

THE PELICAN POST

A quarterly publication - Weeks Bay Foundation
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**Best of Show by Ray Baker
2013 Weeks Bay Photo Contest**

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From the Executive Director . . .



This summer, the Weeks Bay Foundation took two big steps toward becoming one of the leading voices championing conservation on the Gulf Coast. The first step involves protecting our coastal marshes and wetlands, while the second step seeks to protect what lies beneath the waves, namely an ancient underwater forest.

When federal officials released a draft of their plan that would govern how the states spend RESTORE Act money associated with the BP oil spill, one key component was missing. The plan did not require the states to spend any of the billions of dollars worth of fine money buying and protecting coastal wetlands. While Louisiana's wetlands were heavily oiled, marshes in Alabama, Florida, Mississippi, and Texas were largely unscathed. The healthy wetlands were able to act as a nursery for the Gulf's sea creatures, and are the reason the Gulf rebounded from the oil spill.

The RESTORE money represents a once in a lifetime chance to protect our coastal marshes. After an editorial I wrote appeared in the New York Times, more than a dozen coastal environmental groups signed on to my call for "A Nickel for the Marshes." I proposed that a nickel of every dollar in BP fine money be spent to protect coastal wetlands. The following groups signed on to a joint letter with the Foundation asking the federal commission to require 5 percent of the fine money go to the wetlands: The Southern Environmental Law Center, the Dauphin Island Sea Lab, the Gulf Restoration Network, Mobile Baykeeper, Atchafalaya Basinkeeper, SouthWings, Gulf Islands Conservancy, Oasis Earth, Mobile Bay Audubon Society, Birmingham Audubon Society, Alabama Coast United, and the Mississippi Sierra Club.



At its July meeting, the board of directors of the Weeks Bay Foundation agreed to take on the challenge of protecting the underwater forest discovered off Alabama.



Samples from the forest tested at the federal Lawrence Livermore Laboratory proved to be more than 50,000 years old. I first wrote about diving on the forest in 2012, but kept its location secret. News of the discovery went viral this summer, with calls coming in from news outlets around the globe. We also received calls from salvage companies looking to remove the ancient

trees from the seafloor to sell them. In July, we announced our effort to have the area designated a Marine Protected Area by federal officials in order to prevent removal of the stumps. Since then, the Coastal Conservation Association's Alabama chapter and the Alabama Gulf Coast Reef & Restoration Foundation, which recently sank "The LuLu" offshore, have agreed to fund some of our survey work at the forest.

As we move ahead with these and other efforts to protect our coast, know that your membership and support of the Weeks Bay Foundation makes our work possible. When you hear of a new place we managed to protect, know that you played a role.



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

Layout & Design by
Kathy Hicks

Weeks Bay Pelican Paddle Makes a Splash

by Liz Bizer, Foundation AmeriCorps VISTA



On Saturday, July 27, the Weeks Bay Foundation held its first ever Pelican Paddle Canoe and Kayak Race. The local community took to the event like kayakers to water, and 93 paddlers showed up to race. Despite some threatening clouds looming at the start of registration, the rain held off and the weather was perfect for paddling.

The racers were split up into seven divisions, and the top three finishers in each were awarded a medal. Only three racers entered the Pro Kayak division and attempted the longer 7-mile race course, with **Mike Allen** placing first by a good margin. Everyone else did a 3.5-mile race. **Keve Warner** took the gold in Men's Solo Kayak, **Laura Gamard** finished first in the equivalent Women's division, and **Olivia Novobilski** was the winner in the Junior division. Brothers **Kevin and Patrick Anderson** were the winning Canoe team. In the Non-Traditional division, which included both pedal kayaks and tandems, **Mark Byrd** placed first in his pedal kayak. **Self Radcliff** took the gold in Stand Up Paddle Board. After the race, everyone munched on hot dogs and chips while Executive Director **Ben Raines** raffled off prizes, including boating gear, gift cards, artwork, and a kayak donated by the Fairhope Boat Company.

