



PELICAN FLYER

April 2009

From the President's Desk

By Bonnie Swanson

Well another successful Pelican Island Wildlife Festival under our belt and we can't thank our wonderful sponsors and especially the volunteers, for making this such a well attend and appreciated event! We received many positive comments from our vendors and participants again this year. Thanks to everyone who had a part in making this another great event for PIPS and especially for the Pelican Island National Wildlife Refuge!

I also want to thank everyone for their support of and participation with PIPS over the last few years while I have been president of PIPS. This year I will be stepping down to the position of "Past President" on our Board and Steve Massey has agreed to assume the responsibility as president. Steve has been a dedicated member of our Board of Directors as Vice President and I welcome him to his new position. I also encourage all of you to continue your support, both in time and financially. We need your help and support now more than ever! Please see related articles in this issue of the newsletter about membership renewal and the election of our new Board at our upcoming April meeting, plus other things that we are involved with.

Speaking of volunteering, we have a few vacancies in our Board positions and we are always looking for anyone who is interested in being on the Board, or just volunteering and helping out. However you choose to help our group, we thank you for your support.

Kayaking the Wilds of the St. Sebastian River

Kristen and Mike Beck of Kayaks, Etc. in Vero Beach will give a presentation at our April general meeting on Monday, April 27. The Becks are trained Florida "Master Naturalists" and have developed a presentation on the beautiful "wilds" of the St. Sebastian River and the numerous wild things one might see when meandering these waters in a kayak.

The April meeting is also the Annual Meeting for PIPS and we will be electing our Officers and Board of Directors at the meeting. As mentioned, we are looking to fill a few vacancies on our Board. If you are interested in being involved, you just need to maintain a current membership and have the time and interest to get involved. The following is the current nominations to voted on at the April meeting:

Officers

President—Steve Massey
Vice President—Kristen Beck
Secretary—vacant
Treasurer—Walt Stieglitz
Past President—Bonnie Swanson

Directors

Tim Glover—2 yr.
Kerry Firth—2 yr.
vacant—1 yr.
vacant—1 yr.

If you are interested in being on the Board, please let us know by sending an email to info@pelicanislandfriends.org or calling Walt Stieglitz at 772-663-9750.

The meeting will be held as usual at the North Indian River County Library in Sebastian. The program begins at 7 PM and refreshments will be served. We'll also have a special announcement about the Joe Michael Overlook at the Refuge! And if you didn't get to meet Charlie Pelizza, the new Pelican Island National Wildlife Refuge Manager, at the Wildlife Festival last month, he will be with us to introduce himself and say hi. See more about Charlie inside this newsletter All are welcome to attend so please bring your friends and join us!

Visit PIPS on the web at www.pelicanislandfriends.org

New Refuge Manager Comes to Pelican Island

Paul Tritaik, the previous manager of the Pelican Island NWR left for his new position as Refuge Manager at the J. N. "Ding" Darling Refuge in Sanibel last May. His successor was recently appointed to assume the vacancy, and he hit the ground running his first day on the job, working at the Pelican Island Wildlife Festival last month! How's that for an introduction and a christening for his new job!

Charles Pelizza has recently been selected as the refuge manager for the Pelican Island National Wildlife Refuge. Charlie has spent 28 of his 29 year Fish and Wildlife Service career within the National Wildlife Refuge System. He has worked throughout the country in many capacities ranging from wetland ecologist, wildlife biologist, wildlife disease specialist, and conservation planner; and in habitats as diverse as tidal salt marsh, prairie pothole, sub-tropical desert, tropical island, and marine ecosystems. His most recent position was at Hawaii and Pacific Island National Wildlife Refuge Complex, with some of his most rewarding achievements being his time serving as the acting Refuge Manager on Palmyra Atoll and Midway Atoll National Wildlife Refuges, and working with landscape planning partnerships throughout Micronesia.

