

# F · I · R · S · T      W · A · T · C · H

VOLUME 2, November 1998

NEWSLETTER OF BEACH TO BAY CONNECTION

ISSUE 2

## VOTE ON TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 3RD

– *From the Editor*

Apathy or greed! Which one causes more destruction to the environment and community? Both contribute to the loss of South Walton's natural beauty and resources that make it a special place to live and visit.

Don't be guilty of apathy on election day, Tuesday, November 3rd. Some folks have been heard to say, "I'm not voting because I don't like any of the candidates." Yes, sometimes the choices for our leaders seem limited. But nonvoters have no right to complain about elected officials. By not voting you may be inadvertently helping to elect the wrong candidate.

In Tallahassee complaints about local situations and officials have been responded to with "Well, then elect someone else!". We can only hope that

our unique environment in South Walton will not be destroyed by the time we find political leaders with a true commitment to preserving and enhancing the land and waters within South Walton.

### ***Vote YES on Constitution Amendment 5***

It will combine the Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission with the Marine Fisheries Commission, thus creating one efficient management agency.

Amendment 5 will also extend the authority to issue bonds for purchasing conservation and recreation lands in the state of Florida. Topsail Hill Preserve, Grayton Beach State Park, Deer Lake State Park and Point Washington State Forest were purchased using funds generated by the same type of bonds.

*Please vote on Tuesday, November 3rd.*



## NEW TOWN UPDATE

We continue to await Judge Terry Lewis' ruling on the constitutionality of Senator Charlie Clary's legislation that clears the way for the sale of Preservation 2000 land to Walton County for the development of "New Town".

Despite repeated statements by County Attorney George Ralph Miller that he would donate his private property (where the school site is planned) to the citizens of Walton County in order to "shut them up" about the conflict-of-interest of his land ownership in the controversial site, his gift has not been forthcoming. (St. Petersburg Times, August 10, 1998.)

County Attorney Miller remains confident that Walton County will prevail in the statewide precedent-setting transfer of Preservation 2000 land for development. Miller was one of the proponents speaking in support of Clary's legislation at the September 24th Administrative Hearing in Tallahassee.

On November 3rd we have the opportunity to choose two county commissioners. When will we have the opportunity to choose a county attorney who is interested in the will of the people and not his own self-interest?

Perhaps the upcoming elections will change the complexion of the Walton County Commission, leading to an opportunity to replace entrenched appointed officials who continually advocate their pro-development and anti-preservation agendas.

### MISSION

The mission of Beach to Bay Connection is to enhance and protect the undeveloped lands and waters within South Walton



County by taking an active role in gathering and disseminating information specific to our ecosystems, and acting as stewards of our public lands.

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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[www.beachtobay.org](http://www.beachtobay.org)

## BEACH COMMITTEE MAKES HEADWAY!

### *Beach Etiquette & Beach Respect*

During the September BEACH TO BAY meeting a Beach Committee formed to improve beach etiquette on our beaches and seek solutions to problems.

The Beach Committee has opened discourse with the TDC, local TV stations and *Coastal Living* magazine. All parties agree to assist in publicizing better care of our beaches and environmental concerns.

The committee will meet again on November 11. New members are welcome. Please contact Steve or Karen Peterson at 267-1022.

*The mission of the Beach Committee is to protect the natural beauty of the beach through education and information.*

# 1998 SOUTH WALTON TURTLE WATCH SEASON



Thank you all for sharing our 1998 turtle season. We couldn't have done it without you. You called in sea turtle sightings and lighting disorientation problems. You turned off your lights when asked, and you cared. You helped with your donations, and buying our T-shirts. These T-shirts are available at Granola Girls Bakery in Seagrove and are a good source of funds for us.

The sea turtle season ends on October 31st, and we still have two nests in the ground. This was a great year for us. We marked 41 nests. 3 of these turned out to be false crawls, and we had 11 other false crawls. The nests did super until Hurricane Earl. We had great hatching success with lots

of hatchlings making it to the water. The final numbers for the 1998 season will be in the next newsletter. So far, we have had 23 nests hatch. We had two endangered sea turtle nests this year and they both successfully hatched.

Our main problems this year were our two major hurricanes, which we can't do anything about but learn from, and a big lighting problem that we are trying to do something about . . .

You can help. Please use turtle friendly lights and better yet – turn off your lights during nesting season. Please do not use flashlights on the beach.



One of the many examples of problems we had this year was a nest decimated by light disorientation even though the nest was laid only 25 feet from the water. The night the hatchlings emerged they went directly to the lights of nearby condos. The hatchlings never even went toward the water.

Live and dead babies were found all over. Artificial lights just outshine the moon and the stars by far.

*Sea turtles need your help.*

Please turn out the lights.

## THE NEXT MEETING

### Our Beaches – Erosion, Protection, & Natural Events

**Wednesday, November 18, 1998  
6:30 PM, Seaside Meeting Hall**

The BEACH TO BAY CONNECTION November meeting will be held Wednesday, November 18, 6:30 p.m. at the Seaside Meeting Hall. (The regularly scheduled second Wednesday meeting day was changed due to Veteran's Day.)

Paden Woodruff, Environmental Administrator with Beaches and Coastal Systems of the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, will be the guest speaker.

