



The Islander

June 2014

A Publication of the St. George Island Civic Club

Florida Department of Economic Opportunity Specialist Speaks on Special Districts at April Civic Club Meeting

Jack Haskins, a Specialist from the State of Florida, made a presentation at the May meeting on the pros and cons of St. George Island a Special District.



Jack Gaskins

He led off by describing a “special district” and the differences between a county/city and a special district. Counties and cities are classified as general-purpose governments and special districts are special-purpose governments.

The differences are the first category includes regulation, law enforcement, parks & recreation, housing, public works,

transportation, emergency management, economic development, etc.

Special districts may have one or two specialized and/or enhanced governmental services explicitly (never implied) authorized by the law/charter under which it operates.

Here in Franklin County, Apalachicola and Carrabelle are classified as governments.

The following are some special districts listed as type of district:

Special Planning District – Public
The Community Redevelopment Authorities in Apalachicola and Carrabelle

Special Planning District – Private
St. George Plantation and St. James Bay

Special Districts – Dependent
Lanark Water & Sewer and the Carrabelle Port & Airport Authority

Special Districts – Independent
Alligator Point Water Management District and the Eastpoint Water & Sewer District

Generally, dependent special districts are created by single counties or single
(See Speaker, Page Two)

The next Club meeting is June 19. The speaker will be Kaitlin O'Connell from FWC who will address the challenges of the Florida Black Bear population.

(Speaker, from Page One)

municipalities by passing a local ordinance and independent districts do not have any of the “dependent” characteristics.

Generally, the Florida Legislature creates independent special districts by special act.

Considerations:

Dependent – the county will have influence over decision-making and policy matters (control over board membership and/or budget)

Administrative cost may be lower, since the county may handle financial matters, such as financial reporting, financial audits and other administrative matters

May be easier to create a district by special act.

Independent – Independent governance

Higher administrative costs, separate financial audit

May be more difficult/time-consuming to create.

There are a total of 16 special districts in Franklin County. Many cover Housing, Hospitals, water and conservation.

The main reasons special districts are created are to empower citizens to govern their own neighborhood/community. Use them as a financing mechanism for the private and public sectors to govern, finance, construct, operate and maintain essential public services and facilities. Provide enhanced/specialized public services in response to citizen demand that a county or municipality is unable or unwilling to offer. And only those who benefit from the services pay.

Some considerations are there is no free money – special districts must generate all revenues and limited grant eligibility. It will be another level of government.

Misconceptions are that oversight and accountability is nonexistent, duplicate services and may be seen as a “shadow government” and special districts at present are out of favor with some politicians.

Some responsibilities are that many of the same accountability laws for counties and municipalities have to be followed, including annual financial audits and reports, government-in-the sunshine laws regarding public meetings and ethic laws.

(Resources for this article were the Power Point presentation provided by Jack Gaskins and info prepared by Bill McCartney)

Sunset/Full Moon Climb



Climb to the top of the Cape St. George Lighthouse to view the sunset and full moonrise. Admission is \$15 (\$10 for SGLA members) and includes snacks and a sparkling cider toast to the full moon. The sun will set at 8:40 p.m. and the moon will rise at 8:17 p.m. on June 12. After sunset, additional climbers can view the full moon as time and space allow for \$10 (\$5 for SGLA members). Because space is limited, reservations are recommended. For reservations please contact the Lighthouse Gift Shop at 850-927-7745.

Upcoming Events

Remember Summer Bingo each Tuesday this summer at the Firehouse

Turtle Presentations



Visitors interested in learning about sea turtle nesting can attend 2 pm turtle orientation meetings on Wednesdays during June at the Apalachicola National Estuarine Research Reserve Visitor Center at 108 Island Drive in Eastpoint. The presentations are hosted by the SGI Volunteer Turtles and ANERR– each Wednesday in June at 2 pm (June 4, 11, 18, 25)

Common sense turtle tips include removing all beach chairs and umbrellas at the end of the day and use red filtered flashlights when walking on the beach at night to avoid disorienting hatchlings.

