

# The Traveller

A Newsletter of the Bartram Trail Conference

Fall 2018

## 2018 St. Johns River Bartram Frolic

By Sam Carr

William Bartram's first Frolic took place near Palatka in 1774. In the past four years the St. Johns River Bartram Frolic has become an annual event that celebrates Bartram's heritage and his beloved St. Johns River.

The St. Johns Riverkeeper's educational director, Emily Floore, and the Putnam County School System's Helen Muir used the 2018 Frolic as an opportunity to introduce the county's second graders to the St. Johns River. Throughout the week students from area schools visited the St. Johns River Center to learn about river heritage and natural history.

The highlight of this field trip was the opportunity for students to meet the Long Warrior, Trader Job Wiggins, and (of course) Billy Bartram. They learned about plants and animals of the St. Johns River, how to make fire without a match, and the importance of trade to the Native Americans. The Long Warrior taught them about Puc-Puggy and how the Seminoles lived in 1774. Students visited three camps that displayed alligator hides, deerskins, a full-size mounted bear, an alligator, tomahawks, firearms, a chickee, and more. All of the students were treated to a riverboat tour courtesy of the St. Johns Riverkeeper.

The Frolic featured "Ecology Stations" hosted by experts from the following collaborating groups:

- River Exploration, St. Johns Riverkeeper (boat tour on the Pride of Palatka II)
- Wetland Ecosystems, St. Johns River Center
- Enviroscope, St. Johns River Water Management District
- Fish Ecology, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission



Jim Sawgrass regales the audience as Long Warrior

- Longleaf Pine and Prescribed Fires, Florida Parks Service
- Estuary Explorers, Guana Tolomato Matanzas National Estuarine Research Reserve (GTM)

At the VIP Frolic on Friday evening, Putnam County dignitaries and living history actors met to enjoy a rum-based grog in honor of the original 1774 Frolic. A standing room only crowd enjoyed hearing the Long Warrior recite his famous speech recounted in *Travels*.

Saturday's events included the Heart-Healthy Bartram Frolic Family 5K Run, a Bartram-themed Chalk Explosion, the historic Bartram bicycle tour through Palatka, and a kayak tour to Rollestown. On Sunday there was a paddle to Welaka.

The Passport to the Past was an adventure trek for families. By visiting all ten education stations, children received an award and had lots of fun. We estimated 1,800 people heard William Bartram, the Long Warrior, and Trader Job Wiggins talk. The Florida Wildlife commission provided a live pet-able alligator and the

Welaka National Fish Hatchery released large striped bass into the river. The Fort Mose Historical Society thrilled all by firing their muskets and sharing their heritage.

Three themed cruises on the Pride of Palatka riverboat completely sold out. Later in the evening, Revitalize Historic Palatka hosted the Frolic in the Streets with more frivolity and music.

### The Bartram Frolic Symposium

The 2018 St. Johns River Bartram Frolic concluded on Sunday with our Fourth Symposium. Mike Adams, a.k.a. William Bartram, was awarded the Stetson Kennedy "Fellow Man and Mother Earth Award," presented by Stetson Kennedy's wife Sandra Parks. Bartram troubadour Linda Crider sang songs about the river and Billy Bartram. Speakers at the Symposium included:

Bill Belleville, author of *River Of Lakes* and Bartram advocate, spoke about the importance of appreciating our natural

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## In Remembrance

# Charles D. Spornick, 1953–2018



*Chuck Spornick at the Bartram Trail Conference in Gainesville, Florida. Photograph by Kathryn Braund*

*By Kathryn Braund*

In May, the Bartram Trail Conference lost one of our most stalwart members, Chuck Spornick. Chuck, the coauthor of *An Outdoor Guide to Bartram's Travels*, was a long-time BTC board member and held virtually every BTC office, including that of president. He visited, photographed, and described every Bartram site across

the South, spreading the word about recreational and educational activities along Bartram's trail.

A native of Chicago, Chuck received his PhD in medieval history from the University of Notre Dame. He also held an MA in library science, and his first job at a medieval studies library set him on a career path as an academic librarian. After a brief stint at the University of Iowa, he took a position at Emory University's Woodruff Library. Chuck's career there spanned thirty-one years. He served as the first permanent head of the Louis H. Beck Center for Electronic Collections, developing Emory's digital collections. Later, he served as the head of Collection Management and at the time of his retirement was the Director of the Service Division. Chuck's position at the library, overseeing the growth of the library's research collections and managing million-dollar budgets and myriad personnel, stood in stark contrast to the way most of his Bartram friends saw him: dressed in cycling or paddling gear on the way to a grand outdoor adventure.

