

# Chazz Jazz

Fall 2011 Newsletter

© 2002 Friends of Chassahowitzka National Wildlife Refuge Complex, Inc

FRIENDS OF CHASSAHOWITZKA NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE COMPLEX, INC



**Wildlife Refuge Week**

**President's Message**

**Refuge Manager**

**Calender of Events**

**Volunteers Needed**

**Membership Info.**

## Seventeenth Annual WILDLIFE REFUGE WEEK CELEBRATION

The Crystal River National Wildlife Refuge will have its annual "Refuge Day" celebration from 10 AM to 4:00 PM on Saturday, October 22. This year's Refuge Day will take place on the Three Sisters Springs property located on SE Kings Bay Drive in Crystal River. A ribbon cutting ceremony for the newly build boardwalk is planned for 10:30am. Admission to this event is free. Food and drink will be available for purchase. Plenty of parking will be available on the property.

The day will begin with a special "Sunrise Birding Tour of Kings Bay" hosted by the Friends the Chassahowitzka. Boats will leave the headquarters' dock at 7:30 a.m. and qualified birders will accompany each boat to help in identifying the many birds around the Refuge. The tour is \$20 per person and includes a complimentary breakfast back at headquarters. Space is limited; call 352-628-0033 by October 17 to reserve a seat. You are then invited to stay and enjoy the rest of the festivities planned for Refuge Day over at Three Sisters Springs.

The event will host wildlife shows/exhibits such as live raptors and reptiles, and a collection of confiscated endangered wildlife items from all over the world. Children activities will include a USGS manatee matching game; build your own manatee puppet, a marine tide pool touch tank, and wildlife identification games.

Representatives from a variety of non-profit organizations and local and state outdoor agencies will be on hand to help promote Citrus County's bountiful natural resources. Some of these included the Florida Wildlife Commission, Florida Park Service, Florida Public Archaeological Network, USGS and many more.

Once again the Friends will have a kayak to raffle off on Refuge Day thanks to generosity of Kayaks And Beyond. The winner will be announced that day but **NEED NOT BE PRESENT** to win. Funds raised will go to support the Three Sisters Springs project.

Our celebration of Refuge Day is part of the National Wildlife Refuge Week. Bring the whole family and enjoy a day on your Refuge! This event promises to be a fun-filled day for everyone. For more information and/or directions, call 352-563-2088.

---

Chazz Jazz is published for the members of the Friends of the Chassahowitzka NWR Complex, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.

**Thanks for your support!**

*Please notify us of any changes to your e-mail address.*

## Board of Directors 2011

*President*  
**Lace Blue-McLean**

*Vice President*  
**Ardath Prendergast**

*Treasurer*  
**Shirley Knudsen**

*Secretary*  
**Al Peterson**

*Directors*  
**Jo Claycomb**  
**Pat Purcell**  
**John Peterlin**  
**Warren Blodgett**

*Refuge Manager*  
**Michael Lusk**  
*Friends' Liason*  
**Ivan Vicente**

**Chassahowitzka  
National Wildlife Refuge  
Complex**

**1502 SE Kings Bay Dr.  
Crystal River FL 34429**

**Tel: 352-563-2088 Ext. 215**

**Email:  
info@friendsofchazz.org**

**Website:  
www.friendsofchazz.org**

**For volunteer opportunities  
visit:  
www.friendsofchazz.org**

**or e-mail:  
volunteer@friendsofchazz.org**

## President Message Lace Blue-McLean



Dear Friends,

Happy Fall! Yes Fall is officially here according to the calendar but we can always tell by the just by the number of activities that are coming up that the Friends are involved with!

First up is the annual Refuge Day celebration on October 22 as shown above, which is extra special this year with a Ribbon Cutting Ceremony to celebrate the boardwalk at Three Sisters Springs being official completed. This event is packed with many activities from an early sunrise boat tour hosted by the Friends' group to all day music just to name a few! Get your tickets soon as they go quickly!!

Admission to Refuge Day is free. Food and drink will be available for purchase. Once again the Friends have a kayak to raffle off thanks to generosity of Kayaks And Beyond. The winner will be announced at Refuge Day but NEED NOT BE PRESENT to win. This event promises to be a fun-filled day for everyone. This is YOUR Refuge, so bring your family and friends and come out and enjoy it!

Another indication of fall is Whooping Cranes! The 10 ultra light-led cranes and crew are busily preparing for their departure from Necedah National Wildlife Refuge in Wisconsin. A target date of October 8 has been settled on. You can follow the migration down to Florida at [http://www.operationmigration.org/Field\\_Journal.html](http://www.operationmigration.org/Field_Journal.html). The Friends too are already planning for this year's flyover event, which will be held once again at the Dunnellon airport. Look for more information on their progress in the Friends' column in the Chronicle.

