



PELICAN POST

A quarterly publication - Weeks Bay Foundation
Summer 2018
Volume 33, No. 2



2017 Weeks Bay Photo Contest
Honorable Mention, Flora
by Karen Chiasson

Executive Director	2
New Greenspaces	3
Alien Invaders	4
Waxmyrtle	4
Living Shorelines	5
Bald Eagle Bash	6-7
Profiles of Sponsors	8-9
Calendar	9
Donors	10
Science Education	11
Pelican Paddle	12

Board of Directors

Jack Edwards
Chairman Emeritus

Ellis Allen, MD
Shawn T. Alves
John L. Borom, PhD
Andrew Chason
Daniel R. Galbraith
Ralph Havard
Ken Heard
Veronica Herndon
Bob Holk
Rodney M. Kilgore
Walter Kirkland
Gigi Lott
Phil Norris, EdD
Lesley Pacey
Michael J. Quinn, MD
Louis G. (Buddy) Russell
John L. Stump, DC, PhD, EdD
Skipper Tonsmeire
Gina Walcott
Rick Wallace
Leslie G. Weeks

Executive Director
Yael Girard

The Weeks Bay Foundation is a non-profit organization whose members work to protect the natural resources of coastal Alabama and to provide support for the Weeks Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve's goals and programs.

Pelican Post is a quarterly publication of the Weeks Bay Foundation.

Editor
Diana Brewer

Layout & Design
Kathy Hicks

From the Executive Director . . .

While walking the beaches of Gulf Shores recently, just before sunrise, I was struck again by how impressive this place is that we call home. Especially now, as summer rolls in and every corner of the coast grows lush with new life.

Here at the Weeks Bay Foundation, we have just celebrated the changing of the seasons with our biggest fundraiser, the Bald Eagle Bash. This ever-growing event brought nearly 1,100 people to the shores of Weeks Bay to eat, drink, dance, and support our mission.

We are now planning for the Pelican Paddle, summer interns, and some large-scale restoration efforts. Through the dog days, we continue our work of protecting and enhancing critical habitat throughout the area. Join us on the bay and in the backwaters for the paddle race or for a volunteer "plant pull party" and remind yourself why summer in coastal Alabama is a joy uniquely ours.

I leave you with the poem "Summer in the South" by Paul Laurence Dunbar.

The oriole sings in the greening grove
As if he were half-way waiting,
The rosebuds peep from their hoods of green,
Timid and hesitating.
The rain comes down in a torrent sweep
And the nights smell warm and piney,
The garden thrives, but the tender shoots
Are yellow-green and tiny.
Then a flash of sun on a waiting hill,
Streams laugh that erst were quiet,
The sky smiles down with a dazzling blue
And the woods run mad with riot.




Female Orchard Oriole

Kathy Hicks

Master Gardeners' Spring Plant Sale

The Baldwin County Master Gardeners' 20th annual Spring Plant Sale, hosted by the Weeks Bay Reserve, was a huge success. Not even the rain could dampen the spirits of organizers and volunteers, who reported close to record sales.



The Baldwin County Master Gardeners have freely given their time and expert assistance to countless projects and events at the Reserve over the years, and they continue to play an important role in the Weeks Bay Volunteers' annual Native Plant Sale.

"We are proud of our association with this dedicated group of volunteers," L.G. Adams, Weeks Bay Reserve manager, said. "We look forward to working with them as we continue our work to educate the public, protect our natural heritage, and beautify Baldwin County."

Foundation launches new greenspace projects in Mobile and Baldwin counties

by Diana Brewer, Development and Communications Coordinator

After 28 years of preserving coastal habitat and educating the community about these important natural resources, the Weeks Bay Foundation is proud to launch its first public greenspace and recreation area project, thanks to a \$260,000 grant from the EPA Gulf of Mexico Program, a \$20,000 grant from the Daniel Foundation, and a \$7,500 sponsorship from Baldwin County Sewer Service.

