



# THE PELICAN POST

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Kayaking on the Magnolia River

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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.*

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## *From the Foundation President . . .*

The Weeks Bay Foundation Board of Directors is proud and excited to announce that **Ben Raines** has joined the Foundation as the new Executive Director. Ben comes to us after 13 years of award-winning environmental reporting for the Press-Register. Through his experiences and his love of the outdoors, Ben has developed a passion for conserving land in coastal Alabama. As an avid fisherman, he understands the importance of water quality and habitat not just for fish but for all wildlife. Most important, Ben recognizes that the quality of life we so value in coastal Alabama is directly related to the quality of the environment we have around us. Please join us in welcoming Ben Raines as our Executive Director.



## *From the Executive Director . . .*



Some of you will recognize my name from my time as the environment reporter for the Press-Register. For the last 13 years I've been paid to tromp around in our coastal wetlands, explore the Mobile-Tensaw Delta, and fall deeply in love with this place. I assure you, few things could have tempted me to give up that job. But the chance to serve as Executive Director of the Weeks Bay Foundation ranks at the top of the list.

Weeks Bay holds a special place in my heart. If you're on the water much, you've probably seen me out there, or up one of the rivers. I've come to know the Fish and Magnolia so well that I can just about navigate them with my eyes closed. These rivers are special, just like all the rivers and creeks surrounding Mobile Bay. I couldn't be more excited to have a chance to work to save them.

More than any other group, local or national, the Weeks Bay Foundation is focused on protecting this place. I've watched the Foundation grow, and cheered its recent accomplishments, including the decision to begin acquiring and protecting land on both sides of Mobile Bay. That decision, more than any other, shows where the Foundation is headed. While the Foundation was originally created to protect the area immediately around Weeks Bay, its new mandate is to protect as many special places in coastal Alabama as possible.

Alabama is home to more species of fish, turtles, snails, mussels, and crawfish than any other state. Our wild places are as spectacular as any in the nation. But for too long, we have neglected them instead of cherished them. Alabama ranks 49<sup>th</sup> in the nation in terms of what it spends to protect the environment. And less than 4 percent of the land in the state has been set aside for conservation, compared to 20 percent in Florida.

The Foundation is working to change that equation. Operating under the principle that the best way to save a special place is to permanently protect it from development, the Foundation is uniquely qualified to ensure that the places we love will still be around for our grandchildren to enjoy. I am proud to be a part of that mission and ask each of you to help any way you can, whether that's donating land, volunteering, or helping set up conservation easements along rivers, creeks, and bays. Watch the Weeks Bay Foundation's Facebook page, my Facebook page, or upcoming issues of *The Pelican Post* for new opportunities to help, and feel free to contact me at Ben@weeksbay.org.




## *Foundation Membership*

*by Rick Wallace, Foundation President*

On behalf of the Weeks Bay Foundation, I want to thank the 84 new members who joined the Foundation in response to a letter we sent to property owners in the Weeks Bay watershed.

Not only did we have a great response in terms of the number of new members, but the average amount donated for membership was over \$100.00 – well above the \$35.00 minimum suggestion.

Members and their contributions are essential to the Foundation's mission of protecting coastal land in Alabama and supporting education programs at the Weeks Bay Reserve. Furthermore, when we seek grants and large donations for major projects, our benefactors often want to know what kind of community support we have. Our now 750 plus dues-paying members are great evidence of support. And we are proud to tell them about the additional help our members provide through annual giving, volunteer work, and participation in the Bald Eagle Bash.

Here is the letter we sent. You might want to share it with your friends and neighbors.

Dear Jack and Jane:

Do you enjoy boating and swimming in the clean waters of Fish River, Magnolia River, or Weeks Bay?

Do you like to fish for specks, redfish, and bass along natural shores lined with trees or marsh grass?

Do you watch for ospreys, warblers, and even eagles from your dock or boat?

If you value these and other natural aspects of the Weeks Bay area, then the Weeks Bay Foundation would welcome you as a new member.

The Foundation is an accredited land trust and has conserved over 4,000 acres of coastal lands - lands that contribute to clean water, that provide nursery areas for fish, shrimp, and crabs, and that serve as critical habitat for birds and other wildlife.

As a property owner in this beautiful area, please take this opportunity to join our concerned members and support the only local organization focused on protecting water quality and conserving natural values in the Weeks Bay watershed.

