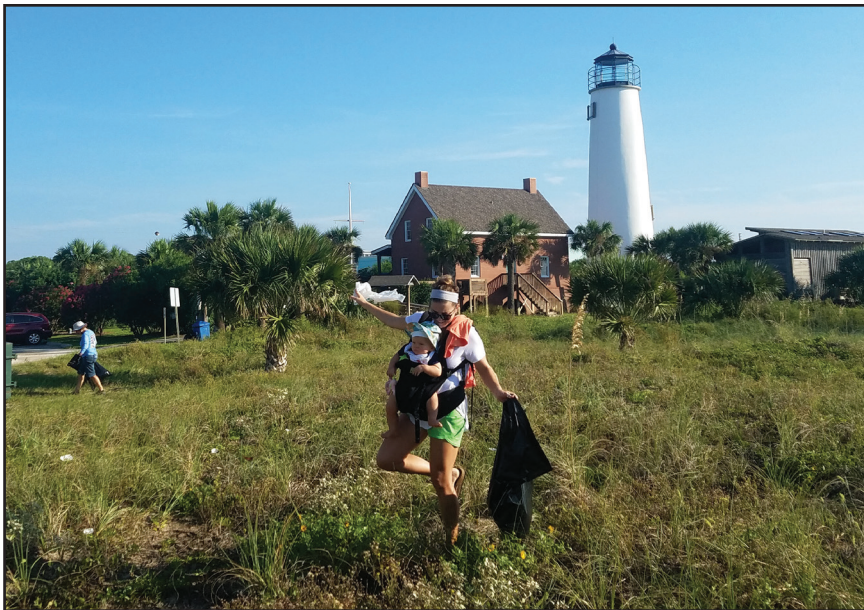




# THE ISLANDER



Together We Can - Keep Our Coast Clean | Volunteers join in the Franklin County Coastal Cleanup

## IN THIS ISSUE

- TDC Returns Tax Dollars to the Island**..... page 2  
Tourism support local events and business
- Duke Energy Grant to help Restore Island Entrance**..... page 4  
Grant to SGI Civic Club puts \$2,000 to work
- Beautification Grant Moves to Next Level**..... page 4  
Learn how the process is working for SGI
- State Park Recovery** ..... page 8  
Promises to be better than ever
- Freshstart Program Success Story** ..... page 10  
Bill Mills describes Re-Entry Program
- ECCC Expands Reach with New Program** ..... page 12
- Islanders Welcome Back Iconic Harry A's**..... page 12  
The recovery brings a host of surprises
- Pine Bark Beetles and Hurricane Michael** ..... page 14
- ANERR Celebrates 40th Anniversary** ..... page 14
- Coastal Cleanup Underway Sept 21** ..... page 16

## Upcoming ISLAND EVENTS

### ECCC Appreciation

Elder Care Community Council Appreciation  
9/17, 5-7pm at Holy Family Senior Center  
RSVP [holyfamilyseniorcenter@gmail.com](mailto:holyfamilyseniorcenter@gmail.com)  
or call 850-653-3134

### Franklin County Board of County Commissioners

Commission Meeting Room, Apalachicola  
Regular Meetings - 9/17, 10/1, 10/15 at 9 am  
Commission Meeting Room, Apalachicola

Budget Meeting - 9/17 at 5 pm  
Planning & Zoning - 10/8 at 6:30 in the  
Annex Courtroom, Apalachicola

### Franklin County Coastal Cleanup

9/21 9:30-11:30 am - Various Locations  
Contact Ada Long at 850-927-3776 or  
email [adalong@uab.edu](mailto:adalong@uab.edu)

### SGI Lighthouse

9/21, 4 - 5 pm, Dennis Barnell Memorial,  
Celebration of Life  
10/13, 7 - 8:30 pm, Full Moon Climb  
[www.stgeorgelighthouse.org](http://www.stgeorgelighthouse.org) or 850-927-7745

### SGI Civic Club Meetings (3rd Thursday)

9/19 6:30 pm, SGI Firehouse  
Speaker: Erik Lovestrand, Franklin County Extension  
Agent, IFAS. Also, discussion of Charitable Giving  
Donations & 2020 Officers

10/17 6:30 pm Civic Club Luau, Lighthouse Park  
(no business meeting)

11/21, 6:30 pm, SGI Firehouse  
Vote on Charitable Giving recommendations  
and SGI Office Speaker: County Commissioner  
Ricky Jones

12/19, Civic Club Holiday Party, Doc Myer's Grill  
(no business meeting)

### SGI Art & Wine Splash

10/16, 1 - 5 pm, Tickets: SGI Visitor's Center,  
Sometimes It's Hotter, Island Dog, Seaside Cotton

FOR A COMPLETE LISTING OF  
FRANKLIN COUNTY AREA EVENTS  
CLICK [www.ApalachicolaBay.org](http://www.ApalachicolaBay.org)

# THE ISLAND'S Success Stories

Modest improvements to the island represent a cooperative effort between our citizens and our county staff.

Thanks for giving credit where it's due and alerting us to the good works of your neighbors and county staff.