At the end of the day, everyone had a great time and all the proceeds went to benefit the Foundation's work. We are thrilled that this first-time event went so well and we plan to make it an annual occurrence. We would like to thank all the volunteers for their hard work to make the race great, as well as Daphne Utilities for providing lunch for everyone. Thank yous are also in order to all the businesses and individuals who donated prizes: Dragonfly Boatworks, Beckwith Camp and Conference Center, local artist **Lauren McCrory**, Coldwell Banker Reehl Properties Inc., **Jason and Tommy Harris**, Bay Mortgage Corporation, Merchants & Marine Bank, The Church Mouse, and Road ID (who also provided the race bibs). Special thanks go to the Fairhope Boat Company, for not only donating several prizes including the grand prize kayak, but also providing stacks of kayaks for people who didn't have their own to race.

ExxonMobil Interns Help Weeks Bay Foundation Mission

by Ben Raines, Foundation Executive Director

The Weeks Bay Foundation had two great summer interns this year, **Harold Woulard** and **Garrett Lloyd**, thanks to the ExxonMobil Community Summer Jobs Program. For two months, the pair helped monitor water quality in Weeks Bay, study invasive and native plants, work on studies looking at the implications of sea level rise, investigate fish populations in the watershed, organize the first ever Weeks Bay Foundation kayak race, and lead an aquatic summer camp.

Harold is entering his senior year at the University of South Alabama, majoring in geography. His mapping skills have proved invaluable to the Foundation as we work to identify and protect some of our most valuable coastal areas. In particular, Harold mapped a huge tract of marshland surrounding Fowl River in Mobile County, identifying dozens of land owners and the parcels they own. Utilizing his GIS (Geographical Information Systems) skills, the Foundation was also able to identify parcels deserving protection within the Weeks Bay watershed.

"We take data and turn it into maps with specific designs based on what the person requesting the map wants," Harold said, explaining the environmental applications for the technology. "With storm surge maps, you can see



how storm surge will go throughout the land, or you can show where a forest fire burned, or look at topography, wetlands, mountainous areas, pretty much anything you can dream of.”

Harold got some hands-on mapping experience during the summer, helping The Nature Conservancy monitor the growth of wetland habitat and shoreline vegetation along Mobile Bay. The Nature Conservancy erected several oyster reefs just offshore from an area known as the Swift Tract, which was preserved by the Foundation, Forever Wild, and the Weeks Bay Reserve. The reefs, part of a living shorelines experiment, were designed to promote the growth of marsh grasses, submerged vegetation, and oysters. Harold was part of the team that walked the shoreline to create a new map using a highly sophisticated, and highly accurate, GPS unit housed in a backpack.



Harold Woulard works along the edge of a shoreline on the Swift Tract as part of an effort to map the changing contours of the marshland

“I thought it was pretty cool. We had to walk exactly along the edge of the vegetation, even if it was over trees or stumps, or often incredibly deep water. It was interesting to figure out how they get the exact data to make maps,” Harold said. “The backpack held a device which allowed us to record exactly where we were going, so we could walk along the vegetation and track its contours exactly.

It is fun to go out in nature like that and actually gather the data yourself, rather than just sitting around an office, to acquire the actual shoreline contours.”

Garrett Lloyd helped on The Nature Conservancy site as well, which fits in with his major, ecology and biology at Troy State, where he’s a junior. He plans to work in conservation when he graduates, with a particular focus on field biology.

“Anything that is hands on with the environment, that pretty much sums it up for me; that’s what I want to do, so getting to work with the research students at the Reserve, I really enjoyed that. They are in the same boat as I am, still trying to learn and get experience, just soak it up like a sponge,” Garrett said. “I really enjoyed working on the Swift Tract, seeing how it was working efficiently as a breakwater, but also all the shrimp and stuff. You like to see progress like that.”

Garrett, who had internships in summers past with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, said that working at the Foundation was an eye opener.

“Having worked in the past with the federal side, with U.S. Fish & Wildlife, and the state side, and now getting to work with a non profit, it was amazing to see how it all fits together, how the three groups interact to protect land and the environment,” Garrett said. “The public wants to cherish the environment. Seeing all the agencies and the Foundation working together trying to preserve something for the public, that’s where I am headed, trying to see how I can have the greatest impact for the public and the environment at the same time.”