"The Foundation believes in the importance of greenspace to our health and happiness," Yael Girard, Weeks Bay Foundation executive director said. "We also believe people will better protect things they understand, and they will better understand something they experience in person. This project will give folks on both sides of Mobile Bay new access to nature."

Rio Vista is a 25-acre tract on Fish River, in Baldwin County, on a section of river popular for kayaking, swimming, and fishing. "This is a perfect spot for recreation and education," Girard said. "This property will become a paddle-accessible preserve focusing on watershed health. A 'watershed' is more than just the rivers and bays. It is also the land surrounding those waterways. What we do on that land directly influences the health and resiliency of our communities."



Shoreline at Rio Vista

Alternatively, the 70-acre Rangeline property is on a main road between Mobile and Dauphin Island. This area is a hub of industry and shipping, but has few opportunities for community access to nature.

"Rangeline was once slated to be a subdivision (prior to the Foundation acquiring the property), but that idea was eventually abandoned," Girard said. "Through this restoration plan, we will clear brush, plant trees, and construct walking trails. This property will become a valuable public wilderness space for an underserved part of the community."

Coastal Alabama is growing rapidly. Baldwin County's population is projected to grow more than 60 percent by 2040. "This growth will have significant impacts on the surrounding wetlands, rivers, and bays," Girard said. "It is important that residents and community leaders understand the value of our coastal resources in order to make good choices as our area changes."



Pitcher plant at Rangeline

The Association of American Colleges and Universities reports that people gain a deeper comprehension of issues when they are able to experience a resource firsthand. By getting residents out into these critical habitats, for both restoration activities and leisure recreation, it will improve their connection to these places and their likelihood of being good stewards of the land and water.

In addition, the demand for recreational activities, especially walking and hiking, are higher than ever. The 2013 Alabama Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) states that 91 percent of Alabamians see outdoor recreation as important or very important. Furthermore, "Walking for Pleasure" was the number one activity of interest for participants in the SCORP survey.

The creation of these two preserves will introduce community members to two new, unique locations for recreation, with a combined 2.5 miles of trail. Outreach will include volunteer participation in the restoration activities, such as invasive plant removal, tree planting, and trail construction. In addition, the Foundation will install educational signage for each preserve. This signage will teach visitors about watershed health, coastal biodiversity, endangered species, and how land use affects water quality.

Activities on these properties have begun, and projections are for the preserves to be open to the public by the winter of 2020. If you, or your company, would like to be part of this process, through sponsorship or volunteerism, please contact Yael Girard at yael@weeksbay.org.



Get to know our native plants: Waxmyrtle

by Fred Nation



Looking for a durable, fast-growing, informal hedge for your landscape? Waxmyrtle (*Morella cerifera*), or Southern Bayberry, is a large colonial shrub native to the coastal plain from Maryland through Florida, westward into Texas. In Alabama, the range is primarily the southern half of the state, and it is frequently seen throughout the Weeks Bay Reserve.

The Waxmyrtle's leaves are evergreen, elliptic or lance-shaped, 2 to 4 inches long, and smaller toward the ends of the branches. They are irregularly toothed, mostly toward the tips. Both leaf surfaces have yellow, resinous glandular dots, which give them a yellow-green appearance. Native Americans and early settlers are said to have used the aromatic leaves as an insect repellent in bedding, and around animal pens to repel fleas. Waxmyrtle is "dioecious," with male and female flowers on separate plants. The female flowers produce large quantities of small, woody, nut-like fruits in dense clusters along the stems. These fruits are covered with a pale gray wax that can be extracted by boiling in water. The species name, *cerifera*, means "wax-bearing." Soap and bayberry candles can be made from the wax.

Most of our native habitats in the southern half of Alabama contain Waxmyrtle populations. They are well adapted to fire, and readily sprout from burned or cut stems and from rhizomes. They are among the earliest pioneer species on eroded or clear-cut land. The resinous leaves and twigs burn with an extremely hot fire, which can cause damage to small pine trees. On the other hand, this colonial shrub can be planted to stabilize and restore badly eroded land.