## Landscaping Updates

Four landscaping beds on Franklin Blvd and two on Chili Blvd by Lighthouse Parking lot were restored to their original appearance by the work of Civic Club volunteers and the county's Parks & Recreation program. After several years of neglect and inundation by Hurricane Michael, the beds have new life with dwarf oleander continuing to bloom and muhly preparing for its fall show. The volunteers, working for approximately an hour a day on several Fridays, removed the debris, overgrowth, dead shrubs, palm fronds, and litter deposits from Michael. The Parks & Recreation department, led by Director Fonda Davis who was a dinner speaker to the Civic Club earlier this year, hauled off the piles of cuttings to the county land fill, installed weed barrier on the beds, and covered the area with multiple inches of fresh pine straw. Quite a difference! Thanks for all the help.

*Continued on next page >*

## TDC Returns Tax Dollars to the Island

Each month the Franklin County Tourist Development Council (TDC) receives funds resulting from the collection of a local option 2% sales tax on all short-term rentals. These funds are then used for advertising and promotion of the county through a variety of media. Promotion of the community also occurs through the financial support of non-profits who perform functions that bring liveliness and character—and often visitors—to the area. The island associations receiving support in 2019-2020 include the following well-known institutions and events.

### St George Lighthouse Association:

The Lighthouse Association received two grants from the TDC. The \$2,000 Event grant will be used to promote and advertise the Tour of Homes, a major fundraiser for SGLA held each February. (February 8 in 2020!) Specifically, funds will be applied to design and production of posters as well as radio and newspaper ads in targeted communities.

The \$12,000 Museum Grant assists in keeping the Lighthouse and Museum open to Visitors throughout the year. An average 30,000 visitors come each year, with most taking the opportunity to climb to the top of the Lighthouse. The SGI Lighthouse is not only a rare, valuable historic landmark but is also the beautiful, tangible symbol of our island way of life.

### Rock by the Sea

Rock by the Sea, a 4-night music festival held on the Island, has again received TDC money for promotions (reimbursed funds) made outside of the area. Rock by the Sea regularly brings in over 300 people (and has had as many as 900), not including between 40-80 musicians, who all stay in rental homes, condos or the two hotels, usually for up to a week. May 2020 will be the 12th year for the Spring event and the 11th year for a fall event. Visitors from as many as 42 states and 6 countries have attended over the years. The TDC money has allowed us to market our events through various music communities in the Northeast and the Midwest. In turn, Rock by the Sea has given back by donating \$195,000 to two children's health programs at the University of Florida: Pediatric Brain Tumor Program and Brain Tumor Immunotherapy Program. Locally, the charity has donated

*Continued on next page >*

more than \$50,000 to entities, including Humane Society, Franklin's Promise, "Summer Reading Program" of The Friends of the Library, "Music as a Second Language" of Franklin County Schools. "Cops for Kids" of Franklin County Sheriff's Office. A special effort in 2019 was a fundraising event for unemployed staff of Harry A's, which closed after Hurricane Michael.

### **SGI Paint Out**

The St. George Island Paint Out is a 503 (c) 3 non-profit. The organization was developed to promote St. George Island as a painting destination for artists, from all over the world, to demonstrate their skills by painting in the outdoors or plein air. While participating in this annual Spring, week-long event, the artists also offer workshops to those interested in learning to paint or enhancing their painting skills. In last year's event, a special workshop included local students. The public is welcome to attend all events for free, with the exception of the workshops and the final Champagne reception, which require fees. TDC's grant to us will provide money necessary to advertise and promote our event on television, radio, newspapers and Facebook. SGI Paint Out does not make commissions from sale of paintings or workshops by the artists. The event is to strengthen the island and its arts community.

### **Brewfest**

The SGI Brewfest is a one-day craft beer festival that promotes the growing craft beer/local brewing scene to benefit the Franklin County Humane Society. Using the demographic targeting capabilities of social media marketing, our TDC grant money has been successfully used to promote visitation during a relatively slow time of year for the county. Over the past 4 years, SGI Brewfest has attracted nearly 3,000 visitors from twenty US states as well as England and Spain, and raised over \$100,000 for the FCHS. The Brewfest also has created a significant economic boost for St. George Island and surrounding areas. Brewfest attendees tend to travel in groups of three or more, and stay at least one night in Franklin County. They eat at local restaurants 2-3 times during their stay and visit an average of six other local businesses.

The TDC also awarded a grant to the SGI Volunteer Fire Department for the annual Chili Cook Off. No write up was available at publication time.

## Success Stories, cont.



**Debris created by volunteers—nearly as high as an automobile.**

**This was only one landscape bed.**



**After all vines and weeds were removed, dwarf oleander and muhly emerged. Pine straw and weed barrier were added by county Parks & Rec staff.**

## EXCERPTS FROM

# Letters of Support for FDOT Beautification Grant

**United States Senator Marco Rubio:** Improving beautification is one element of storm water and infrastructure improvements to the island to maintain livability to attract tourists and permanent residents to the area.... I applaud the Franklin County Board of County Commissioners on its efforts.

**Congressman Neal Dunn:** Franklin County, a rural coastal community located in the Big Bend of the Florida Panhandle, has traditionally relied on the seafood industry for its economy.... Today, the major industry supporting Franklin County is tourism, with its popular destinations of Apalachicola and St George Island drawing hundreds of thousands of visitors annually.

**State Senator Bill Montford:** This grant represents a major step in the effort to preserve and protect one of the state's environmentally and economically important barrier islands.

