



2008 BCC Newsletter

Bay County Conservancy

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Community Effort

The Bay County Conservancy is truly a community effort. Volunteers and donors who understand the need for preserving at least a small part of our native environment are the bedrock of the organization. The board members and administrative assistant coordinate these concerns into an effective program.

Special thanks are due this year to **Mr. Johnny Patronis** who gave a \$10,000 donation to the BCC program. We are always grateful to the accounting firm of **Hare, Hare, and Myers** for their donation of accounting services; **Sandy Lynch's** patience and expertise is especially appreciated!

The BCC PowerPoint Presentation was shown to a few groups, and we are always looking for new places to present it. Teresa Nooney created a booth for Nature's Gallery at St. Andrews State Park that attracted attention.

New members, volunteers, opportunities to speak to groups, donations of land or money or securities—these are all ways that the community can continue to increase the effectiveness of land preservation in Bay County!



New Property Acquired in Waning Moments of 2007

A native of the Panhandle was honored by a gift to the Bay County Conservancy of the 12 1/2 acres of family land on which her ashes were scattered by her husband and sister after her death in 1986. The Doreen Miley Holder Preserve, donated by Lehman Holder and Donna Miley Albert, was appraised at \$430,000. Its location near Choctawhatchee Bay, in a rapidly developing area south of Freeport, accounts for the high valuation. While much of the property has been altered for

timber production, a small stream known as Bear Creek runs through it, providing diversity of plant cover.

The new preserve is "landlocked", meaning that no road runs to its boundary. An adjacent landowner has given permission for us to cross his property on an old jeep trail, so we hope to locate a good site for erection of a sign proclaiming the name of the preserve. A dedication will be held at a time when the donors might be able to travel from their present homes

in Washington.

The BCC is grateful to the owners of this valuable property, who thought that preserving the plants and animals and natural values of this piece of Florida was the most fitting tribute to their beloved wife and sister. As more and more land is disturbed, the need for refuges to provide habitat for animals and a lift to the human spirit becomes even greater. Thank you, Lehman and Donna.

- **Candis Harbison**

President, Bay County Conservancy

Save the Date!

Please plan to attend BCC's **9th Annual Meeting** on March 8, 2008, at the Gallery of Art from 10:00—11:00 a.m. Check out our native plant restoration project in progress 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.

New Plan Approved for Mary Ola Reynolds Miller Palm Preserve

The BCC Board has approved a plan that includes removing intrusive exotic vegetation and replacing it with native plants and wildflowers that will attract birds and butterflies. Trails have been laid out through the park, and a picnic table and vine arbor are planned next to the Art Gallery. Many thanks to Linda Macbeth of the National Audubon Society for her very aesthetic design of the park layout. Once the native plants are established, they should require only minimum maintenance. It is hoped that the park will become an oasis for those in the downtown area and a very visible property for the BCC.

The project got off to a good start in early August when thirty or so youth from the First United Methodist Church showed up for a work day. They were able to spread the truck load of dirt necessary for the garden, as well as remove many exotic



plants and do general landscaping that improved the overall appearance of the park. This was followed by a team led by Ron Houser, including Mark Thompson, Ray Matson, David Gorchoy and his very able children, who marked off trails and garden areas, added mulch to the garden soil, and planted numerous plants and seeds.

Special thanks to Nancy Spalding,

Simon Price and Bob Vickery for their efforts in removing (painfully!) so many of the Spanish Bayonets in the park. As you know, these are very unforgiving plants!

We have eliminated the trash pile from the back of the property and plan to compost the plant debris on site. The property has been restricted for day use only and now has signs prohibiting the use of alcohol. A grant has been applied for that would help us fully realize this beautiful plan. Please come and visit and enjoy the beauty of the park. Maybe there will be some blooming flowers this spring!

-Ted Wilson,

Management Team Leader

[Editor's Note: "Thank You" to Ted for organizing, watering, and remaining enthusiastic!]

Audubon Nature Preserve Update

Audubon Nature Preserve, a 35-acre property located behind Wal-Mart and Gulf Coast Medical Center off 23rd St., was our first acquisition. It is open to the public during the daytime either by using the boardwalk or by walking down the path on the north end of the preserve right by the drainage ditch behind Wal-Mart. Our extensive bird list for the preserve has grown to about 130 species thanks mostly to our worker **Mike Finnegan**, who is also an excellent birder.

During 2007 our ANP management team continued to eradicate invasive exotic plant species from the preserve. Most of the Chinese Tallow and Camphor trees have been eliminated and new native growth is coming up all over without the need

for replanting. The area in most need of control is the area adjacent to the Orthopedic Offices at the corner of 19th St. and State Avenue. The large amount of Climbing Air Potato vines have been aggressively treated by digging up the large tubers and picking up the "potatoes" on the ground. We plan to continue doing that in the coming year.

Our informational kiosk at the Doctors' Pond boardwalk was redesigned earlier in the year, thanks to Teresa Nooney. The pond itself is changing due to the lack of rain. This has allowed non-aquatic plants to proliferate, including blackberry. We hope that rainfall will return to normal this year to bring back the wood ducks and wading birds.