Visit our website at [www.weeksbay.org](http://www.weeksbay.org) for more information.

We look forward to seeing your response in the enclosed envelope.

Thank you.

## *Kayaking on the Magnolia River*

*by Rick Wallace, Foundation President*



Weeks Bay Foundation Board members **Skipper Tonsmeire** and **Rick Wallace** enjoyed a great paddle trip down the Magnolia River on a recent sun-filled morning. They were joined by Associate Board members **Jason Harris**, **Anna Bryant**, **Justin Vance**, **Corinna Ray**, and **Will Underwood**.

“We were fortunate to be able to launch above the ‘cold hole’ from private land thanks to help from Board member **Bob Holk**,” notes Rick Wallace. From there the group floated over the odd, very shallow rock formation in the middle of the river and into the 30 foot deep “cold hole.” A pleasant north wind pushed the paddlers south and before long they were exploring Weeks Creek and Eslava Branch. The trip ended at **Chuck and Brooke Kelly’s** home, where Skipper Tonsmeire treated the paddlers to a delicious lunch. The Foundation thanks Chuck, Brooke and their two dogs for their gracious hospitality.

**Check out the Weeks Bay Foundation’s website, [www.weeksbay.org](http://www.weeksbay.org), or Facebook page for details about the upcoming Weeks Bay Kayak Race.**



## Volunteer Spotlight - Sue Kimsey

by Maureen Nation, Reserve Volunteer Coordinator

If you come to the Weeks Bay Reserve on Tuesday mornings, you may see a volunteer who seems at home, greeting visitors with the friendly confidence she is known for. **Sue Kimsey**, after working at the Reserve for three years, has returned as a cherished volunteer.

She is originally from Rockford, Illinois, where her two brothers referred to her as “the boss.” Apparently, Sue exuded a special kind of confidence from a very early age.

Her first eight grades were spent in a two-room schoolhouse where she graduated with eight classmates. She moved to a much larger high school, then attended and graduated from Illinois State University with a Bachelor of Science degree in physical education. Sue taught for eight years in the Chicago suburbs until the birth of her son, **Jeff**. She stayed at home with him until he started school, then went back to work.



For many years the family had been coming down to Gulf State Park during spring breaks, and they really liked the area. So, when her husband, **Jack**, retired, they decided to make their home here in coastal Alabama. Sue worked for Manpower in Foley and then in Pensacola, becoming supervisor of the accounting department until the company closed in 2004. The next year she began working as manager of Camp Pinetreat, a Presbyterian camp just north of Bay Minette. Sue then heard that the Reserve was looking for an administrative assistant and she was interested in the position. Her multifaceted background and experience made her exceptionally qualified for the job. Her mantra, “If I don’t know the answer, I know where to find the answer,” has served her well throughout her working life, including her tenure at the Reserve.

Since her retirement in 2010, Sue has more time to spend with her family. Her son and grandchildren live in Gulf Shores and she travels back to Rockford to spend the summers visiting her active 93-year-old mother. She also enjoys traveling and exploring

interesting new places, bowling, reading, solving puzzles, and listening to music.

When asked why she decided to volunteer at the Reserve, Sue says that she enjoys working there and that the staff feels like family. “I enjoy life and I need to stay busy,” she said. Everywhere Sue has worked, she has displayed a poster that shows a border collie on a unicycle balancing a cat and a number of other things on his head. The poster reads: “The trick about life is to make it look easy.” It is so great having Sue back!



## NERRs Receive Outstanding Research Partner Award

by Mississippi Press Staff as revised



Accepting their awards, from left, are Eric Brunden, Weeks Bay NERR, Scott Phipps, Weeks Bay NERR, David Ruple, Manager of the Grand Bay NERR, and Kelly Major, one of the USA faculty members who jointly nominated the Weeks Bay NERR and Grand Bay NERR for the University of South Alabama Faculty Senate’s Community Partnership Award for Outstanding Research Partner. (Photo submitted by Mississippi Department of Marine Resources)

The University of South Alabama Faculty Senate honored the National Estuarine Research Reserves (NERR) in Mississippi and Alabama with its Outstanding Research Partner Award at the awards banquet in Fairhope, Alabama. The Weeks Bay NERR and Grand Bay NERR were jointly nominated and selected to receive the prestigious award.