**State Representative Jason Shoaf:** This causeway was last improved in 2003 but has since suffered from increasingly hostile coastal conditions and, most recently, from Hurricane Michael. Improving beautification at the entrance...will improve livability on the island.

**Sheriff A. J. Smith:** Safety improvements to the causeway, including a proposed pedestrian crosswalk and other traffic slowing devices, will reduce the likelihood of accidents involving pedestrians who increasingly use this area for sightseeing.

**Mayor Van Johnson, City of Apalachicola:** We believe that improvements to the island and the county will result in improvements for Apalachicola, through increased revenues, increased community spirit, and greater sustainability of our area.

**St George Plantation Owner's Association:** We believe quality landscaping enhances property values, protects the environment, and strengthens a sense of community for residents and tourists.

*Continued on next page >*

## Duke Energy Gives \$2,000 Grant to SGI Civic Club

Duke Energy Foundation announced in late August that it has awarded the Civic Club a \$2000 grant. Specifically, the grant was awarded to assist our efforts post-Hurricane Michael to recover from the storm water damage done to landscaping at Franklin Blvd and SR300 Causeway to the bridge. The Civic Club and Trash Patrol volunteers have performed hands-on work cleaning debris and trimming landscaping. In addition, volunteers have raised funds and written grants to fund necessary improvements. The restored and new landscaping will feature salt tolerant plants that will make the area more sustainable to future storm events.

"We are proud to support the efforts of the St. George Island Civic Club as they work to recover from Hurricane Michael," said Danny Collins, Government and Community Relations Manager for Duke Energy. "This project will help protect the natural beauty of this island that makes it a truly special place for visitors and locals alike."

Duke Energy has held volunteer events on the island in recent years in partnership with Franklin County Emergency Management which resulted in the planting of thousands of sea oats to help mitigate beach erosion.

The beautification of the entrance to the island is part of a multi-year island capital improvement effort known as SGI2025 Vision, a long range plan for the island developed last year by the Civic Club and its membership. Other projects underway include a RESTORE grant for remedying the storm water problem from the roadways in the island commercial area and a search for funding sources for replacement of the island's Lighthouse Park public restroom in the commercial district. For more about the SGI2025 Vision and how you can help with the effort, check out our website at [www.sgicivicclub.com](http://www.sgicivicclub.com).



## Beautification Grant Request Moves to Next Level of Competition

The partnership between the Civic Club and Franklin County government to win a grant for landscaping the causeway to St George Island successfully passed the first round of judging with only a few suggestions for changes.

Among the modifications is the decision to pursue a future (proposed for 2020) grant for Phase II that will fund the restoration of native and other plantings to the east side of the causeway where an unauthorized road was created on FDOT Right-of-Way. Restoring sturdy plantings will help mitigate future erosion. This is Item 2 in the concept plan illustration. Item 7, the placement

*Continued on next page >*

of a crosswalk from the parking area to the Welcome sign, was already completed this month by FDOT. The state also advised that our new palms should be no shorter than 8 foot, so we made that adjustment in our grant request. Finally, the District 3 FDOT office suggested that we add a state map with an arrow pointing to the island so that the judges from central and south Florida could figure out where St George Island is located.

In other discussions, we have listened to member suggestions of what hardscape items, such as benches or garbage can surrounds, might be added to make the area more comfortable. The Club currently has two benches located on the west side; however, given the increasing numbers of individuals taking advantage of the sunset views, more are needed. Another member suggested permitting donors to place a memorial engraving on a bench if a donation was made in honor of a family member or association, as is done by the Lighthouse brick pavers today. One suggestion that came to us from FDOT and other sources is the installation of public art, a concept that is increasingly popular throughout the country. The State of Florida is currently supporting a project to establish large public art installations along well-traveled state roads in the middle of the state. None of these items are covered by the grant and would need to be purchased through fundraising efforts of the Civic Club or private donations.

The final submission of the grant request is due before the end of September. We will learn if we are chosen by the statewide committee in November. Construction will begin in February 2020.



<https://www.leopoldgallery.com/wind-sculptures/lyman-whitaker/>

## Letter of Support, cont.

**Sgi Trash Patrol:** The problem begins at the entrance to the island, where perpetual trash creates a precedent for careless littering.... Beautification of the island entrance would, we are convinced, be a huge asset in cutting down the amount of litter island-wide by creating the message that the island is and should be appreciated and well cared for.

**Apalachicola Bay Chamber of Commerce:** The Apalachicola Bay Chamber of Commerce represents businesses in Apalachicola, St. George Island, and Eastpoint, FL. This grant will help restore attractive natural-looking landscaping, ensuring greater sustainability of this area.

**Sgi Resident Greg Howington:** My experience (as a General Contractor) taught me the value to the community of good planning and natural amenities....The current state of the entry way landscaping and hardscapes on to the island does not begin to represent the quality of this area to the State of Florida.

**Sgi Business Association:** These funds will be used to enhance the attractiveness and sustainability of the entrance to the island, a significant tourist attraction for the county and a major source of revenue.

**Franklin County Tourist Development Council:** As its major industry, sustained tourist development is important not only to the island but also the entire county which benefits from its growing success.

**St George Lighthouse Association:** We...are tasked with the ongoing maintenance and upkeep of the lighthouse as well as educating locals and visitors about the maritime history of North Florida....An appropriately attractive entrance will support the island as a tourist destination and will be more in line with the landscaping that is maintained in Lighthouse Park.