The Weeks Bay Foundation thanks the ExxonMobil Foundation for providing the funding for our interns through the ExxonMobil Community Summer Jobs Program.

A colorful flyer for the 21st Annual Weeks Bay Native Plant Sale. The title "WEEKS BAY NATIVE PLANT SALE" is in large, bold, black letters. Below it, the dates "Friday, Saturday, & Sunday October 11, 12, 13 - 9am to 4pm" are listed. The flyer features illustrations of various plants, including a large pink hibiscus flower, a green fern, and a butterfly. The text lists plant categories: "Shrubs - Perennials - Butterfly Plants - Trees - Hummingbird Plants - Wetland Plants - Dune Plants - More". At the bottom, it says "Safe Harbor at Weeks Bay Across U.S. Hwy 98 from Weeks Bay Reserve".

A flyer for the 26th Annual Alabama Coastal Cleanup. The title "26TH ANNUAL ALABAMA COASTAL CLEANUP" is in large, bold, blue letters. Below it, the date "SEPTEMBER 21, 2013 SATURDAY AT 8:00 A.M." is listed. The flyer features illustrations of coastal plants and a bird. To the right, there is a logo for the cleanup and the text "Don't Miss the 26th Annual ALABAMA COASTAL CLEANUP 09/21/2013". At the bottom, it says "Fish River Marina, 8:00 a.m. to noon For more information, contact the Reserve (251) 928-9792".



10th Annual Alabama Coastal BirdFest Introduces Five New Trips

submitted by Alabama Coastal BirdFest

This year's Alabama Coastal BirdFest, October 3-5, covers familiar territory but also gives participants a chance to explore new ground – or new water.

"I'm very excited about these new adventures, and judging by early registration, so are our visitors!" said BirdFest "nestkeeper" **Fran Morley**.

"The first new trip – Bottle Creek Indian Mounds Adventure on Friday, October 4 – is something everyone who lives in our area should do at least once. These mounds, built by 13th century Mississippian Tribes, are a real treasure that you can't easily get to on your own." This trip travels first by bus from 5 Rivers Delta Resource Center and then onboard the *Osprey*, 5 Rivers Delta Safaris' new 40-passenger boat.

The Southbound Delta Adventure Cruise is also on Friday. It starts with a short bus ride from 5 Rivers up to Live Oak Landing on the Tensaw River and then a cruise back to 5 Rivers, exploring 25 miles of shoreline with a stop at Gravine Island.

This year's BirdFest includes two new "online only" paddle trips, available only through online registration. The first, 5 Rivers/Mud Flats Paddle, explores tidal marshes, taking paddlers from 5 Rivers to Meaher Park, with a shuttle back to 5 Rivers.



Capt. Michael Dorie of 5 Rivers Delta Safaris standing beneath the highest mound on Mound Island. Photo by Tom Morley



Graham Creek paddlers.
Photo by Tom Morley

The second new paddle is at Graham Creek Nature Preserve in Foley. "I've done this paddle, and it offers nice variety, starting at a narrow creek with heavily wooded banks and opening to wide waters of the bay, with opportunities to see osprey and possibly dolphins," Morley said.

The final new trip is a good way to celebrate BirdFest's 10th anniversary: a Sunset Wine Tasting Cruise on board the *Osprey* on Saturday, October 5. "The boat will wind its way through the rivers and marshes while everyone enjoys a variety of wines and light snacks, and then the captain will position the boat just right to catch a spectacular Delta sunset, so bring your cameras," Morley said. "It's a perfect way to wrap up this year's Alabama Coastal BirdFest!"

For more information and to register, visit www.AlabamaCoastalBirdFest.com.



White-fringed Orchids,
Platanthera blephariglottis



Steve Heath, a retired state biologist and Foundation member, participates in the orchid count on a rainy morning

White-fringed Orchid Count

The incredible proliferation of White-fringed Orchids, *Platanthera blephariglottis*, in a small Baldwin County bog owned and managed by the Weeks Bay Foundation serves as a testament to the restorative power of fire in our landscape.

