



# St. Johns River Alliance

August 5, 2014



## **Mission statement**

To preserve, protect, restore and celebrate the St. Johns River as an American Heritage River in recognition of its ecological, historic, economic, recreational and cultural significance, so that the public may gain a greater appreciation and understanding of the river's importance to the quality of life for current and future generations.

## History

- Formed in 2003 as a direct result of the St. Johns River being designated by presidential executive order as one of 14 American Heritage Rivers nationally.
- 34 board members representing 13 river counties, two regional planning councils, two regional offices of the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, and various stakeholders throughout the river basin.
- Meets every other month , rotating locations among member counties.

# Accomplishments

- Sponsored a February 2014 water supply workshop at Stetson University in which 12 of the 13 river counties participated,
  - Water conservation targets
  - Water Academy for elected officials (funded by private foundation grant)
- Awarded “State Paddling Trail” designation for St. Johns River in 2013 (St. Johns River Blueway)
- Awarded “America’s Great Waters” designation for the river in 2012
- Hosted River Summits in Jacksonville in 1999, 2003 and 2010, with more than 300 attendees each
- Hosted River Classrooms in 2010 and 2011 at Blue Springs State Park educating community leaders with on-the-water training
- Produced the DVD “River into the New World: The St. Johns” in 2005. The movie was shown on PBS stations nationwide

# Accomplishments

- Sponsored the St. Johns River specialty license plate in 2010. The tag increases visibility for the river and earns funds for community projects
- Participated in the St. Johns River Caucus (in Tallahassee) since its inception in 2011. Our efforts helped to secure state funding in 2012 and 2013 for river restoration projects in the Tri-County Ag Area
- Joined Congressional fly-ins in 2012-2014, meeting with key U.S. House and Senate leaders about national water issues that affect the river
- Exhibits at 20-30 community and nature festivals annually throughout the basin as a means for outreach and education



# Focus areas

## **Restoration**

- Water quality
- Springs restoration
- Nutrient removal
- Restoration funding
- Ft. George River restoration (steering committee)
- Hogan Creek restoration

## **Recreation**

- St. Johns River Blueway (project manager)
- Groundworks Jacksonville (steering committee)
- Lake Apopka ecotourism initiative (steering committee)

## **Research**

- Economic impact of St. Johns River
- Expand Lower St. Johns River Report (peer review)

## **Resilience**

- Water conservation: consumption targets
- Water conservation: Water Academy 2015 (Stetson, University of Central Florida, University of North Florida)

# Focus areas

## **Regional cooperation**

- Stetson University water supply summit
- Local grant program (from license plate sales)
- Regional discussion of Jacksonville's proposed port dredging operations (ports task force)
- Central Florida Water Initiative (surface water sub-team)
- Support from all river counties for the St. Johns River Blueway designation



# Membership structure

2014-2015 budget

Clay - \$2,500

Duval - \$20,000

Flagler - \$2,500

Indian River - \$2,500

Lake - \$5,000

Marion - \$2,500

Putnam \$2,500

St. Johns - \$10,000

Volusia - \$20,000

- Under review: Brevard, (\$20,000) Orange (\$20,000), Osceola (\$10,000), Seminole (\$20,000)
- Non-membership dues revenue: License plate sales \$15,000
- Program grants

## **Action requested**

Board direction regarding future funding of the St. Johns River Alliance. All Districts