

**The Race is On
For Anyone who Can Make it “Up the River with a Paddle”**

**Nov. 19 –
A Benefit for By the River**

SEBASTIAN, FL, OCTOBER 22, 2011 -- It will be a day that Sebastian has never seen before. The first-ever paddling race on the St. Sebastian River, “Up the River with a Paddle,” will bring together recreational and competitive paddlers alike – kayakers, canoers, stand up paddle boarders and all non-motorized water sports enthusiasts of all skill levels and ages. Organizers expect to draw paddlers from around the state who have heard about the scenic beauty of one of the most diverse natural estuaries in the country – the South Prong of the river. This will be the backdrop of the event, to be held Saturday, November 19 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Dale Wimbrow Park, 11805 Roseland Road in Sebastian. Proceeds will benefit By the River (BTR), the area’s independent residential community for low income senior citizens, giving them the chance to live affordably in a life-enhancing community. The race is sanctioned by the American Canoe Association (ACA) and being sponsored and coordinated by Florida Outdoor Center (FLOC).

“We wanted to have a fun, family event that the community would enjoy – something new that was ecologically-friendly,” said Mr. Joe Coakley, chairperson of the event. “We talked to several people and Kristen and Mike Beck of Florida Outdoor Center were more than happy to put this together for By the River. We’re looking forward to lots of healthy, friendly competitions on the river!”

Racers may check-in and register beginning at 8:30 a.m. at Dale Wimbrow Park, although pre-registration is encouraged. Races begin at 10:00 a.m. with short and long distances, such as Parent/Child, Kids Fun Race, Masters 50+ and Elite categories. Start times and race course will be announced at check-in. It is recommended that entrants be able to paddle approximately three miles for the short distance race and five miles for the elite course.

In the Elite category, racers can challenge themselves to beat Mike Beck in the long distance course and have the opportunity to win up to a \$500 cash prize, sponsored by Oculina Bank. Mr. Beck is a former member of the USA National Kayaking Team, international paddler and world record holder in 24 hour kayaking. If no one beats his time, monies will go to provide paddling programs for local kids at FLOC.

Another fun event happening and sure to be a highlight of the day, will be for Best Team in the County when groups of 6 or 7 compete in the Elephant Race in a giant canoe starting at 12:00 p.m. Teams from local businesses, organizations as well as groups of friends and family will race the clock around a giant slalom course. A professional steersperson from FLOC can be provided.

The Friends of the St. Sebastian River will be catering food and refreshments starting at 11:00 a.m. Entertainment, such as performances by former Miss. U.S.O. Jennifer Patty and her teen and youth troupe *Ovations*, as well as raffle drawings will be happening throughout the day. Mr. Hamp Elliot of Treasure and Space Coast Radio will be emceeding the event. The public is

welcome to enjoy the festivities, cheer on their favorite racers and enter a few contests themselves.

An awards ceremony will take place at approximately 3:00 p.m. The top three in the recreational categories will be awarded trophies, top racers in the elite category will receive cash awards and prizes, and there will be a large trophy awarded to the best team in the Elephant race.

“By the River is a magical place and this event is being organized by some of the most giving people I have had the pleasure of knowing,” said Kristen Beck of FLOC. “The St. Sebastian River is beautiful and we are blessed to have this resource right here in our back yard.”

“I think this is great for our community as well as for By the River which in itself is great for our community,” added Eva Chapman, committee member and RBC Banking Manager in Roseland.

The event is being sponsored by Scripps Treasure Coast Newspapers, Treasure and Space Coast Radio, Oculina Bank, Egoscue, LoPresti Aviation, Wellmed, Costa D’Este, Harvest Food & Outreach, Breakaway Graphics and Friends of the St. Sebastian River.

If readers want to get involved as a sponsor, monetary and in-kind donations are always welcomed and appreciated and will help towards making this an annual, community-wide event.

Costs begin at \$5 for kids under 14, \$35 for individual adult racers and up for team competitions. Entry fee discounts will be given to ACA members (and includes ACA insurance for all racers). Please see website www.flocracing.com for more details or to register directly online go to www.uptheriver.eventbright.com. Those who register by Nov. 10th will receive a free event t-shirt and Goodie Bag. Boat and paddle board rentals are available. For more information, please contact Florida Outdoor Center at 772-202-0220 or By the River at 772-559-2680.