



# The eSkimmer

Southeast Volusia Audubon Society, Inc.

Issue Vol. III- No. 6

October , 2008

The Southeast Volusia Audubon Society promotes the protection of birds, other wildlife and their habitat through education and activism.

## Prez Sez

Welcome to a new season of Audubon fun. Over the summer, we were busy with several issues including protection of birds at the Smyrna Dunes Park and the Restoration development in Edgewater. This coming year, we will have a series of meetings with new speakers and exciting field trips.

On 23 September the executive committee approved a plan for the new season. Hallmarks of the plan include:

- ♦ Continue to fight for the protection of resting and nesting birds at Smyrna Dunes Park.
- ♦ Restoration and the Edgewater visioning. We need to inject ourselves into the DRI process to ensure that the pie-in-the-sky green community is actually mandated by including the greenest building practices as part of the final documents. We will press the city of Edgewater to change the comprehensive plan and other zoning and planning documents so that the principles that are promised by the developers are actually carried out by the ultimate builders.
- ♦ Provide local schools the opportunity for Environmental Education programs at the Scrub Jay Habitat at the Edgewater YMCA. This will possibly involve setting up an interpretive trail and providing brochures to the schools so they can take the students to the park and learn about the scrub habitat.
- ♦ Birding 101 to attract more members or at least more people sympathetic to the need for habitat protection for birds and other animals.
- ♦ Myrtle Avenue Park garden. The science club at the NSB Middle School is enthusiastic about following through with the plan begun at the end of last semester. We will use the bequest from Debbie Thomas for part of the funding for the project and dedicate it to Debbie and Donnadine, both of whom recently passed away.
- ♦ We will develop partnerships with other like-minded groups in the area for some of these projects, and we will look to you to volunteer to help us out. Together, we can make a positive contribution to the future of our cities and citizens.

If you haven't seen it lately, I invite you to check out the website at <http://www.sevolusiaaudubon.org>.

I hope to see you soon.

—Don Picard

## Meetings

Meetings are held the 1st Wednesdays  
**Oct. thru March at 7 P.M.**

Edgewater Library 103 Indian River Blvd. 7: P.M.  
Smoke-free environment. Refreshments are served.  
Plenty of parking. Public welcome.

**Next meeting is October 1, 2008**

Speaker: **Bonnie Cary**

Volusia County Land Acquisition and Management  
*See Speakers, page 3*

Programs & Field trips subject to change.

## Field Trips

Field trips begin at 8:00 A.M. unless otherwise noted.  
Meet in the Market Square parking lot Edgewater, Ridgewood Ave. & 442, between Dunkin Donuts & Chik-Fil-A.

Bring lunch & drinks. Don't forget bug-spray!

**Sat., Oct. 4 - Smyrna Dunes Park**

See details p.4

Questions? Contact Gail Domroski 428-0447

Audubon members and guests are all welcome.

### Our Email Address

[the.skimmer@yahoo.com](mailto:the.skimmer@yahoo.com)

**If you'd like to have The eSkimmer emailed monthly, contact us at the above address. Type Subscribe in the subject line.**

### Our Website

<http://sevolusiaaudubon.org/>

One of the penalties for refusing to participate in politics is that you end up being governed by your inferiors.

-Plato

## Conservation Notes

It is encouraging to know we are being heard. I represent our chapter on the Audubon of FL East Central Regional Conservation Committee (RCC), which is a meeting for the Audubon conservation chairpersons of 7 counties. Due to a recommendation of the RCC a couple of months ago, the developer made a major change in the development map by moving the residences located in the middle of the conservation zone closer to the rest of the residential development. This will decrease human-wildlife interaction and we are pleased by this action. However, ultimately our goal is to stop the Restoration development altogether.



In the next couple of months the County council agendas will include a request for a public hearing to discuss Restoration development before the County Management, which SEVAS supports so that environmental concerns can be more fully addressed, and a motion that the County adopt the Smyrna Dunes Park Task Force final recommendations, which SEVAS does not support because the recommendations contain no protection for shorebirds, especially from unleashed dogs.

County Council meeting agendas are posted with only one week's notice and members need to be ready to attend and speak. Please use the <http://volusia.org/> site to look up the agenda periodically. We will also try to give timely notice at [www.sevolusiaaudubon.org](http://www.sevolusiaaudubon.org). The next County Council meeting will be Wednesday, October 22<sup>nd</sup> anytime from 9-5.