**Overall Concept Plan. Scale 1:70**

### Project Narrative

Beautification of SR300, the entrance to unincorporated St George Island, is a critical element in "SGI Vision 2025" <http://sgicivicclub.com/sgiv2025.html>. The all-volunteer SGI Civic Club, with more than 500 members, spent a year developing the Master Plan for the island commercial district, the 70 acre area that reaches beach to bay, and avenues 3rd to 3rd. This long-range plan resulted from County Ordinance 2018-02, that called for improvements designed to convey the island as "unique, attractive, vibrant and economically prosperous." The citizens, through live public workshops, online discussion on a website created for this purpose, and online voting, chose the improvements they felt would best accomplish the goal of creating an entrance to the island that is welcoming and attractive. Hurricane Michael spurred a prioritizing of beautification of the Causeway from Bryant Patton Bridge to Franklin Blvd (SR300) because of the damage to landscaping that already needed refurbishing. In addition, Greg Howington, an island resident and retired developer from Atlanta, donated \$5000 to the Civic Club to hire a landscape architect to guide a specific beautification plan and pay other costs. The Franklin County Commission gave preliminary approval to the draft grant proposal in July. The Civic Club has had a successful fundraising year and is committing several thousand dollars, in addition to the single donation by Mr. Howington, to other ineligible items in the plan. The St. George Island beautification project is a high impact and low maintenance dune landscape planting that is cost effective and context appropriate for the island landscape. The plant species are a mix of native palms, broadleaf evergreen trees and shrubs, groundcovers, and grasses. All of the plants are selected from the Florida Friendly landscape plant list and are rated for high drought and salt tolerance. A variety of large sized plants will create a lush and fully layered aesthetic that is both beautiful and good for carbon sequestration. In addition to the new plantings, areas of former Muhly Grass bioswales will be replanted as ecological restoration. The overall concept plan works to create visual buffers where needed and augment views to the water and sunset to frame picturesque moments. The St. George Island Civic Club aspires to further complement the new plantings and restoration areas with upgrades to existing areas are indicated on the plan. Specific plant species, size, and quantities are detailed in the budget. The conceptual plan is designed to comply with all state and federal regulations, design standards, and site lines. Currently, the causeway is one of the county's most littered areas, as drivers speed up to exit or enter the bridge. These wind-blown items then contribute to pollution of the Bay. The plan includes traffic slowing devices that will help reduce speed. The attractiveness of the new landscaping will generate more respect and interest in the area. With the commitment of the county Parks & Recreation department, the Sheriff's Office, and the all-volunteer SGI Trash Patrol the area will become one of the most beneficial additions to this beautiful natural area.



Example Photos of Planting Types

Legend

1. Existing Welcome Sign
2. Phase II Restoration
3. Restored Native Grasses Planting and Bioswales
4. Dense and Colorful Entry Plantings
5. Proposed Dune Plantings with Crushed Shell Mulch
6. Proposed Sand Live Oaks with Native Shrubs
7. Proposed Crosswalk
8. Proposed Improved Sunset Park
9. Proposed Public Art Installation

- Existing Cabbage Palm
- Proposed Sand Live Oak
- Proposed Cabbage Palm 12'
- Proposed Cabbage Palm 8'
- Proposed Evergreen Shrub
- Restored Muhly Grass Bioswale
- Colorful Ornamental Plantings

## MARK YOUR CALENDARS SGI Civic Club Annual

# LUAU

**Oct. 17, 2019**

The Civic Club will provide the barbecue pork, fresh cooked on site by expert chefs Mason Bean and Paul Rieglmeyer. All members are asked to bring a side dish to fill the table at the beautiful setting of Lighthouse Park. Social time begins at 6:30 pm, with dinner served at 7 pm.

Bring your chairs and your own beverages, although tea will be served. The October weather will be perfect for enjoying your friends, the beach, and fresh fall air. Wear your best tropical outfit. Come out at 9 am to help set up and decorate. Or come early at 5 pm to help set up food and paper plates. Stay until the stars come out and enjoy an evening walk on the beach.

See you then!

Photo by Issac Lang



### Progress on State Park Recovery Promises Better Than Ever

In July the Civic Club members enjoyed the lively presentation by their dinner guest speaker Lance Kelly, Assistant Park Manager of the St George Island State Park. His remarks included a report of Hurricane Michael recovery efforts as well as characteristics of our park that make it unique in the Panhandle. And of course, a plea for volunteers!

Officially known as the Dr. Julian G. Bruce St. George Island State Park, the area encompasses roughly 2,023 acres of the easternmost 9 miles of St. George Island. Like many areas of the Florida Panhandle, the Park sustained heavy damages from Hurricane Michael on October 10, 2018. Around 80% of the primary dune structure in the park was over-washed by exceptionally high storm surge, resulting in the displacement of beach sand onto the roadway and beach use areas. Park Drive was buried under three to four feet of sand for the first mile. Sections of asphalt were floated or destroyed. Boardwalks and pavilions were damaged to the point of inaccessibility. The campground infrastructure sustained heavy damages from the storm surge. Individual campsites had to be rewired, and compromised underground water shut-off valves had to be replaced.