His stated objective for his retirement was to continue his two passions: kayaking and cycling. An avid paddler, especially on white water, Chuck was happiest in his kayak and inspired many to embrace the



*Chuck engaged in his favorite passtime. Photograph courtesy of Nantahala Outdoor Center*

“big boomin’ fun” of the outdoors in fellowship with friends and nature. Chuck always brought his smile, humor, and kindness along on every adventure. His hard work and dedication to the promotion of the Bartram Trail made all our lives richer. He leaves behind his wife Cathi, and two children, Nick and Anna. ☘

## “Polly” Leslie Boteler Williams 1930–2018

Leslie Boteler Williams of Baton Rouge, Louisiana, known as “Polly” by everyone, passed away peacefully at the age of 87 on August 27, 2018, surrounded by her loving family. Born on November 3, 1930, in New York City, New York, she later moved to Rhode Island where, at 17, she became the youngest female in the state to earn a private pilot's license. A lover of adventure and the outdoors, she was also an avid sailor, teaching sailing during the summers. She was a graduate of the University of Kentucky.

In 1965, after living in Florida and Texas, she and her family moved to Baton Rouge, Louisiana. Since that move more than 50 years ago Polly has been a permanent fixture in the community pages of *The Advocate*. She made a career of being an activist and volunteer, and thrived on service to her community. She helped established many organizations in Baton Rouge, and serving in leadership roles, was instrumental in the success of numerous others. Her work did not go unnoticed, and she was appointed to positions of service by two governors and a senator.

One of her governor-appointed positions was to the multi-state Bartram Trail Conference Board of Managers, where she served as the Western Vice-Chairman. This board directed the research and compilation of the 1979 *Bartram Heritage* report, submitted to the National Park Service.

A notable presentation of the recent Bartram Trail Conference biennial meeting held in Baton Rouge in March 2017 was a roundtable discussion, moderated by Chuck Spornick, featuring Polly Williams, Sally Daigle and Charles Fryling. The trio discussed not only their early work, but also their hopes for the future of the Bartram Trail Conference. ☘

# Fothergill Awards Reports from the Field

By Heather Gladfelter, Ph.D. candidate,  
Horticulture, University of Georgia

It was a very successful collecting trip to Philadelphia in every way possible regarding the trees I found and the awesome people I met. I could not believe how wonderful the people were who helped me find the trees on my list. I believe these new relationships will be long lasting as I continue working with *Franklinia* and plant conservation as a whole.

In addition to the Fothergill Award, in August I received the Jeane Reeves Research Grant from the Georgia Native Plant Society, which provided an additional \$1000 to support my research with *Franklinia*. So far, I have samples from 100 different trees. In addition to samples collected in Philadelphia, I now have samples from Kentucky, Ohio, North Carolina, the District of Columbia, Connecticut, New York, Arnold Arboretum at Harvard, Alabama, and Georgia. I have received leaf samples from Poland, Belgium, British Columbia, Kew Gardens, the Royal Botanical Gardens (RBG) in Edinburgh, Netherlands, Germany, and New Zealand. I also received herbarium samples dating back to 1842 and 1845 from RBG-Edinburgh. In return, I sent tissue-culture plants as a thank you to their curator and now they have their own accession numbers. It's so exciting to know my tissue-culture *Franklinia* plants are in Europe!

I very much enjoyed meeting Whitney and our dinner together in downtown Philadelphia. We were able to sit outside the restaurant and enjoy the lovely evening with the most perfect weather. The only downfall of the trip was I got a parking ticket in downtown Philadelphia the night I had dinner with Whitney. I was told by others "welcome to Philly." Overall it was a very successful and fun trip with lots of adventures! Fothergill and Bartram would be proud of my collection efforts. Thanks so much for helping making this trip possible. Having passed my written and oral exams in early September, I am now officially a Ph.D. candidate. ❀

By Whitney Barlow Robles, Ph.D. candidate,  
American Studies, Harvard University

The Fothergill Research Award allowed me to spend a productive week in several Philadelphia archives tracing William Bartram's thoughts about rattlesnakes and other animals, which will prove invaluable for my dissertation on the history of how animals both facilitated and confounded eighteenth-century science.

