

APALACHICOLA RIVERKEEPER®

SAVING AN AMERICAN TREASURE

Dear Friends and Supporters,

For nearly two decades, Apalachicola Riverkeeper has worked resolutely to provide stewardship of the Apalachicola River, Bay and Basin. Sharing the message of care and conservation of our region's natural resources, especially our water, has been a family affair since the grassroots beginnings of Apalachicola Riverkeeper in 1998. Undoubtedly, present and future generations depend on us to protect the biologically unique Apalachicola River and Bay. Matthew and Kelli Godwin of Wewahitchka, Florida wholeheartedly agree.

Owner of Off the Map Expeditions, Matthew Godwin, who left a job in corporate sales and pursued his life's dream, earns a living on the water by providing guided fishing and kayaking trips on area waterways, including the Apalachicola River and Bay. Matthew prefers to "live off the river and land," because in his words, "I love it all from the Chipola over to Apalachicola Bay." Matthew is a longtime duck hunter and fly fisherman. Both avid gardeners, Matthew and Kelli grow much of their own food, in addition to appreciating shrimp, mullet and catfish that the local rivers and Gulf of Mexico provide for their table.

Kelli Godwin has deep roots in "Wewa," as it's most frequently called. Renowned for its tupelo honey, Wewa is located along the southwestern end of the Apalachicola River. Other significant nearby waterways include the Chipola River, Dead Lakes, St. Joseph Bay and Apalachicola Bay. As the executive director at Gulf County Tourist Development Council, Kelli strives to uphold the region's uniqueness, ensuring that visitors to the area will have an authentic, memorable Florida experience. Both Kelli and Matthew believe that conserving and protecting water are important for everyone's well-being, including their nearly one-year old, active son, Sawyer Jaxon. As outdoor enthusiasts, the Godwin family can be frequently spotted in or near their local waterways at places like Indian Pass, one of their favorite locations to play and explore.



The Godwin family, Matthew, Kelli and Jax

Since early 2016, Matthew has served on our volunteer board of directors at Apalachicola Riverkeeper because, according to Matthew, "Riverkeeper is protecting the exact things I care about and I wanted to do what I could to contribute." Smiling, Matthew told a fellow board member recently that being a dad is "sometimes stressful and the most rewarding thing I've ever done." Crediting his father, Tommie Godwin, for his love and respect for the outdoors, Matthew said, "I want to raise Jax like my father raised me and have him appreciate the natural world." He added, "I want Jax to have a foundation like that."

As we head into the bustling holiday season, rapidly approaching the end of 2017, I invite you to slow down. Go play at the beach or hike along the river's edge. Visit a favorite outdoor spot and surround yourself with some of nature's restorative power. And like father, outfitter and board member, Matthew Godwin, **I hope you'll also renew your commitment to the conservation and restoration of our natural world, especially Apalachicola River and Bay.**

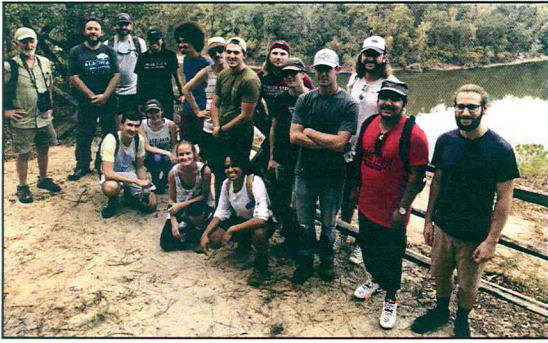


Board member, Matthew Godwin and son

As you reflect on the significance of Apalachicola River and Bay, please consider a financial, end-of-year contribution to Apalachicola Riverkeeper--knowing that your funds will be put to the critical work of advocacy, education, outreach and collaborative research work to protect this American Treasure. Join the Godwin family, our board and other supporters by investing in the future and be assured that Apalachicola Riverkeeper will continue its commitment to protect this natural resource for many generations to come.

Highlighted below are some of Apalachicola Riverkeeper's 2017 accomplishments that are possible because of generous members and supporters like you.

Over the past year, Apalachicola Riverkeeper:



Florida State students



Apalachicola River, Alum Bluff



RiverTrek 2017 Team



Franklin County Coastal Clean Up

- ✓ **Embarked on a film documentary partnership** with FSU's School of Communication and WFSU Public Media through a grant from the Florida Humanities Council.
- ✓ **Remained committed to better water management practices through consensus-building and collaboration among the water interests in Georgia, Florida and Alabama** – the states that share the Apalachicola-Chattahoochee-Flint (ACF) River Basin. Through our on-going work in the ACF Stakeholders, we know that this waterway can be sustained through sound, long-term water management planning and practices.
- ✓ **Worked with riparian county governments** and other citizen groups to bring attention to the potential and lasting impacts of deep-injection and oil and gas wells on our rivers, streams and groundwater.
- ✓ **Concluded a collaborative research project** in partnership with Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission and the University of Florida. This scientific assessment of geomorphological impacts of endangered mussel habitat will begin a second phase next year.
- ✓ **Stood up to the Army Corps of Engineers** by legally challenging their Environmental Impact Study (EIS). The deeply flawed EIS guides the update of the Corps' Water Control Manual. This manual is used to manage the river's freshwater flow. The update would allow Georgia to keep even more freshwater from flowing to Florida. Earlier this year, Earthjustice filed suit on behalf of Apalachicola Riverkeeper, Florida Wildlife Federation and National Wildlife Federation.
- ✓ **Led our 10th Annual RiverTrek** public outreach and fundraising campaign. Volunteer paddlers from Georgia and Florida completed a 5-day kayaking journey along the entirety of the Apalachicola River in October, meeting with history, geology and ecology experts along the way. Prior to their excursion, the RiverTrek team hosted home meetings, concerts, church presentations and other events to engage and educate their respective communities about the challenges facing the Apalachicola River and Bay. This team collectively raised \$60K to support and expand our outreach and education work, including our **Fourth Saturday Paddle**, a monthly eco-educational kayak outing for community members.
- ✓ **Removed nearly 4 tons of trash in a single day** from the shores and waters of Apalachicola River and Bay, alongside 400+ volunteers in Franklin and Gadsden counties, as part of the annual International Coastal Clean-Up.

As you can see, Apalachicola Riverkeeper remains actively and fully committed to our mission.

Please join us by making a year-end donation. This will greatly help us head into 2018, fired up and ready to continue the essential work you expect of Apalachicola Riverkeeper, especially as we await the United States Supreme Court hearing on January 8. With your support, we can continue our steadfast work to protect and restore Apalachicola River and Bay.

To make your contribution online, please go to: www.apalachicolariverkeeper.org/donate-now/

If you prefer to mail your contribution, our address is: **P.O. BOX 8
Apalachicola, Florida 32329**

Thank you for the opportunity to work on your behalf to protect Apalachicola River and Bay. The staff and board of Apalachicola