Charlie's family has relocated to the area, bringing their two children closer to their grandparents, long time residents of Vero Beach. His wife, Sylvia, also a long time Refuge System employee, is now the Project Leader for the Arthur R. Marshall Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge Complex. Charlie states, "I am truly honored to serve as the manager of the nation's first National Wildlife Refuge. I can not think of a more fitting chapter in my long personal history with the Refuge System than to be stationed here, and I look forward to working with members of the Pelican Island Preservation Society."

We hope you had the chance to meet Charlie at the Wildlife Festival, but if not, look for him around the refuge or some of our upcoming events.

2009 Pelican Island Festival a Great Success

This year's Pelican Island Wildlife Festival, hosted as usual by PIPS and the Pelican Island NWR/US Fish & Wildlife Service was another great success. As Bonnie mentioned in her comment on the front page, we receive many positive comments from attendees and vendors alike. We want to thank everyone who participated, from the planning, set-up, day-of-event volunteering and just being there to enjoy the many wildlife exhibits, environmental themed vendors, kayaking and great food!

We had several special treats at this year's event. One was seeing former Pelican Island Refuge Manager Paul Tritaik and his family return to enjoy the event and greet the new Refuge Manager—Charlie Pelizza. See info about Charlie above.

Did you also get to meet President Teddy Roosevelt? Teddy was this year's Master of Ceremonies and you couldn't miss him! Teddy, aka Joe Wiegand of the TeddyRooseveltShow.com brings history to life in Chautauqua-style presentations and events, with his outstanding and authentic representation of T.R. This has been a busy year for T.R./Mr. Wiegand, traveling the country to celebrate the 150th anniversary of his birthday and the centennial of the end of his term as president. We were very grateful to President Roosevelt for taking the time to join us in Sebastian for this year's festival. President Roosevelt wrote afterwards to let us know that he had a great time at the festival—"The feedback from attendees young and old brought many a smile to my face...." He tells us that he is already planning on returning to join us again at next year's festival, so be sure and not miss him then, if you didn't get a chance to meet him this year!

Another wonderful special treat we had this year was the release of a rehabilitated brown pelican back into the wild. This is a fun event and one that we look forward to with mixed emotion. It is wonderful to see a pelican be rehabilitated and released back to its natural surroundings. But it is also discouraging to find many injured pelicans and other birds that need such attention.

We hope that you took the time to stop by the PIPS Welcome Tent to check us out, say hi and even support our efforts by signing up for a new membership, buying some of our Pelican Island themed items or participating in our raffle. The "Grand Prize" was a Jackson Kayak "Day Tripper", won by Seth Godfrey who is a Florida coordinator for the Ocean Conservancy's annual International Coastal Cleanup. Congratulations Seth!



Photo: US Fish & Wildlife Service

This year's Photo Contest was also a great success and we thank all the folks who participated. There were numerous entries and the "Best in Show" award went to Charlie Corbeil of Melbourne. For a complete listing of all the awards presented and the winners,

please visit the 2009 Festival page of our website.

Finally we would like to thank the City of Sebastian for co-hosting the event with PIPS and our many great sponsors. Please visit the 2009 Festival page of our website and the “Program Flyer” to see a list of our major sponsors.

We are always working on ways to improve the Wildlife Festival. So if you have any comments or suggestions, please let us know by sending us an email to info@pelicanislandfriends.org or giving Joanna Webb, Refuge Ranger at Pelican Island, a call at 772-562-3909, x258.

Thinking About Volunteering?

As always, we can never have too many volunteers. Beyond the usual help with publicity/programs, merchandising, newsletter writing, membership, etc., our Refuge is also looking for those interested in helping out birding and general tours at the Pelican Island Refuge. If you are interested in helping out or more details, please contact Refuge Ranger Joanna Webb at 772-562-3909, x258 or email us at info@pelicanislandfriends.org.

Additionally Refuge volunteer Suzanne Valencia is always looking for help with maintaining the butterfly garden at the Refuge. She is often out there a couple of days each month. For more information and upcoming scheduled work dates, please contact Suzanne at 321-984-0604. Next workday is Earth Day, April 22 at 8 AM.

