



# Bay County Conservancy, Inc. Newsletter

[www.baycountyconservancy.org](http://www.baycountyconservancy.org)

2011

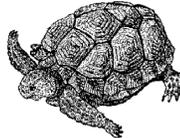
## Two New Nature Preserves

### *Margaret Roberts Meek Preserve*

Acquisition Committee Chair Jackie Kolk has had her eye on a particular piece of property for many years, and her inventive ideas finally obtained it for BCC. She negotiated a sale to developer Mitch Dever, who was to give us the 15 acres as mitigation for apartments that he planned to build. The recession killed the development project, but we received the property anyway.

Dense vegetation on the headwaters of Callaway Creek comprises most of the tract, and it might never be suitable for general use by the public. However, it is wonderful habitat for birds and plants. Ron Houser found a rare rosebud orchid growing there, and we found an active gopher tortoise den on the power line easement bordering the land. The land will be perfect for educational use and passive conservation.

The Board of Directors named it the "Margaret Roberts Meek Preserve", after a dedicated supporter and frequent donor to the BCC. Mrs. Meek said, "Anything that we can do to help save part of the earth is worth the effort". A sign will be erected soon.



### *Lot at Sandy Creek*

A 2-acre lot at Sandy Creek development is being donated by Mr. and Mrs. Duncan McNaughton of San Francisco. Mr. McNaughton's father had purchased the lot and dreamed of building on it, but he was unable to do that before he passed away. After making inquiries about the BCC, the McNaughtons decided to give us the property. We will be paying tax and closing costs, and the transfer took place on November 17. Even a small green space makes a difference in a neighborhood!

- Candis Harbison



**Rosebud orchid on the  
Margaret Roberts Meek  
Preserve**

*(photo: Ron Houser)*

## **BCC Receives Grant from Norcross Wildlife Foundation**

In February, the Conservancy received a \$1,000 grant from the Norcross Wildlife Foundation to purchase a lawnmower, herbicide sprayers and herbicide.

BCC volunteers are using the sprayers and herbicide to eradicate invasive plants such as Chinese Tallow trees, privet and climbing air potato vines. Our new Toro power mower is being used to mow public access points to the preserves.

Thanks, Norcross!

## **Thank You for Your Support!!**



Thanks to BCC members and friends, we have raised \$13,159.38 toward paying off the \$20,000 loan for our addition to the Tumble Creek Nature Preserve!

## Tumble Creek Local History Ingathering a Success

Through funding provided by the Florida Humanities Council, BCC held a **Local History Gathering** on September 25th for neighbors of our Tumble Creek Nature Preserve in the Quail Hollow/Buckhorn Creek area of Washington County. The event was an opportunity for BCC to learn more about the community surrounding our preserve—and for residents to find out about the Conservancy's efforts to preserve local land.

**Mary Ann Pelletier and her husband Ed**, the Country Oaks Volunteer Fire Department Chief, kindly let us use the fire department's community building for the event. Approximately 30 residents of this very rural area joined BCC volunteers for refreshments and story-sharing. With the assistance of our program scholar **Mary Thieme**, we were able to tape record interviews with many of our guests, which we plan to compile into a historical exhibit.

Although the residential "history" of this area is actually quite recent (most people arrived in the early 1980's), in many ways, the first property owners were pioneers. They purchased lots in the Buckhorn Creek area after seeing Land for Sale advertisements in either the Mother Earth News or the Palm Beach Post. Some wanted to escape the excessive overdevelopment that was taking Southern Florida by storm; others were heading to the panhandle in search of back-to-the-earth homesteading opportunities. We were fortunate to be able to meet with **Dorothy Pierce, her daughter, Sandra and their friend Melinda**. It was Mrs. Pierce's late husband, **Frank**, who headed up the T&P Land company back when land parcels were first advertised for sale in the Tumble Creek area. The Pierces were known well by all those present, and were considered to be community founders and friends. A big thank you to all who attended the Gathering—and to our BCC Board members and volunteers who came out to help and take part in the event: **Candis Harbison, Ron Houser, Mary Thieme, Ann Ake, Lynn Koehnemann, Nancy Harris, Margaret Meek, Bill Nooney, Ed and Lisa Keppner.**  
-Teresa Nooney

**Right:** Mary Ann Pelletier tells us about the early days of the Volunteer Fire Department .



**Above:** Dorothy Pierce shares a story with Mary Thieme.



**Left:** Leonard Parry stops by with his 3 adopted orphaned opossums, Sylvia, Stella and Adriana.

### New BCC Board Member

Welcome to **Sandy Lynch**, Bay County Conservancy's newest Board Member! We are all grateful that Sandy has offered to join us and look forward to having her involved with Conservancy projects in the coming year.