Paden will discuss beach erosion along Walton County's coast, including daily effects, as well as storm events. Paden will also discuss how man affects the coast and laws pertaining to coastal protection.

Updates from the Beach Committee and Greenway Committee and an end-of-season report from South Walton Turtle Watch will round out the meeting.

# ANNUAL TREE SALE

The 1 millionth longleaf pine will be planted in Point Washington State Forest this winter. Tom Beitzel, Forest Manager, is planning a short planting celebration for Arbor Day, January 15, 1999 at the Eastern Lake Trail Head. The public will be invited to the event. The event is still in the planning stages; further announcements will be forthcoming.

Longleaf pines are native to the Florida Panhandle. The longleaf pine ecosystem has evolved with hurricanes and fires over thousands of years. The tree's deep taproot anchors it against wind. Pine trees uprooted during hurricanes are usually sand pines and slash pines.

Native longleaf pines are resistant to many diseases and insects that damage other pine species in the southern forest. It grows and thrives in poor sandy soils and is the longest-lived of southern pines, capable of exceeding 300 years in age. Longleaf pines can reach 100-120 feet in height and grow about 2-3 feet in diameter.

BEACH TO BAY CONNECTION'S *Annual Longleaf Pine Tree Seedling Sale* will be held in conjunction with the millionth tree planting celebration.

The seedlings are in short supply this season because of the need to reforest much of central Florida's forestlands destroyed by the intense wildfires this past summer. We were fortunate to secure 1,000 seedlings.

Several volunteers are needed on the day of the sale. If you would like to help with the sale, or place an order for trees, please call 267-2227.

## We need help!

**Volunteer an hour or more of  
your time on Election Day to  
distribute information on  
Amendment 5 at the polls.**

Call 267-2227 to sign up.

# FALL ADVENTURE SERIES: EXPLORING THE GREENWAYS OF SOUTH WALTON

Hurricane Georges caused a rescheduling of the **Deer Lake/Camp Creek** Fall Adventure. A confirmed date for the rescheduling of this adventure will be announced soon.

**The Butler Elementary School/Escada Connector Trail** adventure on October 17 began with Mandy Yourick, Phillip Bedford and Lauren Wilde leading the way.



They are among the students who originally developed and studied the ecology and history of the forest. They explained signage on the trail, as well as trees, plants, and birds that make their home in the forest. Evidence of the once thriving turpentine industry is found near Peace Pond (which was named by the student body). Two large Longleaf pines still bear the scars of catfacing and a metal plate that allowed sap to seep into clay pots for collection.

The group of adventurers then made their way through the part of Point Washington State Forest between Sugar Road and Thompson Road. The trail follows an old logging road that aerial photos show existed before Hwy 30A.

Fallen trees in this area reveal recent history. Several years ago a waterspout came ashore in Dune Allen. Tree trunks twisting before breaking mark its path. Trees felled by hurricanes are snapped clean.

The trail intersects Thompson Road on the west side, just south of the Thompson Cemetery. The group rested and learned a bit of history of the nearly 100-year old cemetery.

The hikers returned to Sugar Road through the forest and returned to Butler Elementary parking lot via the Escada Connector Trail. Michael Jenkins, developer of Escada, donated a 25-foot Greenway easement to the county from Sugar Road to the Point Washington



State Forest land to the west of his property. The trail continues through the state forest to the north side of Butler Elementary School. Butler Elementary students living along Sugar Road can ride their bikes or walk to school, rather than take a lengthy bus ride on Hwy 98.

## THE NEXT ADVENTURE

Hidden Forest/Beaver Dam Excursion:  
Saturday November 21, 9:00 AM

Everyone is welcome to join us for the next adventure in our Fall Series: **The Hidden Forest/Beaver Dam Excursion**. Meet at the Blue Mountain Beach access parking lot at the south end of Highway 83. Explore the forest of the Big Redfish Lake headwaters. View a small beaver dam along the way to the hidden forest. Tom Beitzel, Point Washington State

Forest Manager will be our guide on this 2-mile adventure.

Suggested items to bring: water, snacks, bug repellent and comfortable shoes.

For more information call 267-2227.



## BEACH TO BAY CONNECTION MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

*We need your support!  
Please show you care.*

*volunteer • non-profit • member-supported*

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP CODE \_\_\_\_\_

HOME PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

- |   |             |  |              |
|---|-------------|--|--------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Student/Limited Income | 10.00/year  | <input type="checkbox"/> Associate               | 15.00/year   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual             | 20.00/year  | <input type="checkbox"/> Business or Association | 100.00/year  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family                 | 30.00/year  | <input type="checkbox"/> Benefactor              | 500.00/year  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Nice Person            | 100.00/year | <input type="checkbox"/> Saint                   | 1000.00/year |

I would like to make a donation dedicated to the South Walton Greenway Network. Amount \_\_\_\_\_

I would like to make a donation dedicated to the South Walton Turtle Watch. Amount \_\_\_\_\_

Please make check payable to Beach to Bay Connection, and mail to P.O. Box 1129, Santa Rosa Beach, FL 32459

**Membership dues and donations are tax deductible**

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P. O. Box 1129

Santa Rosa Beach, FL 32459

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Newsletter

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BEACH TO BAY CONNECTION, THE SOUTH WALTON COASTAL CONSERVANCY

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