Our pioneer ancestors, and Native Americans before them, valued the Waxmyrtle and found it useful. It is pleasant to see it in many natural areas in the Weeks Bay watershed.

Alien invaders hit close to home

by L.G. Adams, Reserve Manager

Recently, someone pointed out, "Hey look, that tree is dead."

"Yep, they are dying all over the county," I said.



Alien Invaders in our midst are wreaking havoc on native plant species—species often taken for granted as background foliage along the Gulf Coast. The tree in question is the Swamp Bay (*Persea palustris*), a species of Red Bay in the Laurel family *Lauraceae*. Found here in the Southern Coastal Plain, Swamp Bay has some commercial use locally in cabinetry and small boat building, and the leaves contain wonderfully aromatic compounds that make them an excellent substitute for the commercial bay leaves used to flavor foods.

The Swamp Bay is in trouble. Tree after tree is falling prey to a nearly invisible invader, the redbay ambrosia beetle (*Xyleborus glabratus*). The beetle carries a lethal exotic fungus (*Raffaelea lauricola*) that, once inside the Swamp Bay, will almost certainly kill the tree.

As obscure as it seems, it is called Laurel Wilt Disease and has been affecting trees in North America for the last decade. The ambrosia beetle, acting as the vector host, was first discovered in Georgia after being captured in a survey trap in 2002.

This exotic beetle, no more than 1/16 of an inch in length, bores into the bark and introduces the fungus that disrupts normal processes in the tree. These exotic invaders are so small you might never notice them until the leaves of the Swamp Bay in your yard, or on your favorite trail or boardwalk, turn reddish brown, signaling it's too late.

Eradicating the ambrosia beetle is not feasible in the southeast. However, we can limit the spread of this pest by not



transporting infested wood products. To prevent similar situations from occurring with other species, it is important to know which plants and animals are exotic invasive species. Invasive species of plants, fish, mollusks, insects, fungi, and bacteria are a growing problem.

What can you do?

- Manage your yard or other land to minimize the introduction of invasive species.
- Plant only native plants in your yard.
- Do NOT release exotic fish or plants, like those in an aquarium, into a pond or stream.
- Support local efforts and programs that promote native species and biodiversity and that work to combat the introduction and spread of exotic invasive species.

In addition, help protect natural areas that promote biodiversity. You can learn more by visiting the Weeks Bay Reserve and Weeks Bay Foundation websites at weeksbayreserve.com or weeksbay.org.

The benefits of living shoreline techniques and coastal enhancement research

by Daniel Firth, Sara Martin, Nigel Temple, and Eric Sparks

Recent articles in *Pelican Post* detailed the use of living shorelines and the progress of shoreline enhancement projects along the Swift Tract in north Bon Secour Bay. Here, hybrid living shoreline designs, featuring marsh grass plantings coupled with nearshore rubble breakwaters, were installed to help reduce shoreline erosion. While previous articles highlighted the research by Mississippi State University and partners on the effects of marsh planting designs, MSU is conducting additional research on the effects of shoreline restoration on commercial and recreational fisheries.



This fisheries research examines the complimentary roles of planted marsh grass and breakwater protection in providing habitat for marine life, and if their presence benefits the local food web. To investigate the effects of the design, researchers collect fish and crustaceans, such as speckled trout, flounder, blue crabs, and shrimp, seasonally, from various sampling locations along natural and restored sites. They use a combination of trawl nets, custom lift nets, shoreline minnow traps, and sediment core samples. These diverse sampling methods help capture fish associated with certain habitats, such as topminnows in marsh grasses or croakers along breakwaters, as well as from fisheries

that may move frequently between habitat types, such as for blue crabs and shrimp. After field collection, researchers identify and weigh specimens to determine which species are associated with natural and restored areas and if fisheries are more productive as a result of restoration efforts.

After two years of monitoring, preliminary results show some interesting findings. The breakwaters are supporting approximately 30 percent more fish and invertebrates compared to areas without breakwaters. Other results reinforce the idea that marsh grasses provide high quality habitat for a variety of species. These trends support the idea that breakwaters increase the abundance and diversity of local marine life, which is important for the seafood market in our community.

