



THE SALT LINE

A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF
SOUTH ALABAMA LAND TRUST

Friends of Weeks Bay Reserve - Spring 2021 (Vol. 2, No. 1)



30

OUR HISTORY

YEARS OF
PROTECTING
COASTAL
HABITATS

TODAY

700
Members

9,500
Acres of protected habitat including
along the Alabama coastline

\$11,780,946
Total value of protected land

1986

2,693 acres of initial protected habitat
of the Weeks Bay National Estuarine
Research Reserve

1990

Weeks Bay Foundation incorporated

1992

Weeks Bay Foundation's first land acquisition

1993

First land in Baldwin County donated
to Weeks Bay Foundation

1997

Acquired Safe Harbor RV Park
and Fish River Marina at auction

1998

First land in Mobile County donated
to Weeks Bay Foundation

2009

Accredited by the Land Trust
Accreditation Commission

2009

First conservation easement in Baldwin County

2011

First conservation easement in Mobile County

2015

Transferred 143 acres to State of
Alabama Forever Wild program



**SOUTH ALABAMA
LAND TRUST**

Board of Directors

- Chesley Allegri
- Ellis Allen, MD
- Shawn T. Alves
- Gavin Bender
- Coley Boone
- John L. Borom, PhD
- Andrew Chason
- Jordan Collins
- Kendall Dexter
- Brett Gaar
- Daniel R. Galbraith
- David Green
- Veronica Herndon
- Bob Holk
- Warren Hopper
- Rodney M. Kilgore
- GiGi Lott
- Walter A. (Trey) Ruch III
- Louis G. (Buddy) Russell
- Skipper Tonsmeire
- Gina Walcott
- Leslie G. Weeks
- Julie Wiggins

Executive Director

Connie Whitaker

**Development and
Communications**

Diana Brewer

Land Coordinator

Darrel Williams

**Freelance Writer and
Photographer**

Colette Boehm

Cover Photos

(L) Stephanie Pluscht
(R) Lisa Comer

TABLE OF CONTENTS



Photos by Allan Walls

Executive Director	4
Bald Eagle Bash is Back!	5
Longleaf Pines	6-8
From the Weeks Bay Reserve	9
SALT Annual Report	10-11
30 Years. 30 Supporters.	12-13
Welcome New Board Members	14-15
Protecting 478 Acres	16-17
Our Supporters	18-19

The mission of the South Alabama Land Trust is to protect land and promote environmental education so current and future residents can enjoy clean water and the marine life, wildlife, and outdoor recreation that define our area.

It's hard to believe that this time last year we were learning about COVID and not yet anticipating a world-wide pandemic. 2020 was one for the record books – that's for sure. In spite of an unprecedented year, we had one of its busiest and most exciting years in history. Not only did we change our name, but we protected another 1,500 acres in Mobile and Baldwin counties, bringing our total to nearly 10,000 acres!

This year, we are moving forward to purchase properties on Dauphin Island for the Dauphin Island Bird Sanctuary with funding provided by the National Fish and Wildlife Federation (NFWF). We are also partnering with the City of Mobile on another NFWF funded project to conserve 45 acres of wetlands on Mobile Bay, part of the Brookley economic development project that includes a new public park.

Thanks to funding from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Gulf of Mexico and NFWF 5 Star grants, we are also moving forward with restoration on three properties in two counties – Alta Fish River, Rio Vista and Rangeline. Our staff, interns and volunteers have been working on firebreaks at Alta Fish River and Rio Vista – a big job with Hurricane Sally debris. In addition to the prescribed burns planned for those three properties, we recently burned our Juniper Bog property with the help of our “Bog Trotter” volunteers. Under our habitat management plan for that property, we burn annually in late winter/early spring, then let Mother Nature do the rest. By mid-April the property will be a colorful splendor of pitcher plants, followed by white orchids in late July/early August. We will be extending invitations to SALT members to tour the Bog when the pitcher plants are in full bloom and assist us with the white orchid count.

