



Vol. 21, No. 1

Spring, 2018

<http://www.HomosassaRiverAlliance.org>

Message From the President

Change has been characteristic of this past year, for the community, the River and for the Alliance. We have all been affected by the construction. The Halls River bridge construction has required one lane traffic on that portion of Halls River Road. The residents of River Haven have had a rough year.

The massive reconstruction of US 19 has impacted all of us. Making left turns on that road is a matter of avoiding personal destruction. The results of the construction will be much better traffic flows and a phenomenal change in the flow of rainwater. It has been estimated that the first two inches of rainwater contains some 90% of pollution. The fact that all of the rain falling on US 19 and to its East will be directed into a massive set of drainage retention areas is significant. They allow for nature to remove most of the pollutants. This has the intended purpose of greatly reducing the harm we are doing to the river. Also, The Homosassa River Restoration group has worked incessantly for monies to remove the muck from the Headwaters. This year's legislature did not specifically allocate funds for this but there is still hope. If not this year, then next. The elimination of septic tanks is our next big task.

This year the Alliance re-wrote its Bylaws, with a significant rewrite of the entire document. The Bylaws were first adopted in November of 2000 and a minor tweaking occurred in April 2007. The most important change is to make it clear that the Board has the responsibility and authority to adopt the procedures and policies for the Alliance. Also, election procedures were clarified.

The Alliance will always be grateful to Ron Miller, Janet Garvin, Terri Auner and Bob Jeeves for many years of service. They have chosen to yield their positions on the Board and they will be missed.

On a personal note I must thank the membership, the Board and our several speakers for the help they have given me.

Ron Schultz

MEMBERSHIP DUES

Dues for membership shall be ten dollars per member or twenty 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).

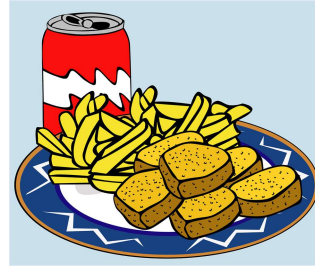
2017 John Smith
123 Any Place St.
Homosassa, FL 34448

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.

On the membership form please add under the 'Yes! Count me in!'

Annual dues: \$10 per Member of \$20 per family. Dues are due January 1st

NOTE: Dues can also be paid via Paypal on our website:
Homosassariveralliance.org



MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

ANNUAL PICNIC

Where: Bluebird Springs
When: Thursday, April 12, 2018
Time: 4:00 p.m.

Please join us and enjoy an afternoon of friendship and fun. Bring a dish to share. Drinks will be provided.

New officers will be installed.

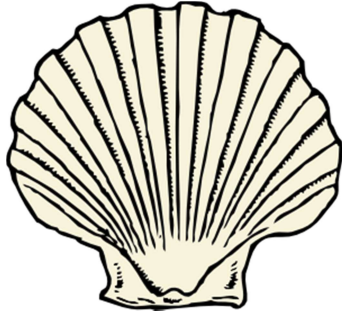
Homosassa River Alliance
P.O. Box 124
Homosassa, FL 34487
Board of Directors

Ron Schultz, President
Frank Kopocsi, Vice President
Rosey Rendueles, Treasurer
Iris Rose, Secretary

Board:
Janet Garvin
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Steve Mingu
Iris Rose
Jake Jacobs
Ron Miller
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Contacts:
Board Issues: Ron Schultz
eda@tampabay.rr.com

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IBROSEFLA@tampabay.rr.com



SCALLOP CLEANING ON THE RIVER

Frank KarPOCSI

If you've been on the Homosassa River near the Blue Waters (main spring) lately, you probably have noticed the signs asking that scallop shells not be dumped in the river.

Our efforts continue to move forward to educate scallopers not to dispose of the shells in the Homosassa and all surrounding rivers.

In February, we contacted the Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD), asking them to join us in this endeavor. They agreed to join us in our efforts. Their graphic designer will create a brochure or rack card, using our scallop shell design. They will incorporate our design with some of their own designs/ideas for these materials. Once the designs are approved, they will be printed and distributed to Marinas, Campgrounds, Motels, Restaurants, Tour Operators and all interested stakeholders. "Do Not Throw Scallop Shells" into our beautiful rivers will be presented throughout the Homosassa area.

Also in February, we contacted the Department of Environmental Protection and shared our concerns over

the dumping of scallop shells. After much discussion, they directed us to the Florida Wildlife Commission, who in turn directed us to one of their employees, Mr. Kent Smith in St. Marks, Florida. Mr. Smith is currently working with Citrus County and others affected by the question of how to collect and dispose of scallop shells during the harvest season. Mr. Smith assured us that the River Alliance would be considered a stakeholder and will be kept informed of any progress being made. We will maintain contact with Mr. Smith and Citrus County about this issue. We will keep you posted.

NOTE: Many of our members are from other areas around the country and if anyone has any suggestions, please let us know. How are/were these problems handled in other parts of the country? Oyster and clam shells need to be disposed of – how do other places do it?

We would welcome any ideas/suggestions. Come to one of our meetings and share those ideas.