About 20 orchids bloomed in 2003, the year the Foundation took ownership of the pitcher plant bog, which hadn't experienced a fire in many years. Following a successful burn, the orchid population doubled by the next year. That pattern continued each year as spring burns were performed. By 2012, the bog men, a group of botanists and biologists who monitor the wetland area, counted 600 orchids.

This year, more than 1,200 orchids were blooming by late August. In the early morning light, the orchids seem to glow like Chinese lanterns, hundreds and hundreds of the delicate flower clusters bobbing in the breeze.

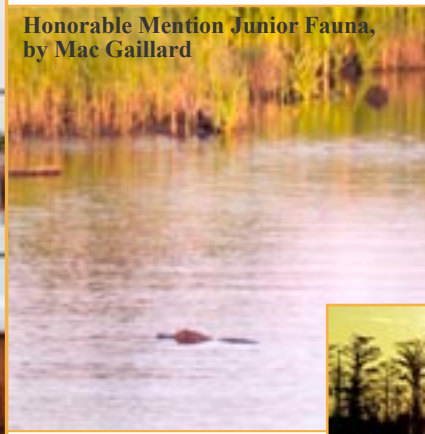
The bog was donated to the Foundation by a landowner who recognized the pitcher plants on the property and knew it was a special place. It is believed to be the only spot in Baldwin County where this once common orchid persists, and there are only four known populations in Alabama.



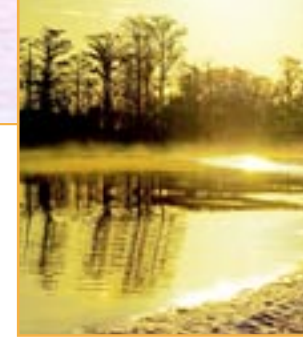
Open Division winners Rodney Kilgore, Henry Moncrief, Lisa Comer, Ray Baker, Sherry Stimpson Frost, Brett Foster, Laurie Schaerer, and Harry Surline (not included in the photo are Stephanie Pluscht, Georgia Sims, Jo Pennington, Robert Schroeter, and Jon Cofield)



Honorable Mention Junior Fauna,
by Mac Gaillard



Best of Show Ju



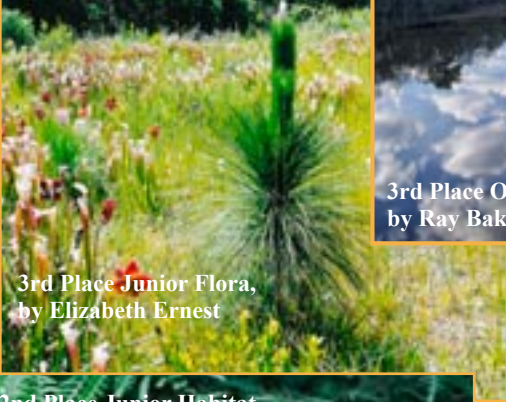
Honorable Mention Open H
by Sherry Stimpson Frost



2nd Place Junior Flora,
by Elizabeth Ernest



3rd Place Open Habitat,
by Ray Baker



3rd Place Junior Flora,
by Elizabeth Ernest



2nd Place Junior Habitat,
by Elizabeth Ernest

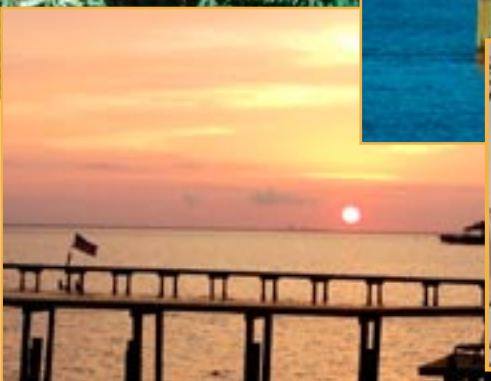
Honorable Mention Junior Habitat,
by Emily Kilgore