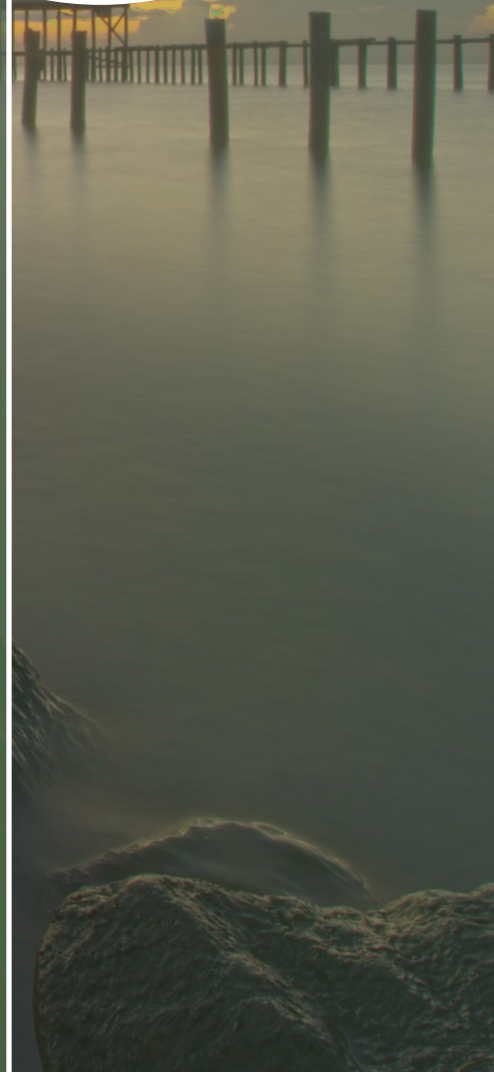
Now that spring is in the air, there are a few SALT sponsored events that I hope you will be a part of. We are thrilled that the **Bald Eagle Bash** is on this year! We bumped the date back to May 22nd to allow time for more folks to receive their vaccinations. In consideration of social distancing, we are reducing ticket sales and allowing our SALT members to purchase tickets before we open sales to the general public. Members stay tuned!

We just completed our annual “Floating Cleanup” on the Magnolia River and Weeks Bay. A special thanks to Osprey Initiative LLC for providing volunteers and motor boats and JubileeScape for providing volunteers and a truck to haul the trash away. And to our many volunteers who cleaned by kayak, canoe or on foot, thank you!

As you can see, it's already shaping up to be another exciting year for us. We could not do it without your dedication to our mission as members, event sponsors, donors and volunteers. We appreciate you!



Connie Whitaker



FROM THE
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



BALD EAGLE BASH IS BACK - MAY 22

John Oldshue

Are you ready for the Party for Preservation? What better way to shake off the winter months and a long year than watching the sunset over Weeks Bay while enjoying fresh local seafood and listening to live music for a great cause? The 11th annual Bald Eagle Bash, set for May 22 from 4-7 p.m., at the Tonsmeire Weeks Bay Resource Center, is South Alabama Land Trust's (SALT) largest event, raising funds to protect land, water, and wildlife habitats, and greenspaces for recreation and education.

The Bash brings more than a dozen area restaurants together to create dishes based on delicious fresh shrimp. From fried shrimp, to stuffed shrimp, to shrimp and grits, shrimp ceviche, and jalapeno shrimp sliders, each chef prepares a signature dish that is sure to delight all participants. Several restaurants will serve tasty desserts.

There are a lot of great local bands to choose from, and this year we'll have **The Marlow Boys** on stage! Joe and Karl Langley, Stan Foster, and Phil Proctor have been playing together since 2014. Collaborating on original songs, their music is, as one person said, "Good people, good music."

Local brewer **Fairhope Brewing** will be serving their signature beer, Bald Eagle Blue, along with other favorites, and this year, for the first time, **Braided River Brewing Company** from Mobile will be joining us.

"The Bald Eagle Bash is a family-friendly event with local seafood and local musical talent in a setting that cannot be beat." Ellis Allen, South Alabama Land Trust Board Chairman said. "After last year's cancellation, there's a lot of excitement around the Bash this year. Co-chairs Coley Boone and Chesley Allegri and staff are working extra hard to make sure this is our best one yet."

Tickets go on sale April 1 to SALT members, and April 5 to the general public. To maintain social distance, tickets will be limited and **can only be purchased in advance**, either online at baldeaglebash.com/tickets/ or at one of these locations: The Fairhope Store, The Orange Beach Store, and SALT office. Tickets are \$50 for SALT members, and \$55 for nonmembers. Children 10 and under are free. Parking is available at the SALT office, with shuttles to and from the event. For more information or to be a sponsor, call 251-990-5004. -- DB

WHY ALL THE FUSS ABOUT LONGLEAF PINES?

When Europeans first arrived in North America, the southeastern United States was covered by a 90-million-acre longleaf pine ecosystem. As Europeans became established in the region, deforestation began due to the demand of the longleaf wood.

Longleaf pine grows straight and has a strength that rivals steel, making it an appealing construction material. Resin protects the inner wood from decay, making it outlast many other tree species during life and as lumber. These traits partially account for the decline in the longleaf ecosystem; the original 90 million acres is now less than three million, of which only a fraction reflects a healthy longleaf ecosystem.

In many of the world's forests, canopy diversity can be a gauge by which to judge the health of the ecosystem. To the untrained eye, an aerial image of a longleaf forest gives the appearance that it lacks biodiversity. The longleaf ecosystem, however, could be the most biodiverse in North America, with many unique species of grasses and spectacular plants.