With roughly a year left of sampling, our team is eager to continue analyzing the benefits of living shoreline and coastal enhancement projects. These results will address critical questions of fishery health in areas with active restoration projects and shed light on more efficient methods for combating shoreline erosion. Our goal is to increase the effectiveness, sustainability, and prevalence of future coastal restoration projects.

If you are interested in learning more about living shorelines and their possible benefits for your property, visit masgc.org/living-shorelines, or email eric.sparks@msstate.edu.





Bald Eagle Bash by the numbers (and other fun facts!)

by Diana Brewer, Development and Communications Coordinator

The 9th annual Bald Eagle Bash was a great success—the weather, the food, the band, the people—all made for one heck of a “Party for Preservation.” The Bash is the largest fundraiser for the Weeks Bay Foundation, supporting our mission to protect the water, the woods, and the wildlife in coastal Alabama. In addition, the Bash allows us to connect with members of our community and educate them about the importance of our coastal wetlands and this amazing Weeks Bay watershed. With the generous support of our sponsors, plus area restaurants serving fresh local shrimp and delicious desserts, a signature beer, folks dancing to Johnny Hayes and the loveseats, and a spectacular setting, it was definitely a celebration.

Here is the day broken down by the numbers:

- \$62,000 in net proceeds to support our mission
- 10,000 biodegradable plates and bowls, instead of plastic
- 1,130 pounds of shrimp fried, sautéed, and boiled
- 1,069 people, plus a bunch of little ones
- \$990 in day-of donations
- 85 sponsors investing in the event
- 26 cases of wine from M&J Wines
- 16 restaurants cooking up a storm
- 12 half kegs of beer from Budweiser and Fairhope Brewing Company
- 1 awesome party!

While the Bald Eagle Bash is all about fun in the sun, the funds raised play a critical role in local conservation and the preservation of our most vulnerable natural resources. This is only made possible by incredible restaurants, generous sponsors, and tireless volunteers that give of their time, talents, and treasures. We are very grateful to all who support our mission!



Photos by Sherry Stimpson Frost and Diana Brewer



PRESTIGE SPONSORS



DIAMOND SPONSOR

Coastal Land Trust

PLATINUM SPONSOR

Lagnaipe Weekly

GOLD SPONSORS

17 Turtles Outfitters
 Allen, Allen and Foster, LLP
 Budweiser Busch Distributing
 Buffalo Rock - Pepsi
 Columbia Southern University
 Dewberry
 Fairhope Brewing Company
 The Funchess Family
 Steven W. Kinsey, M.D.
 Merrill Lynch - Fairhope
 Moffat & Nichol
 PPM Consultants, Inc.
 Russell Thompson Butler & Houston - CPAs
 Saunders Yachtworks
 South Baldwin Family Practice
 Thompson Engineering
 Tonsmeire Properties
 Volkert
 Weeks Bay Watershed - Yours to Protect

SILVER SPONSORS

Airbus
 Alabama Power Company
 Baldwin County Sewer Service
 Ben M. Radcliff Contractor, Inc.
 Blue Water Lumber
 Barry L. Booth, DMD
 Caldwell Wenzel & Asthana PC
 China Doll/Dixie Lily Foods
 Citizens Bank

Dauphin Island Real Estate, Inc.
 Deuel Drug Store
 Erwin Remediation, Inc.
 Fairhope Title Services, LLC
 Family Medicine Specialists - Michael McBrearty, MD
 Harris Properties Management
 Hellmich Electric, Inc.
 Dr. Michael Houston - Baldwin County Pulmonary and Sleep
 JubileeScape
 Kemko Metal Buildings
 Knockout Pest & Termite
 Krob Landscape
 Merchants & Marine Bank
 Merchants Transfer Company
 Mobile Fixture
 National Bank of Commerce
 Michael and Debbie Quinn
 Riviera Utilities
 SmartBank
 South Baldwin Regional Medical Center
 Stone Crosby, P.C.
 Storage Plus of Baldwin County, Inc.
 The Caring Foundation of Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Alabama
 Thomas Roofing/Construction
 Trustmark Bank
 Valere Homes
 Walcott Adams Verneuille Architects

