



Bay County Conservancy, Inc.

Local People....Saving Local Lands

www.baycountyconservancy.org

2013-2014 Newsletter

BCC Continues to Grow

Hazel and Herselle Wilderness Preserve

The Bay County Conservancy's first property in Calhoun County was given by a family that wished to honor their fond memories of the Fields family farm and surrounding countryside. **Roy Clarke** and **Ann Clarke Snell** donated their undivided 2/3 interest in 24 acres of upland, creek, and swampland. Also on the property is the historic Wood cemetery where members of an unrelated family are buried.

The Preserve is named for their mother, Hazel Fields Clarke, and aunt, Herselle Fields McBride. We enjoyed having Mr. Clarke and Mrs. Snell, and their sister **Myra**

Clarke Worsham, share some of their memories and family history with us for our archives. And we are very grateful for the donation of the land that will allow other generations of families to romp in the woods!

— **Candis Harbison**



Louis Stürke, Jr. Memorial Preserve

Ten acres of intact natural forest has become a new Preserve for the Bay County Conservancy. The "Louis Stürke, Jr.



Memorial Preserve" is located in north Bay County near Pine Log Road. It is surrounded by planted pines, making it an island of diverse native habitat. The property was donated by **Joanne "Jody" Bourland** of Pleasant Hill, California, who inherited it from a family member. Ms. Bourland's wishes are that the property be maintained in its natural state as a refuge for wildlife. Presently, there is no public access to the Preserve, but the BCC hopes to arrange use of a dirt trail that connects it to the main road. We appreciate Ms. Bourland's love of nature!

Tully Park

The children of the late **Jimmy Tully**--- **Katee Tully**, **Lynn Salmon** and **Terri Cruz**--- have donated a bayfront lot in St. George Plantation to the BCC. Tully Park is BCC's first Franklin County property. "Our father loved the beauty of his native state," said Katee Tully, "and we think he would have liked having others enjoy the island's natural beauty." The lot will be managed by the St. George Plantation Owners' Association and is contiguous to state-owned land at Nick's Hole Cove. BCC is grateful to **Rick Watson** for coordinating this land donation. Jimmy Tully was a Korean War veteran and a graduate of FSU. He was an avid outdoorsman, past president of the Florida Association of Realtors, and developer of Tallavana and Capital Regional Medical Center in Tallahassee. He passed away in 1978. "Thanks to the generosity of individual owners, we will construct a viewing platform, a bike rack and a few parking places," announced **Steve Kearney**, President of the St. George Plantation Owners' Association. The management plan includes creating a pedestrian path leading to existing paths on state land so that Tully Park visitors can enjoy the Nick's Hole Cove and the Bay.



Rick Watson and members of the Tully family at the newly donated Tully Park.

Thank You to Our Volunteers!

Heartfelt thanks are due to the many members of our community who have given of their time and shared their knowledge with us. Some help is of the boots-on-the-ground variety, and some arrives in the form of professional advice or service. Whatever the source, BCC recognizes and is most grateful for each and every volunteer's contribution. Our volunteers truly are ***Local People...Saving Local Lands!!*** Thanks go to **Rick and Candace Watson, Pat McConnell and Kristy Branch Banks** on St. George Island, **Nancy Harris and Jeff Palgut, Alan Gorchov Negron** and the **Rutherford Student Activist Association, Cat Kennedy, Joe Tom King and Kelly Bonner** and the **Sweetbay Chapter of the FNPS**. Thank you also to landowners **Mary Hardy, Janine Gedmin and Cathy Kirkland** who share our passion for preserving our native Florida.

Last but not least, thank you to the many friends who made donations in memory of BCC co-founder and long-time Board member, **Jerry Gerde, Esq.**, who passed away on January 29, 2013. The Conservancy is very grateful and will put the money to good use by continuing to restore and protect the lands that Jerry cared about so much. Thank you to: **Allen Jelks, Roberts Financial Planning Services, Inc., Doug Smith, Rita King, Jackie Kolk, Joe and Carolyn Parell, Nancy Harris, Victoria Musgrave, Rayford and Eugenia Lloyd, Ada Mullis, Nancy Pendleton, and Maxwell Miller.**



New BCC Board Members: Welcome, Anna Martin and Phil Mount!



I grew up in Dothan, AL and have always had an interest in natural history. I graduated from Troy University with a degree in English Literature and a business minor. I want to go back to school and do something with environmental science. I am a member of the Alabama Historical Association, and have served as secretary and now treasurer, of the Bartram Trail Conference. My professional background is in real estate and finance. I am currently working in the commercial real estate appraisal industry.

- **Anna Martin**



I am a retired mechanical engineer, US Navy civil service, and have embraced environmental conservation. Upon retiring I taught in the public school system for a couple of years. I then was the environmental manager for the city of Lynn Haven for a few years and moved on to be the stormwater engineer for FDEP for several years. I now have a small business I conduct out of the house to represent an energy saving control system and to provide surface water management support to property owners and developers. I am married to the love of my life, Patsy, and have been blessed with three sons and daughter-in-laws, nine grandchildren and one great grandchild on the way. I enjoy all aspects of the environment we have been charged to care for.

- **Phil Mount**

Need a Program?



Members of the Bay County Conservancy can provide colorful, informative programs tailored to your needs.

