



Friends of the Loxahatchee River

March 2016

River Center Summary Statistics



| Year Month | General Visitors | Program Visitors | Outreach | Gift Shop | Donations | Memberships | Sponsors | Education Programs | River Center Programs | Special Events | Volunteer Hours |
|------------|------------------|------------------|----------|-----------|-----------|-------------|----------|--------------------|-----------------------|----------------|-----------------|
| 2015-02 | 1266 | 308 | 1313 | \$1,360 | \$990 | \$200 | \$532 | \$130 | \$3,025 | \$2,872 | 215 |
| 2015-03 | 1695 | 219 | 274 | \$1,451 | \$1,003 | \$365 | \$3,500 | \$100 | \$5,390 | \$9,647 | 358 |
| 2015-04 | 1326 | 518 | 150 | \$1,600 | \$1,023 | \$250 | \$1,400 | \$1,818 | \$6,770 | \$1,561 | 130 |
| 2015-05 | 1138 | 358 | 183 | \$944 | \$643 | \$210 | \$2,950 | \$49 | \$5,179 | \$1,599 | 81 |
| 2015-06 | 2078 | 1031 | 160 | \$1,355 | \$837 | \$200 | \$520 | \$3,087 | \$4,365 | \$420 | 487 |
| 2015-07 | 1936 | 1294 | 46 | \$1,985 | \$524 | \$50 | \$650 | \$5,073 | \$1,490 | \$377 | 645 |
| 2015-08 | 1544 | 305 | | \$1,432 | \$691 | \$75 | \$1,460 | \$732 | \$215 | \$892 | 404 |
| 2015-09 | 1047 | 278 | 34 | \$771 | \$491 | | \$520 | \$60 | | \$160 | 116 |
| 2015-10 | 1055 | 549 | | \$872 | \$636 | \$25 | | \$128 | \$128 | \$626 | 139 |
| 2015-11 | 881 | 255 | 144 | \$1,192 | \$560 | \$150 | \$460 | | \$667 | \$815 | 128 |
| 2015-12 | 1078 | 277 | 51 | \$2,749 | \$663 | \$250 | \$8,460 | \$82 | \$210 | \$186 | 142 |
| 2016-01 | 1083 | 606 | 348 | \$1,083 | \$496 | \$150 | \$2,410 | \$93 | \$4,065 | \$679 | 143 |
| 2016-02 | 1178 | 295 | 1338 | \$1,237 | \$501 | \$250 | \$5,060 | \$41 | \$4,655 | \$963 | 114 |

River Center

During February, the River Center had two Eagle Scout candidates working on projects. Bryce Bourg used leftover pavers from our chiki hut project



to pave the dirt area behind the center between our LSS building and native garden. The pavers here make this transition onto the path easier and help to prevent further erosion of the area. The second project will be completed in two parts. Boy Scout Jason Shawver



wanted to help the River Center with its outdoor gear storage problem. First, we need easy access to fishing poles for our fishing clinics and camps

during the summer without having to move them in and out of the attic every week. Second, we would like to store our paddles and life vests at ground level again to prevent staff and volunteers from having to move these items up and down from the attic on a weekly basis especially during the summer. The first part of the project is complete with storage racks for fishing poles mounted inside the classroom closet. The second part of the project has started and will entail a storage "closet" near the back of the LSS building. A similar project was completed for storage of gardening equipment (shovels, rakes, etc.) and can be seen on the right of the photo.



Friends of the Loxahatchee River

Friday, March 4th, the River Center welcomed shark researcher Bryan Keller as he presented a discussion entitled "Shark-tagging off the coast of Jupiter, FL: the techniques, findings, and implications." He discussed recent efforts on tagging lemon sharks and great hammerheads in the Jupiter area. He also discussed the various methods of tagging and

what has been discovered through their efforts. Bryan gave a wonderful presentation and over 90 guests attended this great lecture.

Special Programs

Loxahatchee by Night Campfire

The River Center finished out the campfire season on a high note on Friday, February 12th. Over 200 participants of all ages joined River Center educators for a night of fun learning about “Sharks of Jupiter.” In our Chiki Hut, Hannah Medd, the founder of the



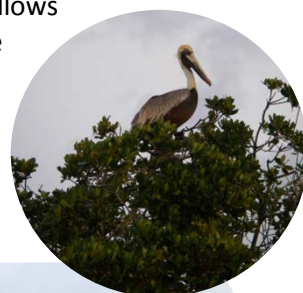
evening.