FIRE AND LONGLEAF

The Southeast's once longleaf dominated forests allowed this unique ecosystem to flourish, and it still does in isolated sanctuaries. Longleaf alone, however, cannot achieve this degree of biodiversity

without the aid of fire. Fire plays as vital a role as the longleaf itself.

As a longleaf pine tree reaches approximately 80 years old, the resin-protected heartwood becomes less resistant to red heart fungi. Although this fungus breaks down the once dense heartwood of the tree, the longleaf's resilience allows it to live centuries in this condition. The fungus actually creates a heartwood that is a remarkably efficient fire starter. The high frequency of lightning strikes in the southeastern United States makes the more mature, taller longleaf pine trees extremely vulnerable as a contact point. The less dense and partially hollowed heartwood of the mature longleaf ignites easily when struck by lightning, which bodes well for the survival of the longleaf forests. In the absence of fire, competing plants grow quickly and block out the much-needed sunlight for young longleaf to thrive.

A longleaf pine will remain in a grass stage where, above ground it resembles a tuft of grass, while the root system below develops. The grass-like arrangement of moisture-filled needles protects the growing bud from fire. Between the first and seventh year, the young longleaf will use its well-established root system to fuel a rapid growth spurt, raising its branches above the range of fire. As the tree matures, a layered papery bark forms. As fire is

carried through a longleaf stand, the papery outer layer of bark will burn, peel, and drop, and heat is continuously removed from the tree until the fire has passed.

NATURE'S PERFECTION

A mature longleaf pine's branches are high above the ground with leaves that are long and needlelike. Since the trees favor open areas exposed to sunlight, longleaf pines tend to be naturally well-spaced. This combination of spacing and structure creates a canopy that allows the perfect amount of sunlight and warmth to reach the forest floor and the ground-dwelling grasses and flowering plants. That same canopy can also act as an insulation layer, protecting the plants from low temperatures.

An entire library could be dedicated to the species connected to longleaf. Two of the most iconic are the red-cockaded woodpecker (RCW) and the gopher tortoise. Both face an uncertain future as their dependence on a fire-maintained longleaf pine ecosystem makes them vulnerable. Red-cockaded woodpeckers will not nest in a young, dead, or decaying tree; they specifically rely on mature longleaf pines as their ideal habitat. The less dense heartwood (that red heart fungus creates) allows the RCW to burrow through the outer sapwood and into the softened heartwood to construct a nest cavity. In addition, the RCW pecks numerous holes strategically placed around the sapwood below the

nesting site, allowing sticky sap to ooze down and coat the trunk, protecting the nest from unwanted predators such as fire ants and snakes.

With treetops more than 100 feet tall, RCWs can nest well above the range of fire. Ground-dwelling species have other survival strategies. The gopher tortoise is a keystone species, as it plays a crucial role in

continued next page



LONGLEAF PINES

the survival of numerous animal species within the longleaf ecosystem. Gopher tortoises burrow in well drained, sandy soils that are commonplace in the longleaf pine's favored environment. These burrows can measure 10 feet deep and 25-35 feet long and provide the tortoise with protection against predators, extreme weather, and fire. The burrows also provide shelter for around 350 other species, playing a vital role for many in surviving fire.

THE ARGUMENT FOR RESTORATION

The act of conserving and restoring longleaf pine forests is also of concern to humans. Longleaf pines have superior carbon sequestration abilities and are capable of harboring carbon for up to 1,000 years. With global warming a growing issue, carbon sequestration through longleaf is a viable option, especially when considering the extent of its suitable range.

Not only does longleaf improve air quality through reducing CO₂ levels, its airborne pollen is generally too large to infiltrate the respiratory tract and cause allergies. In fact, the removal of longleaf pine leaves the door open for invasive species to take its place. These species produce pollen one-fourth the size of the longleaf pollen and can infiltrate the respiratory tract of humans, causing allergies and related illnesses.

Living around longleaf ecosystems has other benefits, including improved water quality, an increase in the abundance of game animals, a reduction in biting insects, and room to walk and play in open and aesthetically pleasing natural settings.

Despite the long list of benefits and improved quality of life that longleaf provides, conserving these ever-shrinking natural sanctuaries is a challenge. Coastal Alabama is subject to rapid population growth, and along with it, woodlands are being cleared or developed at an unsustainable rate.