The East End of St. George Island Park, a 5-mile "Special Use Area" designated for fishing and limited to 20 cars and pedestrian traffic, suffered extensive roadway damages, rendering this section of the park inaccessible to the public. Because of the compromised stability of this ecologically sensitive area, the East End Special Use Area remains closed today, but further analysis will take place upon the conclusion of sea turtle and shorebird nesting seasons this winter.

In addition to its beautiful beaches providing recreation and sport, the park's mosaic of high-quality upland and wetland

*Continued on next page >*



natural communities provides exceptional habitat for listed bird species. It has the most diverse shorebird nesting of all the Florida State Parks along the northwest Florida Gulf Coast with the highest abundance of overwintering piping plovers, among other species. During the spring and fall migration, it is also a major area for neotropical birds and raptors.

Although the hurricane impacted many North Florida human and natural resource communities, the storm had some positive effects for wildlife at St. George Island State Park. The storm altered coastal dune areas of the natural ecosystem by reshaping dune structure and vegetative zones. The resulting “reset” of the state park increased the activities of many key species in North Florida. The park is currently monitoring over 50 sea turtle nests including a green sea turtle nest and a leatherback sea turtle false-crawl. The park has seen increased shorebird nesting activities for many species including snowy plovers, Wilson’s plovers, least terns, sandwich terns, black skimmers and American oystercatchers.

St. George Island State Park reopened to the public on March 1 of this year and has seen increased visitation and attendance ever since. Camping and day-use visitation numbers continue to increase, and the park is returning to a semblance of normalcy.

Many 2019-2020 improvements are underway to enhance visitor experience. Contracts are in place to repair the picnic pavilions at the beach use areas and the addition of a mixed-use bicycle path adjacent to Park Drive is in the key stages of implementation. The park is also working to expand its interpretive program offerings to include Dark Sky Observation programs along with guided kayak ecotours. The park will continue to improve visitor facilities while safeguarding natural resources. The goal is to provide a harmonious visitor-to-nature experience for generations to come.

People make the parks, and many volunteers contribute time and talent to support the diverse operational and maintenance needs of a park. Florida State Parks benefit from volunteers who conduct all facets of park operations including grounds and facility maintenance, interpretive programs, and fee collection. St. George Island State Park welcomes volunteers! Whether you can contribute an hour, a day or a month, the park could use your help. Volunteer applications are available at the St. George Island Park, as well as our two satellite parks in Apalachicola, the John Gorrie State Museum and the Orman House Historic State Park.

St. George Island State Park continues to progress in its quest to protect natural resources and provide outdoor recreation opportunities for the enjoyment of generations of Florida residents and visitors. Thank you for your continued support of St. George Island State Park, and we look forward to seeing you during your next visit. Don’t forget the sunscreen! Reach out to [Lance.Kelly@FloridaDEP.gov](mailto:Lance.Kelly@FloridaDEP.gov)

St. George Island

*Art & Wine*  
*Splash*  
2019

OCTOBER

12

1-5 pm

TICKET & GLASS — \$25

SGI Visitor Center Sometimes It’s Hotter Island Dog Seaside Cotton



Sponsored by  
SGI Business Association





## Hurricane Preparation Time

The Florida Hurricane season lasts through Nov. 30 with mid-August through October being the high season. It is important to have a plan if you stay or if you leave and important information is available on the Franklin County Emergency Management website. If you evacuate, you'll need a Re-Entry tag. If you already have a valid entry tag and your address has not changed, you can simply write "NA" over the expiration date - no need to update it annually.

Go to [www.franklinemergencymanagement.com](http://www.franklinemergencymanagement.com) then click on the "programs" tab to access the Re-Entry Tag form. Fill out the form and mail, fax or email it to:

Jennifer Daniels, SPN Coordinator  
Franklin County Emergency Management  
28 Airport Rd, Apalachicola FL 32320  
Email: [em1frank@fairpoint.net](mailto:em1frank@fairpoint.net)  
Fax: 850-653-3642

### Acceptable forms of Residency Verification (Need only one of form of residency with form)

- Water/Power/Cable Bill
- Tax Form for property
- Property Appraiser property information
- Voter Registration
- Driver's License

The Re-Entry Tag will only be issued to the address on the proof of residency.



## August Speaker Bill Mills Introduces "FRESHSTART VISIONS" Re-Entry Program

Freshstart Visions is a faith-based, non-profit focused solely on reducing recidivism, the return to prison of offenders who have been released from incarceration. Nationally, the rate of recidivism is 70%. The success of the FreshStart program is evidenced by data which indicates that compared to that national 70% recidivism rate, FreshStart graduates of the two year program return to prison at a rate of only 5%.

The FreshStart Visions currently operates in South Carolina and Florida. The program takes a two-step, two-year approach. Participants must first complete a rigorous Year One Inside Prison, with a focus on discovering ways to create a change in heart and mind and to seek God's Plan for each person. Approximately 30 local volunteers teach classes each day, such as Anger Management, Parenting, and GED subjects in addition to the Freshstart curriculum. Also, ten local pastors conduct men's and women's church each Sunday on a rotating basis. They also serve as mentors, helping prepare participants for life outside of prison. FreshStart Visions provides programs in the local Franklin County Jail and in state institutions, including Franklin Correctional Institution Main Unit and Work Camp (Carrabelle), Bay Correctional (Panama City), Wakulla Correc-

*Continued on next page >*

tional (Crawfordville), Liberty Correctional (Bristol), and Gadsden Re-Entry Center (Quincy). Approximately 190 inmates participate in these programs.