American Shark Conservancy, presented a fantastic talk about our local sharks. Inside the center, guests had the opportunity to create their own sharks, shark fin hats, and shark teeth! Guests were invited to explore the exhibits inside the center, touch animals in the touch tank, and discover various plants and animals in the migratory bird and butterfly garden. The campfire was roaring all night, as families roasted marshmallows and enjoyed delicious s’mores throughout the



Winter Shorebird Survey with Audubon

River Center staff members participated in the annual Winter Shorebird Survey with the Audubon Society on February 9th. The Winter Shorebird Survey is a week-long, statewide survey of shorebirds and seabirds in Florida. The primary objective of the Winter Shorebird Survey is to better understand the winter distribution of shorebirds and seabirds in Florida. This annual survey will allow us to recognize long-term trends or changes in winter population sizes and distribution and identify key wintering sites; information that is much needed to guide future conservation efforts. Megan Harris and Sara Duggan set out by kayak to survey Fullerton Island, Bird Island, and throughout the Loxahatchee River’s central embayment. Some of the species that were identified were Brown Pelican, Osprey, Little Blue and Great Blue Heron, Great Egret, Ibis and Piping Plovers.



and is an international destination. However, America’s Everglades are on life support. This program introduced 12 participants to key aspects of the Everglades’ ecosystem including its watershed, endangered species, water conservation, and other topics through the Everglades Literacy Program. FAU Pine Jog Environmental Education Center graciously allowed us to borrow their materials and lesson plans.

Adult Environmental Education Program: Florida’s Treasure: Past, Present and Future of the Everglades

On Thursday, February 11th the River Center held the next class in our Adult Environmental Education Series. The Everglades is a national treasure. This ecosystem is home to hundreds of species of beautiful and fascinating wading birds, mammals, fishes, reptiles, amphibians and plants. It is home to 67 threatened and endangered species, provides fresh water to nearly eight million Floridians,

If You Build It, They Will Come

On February 23rd Josh Wenkert-Lane, a Jupiter High School Environmental Academy student and River Center volunteer presented his Senior Project entitled, "If You Build It, They Will Come." His presentation discussed local and migratory birds, issues they face, and what you can do to help. We learned about creating a backyard bird habitat with different types of bird boxes and resources such as Audubon and the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. Josh then led guest on a bird walk through the River Center's migratory bird garden. Josh is planning to attend University of North Florida in the fall.



Special Valentine's Day Story Time

The River Center celebrated a special Valentine's Day Story Time on Thursday, February 11th. This year's theme was "We LOVE Sharks!" Over 65 parents and children attended the program where we read stories about loving parents, hugs and kisses, and sharks that we love. Children danced to Valentine's Day songs and were invited to design Valentine's Day cards for everyone in the family and do fun shark crafts.

Outreach Activities

ArtiGras Fine Arts Festival

This year the River Center participated in ArtiGras 2016, the award-winning fine arts festival celebrating its 31st anniversary held February 13th – 15th. Visitors viewed over 300 artists from around the United States experiencing a fine arts area, artist demonstrations, ArtiKids area, and entertainment stage. Children of all ages had the opportunity to head down to the Amazon Rainforest, this year's theme, in the ArtiKids area. Art stations were provided by Macaroni Kid, South Florida Science Center, Resource Depot, Lighthouse Arts Center, Solid Waste Authority, the River Center, and several other local organizations. Over 1130 families visited the River Center's booth creating fish out of recycled materials. This event has been our most successful outreach for the 2015-2016 school year to date and we hope to see these families become part of our River Center family.



Guanabanas Give Back:

On Thursday, February 4th, the River Center participated in Guanabanas Give Back Thursdays. All proceeds from Mako Vodka cocktail sales and sales from the specialty drink of the night, the "Spinner Shark", were donated to the River Center. This event showcased a sneak peek at the River Center's upcoming "Jupiter Shark Exploration Exhibit." It was a great evening to promote the River Center and we hope to be part of this event again in the future.



Jupiter Jubilee:

The River Center and the Loxahatchee River District participated again this year in the Jupiter Jubilee on Saturday, February 6th. This annual event created by the Town of Jupiter for their residents is a family fun event with business and civic fairs, an eco-tourism expo, kid's activities, demonstrations, food, music, and much more. More than 150 families visited the River Center's and Loxahatchee River

District's booth in the Eco-Tourism Expo. It was amazing to see the awareness, positive response, and interest from Jupiter residents to the River Center as well as communicate and reach out to the other parks, nature centers, and organizations throughout northern Palm Beach County.