The City of Edgewater convened a workshop, "Envision Edgewater" in September, sponsored by the developers of Restoration. The workshop's purpose is to create a long term (~ 20 year) vision for Edgewater. Don Picard attended the first meeting and I attended the second. For more information about the first meeting, see [www.envisionedgewater.com](http://www.envisionedgewater.com). At the first meeting Don presented the conservation position of using low impact development techniques, water conservation and alternative energy for all future development in Edgewater, which will necessarily demand major and positive changes of our current zoning and codes.

The second meeting was attended by approximately 34 people, about half were private citizens, the rest developer and city staff. Mr. Canin, the primary facilitator, is the planner for the developer of Restoration. Mr. Canin's summary of the first meeting of the workshop was that residents are generally happy with their quality of life. Residents agree that Edgewater is affordable, safe and has a small town feel. Recommendations generally were to make better use of the waterfront, promote community events & programs, increase biking and pedestrian opportunities, build new city hall and create a main street. Everyone agreed that Edgewater's main draw is the waterfront.

The next part of the meeting was a review of slides previously viewed and rated high to low for what attendees would like to see for future developments in Edgewater. When we were shown an average of ratings that had been done in the previous meeting, it was striking that all of the highest rated slides included a lot of mature shade trees with other beautiful, well maintained landscaping, and with outdoor seating areas that give a "village look". Even when scenes had 2-3 story

buildings, as long as there were mature shade trees, the slides were rated highly for attractiveness. Regardless of architectural design, if the landscaping was not maintained, the scene was rated low. As soon as cars were added in the picture, there was a significant drop in rating. All scenes showing overhead utility lines were disliked.

One story buildings cannot easily be retro-fitted to multi-story. Residents in the story above the ground floor help keep the area vibrant as they will shop and eat in the area. The detriments to multi-story buildings were zoning changes and functionally, stair avoidance by many due to physical limitations. During storms, multi-story buildings would require a source of secondary power to run elevators because many people cannot climb stairs. Multiple stories require increased parking space. (this is not rocket science but I've been hearing so much about how development needs to go vertical to save land space, that I believed it without giving it any thought. But in reality, multiple story residences require more parking space, which correspondingly should be vertical, or mass transit provided). Consensus seemed strong for no residential development over 35 feet, as per current charter, although this is up for deletion in November.

There was a final recommendation that City Hall be placed on 442 in the May field (or across the road close to the airport because it's difficult to get people to live near the airport due to noise). It could be placed there because the deal with Publix fell through. The Middle School is still anticipated to be located on the south side of the field, although no permits have been issued for any development in the field to date and actually the field is still unincorporated. City Hall will contain administrative offices only. Police and Fire will be scattered throughout the communities they serve. Public works will be separate. Therefore, a large municipal center, with the associated increased costs for size and land required, will not be needed. Also Riverside Drive will not support the large amount of traffic from a municipal center. Long term, a municipal center will not be needed because City business will be done via Internet or some other non face to face medium.

To help prevent decay of US 1, it is recommended that Edgewater's main street be Park Ave, ending in the waterfront attraction, Kennedy Park. The boat ramp will be re-located to deeper water south of Roberts Rd. Kennedy Park will then be developed for diverse activities and landscaped with shade trees. Utility lines will be buried or placed at the back of buildings so as to not interfere with the shade tree canopy. It is envisioned that Park Ave, from all four corners of US 1 east to Kennedy Park, will consist of restaurants and businesses. One reason that it was decided that City Hall should not be taking up waterfront property, was that City Hall doesn't generate tax revenue. However, restaurants or other businesses, especially those on the waterfront, would generate tax revenue. In addition, some historic buildings will be moved from their current locations to Park Avenue to create a historic corridor. Historic tours would naturally follow. Some land along Park Avenue is available to create another park. Parking will be behind buildings. It is believed that increased attractiveness of Edgewater will help draw industries and their workers to our area. There are plans to widen Old Mission Rd to Park Avenue, and then develop the remainder of Park Ave to US 1 to encourage developments west of I-95 to come into town that way instead

## Conservation from p. 2

of 442. It was noted that workers for future industry will come from FL Shores and retention of FL Shores residents will be easier if there is an attractive main street and large park.