For more information, call 850-670-7700 or visit

www.dep.state.fl.us/coastal/sites/apalachicola

Fishermans Choice Annual Kids Fishing Tournament

Charles and Rex Pennycuff are hosting their 15th annual Fisherman's Choice Youth Fishing Tournament on June 7th. Kids 16

and under will fish for fresh and saltwater species. Each entry receives a t-shirt, and after the tournament, entrees are invited to attend a cookout at Fisherman's Choice where they will weigh in their fish, eat hot dogs and hamburgers and get some great prizes. In years past, Rex says they gave



away 170 rods and reels, tackle boxes and a dozen cast nets. Prizes are given for 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th place, and include all major fish species. Entry is free and generally about 200 kids sign up. Call Fisherman's Choice for more information at (850) 670-8808 or go to www.fishermanschoice.net/

FSUCML Conservation Lecture Series



The Florida State University Coastal Marine Lab at will hold the next lecture on Thursday, June 12 at 3618 Coastal Highway 98, St. Teresa.

Fire has shaped the ecology of southern pine forests for thousands of years. By some estimates, fires ignited by lightning moved (See FSUCML, Page Four)

(FSUCML, from Page 3)

through these forests every 2-3 years and led to the development of tight relationships between frequent fires and the habitat needs of many different animals. Birds are the most diverse group of vertebrates associated with southern pine forests and help to underscore the importance of fire. Far from being a hindrance, fire actually is a critical factor in habitat restoration for a number of species considered to be of greatest conservation concern.

In this presentation, Jim Cox will discuss the intimate relationship between birds and fire and in so doing demonstrate that fires conducted during late spring and summer -- the primary months that many birds breed -- do not pose grave threats to bird populations. In fact, the long-term benefits of fire significantly outweigh any short-term set backs. Fire is a natural process in southern pine forests, while the lack of fire is a death knell for declining species such as red-cockaded woodpeckers, Bachman's sparrow, brown-headed nuthatch, and loggerhead shrike.

For more information, call 850-697-4120 or visit www.marinelab.fsu.edu

Big Bend Saltwater Classic Fishing Tournament



The Annual Big Bend Saltwater Classic Fishing Tournament will be held on Friday,

June 13, 2014 through Sunday, June 15 in Carrabelle.

The Big Bend Saltwater Classic fishing tournament was launched in 1989 by The Organization for Artificial Reefs, Inc, (OAR), a private, non-profit, marine interest group based in Tallahassee. The family oriented Tournament was intended to serve as OAR's primary fund-raising project.

Today, the Tournament is under the direct control of a non-paid board of directors, is incorporated under the laws of the State of Florida as The Big Bend Saltwater Classic Foundation, Inc, and is recognized by the U.S. Internal Revenue Service as a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization. OAR our parent organization has been a 501(c)(3) organization since 1987. Currently, all of the proceeds derived from the event are used to expand and develop a system of artificial reefs in the Northeastern Gulf of Mexico, OAR's purview of operation.

For more information, call 850-216-2272 or go to saltwaterclassic.com/

Mullet Toss at the Blue Parrot



This event takes place on the second Saturday of June each year. This year the date is June 14.

The Mullet Toss is sponsored by **The Blue Parrot** at 68 West Gorrie Dr., St. George (*See Mullet, Page Five*)

(Mullet, from Page Four)

Island, for the benefit of the Apalachicola bay Charter School. For a \$25.00 entry fee you get a unique Mullet Toss T Shirt, and 2 mullet to throw. Visitors and Locals compete for prizes and bragging rights.

There are prizes for the longest throws in the men's, women's and kids divisions. Located on the Blue Parrot Beach 10:00 AM until 5:00 PM.

For more information, call 850-927-2987 or visit www.blueparrotsgi.com

Apalachicola Independence Day Celebration



Historic Apalachicola Main Street Presents Apalachicola Independence Day Celebration - Thursday, July 3

Seafood in the Park - 12 noon - 10 pm
Firecracker fried shrimp & low country boil, live music, refreshments and silent auction

Red, White & Blue Parade - 6:30 pm
Meet at Lafayette Park at 6:30. Decorate your golf cart or bike and parade down Avenue B to Riverfront Park on Water Street

Ice Cream Social - 7 pm
Free old fashioned ice cream social

Live Auction - 7:30 pm

Veterans Tribute - 8:30 pm

Fireworks - 9:00 pm
Gather along the river for a spectacular finale!

Thanks to the Franklin County Tourism Council for Upcoming events.

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Please visit our website: www.sgivicclub.org for the latest news from St. George Island and the surrounding area. Email us at sgivicclub@gmail.com Dues are \$20 per person and can be mailed to SGI Civic Club, P.O. Box 451, Eastpoint, FL 32328.

The Islander is edited by Eric Roberts (egrob2@fairpoint.net)