BRONZE SPONSORS

Alabama Coastal Radiology
 Bryant Bank
 Chris Myers Automall
 Courtney and Morris
 Tucker Dorsey
 Federal Services
 Hand Arendall Harrison Sale LLC

Healing Touch Chiropractic
 HEPACO, LLC
 Intl FC Stone Financial - Thom Lott
 Jeff Hudson - Architect - HRG Design Build Solutions
 Mr. and Mrs. Rodney Kilgore
 Walter Kirkland and Judy Culbreth
 Moyer Ford
 Paradise Marine Center
 Hill and Krysti Robinson
 Marshall and Claudia Shoemaker
 Southern Chevrolet
 Mark Stejskal for Circuit Clerk
 Stowe's Jewelers
 The Happy Olive
 Thomas Hospital
 Weeks Bay Plantation

RESTAURANTS

Big Daddy's Grill
 Blue Marlin Restaurant
 Boudreaux's Cajun Grill
 Cobalt The Restaurant
 Dragonfly Foodbar
 Ed's Seafood Shed
 Felix's Fish Camp
 Locals
 Mary Ann's Deli
 Master Joe's Sushi
 Panini Pete's
 Serda's Coffee Company
 Southwood Kitchen
 Sunset Pointe
 The Little Cake Shop
 Warehouse Bakery & Donuts

SUPPORTERS

Baldwin Signs, Inc.
 Coastal Alabama Community College
 Kathy Hicks
 M & J Wines
 Miller's Grand Events
 Nall Printing
 Weeks Bay Volunteers

Special thanks to the Weeks Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve and the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources - State Lands Division, for allowing us to host the Bald Eagle Bash at the Tonsmeire Weeks Bay Resource Center.



Why should we care about the local environment? Let's ask these folks.

by Diana Brewer, Development and Communications Coordinator

The Bald Eagle Bash is the biggest fundraiser for the Weeks Bay Foundation. At the close of its 10-year milestone next year, it will have raised half a million dollars for local conservation efforts on the Gulf Coast.

While it's hard to see what local conservation looks like, in a nutshell, it means saving coastal lands NOW, so there's greenspace in the future. It means protecting shorelines NOW, so there's clean water in the future. It means preserving fish and wildlife habitats NOW, so there are fish, shrimp, and crabs to enjoy in the future.

Thankfully, there are many in our community who CAN see a future with open spaces, clean water, and abundant wildlife and aquatic creatures, and they support the efforts of those whose mission it is to make it happen. At the Foundation, we call them members, annual donors, and event sponsors. For this issue of *Pelican Post*, we asked four of our event sponsors to talk about why they support the Bald Eagle Bash, and local conservation in general.



GREG STRACHAN
Market President,
Baldwin County
Bryant Bank
Sponsor for six years

"Bryant Bank is a community bank first, period. Our owner and founder, Paul Bryant, Jr., formed the bank with the primary purpose of supporting the communities in which we are located. Each of Bryant Bank's four markets is unique and ownership provides us full autonomy to choose and support the charities we feel are most important. Naturally, Baldwin County has an extensive coastal presence and resource. Weeks Bay is incredibly important to our environment and as such needs funding to preserve it. The Bald Eagle Bash is a unique occasion that brings people together to support the local conservation efforts, but also provides a great afternoon of entertainment, socializing, and not to mention business networking!

"We need to elevate the benefit of working to protect and conserve our environment. We only have one environment and we have seen over the decades what occurs when we don't pay attention to our valuable natural resources. We need to protect them so we can enjoy them; and, so our children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren can enjoy them for years to come."