South Alabama Land Trust (SALT), with the help of the Weeks Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve and the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (ADCNR) State Lands Division, along with organizations such as Forever Wild, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), The National Fish & Wildlife Foundation (NFWF), and The Nature Conservancy (TNC), has protected multiple areas in Baldwin and Mobile counties, either by donation, purchase, or conservation easement. SALT's aim is to encourage the region's natural ecosystem to thrive, to benefit local residents by protecting the area's natural beauty, and to create a healthier environment for generations to come. - **DW**





WEEKS BAY RESERVE

FROM THE RESEARCH SECTOR

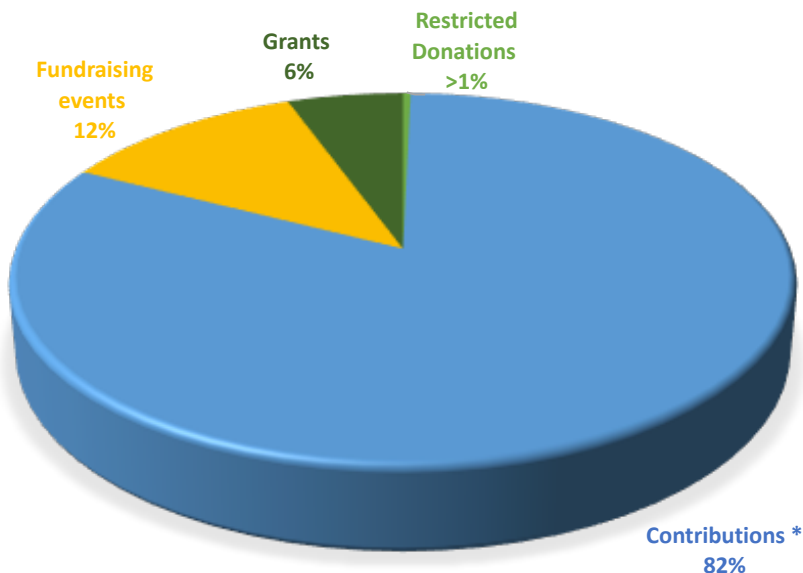
Research is part of the primary mission of the Weeks Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve (WBNERR), so much so that it is in our name. You may wonder just what that means and how we use research to better understand and manage our watershed. One of the keys to understanding a system as complex as an estuary is to evaluate the variation, or change over time, in key water quality and habitat measures. We accomplish this in part through our System Wide Monitoring Program (SWMP), a standardized method of collecting real-time background environmental data using four sophisticated data sondes placed in the water around the Reserve. These sondes collect water depth, temperature, pH, salinity, turbidity, conductivity, and dissolved oxygen levels in the water column every 15 minutes. That data undergoes quality assurance checks and becomes available for use by our staff, researchers, and the general public.

Another important function of our Reserve's mission is to provide a place for visiting researchers to conduct their own work and contribute to the growing body of literature and management options for best conserving estuaries. We accomplish this by providing laboratory space, dormitory accommodations, and technical and logistical support to visiting researchers.

Additionally, the Reserve serves as a host for a university graduate student funded through NOAA's new Margaret A. Davidson Graduate Fellowship Program. The Davidson Fellowship places one graduate researcher at each of the 29 National Estuarine Research Reserves, including Weeks Bay. Davidson Fellows' research helps scientists and community members better understand some of the challenges faced by coastal communities. Decision makers can then implement research-based policies and strategies for addressing those challenges.

Last fall, the Reserve welcomed Mai Fung to our research team as the first Margaret A. Davidson Graduate Fellow. Her research is focused on better understanding how different environmental factors influence eutrophication around Weeks Bay. Eutrophication occurs when an excess of nutrients in the water leads to increased growth of phytoplankton, or algae. Eutrophication can cause harmful algal blooms and lead to low-oxygen levels in the water. Some of the ecosystem impacts resulting from these conditions include things like fish-kills, unsanitary swimming conditions for both humans and household pets, and even aerosolized toxins that can cause respiratory issues. Better understanding of this entire process will help us to make better management decisions in the future.

2020 ANNUAL REPORT



* Individual and Corporate Memberships, Year-end and Spring Appeals, and General Donations

OPERATIONS

- General Operating Budget: \$424,100
- Income from Contributions: \$254,000
- Earned Income: \$45,000
- Income from Events/Retail: \$125,100
- Number of Employees: 2.5
- Board of Directors: 23

FINANCIAL STABILITY

- # of Member Households: 389
- Revenue from Memberships: \$72,756
- # of Active Donors: 804
- Average Gift Amount: \$441
- # of New Donors/Members: 110
- Corporate Sponsors Revenue: \$48,607

SALT FOOTPRINT

Total acres protected: 10,500

- Acres protected in 2020: 1,500
- Acres held in conservation easements: 1,645

LAND CONSERVATION PROJECTS COMPLETED

- Oyster Bay - 836 acres
- Holmes - 91 acres
- Perch Creek - 95 acres
- Bacon - 478 acres

LAND CONSERVATION PROJECTS IN PIPELINE

- Dauphin Island - 11 acres
- City of Mobile- 45 acres

ORGANIZATIONAL DURABILITY

- # of Intern Hours: 168
- # of Volunteers: 165
- # of Volunteer Hours: 1,376

LAND IS THE ANSWER

Our outdoor spaces are the lifeline to clean air, water, food, a stable climate and human health.



