



PELICAN FLYER

April 2010

From the President's Desk

By Steve Massey

It was great day for the 18th Annual Pelican Island Wildlife Festival. We barely dodged Mother Nature's rainstorms from the two previous days! The festivities started with a color guard salute presented by the Sebastian American Legion. Students of Vero Beach Elementary School sang the National Anthem. Tim Brown of the Treasure Coast Wildlife Hospital then entertained the crowd with the release of two rehabilitated pelicans.

The festival was a success with many activities including a kids activity tent, a collection of Refuge Representatives from the State of Florida, and historical information about our local area and Florida. President Roosevelt (aka, Joe Wiegand) also entertained the crowd and led the center stage. Both food and craft vendors were in attendance. Very importantly, wildlife exhibits were utilized to entertain and educate the attendees. **MUCH** and **MANY** thanks are due to the Pelican Island Preservation Society Board members, employees of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and hundreds of volunteers. These individuals have planned this event during the year and were in attendance throughout the festival. It would be impossible to have this event without everyone's input and support. Again thank you!

A Great Day in Sebastian!

By Teddy Roosevelt

Once again this year, we had the privilege of President Teddy Roosevelt (aka Joe Wiegand) hosting the Pelican Island Wildlife Festival. Mr. Wiegand performs a reprisal of President Roosevelt bringing history and Roosevelt's passion for conservation to life, teaching us about the establishment of Pelican Island as the nation's first wildlife refuge. Mr. Wiegand was likewise pleased to attend our event, leaving us with the following comments.

"Perhaps more than any other wildlife refuge, Pelican Island stands out in the public mind as a treasured part of the conservation legacy of Theodore Roosevelt. As a Theodore Roosevelt reprisor, I've had the pleasure of performing at the White House, TR's birthplace and the National Park that carries his name. Thanks to PIPS, the Pelican Island Wildlife Festival is in this first rank of places where one can enjoy and commemorate the work done by our conservation president. As a celebration of conservation and wildlife, the Pelican Island Wildlife Festival ranks as one of the finest family events in the nation. Thanks for allowing me to play a small part in this wonderful day where wildlife education, entertainment and great food combine to create memories for a lifetime."

You will find more about Mr. Wiegand's work in portraying President Roosevelt at www.teddyroosevelts.com.

April General/Annual Meeting

The presentation for our April meeting will be "An Introduction to Butterfly Gardening", by Suzanne Valencia. Suzanne is a PIPS member and also a member and volunteer for numerous other organizations in our area.

The presentation will teach you how to attract butterflies to your garden. Topics include the value of using native plants as both nectar and host plants, the life cycle of the butterfly including specific host plants for specific butterflies. You will also learn some little-known facts of butterfly life. Suzanne has transformed her own yard from the standard suburban wildlife wasteland into a haven for all sorts of wildlife. She assisted in the establishment of, and helps maintain a large butterfly garden at the Pelican Island National Wildlife Refuge in Sebastian, having helped plant every single plant in this special garden! Please see the information on page 3 for information about how you can volunteer and help out with this garden and other activities at the refuge.

This months meeting is also our Annual Meeting, at which current members will be electing this year's Board of Directors. Below is the slate as of publication time, for Officers and Directors. If you are interested in being on our Board, please let us know! You can send us an email at info@pelicanislandfriends.org or call Walt Stieglitz at 772-663-9750.

Steve Massey, President
Kerry Firth, Vice President
Kristen Beck, Secretary

Walt Stieglitz, Treasurer
Tim Glover, Director, exp. April 2011
Sandy Peterson, exp. April 2012

Gini Prasch, exp. April 2011
vacant, exp. April 2011
vacant, exp. April 2012

Visit PIPS on the web at www.pelicanislandfriends.org

Refuge Update - Endangered Species

By Kristen Kneifl- Refuge Biologist

Did you know Pelican Island NWR is home to twelve endangered and threatened species, including sea turtles, Johnson's seagrass, manatee, wood stork, and the indigo snake? An endangered species is one that is at risk of becoming extinct; a threatened species is vulnerable to becoming endangered. Many of these species numbers have declined due to habitat loss and fragmentation, as well as predation and human activities. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and our partners are dedicated to preventing extinction and achieving recovery of these magnificent creatures and to protecting the habitats they need for their continued survival. Diversity and balance are crucial to a functioning ecosystem, with each creature from large to small playing a critical role.

In 1973, Congress passed the Endangered Species Act. Its purpose is to protect imperiled species from extinction as a "consequence of economic growth and development untempered by adequate concern and conservation". One success story as a consequence of this act is the recent delisting of the brown pelican populations that exist in along Gulf coast and California, with their numbers rebounding due to stricter pesticide controls and improved habitat management.

