



Vol. 24, No. 2

Fall, 2022

<http://www.HomosassaRiverAlliance.org>

### *Message From the President*

The 2022-2023 season of the Homosassa River Alliance will have us facing new challenges as we continue to work with our community to restore, protect and ensure that our river and its Blue Waters will again return to its once healthy environment. Looking into the future, I cannot help but reflect on the past efforts and accomplishments focusing on the goal for a cleaner and healthier Homosassa River. Over the past few years, with the help of many, the following were implemented: (1) The education of scallopers not to dump empty shells into the river and its Blue Waters, (2) The restoration of the Blue Waters by removing tons of muck and debris from the bottom and replanting the destroyed aquatic vegetation, while opening up several spring vents, (3) The sewer project within the Spring Cove was moved up in the que to quickly reduce the flow of nutrients into the river and Blue Waters, (4) A new slow speed zone was placed between Monkey Inland and the Halls River to further protect our manatee population, (5) A noise ordinance was passed reducing the volume on devices played while within the Blue Waters and the river. All of this could not have been possible without the efforts of the Homosassa River Alliance, Homosassa River Restoration Project, Homosassa River Warriors, Homosassa Civic Club, the Spring Cove Community, Citrus County Board of Commissioners, Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission (FWC), Southwest Florida Water Management, Florida Senator Wilton Simpson, Representative Ralph Massullo and the many residents of Homosassa and its business community.

In order to ensure that all of the above efforts have a lasting and maximum effect on the health and future of the Homosassa River and its Blue Waters, we must again come together and petition the FWC with the help of our County Commission, to designate the Blue Waters a Spring Run Protection Zone. A Spring Run Protection Zone would address the negative impacts resulting from vessel speed or the anchoring, mooring, beaching or grounding of vessels, which in the past have led to the decline of the health of the Blue Waters and its surrounding environment.

I look forward to seeing you and working with each of you as we together strive for additional protections for our Florida outstanding waterway.

Looking forward to seeing everyone,  
*Frank Kapocsi, President HRA*

**ATTENTION MEMBERS**

**HOMOSASSA RIVER ALLIANCE ANNUAL FUNDRAISER**

The Homosassa River Alliance will be partnering with the Homosassa Civic Club once again for our Annual Fund Raiser which takes place in conjunction with the Old Homosassa Seafood Festival. The festival will be held this year on November 12 & 13.

Please be watching your mailboxes for an envelope which will contain information explaining how you can purchase raffle tickets to win a gift package. You will have the opportunity to choose from 5 packages. The 5 packages will be listed on the back of the Raffle Letter. Each envelope will hold 6 tickets at \$2.00 each.

The drawing for the winning tickets will take place on November 13<sup>th</sup> 2022 at the Homosassa Seafood Festival at 4 p.m. 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 efforts to save our waters from further degradation, giving Citrus County Science Fair awards, and a High School Scholarship.

If you have any questions, please contact Rosey Rendueles at 352-628-5116.

**MEMBERSHIP DUES**

Dues for membership shall be twenty dollars per member or thirty 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.

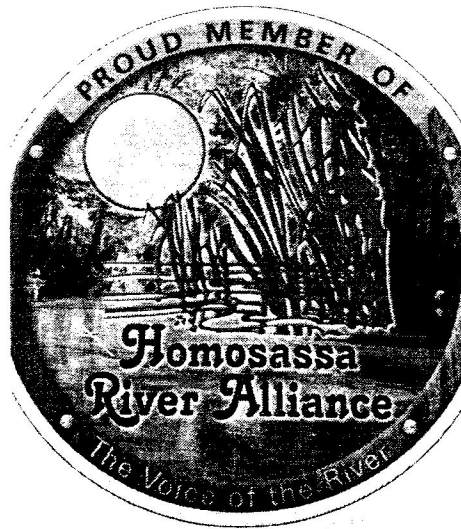
Members whose dues remain unpaid after March 31 will be dropped from this corporation's list of members.

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).

