



PELICAN POST

A quarterly publication - Weeks Bay Foundation
Winter 2019
Volume 34, No. 4



Weeks Bay Photo Contest
Best in Show by Mason Lamb

Executive Director	2
In Memory of . . .	3
Rangeline Volunteer Day	4
American Mistletoe	5
Photo Contest Winners	6-7
Donor Spotlights	8
BirdFest	9
Donors	10-11
Bald Eagle Bash	12

From the Executive Director . . .

Isn't autumn in south Alabama the very best? The amazing crisp weather has been excellent for getting outside. We have started year three of our GulfCorps partnership, working on habitat restoration throughout both coastal counties. A group of eager volunteers got the chance to say "I Restored Rangeline" by removing invasive plants and trash from our new preserve property in Mobile County.

Did you know that fall is a peak season for bird migration through the Gulf? To celebrate, hundreds of birders and nature lovers from around the country came out for the Alabama Coastal BirdFest. With over 35 trips and workshops for every skill level, and a free expo, BirdFest was a great opportunity to enjoy all the natural wonders in our area.

Many of these beautiful scenes are captured each year in our annual photo contest. This year we had 228 entries. The winners of this year's contest are showcased in the center spread and on the cover.

Now, with the holidays quickly approaching, we are trying to wrap up a few more land protection projects before the end of the year and plan for a great 2020 full of growth and new conservation efforts.

This will be my final *Pelican Post* issue as the Executive Director of the Weeks Bay Foundation. It has been a privilege to work for this group and fight for habitat preservation throughout south Alabama. Thank you to everyone I have met and worked with during my time here. I know there are great things in store for this organization!

Happy Holidays!



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The mission of the Weeks Bay Foundation is to protect land and promote environmental education so current and future residents can enjoy clean water and the seafood, wildlife and outdoor recreation that define our area

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On the Cover

Weeks Bay Photo Contest
 Best in Show
 Photo by Mason Lamb

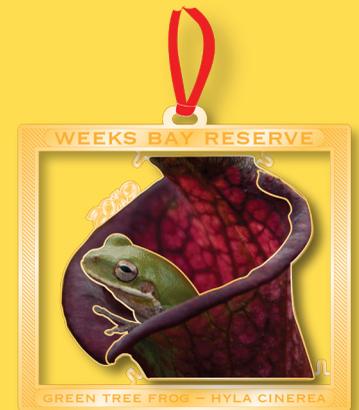
In this season of giving, we give thanks to our members, donors, and volunteers, and to those who support land conservation by attending Bald Eagle Bash, Pelican Paddle, Star Party, or a clean-up event. It is because of you that we are on track to protect another 1,000-plus acres this year, ensuring better water quality, intact wetlands, and thriving habitats for wildlife and aquatic life.

This is also the time of year when we ask our current supporters and new friends to consider a one-time, year-end donation. These donations help us plan for 2020 land protection and restoration projects, as well as opportunities to get people outside enjoying nature.

Donors of \$250 or more will receive the Weeks Bay Foundation 2019 Christmas ornament as our way of saying "thanks!" The ornament features a green treefrog—with its long limbs, long digits, and sticky toe pads—peeking out of a pitcher plant. The original photo on which the ornament is based, taken by **Rodney Kilgore**, now a Foundation board member, won Best in Show in the 2013 Weeks Bay Photo Contest.

We hope you will consider making a donation toward protecting land and habitats in your year-end giving. No gift is too small.

Giving online is easy. To make a donation, please visit weeksbay.org/donate/annual-appeal/.



Remembering William Jackson “Jack” Edwards



There are many toasts and tributes one could make in remembrance of the late Congressman Jack Edwards. He was a statesman who served his state and country proud, who showed by his actions that working together toward a common goal could

result in much good, and who believed that leaving behind a better place was the greatest legacy a person could have.