MEG GOECKER
Coastal Scientist
Moffatt & Nichol
First-year sponsor

"I work as a project manager on various coastal restoration projects along the Alabama coast, including living shorelines, marsh restoration, habitat assessments, and watershed planning. Moffatt & Nichol felt it was important to support the Weeks Bay Foundation as we will be helping implement some coastal restoration projects at the Weeks Bay Reserve in the coming years. This was a way for us to give back to the Foundation and the Reserve while supporting their mission of conserving and restoring these habitats.



BRIAN KANE
Owner
Fairhope Brewing Company
Sponsor for five years

"Protecting our waters along the Gulf Coast is extremely important. Whether it's swimming, fishing, or any other water-related activity, my family spends a great deal of time enjoying our local surroundings.

From our view point, anything we can do to help those who look after our water resources is something we are all on board to do.

"As a general rule, breweries are environmentally-minded businesses. Fairhope Brewing hosts a monthly environmental gathering in our taproom called Green Drinks. And we support many local organizations that deal with environmental issues. Whether it's hosting a fundraiser in the taproom or donating beer to an off-site event, we try to help those groups that are working to make our community a better place to live. If we can help a non-profit by creating more awareness for their cause or making their event more fun, we are almost always on board."

"There is no shortage of environmental issues to tackle in coastal Alabama. Supporting these environmental organizations is vital to generating local community-driven restoration programs. Land conservation is one of the best tools in the restoration tool box for protecting critical habitats, keeping waterways clean, and providing greenspace for nature recreation. Without the Weeks Bay Foundation's excellent work in conserving lands, these habitats would have been lost to future generations and the Weeks Bay watershed would be further disturbed. Continued support of the Foundation will ensure that the greenspaces where the state's coastline meets the waters of Mobile and Weeks Bay are forever conserved and utilized to teach future generations about their importance."



BRIAN HARRIS
Founder and President
Harris Properties
Management
First-year sponsor

"As a full-service real estate brokerage firm based in Gulf Shores, our business relies on the environment. We manage vacation rentals and host over 4,000 families

per year. These guests come down here specifically for the beauty and the health of the environment—the water, the beaches, the seafood. When we look to support a cause in the community, we're naturally going to look for an organization that aligns with our business and our livelihood.

"On a more personal level, my family has owned property and been coming to the Fort Morgan area (from Birmingham) since I was just four months old. My wife and I moved down here after college to help with the family business and later founded Harris Properties Management in 2013. My mother bought property on Fish River last year, so this area is home for us. We first learned about the Weeks Bay Foundation through Skipper Tonsmeire (Foundation board member), and of course, he's such a big supporter, it was hard to not get excited about it as well.

"The Bald Eagle Bash was a fun day that allowed us to protect the waters that we swim in along with the waters that allow us to make a living. You can't ask for much more than that!"

SUMMER 2018 CALENDAR

June

- 12 Guest Lecture Series: "Nature Photography" presented by Stephanie Taylor Pluscht. 5 Rivers Delta Resource Center, 7 p.m.
- 13 Weeks Bay Advisory Committee Meeting. Tonsmeire Weeks Bay Resource Center, 2 p.m.
- 18-29 Squeaky Sneakers Summer Camp. Weeks Bay Reserve

July

- 4 Independence Day Holiday*

August

- 4 Pelican Paddle: Canoe, Kayak, and Paddle Board Race and Eco Tour. (See ad on back cover.)
- 13 Weeks Bay Foundation Annual Membership Meeting. Tonsmeire Weeks Bay Resource Center, 4:30 p.m.

September

- 3 Labor Day Holiday*
- 12 Weeks Bay Advisory Committee Meeting, Tonsmeire Weeks Bay Resource Center, 2 p.m.

*The Visitor Center will be closed. All trails and boardwalks will remain open for your walking and sightseeing pleasure.

Save the Date



Georgia Sims

15th Annual John L. Borom Alabama Coastal BirdFest
October 3-6, 2018

Online Registration:

August 13, 9 a.m. – September 21, 4 p.m. CDT.