1st Place Open Fauna, by Harry Surline



Honorable Mention
Open Fauna,
by Lisa Comer



3rd Place Junior Habitat, by Mac Gaillard



2nd Plac
by Jo Pe

14th Annual Weeks Bay Photog

by Liz Bizer, Foundation AmeriCorps VISTA

Local photographers really outdid themselves this year with a truly stunning crop of shots. We received more entries than ever, and all are all gorgeous. The judging proved to be very difficult, especially in a Junior division, and each of those were split up into First, Second, and Third place. There was a great variety of submissions, and all together they paid tribute to the area. We also had more Junior entries than in recent years, and it was a pleasure showing off so much talent.

A small reception was held at the Eastern Shore Art Center where each first, second, third, and Honorable Mention winner was recognized. In addition, the first, second, and third place winner also had the opportunity to view all the spectacular photos that were submitted.

Junior Division, by Sloan Bryant



Habitat,

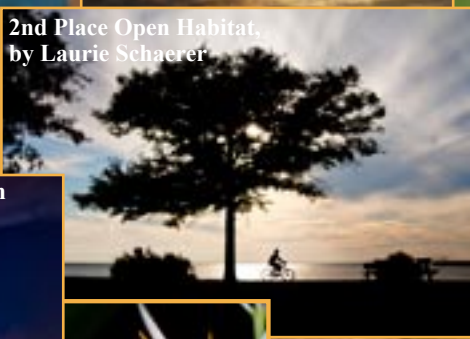
1st Place Junior Fauna, by Emily Kilgore



2nd Place Junior Fauna, by Mac Gaillard



2nd Place Open Habitat, by Laurie Schaerer



Honorable Mention Open Flora, by Brett Foster



1st Place Junior Flora, by Sloan Bryant



Honorable Mention Open Habitat, by Jon Cofield



3rd Place Junior Fauna, by Emily Kilgore



Photography Contest

year in our annual photography contest, sending in more photos than we have since the 2008 contest, and they were all fantastic! As every year, there was an Open division and categories for Open Flora, Fauna, and Habitat. We received an amazing amount of photos and an amazing portrait of coastal Alabama. We were so proud to see such young photographers.

The contest was held at the Center in early July to celebrate the winners, and a ribbon ceremony in each category was presented with a ribbon. The winners took home a prize. The best part, though, was

Honorable Mention Open Flora, by Henry Moncrief



3rd Place Open Flora, by Georgia Sims



2nd Place Open Flora, by Stephanie Pluscht

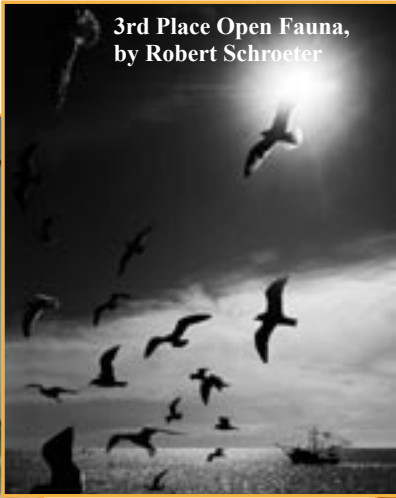
1st Place Open Flora, by Stephanie Pluscht



Honorable Mention Open Fauna, by Brett Foster



3rd Place Open Fauna, by Robert Schroeter



Honorable Mention Open Habitat, by Rodney Kilgore



Honorable Mention Junior Habitat, by Sloan Bryant



1st Place Open Fauna, by Sloan Bryant



Managing Wild Pig Damage

by L.G. Adams, Reserve Manager

You hear them crunching through the palmettos along the riverbank, or see them feeding in a wetland at daybreak, digging down in the soft mud to get at the tender roots of cattails, arum, and golden club.



Damage from wild pigs in the Weeks Bay Pitcher Plant Bog

The woods and wetlands of south Alabama have become, literally, hog heaven. Domestic hogs released into the woods by settlers and farmers for 200 years are now so well established in our area that there is no hope of eradicating them. Scientists estimate the population in Mobile and Baldwin counties to number in the millions, and the pigs are believed to cause economic losses of \$30 million a year in Alabama. A female can give birth to more than a dozen piglets a year, and the babies are able to reproduce at just six months old.

