

FOOTPRINTS & PADDLEDRIPS

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January 2000

The Georgia Nature-Based Tourism Association

New Year Starts With Training Session *To Be Held in Conjunction with January Business Meeting*

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President's Message

With the dawn of the new millennium and the close of the 20th century, the natural inclination is to reflect upon past events, and begin dreaming of future possibilities. In September of 1998, the Georgia Nature-Based Tourism Association was born. The struggle began to create a brand-new organization that would work to promote local economies via nature-based tourism, and to protect those special environments to which we belong. An integral part of the plan involved looking past city limits and developing a cooperative spirit among all types of people, businesses, and agencies. While some "finishing touches" remain to be done, many success stories have been recorded at all levels. Those who have been there "in the trenches" deserve much praise. They held onto the vision through all the necessary, but sometimes tedious, meetings, and routinely sacrificed restful hours in order to make the journey or get the work done. And still they come back for more. Thank you for providing the foundation for GNBTGA, and also the building blocks of our future. To our neighbors we say, "Come join us, and let's see what we can accomplish together."

January Meeting

The January meeting will be held on **January 18** at the Folkston Train Depot beginning at 10:00 AM. Committees will meet from 9-10:00 over coffee. All others are invited to coffee and talk between 9-10:00 AM. Following the general business meeting, the first training session of the year will be presented. Call 912-496-3764 or 912-496-2536 for directions to Folkston. *Don't forget to bring your coffee mug to the meeting.*

Training Session

The first of quarterly training sessions to be offered by the association will be held on January 18 beginning at 1:00 PM in the Folkston Depot. Expert birder Sheila Willis will present a 45 minute slide program on backyard birds. Following Sheila's presentation, the National Wildlife Federation's Vicki Seastrom and Georgia Wildlife Federation's Laura Bryant will present an hour's program on backyard habitats for wildlife. In keeping with the nature-based mission of the association, the association encourages businesses to make their properties wildlife friendly. Free National Wildlife Federation backyard habitat information packets will be distributed. The training program is free to association members and non-members will be asked for a \$10 donation (this fee can be applied toward membership if you join the day of the session!).

January Meeting Agenda

9-10:00 AM - Coffee and Talk
9-10:00 Committee Meetings
10:00 AM - Welcome -
Sheila Willis and Dick Jackson
Introductions and Current Events
Secretary's Report
Treasurer's Report
Committee Reports
11:00 Other Business
11:30 Introduction of Guests
Noon - Lunch
1:00 - 3:00 Training Session
Sheila Willis, Vicki Seastrom, Laura Bryant

On the agenda are the logo, brochures, website, and other general business items.

FOOTPRINTS&PADDLEDRIPS

The Georgia Nature-Based
Tourism Association
Box 305
Folkston, GA 31537

Association Officers

Sheila Willis
1-912-285-0419
Lynn Carter
1-912-367-7731
Beth Nunley
1-912-232-0032
Genna Wangness
1-912-496-3764

Earth Kinship 2000 Conference

The University of North Florida and Sea Grant Florida are holding their 11th annual conference entitled "Coming Home: Discovering Our Sense of Place" on February 4, 5, and 6, 2000, at the University Center, 12000 Alumni Drive, Jacksonville, FL 32224. For registration/information call 904-461-4014 or E-mail: neseagrnt@aol.com.

This is a conference about developing a greater understanding of the systems which support life on earth and the natural features of the communities where we live - the plants, animals, soil, climate, geology, water systems, and humans. Featured speaker is Mariam MacGillis, founding director of a learning center where people search for ways to live in harmony with the natural world and each other. Many other speakers are featured, including Susan Cerulean, Watchable Wildlife Coordinator/FL Fish and Wildlife Conservation, who spoke at the association's conference in September of 1998.

Sheila Willis and Chip Campbell will be hosting the GNBTA/Southeast Georgia Division booth. The exhibit title is: "Coastal Plain Communities: Our Heritage, Our Future." **Please bring to the January meeting** any photos, maps, brochures, items, etc. which help depict the uniqueness of our area's natural communities, their interrelationships, and the impact of humans (past, present, future - good or bad) on them. How are you (in your respective areas) recognizing your special places and working to protect them? Bring your business brochures and other items that depict nature-based tourism in the Coastal Plain Communities by our members. Perhaps work with your neighbors on this project. For example, the Altamaha River or the Okefenokee Swamp connect many communities and businesses. Now is our chance to promote Southeast Georgia together!!!

Officers Elected

At the November general meeting, Interim President Sheila Willis was elected President and Interim VP Lynn Carter was elected Vice President. Their terms run from January 1, 2000 through December 31, 2001. Beth Nunley, Treasurer, and Genna Wangsness, Secretary, continue in their positions through December 31, 2000.

Committee Chairs Reminders

If you are unable to attend a meeting, or you will be significantly detained, committee chairs should determine which fellow committee members are planning to attend and designate an informed replacement. **For the January meeting**, chairs should have a written description of their committee's responsibilities prepared. Meet briefly with Sheila prior to the start of the meeting to set plans in motion for developing the association's official brochure. Bring copies of any past and current press releases (print and radio), web site promotions, etc., which have been prepared and issued by your committee on behalf of the association.

GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT 2000

From February 18 through 21, thousands of birders across North America will identify, count, and record the various birds which are found in their immediate backyards or farther afield. They will be part of a project devised by the national Audubon Society and the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology to provide a "snapshot" of this continent's bird populations as Winter winds down. Each bit of information helps scientists define the status of birds for a new millennium. For more information call or email Matthew McKown, 1-212-979-3083

<mmckown@audubon.org>

Participate by visiting

<http://birdsource.org/gbbc>.