Trips and event information will be available online mid-June at alabamacoastalbirdfest.com



Thanks to Our Donors February to April 2018

AmazonSmile
Joana Auiler
Heather Ballard
Sammy & Becky Bishop
Mr. & Mrs. Richard Brabner
Ronald F. Bush
Donald Cameron
John Carlton
Sally & David Carrington
Daven Cave
Wendy Chapman
Frank Chase
Andrew Chason
Russell Christie
Robin Clark
Kara Coats
Leslie Colglazier
Jerry R. Collins
Joan Covington
Jerry Curran
Alan Curtis
Daphne Rental Center Inc.
John R. Davis
David DeLaney
Elizabeth & Hardy Downing
Chris & Joyce Durden
Dykes Veterinary Clinic
John & Kim Estes
Fairhope Paddleboard LLC
Chris & Jennifer Farlow
Lee Faulk
Mr. & Mrs. Frank Feagin
Elizabeth Fox
Brett & Christine Gaar
Steve Gordon
Norma Gray
Patrick Guy
Mr. & Mrs. James M. Harrison
Ralph & Cathy Havard
Dr. & Mrs. Thomas W. Hewitt
Bill & Elizabeth Higginbotham
Foundation
Joe & Karen Hocklander
Richard D. Holland
Jim & Shelley Hood
Chuck & Michelle Huguley

Gavin & Lynda Hunter
Ickes Tree Service
Bill & Annie Inge
Edward Inge
Cindy & Bill Inness
Irby & Heard, P.C.
Carolyn Israel
Kittrell's Daydream Apiary
AC & Leon Leggett
GiGi Lott
The Mapp Family Foundation
Paul & Rachel Marcinko
Luanne Matson
Trip & Lucy McVay
Larry Meese
Richard & Marilyn Meyer
Champ & Anne Meyercord
Red Moffat
Stephanie & Skeeter Morris
Terry O'Connor
Stephanie Pluscht
Lori & Rick Remesch
Randy & Kay Roach
Richard & Kathy Roberts
Tim & Sandy Russell
Mr. & Mrs. Howard Schramm, Jr.
John Craig Shaw
Sharon Simkins
Peter Soukup
Orland Stanford
John & Dianne Stump
Bill Summerour
The K Foundation
Elizabeth Tonsmeire
Cindy Travis
Ivan & Rosella Turner
Lloyd & Beth Turner
Robert & Susan Turner
Nancy E. Ward
Debra Webb
James Whitson
Charles Wilson

ANNUAL FUND

Robert Outlaw

MEMORIALS & HONORARIUMS

In memory of Robin Herndon, III
Ann Bedsole

In memory of Billy Schmidt
The Schmidt and Barton
Family Fund

In memory of Terry Sims
Michael Byers
Sandra Horne
Mike Metzler

FOUNDATION PARTNERS

Alabama Department of
Conservation & Natural
Resources, State Lands
Coastal Section
The A.S. Mitchell Foundation, Inc.
Baldwin County Soil and Water
Conservation District
Dauphin Island Bird Sanctuaries, Inc.
Dauphin Island Sea Lab
Estuarine Reserves Division, NOAA
Forever Wild Land Trust
Gulf Coast Resource Conservation
& Development
Gulf of Mexico Alliance
Land Trust Alliance
Lillian C. McGowin Foundation
The Mapp Family Foundation
Mobile Bay National Estuary
Program
National Estuarine Research
Reserve Association
NOAA Coastal Services Center
Partnership for Gulf Coast
Land Conservation
The Curtis and Edith Munson
Foundation
The Nature Conservancy
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
Weeks Bay National Estuarine
Research Reserve
Weeks Bay Volunteers

Education program thrives under Baldwin County resource teacher

by Diana Brewer, Development and Communications Coordinator

"Tell me and I forget, teach me and I remember, involve me and I learn." – Benjamin Franklin

For 25 years, students from across the Gulf Coast have had access to an outdoor classroom, a virtual treasure trove of hands-on nature discovery and learning, thanks to a partnership between the Baldwin County Board of Education (BCBE) and the Weeks Bay Reserve. By providing a resource teacher at the Reserve, BCBE gives schoolchildren of all ages, and their teachers, access to the estuary. This past school year, their instructor has been long-time educator Ilka Porter.