“Jack Edwards has left a large conservation footprint on his beloved state of Alabama,” **Skipper Tonsmeire**, board member and one of the founders of the Weeks Bay Foundation said. “Beginning in the mid-1970s, he was responsible for the authorization of the Bon Secour National Wildlife Refuge and for securing the appropriations necessary to implement this great accomplishment.”

According to Skipper, subsequent actions by Jack led to establishing the Weeks Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve, a partnership between the state of Alabama and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) that has benefitted the area’s ecology and provided educational opportunities to students of all ages.

Jack’s extensive contributions to Weeks Bay extended more than 30 years, including serving as chairman of the Weeks Bay Foundation from 1990 to 2008.

“Not satisfied with these great efforts on behalf of conservation in Alabama, Jack was instrumental in getting legislation necessary to provide for a massive protection effort in the Mobile-Tensaw Delta, an area cherished by many generations of Alabamians,” Skipper said. “Through the efforts of Jack Edwards, massive amounts of habitat have been conserved benefitting indigenous flora and fauna and providing perpetual outdoor recreational opportunities for south Alabama residents and visitors for generations to come. Jack was loved and revered by all who knew or knew of him. We miss him and will never forget his accomplishments.”

Remembering Otilie Halstead



When Otilie Halstead passed away November 15th, it was nine days before her 106th birthday. From the time she moved to Fairhope, Alabama until her death, she was a great friend to the Weeks Bay Foundation, the Weeks Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve, and the Fairhope community in general.

Many will recognize her name from the Halstead Amphitheater on the Fairhope campus of Coastal Alabama Community College (CACC). Or the Otilie Halstead Weeks Bay Visitor Center at the Weeks Bay Reserve. Additionally, she provided funds for the Kurt G. Wintermeyer Boardwalk at the Weeks Bay Pitcher Plant Bog (named in honor of her brother). She also purchased a grand piano for Centennial Hall, and chairs for Giddens Auditorium in Centennial Hall and for the Fairhope Unitarian Fellowship. She contributed funds toward the construction of the John L. Borom Center for Health and Natural Science at CACC and the purchase of land for the Weeks Bay Foundation and the Tonsmeire Weeks Bay Resource Center.

“Otilie Halstead was so special and led such a grand, beautiful, long life, giving back so much to Fairhope,” **Dr. John Borom** said. “We are thankful for her friendship and for her commitment to present and future generations. She was truly one of a kind.”

According to friends who spoke during her memorial service, Otilie was adventuresome. She went whitewater rafting, hiking, and camping in Idaho for the first time when she was in her 80s. She enjoyed it so much, she went again. She loved birding, and was treasurer of the Mobile Bay Audubon Society until she was 100 years old, and she took Spanish classes before going to visit her brother, who lived in Mexico. She also traveled regularly to visit family back in her native Germany.

The Weeks Bay Foundation will be forever grateful to Otilie Halstead’s contributions to conservation in south Alabama. Her generosity will benefit many, for generations to come.



Grab your popcorn (trees) and check out the action

Earlier this year, the Weeks Bay Foundation worked with local restoration experts to complete forestry mowing and understory thinning on the upcoming Rangeline Preserve in south Mobile County. With a newly opened canopy and much more sunlight, a huge population of green pitcher plants popped up.

Unfortunately, a substantial crop of invasive plants was not far behind. Invasive species are plants or animals that come from other areas and take over their new habitats.. Why? Because they have no natural predators or pests and can often thrive in the weather conditions of their new home. On Rangeline, and in our region in general, the popcorn tree (Chinese tallow tree) is one of the worst offenders.

Luckily for the Foundation, we have some great partners and community members who were willing to get their hands dirty in the name of conservation. During the month of October, GulfCorps program participants and volunteers from the area helped remove thousands of popcorn tree seedlings from the property. By hand pulling the seedling trees and their roots, we will use much less herbicide on the property and can be assured that the trees will not re-sprout in the next growing season.