We have seen the damage at the Weeks Bay Reserve first hand. The rooting behavior damages wetland areas by disturbing rare and sensitive habitats like the Weeks Bay Pitcher Plant Bog. Study an area where pigs have been active and the signs are obvious, from hoof prints in the mud to round, tell-tale impressions of their snouts.

The Weeks Bay Reserve in cooperation with the Alabama Cooperative Extension System-Auburn University hosted a workshop on wild pig management that provided attendees with the necessary tools to reduce and manage the damages caused by wild pigs.

The workshop was part of the Coastal Training Program at the Reserve, providing scientific information to coastal managers and decision-makers. The workshop covered wild pig biology, control methods, diseases of pigs, and the potential implications to humans and domestic livestock. Instructions were provided on how to capture and control wild pigs on properties in Alabama.

The workshop was held at the 5 Rivers Delta Resource Center. Partners and presenters included **Mark Smith**, Professor at Auburn University, **Tony Frazier** of the Alabama Department of Agriculture, and **Dana Johnson**, with the U. S. Department of Agriculture, Wildlife Services.



Dana Johnson shows wire panel construction and trip wire trigger in traps

Tree Identification Class at Weeks Bay Arboretum

by Maureen Nation, Reserve Volunteer Coordinator

Dr. Harry Larsen, a longtime Auburn professor and one of the premier tree experts in Alabama, led the first ever tree identification class at the Weeks Bay Reserve.

Harry, a Weeks Bay Volunteer since 1993, has long had a goal of developing an arboretum at the Reserve, and to be able to use it as a teaching tool in an outdoor classroom one day. So, it is fitting that after developing the arboretum, Harry organized and instructed the Reserve's first formal Tree Identification Class!

Harry developed an identification key specifically for the class. His focus was to design the key around our local trees and to develop a learning tool that was less complicated, with less technical jargon, than the keys he used during the 32 years he taught dendrology (tree identification) at Auburn University.

With the key completed, Harry worked with Reserve staff to offer the class to the Weeks Bay Volunteers and Foundation members. It was intended to help people identify Baldwin County trees and learn how they fit into the environment and into our landscapes. Dr. Larsen says that by the end of the 10 week class, participants will be able to identify the trees in their own landscapes, and they will know enough about trees to select the best native trees for any local site. There are plans to offer the class on an annual basis.

We are fortunate to have Harry Larsen, one of the premier tree experts in Alabama, as one of our amazing Volunteers!



Harry Larsen explains the tree identification key he developed for the Tree Identification Class at the Reserve



Training Does Not Take Summers Off

by Mike Shelton, Reserve Coastal Training Coordinator

The summer training program at Weeks Bay Reserve kicked off with a *Wetlands Rapid Assessment Procedure* or WRAP class. The WRAP system rates a wetland based on how well it does the things a wetland is supposed to do, such as filter stormwater flowing through it. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and other agencies use the rating to help them in permitting work. **Boyd Gunsalus** of the South Florida Water Management District, and one of the authors of the procedure, led the class. **Mike Moxey**, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Mobile District, and **Randy Shaneyfelt**, Alabama Department of Environmental Management, provided additional instruction. The class visited wetlands along Mobile Bay and Weeks Bay and explored additional sites in Daphne and Spanish Fort. Over 35 federal, state, county, and local officials and private consultants participated.

The basic definition of the public trust is the principle that certain resources are preserved for public use, and that the government is required to maintain them for the public's reasonable use. The Weeks Bay Reserve, along with EcoSolutions LLC, Alabama Coastal Foundation, Mobile Bay National Estuary Program, and the Baldwin County Soil and Water Conservation District hosted *Public Trust Doctrine In Motion* with **David Slade, Esq.**, in Mobile. The workshop examined the evolving understanding of the public trust in the U.S., and how the doctrine can help with land conservation for the benefit of all citizens. Twenty-seven people participated in the workshop.