On May 22nd the Refuge, along with the South Florida Ecological Services Office and the Pelican Island Preservation Society will host "Endangered Species Day". This event is a great opportunity for families and especially kids to learn about protecting endangered species and what everyday actions they can take to help protect our nation's endangered wildlife and their habitats. Protecting America's wildlife and plants is everyone's duty, so that they may be enjoyed for generations to come.

The Archie Carr NWR is home to nineteen threatened and endangered species. Lake Wales Ridge NWR is the first refuge to be designated primarily for the protection of endangered plants, with a total of twenty-two species.

As a side note, myself and the rest of the staff would like to give a big thanks to PIPS, the volunteers, and supporters for making this year's Pelican Island Wildlife Festival a huge success.

Joe Michael Trail Dedication/Endangered Species Day Celebration

Everyone is invited to the Pelican Island National Wildlife Refuge on Saturday, May 22 to help dedicate the new Joe Michael Trail and Overlook.

It began in 1959 when Pelican Island was under serious threat of encroaching development. Joe swiftly formed the Indian River Area Preservation League and partnered with the Florida Audubon Society to spearhead an impressive four-year effort to stop the selling, dredging and filling of vital wetlands around Pelican Island, including 300 acres of salt marshes now encircled by the Pete's and Bird's Impoundment Trails. These wetlands were proposed to be sold to a housing developer, but Joe's persistence and persuasiveness not only put a halt to the sale of these vital salt marshes, it led to the end of selling wetlands on a statewide basis.

Many years later, in the late 1990's, Joe and other citrus grove owners on Orchid Island sold their century old groves to the Refuge instead of to developers. The acquisition of this land into public ownership afforded the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service the opportunity to restore these uplands as additional wildlife habitat, create the first public facilities at Pelican Island National Wildlife Refuge in preparation for its Centennial Celebration, and permanently protect the Pelican Island rookery from encroaching development. The Refuge now encompasses over 5,400 acres of vital wildlife habitat thanks to Joe's efforts.

The event will also include activities at the refuge to help celebrate the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Services Endangered Species Day. "... the Fish and Wildlife Service will observe Endangered Species Day in order to recognize the national conservation effort to protect our nation's endangered species and their habitats."

The event will take place from 10 AM until 2 PM at the Pelican Island NWR located at the north end of Jungle Trail, just off Highway A1A, approximately 3.5 miles north of route 510. Activities will include tours of the Joe Michael Trail and Overlook, endangered species educational displays, butterfly garden demonstrations, kids activities including fish printing with free t-shirt, educational displays, and centennial trail history tours.

For more information please call the Pelican Island NWR at 772-562-3909, ext. 275, or for more information about Endangered Species Day, please visit the USFWS at www.fws.gov/Endangered/ESDay/2010.html or the

Endangered Species Coalition at www.stopextinction.org.

This newsletter is published four times a year – January, April, June and October, corresponding with our General Membership Meetings. Subscription is included with membership and is also available on our website.

Please contact us at the address below for change of address.

Board of Directors

Officers

Steve Massey, President
Kerry Firth, Vice Pres.
Kristen Beck, Secretary,
Walt Stieglitz, Treasurer

Directors

Tim Glover, exp. Apr '11
Gini Prasch, exp. Apr '11
vacant, exp. Apr 2011
vacant, exp. Apr 2012
vacant, exp. Apr 2012

PIPS is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization and all donations are tax deductible, to the extent allowed by law.

Pelican Island
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In Memoriam

We are sad to report that PIPS member and long-time friend and volunteer at Pelican Island NWR, Joel Day passed away on March 31. Joel was an avid fisherman and was a member of and volunteered for several organizations in our area. Joel eagerly participated in the Pelican Island Wildlife Festival last month, helping to teach kids about fishing. We will sorely miss him and our sympathy goes to his wife Lee and their family. There will be a memorial service for Joel on April 30 at the Bethel Creek House in Vero Beach – please check local papers for details.

Volunteer Opportunities at the Refuge

The Pelican Island National Wildlife Refuge has ongoing, monthly “Pelican Pals” workdays at the refuge for those who want to help out with habitat restoration and butterfly garden maintenance. The next few workdays for butterfly garden maintenance will be April 22, 30 and May 8 from 8 AM until noon. Please contact Suzanne Valencia at 321-984-0604 for information and RSVP. Your help is also needed with the Joe Michael Trail dedication event on May 22, anytime between 8 AM and 3 PM. And finally a habitat restoration workday is planned for June 11. To volunteer for either of these events, please contact Pelican Island NWR Ranger Joanna Webb at 772-562-3909, ext. 258.

PIPS Membership Renewals Now Due

April begins our membership renewal season each year and we hope that you will consider renewing right away! PIPS, along with the other 200+ “Friends” organizations are the only direct way for the public to financially support their local National Wildlife Refuge.