PARTNERS

Friends of the Weeks Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve

Alabama Department of Conservation
& Natural Resources

Baldwin County Soil and Water
Conservation District

Dauphin Island Bird Sanctuaries, Inc.

EPA Gulf of Mexico Program

GulfCorps

Land Trust Alliance

Mobile Bay National Estuary Program

National Estuarine Research Reserve
Association

National Fish and Wildlife Foundation

National Oceanic and Atmospheric
Administration

Natural Resource Damage and
Assessment

NatureConnect

Partnership for Gulf Coast Land
Conservation

The Conservation Fund

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Weeks Bay Volunteers

NEW NAME - NEW LOOK

Weeks Bay Foundation became South Alabama Land Trust (SALT) in 2020 to better reflect our growing footprint and geographic concerns. We launched our name in September.

OUR MISSION

South Alabama Land Trust protects land and promotes environmental education in coastal Alabama so current and future residents can enjoy clean water and the marine life, wildlife, and outdoor recreation that define our area.



SOUTH ALABAMA
LAND TRUST

30 YEARS 30 SUPPORTERS

South Alabama Land Trust has thrived for 30 years thanks to hundreds of supporters -- from volunteers to members and donors to landowners. As part of our anniversary celebration, we are telling stories of 30 individuals who have put their stamp on local conservation through their time, talent or treasure. We hope that in reading their stories you will meet an assortment of like-minded people who enjoy the abundance of natural resources—the land, the water, and the wildlife—in south Alabama, and who are doing their part to protect what we have today, and for the tomorrows of those who come behind us.

SUZANNE CORRINGTON

A native of Baldwin County, Suzanne Corrington, M.D., has many fond memories of discovering and exploring the waterways of South Alabama.

"A friend in high school taught me how to throw a cast net in Weeks Bay," Corrington recalled. "She and her family lived next to the water. I loved the look, sounds and smell of it. I learned to water ski in Magnolia River. My grandparents had a house very near Bon Secour and I have wonderful memories of that area."

During her years of medical training, her focus shifted to Mobile County. "In medical school I skied on Dog River. I knew every inch of Dog River.



Photo by Colette Boehm

"Environmental issues have mattered to me as long as I can remember," she said. "The underlying theme seems to be water." The connection, she noted, between the waterways and the species that depend on them, is evident. Now a Tennessee resident, Corrington often returns for visits, which usually include time for birding on Dauphin Island.

"As a basic level birder, it is obvious that protecting wetlands and areas that provide food and shelter along the migratory pathway is crucial. The same is true in breeding areas."

Corrington said she recognizes that the natural resources she and so





Photo by Sam St. John

many others value depend on the choices individuals make. While many seek solace in nature, she noted that not everyone takes responsibility for sustaining it.

"We recognize that natural areas sustain us," she said. "but there's a disconnect. We don't do the things to take care of it." Her contributions to South Alabama Land Trust and other organizations that work to support natural ecosystems is her way of making that connection. -- **CB**

THOMAS AND SHARON MCPHERRON

Thomas and Sharon McPherron live part-time in a treehouse on Dauphin Island. Not an actual treehouse, but the floor-to-ceiling "storefront" windows on the second floor (the main living area) of their two-story home certainly gives the impression of being in the treetops.

"We said to our builder, 'we do not want a tree cut unless it's absolutely necessary,'" Sharon said of their home on the east end of the island. Built in 2008, the minimalist house has metal siding and enough windows to "bring the outside in." It's their second home on Dauphin Island; the first house was on the west end and was destroyed during Hurricane Katrina.

The McPherrons have been coming to Dauphin Island from St. Louis since 1971. It was, as they said, the closest nice beach to St. Louis. Sharon had a faculty job, so she and their children would spend summers on the island. Today, she and Thomas spend spring and fall here.



Photo by Colette Boehm

In 2017, the McPherrons donated the parcel adjacent

to their home to South Alabama Land Trust. "Where we are, there's the dune and a series of lots," Sharon said. "The lots are important to the protection of the dunes."

The lots along the dunes flood during heavy rain, Thomas added, but they don't get the storm surge.

Thomas and Sharon said they wanted to donate the property to an accredited organization with a full time staff and a succession plan so the property would be protected forever.

If we keep building, all these woods will disappear," Thomas said, "and there will be ramifications for that." -- **DB**

WELCOME NEW BOARD MEMBERS

South Alabama Land Trust is pleased to welcome four new members to its Board of Directors.

