

Central South Native Plant Conference

Speaker Mini Biographies

Jim Allison retired in July 2004 after more than 15 years of service as a botanist with the Georgia Department of Natural Resources. His years of field work in Georgia and the Southeast have produced many significant finds and several “conservation hotspots” he discovered have since received formal protection, most notably the Coosa Prairies and the Bibb County (Alabama) Glades. From the latter, he described and named nine(!) Alabama plants new to science (he has named Georgia plants since, and is working up still more). Increasingly alarmed by the number of uncontrolled invasions of exotic plants as he travelled throughout the South, Jim helped found the Georgia Exotic Pest Plant Council and served as its second president. In December 2006, he accepted a part time ranger-naturalist position at DeKalb County’s Davidson-Arabia Mountain Nature Preserve.

Wayne Barger graduated from Jacksonville State University in 1994 and 1996 with B.S./M.S. degrees in Biology and from Auburn University in 2000 with a Ph.D. in Botany. He performed one year of post-doctoral work with the USDA in Stoneville, MS. He taught at the university level for four years and has published numerous peer-reviewed publications. Currently, he is employed as the State Botanist with the Natural Heritage Section/ALDCNR, a position that he has held for three years.

Sara Bright has spent the last 30 years photographing the natural treasures of Alabama and the Southeast. After receiving a business degree from Birmingham Southern College, she started a commercial photography business. She shot photos for advertising, but never lost her passion for nature photography. She has studied under many photographers including Ansel Adams, Arnold Newman and John Sexton. For twelve years, she taught photography classes at the University of Alabama in Birmingham’s adult studies program.

For more than a decade, Sara has photographed southeastern butterflies. She and writer, Paulette Haywood Ogard, have enjoyed traveling in search of each of the Southeast’s species of butterflies. The emphasis of this project is to reveal the unique life history of each butterfly. This story would not be complete without emphasizing the special relationship of butterflies and their caterpillars with native plants. Many venues have honored Sara Bright by displaying her work over the years. She was the featured artist for the Birmingham Symphony Orchestra in 1985. Corporations that display Bright’s photographs in their permanent collections include McDonald’s Corporation, Alabama Power, Wachovia Bank, Birmingham-Southern College, and Birmingham Botanical Gardens. Her work has been published in dozens of magazines, calendars and books. Some of these are Canoe, Southern Living, Birder’s World, Outdoor Life, Geo, and Alabama Magazine. It is Sara’s goal to help conserve our natural heritage. She was thrilled when her photographs were included in a presentation to congress by the Nature Conservancy of Alabama that helped to create the Little River Canyon National Preserve.

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Bob Brzuszek is an assistant professor of landscape architecture at Mississippi State University. Prior to teaching, Bob was the senior curator at The Crosby Arboretum, a native plant arboretum in Picayune, Mississippi. He holds a master's degree in landscape architecture and a bachelor's degree in horticulture. Check out his Home Landscape webpage with numerous garden design and plant publications at: <http://msucare.com/lawn/landscape/index.html>

Stephen Enloe, a native of Franklin, North Carolina, is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Agronomy and Soils at Auburn University. He is also an Invasive Plant Specialist with the Extension Service. Stephen holds a BS in Agronomy, 1994, North Carolina State University, a MS in Bioagricultural Sciences and Pest Management (Weed Science emphasis), 1997, Colorado State University, and a PhD in Plant Biology, 2002, University of California Davis. After 14 years of research and extension experience on noxious and invasive weeds in dryland agriculture systems across the Great Plains, California annual grasslands, rangeland, pasture, and riparian systems in Wyoming, Stephen is now moving into invasive plant research in Alabama and the Southeastern United States.

Bill Finch, long-time environment editor and garden writer for the Mobile Press-Register, became The Nature Conservancy's state director of conservation in December.