“Friends organizations are crucial to the collective mission of the Refuge System to conserve and protect the wildlife of this great nation. Friends organizations are essential to helping millions of Americans understand that their actions today determine the legacy we leave for tomorrow – and they are the motivation for a new generation of conservationists.”

PIPS is dedicated to helping support the Pelican Island National Wildlife Refuge through advocacy, fund raising, educating the public about Pelican Island, and the need to protect the entire refuge system for wildlife and habitat conservation.

You will find more information about membership and renewing on the back page of this newsletter. You may renew by sending us a donation by mail, at our upcoming April Annual Meeting, or online through our website using your credit card or PayPal account.

With the changeover to our new database we are now including membership expiration information on your mailing label. Please check the label for your membership expiration date and let us know if you have any questions. We must apologize, as in the process of establishing the new database, some membership renewals were apparently lost. We believe it was only a handful of updates that were lost and would have been renewals that were made around late spring last year. Therefore if you believe that your expiration date is not correct, please let us know! You can contact us by email at info@pelicanislandfriends.org, at the address on the back of this newsletter, or call Tim Glover at 772-589-0636.

NWRA 2010 Conservation Leaders Awards

The National Wildlife Refuge Association (NWRA) and National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) have selected recipients of the 2010 Refuge System Awards. These annual awards recognize refuge conservation professionals, volunteers and Friends groups that exemplify outstanding dedication and passion for wildlife conservation in advancement of the mission and purposes of the National Wildlife Refuge System (NWRS).

Kevin Foerster has been selected to receive the Paul Kroegel Refuge Manager of the Year Award for his outstanding management of the Sacramento National Wildlife Refuge Complex in California. Mr. Foerster oversaw the growth and restoration of some of the most important wintering waterfowl habitat on the West Coast. His recent accomplishments include implementing a sophisticated inventory and monitoring system and forging partnerships with private landowners to restore the landscape of the Sacramento Valley. He has exhibited his skill, passion and commitment as a leader in the Refuge System, and was recently named as the project leader at Upper Mississippi River Fish and Wildlife Complex.

You may read more about all the award recipients at www.refugeassociation.org/new-events/NWRS2010.html.

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Early Spring at Pelican Island NWR

Text and photos by Nancy Soucy

After the last few months of Mother Nature reminding us that she is in charge, I was anxious for her to show her kinder colors. In the eleven years that I have been transplanted from points north, I never really felt I experienced a Floridian spring, its just that winter melds into summer without any thought. On this sunny, mild day in March, I thought perhaps a visit to PINWR would be productive for a springtime wildflower or two.

At the entrance of Jungle Trail, my arrival was greeted with the bright faces of Beggars-Ticks. This common wild herb, more popularly known as Spanish Needles, was once used as a tea to cure a "sick stomach". Also along the trail were Sow Thistles stretching their necks into the sun, these yellow flowers are always interesting to look at with their spiny leaves. After parking, I started my stroll along the paved trail and was just amazed at the carpet of color before me.



The Gaillardia flowers were gorgeous. Also called Indian Blanket, they all displayed a variable design of red on yellow or yellow on red. Each unique flower was strutting its beauty as it was bathed by the sun in warmth and generous light. Wild Lantana sparkled in the fields as Blue Toadflax poked their blue and white faces above the grass. Cutleaf Evening Primrose were scattered about. Carolina locusts, the "high-flying" grasshoppers, jumped ahead as I explored the fields. Creeping Charlie, those really cute mat-forming perennials with tiny flowers that form a circle around a purple floral head were happily offering themselves as a nectar source for the Common Buckeye and Phaon Crescent butterflies. Groundcherry, those dainty pendant, trumpet-shaped yellow flowers hold a pretty surprise if you check the inside - purple stripes radiating from its throat. An adorable Vedalia Ladybug probed the stem. This ladybug is hailed as the first example of a successful U.S. biological control in the late 1880's.

These were just a few of the colorful spring offerings that Mother Nature was boasting that day. If one wishes to shake the doldrums of winter and uplift the mind and spirit, an easy stroll at PINWR may just be the thing to do!



The date following your name is the month/year that your membership renewal is/was due. Thank you!

Pelican Island Preservation Society Membership Application

Please check one:

- Student (under 18) - \$5/yr.
- Individual - \$10/yr.
- Family (joint) - \$15/yr.
- Contributing \$50/yr.
- Corporate/Business - \$100/yr.
- Supporting - \$250/yr.
- Life - \$500

Name(s) _____

Company _____

Street _____

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Send completed application and dues to:
PIPS Membership
P.O. Box 781903, Sebastian, FL 32978-1903

Or use your credit card online at our web address below!