SeaFest at the Lighthouse:

Saturday, February 27th, the River Center participated in SeaFest at the Lighthouse. With a booth down by the beautiful waters of the Jupiter Inlet, it was a great day for a festival. Visitors that came to our booth had the opportunity to try their hand at fishing, dip netting, de-hooking and casting practice. We also brought our touch tank animals along to showcase some of the local wildlife that comes right from our own estuaries. Over 3,000 people attended this wonderful, first time event.



Volunteer of the Month:

The River Center would like to announce that March's Volunteer of the Month is awarded to Eric Gibson. Eric goes to Jupiter High School and is a member of the Jupiter Environmental Research and Field Studies Academy. Eric has volunteered at the River Center since November 2015. Even though he has only volunteered for four months he has earned 25 hours of community service. Eric is given this honor for his support on Saturday afternoons helping as a touch tank docent and animal care specialist, feeding critters and cleaning aquariums. He was especially helpful fishing with kids all afternoon at the SeaFest outreach at the Jupiter Lighthouse. Eric tied knots, baited hooks, helped with casting, and untangled rods. Eric has been a huge help to the River Center and we look forward to his continued support. Thank you for all that you do!



Friends Membership – 74 active members; 2 new/renewals; 40 current sponsors

Annual Sponsors Recognition – Bill & Pat Magrogan, AustinBlu Foundation (Blu Stephanos)

Shark Exhibit Sponsors – Laurie DiMartino

Night on the Loxahatchee Sponsors – Shipwreck Bar & Grille, CDM Smith

Upcoming River Center Events – RSVP at rivercenter@lrecd.org or 561-743-7123.

April 2 – 7pm: Save the Date! Night on the Loxahatchee: Shipwrecked in Paradise annual fundraiser for the River Center. Presentations by shipwreck and pirate experts, food by Food Shack, rum drinks by Shipwreck Bar & Grille, wine by African Tradition Wines, and coffee by Oceana Coffee.

April 9 – 9a-11a: Family Seine and Snorkel at Coral Cove Park. Join River Center naturalists as they explore the waters of Coral Cove Park. Discover and learn about the animals and plants that call it home. All ages.

April 9 – 2p-4p: New Volunteer Orientation. Anyone that would like to volunteer at the River Center should take this class and bring their completed volunteer application. Please RSVP.

- April 9 – 6:30p-9p: Wild & Scenic Film Festival at the Jupiter Inlet Lighthouse. An evening spent outdoors enjoying the sunset view of the lighthouse grounds followed by award winning short films about Wild & Scenic rivers. For ticket information please contact the Lighthouse.
- April 14 – 6p-8p: Kayak Snook Islands with Palm Beach County and the River Center. Advance registration is required.
- April 23 – 8:30a-4:30p: About Boating Safely ([Course taught in Spanish](#)): While boating can be a fun and relaxing experience, operating a boat, especially for young people, can be dangerous. This issue was brought to light last summer when Austin Stephanos and his good friend were lost at sea. In hopes of preventing similar tragedies the River Center is collaborating with the US Coast Guard Auxiliary "Flotilla 52" to provide Boating Safely Classes targeted specifically to young boaters in our community. These classes are provided through a generous sponsorship by the AustinBlu Foundation, a not-for-profit founded in Austin's name and dedicated to raising awareness and promoting educational programs to improve boater safety. Participating in effective boater safety training is the most significant thing boaters can do to decrease their risk of mishap while on the water. Potential boaters need to understand the dangers of boating in hazardous waters like the Jupiter Inlet. Although there is no cost for the class, a \$10.00 deposit per student is required to reserve a seat. This deposit will be refunded in full to all students who complete the class. Please bring a lunch. Pre-registration is required because space is limited. Registration will take place promptly at 8:00, the morning of class. Please register online now! www.tiny.cc/boatsafe.
- April 30 – 8:30a-12:30p: Girl Scout Workshop (Bugs) for Daisies and Brownies: Brownies will earn their Legacy Bugs badge and Daisies will earn their Clover petal. This fun-filled event will help Brownies discover the bugs and why they are important while Daisies will discover the world around them alongside their Girl Scout sisters.
- May 5 – 12p-1p: Friends of the Loxahatchee River Meeting: Join Beau Yeiser, Biological Scientist with Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission, to discuss "Monitoring the Fisheries of our Lagoons". He will review fisheries research in the Indian River Lagoon, mostly as it pertains to the Fisheries Independent Monitoring program and look at methods and results (spoiler: they catch lots of neat fish!). Data collected from this program has been used to aid management in recent years.

AustinBlu Foundation making sure boaters get educated before they head out on the water

BY: Katie Johnson (mailto:katie.johnson@wptv.com)

POSTED: 5:44 PM, Mar 1, 2016

JUPITER, Fla. - The AustinBlu Foundation (<https://www.austinblufoundation.org/>) is helping to make sure boaters get educated before they go out on the water.