After this first year, FreshStart Visions helps participants transition to out-of-prison housing, for up to one year. They also receive job placement assistance and help in locating a new church home and mentoring while they are at this new location. Currently, the out-of-prison program has five homes providing 50 beds for transitioning participants in Charleston, SC. Two homes in Panama City have sixteen beds.

Goals for 2019 and 2020 include the launch of the Inside Prison program into a minimum of five additional prisons in state Department of Corrections Region 1, which includes the Panhandle from Tallahassee to Alabama line. To accomplish this, FreshStart Visions will continue to rely on and grow our financial donations from local churches, civic organizations, corporations, and individual donors. We will also continue to recruit volunteers both in Franklin County and across the Panhandle.

FreshStart Visions staff, volunteers, and participants sincerely appreciate the generosity of the SGI Civic Club and its members as we go about the work of changing lives. For more information about opportunities to support or volunteer, please contact Bill Mills at [generalmillsiv@gmail.com](mailto:generalmillsiv@gmail.com). Bill is the Florida Region 1 Director.



## Upcoming Vote on 2020 SGI Civic Club Officers

### Sept 19, Dinner Meeting

The Nominating Committee, led by past president James Donald, will present a slate of nominees and open the floor for additional candidates. The 2020 board will have two vacancies. If you want to volunteer, contact James at [jdonal278@gmail.com](mailto:jdonal278@gmail.com).

The electronic ballot will appear in an email to members in early November. Members can vote by email or regular mail.

### Nov 21, Dinner Meeting

The balloting for 2020 Civic Club officers will close. All electronic and paper ballots must be in by the close of the dinner meeting.

# ECCC Advocates for Need Based Services in Franklin County.

Elder Care Community Council (ECCC) continues to develop initiatives to expand its reach in the area of senior advocacy. One of those programs that has been effective in this effort is ECCC's Franklin Neighbor 2 Neighbor (N2N) co-chaired by Ellie Trujillo and Connie Finneran.

Trujillo and Finneran have taken their mission of service on the road, knocking on the doors of businesses, organizations, churches, governmental, local and state agencies in an effort to develop partnerships and obtain information for services that are not currently offered in Franklin.

"ECCC's goal for N2N is to help Franklin County residents safely remain in their homes. We want to connect people with the support they need by matching up volunteers with people that need the assistance. Volunteers are here to help link people with services, advocate for them and to try to increase the quality of life. We want to be that bridge

*Continued on next page >*



## Islanders Welcome Back Iconic Harry A's Restaurant & Bar

No damage from Hurricane Michael was more acutely felt by St George Island residents and visitors than the loss of Harry A's Restaurant and Bar. When Michael brought the Bay waters inland, the crest reached a height of 5 feet, washing out the breakaway lower walls and coming to a stop in the back of the patio area. As bad as it appeared, very little critical structural damage occurred. But restoration did not come quickly or easily.

Harry A's has been a tradition on the island since the early 80s, when the business was little more than a screened porch. No one is willing to try to estimate all the facelifts and minor remodels since that time, with each change generally expanding capacity. Long before smoking was banned in public spaces in Florida, Harry A's patrons took full advantage. Islanders who remember those days say that when they arrived home after a Friday night spent at the bar, they would leave their clothes outside to avoid bringing the tobacco smell into their homes. As testament to its reputation for conviviality, Tom Tiffin, island owner since the early 80s and owner of Tiffin's Furniture, once had an office in an upstairs apartment. He recalls fondly coming downstairs at the end of the day to join all the locals who would gather for cocktails and story-telling.

In all those years Harry A's never had more than two owners, one who owned the building and one who owned the business, including the liquor license. In 2012 Patrick Kelly took over as manager of the restaurant and bar and put together his own team of chefs and staff. He looked forward to a time when he might buy, but before that could happen, Hurricane Michael came washing in. After the initial clean up, the building sat untouched as the owners decided what to do. Their decision to sell everything "as is" was a surprise. Investor Vince Lindley, who has other property on the island, stepped up and took the responsibility of re-creating Harry A's. And Patrick was able to become the owner of the business that he had desired.

*Continued on next page >*

The renovations revealed a host of surprises. Removing old tile revealed a tree stump around which the floor had been laid, level with the top of the stump. Replacing kitchen appliances revealed that the cooler had once sat outside on a concrete slab but a subsequent wall and roof brought it inside. All electrical and kitchen equipment is now energy efficient. Most of the plumbing required replacement; inside a wall there still existed a spigot no longer connected to a water supply with the word “water” spray painted above. No one remembers why. Decorating decisions included removing all the dollars bills, posters, photos and signs that had found a home on those walls over the years. The plan is to add back only a few original pieces by local artists, more in keeping with the new face of the granddaddy of island hang outs. Gone are the dark walls, leather booths and floors. In their place is light pine, hewn cypress, and ceramic tile. A corrugated aluminum ceiling, revealed through the renovation, became the inspiration for a similar surround for the bar and other locations.

On August 10th Harry A’s began re-opening on August 9 on a schedule that would take several weeks, adding back food services over time. Aside from the building improvements, the most gratifying for the new owners was the return of so many of the original staff, most of whom having taken temporary positions hoping that Harry A’s would come back. And back it is! Harry A’s with its new style but same commitment to hospitality now is no longer just the island’s oldest bar, but a symbol of the transition from the St George Island of the past to its future as an attractive and welcoming place for generations to come.