J. Gavin Bender, Sr., Mobile

Gavin Bender, a Mobile native, is president of Bender Real Estate Group (BREG), which manages, leases, develops and brokers commercial real estate properties. BREG most recently handled the redevelopment, leasing and managing of the 65 Dauphin Medical and Financial Center and the Riverview Office Plaza in downtown Mobile. In addition to his real estate industry affiliations, Gavin serves on the University of South Alabama Mitchell College of Business, Board of Advisors, the University of South Alabama Mitchell College of Business Real Estate and Economic Development Advisory Board, State Bank and Trust Advisory Board, and the Mobile Botanical Gardens Board of Directors. He and his wife, Margaret, have three children, all married, and eight grandchildren.



Kendall Dexter, Mobile

A native of Mobile, Kendall Dexter is a graduate of the University of South Alabama and owner of Employers' Administrative Services Inc., a payroll company that serves Mobile and Baldwin counties. Kendall is past president and current board member of the Mobile County Wildlife and Conservation Association. In 2010, Kendall started the Poker Run, a day of adventure and socializing at swamp camps in the Mobile-Tensaw Delta. Kendall and his wife, Amanda, have two daughters.



Photo by Rodney Kilgore

Brett Gaar, Magnolia Springs

Brett Gaar is a sixth generation south Baldwin County native. His family moved to the area in 1860 and worked at Fort Morgan before opening Gaar Brothers general store in Foley in 1909. Brett recently retired from Volkert Engineering after a 29-year career where he was Vice President of Environmental Operations. He also served on the Board of Directors from 2006-2011. Brett served as the environmental compliance officer for several large projects, such as the Gulf State Park Hotel, Interpretive Center and Trail system, The Wharf in Orange Beach and The Little Bay 50 acres wetland complexes at Bayou La Batre. Brett and his wife, Christine, have three children. In addition to SALT, Brett serves on the Wolf Bay Watershed Board of Directors, and previously served on the Alabama Coastal Foundation Board of Directors and the Magnolia Springs Town Council.



Walter A. "Trey" Ruch III, Perdido Bay

Trey Ruch and his wife, Mary Jane, moved to Palmetto Creek off Perdido Bay, in June 2015. Trey is Managing Member of LibertyFi, LLC., a financial technology consultancy based in Birmingham and serving independent Registered Investment Advisory firms across the United States. Trey and Mary Jane have two daughters, a grandson and two merry English cockers. The Ruchs enjoy the outdoors, particularly fly fishing, bird hunting, boating, and hiking at their home on the coast and in Asheville, NC. Trey also serves as a member of the Endowment Committee of The Asheville School, Asheville, NC.



DONORS continued from page 19

John Estis
Laurel Hixson
William and Allison Hixson
Bob and Lolly Holk
Ivan and Julia Jones
John B. Jones
James and Ione Jurkiewicz
Mrs. Billie B. Lee
Claire Norton RN
Tommy and Kay Salter
John and Mary Ann Schaff
Mark and Becky Lee Smith
Sam and Sharon Styron
Sun Coast Builders, Inc.
Elaine Fuller Tankard

Ellen Taylor
The Family of Dr. Marvin Taylor
The Rachel Family
The Schultz Family
Thomas Hospital and Mobile Infirmary
Perfusion
Mr. and Mrs. Ormand Thompson

In Memory of Henry A. Wise V
- Johnny Wise

In Memory of Paul Mayson
- Ellen and Hobart McWhorter

In Honor of Jimbo and Lynn Meador
- Ellen and Hobart McWhorter

In Honor of Webb Radcliff
- Barbara Allen

JOIN SOUTH ALABAMA LAND TRUST

Memberships, renewed annually or in monthly payments, start at \$50. Our members have similar interests and concerns for the places we love and help protect land, water, wildlife habitats and greenspace for outdoor recreation.

MEMBERSHIP LEVELS

Legacy	⋮	\$5,000
Guardian	⋮	\$2,500
Conservators	⋮	\$1,000
Steward	⋮	\$500
Advocate	⋮	\$250
Supporter	⋮	\$100
Friend	⋮	\$50

BACON EASEMENT PRESERVING LAND FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

"I just love beautiful timber," Robbie Bacon, a forester by trade, said of his aim to restore his property in the heart of the Mobile-Tensaw Delta to its natural state. "It dawned on me, because I didn't have the opportunity to see what this land was like before we started cutting trees down, I wanted future generations to be able to see that." Through a conservation easement agreement with South Alabama Land Trust, Bacon is ensuring that will happen.

"In 100 years from now, which is about what it will take, that's what they'll see. I wanted to give future generations the opportunity to see what I couldn't," he continued. "That's why I wanted to do it."

The conservation easement Bacon granted in late 2020 is allowing SALT to protect the 478 acres on the Alabama River in the Blacksher

community, just north of Stockton in Baldwin County.



Robbie Bacon

The property is forested throughout, primarily with mixed hardwoods, including willow oaks and water oaks. In addition, one portion of the property is dominated by bald cypress. The property is an outstanding environment for wild turkeys, white-tailed

deer and other mammals and its low-lying areas include numerous tributaries and sloughs that are home to several species of reptiles and amphibians. It also provides critically important habitat for neotropical migratory birds, wading birds and waterfowl.