**Leigh Minchew**, chair of USA’s Faculty Senate Planning & Development Committee said, “On behalf of the University of South Alabama Faculty Senate and **Dr. Phil Carr**, USA Faculty Senate



President, I would like to congratulate you on your nomination and selection for the USA Faculty Senate's Outstanding Research Partner Award. You and your agencies have provided direct support to the research mission of USA faculty through financial, in-kind, personnel, expertise, office space, consulting, and other means."

One of the most important objectives of the reserves' science program is to assist and facilitate the efforts of visiting researchers at each reserve. Assisting in their efforts greatly enhances understanding of coastal resources. Researchers from across the country have utilized these sites as a platform for their studies. It is much appreciated that the faculty at the University of South Alabama recognized reserve staff for these efforts.

## *What is a TMDL?*

by Michael Shelton,  
Reserve Watershed Coordinator

In the science world, acronyms are used all the time. Abbreviating long terms into a few letters can help with communication, but can also cause confusion. Perhaps you've never wondered about the definition of a Total Maximum Daily Load, or TMDL, but the term has real meaning for the future of Fish River. The Clean Water Act requires Alabama



Flooded sewer lines can be a source of pathogens in Fish River

to check on the health of the water in her rivers, creeks, and lakes. The Alabama Department of Environmental Management (ADEM) tests the waterways.

Rivers and creeks found to have pollution problems are included on a list of "impaired" waters. Fish River is now included on the impaired waters list due to excessive amounts of potentially harmful bacteria or pathogens which are typically associated with sewage or livestock. Once included on the list, a study of the waterway is conducted to determine how much of a pollutant a waterway can handle and still meet healthy standards. That pollution limit is called the Total Maximum Daily Load, or TMDL.

Scientists with ADEM are now studying Fish River to establish the TMDL for bacteria. They are looking at bacteria testing data, seasonal water flows, potential sources of bacteria, and a calculated margin of safety to account for uncertainty. Based on the results of the study, a TMDL will be set which will require reductions in contamination needed to bring the Fish River back into compliance with federal standards for bacteria levels. There will be a public comment period after the study is completed and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency will examine the resulting plan for ultimate approval. In the end, the plan will include a combination of regulatory, non-regulatory, or incentive-based actions designed to attain the necessary reduction in bacteria loading. The TMDL plan will likely include pollution prevention practices and habitat preservation or restoration. The Watershed Program at Weeks Bay Reserve is a good source of information on this process. Contact **Mike Shelton** if you have questions. Also, check out the ADEM website, [adem.alabama.gov/programs/water/tmdl.cnt](http://adem.alabama.gov/programs/water/tmdl.cnt).

## *It's Nesting Season!*



Sporting a distinctive hooked beak, an adult white ibis stands above its nest on an island in the Mississippi Sound. The island, which is about the size of a softball field, is one of the only places ibises nest in Alabama. But they have to share the breeding grounds with cattle egrets, the white birds in the background with a rust colored crest, tricolor herons, oyster catchers, and reddish egrets. This year's young were born in April and are already flying now, though they still share the nest with their parents.  
(Ben Raines, Foundation Executive Director.)

# 2013 BALD E

The word is spreading; the Weeks Bay Foundation puts on a great party.

With favorable winds, sunny skies, and a whole lot of great food, the fourth annual Bald Eagle Bash was an undeniable hit.

A crowd of folks armed with broad brimmed hats and collapsible chairs began to form about 30 minutes before the gates were opened. A brief survey revealed that most of the early birds had been to the Bash before and didn't want to miss a minute of it this year.

A little Johnny Cash, courtesy of Rollin' in the Hay, serenaded the crowd as they made their way in. Most headed straight for the food.

Shrimp ceviche, shrimp gumbo, shrimp gazpacho, shrimp tacos, shrimp jambalaya, shrimp etouffee, shrimp skewers, shrimp-stuffed potatoes, and fried shrimp, the 14 restaurants outdid themselves coming up with recipes. In the end, there was nothing left. The crowd gobbled up 700 pounds of fresh Gulf shrimp.

The Bald Eagle Bash is the Weeks Bay Foundation's biggest fundraiser of the year, and provides much of our operating budget. Everyone who bought a ticket this year helped further the Foundation's mission of protecting coastal land. So the next time you hear about a land acquisition by the Foundation, know that you helped make it happen.

