



NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
JOHN PEYTON
MAYOR

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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MAYOR PROCLAIMS MARCH AS “RIVER MONTH” IN JACKSONVILLE

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. March 13, 2008— Celebrating the community’s signature landmark, the St. Johns River, Mayor John Peyton has proclaimed the month of March as “River Month” in Jacksonville.

“The St. Johns River is a local and national treasure that should be celebrated -- and more importantly, protected,” said Mayor Peyton. “We have made crucial strides in addressing the health of the river and we will continue to do more. This designation is just another way of bringing attention to one of America’s great natural resources.”

Key elements of the month-long celebration will be two annual City of Jacksonville-sponsored events—The St. Johns River Celebration, and *JaxParks...Get Out There*.

Part of the Florida Great American Cleanup, The St. Johns River Celebration is one of many national and regional volunteer efforts to clean and protect the environment throughout the spring. Jacksonville’s citywide event, scheduled for March 15 from 8-11:30 a.m., is an opportunity to bring together residents who respect and love the St. Johns River. Annually, approximately 1,000 volunteers work at more than 20 sites and collect more than 35,000 pounds of marine debris and hundreds of tires.

Volunteers will be provided with trash bags, gloves and tickets at the locations below. Tickets may be redeemed for refreshments and t-shirts (while supplies last) at an appreciation event following the cleanup from noon-2 p.m.

This event provides an opportunity for students to satisfy community service requirements. Scouts may earn badges for two volunteer hours at the cleanup (while supplies last). Participants must be over 18 years of age or accompanied by an adult. Pre-registration is not required.

Another facet of the celebration is the display of a mural art project of the St. Johns which is on display at the Main Library, 303 N. Laura St., third floor. The mural was created by Douglas Anderson School of the Arts students under the direction of Sarah Crooks Flaire of the Cummer Museum of Art and Gardens.

The third annual *JaxParks... Get Out There!*, scheduled for March 28-30, features five special events: Celebrate the River, Explore the Timucuan, Kids Kampus Survivor, Wild on the Westside and the first-ever Get Out There Trail Ride. The weekend of events will provide an opportunity for residents and visitors of all ages and interests to explore and experience the abundant activities, sights and sounds of Jacksonville’s parks — the largest urban park system in the nation.

River-focused activities will include a unique biathlon featuring a river kayak course and run, boat rides and nature programs by The St. Johns Riverkeeper, kayak and canoe tours, informational booths, fly fishing demonstrations and much more.

These events will help to raise awareness of the importance of the St. Johns River, the opportunities that exist in Jacksonville to access and experience the river, the problems that are affecting its health, and what is being done and needs to be done in the future to protect and restore this magnificent waterway.

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For more information or to register for The St. Johns River Celebration call (904) 630-CITY or visit www.coj.net, keywords: *St. Johns River Celebration*.

For a complete listing of *JaxParks...Get Out There!* events, call (904) 630-CITY or visit www.jaxparks.com.

River Month Proclamation

- WHEREAS:** The St. Johns River is a defining feature of our community; and
- WHEREAS:** It is one of our most important and treasured natural resources, and is critical to the health of our economy and our quality of life; and
- WHEREAS:** The St. Johns River is one of our country's most historic and significant waterways and was recognized in 1998 as one of only 14 American Heritage Rivers in the United States; and
- WHEREAS:** Our river has been adversely impacted over the years by human activity and neglect and is now deserving of our utmost attention, care and efforts to restore its health; and
- WHEREAS:** We recognize the value and importance of the St. Johns River and wish to celebrate and honor its significance by holding a series of events throughout Jacksonville; and
- WHEREAS:** The St. Johns River Celebration and Cleanup is held each year in March and involves thousands of Jacksonville's residents in beautifying and protecting the river and its tributaries; and
- WHEREAS:** Under the direction of the Cummer Museum and artist Sarah Crooks Flaire, students from Douglas Anderson School of the Arts have created a mural art project of the St. Johns River that they will exhibit during the celebration and cleanup; and
- WHEREAS:** The City of Jacksonville will sponsor the Third Annual *JaxParks...Get Out There!* festival featuring opportunities for the public to celebrate and learn about the St. Johns River; and
- WHEREAS:** These events will help to raise awareness of the importance of the St. Johns River, the opportunities that exist in Jacksonville to access and experience the river, the problems that are affecting its health, and what is being done and needs to be done in the future to protect and restore this magnificent waterway.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, JOHN PEYTON, by virtue of the authority vested in me as Mayor of Jacksonville, Florida, do hereby proclaim March 2008 as

St. Johns River Month

in Jacksonville and urge all citizens to join me in celebrating the St. Johns River, in striving to protect and restore the health of the river, and in commending all those involved with efforts to enhance and improve the river for this and future generations.

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