## ECCC Advocates, cont.

for our community,” said Ellie Trujillo.

ECCC’s mission is advocating for smart policies and systems that create a community where everyone has equal opportunities to services.

If you are interested in participating, volunteering or partnering with us, you can contact us at [holyfamilyseniorcenter@gmail.com](mailto:holyfamilyseniorcenter@gmail.com) or 850.653.3134 or ECCC at [ecccfranklin@gmail.com](mailto:ecccfranklin@gmail.com) or 850.509.5009. Please visit our facebook pages Holy Family Senior Center and ECCC- E Triple C to stay informed on the latest events and activities at the Center.

Another great source to use for connecting to local resources is the Elder Helpline 1.800.963.5337. Sponsored by the Florida Department of Elder Affairs, the helpline staff can provide answers to your questions about aging issues, local services, and other resources available in your community.

**Elder Care Community Council**

# Volunteer Appreciation

Tuesday, September 17, 2019

**5-7 PM**

**Holy Family Senior Center**  
203 Dr. Frederick Humphries Blvd.  
Apalachicola, Florida  
850.653.3134

*Save the Date*

*please RSVP*

On or before Friday, September 13, 2019  
via email: [holyfamilyseniorcenter@gmail.com](mailto:holyfamilyseniorcenter@gmail.com)  
or phone 850.653.3134

# Pine bark Beetles and Hurricane Michael

Submitted by Lon Wilkens

Beginning with observations in the Plantation, St. George Island is suffering a significant mortality of pine trees, all the way into the state park. (\*) Each of the dead trees examined so far shows evidence of attack by pine bark beetles. Erik Lovstrand, Franklin County Extension Director, believes the beetle to be one of three Ips species common in the Southeast and, indeed, I have identified live *Ips grandicollis*, the eastern five-spined engraver beetle extracted from a tree in the Plantation. Although not yet found on the island, the southern pine beetle, *Dendroctonus frontalis* is responsible for most attacks on pine forests in the south.



Trees under stress are particularly susceptible to bark beetle attack by giving off odors that attract the beetles. In turn, beetle pheromones recruit

additional beetles. Drought and root, trunk or limb damage are common forms of stress but undetected physical damage from high winds, such as experienced during hurricane Michael, is also capable of stressing pine trees.

Further, there is consensus that exposure to seawater has stressed trees locally, particularly since many of the dead and dying trees occur in low-lying

areas submerged by the tidal surge for extended periods. As illustrated, beetle infestations are evident from reddish blobs of resin on the tree bark, an attempt to wall off the in-bor-



ing beetle, and from numerous 1-2 mm diameter shot holes left from emerging beetles, in addition to grass on the bark below the holes. Tunneling in the inner bark, the cambium and phloem layers is what kills the tree. A blue fungus introduced by the beetle also plugs the xylem causing the crown to wilt more rapidly. During

*Continued on next page >*



## Apalachicola National Estuarine Research Reserve celebrates its 40 Years

The Apalachicola National Estuarine Research Reserve celebrates its 40th anniversary this year. Designated by Congress in 1979, the Reserve is the second largest research reserve in the nation comprising over 234,000 acres of pristine bay, river and uplands that provide essential habitat for countless species of fish and wildlife including those that are economically important like shrimp, crabs and oysters. The Reserve employs twenty-six people in Franklin County and brings a direct economic investment of over \$2 million dollars into each year from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) through the Florida



Department of Environmental Protection.

Many people think of the Reserve as just a nature center, the place you go on school field trips or bring your out-of-town relatives, but research and monitoring are our core functions. The Reserve regularly collects data on water quality and weather such as: salinity, pH, dissolved oxygen and temperature of the air and water. This vital scientific information gives a picture of the health of the Apalachicola Bay and River. We also study the fish and invertebrates such as crabs, shrimp, and oysters that call the estuary home. You can view the Reserve's data at <http://fldep-stevens.com/> or <http://cdmo.baruch.sc.edu/get/landing.cfm>.

We share the data we collect with NOAA where it contributes to the national picture of the health of coastal areas. The National Estuarine Research Reserve's System Wide Monitoring Program (SWMP, pronounced "swamp") was established in 1995. This program is a means of observing short-term variability and long-term changes in estuarine regions around the country. Researchers, resource managers, educators, and coastal decision makers can access standardized, quantitative measures to determine how coastal conditions are changing. By using standard procedures for each component across all 29 reserves, SWMP data helps establish the reserves as a system of national reference sites, as well as a network of sentinel sites for detecting and understanding the effects of climate change in coastal regions.

Biological monitoring is also an important part of the Reserve's research program. Long-term monitoring of juvenile fishes and invertebrate sampling began in July 2000. We now have collected

*Continued on next page >*

more than 15 years of data on fishes, shrimps and crabs in Apalachicola Bay. In 2016, we added zooplankton (a microscopic source of food for fish) to its long-term Biological Monitoring Program. Four times a year research staff collect samples of these tiny macroscopic animals at each of our nutrient sampling stations. We're hoping that this new dataset will help determine linkages between water quality and the river and bay biological communities.