Before joining The Nature Conservancy, Finch was the assistant managing editor at the Press-Register, where he received numerous national awards for environmental journalism and his garden column, including the Columbia School of Journalism's Oakes Award for Environmental Reporting, the Scripps-Howard Meeman Award for Environmental Reporting and the Atlantic City Press Club's National Headliner Award for best specialty column.

He has also held editing posts at the Anniston Star, the Selma Times-Journal and The Mother Earth News magazine.

Though he now frequently travels throughout the state, Finch still lives in Mobile with his wife, Vikki, and continues to write a weekly garden column for the Press-Register and a regular column for Alabama Gardening magazine.

Tony A. Glover is a Regional Extension Agent based at the Birmingham Botanical Gardens (C. Beaty Hanna Center). The metro Birmingham area responsibilities include home and commercial horticulture with special emphasis on the Master Gardener program and the Gary Gerlach Plant Information Center at the Birmingham Botanical Gardens. He holds a BS and MS of Horticulture from Auburn University. He worked for the Alabama Cooperative Extension System (ACES) from 1984-1998. He spent several years managing Master Gardener programs at the local and state levels and working in the area of commercial horticulture. He operated a retail plant and produce business for eight years.

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Jim Lacefield lives in rural Colbert County near Tusculumbia, AL where he and his wife, Faye generously share their home place, Cane Creek Canyon Preserve. He is a retired adjunct professor of Biology and Earth Science from the University of North Alabama. He spends most of his time writing articles for the popular press on geology, geologic history and other aspects of Alabama's natural environment, as well as in giving teacher workshops and natural history talks to environmental groups. Jim holds a doctorate in science education from the University of Alabama, specializing in Biology and Geology. He has a keen interest in fossils, ancient life and geologic history and how rock layers can provide information on the Earth's past and present.

Ron Lance is currently employed as Senior Naturalist and Land Manager at Balsam Mountain Preserve, NC--site of a 3000-acre conservation easement. Over 33 years, he has held positions in management of native plant nurseries, in botanical research and in education allowing work in 10 southeastern states. He has authored or co-authored 5 books on native woody plants, including "Woody Plants of the Southeastern US- A Winter Guide" by UGA Press. He is currently specializing in hawthorn (*Crataegus* spp.) studies for the South.

Paulette Haywood Ogard has spent the last twelve years locating, observing, rearing, and writing about southeastern butterflies. She and photographer Sara Bright have documented the life histories of more than 100 species with text and pictures. Their work focuses on the intricate and intimate relationships between butterflies and native plants. Field research is on-going and covers an eight state area. The pair is currently completing work on a book about Alabama butterflies and their host plants. Paulette has a Bachelor of Arts degree from Birmingham-Southern College and obtained her Master of Social Work from the University of Alabama in 1978, but at heart she is a naturalist. After devoting ten years to social work, she began to teach classes on wildflowers and native plants at the University of Alabama in Birmingham's Special Studies program. She moved on to become a lecturer, workshop leader, and field trip leader on subjects including wildlife habitats, native plants, butterflies and butterfly gardening. Venues have included local, state, and regional conferences in Alabama, Georgia, Tennessee, Louisiana, and North Carolina, including the Cullowhee Conference: Native Plants in the Landscape. Paulette co-founded Habitat Designs, Inc. in 1994. A business devoted to designing and developing wildlife-friendly landscapes, corporate clients included U.S. Steel Corporation, Mountain Brook School system, MOAT Corporation, and the City of Birmingham. Butterfly garden design was an integral part of the business.

Brian Rushing is the Director of Land Conservation at the Freshwater Land Trust and has been with the organization since March 2003. He has a B.S. in Natural Resources from the University of the South, an M.S. in Environmental Planning and Management from Louisiana State University, and an M.B.A. from the University of Alabama.