**2020** 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.

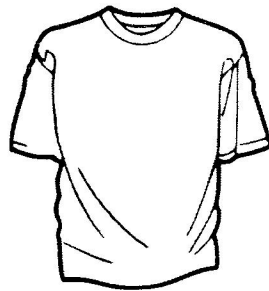
**NOTE:** Dues can also be paid via Paypal on our website: [Homosassariveralliance.org](http://Homosassariveralliance.org)



This is our new decal – we cannot show it in color in this newsletter. They can be purchased via mail,\* at the Seafood Festival or at monthly meetings for \$5.00. The actual size is 5 inches in diameter. If you would like to see it in color, you can go to the HRA website, which is [www.HomosassaRiverAlliance.org](http://www.HomosassaRiverAlliance.org).

These decals can be placed on your car bumper, golf cart, business window, etc. They are of excellent quality. This is a fundraiser for us and we certainly appreciate your support.

\*River Alliance, PO Box 124, Homosassa, FL 3448



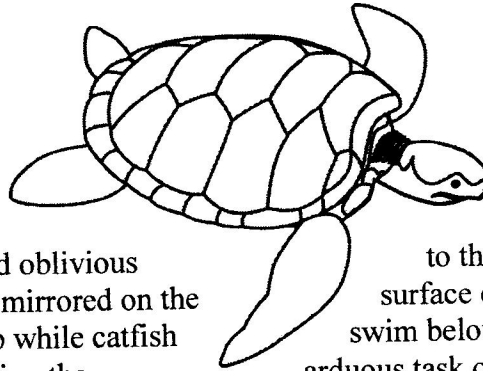
### **River Alliance T-Shirts**

The River Alliance will host a booth at the Homosassa Seafood Festival in November.

Stop by our booth to visit and check out the new T-shirts!  
**(See last page for new image on the back of the t-shirts)**

## Riverside Observations

By Alecia Runyon



Jets fly overhead oblivious  
They leave vapor trails mirrored on the  
pop up and mullet jump while catfish  
drone of vacuums tackling the  
are heard. The evening brings peacefulness and buzzards, one-by-one, come to roost as  
the sun sets. Flocks of ibis precede them heading east. Sometimes you can see a  
manatee surfacing to breath or a tarpon on the prowl.

to the natural beauty below.  
surface of the river. Turtle heads  
swim below. During the day the sweet  
arduous task of cleaning the river bottom

Surface algae along the river's edge has provided a great nursery for baby turtles. Over a few months they have grown from the size of a quarter to the size of the palm of your hand. Cicadas are singing the final song of summer as scallop season comes to a close. Fewer boaters will allow ducks and ducklings to once again cross the river safely. All of these things make me realize it is a privilege to live here and we have an obligation to protect this beautiful natural resource.

If you are not already an active member, please consider joining the Homosassa River Alliance.

## River Cleanup Update

As September 2022 comes to a close, the Homosassa River Restoration Project (HRRP) is completing vacuuming of the last few acres of Phase 1. When grass installation is completed in early November of this year, 25 acres of river and canals will have been cleaned and planted with new eelgrass. Phases 2 and 3 (combined 34 acres) have received Department of Environmental Protection permits, and provided the necessary funding is granted, vacuuming and cleaning of Phase 2 will begin April 2023. HRRP is also in discussion with the Ellie Schiller Homosassa Springs Wildlife State Park to clean and restore the areas inside the visitor/wildlife section, the no boat area of the river before the bridge, as well as Pepper Creek. This will involve the same technique and process we are currently utilizing in the river and will also require the same permitting. We believe that every positive change made upstream improves quality downstream. Besides improving the visual aspects of the park, the eelgrass acts as a natural nitrate sink and helps filter out suspended particles improving the water quality both within and leaving the park. Separate funding will need to be secured in order for HRRP to take on this additional work.

Grass areas initially planted are taking root and continuing to grow and spread. There have been some setbacks due mostly to the large numbers of people

and boats visiting the upper river, but progress is being made. All infrastructure is in place to continue restoration but funding continues to be the major concern. HRRP seems unable to obtain the same amount of funding given to our sister project in Crystal River. Each of the past few years has seen Crystal River granted line-item budget funding and although HRRP has requested the same exact amounts, we have been consistently denied. At this time, we remain well short of the monies required to fully extend the project downstream. The following politicians' help is essential to our continuing success. Please contact them directly and ask for their support. Courtesy and respect are requested.

