Dear Friend of St. Vincent NWR,

It's that time of the year when we contact our members to give you an update and an invitation. Our Friends organization has been in existence for 19 wonderful years. This would not have been possible without your financial support. We sincerely appreciate your partnering with us.

First, the update. We have been blessed by not having to deal with damage from any hurricanes. This is one of the good news items. On the negative side, we currently have only one full time government employee working on our beloved island. This is a really tall order to have one person to manage and maintain a 12,000 plus acre barrier island. This is where the Friends group support comes in to play. Here are some of the areas where we help out:

Financial:

1. Purchased supplies related to the Sea Turtle Program (materials for predator exclosure cages, rain suits, gloves, Gatorade, survey tape, markers, insect repellent, etc.)
2. Provided a stipend and housing for a Summer Intern.
3. All Terrain Vehicle (used in the Turtle Patrol activities) Two years ago, we purchased such a vehicle. These vehicles typically have a service life of two years. We plan to have a fundraiser to help purchase a new vehicle.

Education:

1. The Friends conduct Wagon Tours of the island. We provide a driver and a narrator for these tours. We are in the process of preparing a schedule for the tours for 2026. We will post the schedule on our website.
2. Website – we are revamping our website. We have hired a website designer to accomplish this.
3. Speaking Engagements – We have created a PowerPoint presentation which can be used at various venues to help increase the public awareness of our wonderful island.

Volunteerism:

1. Several of our members volunteer in the Sea Turtle Patrol program.
2. Some of our members volunteer to assist with the tracking of the Red Wolves.
3. We assist in educating the public and encourage individuals to become volunteers on the island.

Our records indicate that you have been a member in the past. It is now time to renew your yearly membership. Your membership is good for 12 months. You can renew your membership at our Annual Meeting on January 25, 2026. If you will not be attending the meeting, please complete the enclosed form, include your check, and mail it to the address shown on the enclosed form. Thank you, in advance, for continuing your financial support.

A special message to you if you are a lifetime member:

Please know that your lifetime membership is greatly appreciated and it has provided additional financial support for programs in the past. Due to the lack of government support in some areas and our anticipated financial needs, we are asking you to consider making a donation to the Friends for 2026. Every donation, regardless of how large or small, is of vital importance to our organization. Thank you !

Now for the announcement:

ANNUAL MEETING

When – January 25, 2026 from 1pm until 4pm (Eastern time zone)
Where – St. Joseph Bay Buffer Preserve 3915 State Road 30A Port St. Joe, FL
What –

Membership sign-up and sign in (memberships available at the door)
Business meeting
Lunch – food provided by Gant's BBQ
Guest Speaker – Doug Alderson (adventurer, hiker, kayaker, accomplished naturalist, and writer)
Doug will be speaking about the connectivity between the Apalachicola River/Bay and St. Vincent Island.

Questions/comments – contact Landy Luther 850/229-6735 or landyl@fairpoint.net