On field trips, students walk the boardwalks through the marsh and along the bay. Younger students see shrimp jumping, crabs crawling, and fish flipping into the water. Older students venture out on the bay to pull a seine; they also take water samples and view plankton.



Older students venture out on the bay to pull a seine; they also take water samples and view plankton.

With undergraduate and graduate degrees in elementary education, Porter taught in the classroom before moving to science centers and museums. She served as education director for both The Gulf Coast Exploreum Science Center and GulfQuest Maritime Museum. In addition to the Reserve, Porter works as a STEM (Science Technology Engineering & Math) Specialist with the Mobile Area Education Foundation.

Her background in developing and leading education programs in science museums is being put to good use at the Reserve, where she prepares curriculum for the teachers and students visiting the estuary.

"This position requires someone with practical education experience as well as expertise in the areas of marine and environmental science, and Ilka has all of that," said Angela Underwood, Education Coordinator at the Reserve. "Not only has Ilka taught in the classroom, but she has also developed curriculum and programs for children of all ages, and the education guides for teachers that go along with the programs. She's an invaluable asset."

Become a member of the Weeks Bay Foundation!

Membership Levels

Legacy Circle	\$5,000 and up
Sustainer	\$1,000 - \$4,999
Steward	\$500 - \$999
Supporter	\$250 - \$499
Friend	\$100 - \$249
Member	\$35 - \$99

Join us by returning the enclosed envelope or look for the link on our home page at weeksbay.org.

Florida Registration # CH40701: A COPY OF THE OFFICIAL REGISTRATION AND FINANCIAL INFORMATION MAY BE OBTAINED FROM THE DIVISION OF CONSUMER SERVICES BY CALLING TOLL-FREE 1-800-435-7352 WITHIN THE STATE OR BY GOING TO WWW.FLORIDAConsumerHELP.COM. REGISTRATION DOES NOT IMPLY ENDORSEMENT, APPROVAL, OR RECOMMENDATION BY THE STATE.

North Carolina Solicitation License # SL009125: Financial information about this organization and a copy of its license are available from the State Solicitation Licensing Branch at 919-807-2214. The license is not an endorsement by the State.



"I love what we do here," Porter said. "The many classes coming out this spring have been fantastic. It is really fun to facilitate the different grade levels – from elementary to high school. Each group is different but they have all enjoyed discovering nature in their own backyard. And teaching about estuaries is so rewarding."

The Weeks Bay Reserve is one of 29 reserves across the nation, part of the National Estuarine Research Reserve System. All the reserves have education programs, but only a few partner with their local school system. Congratulations to the Baldwin County Board of Education and the Weeks Bay Reserve for providing hands-on science education for 25 years, and counting!



Weeks Bay Foundation

11401 US Highway 98
Fairhope, Alabama 36532
(251) 990-5004
www.weeksbay.org

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Fairhope, AL
Permit #55



Photo by John Borom

Yellow-crowned Night Heron

"Faith is the bird that feels the light when the dawn is still dark." - Rabindranath Tagore

6TH ANNUAL PELICAN PADDLE



MARK YOUR CALENDARS! The 2018 Pelican Paddle--a canoe, kayak, and paddle board race--is set for Saturday, August 4. Get out your fastest craft and compete for bragging rights, or join us for a non-competitive, educational Eco-tour around Weeks Bay. Race time is 9 a.m. Day-of-race registration and race check-in begins at 7:30 a.m. Register online or download the form at weeksbay.org/events/pelican-paddle. For more information, call (251) 990-5004.

RACE CATEGORIES INCLUDE:

- Men's Solo Kayak
- Women's Solo Kayak
- Junior Solo Kayak (Age 13 and under)
- Men's Paddle Board
- Women's Paddle Board
- Tandem Craft (Canoe or Kayak)
- Non-Traditional (Non-motorized boats not in other divisions, including foot-pedaled kayaks, excluding sailboats)
- Pro Solo Kayak (A 7.0 mile race, any age and gender)