Throughout the year, the foundation is covering the cost of boating safety courses at the River Center (<http://events.r2o.constantcontact.com/register/event?oeidk=a07eca3vb8ie631fafd&llr=g5zl9gjab>) in Jupiter.

"Makes you feel good, to do something positive for someone else or help someone else," said Blu Stephanos, father of Austin Stephanos.

Austin and his friend Perry Cohen went missing at sea last July after taking a boat onto the ocean.

His mom, Carly Black, said Austin was extremely experienced on the water.

"I would be on the boat with him and would have him as my captain any day of the week. We trust him completely."

The U.S. Coast Guard found the boat, but didn't find any signs of the boys.

"It was a difficult thing for everybody here. For the 'coasties' they felt helpless. They like to save people," said Gregory Barth.

Gregory is the flotilla commander with the U.S. Coast Guard in Jupiter.

He's expecting between 20-35 students at each course, and said the Coast Guard is offering a course in Spanish at the River Center in April.

"Anybody that's on a boat, that's driving a boat, we want them to understand what's going on. And how to operate the boat safely," Gregory said.

One thing both the Coast Guard and Austin's parents want boaters to invest in is a personal locator beacon (PLB) or an emergency position indicating radio beacon (EPIRB).

The AustinBlu Foundation is pushing for legislation to be passed in Tallahassee that would offer incentives to boaters who buy EPIRBs. If purchased, under the legislation, a person would get a discount on their boater's registration.

In the meantime, Austin's parents said they plan on attending some of the courses, and hope their son's love for the water will spread to others.

"I hope they have a passion for it like Austin did. Austin loved the water. He was swimming before he could walk. He was as salty as they come. I hope they take a little bit of that with them," Carly said.

Blu added, "I have some huge reason to do it and that's my son and honoring him. That's what keeps me driving here. And the community that stands behind us. That's why it's so important to give back."

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JUPITER BOATING SAFETY

Parents of teen lost at sea offering safety classes

By Bill DiPaolo
Palm Beach Post Staff Writer

JUPITER — The parents of Austin Stephanos, one of the two Tequesta teens lost at sea in July, are sponsoring safe-boat-ing classes for youngsters in north county.

"I don't want any other parents to go through what we went through," said Blu Stephanos, the father of Aus-

tin Stephanos. Austin and Perry Cohen, both 14, never returned after leaving Jupiter Inlet on July 24 in their 19-foot SeaCraft boat.

The classes, which will be taught by the U.S. Coast Guard, are scheduled to be offered one Saturday a month beginning March 12 at the Loxahatchee River Center in Jupiter.

The daylong classroom

ON FACEBOOK

Get news updates about Jupiter at [facebook.com/postonjupiter](https://www.facebook.com/postonjupiter)

instruction ends with a test. Those who pass the test get a Florida Fish and Wildlife Safe Boating Card, which every boater born after Jan. 1, 1988, is required to have, said U.S. Coast Guard Flotilla 52 Cmdr. Gregory Barth.

"It's a soup-to-nuts class.

We go over navigation, how to leave and enter a dock, anchoring, life preservers and the legal aspects of boating," Barth said.

The class, which is scheduled from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., normally would cost \$35. The fees are being paid by the AustinBlu Foundation, Stephanos said.

Classes continued on B5

Classes

continued from B1

"Austin would be proud of this. He would want us to protect other kids," said Carly Black, Austin's mother.

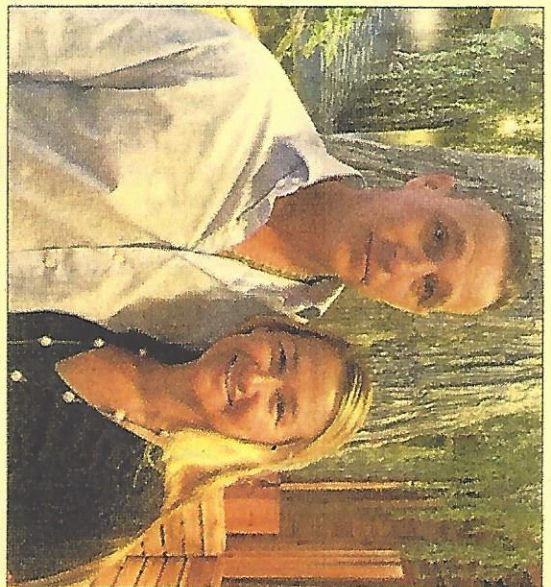
Boating-safety legislation inspired by the loss at sea of the two Tequesta teenagers is winding its way through the Florida Legislature.