"The ecological importance of this system cannot be overstated," Gena Todia said. She is with Wetland Resources Environmental Consulting and worked on documenting the Bacon property for SALT. "It is especially



Photos by Colette Boehm

important to neotropical migratory birds. This property is located in the upper end of the Mobile-Tensaw Delta, one of the biologically richest ecosystems in the country," she explained. "It's in the flood plain of the Alabama River amidst an extensive bottomland hardwood forest system."

Todia, too, appreciates the long-term benefits of preserving land such as this.

"We have lost so much natural area to development and conversion to agriculture and other uses and much of what's left has been degraded," she noted. "It's increasingly important to protect what remains. Doing so benefits wildlife, protects water quality, recharges groundwater, attenuates flooding and provides refuge to us humans when our souls need solace. As land is converted and developed," she continued, "we are losing our natural heritage and that of our children and future generations. Saving what's left has never been more important."

Bacon can attest to the rarity of pristine, undeveloped land and is

happy his property will return to its natural state.

"When I travel in the southeast," he said, "I make an effort to see if there are any virgin timber sites around. There are very few." While he notes that his property is still a beautiful piece of forested land, he believes allowing it to return to a natural state will have positive results both for the plants and animals who live on the land and the humans who enjoy it. "People will appreciate it in years to come. I'm just happy it's going to be preserved."

Todia, who is also a SALT volunteer, believes in its mission to protect areas such as this. "The efforts of SALT to acquire land and conservation easements, and their work to restore and manage these properties are so important and necessary at this critical time when it seems new development is happening everywhere we look. As the only accredited land trust in south Alabama, SALT is filling a niche that provides landowners interested in the long-term protection of their property with a trusted resource to do just that." -- **CB**

OUR SUPPORTERS

DEC 1, 2020 - FEB 28, 2021

ANNUAL MEMBERS

Conservator \$2,500

Sally Demott

Steward \$500

rWilliam and Lucy Bingham
Bufkin Appraisal Company LLC
Will and Catherine Kiser
Frank and Marianne Lott
Don and Dena McKee
Mary Elizabeth Perry
Orland and Joan Stanford
Tynes Stringfellow
Len and Pam Turne

Advocate \$250

Jack and Patti Burrell
Kit Caffey
Dykes Veterinary Clinic
Daniel and Addie Galbraith
Kenny Hanak
Jim and Gail Laughner
Caroline and David Pryor
Johnny Wise

Supporter \$100

Ron Bankester
Sam and Ann Crosby
Alan and Debbie Curtis
Bill and Jeri Harrison
Steve and Sandy Mills
Alison Moore
George Nelson
Seth Phelps
Craig and Sandy Stepan
Harry and Martha Surline
Will Underwood
Gary and Billie Jo Underwood
John and Carolyn Borom
Emmett and Suzanne Carden
Sally and David Carrington
Jerry Collins

Kim Enikeieff
Elizabeth Fox
Norwood E. Green
Brenda Hutchison
Eric and Nancy Jenison
Kittrell's Daydream Apiary
John Koniar
Gary and Kathy Moore
Jay and Lisa Murray
Paul and Susan Pacey
Vicki Rehm
Elberta Reid
David and Ginny Russell
Mark and Kelley Ryan
Ernie and Rowena Sewell
Jim Thompson
Elizabeth Turner
Robert and Susan Turner

Friend \$50

Mary Calvin
Charlotte Cooksey
Carl Couret
Mimi Fearn
John Manelos
Daryn McCullough
Jo Anne Stapleton
Matt and Elizabeth Thomason
Dave Armstrong
Steven and Wendy Chapman
Ted and Charlotte Clayton
Larry and Linda Ennis
Rebecca Garnett
Thomas Gaskin
J.B. Horst
Susan and Court Hurst
Chris and Alison Knight
Stella Martin
Steve and Jo Masters
Lacie Maynard
Carol Medders
Maggie Mosteller
Nancy Myrick
Dale and Cindy Penny

Bob and Joy Zeanah
W. Dean Mosher
Jimmy and Virginia Dunn
Stephen Quina

QUARTERLY MEMBERS

Mac and Michelle Tonsmeire

MONTHLY MEMBERS

Connie Baggett
Jared Busen
Karen Chiasson
Mike and Amy DePriest
John and Kim Estes
Sandy Geddes
Elizabeth Gilbreath
Mike and Carol Gordon
Steve Heath
Mike and Trish Howell
Rodney and Mary Katherine
Kilgore
Houston and GiGi Lott
Luanne Matson
Edward Panacek
Melissa Pershina
Nanette Peturis
Jeff and Donyale Rawson
John and Emily Riser
Randy and Kay Roach
John Craig Shaw
Judy Stout
Betty Suddeth
William Wallace
Lundy Wilder