When the Weeks Bay Foundation decided to create this preserve in Mobile County, along with its sister property on Fish River, we wanted to make sure the public was part of the process. Over the last year, we had more than 100 volunteers remove invasive plants, plant trees, and put up fencing to keep out damaging four-wheelers. We wanted community members to be able to say “I restored these places that we can now enjoy.”

Over the next year, the Foundation will do additional invasive plant removal, prescribed burning, and trail construction. By the winter of 2020, we look forward to opening the Rangeline Preserve to the public with a mile and a half nature trail, educational signage, and a parking area.

To find out more or make a donation towards this project, please visit weeksbay.org or call Diana Brewer at 251-990-5004.

Accreditation Update

Weeks Bay Foundation is pleased to announce it is applying for renewal of accreditation. The land trust accreditation program recognizes land conservation organizations that meet national quality standards for protecting important natural places and working lands forever. A public comment period is now open.

The Land Trust Accreditation Commission, an independent program of the Land Trust Alliance, conducts an extensive review of each applicant’s policies and programs.

The Commission invites public input and accepts signed, written comments on pending applications. Comments must relate to how Weeks Bay Foundation complies with national quality standards. These standards address the ethical and technical operation of a land trust. For the full list of standards see <http://www.landtrustaccreditation.org/help-and-resources/indicator-practices>.

To learn more about the accreditation program and to submit a comment, visit www.landtrustaccreditation.org, or email your comment to info@landtrustaccreditation.org. Comments may also be faxed or mailed to the Land Trust Accreditation Commission, Attn: Public Comments: (fax) 518-587-3183; (mail) 36 Phila Street, Suite 2, Saratoga Springs, NY 12866.

Comments on Weeks Bay Foundation’s application will be most useful by April 12, 2020.



Consider a qualified charitable distribution for your year-end giving

Looking for ways to support the Weeks Bay Foundation?

If you are 70½ or older and required to take minimum distributions from your retirement accounts, a qualified charitable distribution may be right for you.

As a 501c3 organization, the Foundation can accept all or part of your required minimum distribution. The amount of the distribution will reduce your taxable income. It's as simple as requesting that your financial institution send your required minimum distribution directly to the Foundation.

If your passion is for leaving a legacy that ensures protected land and waterways, access to outdoor recreation, and environmental education, your donation would support these causes.

For more information, visit www.irs.gov/retirement-plans/retirement-plans-faqs-regarding-iras-distributions-withdrawals.



National Charity League volunteers

We can't say enough good about these mother/daughter volunteers.

You see them at Bald Eagle Bash, serving snow cones, helping restaurants, and taking up tickets. At Pelican Paddle, they register participants, work the retail booth, and serve beignets. They arrive early and stay late. They are members of the local chapter of National Charity League, a multigenerational philanthropic organization of mother and daughter volunteers.

Get to know our native plants: American Mistletoe

by Fred Nation

American mistletoe (*Phoradendron leucarpum*) is an evergreen woody shrub that grows directly on the limbs of many broadleaf trees. Also called oak mistletoe, it is often seen at Weeks Bay Reserve and throughout Alabama, growing on red oak species such as water oak.



Fred Nation

Because it has green leaves that conduct photosynthesis, mistletoe is a semi-parasite; it “steals” water and nutrients from the vascular systems of host trees. The trees can become so heavily infested they look like evergreen “mistletoe trees.”

Mistletoe is dioecious (di-e'-shus)—each plant is male or female. The females produce sticky white fruits, which play a critical role in an ingenious seed transport strategy. When birds eat the berries, some stick to their bills, which they scrape off on limbs as they fly from tree to tree. If a seed is deposited onto a suitable host tree, it sprouts directly into the limb to make a new plant.

All parts of American mistletoe contain toxic alkaloids. Despite this toxicity, mistletoe was a highly regarded historic herbal remedy for such diverse maladies as epilepsy, tumors, high blood pressure, and cardiac arrhythmia. American Indians reportedly made a tea from the berries to stop bleeding after childbirth.