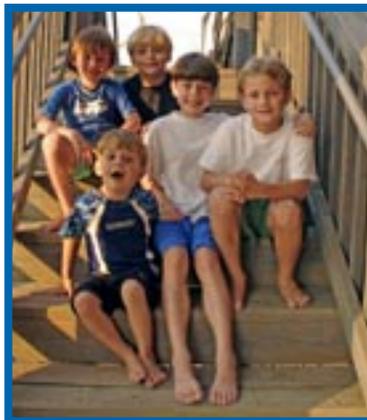
Thanks to everyone who came, and thanks most of all to everyone who helped out, including Boy Scout Troop 47, Wilsey Nursery, Faulkner State Community College, Darwin Singleton, and the dozens of volunteers who gave their time to help make sure the party for preservation went off without a hitch.



Big Daddy's Grill



Pinzone's Italian Downtown



Pelican Patio



The Bluegill Restaurant



Lulu's at H...



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# EAGLE BASH



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Rollin' In The Hay

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## Landscaping with Native Plants Preserves Ecologic Heritage

by L.G. Adams, Reserve Manager

For many years, the Weeks Bay Reserve has partnered on a spring plant sale with the Baldwin County Master Gardeners. This year was no exception and the number and diversity of plants for sale was a sight to see. The very successful sale was held Friday through Sunday (April 5-7) across U.S. Highway 98 from the main office of the Reserve. Hundreds of plants from a variety of habitats were on display and left with new owners from lower Baldwin County and beyond. Many, if not most, of the plants were natives, that is to say, having their origins in the region or more correctly said, “from the North American Continent.” The Master Gardeners were on-site providing tips on plant selection and landscaping. The gardeners hold the sale as a fundraiser, but most would agree it’s for the fun and satisfaction of getting the word out about landscaping with native plants.



Landscaping with native plants is just the smart thing to do. Not only are there beautiful plants to choose from, plants for every local habitat, and plants that require less maintenance, but landscaping with native plants *preserves our ecologic heritage*. This topic is really more than “oh yeah, it’s good to landscape with natives.” There are concepts to understand and best practices to implement in selection of alternatives for landscaping your yard. This is why the Reserve offered a class on Landscaping with Native Plants. **Mike Shelton**, CTP Coordinator at the Reserve, organized this workshop as part of the Coastal Training Program. The very qualified instructors were **Gena Todia**, **Fred Nation**, and **Bobby Green**. During the half-day workshop, these three instructors discussed how land use changes have disrupted the natural landscape and affected both plants and animals. Using native plants in residential and urban settings helps restore an ecologic connectivity so broken in today’s modern setting. This



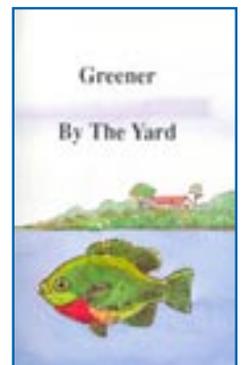
class was held Saturday, during the plant sale, and included the topics:

- Balanced approach to selecting plants for residential/urban landscaping
- Invasive plant species identification
- Invasive plant species ecology
- Use of native plants in residential and urban landscapes
- A few of our favorite plants.

## High and Low Tech Resources: More Than One Way to Help Prevent Pollution



Everybody has a favorite way to get information. Some ways are high tech, using buttons and phones. Others involve flipping pages, whether made of electrons or real paper. Here are two resources, one new and one an improved old favorite. Alabama Cooperative Extension System and Alabama Smart Yards have produced an app for both iPhone™ and Android™ devices called appropriately “Smart Yards.” Smart Yards is designed to be the ultimate pocket guide for all your yard work. The app will help you face yard work troubles with ease and turn your average yard into a smart yard. There are pages for lawns and tree and shrub pruning that can help reduce maintenance and promote a healthy landscape without so much water, fertilizer, and chemical use. Also, the app includes expert advice for reducing water pollution from sources around the home. Help with designing and planting rain gardens and building and installing rain barrels is included. A water quality section helps users understand and prevent pollution washed off our neighborhoods by rainfall runoff. Tips on reducing the amounts of hard surfaces like cement and asphalt and replacing them with sidewalks and driveways that allow water to soak into the ground are provided. Contact **Tyler Weldon**, Home Grounds Team Assistant at Auburn University, (334) 844-3848, for more about the app, or get it at [www.smartyards.org](http://www.smartyards.org).