Senator Wilton Simpson – Senate term ending this year but running for Florida  
Commissioner of Agriculture  
Representative Blaise Ingoglia House District 35 – Running for Sen Simpson's Senate  
seat – Senate District 11  
Representative Ralph Massullo – House District 23 – Running for re-election.

Steve Minguy, President, HRRP

### **Guest Speakers at September HRA Meeting**

**Anna Laws**, a Biological Scientist with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) was guest speaker at our September meeting. Anna's area of responsibility covers the west coast from Taylor County to Manatee County. She spoke about current and planned restoration projects, which are numerous. Some mentioned were:

- Work is in progress in Sarasota Bay on seagrass restoration from the 2018 algae bloom. It includes co-planting grass and bivalves using Southern Hard clams. The project will be monitored for 3 years.
- An ephemeral pond restoration project in the Big Bend area where vegetation will be removed by hand to enable some species to lay eggs.
- Floating islands of vegetation which are being removed from Tulsa Apopka lakes.

Offshore seagrass beds are decreasing due to declining water quality and increased boating. Prop scaring is a primary concern – it takes time for grass to recover, if at all. Unfortunately, past experiences have shown that education campaigns to increase awareness is not very effective and neither are buoys. She advocates establishing pole and troll zones in the aquatic preserve and at St. Martins Keys so grass can be restored within those zones.

**Lt. Chris Ball** of the Citrus County Sheriff's Department has completely transitioned into his new role as Operations Leader for the West District of Citrus County. His officers have been on the river during scallop season and summer holidays. They have made a noticeable impact that is much appreciated by HRA members.

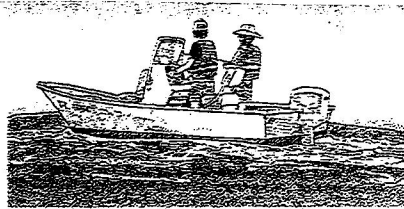
They were very busy during the Labor Day weekend issuing 153 warnings/citations. On Saturday and Monday (9/3 & 9/5) the officers counted 75 boats each day and on Sunday (9/4) there were 150 boats in the blue water at any given time.

## Noise Ordinance in the Blue Water

The FWC has requested that the noise ordinance be amended to exclude engine and exhaust noise. This is currently being done. Once completed, new information signs will be posted along the river focusing on the new ordinance.

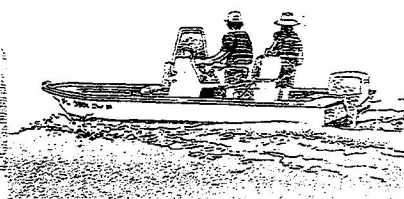
### What is Idle Speed?

Please share the information on this card with your boating friends. Many of us are confused about idle speed. Hopefully this will help all of us to better understand. These cards are available at our meetings and will be our Seafood Festival booth.



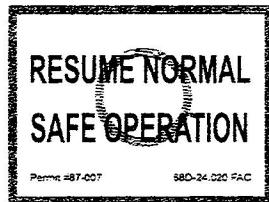
#### **Idle Speed No Wake:**

Any vessel operating in a speed zone posted as "Idle Speed No Wake" must operate at the minimum speed that will maintain steerageway and headway.



#### **Slow Speed Minimum Wake:**

Any vessel operating in a speed zone posted as "Slow Speed Minimum Wake" must operate fully off plane, completely settled in the water, and at a speed which is making little or no wake.



#### **Resume Normal Safe Operation:**

A boat should be operated at a speed that is safe for the waterway and boat traffic conditions.



# VOICE OF THE RIVER



**"Making A Difference"**  
**Homosassa River**  
**Alliance**

**Homosassa River Alliance**  
**P.O. Box 124**  
**Homosassa, FL 34487**  
**Board of Directors**

Frank Kapocsi, President

Alecia Runyon, Secretary

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