Sidewalks in FL Shores and bike paths were not addressed.

The next meeting will be a presentation of the new vision at the Edgewater City Council meeting Monday, October 20<sup>th</sup> at 7PM. Following that will be a presentation of a Community Vision Book December 8<sup>th</sup>. Minor revisions will still be allowed. Unfortunately there's no blog on [www.envisionedgewater.com](http://www.envisionedgewater.com) site yet. Meanwhile, e-mail interim City Manager, Tracey Barlow [tbarlow@cityofedgewater.com](mailto:tbarlow@cityofedgewater.com)

Audubon of FL asks that SEVAS support Amendment 4 which takes conservation land off tax rolls when the owner gives away all development rights for perpetuity. In the past to avoid taxes, property owners have cleared their land to make it agricultural. With this amendment, owners can leave the land natural and still avoid taxes.

If you have a conservation concern or need more information, please contact Kathy Booth, Conservation Chairperson at 416-8550.

—Kathy Booth

## Native & Nice

### *Mimosa strigillosa*

*Mimosa strigillosa*, is a low growing groundcover commonly called powder-puff for the shape of its showy pink flowers. When *Mimosa strigillosa* is touched, the leaves fold so it is also referred to as sensitive plant. *Mimosa* comes from the word mimic for the movement of the leaves.



Sensitive plant blooms most of the year and grows to less than 3-4" in height and can be mowed. It prefers full sun to part shade. *Mimosa strigillosa* likes moderate to moist conditions making it an excellent choice for low areas that collect water during the rainy season.

The Florida Nursery, Growers & Landscape Association named *Mimosa strigillosa* one of the 2008 "Plants of the Year" for its diverse nature. It is a fast growing legume. Just six plants can cover an area of 200-300 square feet in one growing season. The roots can become nodulated with nitrogen fixing bacteria reducing the need to fertilize. The dense, mat-like habit, and deep root system also make it an excellent choice for erosion control.

Little sulphur butterfly *Pyrisitia lisa* caterpillars will feed on powder-puff foliage. These larvae can be desirable (or not) depending on your point of view. It is not known to have any other diseases and seems to be deer resistant.

—Debbie Pell

*Mimosa strigillosa* is available at Lindley's Nursery & Garden Center, W. Canal St. & Old Mission Rd., in New Smyrna Beach.

## Speakers

Our **October** 1, speaker will be Bonnie Cary, the Outreach Education Coordinator for Volusia County Land Acquisition and Management. Many will know Bonnie from field trips to Longleaf Pines Preserve or other Volusia County properties. She is a dedicated and enthusiastic naturalist who is doing an exceptional job of keeping the county preserves natural and pristine while making them accessible to those who wish to enjoy our Florida flora and fauna.

See [Of Interest](#) on p.4 for a link.

Bonnie is a native Central Floridian, born in Orlando and grew up in Titusville. She holds degrees in Horticulture and in Environmental Studies from Rollins College. After working for Coca Cola Foods Horticultural Research Division in Forest City she became an Enrichment and Science teacher at St. Barnabas School in Deland. From there she joined the Volusia County staff and has held her current position for four years.

Bonnie will present a Power Point presentation on the Volusia County Conservation Lands Outreach Program.

Our **November** speaker will be Ms Samantha McGee, Park Environmental Specialist at St Sebastian River Preserve State Park. Sammy is a native Floridian, born and raised in Melbourne Beach. She attended university in North Carolina and earned a BSc in Environmental Science and Religious Studies from St Andrews College in 1998.

—Ken Gunn

## Editor's Note

### Limited Edition of Hard Copy

With this issue of *The eSkimmer*, we are co-publishing our October issue of *The Skimmer* (our hard-copy or printed edition) in limited numbers.

We're trying something new with *The Skimmer* (hard-copy, note the absence of "e" before Skimmer). We're publishing it in small numbers in-house, in full color.

Since this demands more labor from our tiny committee, we'll be limiting distribution to the NSB Regional Library and the Edgewater Library. We will also mail to the very few organizations that need hard copies and we'll have a few on hand at meetings.

*The eSkimmer* will be our primary newsletter.

By utilizing the technology available (the internet) we're reaching more people than ever before and with *The eSkimmer* and our website we're able to provide more information via links.

