



# Bay County Conservancy, Inc. Newsletter

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

2012-2013

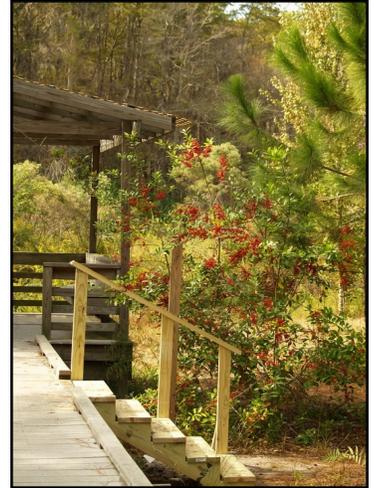
## Cooperation for the Crayfish...and Kids

Without even owning the land, the Bay County Conservancy is creating a new home for the Panama City Crayfish and a study/research area for students at Mosley High School. Many partners are coming together to achieve this result: Lynn Haven owns the land, Department of Environmental Protection oversees the land, **Patty Kelly** of U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and **John Himes** of Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission are restoring the land to be hospitable to the crayfish, and Ms. **Tammy Stundon**, science teacher at Mosley, plans to send her students across the street to conduct ecological projects.

Bay County Conservancy is coordinating all the parties and hoping eventually to make part of this conservation area open to the public for an interpretive walking trail. Ms. Stundon said "What better place to go on a field trip than in your backyard! With such close proximity to our campus, we will be able to collect data on a regular basis. We want the students to take ownership in this project." The first step occurred when the Lynn Haven City Commission approved a Management Agreement. Next, the biologists will submit their detailed restoration plan. The students will collect some preliminary data for comparison after restoration.

Why is the BCC, a land trust, doing this project? The Board of Directors decided that the value to the community and the opportunity to increase valuable wildlife habitat was worth the effort.

*Candis Harbison, BCC President*



Thanks to volunteer **Al Clare**, the Doctors' Pond gazebo now boasts a new set of steps—making the walking path more accessible.

## Happenings at Juniper Headwaters Nature Preserve

In the last year, BCC has worked hard to try and eradicate the remaining popcorn trees on the preserve. The property was finally burned by the Forestry Service in an attempt to clear out some of the underbrush and let native plants regenerate, and a loop trail has been marked out. BCC hopes to develop a trail map in the near future.



## BCC to Plant Wildflowers for FLOR500

In the months to come, BCC will be planting Florida wildflowers as part of FLOR500 – a participatory art, nature, and history project commemorating Florida's quinentenary (500 year birthday) in 2013. The project marks the importance of the moment when the history of Florida changed forever and gives a glimpse of what its landscape was like 500 years ago. Scientists across the state have identified 500 native wildflowers that were around when Ponce de Leon landed and named the state Florida. Schools, communities and individuals have been invited to plant wildflower gardens for each of the project's 500 wildflowers and dedicate them to someone who was a part of Florida's history – or to a local Floridian who is special to them. These new native habitats will help support Florida's biodiversity.

BCC will be planting wildflowers at the Mary Ola Reynolds Miller Palm Preserve located in downtown Panama City on Beach Drive. For more information about FLOR500, please visit [http://www.xaviercortada.com/?page=FLOR500\\_about](http://www.xaviercortada.com/?page=FLOR500_about). Bay County Conservancy will also post updates on the wildflower planting on Facebook and at [www.baycountyconservancy.org](http://www.baycountyconservancy.org).



## Bees Find Sweet Home on BCC Properties

As you drive down a busy street in town and notice that some of the trees, vines, and flowers are blooming, did you ever think about the bees that might be visiting those flowers? A beekeeper from Fountain did. After requesting permission from the Bay County Conservancy and after checking with Panama City about their mosquito spraying pattern, **Bob Grant** positioned a trailer full of beehives on the King Family Preserve for six weeks.

All parties were happy with the results. The bees found plenty of flowers to sip nectar from, Mr. Grant had honey to harvest and sell, and the BCC received the benefit of having pollinators active on their native habitat to keep the plants reproducing.

The Bay County Conservancy is a non-profit land trust that protects native landscape for the preservation of wildlife, plants, and for the education and spiritual renewal of people. More information can be obtained by calling 872-8260 or visiting the website at baycountyconservancy.org.



## New BCC Board Member

Welcome to **Jennifer Trusty, Ph.D.**, Bay County Conservancy's newest Board Member!



Jennifer Trusty is a botanist and educator who has worked with Florida native plants for over 10 years. Currently, she and her husband, **Herbert Kesler**, are finishing a three year project on Federally Endangered *Harperocallis flava* in the Apalachicola National Forest funded by the Florida Division of Forestry.

Jen is also active in education and teaches online biology courses at Georgia Perimeter College and Gulf Coast State College where she hopes her love of science is infective.

## Annual Meeting Notes

BCC's 13th Annual Meeting was held on March 31st at the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Bay County. Despite early morning rain storms, several BCC members joined Vice President **Ron Houser** for a walk at the Audubon Nature Preserve. Walkers saw a marsh rabbit and heard warblers, a Carolina wren and marsh wrens.