**BE A VOICE OF THE RIVER!!
Become an Active member of the
Homosassa River Alliance!**

Attend meetings to help identify new projects and express concerns.
If you can't attend meetings, send us an email at homosassariveralliance.com

Our monthly meetings are held on the 2nd Thursday of each month.

We meet at the Learning Center in Old Homosassa at 7 p.m.

HOMOSASSA RIVER RESTORATION PROJECT

Just get in the water, clean out all of the yuck, and replant some native vegetation. How hard could that be? I mean everyone says they want cleaner and healthier rivers, right? So, getting the community, the regulatory agencies, and the politicians all on board should be a no brainer, right? With everyone talking about making things better all we needed was a group to actually do something instead of just talk about how bad the river has become. Easy, right? At least that was how I was looking at the Homosassa River Restoration Project a little over a year ago when we started things rolling. We would take care of the organizing, permitting, hiring the contractors, and making sure the job was completed correctly and in a financially responsible manner. We would work for free using a restoration model already proved successful in Crystal River. We would begin, immediately, to change the river for the better. Right?

Maybe not so fast. Here it is a little over 18 months later and we are still jumping through hoops to get our permitting. We are currently in the final stages for the first 25 acres of river and canals which is actually pretty good news but we are not, as a group, the most patient of people. We want barges and divers in the water and we want it now! Of course, wanting does not necessarily translate into getting.

Things have actually moved along rather well since our inception. Thanks to strong community support and an amazing amount of donations we will have 25 acres permitted shortly and that permit is good for 15 years. As soon as

we get the first 25 acres completed we will start on the next 25. That will get us past Halls River. More people than ever are talking about actually doing something to reverse the decline of the Homosassa. Maybe with the Homosassa SWIM program in place SWFWND will finally begin to invest some funds here as well. Senator Simpson and Representative Massullo continue to support our efforts but we must receive funding from Tallahassee for all of our efforts to be successful. Here a couple of email addresses if you would care to send them a note. Senator Wilton Simpson – simpson.wilton.web@flsenate.gov and Rep. Ralph Massullo – Ralph.Massullo@myfloridahouse.gov

We are 100% volunteer and remain committed to making this river healthier now, not 20 years from now. Join our Facebook Page, visit our webpage, get on our email list, and help us out with a donation if and when you can. Homosassa River Restoration Project is going to do whatever it can to make this river worthy of the Outstanding Waterway designation it has been given.

Steve Minguy, President
Homosassa River
Restoration Project



GUEST SPEAKERS

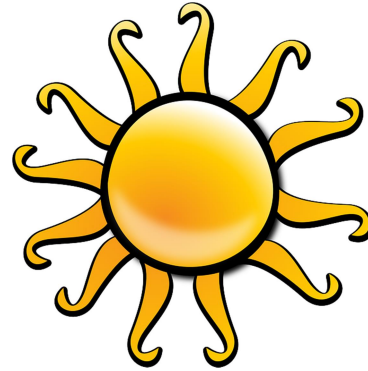
SWIM PLAN

Sky Notestein and Mary Castenbaum from SWFWMD were guest speakers at the River Alliance's March meeting. They presented their on-going project which is the Surface Water Improvement and Management Plan (SWIM). There are 5 magnitude springs and one is the Homosassa. The other systems, Rainbow, Chassahowitzka, Weeki Wachee and Crystal River suffer from nitrates and reduced clarity. The Homosassa especially has had a decrease in clarity and historical flows. SWFWMD is collecting data under the fishbowl. The focus of the SWIM plan is water quality, water quantity and natural systems (plants and fish).

Mr. Notestein also mentioned sewer project development. The Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) will finalize plans by July 2018 for sewers. Citrus County home owners who will not hook up to sewers will possibly be expected to comply and install a higher performing septic system if hooking up to a sewer system is not an option.

Anyone with questions can look up N952: Old Homosassa West Septic Sewer Project which is a Citrus County Proposed Project .

Also, people can look on the SWFWMD website – Swfwmd.state.fl.us/springs/Homosassa/ Dashboard for information regarding the Homosassa area, in particular.



SOLAR POWER

Our guest speaker at the February meeting was Ms. Maxine Conner. Ms. Connor made a presentation regarding solar power. She is a member and volunteer of the League of Women Voters. That organization has partnered with the Solar United Neighbors (SUN). SUN is an organization comprised of several organizations who work together to promote solar to generate power. Points she mentioned which benefit the use of solar power are:

- Energy independence
- Saves us money
- Creates jobs
- Lessens carbons (which create green house gas (holds heat).

Knowledge of solar power and the price to install is a challenge. Consumer education is given through the League of Women's Voters. They lobby for solar issues in Tallahassee.

UPCOMING SPEAKER

A representative from the Florida Wildlife and Game Commission will be the guest speaker at the June 14th meeting.

TIGER TAIL ISLAND – A PART OF OUR RIVER’S RICH HISTORY

Many Homosassa residents, boaters and tourists alike, have traveled the length of our beautiful Homosassa River and have enjoyed some of the more well-known attractions. We’ve shown friends the Springs, the Wildlife Park, Grover Cleveland’s gazebo, Monkey Island and Bird Island, but we know there is so much more that makes our unique waterway worthy of our unflagging conservation efforts.