The measure by Rep. Marylynn Magar, R-Tequesta, is aimed at encouraging boaters to buy an Emergency Position Indicator Radio Beacon (EPIRB) or personal locator beacon for their watercraft. A similar bill by Sen. Joe Negron, R-Stuart, is awaiting final action in the Florida Senate.

The Coast Guard called off its search that stretched from Daytona Beach to South Carolina on July 31. The families of the two missing boys called off the private search on Aug. 9. About 800 friends and family of Austin Stephanos gathered Nov. 13 at Jupiter First Church to say goodbye to the teen.

Blu Stephanos, who now lives in Stuart, said he rarely goes out in his boat.

The last time was on Dec. 1, Austin's birthday. Blu and his son Dakota, 11, headed out the Jupiter Inlet to drop roses overboard to remember Austin. But with an incoming tide, they decided to head a couple of miles out.



Blu Stephanos and Carly Black, Austin Stephanos' parents, will use funds from the AustinBlu Foundation to pay for boating classes in Jupiter. BILL DI PAOLO / THE PALM BEACH POST

WATERWAY TOLL

Florida had 73 boating deaths in 2014.

- The most (28 percent) were from falling overboard.
- July was the deadliest month (17).
- Palm Beach County had four deaths. Okaloosa County had the most (10).
- There were 634 boating accidents resulting in 365 injuries.
- Alcohol and drugs played a role in 12 percent of deaths.
- 86 percent of the deaths were men/boys.

CONTACT US

Have a Jupiter issue you'd like to see The Post tackle, or a story idea? Contact Bill DiPaolo at BDiPaolo@pbpost.com.

They dropped the roses into the sea.

"It was very difficult. That was the last time I

was on the ocean," Stephanos, 38, said, adding there was an EPIRB on his boat.

For information or to register online for the class, go to tiny.cc/boatsafe or call 561-743-7123.

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CALENDARLOOKING AHEAD



PROVIDED PHOTO/JOANNE FRAZIER OF CALYPSO DIVE CHARTERS

RIVER CENTER MEETING EYES JUPITER SHARK-TAGGING

The River Center will host a presentation Friday, March 4, by shark researcher Bryan Keller on "Shark-tagging off the coast of Jupiter, FL: the techniques, findings, and implications."

It will discuss efforts of tagging Lemon Sharks and Great Hammerhead sharks off the coast of our local beaches.

Each year in Jupiter, the Bimini Biological Field Station conducts acoustic tagging of large bodied sharks to better understand their spatial ecology. These conventional methods have been bolstered with the efforts of local scuba divers, who have supplemented data with unique methods of their own.

Specifically, these methods include laser photogrammetry, a non-invasive technique for measuring an animal; surveying the species present during shark dive expeditions; and non-lethal extraction of muscle samples while tagging sharks with a modified spear gun. As a result of the efforts of the Bimini Biological Field Station and the local community, a great deal of information has been learned about the sharks of Jupiter. The meeting will be held at the River Center in Jupiter at noon. It is part of a monthly series hosted by the River Center and Friends of the Loxahatchee River featuring environmentally focused topics and speakers. A light lunch is included, and the event is free and open to the public. Seating is limited, so please RSVP by calling 561-743-7123 or emailing RiverCenter@LRECD.org.

The River Center is located at 805 N. U.S. 1 in Jupiter at Burt Reynolds Park. Hours are Tuesday and Wednesday, 12 to 4 p.m. and Thursday through Saturday, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

There are multi-media and live aquatic exhibits, and a touch tank teeming with aquatic life. For more information about the River Center, visit www.loxahatcheeriver.org/rivercenter.

Want to have your upcoming events publicized in The Jupiter Courier Newsweekly?

Please submit your Looking Ahead events by going to tcpalm.com/submit and clicking on the Calendar form.

Longer versions of your events, along with photos, also should be posted at TCPalm.com/YourNews.

SPECIAL NOTICES

"HEALING MASSES" UPCOMING

We are open to anyone who would like to share the reasons why, and the beauty of, healing Masses for those who have been hurt or are hurting from their

abortions.

This particular evening - Thursday, May 12, St. Jude Catholic Church in Tequesta is also for those they love.

It was started as an inspiration of the Holy Spirit in response to the needs of beautiful women and men from our parish of St. Rita in Wellington. These women and men began a retreat ministry because they had been healed and received what they needed. They wanted others to experience what they had.

This ministry became so big, that it expanded to the Spanish community, prison and those who have been sexually abused,

See CALENDAR, 22