The Reserve participates in NOAA's Sentinel Sites Program which focuses on addressing the impacts of climate change. Surface elevation tables installed around Apalachicola Bay track changes in the elevation of the marsh surface. This and other parameters are monitored to measure changes in local sea level, which will give us valuable information of how vulnerable our marshes, coastline, and community will be to sea level change.

Our Stewardship program is tasked with protecting, maintaining and restoring 6,800-acres of uplands adjacent to the shorelines and marshes of the estuary including Little St. George Island, and several other sites bordering Apalachicola Bay with the goal of protecting the bay's water quality, and serving as public access points for a variety of low impact recreational opportunities.

Good stewardship is key to maintaining the estuary's productivity and health. Communicating ways to minimize the human impact on the bay and river are integral in everything we do. We work with community leaders and other land managers to address management issues and promote good stewardship of this important and unique natural resource by facilitating a better understanding of what an estuary is and why they are important. We also work with K-12 students as well as scientists and graduate students to conduct research in this "living laboratory."

Key accomplishments over the past 40 years include providing long-term data on water conditions in Apalachicola Bay to the State of Florida for its state and federal court cases, including the Florida v. Georgia U.S. Supreme Court case. In addition, the Reserve opened the new Nature Center in 2011, moving from its small home in Apalachicola to our current facility located on 28 acres in Eastpoint that attracts 30,000 visitors per year. The new 5,400 square foot nature center has three large tanks, a mural depicting the ecosystems of the area and a Bay Discovery Room with skeletons, fossils and preserved marine life to explore and examine close-up.

As we enter the next 40 years, the Reserve hopes to gain an even better understanding of the Apalachicola estuarine system for all the communities, marine and human, that rely on it.

## Beetle, cont.

summer, trees attacked by the bark beetle die in a matter of several weeks.

Once infected there is no effective treatment for saving the tree. In forested areas, infested trees are removed to stop the spread of beetles including a perimeter of live trees, a solution ill-suited for residential areas such as on St. George Island. Although bark beetle die offs of pine trees are eventually self-limiting we may continue to lose trees stressed by hurricane Michael. As noted by entomologists from the Florida Forest Service, latent pine mortality can continue for several years due to wind damage and stress from previous hurricanes. For more information, see UF-IFAS discussion at <https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/pdf/FR/FR39900.pdf>.



20th Annual  
**FRANKLIN  
COASTAL  
ANNUAL  
CLEANUP**

**SEPT  
20**  
8:30-11:30 AM

**VOLUNTEERS SHOULD WEAR OR BRING:**

Sunscreen, Bug Spray,  
Protective clothing (hats, long pants,  
long-sleeved shirts

**VOLUNTEERS WILL BE PROVIDED:**

Trash Bags, Gloves,  
Data Cards, Snacks,  
Drinking Water, T-shirts

BE PART OF

*The Forgotten Crew*  
**VOLUNTEERS**

Contact Ada Long at 850-927-3776  
adalong@uab.edu

**F**or at least two decades, Apalachicola Riverkeeper and its co-sponsors—Ocean Conservancy and the Franklin County Departments of Parks & Recreation and Solid Waste & Recycling—have sponsored annual cleanups on the third Saturday of September cleanups throughout the county. In one year, for instance, 349 volunteers, including 24 site coordinators, helped clean up our beaches, islands, bay, and river at 17-20 sites. Volunteers ranged in age from 2 to 75+. According to estimates by coordinators, volunteers collected 10.93 tons of trash: 364 bags of cans, bottles, cigarette butts, plastic, styrofoam, fishing gear, ropes, and other litter—as well as a Darth Vader case, Tonka toy truck, skull of a wild hog, bathroom sink full of oyster shells, fire hydrant, car headlight, refrigerator, bear trap, 9 baseball caps, men’s underwear, and a (half) bottle of rum.





# ST. GEORGE ISLAND AND EASTPOINT HAVE ALWAYS BEEN AMONG THE MOST ACTIVE CLEANUP SITES. THE NUMBERS FOR LAST YEAR (2018) WERE:

Sgi downtown: .....41 volunteers who collected 1,380 pounds of trash  
Sgi State Park .....11 volunteers who collected 100 pounds of trash  
Little St. George .....26 volunteers who collected 100 pounds of trash  
Eastpoint downtown .....5 volunteers who collected 650 pounds of trash  
Eastpoint Millender Park .....13 volunteers who collected 320 pounds of trash



Bellamy is a 6 week old Golden Lab. He is super sweet and social with stunning green eyes. He is available for adoption and may go home in 2 weeks. 850-670-8417



## SGI CIVIC CLUB BOARD MEMBERS

President: Michael O'Connell  
MikeOconnell@sgicivicclub.com

Vice-President: Jim Morris  
jim.morr98@yahoo.com

Secretary: Loula Fuller-Myer  
lfuller@fuller-myers.com

Treasurer: Carol McCormick  
carolflys@gmail.com

Past Pres: James Donald  
James.Donald@sgicivicclub.com

At-Large: Ben Mathewson  
benz256@mac.com

At-Large: Pleas Howe  
pleassgi@gmail.com

## COMMITTEES

Communications: Buena Brown  
buena.brown@sgicivicclub.com

Winter Bingo: Ben Mathewson  
benz256@mac.com

Gov't Relations: Pat O'Connell  
poconnell1414@gmail.com

Fundraising & Charitable Giving:  
Jim Morris  
jim.morr98@yahoo.com