For the luddites, an old friend, *Greener by the Yard*, is now being reprinted on real paper, and is also available in electronic format. The *New and Improved* version contains a wealth of information for the homeowner. It addresses everything from taking care of septic tanks to reduce the chance of releasing harmful bacteria into the environment to recycling electronics to slow the consumption of landfill space and the spread of toxic chemicals. The booklet contains many hints on helping the homeowner use less fertilizer and other chemicals. There is even information on how some things like leaves and grass clippings, when not disposed of properly, can become pollutants in local storm drains and waterways. Very useful lists of native plants for dry or wet soils, sunny or shady spots, and shoreline or upland areas are part of this informative and easy to read publication. The printed version is available at the Weeks Bay Reserve's Otilie Halstead Visitor Center. Go to [www.weeksbayreserve.com](http://www.weeksbayreserve.com) for an electronic copy. Either in print or on the smart-phone, residents can get helpful information to improve their environment.

*Alabama Coastal BirdFest*  
by D. Fran Morley, BirdFest Nestkeeper

This year marks the 10th anniversary for the John L. Borom Alabama Coastal BirdFest. Can you believe it? Over the years, we have attracted visitors from nearly half of our 50 states as well as from Canada, and some of those visitors from far away have come back again and again to enjoy our hospitality—and our birds! This year's BirdFest is October 3-5.

In the years since 2004, BirdFest has raised more than \$70,000 and donated that money to help purchase habitat land in both Mobile and Baldwin counties. "Protecting and preserving our wildlife habitat along the coast is the primary mission of BirdFest," said event founder **John Borom**. "Coastal lands and beaches are popular with the human population but they are vital to the birds and other wildlife. For migratory birds that winter in Central and South America, our coast is the last stop before a 600-mile flight across the Gulf of Mexico. They need the trees and shrubs as a safe haven to rest and eat before completing their journey and that is why we need to ensure that there are wild areas along the coast."

This year's poster artist is Mobile photographer **Larry Dees**. "Larry is a fabulous photographer," said BirdFest graphic designer (and past-poster photographer) **Kathy Hicks**. "It's been so much fun

to work with his photos for this year: there were so many great shots to pick from." Dees' photos will be featured in this year's "Nature Through our Lenses" presentation at the pre-BirdFest Orientation/Reception on Wednesday, October 2, at 5 Rivers Delta Resource Center.

The keynote speaker for the Friday night Social and Silent Auction is **Dr. Mark Woodrey**, a Coastal Ecologist at Mississippi State University Coastal Research and Extension Center in Biloxi, and Research Coordinator at the NOAA/Mississippi Department of Marine Resources Grand Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve in Moss Point. For more than a decade, Dr. Woodrey and his colleagues have researched marsh birds in the marshes of Mississippi and Alabama; his highly illustrated presentation will explore why marsh birds are important, highlight research on secretive species like Clapper Rails and passerines such as the Seaside Sparrow, and talk about the conservation of this poorly known group of birds.



In addition to his focus on marsh bird research, including monitoring and ecological studies, BirdFest keynote speaker Dr. Mark Woodrey has studied a variety of bird groups, including colonial beach-nesting birds, grassland birds, and breeding birds of bottomland hardwood forests. He promotes the use of science-based information from his lab to support local, regional, and national bird conservation plans, allowing for more informed and effective natural resource management decisions

This year's BirdFest will feature some exciting new boat trips that should prove popular with locals and out-of-state visitors. "We're finalizing the schedule now, but we think we've come up with several fun, new trips to unusual places," said BirdFest Nestkeeper **Fran Morley** who has been coordinator of every BirdFest since the first event in 2004. "Updates and details will be posted on our website at [www.AlabamaCoastalBirdFest.com](http://www.AlabamaCoastalBirdFest.com) as they are announced. Registration will be open by late-July. And once again this year, we will have some special 'online only' trips, so we encourage everyone to register online, which is fast, safe, and convenient."

5 Rivers Delta Resource Center in Spanish Fort is the site of both evening events and all trips leave from that location. The free, family-friendly Bird & Conservation Expo takes place Saturday, October 5, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. on the grounds of Faulkner State Community College in downtown Fairhope.