The genus, *Phoradendron*, is from two Greek words that mean “tree thief.” The species name, *leucarpum*, means “white fruit.” European mistletoe, *Viscum album*, looks similar, has the same habits, and is closely related to the American species. Because of this similarity, the extensive European folklore has become associated with the native species. Our holiday mistletoe is a symbol of welcome and good fortune, with origins far older than Christmas or Christianity.





Best in Show, Mason Lamb

2019 Weeks Bay Photo Contest Winners

For the first time in its 19-year history, a budding photographer from the Junior category won Best in Show in the 2019 Weeks Bay Photo Contest!

That distinction goes to Mason Lamb of Summerdale for his fun and quirky photo aptly named “Friendly Toads.” He submitted the photo in the Junior Fauna category. The Open and Junior divisions are Flora, Fauna, Habitat, and People in Nature.

The 2019 winners were selected by judges **Rodney Kilgore**, **Georgia Sims**, and “**Brody**” **Joe Thomassen** from among 228 photographs submitted. The winning photos will be available for viewing on the Weeks Bay Foundation website (weeksbay.org) and at the Fiver Rivers Delta Resource Center Apalachee Exhibit Hall. Plans are underway to display the photos at various locations throughout Baldwin County in 2020. They will also be featured in Weeks Bay Foundation literature.

PEOPLE IN NATURE, JUNIOR



1st Place – Sophia Haines



2nd Place – Mason Lamb



3rd Place – Mary Mac Estes



Honorable Mention – Mason Lamb

HABITAT



2nd Place – Maggie Paul



PEOPLE IN NATURE, OPEN



1st Place – Belinda Ringfeil



2nd Place – Laurie Schaerer



3rd Place – Jeff Hosterman



Honorable Mention – Brent Eanes

HABITAT



1st Place



2nd Place – Beth Tattersa



HABITAT, JUNIOR



1st Place –
Audrey Haines



Paul



3rd Place – Sophia Haines

Honorable Mention –
Mary Mac Estes

FLORA, JUNIOR



1st Place – Sophia Haines



2nd Place –
Maggie Paul



Honorable Mention -
Grace Williams



3rd Place –
John John Normann

FAUNA, JUNIOR



1st Place –
Taylor Goodrich

2nd Place –
John John
Normann



3rd Place – Sophia Haines

Honorable Mention –
Sophia Haines



HABITAT, OPEN



1st Place – Wayne Anders



tersall



3rd Place –
Gwen Ainsworth



Honorable Mention –
Wayne Anders

FLORA, OPEN



1st Place – Karen Chiasson



2nd Place – Kathy Peace

Honorable Mention –
Kathy Peace



3rd Place – Jessica McAlpine



FAUNA, OPEN



1st Place –
Laurie Schaerer

2nd Place –
Mark Watts



3rd Place – Jessica McAlpine



Honorable Mention –
Beth Tattersall



Donor Spotlight Steve Baker



When we caught up with Steve Baker, Wealth Management Advisor with Merrill Lynch in Fairhope, he was getting ready to go to north Alabama for the 100-mile Pinhoti 100 ultra trail race in the mountains, from Heflin to Sylacauga. Not to compete in the race, but to work the mile 52 aid station.

“I’ve been doing this since year one of the race—for 13 years,” Steve said. “I love it. It gets me in the woods. I don’t hunt, but I love being in the woods.”

When his two sons—Evan and Will—were young, Steve would take Boy Scouts on backpacking trips, including a 70-mile hike in Montana. He still does those hikes, and others like them, just without the scouts. Sometimes his now-grown sons or friends accompany him; other times he hikes alone. And the hikes always include packing a fly rod.

Back home, Steve said his involvement with the Weeks Bay Foundation started with **Ken Cole**, now retired from Merrill Lynch.