One lesser known area is Tiger Tail Island (and Tiger Tail Bay), which figured into the rich history of the Homosassa River, (*the “River of Fish”*) especially in the 1800s. Many boaters are familiar with the area, especially as a navigation landmark as they make their way down the river to the Gulf. Tiger Tail Island is an island southeast of Beli Island, southwest of Lashley Point and east of Wiley Point. It has a high elevation of 23 feet.

The island’s name derived from a famous Seminole chief called Tiger Tail, who fished and hunted with his band on Tiger Tail Island. In her “Three Dynasties on Tiger-Tail,” Lenora Beck Ellis writes, “...*This chief was known as Tiger-Tail... His favorite hunting-ground was an island in the River of Fish, destined thenceforth to bear his own name and become an object of historic as well as picturesque interest. Many advantages conspired to fit that little spot of earth to be the final stronghold of a courageous but defeated and vanishing people. Its food resources were great: the circling waters teemed with fish, oysters, clams, mussels, conchs, turtles and porpoise. At low tide, excellent drinking water could be had from the adjacent creek. It was densely wooded, especially upon its western half, which was scarcely more than a jungle of cedar, cabbage palmetto, and bamboo, woven together impenetrably in places by stout sea grape and trumpet vines. In this deep lair dwelt enough deer, opossums, raccoons, wild turkeys, squirrels and hares to feed many men through long sieges; while beyond the narrower branch of the river the main shore ran out in a similar but much vaster jungle, and was similarly populated, with numerous black bear superadded. A hunt there, when the scouts proclaimed the enemy distant, would often lay up many months’ store of meat.*” This description of the area gives a glimpse of the wonderful resources our beloved “River of Fish” afforded to the local residents and why this river is so worth protecting.

In the mid-1800s, Tiger Tail Island’s most famous abode was arguably the beautiful home built by one of Homosassa’s famous historical figures, David Levy Yulee. He purchased land on the river in the 1840s from William Cooley, who was a pioneering landowner and businessman in the area. Yulee was one of Florida’s first senators, and established his sugar plantation by planting thousands of acres of sugar cane along the river. He managed the plantation from his Tiger Tail Island home, called “Margarita,” and his other homes in Yulee and central Florida. Sugar was exported from the Homosassa River to ports in the Gulf and along the Atlantic coast. Tiger Tail Island became a port of call for the coastal steamers that linked the steamers on the Gulf to the world. Tiger Tail Island held confederate supplies during the Civil War. This led to an unfortunate raid up the river by Union troops in May of 1864, which destroyed Yulee’s mansion and much of the Southern military supplies when the Union army set fire to the supply depot and it spread to the home.

Phyllis Colvin

**RIVER ALLIANCE HIGHLIGHTS -
PAST AND PRESENT**

AWARDS RECEIVED

FDEP - Florida Springs Protection Award
Homosassa Elementary School Science Award
SWFWMD Award of Excellence
SWFWMD Community Education Grants
Florida Lake Management Society

EDUCATION PROJECTS

“Day On The River” for all Homosassa 3rd graders
Pepper Creek Skimmers
Clean the River Buckets & Key Rings
Mangrove Planting on Homosassa
Water Quality Testing of the Homosassa, Halls River &
Bluebird Springs
Fishbowl Drive Traffic Reduction
Bluebird Springs Restoration
SWFWMD Video of River Volunteers at Work
Native Tree Planting Project
Know Your Springs & River Brochure
Stormwater Management Demonstration
Lakewatch Water Testing
Educational River Tours

**“Voice of the River”
Newsletter**
Since 1999

MONTHLY MEETINGS
7 PM - 2nd Thursday at Civic
Club

WEB SITE
[.HomosassaRiverAlliance.org](http://HomosassaRiverAlliance.org)

PROTECTION OF THE RIVER

Coastal Conservation Presentations
FDEP Springs Task Force
Save Our Waters Week
Florida Coastal Springs Greenway
Comprehensive Plan Updates
Oppose Development in Sensitive Areas
Homosassa Waterfronts Florida Community
Nutrient Remediation Planning Committee
SWFWMD Environmental Advisory Committee
Citrus/Hernando Waterways Council
Highlight River Dead Zones
Rally in Tally
Save Our Springs Now
Reset Minimum Flows & Levels

AWARDS WE GIVE

Science Fair Awards
Save Our Water Essays
River & Springs Photo Contest
Environmental Warrior of the Year
River Alliance President’s Award

EXPERT SPEAKERS

Florida Dept of Environmental Protection
South West Florida Water Management District
Florida Fish & Wildlife Service
US Fish & Wildlife Service
US Geological Service
Florida Yards & Neighbors
Florida Springs Task Force
St Martins Aquatic Preserve
Buffer Preserve State Park
Homosassa Springs State Park
University of Florida
University of So Florida
Audubon
Cynthia Barnett
Native Plant Society
Emergency Management
Developers; Planners; Fishermen; Engineers
Commissioners; Reporters; Lawyers; Citizens