David Slade, Esq., leads workshop participants through the legal cases shaping the Public Trust Doctrine in Alabama



Wetland Rapid Assessment Procedure workshop participant gets knee deep in ranking this grassed wetland along Mobile Bay

Sometimes we have to reach across barriers to get our message to people. With Grand Bay Reserve and the Coastal Storms Program/MS-AL Sea Grant, the Reserve conducted *Breaking Through Barriers, Environmental Communication with Hispanic, Vietnamese, and Other Cultures*. Leaders and educators trying to improve outreach across cultural groups attended the workshop. **Eric Eckl**, Water Words That Work, led the course to enthusiastic audiences in Spanish Fort, Alabama, and Long Beach, Mississippi. Over 60 people from Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana participated in the workshops that helped build skills to reach new audiences. Workshops were funded by a grant from NOAA and the Coastal Storms Program. While others are vacationing all summer, the Weeks Bay Reserve Training Program never rests.

Custom Fishing Rod Building Class Taught at Reserve

by Mike Shelton, Reserve Coastal Training Coordinator



Agriscience teacher receives a hands-on learning experience building custom fishing rods

Teachers in our public schools work hard to improve the learning experience for high school students. Weeks Bay Reserve strives for that same goal. **Jeff Kelley**, Agriscience Instructor at the South Baldwin Center for Technology in Robertsedale, conducted a four-day custom fishing rod building class in the Reserve Auditorium. A dozen agriscience teachers from all over Alabama attended the class. They plan to offer the class to their students to increase the students' interest in



Jeff Kelley, South Baldwin Center for Technology, adds to his custom fishing rod during the summer class at Weeks Bay Reserve

agriscience and engage them in the study of environmental science and fish ecology. In addition, the students will learn a skill creating custom fishing rods. While at Weeks Bay for the class, teachers also had time to learn about the Reserve and take in a little fishing.



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our home page at
www.weeksbay.org.

Donate to the Foundation through the
Combined Federal Campaign, Code 37621



FALL 2013 CALENDAR

September

- 2 Labor Day Holiday.***
- 4 Weeks Bay Advisory Committee Meeting.** Tonsmeire Weeks Bay Resource Center, 2:00 p.m.
- 10-12 Wilderness First Aid, a Coastal Training Program workshop.** Tonsmeire Weeks Bay Resource Center, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. For more information, contact the Reserve, (251) 928-9792.
- 10 Citizens Advisory Committee Meeting for the Weeks Bay Watershed Project.** Tonsmeire Weeks Bay Resource Center, 6:30 p.m.
- 10 Guest Lecture Series. "My Audubon Adventure at Hog Island"** presented by **Emma Rhodes**. Come and learn about the National Audubon Society's summer program at Hog Island. The Mobile Bay Audubon Society provided a scholarship to encourage the young birder. Emma is a freshman at Faulkner State Community College. 5 Rivers Delta Resource Center, 7:00 p.m. Bring a friend.
- 14 Kids Fishing Day.** A joint project of the Foundation, the Reserve, and ADCNR State Lands Division, Coastal Section and Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Division. Safe Harbor pond, across U.S. Highway 98 from the Reserve Visitor Center, 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. For more information, contact the Foundation office at (251) 990-5004.
- 21 26th Annual Alabama Coastal Cleanup.** Fish River Marina, 8:00 a.m. to noon. For more information, contact the Reserve, (251) 928-9792.
- 27 Maximizing the Financial Advantages of Land Conservation: Advanced Seminar on Conservation Easements, a Coastal Training Program workshop.** Port Authority Building, Mobile, 9:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. For more information, contact the Reserve, (251) 928-9792.
- 28 National Estuaries Day.** Learn more at www.estuaries.gov/getinvolved/home.aspx.