Volunteers are always needed to help with the exotic plant control program, trash pickup, mowing and keeping the path open. For more information, call Ron Houser, management team leader, at 763-7485.—Ron Houser



King Family Preserve



Since last year we have made a lot of progress at the King Family Preserve. With the help of many people we were able to eradicate most of

the popcorn trees and other exotics such as Kudzu. The ditch blocks were finally put in place, which we hope will keep the water from running out of the wet areas and return the property to its natural state.

The car dealership to the south of the property has agreed to help us clean up the area with the help of some of their employees. I feel that this will be a big help to us since some of the debris behind the dealership is large and it would be a huge undertaking if we were to have to do it by ourselves.

I would like to take this opportunity

to thank Ron Houser for helping coordinate workers and Mike Finnegan for all of his hard work. None of this would have been possible without them.

Many species of birds that depend on wetlands—such as wood ducks—can be found on the King Preserve. It is also home to native trees and vegetation such as Old Growth Pines, Cypress and the rare Loblolly Bay tree.

-Warren Middlemas III

Team Leader, King Family Preserve

High Point Preserve to Gain New Name

Ten acres of wet pine forest near Deerpoint Lake gained a guardian when **Beth Miller**, who lives nearby, became the Management Team Leader for that preserve, and she received some help when preserve neighbor David VanBlaricum agreed to help keep an eye on the preserve and perhaps help organize some enhancements for it.

The preserve will soon be gaining a new name. In exchange for a sub-

stantial donation in her honor, naming rights for the property were given to Julie Hilton and Richard Whitsett as a wedding gift.

A sign will be erected soon.



This preserve is located on East Lakeland Drive, off Highway 2311, which is to the East of Deerpoint Lake. This 10-acre plot was acquired through mitigation in 2006.

Juniper Headwaters Preserve

In March 2007, BCC volunteers painted the signpost and erected the permanent sign stating "*Juniper Headwaters Preserve: a project of the Bay County Conservancy in cooperation with the Northwest Florida Water Management District.*" Also at that time, white goods that had been dumped on the road leading into the preserve were picked up and hauled away, along with several buckets of trash.



Contact was made with neighboring property owners, who complained that unwelcome persons were using

the access road into the property as a "party place" at night. Therefore, King's Bay Concrete Company donated a couple of pilings and placed them in the road to block access. Thank you to **Paul King and his son Tyler** for helping on this project.

A "Team Leader" to regularly monitor the preserve is needed. Persons who live in north Bay County would be ideal.

Board of Directors

President Candis Harbison

Vice President Ron Houser

Treasurer Carolyn Parell

Members at Large

Jerry Gerde, Esq.

Jackie Kolk, Esq.

Joseph Parell, M.D.

Warren Middlemas III

Executive Assistant

Teresa Nooney

Webmaster

Patrice Couch

BCC Protected Properties

Audubon Nature Preserve—30 acres between 19th and 23rd Streets

King Family Preserve—27 acres between 15th and 19th Streets

Tumble Creek Preserve—45 acres in Washington County

Mary Ola Reynolds Miller Palm Preserve -1/3 acre downtown

Savage Swamp—forested wetland on the Choctawhatchee River

Juniper Headwaters Preserve—40 acres near Fountain

Talkington Family Nature Preserve— 10 acres in Lynn Haven

Richard Jennings Preserve— 6 acres between Hwy. 231 and 19th St.

Highpoint Preserve—10 acres just east of Deerpoint Lake

Doreen Miley Holder Preserve— 12 acres south of Freeport

More details and photographs of BCC properties can be found at:

www.baycountyconservancy.org

“Ninety: Stick Around and You’ll Get There”

If we stick around, we will all see our 90th birthday! Hopefully, we will have learned something by then, had some fun, and in some way left the world a better place. Audrey Parker did all that, in addition to being a founding member of the Conservancy, donating the Parker Preserve, and writing a book. I cannot match the wit and wisdom- to say nothing of the sparkling vocabulary - in Parker’s NINETY: STICK AROUND AND YOU’LL GET THERE, but I can tell you that the stories are pure delight. Her recollection of a young Queen Elizabeth’s first visit to America is brought to bear on local events when the same royal wave is used to usher marauding four year olds through the flower bed, with a wink. She moves smoothly from politics to friendship, from technology to philosophy. Her journal is good fun! It is vibrant and frank, but never pejorative. I laughed and frowned, and wished there were more tales from her youth.

The book was written over the years and is her first. She was happily surprised at the positive feedback. At the time of her death she was waiting to see if she placed in the News Herald’s recent writing competition. All proceeds from Mrs. Parker’s work go to the Bay County Conservancy. The book may be purchased through the BCC website or by calling Candis at 872-8260.

—Jackie Kolk

Membership

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

Name: _____

Address: _____

Level: (circle one): \$25-\$49 Contributor, \$50-\$199 Supporter, \$200-\$999 Benefactor, \$1,000+ Lifetime

Mail to: Bay County Conservancy, P.O. Box 1122, Panama City, FL 32402. If you wish to donate tax-deductible funds, properties or securities, please contact Candis Harbison at 872-8260 for more information.

The Bay County Conservancy, Inc., is a charitable organization as determined by Section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code. A copy of official registration #CH15037 with the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services may be obtained from the division of Consumer Services by calling 1-800-435-7352.