The National Wildlife Refuge Association (NWRA) and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation recognized the Friends, YOUR Friends group this year as the Friends Group of the Year. Of the 230 Friends group around the county, we were chosen as the group that had shown outstanding leadership as a voice of the community and as an advocate for the protection, conservation, and enhancement of the National Wildlife Refuge System overall. Evan Hirshe, President of NWRA said, the Friends of Chassahowitzka's support and involvement with the Three Sisters Springs project, demonstrated an extraordinary

dedication to developing a strong cooperative relationship between the Refuge Complex, the local community, government agencies, and other non-profit organizations. This support was vital in helping to protect a prime manatee wintering habitat that is now part of Crystal River NWR. We are very proud of this award and will continue to be advocates of the Refuge system in every way that we can.

Thanks to the hard work of our Treasurer, Shirley Knudsen, the Friends applied for and received a \$10,000 Nature of Learning grant. A long-term goal of the Friends has been to be able to introduce elementary school children to the wildlife refuge and its eco-system in a hands-on manner. We are able to accomplish this goal by using these funds by working with the Homosassa Elementary School to conduct workshops for the 4th and 5th grade classes at the school this coming fall-winter. The workshops will be held at the Chassahowitzka Salt Marsh Trails in Homosassa just down the road from the Elementary School. This is a pilot program and once established will be offered to all 4th and 5th grade classes in the county. Volunteers will be needed throughout the course of this project and hope that you, as a Friends member will contact us to help with introduce school children to the great outdoors!

Open Houses will continue to be held this fall and winter season at the Three Sisters Springs property. As the weather gets colder, it will be especially exciting to see manatees from the land as they gather in the springs trying to stay warm.

Well that is it for now. You can see we have a lot going on and hope you will be able to come out and join us at anyone one of the above events. As a member of the Friends of Chassahowitzka, your support is pivotal in sustaining the Refuge Complex in our endeavor to protect the wildlife and environment for both now and generations to come. I thank you for your support and am looking forward to working together for a great year for the Refuge.

### Calender of Events 2011

**Oct. 22: Refuge Day**

**Nov. 5: Stone Crab Festival**

**Nov. 12: Seafood Festival**

**Dec. 3: Crystal River Christmas Parade**

### Events 2012

**Jan. 21 & 22: Manatee Festival**

**Jan. 29: Annual Meeting**



## Refuge Manager Michael Lusk

My, what a summer it has been! We've seen more change in the last six months than this refuge has seen in several years. And as always, with change comes uneasiness on the part of some. But it is this very uneasiness that has allowed the refuge to open doors of communication that never existed before. We've made in-roads with neighbors and partners that we didn't even know were there. Through it all, the Friends have proven to be a vital link with community and a conduit for the refuge mission. As you all have heard, the Ecological Service's branch of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service out of Jacksonville, Florida, have proposed several changes to the special rules created for Kings Bay to ensure manatee safety. Although the Refuge is not responsible for creating the rule or putting it in place, we will be charged with implementing the rule if it is signed. Part of these rules do nothing more than codify the existing guidelines for interacting with manatees, such as no chasing or riding a manatee, while others expand on our ability to create temporary closed areas to keep manatees safe during periods of cold weather. The most notable change in the rules was the proposal to reduce speeds in the so-called "Sports Zone" in Kings Bay to slow speed year round, except in those areas that are already idle speed. This proposal met with strong opposition from both the Crystal River City Council and the County Commissioners, but was strongly supported by both local business and manatee welfare advocates. What happens now? The public comment period on the rule has closed, and a final rule is being prepared based on public comment. Once the final rule is prepared, it will be forwarded to the Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for signature. If the Director signs it, then the refuge will begin immediate implementation in time for this winter's manatee season. I have been asked numerous times if I know what's in the rule, but I have not seen the rule, nor do I know where it is in the process. All any of us can do at this point is wait and see what the Director decides and go from there. Whatever he decides, we will do our best to implement the rule with fairness and common sense; protecting the manatee first and foremost, but allowing the American public access to this beloved marine mammal as much as is feasible.

We've also seen some great strides in moving ahead with the development of Three Sisters Springs. Our 1,300 foot boardwalk is to be completed by the first week in October, in time to host Refuge Day on October 22. In addition, an architectural/engineer firm out of Charleston, South Carolina, has been contracted to begin the Master Plan for Three Sisters Springs. A three-day planning session was held in late August, in which the planning firm consulted with the main property holders, the refuge and the Friends to discuss future development of the site. Based on those discussions, a preliminary plan was created and presented to the public for their input on September 21. The refuge will work with the planning firm to take citizen comments into consideration, and then present a final plan. Once the plan has been finalized, probably sometime in early December, the refuge will work with the Friends to begin the important task of raising money to begin construction of a visitor's center, educational pavilion, picnic areas and trail system on the site.