Suzanne is also a member of the Turtle Coast Chapter of the Sierra Club and organizes many their volunteers to work at the Refuge. Their efforts help the efforts of Pelican Island NWR personnel to restore the habitat at the Refuge, improving its wildlife value. Many of the volunteers comment that they love being outdoors, the comradery working with others and the fulfillment of giving back to help restore the Refuge and preserve its heritage.

Thanks to all volunteers who help out the Refuge and especially Suzanne for all your efforts in bringing other to the Refuge to help out!

Kayak Pelican Island with Kayaks, Etc.

Kayaks, Etc. leads regular kayaking trips to and around Pelican Island. The next scheduled dates are April 20, 26 & 30, plus three trips in May. This is a relaxing trip around Pelican Island and numerous birds and wildlife is often seen. Kristen of Kayaks, Etc. reports that the white pelicans are taking off on their trip north for the summer.

Trips are suitable for ages 2 to 102 and reservations are required. For more info and to reserve a spot, call 772-794-9900. Also visit them on the web at www.kayaksetc.com.



Photo: Kayaks Etc.

National Wildlife Refuge Association Updates

February 17, 2009—The National Wildlife Refuge Association (NWRA), an advocacy group for the 150-million acre National Wildlife Refuge System, today applauded the signing of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act which includes \$290 million for national wildlife refuges and fish hatcheries. This boost for Americas economy will create new green jobs on refuges throughout the country by providing critical funding to the Refuge System to improve visitor facilities and undertake large-scale projects to rehabilitate habitats.

February 18, 2009—Paul Kroegel Refuge Manager of the Year presented to Greg Siekaniec, Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge, AK

Be sure and visit the “News & Information” page of our website for more updates and news, or the NWRA at www.refugeassociation.org

Subscribe Electronically!

Want to be the first to receive our newsletter? Want to help save us time and money? You can either download the newsletter from our website, or receive it electronically via email! Just send an email to us at info@pelicanislandfriends.org with your request and let us know you no longer want to receive the paper copy. And be sure and keep us up to date whenever your email changes. Thanks for helping us save a tree—especially as we celebrate the upcoming Earth Day—April 22 nationally and April 18 here in Sebastian.

Visit PIPS on the web at www.pelicanislandfriends.org

Pelican Island Preservation Society
P.O. Box 781903
Sebastian, FL 32978-1903

Membership Corner—Renew Now!
With Heather Stapleton

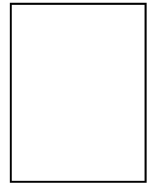
Thanks to your continued generous support, the Joe Michael Memorial Trail and Overlook (funded by Pelican Island Preservation Society) has begun out on the refuge!

Unlike any other organization, PIPS is THE friends group for Pelican Island National Wildlife Refuge – 100% of the money we raise, 100% of the hours we volunteer go straight to Pelican Island NWR. We have been particularly busy in the past few years, speaking up in favor of the refuge and trying to make various improvements within the refuge.

Currently, PIPS is working hard to create the "Joe Michael Trail and Overlook" - a new bird viewing opportunity in memory of Joe Michael. Joe was instrumental in the protection and expansion of the refuge. We are raising funds for AND ALREADY BUILDING this exciting addition to the refuge, in Joe's memory. You can read more about Joe and view a conceptual plan of "Joe's Overlook" on our website: www.pelicanislandfriends.org

Of course, an exciting project of this scope could not be accomplished without member support. It is now time to renew (as is every April). And, renewing is easier than ever! It can now be done on our website through PayPal! You can save paper, stamps and time! Please go to the "Membership" page of our website at: www.pelicanislandfriends.org/application.htm and scroll to the bottom of the page and click on the "make donation" button.

Thank you so much for considering your renewal!



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 _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Phone _____

Email _____

Send completed application & dues to
PIPS Membership

P.O. Box 781903, Sebastian, FL 32978-1903

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

Visit PIPS on the web at www.pelicanislandfriends.org