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Camellia Cafe  
Cobalt the Restaurant  
Dragonfly Foodbar



Jesse's Restaurant  
Locals  
Old 27 Grill  
Pelican Patio  
Sweet Olive at the Windmill Market

#### 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  
Gulf Coast Resource Conservation  
& Development  
Gulf of Mexico Alliance  
Land Trust Alliance  
Legacy, Partners in Environmental  
Education  
The Mapp Family Foundation  
Mississippi-Alabama Sea  
Grant Consortium  
Mississippi Department of  
Marine Resources  
Mobile Bay National Estuary  
Program  
National Estuarine Research  
Reserve Association  
NOAA Coastal Services Center  
Pascagoula River Audubon Center  
TogetherGreen  
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service  
University of New Hampshire  
University of Southern Mississippi  
Weeks Bay Volunteers

## Become a part of the Weeks Bay Foundation!

### Giving 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  
[www.weeksbay.org](http://www.weeksbay.org).

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

# SUMMER 2013 CALENDAR

## June

- 3 Jefferson Davis' Birthday Holiday.** The Visitor Center will be closed. All trails and boardwalks will remain open for your walking and sightseeing pleasure.
- 5 Weeks Bay Advisory Committee Meeting.** Tonsmeire Weeks Bay Resource Center, 2:00 p.m.
- 15 Weeks Bay Photography Contest.** Deadline to deliver entries to the Weeks Bay Reserve is 4:00 p.m. today. For more information, call (251) 990-5004.

## July

- 2 Citizens Advisory Committee Meeting for the Weeks Bay Watershed Project.** Tonsmeire Weeks Bay Resource Center, 6:30 p.m.
- 4 Independence Day Holiday.** The Visitor Center will be closed. All trails and boardwalks will remain open for your walking and sightseeing pleasure.
- 27 Weeks Bay Kayak Race.** Check out the Weeks Bay Foundation's website, [www.weeksbay.org](http://www.weeksbay.org), or Facebook page for details.

**Registration for the John L. Borom Alabama Coastal BirdFest opens mid-July. Look for updates at [www.AlabamaCoastalBirdFest.com](http://www.AlabamaCoastalBirdFest.com).**

## *Weeks Bay Foundation Annual Meeting*

The Annual Membership Meeting of the Weeks Bay Foundation was held April 22. Board members **Eleanor Livaudais**, **John T. Crowder, Jr.**, and **Ken Cole** rotated off the Board and were recognized for their dedicated service to the mission of the Foundation. **Ken Heard**, a local real estate attorney, joined the 18 returning Board members in setting a course for 2013 and beyond.

2013 Weeks Bay Foundation Board of Directors

**Jack Edwards,**  
Chairman Emeritus  
**Ellis Allen,** Chairman  
**Shawn T. Alves**  
**David Ed Bishop**  
**John L. Borom,** Vice President  
**Aubury Fuller**  
**Jim Gaines**  
**Tommy Harris**  
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**Ray Herndon**  
**Bob Holk**  
**Walter Kirkland**  
**Cindy McBrearty**  
**Craig Nelson**  
**Phil Norris,** Secretary  
**Michael Quinn**  
**Buddy Russell,** Treasurer  
**Skipper Tonsmeire**  
**Rick Wallace,** President



# Weeks Bay Foundation

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www.weeksbay.org

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Photo by Ben Raines

A crane fly struggles to free itself from a sticky entanglement with a sundew in the Foundation's Juniper Bog.

*"It is not what we have that will make us a great nation. It is the way in which we use it." - Theodore Roosevelt*

## *100/1000 Restore Coastal Alabama Project* by Rick Wallace, Foundation President



The Weeks Bay Foundation was an active partner in the recent 100/1000 Restore Coastal Alabama project to protect the shoreline at Pelican Point just outside the mouth of Weeks Bay. Foundation Board members **Bob Holk**, **Rick Wallace**, and **Skipper Tonsmeire** joined Associate Board members **Elizabeth Tonsmeire**, **Anna Bryant**, and **Clay Calhoun** to move hundreds of the 35-pound "oyster castle" blocks that make up the structure. A good number of Foundation members were also hard at work passing and placing blocks while up to their waists in the almost chilly water.

All of the volunteers were inspired by the 300 young men and women from Keesler Air Force Base who provided a lot of muscle and great spirit. They came for both of the weekends that it took to finish the project and it could not have been completed without them.

The 100/1000 Restore Coastal Alabama project is being led by The Nature Conservancy, Alabama Coastal Foundation, and Mobile Bay Keeper with help from many local partners including the Weeks Bay Foundation.