### Annual Meeting Notes

BCC's Annual Meeting was held April 17<sup>th</sup> at Carl Grey Park. Attendees unanimously voted to approve a change to the BCC Bylaws to stagger the terms of the BCC Board of Directors. Directors Candis Harbison, Jacalyn Kolk, Carolyn Parell and Ted Wilson were elected to two-year terms, as outlined in the Bylaws change.

## New Homes for Panama City Crayfish

Patty Kelly of U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and John Himes of Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission have teamed up with the BCC to expand habitat for the Panama City Crayfish, a species that is found nowhere else except certain soils in Bay County. Both the Talkington Family Preserve and Marjorie's Magical Marsh-Symone's Sanctimonious Swamp serve as homes to this unique species, and removing some of the tree cover to increase the wet, sunny areas that the crayfish like will increase the numbers of the crayfish. There will be no expense to the BCC, and work will begin soon at Marjorie-Symone.

- Candis Harbison



## Many Thanks to Our Accountants

Hare, Hare, and Myers has been graciously helping the BCC with accounting and tax issues for many years. Diane and Randy Hare share our conservation goals and have given us advice and submitted forms on our behalf. Now, the firm has changed to a new name: Hare Taylor. We are very pleased that Chuck Taylor will continue working with us and keeping us out of trouble. Thank you all!

## Audubon Nature Preserve Update

This year we finally finished up our 6-year mitigation project on Audubon Nature Preserve. Invasive exotic plants are mostly gone and we hope to get final DEP approval soon. This has been a big endeavor, requiring more work than we expected. But we're still finding areas of new seedlings and some larger popcorn trees, so we'll have to be going out there regularly to treat those.

Conditions have changed in the Doctors' Pond area from 6 years ago. As the pond has mostly dried up, it has rapidly grown over with various native plants. Lack of rainfall is a big factor. We do have a fairly new trail leading from the end of the boardwalk northward to the berm trail. A good variety of plants and birds will be seen there. Why not make it a point to visit the boardwalk in late afternoon or early morning with someone? You may see the marsh rabbits grazing around the boardwalk or see swamp sparrows, marsh wrens or even a hawk. This year has especially been good for dragonflies.

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

## Seen and Heard: Preserve Notes

George Jonkel and Elise Gold sent a note to say that they'd seen many wild turkeys this year and heard a barred owl calling at the **Juniper Headwaters Preserve**.

Warren Middlemas reported that the ditch blocks we installed at the **King Preserve** are doing their job—keeping water from draining away from our wetland areas, and biologist John Tobe discovered a white mulberry tree on the same property.

Some bad news: a fungal disease called Laurel Wilt has unfortunately killed some of our Redbay Laurels. We are in the process of determining if we are able to inoculate the trees that have not been infected.

## Volunteerism—Priceless!

Volunteers are always needed and appreciated - especially when we are working outdoors on our preserves. Thank you to our volunteers from the **Lynn Haven United Methodist Church** for their help at the Palm Preserve, and a

big round of applause to **Ron Houser**, for his many, many hours of hard work out in our woods and marshes.



## Board of Directors

**President** Candis Harbison

**Vice President** Ron Houser

**Treasurer** Carolyn Parell

### Members at Large

Jacalyn Kolk, Esq.

Joseph Parell, M.D.

Warren Middlemas III

Ted Wilson, M.D.

Sandra Lynch

### Board Member Emeritus

Jerry Gerde, Esq.

### Executive Assistant

Teresa Nooney

## BCC Out and About

- Board member Warren Middlemas visited the Newpoint Bay High School and spoke to students about the importance of wetlands.
- Board member Ted Wilson met with representatives of the Boy Scouts of America to encourage future partnerships and projects.
- BCC President Candis Harbison and Assistant Teresa Nooney delivered BCC's PowerPoint presentation to the East Bay Rotary group in Callaway and to Ms. Elizabeth Trentanelli's Political Science class at Gulf Coast Community College.

To schedule a presentation for your group, please call Teresa Nooney at 814-4755.



## 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.

**BCC, Inc.**

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**We're  
on the  
Web!**

[www.baycountyconservancy.org](http://www.baycountyconservancy.org)



## Here's a Great Holiday Gift Idea:



Support your local nonprofit land trust by giving a friend or loved one the gift of a one-year membership in the Bay County Conservancy. Fill out the form below and we'll send a BCC holiday card acknowledging your gift along with a brochure and a newsletter.

**\$25.00 helps protect local land for local people!**

**Yes! I would like to give a one-year gift membership to:**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Enclosed is my check for \$25.00 made payable to Bay County Conservancy, Inc.

**My info:**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**A Holiday Gift for You from:** \_\_\_\_\_

(Let us know how to sign your gift card: Ex.: Uncle Jim; Your friend, Pam, etc.)

**Mail this form to: Bay County Conservancy P.O. Box 1122 Panama City, FL 32402**