Brian is originally a native of Tuscaloosa, but has spent several years in Birmingham

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Lee Stanton is a native Floridian, but made his second home in Livingston, Alabama. He attended Livingston University, where he finished his Bachelor's degree in 1993. From there, he traveled south to Dauphin Island where he finished a Master of Science degree at the Dauphin Island Sea Lab. His thesis examined plant dynamics in salt marshes along Mississippi Sound. From there, he moved to Baton Rouge, Louisiana in 1998 and began work on his doctoral degree at Louisiana State University. While he was there, he developed a strong interest in invasive species ecology. As a result, his dissertation examined the establishment, spread and ecological effects of *Phragmites australis*, an invasive wetland plant.

After completing his Ph.D. in Oceanography and Coastal Sciences in spring 2005, he accepted a position at LSU as a Post Doctoral Researcher in the Coastal Ecology Institute. While there, he developed research techniques and orchestrated field activities in efforts to restore floating freshwater marshes. In May 2006, Dr. Stanton took a position as a plant ecologist for a private consulting firm in Ft. Myers, FL. There he worked on various large scale wetland and hydric pine flatwoods restoration projects for mitigation purposes.

Lee returned to UWA for the fall of 2007 to serve not only as assistant professor in the Department of Biological and Environmental Sciences, but also to serve as the Director of the Black Belt Prairie Conservation and Research Institute.

Johnny Stowe is a native of the ridge and valley physiographic region of NW GA and NE AL. He learned about land management from his Grandpa, Daddy and several wise old women and men (mostly while working on a local cattle farm in the summers as a boy), and participated in his first prescribed burns when he was 6 years-old. After leaving high school in 1978, he lived in a tent for eight months in the montane longleaf pinelands near Borden Springs, AL, and then moved across the Georgia line a few miles where he lived in a cabin for ten years and worked now-and-then, generally just when he felt like it or needed money badly (he cut firewood and pulpwood, worked for Hiwasee Land Company as a woodsman, and as a farm and construction laborer), and then only as long as it didn't interfere with hunting, fishing and woods-rambling. The birth of his daughter Molly in 1983 led him to "emerge" and he began studying at Floyd College (now Georgia Highlands College). After getting his core courses behind him thanks to wonderful teachers, he sold his cabin and moved to Athens in 1991 to study at the University of Georgia. At UGA he earned his BS in Timber Management, and his MFR in Wildlife Ecology and Management. His masters work centered on Aldo Leopold's Land Ethic, and he was lucky to have a true "university experience" in the best sense of the word -- i.e. gaining exposure to other cultures and ideas, expanding his mind, and learning to think reflectively and critically.

Since 1996 he has been Heritage Preserve Manager for the SC DNR's Heritage Trust Program, restoring and managing longleaf pine sandhills and wet savannas, switchcane and other grassland species, and wetland ecosystems such as bottomland hardwood forests, Atlantic white-cedar bogs and pocosins. His passions include woods-rambling, hunting, restoring native species and ecosystems, fighting invasive exotic species, conducting prescribed fires, the cultural and natural history of fire as a landscape management tool, human ecology, ecosophy -- and his new Grandboy. He bought 104 acres of family land and

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has restored his homeland's montane longleaf pinelands ecosystem as best he can given the small size of the tract. His heart lies where it always has, near the Cartersville Fault, where the Blue Ridge, Ridge and Valley, and Piedmont join, at the headwaters of Terrapin Creek, Cedar Creek and the Tallapoosa River.

Steven Threlkeld is a Biology Instructor at Calhoun Community College. Mr. Threlkeld also teaches Systematic Botany and Economic Botany at Athens State University. His former occupations include: Botanist for the Alabama Forever Wild land acquisition program, Field Biologist for the Tennessee Valley Authority, and Environmental Consultant to other federal and state agencies. Mr. Threlkeld has published many articles in *Outdoor Alabama* and peer-reviewed journals. His Master's thesis was a comprehensive study of the vascular flora of Madison County Alabama flora. Steve has served as vice-president and president of the Alabama Wildflower Society. He has led annual outings for the Alabama Wildflower society and for the Annual Wildflower Pilgrimage held at the Great Smoky Mountain National Park every spring.