At the meeting itself, guests learned about BCC's purchase of an addition to Marjorie's Magical Marsh—Symone's Sanctimonious Swamp—an important acquisition because it contains habitat suitable for the Panama City Crayfish, which Fish and Wildlife biologists have identified on the site. Wildlife Biologist Patty Kelly and Northwest Regional Biologist John Himes described their work involving crayfish restoration on BCC properties.



BCC welcomed new Board member **Jennifer Trusty, Ph.D.**, to the Board of Directors, and the year's nominated slate of Directors was approved for re-election to the Board. (Candis Harbison, Jackie Kolk, Carolyn Parrell, and Ted Wilson were nominated for reelection. Jen Trusty will serve her first term).

**We're on  
the Web!**

**A New Look for the BCC Website!  
Check us out at [www.baycountyconservancy.org](http://www.baycountyconservancy.org)  
And LIKE us on Facebook.**



## Audubon Nature Preserve Update

The last several years have brought noticeable change to Audubon Nature Preserve, the first property BCC acquired. Prolonged drought-like conditions meant little, if any, standing water in the area known as “Doctors’ Pond”. As a result, opportunistic plant species such as saltbush, grapevine, blackberry and alligator weed are growing where they once could not. Wood ducks are no longer seen in our boxes, because there has been no water for them. But on the positive side, this year has seen almost normal rain conditions and reappearance of water in the pond. Whether this is just a short-term change is anyone’s guess.

We are still waging war on the popcorn trees, which have proved to be very difficult to eradicate completely. We have hired a local company to help us out (if it stops raining). We also have a local teenager, **Alan Gorchov**, who has volunteered to help us there to satisfy some academic community service hours. But he admits he loves to kill popcorn trees too. Where do we find more kids like this?...For some quiet time, the boardwalk and gazebo remains a great place to come



and enjoy the sights and sounds of nature, to eat a lunch or to read a book.

—Ron Houser

## Volunteer Jobs

Bay County Conservancy could not operate without the volunteer labor of many people. The 9 Directors work without compensation, and the half-time Executive Assistant has put in many unpaid hours. Preserve managers, accountants, weed-pullers, film-makers, ecologists, and many others have donated their efforts to enhance the lives of all of us by creating and maintaining sanctuaries for people and wildlife.

### THERE IS A JOB FOR EVERYBODY!

The new website ([baycountyconservancy.org](http://baycountyconservancy.org)) has a “Volunteer” section with job descriptions. Please read the descriptions and see how you can make a difference by working for 1 hour or 1 day. Thanks!

## We’re So Lucky!

Every penny that Bay County Conservancy receives is pinched hard to make sure the maximum benefit is squeezed from it, and we’ve been very lucky to have had expert help in keeping track of our finances. From 2004 to 2012, the firm of Hare, Hare, & Myers (later to become Hare, Taylor) donated over \$20,000 of their time and expertise toward assisting the BCC with advice, tax form preparation, and correspondence with the IRS. When the BCC was getting organized on all fronts at once, their accounting help was invaluable in getting us started on the right path of conserving our resources. Thanks!

Presently, BCC Board of Directors member, **Sandy Lynch**, has assumed the task of compiling tax records and submitting tax forms. She is professionally qualified for the job, and we are pleased to have her advice at all of the Board of Directors meetings. We are also very grateful to BCC treasurer, **Carolyn Parell**, who conducts the day-to-day banking and check-writing, and who prepares monthly financial statements for the Board. Any member is welcome to look at the books upon request.

## Land Added to Marjorie-Symone Preserve

Bay County Conservancy’s offer of \$12,000 for a fore-closed lot adjacent to Marjorie’s Magical Marsh-Symone’s Sanctimonious Swamp near Deerpoint Lake was accepted. Although the 1.5 acre parcel is not large in size, the addition is important to BCC and to Fish & Wildlife biologists because it contains habitat suitable for the Panama City Crayfish.

## Sign in Place at Meek Preserve

The Margaret Roberts Meek Preserve now has its official sign in place at Callaway Creek.



## 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

Jennifer Trusty, Ph.D.

### Board Member Emeritus

Jerry Gerde, Esq.

### Executive Assistant

Teresa Nooney

## BCC Out and About

- Ron Houser, Candis Harbison and Teresa Nooney joined store owners **Jim and Cindy Wolf** in celebrating the one year anniversary of **Wild Birds Unlimited** located in the Gilberg Plaza on Highway 77. Wild Birds stocks all your bird feeding supplies, binoculars and unique nature-themed gift items –drop by and pay them a visit!
- Many thanks go to **Joyce Howard** who has taken the time and initiative to help BCC remove litter from the Doctors' Pond gazebo on the Audubon Nature Preserve.



*Volunteer **George Stevenson** helps Board members Ted Wilson and Ron Houser spread dirt on some low areas of the trail at Audubon Nature 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.

## Here's a Great 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 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 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**