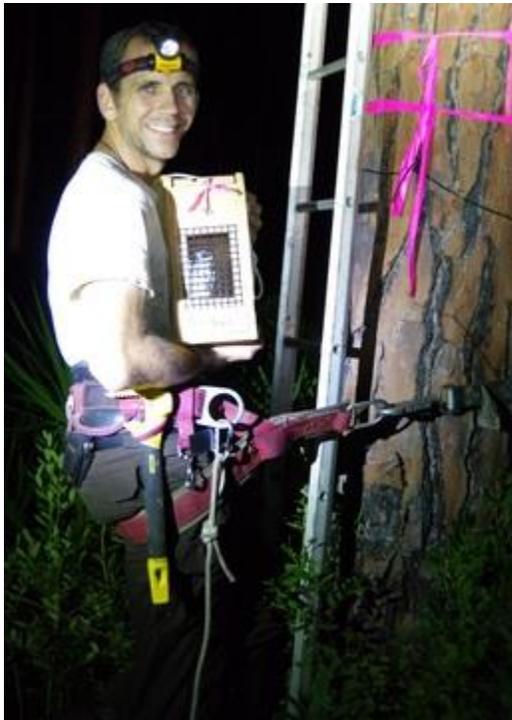
The store is located in the Visitor Center at the St. Marks Wildlife Refuge. The store carries items that highlight the animals, plants and the ecology of the Refuge. All profits go to support Refuge programs and projects. Friends' members receive a 10% discount.



Shown here are several of the gift items that are being highlighted for this holiday period - plush toys, designer earrings and super T's. Other great gift ideas can be seen by going to the [Nature Store web page](#) on the Friends' web site.



Refuge Report - New Homes for Endangered Red-cockaded woodpeckers



A Refuge effort to create new homes for endangered Red-cockaded woodpeckers is a three-part, phased program.

Phase one began

last fall when the Refuge moved 14 red-cockaded woodpeckers (RCWs) into the St. Marks Unit of the St. Marks NWR (near the Visitor Center). Ten birds were from the Apalachicola National Forest and four were from the Panacea Unit of the Refuge. There were ten nesting clusters prepared for them where the areas were mowed and nest boxes inserted. Two pairs nested and several young were banded. To date, at least five adult birds remain in the area. These are the only RCWs found on this side of the Refuge where historically a

population flourished. (Jonathan Chandler, Refuge biologist, is shown here, preparing to give a lucky RCW a new home.)

Phase two begins November 15 when another ten RCWs will be relocated to the St. Marks Unit. All of these birds are from Ft.

Stewart, Hinesville, GA. They are part of a larger Southern Area Cooperative, a group of private, state, and federal land owners managing property with RCWs.

Phase three begins in the Fall of 2017 when the Refuge will receive even more RCWs. We will continue to make updates on the continued recovery of these amazing woodpeckers as they happen.



Article credit, Robin Will; Photo credits: Top, Laura Kellam, Refuge volunteer; bottom Jonathan Chandler, Refuge biologist.



Monarch Festival, Revisited



Another Monarch Festival is in the history books, but the memories of the day are still strong. Beautiful weather provided a perfect day for over a 1,000 visitors to enjoy all of the excitement at the Refuge. Craft booths were, again, a highlight for children.

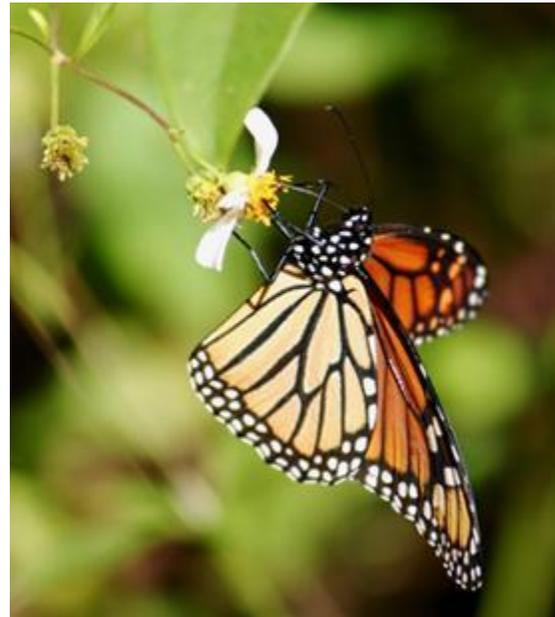
(Photo credit, left, Betsy Kellenberger)

As you can see here, great use of color, made for beautiful masks that were seen throughout the day.