YEAR END APPEAL

\$2,500 - \$5,000

Anonymous
Cunningham Delaney Construction, LLC
Tonsmeire Charitable Foundation
Walter A. and Mary Jane Ruch
Thomas and Sharon McPherron

\$500 - \$999

Bufkin Appraisal Company LLC
Ralph and Cathy Havard
Alan Goldberg and Valerie
Head
Joe and Kate McNeel
Robert and Pat Meaher
Trey and Stephanie Pluscht
Scott and Amy Thompson
Jim and Jane Walcott
David and Julie Wirtes

\$250-\$499

Ellis and Katherine Allen
Shawn and Holly Alves
The Blackbaud Giving Fund
Scott and Coley Boone
J. Brad Burke
Mark Calametti
Andrew and Christy Chason
Cleverdon Farms Inc.
Leslie Colglazier
Jerry Collins
John and Sarah Cooper
Tom and Sarah Damson
Michael DeLaney
David and Elaine Delaney
Eichold Family Foundation Fund
Mary and Ken Ellingwood
Escambia Sand & Gravel
Company, Inc.
Warren Herlong, Jr.
Fred and Rebecca Hill
Margaret Joiner
Josh and Abbie McCullough
Linda Montgomery
Michael and Margaret Neely
Greer Radcliff
Erling Riis
Andrew and Elise Saunders
Burt and Freya Sonenstein
John and Dianne Stump
June B. Taylor
Mike and Joanne Werneth

\$100 - \$249

Martha Allegri
Owen and Genie Bailey
Alexander A. Bertolla
Rebecca Bryant
Delphine Burton

Dick and Joan Casey
Russell Christie
Charlotte Cooksey
Gordon and Pat Cooper
Sam and Ann Crosby
Alan and Debbie Curtis
Joe and Norma Davis
Dennis Aluminum Products
Lila Dexter
Henry Douglas
Chris and Joyce Durden
Ecosolutions, Inc.
Frank and Jane Feagin
Venetia Friend
Sherry Frost
Brett and Christine Gaar
Chris and Laura Gamard
Lawrence Gardella
John Gilchrist
Meg Goecker
Kevin Groom
Terry and Linda Hargroder
James Harrison
Bill and Jeri Harrison
Hugh Hyland
Brooke and Chuck Kelly
Kittrell's Daydream Apiary
Patrick Klaas
John Koniar
Russell Ladd III
Susan Ledlow
Jimmy and Barbara Lenaghan
John and Phyllis Lewis
Thom Lott
Bill and Melinda Mathews
Richard McBroom
John and Julie McClelland
Bert and Pris Milling
Van and Cellie Morgan
Bill and Susan Munson
Paul Nager
George Nelson
Carlton and Judy Niemeyer
Phil Norris and Susan Godwin
Steve and Sharon Olen
Janet Paarlberg
Billy and Lisa Percy
Jim and Martha Rieman
Howard Schramm
Christopher Singleton
Prentiss and Beverly Smith
Helen Soule

Jonathan Stein
Fred Stimpson
Harry and Martha Surline
Marshall Webb
William and JoAnn Yates
Diana Yeager

UP TO \$99

Ellen Dyas
Brian and Dawn Hicks
Chrissie Hines
Jane and Jerry Jackson
Mike and Eva Jordan
Rick Kingrea

GENERAL DONATIONS

\$25,000

Gaye Lindsey

\$2,500 - \$4,999

Baldwin County Sewer Service

\$1,000 - \$2,499

T.K. Jackson

\$500 - \$999

Dale Emge and Kristin Koppen Family
Foundation

\$250-\$499

Andrew and Christy Chason

\$100-\$249

Robert and Weezer Lucassen
DeeDee Avent

UP TO \$99

Patricia Gamble

TRIBUTE GIFTS

In Memory of Dr. Marvin "Buddy" Taylor
Allen and Joan Ard
Paul Baroco
Dick and Linda Boerger
Mary Ruth Burnes
Bill and Carol Cleverdon
Brenda Davis

continued on page 15



SOUTH ALABAMA
LAND TRUST

11401 US Highway 98
Fairhope, Alabama 36532
(251) 990-5004

southalabamalandtrust.org

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



WHAT'S HAPPENING

April 1

Bald Eagle Bash tickets on sale to SALT members

April 5

Bald Eagle Bash tickets on sale to general public

April 13

SALT Night at Fairhope Brewing Company

Saturday, April 17, 9am - noon

Guided Paddle Trip on Perch Creek (Mobile County)

DATE TBD

SALT Night at Braided River Brewing Company

Saturday, May 22, 4-7pm

Bald Eagle Bash

Photo by Beth Tattersall