Members Visit Broxton Rocks

Following the January general meeting, seven association members toured The Nature Conservancy's Broxton Rocks Preserve in Coffee County. Lead by Paul Bradshaw, Park Manager of Coffee State Park, the group spent two hours in this majestic preserve which protects a rugged sandstone outcrop extending approximately four miles in SE Georgia. A haven of unique habitats for plants rarely found in the southern US, more than 450 species of plants have been discovered there, including the rare and endangered silky creeping morning glory. On a beautiful sunny afternoon, the group crawled over, among, and through damp, shaded crevices between the rocks, getting up close and personal with such features of the area as nesting sites for eastern woodrats, ferns hanging from the sandstone cliffs, and many other wonderful images from nature. The group had a wonderful trip and would like to thank Paul (and intern Kate) for their expertise and knowledge of the area.

The Nature Conservancy is working to restore the original longleaf pine-wiregrass ecosystem in this 778 acre preserve. The preserve is available for guided group tours for nature based activities. To schedule your group for a tour, contact The Nature Conservancy of Georgia at 404-873-6946.

Member News

In late December, Altamaha River activist Carolyn Hodges was diagnosed with leukemia. Owner of Open Gates Bed and Breakfast/Tours in Darien and charter member of the association, Carolyn has been an active force in building the foundation of the association as it grew over the past year. Carolyn is being treated at Mayo Clinic in Jacksonville. Our love, thoughts, and prayers go out to Carolyn during this very personal fight.

Longleaf Advocate

Janisse Ray was featured in the Atlanta Journal-Constitution on Sunday, December 19. In her book *Ecology of a Cracker Childhood*, Janisse intersperses her life growing up in a junkyard with chapters on the history of longleaf pine forests that once covered over half of the 156 million acres in the southeast. Her book is in its second printing and receiving favorable reviews.

Association Scrapbook

We are collecting media coverage, photos, and other news and information about association events for a scrapbook that will be available for viewing at the general meetings. Send items of interest to the post office box or bring them to a meeting. Label the items as to member-source, publication-source, dates, identities of persons/places/events, etc. Members who wish to use certain photos for their own businesses should contact the appropriate member-donor for copies. Extra photos that are available will be on a first-come, first-serve basis.

Help Save Our Wetlands

Wetlands are hotspots of biological diversity important to a wide range of animal life, from slithery frogs to furry beavers and racoons. About 43% of the nation's endangered species depend on them for their survival. But we're losing 100,000 acres a year. Since 1934 the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Duck Stamp Program has helped purchase and preserve more than 5 million acres of wetlands for future generations. Duck stamps are available on the internet at <http://www.savewetlands.org>, or visit a wildlife refuge near you.

Send Us Your Events

If you have any events that would be of interest to association members, call Genna Wangsness at 912-496-3764, fax 912-496-6256, or send to the P.O. Box for publication in upcoming newsletters.

WMA Accessibility

Eddie White, manager of the Bullard Creek Wildlife Management Area near Hazlehurst, presented information at the November general meeting on accessibility to Georgia's WMAs. Anyone interested in using WMAs for a group tour needs to get access to gated areas by contacting the WMA regional office nearest to them. The DNR encourages the non-consumptive use of the WMAs. For information on a specific WMA, contact the Game Management headquarters at 770-918-6416 to locate an area near you. You can also visit them on the internet at <http://www.georgia.org/dnr/wild>.

Membership Renewal

It's time for our annual renewals and membership drive. We encourage everyone who receives the association newsletter to join the association and spread the word to your friends about the benefits of association membership. If you know of anyone who would be interested in joining the Georgia Nature-Based Tourism Association, contact Lynn Carter with the information. Lynn's number is 912-367-7731, and her E-mail is lscarter@applingdacoc.com. Look at the back of the newsletter for the membership form and mail it in today.

Association Work

The association needs your input to be successful. Join a committee and contribute your energy in a worthwhile effort to help the association grow. Call one of the following to join.

- Ways/Means**
Jim Burkhart 912-496-7366, ext. 233
- Membership**
Lynn Carter 912-367-7731
lscarter@applingdacoc.com
- Public Relations**
Karen Arms 912-232-0032
karms@tootsytours.com
- Inventory**
Jennifer Rachels 706-886-2306
- Audit/Finance**
Beth Nunley 912-232-0032
bnunley@tootsytours.com

Year 2000 Schedule

Association meetings are held on the third Tuesday of the month. The association attempts to highlight different areas of the state and promote member businesses by moving the meetings to a new location each month. Officers will be happy to work out the details with anyone interested in hosting an upcoming meeting - just give one of the officers a call.

- January 18 - Folkston
- February 15 -
- March 21 -
- May 16 - Baxley
- June 20
- July 18
- September 19
- October 17
- November 21

Officer Meetings

Officers have scheduled the following meetings. If you have concerns or items of interest you would like the board to consider, please let Sheila Willis (912-285-04190) know by the Friday before the scheduled meeting.

- | | |
|------------|-------------|
| January 5 | July 5 |
| February 2 | September 6 |
| March 1 | October 4 |
| May 3 | November 1 |
| June 7 | |

Did you know?

An armadillo gives birth to zither all females or all males. **Grey foxes can climb trees.** ALLIGATOR TEETH WERE ONCE USED AS BABY PACIFIERS. **Skunks are one of the Great Horned Owl's favorite foods.** Mice, rabbits, and squirrels eat old deer antlers to obtain calcium.