Of course, the wildlife on the Refuge is always a huge draw at this time of year. The Monarchs do put on a show. And, in case you think that

the festival is the only time of year that you can see these colorful butterflies, you would probably be surprised to know that there are still a great number of them waiting around to make their journey further South and Southwest.





How Your Membership and Contributions Support Refuge Programs

Let's take a look at some of the ways that you might not be aware of:

Photo Credit, Betsy Kellenberger

Environmental Education, Interpretation, and Outreach

- Funding for Education Interns
- Transportation for public school field trips to the Refuge
- Digital magnifier for Nature's Classroom
- 25 pairs of binoculars for education and outreach programs
- Supplies and snacks for Junior Ranger Camp (fishing poles, t-shirts, etc)
- Furnishings for Environmental Education building
- Education supplies

Wildlife and Habitat Conservation

- These projects focus mainly on threatened and endangered species as well as preservation of the diverse environments of the Refuge.
- Supplies for restoration of longleaf pine habitat which in turn supports the reintroduction of endangered Red-Cockaded Woodpeckers to the Refuge.
- Peeper (wireless optical system) for monitoring Red-Cockaded Woodpecker nests.
- Burrow scope for Gopher Tortoise monitoring .

- Equipment and supplies to outfit trailer as Salamander Workshop for tagging and study of the threatened Frosted Flatwoods Salamander.
- Funding of Intern and supplies for the Monarch Milkweed Initiative
- Expansion of Refuge boundaries through strategic land acquisition

Visitor services

- Printing the Eagle's Eye newsletter and Refuge brochures
- Kiosks featuring historical and cultural resources on the Refuge
- Support for the Monarch and WHO Festivals
- New signage for the Visitor's Center and Education Building

Lighthouse Preservation

- The Friends are spearheading a \$1.6 million effort to preserve and protect this historical and cultural icon.
- Funding of emergency weatherization
- Preservation of the lantern room is now complete
- \$550,000 in state grants have been secured
- Work on the lighthouse tower and keeper's quarters will begin in early 2017

Article by Susan Cason, Board of Directors' Membership Committee Chair.



Friends' News at the Refuge



Hancock Bank Schedules Work Day at the Lighthouse

The Refuge welcomes the assistance of Hancock Bank volunteers on November 18. Numerous tasks are scheduled for the work day, including sweeping and clean-up at the lighthouse. The Friends welcome the

partnership of local corporations in our efforts to support the Refuge, and we look forward to a great clean-up day. Thank you, Hancock Bank, for helping us Bring the Past to Light.

SunTrust Bank Makes Contribution to the Lighthouse Fund

The Friends of St. Marks Wildlife Refuge is pleased to announce a \$1500 donation to the St. Marks Lighthouse Fund from the SunTrust Foundation of Richmond, VA. Our sincere thanks to Tom Pennekamp, City President of SunTrust Bank, and Dr. Richard Chichetti for making this donation possible. These funds will be put to good use as we continue the ongoing preservation of the lighthouse.

The Florida Channel Films at the Lighthouse

On October 31, The Florida Channel filmed at the



lighthouse. The planned segment (to be announced) will profile the history of the lighthouse and the status of the renovation effort. Robin Will, Craig Kittendorf (lower right in keeper's uniform) and lighthouse keeper descendant John Roberts (upper right) were interviewed for history and background. Check upcoming Florida Channel listings to see when this segment will be aired.



Article and photos courtesy of Board of Director's vice-president, Tom Baird.

Watercolor Class Brings Out Local Talent



Seven talented, beginner watercolorists arrived Sunday, November 13, for another enjoyable painting class. Friends' Board of Directors' member, Phillip Pollock, led students through a series of important



techniques that allowed them to create beautiful renditions of the Refuge salt marshes. Shown here, an art student from North Florida Community College, Brooke Hinton (left), applies some finishing touches to her work (below). Also, April Tucci's landscape (top) is a very good example of blending color to create a realistic scene.

There is no set schedule for future watercolor classes, however, they are provided, approximately, every third or fourth month throughout the year. Stay tuned.



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