We realize that there are some who don't have (nor do they want) computers. For those, we will still have our hard copy edition, *The Skimmer*.

—Gil Miller

## Wandering Members

### *The Gunns Come Back To Florida*

Our trip back to the beach from our Alberta summer cabin was very unexciting as far as birding was concerned, even though it was the most leisurely trip we have ever made. On the other hand, the horse racing in Ohio was terrific. As a totally unrelated aside, I got to pet the Budweiser dog, Bud, who was accompanying the Clydesdale team who, in turn, were serving as the honor guard for the feature race participants each day.

Our first stop from home was the salt lakes in southern Saskatchewan. They were almost completely dry and only a few ducks and some swallows remained. There were no Piping Plover, no Avocet, nor any other shorebird for that matter. It will take a very snowy winter to refill these shallow lakes and put them back on the birds' internal atlas.

We spent the first night, a Saturday, with Beth's sister and brother-in-law in Regina, Saskatchewan. They have a large feeder in their treed backyard which attracts all kinds of resident and migrant birds. Of particular interest to me was a small flock of Brewers Blackbirds who were apparently regulars. These birds were quite common when I was a kid on the farm but now are seldom seen.

On day 2 we visited the Audubon Refuge in North Dakota. It, too, was a disappointment as there were very few pheasants and not many waterfowl. We did get a close look at a Bald Eagle in a tree near the refuge road, saw several raptors, a smattering of sparrows and passerines, a lot of Canada Geese, Double Crested Cormorants and American White Pelicans and three stately Sandhill Cranes. We ended up with about 20 species for the site.

That was about it for birds. The tail end of Hurricane Ike had passed near Chicago and over Columbus, Ohio. Roads were flooded and trucks were diverted onto the formerly quiet state highways we were driving. Our B & B near Columbus called in a panic Monday morning to say that they had no power and trees were down all over the place. They expected that the races might even be cancelled.

We kept going and that night learned that Monday's preliminary races had gone as scheduled although without a PA system or a photo-finish camera. The next morning, Tuesday, the B & B called to say that they had electricity and we were welcome. We spent Wednesday and Thursday visiting with friends and watching a total of 43 races, including The Little Brown Jug and the Juliette.

Our best birding event occurred in our own front yard. Shortly after our daughter and granddaughter arrived from electricity-deprived Houston, a beautiful Red Shouldered Hawk landed on the wire 20 feet in front of our deck. It allowed us to go out on the deck for an unobstructed close-up and gave our 16-month old granddaughter her first birding experience.

—Ken Gunn

## October Field Trip

Our first field trip of the year will be **Saturday October 4<sup>th</sup> to Smyrna Dunes Park**. Along the 1.5 mile boardwalk we hope to see migrating Fall Warblers. Along the beaches we also hope to see lots of shore birds. One day during the last week of August, we saw 20 species along the Inlet shoreline. There were many Royal Terns and Sandwich Terns, several Black-bellied Plovers, (still showing some breeding plumage) a few Semipalmated Plovers, Wilson's Plovers, 1 Piping Plover, Dowitchers, and the usual Sandpipers & Gulls. Along the dunes, the beautiful Barn Swallows were doing aerial acrobatics above and among the Sea Oats. Near the foot of the dunes on the Inlet shoreline, one Yellow-crowned Night Heron was stalking and catching Ghost Crabs. Come join us for this first trip of the season.

Meet at the Market Square parking lot at 8 A.M., US 1 & 442, Edgewater, between Dunkin Donuts & Chik-Fil-A. Bring water, mosquito repellent, and lunch if you want to stay and visit awhile. There is a \$3.50 per car fee so car-pooling is recommended. Call Gail @ 428-0447 if you have any questions.

—Gail Domroski

## Of Interest

### *We're Moving*

Usually this column appears, on an irregular basis, somewhere on these pages, sometimes to fill unused space and other times because the mood strikes the editor.

Now that we have our web-site, we feel it fits better there. So: we're adding it there and using this space as a links index.

Here are two now:

[http://sevolusiaaudubon.org/of\\_interest/of\\_interest1.htm](http://sevolusiaaudubon.org/of_interest/of_interest1.htm)

<http://www.volusia.org/growth/outreach.htm>

## Officers & Chairs



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Please forward this  to friends.