In addition to all of that, the Salt Marsh Trails complex was finally (finally!) opened to the public. I know the Friends are now working hard on an educational plan to get kids from the local schools out onto the refuge, and that's great news. It will be exciting to have school kids making good

use of the property. And on another administrative note, we've changed the name of the refuge complex from "Chassahowitzka NWR Complex," to "Crystal River NWR Complex." I know this may be confusing to some, but there several good reasons for making the change. First, the refuge headquarters is actually in Crystal River, not Chassahowitzka, and the sign in front of the office says "Crystal River NWR." So it's confusing to the public to come inside and see everything marked as the Chassahowitzka refuge. Second, the reality is that the Crystal River refuge, because of the manatees, gets the lion's share of the visitation and publicity of the complex. Therefore, people naturally associated the complex more with Crystal River than Chassahowitzka. Finally, the simple fact is that "Crystal River" is just easier to say and remember than "Chassahowitzka." So hopefully, it will be easier to publicize and to share with people.

Yep, it's been a busy six months, and the next six months promise to be just as busy, if not busier. The Friends are needed now more than ever! In order to build the infrastructure on Three Sisters Springs, we'll need the Friends actively engaged in spreading the word of our good work and helping us to raise the funds to do so. It's a great challenge, but one I'm sure our Friends can handle. Thanks for all you've done, and all you will do. I appreciate it, and so do the resources of the Nature Coast.

## Volunteers Needed Volunteers Make a Difference!

Recognizing that there is an untapped source of expertise amongst the Friends' membership, the Board is asking you to consider giving of your time and talents in order to keep the great work of the Friends going. There are plenty of ways to get involved. Check out these committees below; then send us an e-mail at [info@friendsofchazz.org](mailto:info@friendsofchazz.org) attention Tom and let us know when you can start!

### EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

Help implement newly acquired Nature of Learning Grant; participate in local events, network with other environmental groups.

### MANATEE WATCH VOLUNTEER

Provide the public/visitors on the water with information about Crystal River National Wildlife Refuge and manatees; three to four hours in a kayak/canoe; three hours per day for a total of 10 days during the manatee season.

### FRIENDS GIFT SHOP/FRONT DESK

Greet, orient and educate the public at the Visitor Contact located in Crystal River; assist with Friends' Gift Shop sales; provide general information about the refuge.

### FINANCE COMMITTEE

Assist Treasurer in overseeing the financial management of Friends and in the planning and implementing of fund-raising events for the Friends.

**GOVERNMENT RELATIONS** - Assist the Board of Directors in dealing with governmental issues impacting the Refuge; present the Board's views to the Florida Congressional delegation in Washington, local offices, State, County and Municipal officials.

**GRANT WRITING** - obtain and process grants to benefit the Friends' mission in supporting the Refuge.

**PUBLIC RELATIONS** - Ambassador to the community for the Friends of Chassahowitzka; prepare and distribute newsletter and news bulletins; prepare and distribute Public Service Announcements and articles to the media for all Friend's events and issues.

**SPECIAL PROJECTS** - Assist Board with special projects as needed including funding, etc.



Place First  
Class Postage  
Here

**Friends of Chassahowitzka National  
Wildlife Refuge Complex, Inc**  
1502 SE Kings Bay Dr.  
Crystal River FL 34429



**To become a member, complete the form below and mail to:**

Friends of Chassahowitzka National  
Wildlife Refuge Complex, Inc.  
1502 SE Kings Bay Dr.  
Crystal River, FL 3442

**Membership**  
**INFO**

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

**E-mail: [info@friendsofchazz.org](mailto:info@friendsofchazz.org)  
[www.friendsofchazz.org](http://www.friendsofchazz.org)  
Phone: 352-563-2088, ext. 215**

- Membership Levels (Annual Memberships)
- Sandpiper \$15.00 (Individual)  
Newsletter, Member Pin and 10% Gift Shop discount
  - Laughing Gulls \$25.00 (Family)  
Above benefits for a family, (2) New Member Pins
  - Snowy Egret \$50.00 (Supporting)  
Above benefits plus Friend's gift (changes periodically)
  - Brown Pelican \$100.00 (Business)  
Above benefits plus framed membership certificate
  - Bald Eagle \$150 (Sustaining)  
Above benefits plus T-shirt and 1 field trip
  - Whooping Crane \$500.00 (Ambassador)  
Above benefits plus 1 ticket to annual fundraiser event
  - Manatee \$1000.00 (Patron )  
Above benefits plus guided tour of Refuge  
2 tickets to Sunrise Boat Tour/Breakfast on Refuge Day  
2 tickets to annual fundraiser event
  - Special Youth Membership \$5 (to age 12)  
Youth newsletter - Special Youth event - NEW
- Make check payable to: FCNWRC