“We’re fortunate that Merrill Lynch - Bank of America has a foundation that matches our donations,” he said. “Ken and I started sponsoring the Weeks Bay Foundation together, and I’ve kept it going. Anybody who loves the water knows we have to keep the bays clean. We have to keep the edges from eroding. We’ve also got to preserve the marsh lands around the bay—where the fish, crab, and minnows grow.”

Regarding land conservation, Steve said this: “It’s a great way to take land that is only marginally useful for humans, but is exceptionally useful for aquatic and bird life, and make it accessible to all of us.”

Donor Spotlight Wesley Carpenter



Wesley Carpenter, wealth management advisor with Merrill Lynch in Fairhope, moved to Fairhope five years ago, and for five years he’s been supporting the Weeks Bay Foundation.

“My business has grown, and our clients have rewarded us with the capability to give back,” Wesley said. “It was the community involvement and community feel that brought us here. Fairhope is the most philanthropic and family-friendly city I’ve known.”

Wesley said he likes to get involved in things his family is passionate about—the outdoors, boating, childhood education. He and his wife Aena have two children—5-year-old Quin and 3-year-old Wells—who, he said, almost always pick the boardwalks at the Weeks Bay Reserve for Saturday afternoon outings.

“We need more public access to nature,” Wesley said. “Trails, bikes, fishing, whatever gets people outdoors. And a lot of these things you can do for next to nothing. We live in a phenomenal place.”

As a senior vice president and resident director of the Fairhope Merrill Lynch office, Wesley has a team of six financial advisors. A native of Dothan and a graduate of the University of Alabama, he worked for Merrill Lynch in Birmingham for 8½ years before moving to Fairhope.

Of the Foundation’s new public-access nature preserves, Wesley said, “I think it’s huge that we’re doing these parks. Preserving it (land) and allowing future generations to use it is great for this area long term.”



Alabama Coastal BirdFest draws hundreds to Gulf Coast

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The Alabama Gulf Coast is the perfect backdrop for a perfect Alabama Coastal BirdFest.

More than 370 bird species have been counted along the Alabama coast, and fall migration is the best time to seek out birds, enjoy the outdoors, and maybe learn a thing or two about the pastime of birdwatching.

Such was the case for the hundreds of bird enthusiasts at the 16th annual Alabama Coastal BirdFest in October. Boat and walking trips included such locations as the Mobile-Tensaw Delta, Magnolia Branch Wildlife Reserve, the Dauphin Island Bird Sanctuary, and Bon Secour National Wildlife Refuge highlight the festival. There were also workshops on shorebirds, southeastern hummingbirds, and advanced birding. The festival concluded with a free Bird & Conservation Expo on the grounds of Coastal Alabama Community College in Fairhope.

Proceeds from Alabama Coastal BirdFest benefit coastal properties and important habitats. Recently, BirdFest contributed \$10,000 towards the Dauphin Island Bird Sanctuaries' (DIBS) purchase of the "Longfellow Lots." The preservation of these lots adds to the existing DIBS lands and provides additional nesting, feeding, and breeding areas.



Jimbo Meador, the 2019 BirdFest featured artist



Photos by Diana Brewer



Photos by Rodney Kilgore



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*"Between every two pines is a doorway to a new world."
- John Muir*



**Big announcement coming at the
2020 Bald Eagle Bash. Don't miss it!**

Mark Your Calendar: April 25

The 11th Annual Bald Eagle Bash--the Alabama Gulf Coast's Party for Preservation--is taking place on Saturday, April 25, at the Tonsmeire Weeks Bay Resource Center. This signature event for the Weeks Bay Foundation has earned a reputation for delivering great food, great music, and a great time, all on the edges of beautiful Weeks Bay. The "Bash" includes fresh Gulf shrimp prepared by the area's best chefs and restaurants,



*This year's event will feature music by
The Underhill Family Orchestra.*

Mark your calendars now!