October

- 3-5 10th Annual John L. Borom Alabama Coastal BirdFest.** For more information about tours and events, go to www.weeksbay.org and click on Alabama Coastal BirdFest or go to www.AlabamaCoastalBirdFest.com.
- 8 Guest Lecture Series "Gulf Coast Birds 2013"** presented by **John Borom**. Come and enjoy a musical slide show and hear about the success of the 10th Annual Alabama Coastal BirdFest. 5 Rivers Delta Resource Center, 7:00 p.m. Bring a friend.
- 11-13 Weeks Bay Native Plant Sale.** Safe Harbor at Weeks Bay, across U.S. Highway 98 from the Reserve Visitor Center, 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
- 12 Native Plants, Invasive Species, and Our Favorite Plants, a Community Education workshop.** Tonsmeire Weeks Bay Resource Center, 8:30 a.m. to noon. For more information, contact the Reserve, (251) 928-9792.
- 14 Columbus Day Holiday.***

November

- 11 Veteran's Day Holiday.***
- 12 Guest Lecture Series "The Underwater Forest and the Mobile Tensaw Delta"** presented by **Ben Raines**, Weeks Bay Foundation Executive Director. Come and hear about the discovery of a 50,000 year old cypress forest in the Gulf of Mexico about 10 miles south of the present Alabama shoreline. Also, learn more about the Mobile Tensaw Delta. 5 Rivers Delta Resource Center, 7:00 p.m. Bring a friend.
- 28 Thanksgiving Holiday.***

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

FREE! KIDS FISHING DAY

Sponsored by the Weeks Bay Foundation

Saturday, Sept. 14, 2013 at the Weeks Bay Reserve's Safe Harbor Pond, US 98, just west of the Fish River bridge. Join us for a day of free fishing just for kids. The pond is stocked full!

For more information, call 990-5004 or see us at www.weeksbay.org.



Now available.
Pick yours up at the Reserve.



Weeks Bay Foundation

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Fairhope, Alabama 36532
(251) 990-5004
www.weeksbay.org

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Photo by Ben Raines

A green tree frog perches on a White-fringed Orchid

"If the bee disappeared off the face of the earth, man would only have four years left to live." - Albert Einstein

Squeaky Sneakers Heard Loud and Clear

by Angela Underwood, Reserve Education Specialist



Nancy Raia and Angela Underwood led the Reserve's 2013 Squeaky Sneakers Program

The Gulf of Mexico Program awarded Weeks Bay Reserve and the Eastern Shore Art Center a Third Place 2013 Gulf Guardian Award in the Partnership Category for their Squeaky Sneakers Program. Squeaky Sneakers, an interdisciplinary program that marries art and informal science education as a teaching tool, was so named because participants' wet shoes "squeak" while exploring Weeks Bay Reserve. Led by **Nancy Raia**, Community Arts and Outreach Director at the Eastern Shore Art Center, and **Angela Underwood**, experienced Weeks Bay Reserve Education Specialist and Biologist, the program promotes conservation of estuaries and other coastal resources through immersion in experiential environmental education and innovative forms of artistic expression.

Since 2008, Squeaky Sneakers has delivered education and art to participants ranging in age from preschool to senior citizens with a variety of abilities and backgrounds. Squeaky Sneakers strives to enhance ecological awareness and protection among culturally diverse and underserved communities and has worked with groups including Fairhope Rotary Youth Club, Foley Snook Youth Club, The Arc of Baldwin County, Fairhope United Methodist Church's Shepherd's Place, Camp Horizon Girls and Boys Wilderness Program, Baldwin County Public Schools Summer Programs, the Poarch Band of Creek Indians, and Southwest Alabama Regional School for the Deaf and Blind. Additionally, Squeaky Sneakers trains other educators in order to extend the program's reach.

The Gulf of Mexico Program initiated the Gulf Guardian awards in 2000 as a way to recognize and honor the businesses, community groups, individuals, and agencies that are taking positive steps to keep the Gulf healthy, beautiful, and productive. First, second, and third place awards are given in seven categories: individual, business/industry, youth environmental education, civic/nonprofit organizations, cultural diversity/environmental justice, partnership, and bi-national efforts. Nancy and Angela accepted the award at a ceremony at the Gulf of Mexico Alliance All-Hands meeting in Tampa, Florida.