Power Points on the **"Bay County Conservancy and its Preserves"**, **"The Importance of Wetlands"**, and **"Controlling Exotic Plants"** are available in 15 to 45 minute formats.

Contact Executive Assistant Teresa Nooney at tnooney@knology.net for more information.

Anna Runyon Bequest Buys Addition to Tumble Creek Preserve



The Bay County Conservancy was the beneficiary of a surprise bequest from conservationist **Anna Runyon**, who passed away in 2012. Anna worked at the Naval Coastal Systems Center as a physicist for 31 years. She was a bird-watcher and member of Bay County Audubon Society. Anna's

bequest allowed the BCC to buy a piece of property that had been wanted for a long time. It is a very wet 15-acre addition to **Audubon Tumble Creek Preserve**, which now consists of 82 acres of pine, turkey oak, and wetlands. Thank you to **Mr. and Mrs. Sam and Sally Butler** for selling it to the BCC.

Audubon Nature Preserve Update

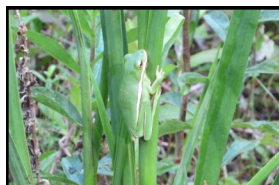
Our oldest and one of the most accessible preserves we have is seeing a reappearance of water in the "pond" area. In fact, it has been too wet to treat the exotic invasive popcorn trees there. But the trail from the boardwalk is usually dry enough for travel. Thank you to **Ed Keppner** for creating a trail map—now posted at the preserve, by the gazebo.

One of the big needs at this preserve is to control the ever-spreading grapevines that threaten to cover the trail and invade the wet area. We treat these by trimming and with chemicals on the base of the vine. We were able to have **Alan Gorchov-Negron**, a local high school student, do some of our exotic control last year. He has since gone off to college but we hope to recruit his club, the Rutherford Student Activist Association, to help us with our projects. Also, since Wal-Mart has moved back as our neighbor, we could possibly enlist their volunteers. As you may recall, they helped us a few years ago when we were building our trail.

The gazebo at the boardwalk remains a nice, quiet place to enjoy the sights and sounds of nature. Our bird list for the preserve has over 100 birds.

Care to help with this preserve? Talk to us. We'll have something you can do.

— **Ron Houser**



And Then Came the Rain!



The Palm Preserve on Beach Drive is a great example of nature providing stormwater retention.

The value of naturally occurring stormwater retention zones to a community is often overlooked – until rainy weather conditions such as this summer's bring about serious flooding issues. For 15 years, the Bay County Conservancy has been actively conserving green space in the local area. Approximately 64 of BCC's 237 protected acres contain wetlands that are located within the city limits – wetlands that currently function as important stormwater retention areas that can help reduce the pollution caused by stormwater runoff.

These wetlands are extremely valuable resources for many reasons. They help control flooding by soaking up and retaining excess water, and also slow down water flow, giving floodwaters more time to recede. Wetlands improve water quality by absorbing pollutants, storing and breaking them down, and in some cases even using them as nutrients. In addition, wetland areas serve as habitat for a great variety of plant and animal species.

In Bay County, as stormwater management and community planning initiatives continue to evolve, the BCC emphasizes the need to recognize the importance of protecting our remaining local wetlands as a vital part of water management decision-making.

Plans are currently underway to revitalize the wildflower gardens on the upland portion at the Palm Preserve. Many thanks to members of the local **Sweetbay Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society** who have offered assistance with this project.

Thanks also go to **Maxwell Miller** for installing a water spigot on the premises to help us keep new plants thriving during future dry spells.

— **Teresa Nooney**



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Out and About



Ron Houser and volunteer **Al Clare** worked with Property Manager **Ted Wilson** to build a new fence at the Mary Ola Reynolds Miller Palm Preserve.



At left: Members of the local **Sweetbay Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society** helped weed the wildflower gardens at the Palm Preserve.

Mission Statement

The Bay County Conservancy is a not-for-profit, 501 (c)(3) land trust dedicated to the preservation of environmentally sensitive lands in the St. Andrews Bay ecosystem with emphasis on Bay County Florida.

Check us out at

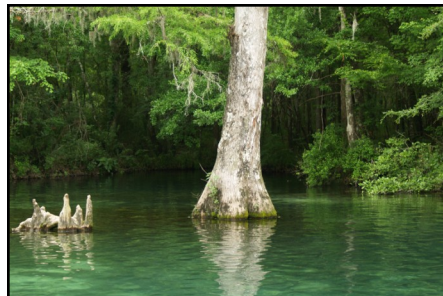
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And LIKE us on Facebook!



FLEPPC Symposium

In May, **Candis Harbison** and **Teresa Nooney** attended *Plant Wars– The EPPCs Strike Back*, a symposium in Panama City Beach put together by the region's Exotic Pest Plant Councils. Botanists, biologists, research scientists and Park Service personnel gave presentations addressing the necessity and benefits of invasive plant management. There was also a field trip to Ponce de Leon springs.



BCC Membership Form

Yes! I want to help the Bay County Conservancy save open space, wetlands and wildlife habitat.

Name: _____

Level: (circle one): **\$25-\$49 Contributor**

Address: _____

\$50-\$199 Supporter

\$200-\$999 Benefactor

\$1,000+ Lifetime

Please mail this form to:

Bay County Conservancy, P.O. Box 1122 Panama City, FL 32402