At the American Philosophical Society, I found a number of manuscript sources related to Bartram's interactions with animals, including his insistence on many animals' rationality and moral sense, as he called them "ingenious little Philosophers" in a letter to Philadelphia naturalist Benjamin Smith Barton. Overall, the Benjamin Smith Barton collection there proved to be a treasure trove for both Bartram's and Barton's thoughts on rattlesnakes, as Barton frequently consulted Bartram for his own publications on rattlesnakes. I also had the chance to read a first edition of Bartram's *Travels* that he personally donated to the American Philosophical Society, which provided ample reflections on rattlesnakes. Bartram sought to vindicate these animals in the eyes of naturalists who despised the creatures, even though they had the power to delay his own researches.

Across town at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, I viewed Bartram's commonplace book, a manuscript draft of his *Travels*, and another manuscript documenting Bartram's belief in the intelligence and mental worlds of animals. At the end of the week, I had the pleasure of meeting Heather Gladfelter, another Fothergill Award recipient, and we swapped stories about the Bartrams in an outdoor garden restaurant. I'm grateful to the Bartram Trail Conference for this opportunity. ❀

*Applications for the 2019 Fothergill Awards will be available in early spring.*

Frolic, continued from page 1  
environment.

Clay Henderson, Florida environmentalist and Stetson University Research Center advocate, spoke on Volusia County's River of Lakes Heritage Corridor Bartram Trail.

Dr. Kent Vliet, spoke about "Bartram's Observations of Alligators"

Local favorite Dick Franz, spoke on his book *Travels On The St. Johns*, co-authored with Dr. Thomas Hallock.

T. R. Henderson, President of the Bartram Trail Conference, spoke about the Conference, its goals, and how to join.

Sam Carr, Vice President of the Bartram Trail Conference, spoke about the National Bartram Heritage Trail Corridor and how the audience could help.

Our next St. John River Bartram Frolic is scheduled for September 28th, 2019.

## Save the Date

October 25–27, 2019  
Bartram Trail Conference

Biennial Meeting  
Alabama Archives  
Montgomery, Alabama

Friday, Oct. 25.  
Opening Reception

Saturday, Oct. 26  
Conference

Sunday, Oct. 27  
Field Trips

Details will be printed in the  
Spring 2019 *Traveller*

## Bartram Trail Conference Board 2018–2020

*President*, T. R. Henderson

*Vice President*, Sam Carr

*Treasurers*, Ken & Janice Mahaffey

*Secretary*, Michelle Deshotels

*Board Members:*

Brad Sanders (*Membership Chair*),

Dorinda Dallmeyer (*Newsletter*

*Editor*), Kathryn Braund, Sam Carr,

Matt Jennings

# Misery in the Fall Line Sandhills

by Brad Sanders

Enroute to the Creek Nation William Bartram and his travelling companions crossed the Flint River on July 5, 1775. They camped that evening on Patsiliga Creek at the site of present-day Ficklin Mill in Taylor County, Georgia. During the next two days Bartram passed through a beautiful country of high open pine forests, but the heat and biting flies were oppressive to distraction and Bartram could take little pleasure in the landscape.

Over these high hills Bartram was following the Lower Creek Trading Path that ran across the Fall Line from Augusta to Cussita on the Chattahoochee River. In 1805 the United States used this path as the route of the Federal Road through the Creek Nation. The path can be recreated today by georeferencing the Georgia District Plats of Survey, which delineate the Federal Road. The 1827 survey for the original Muscogee County shows the Federal Road passing through this area in Districts 11, 12, and 15. Those districts are now located in Marion and Taylor Counties.

In Marion, Talbot, and Taylor Counties the state of Georgia owns several properties that offer us the opportunity to see some of the landscape through which Bartram travelled and suffered in that hot July. Fall Line Sandhills Natural Area is perhaps the most interesting to us because the Federal Road, and William Bartram, passed diagonally through this property. Georgia Department of Natural Resources acquired the land in 2007 because of the presence of rare and threatened animals and plants. The animals include Southeastern Kestrels, Bachman's Sparrows, Gopher Tortoises, Southern Hognose Snakes, Gopher Frogs, and Striped Newts. The botanical community includes federally endangered Pondberry, Sandhill Golden-aster, Pickering's Morning-glory, and Lax Water-milfoil. The natural area and another tract located on Black Creek to the west are included into the Fall Line Wildlife Area.

Next in interest is the Fort Perry Tract of Chattahoochee Fall Line Wildlife



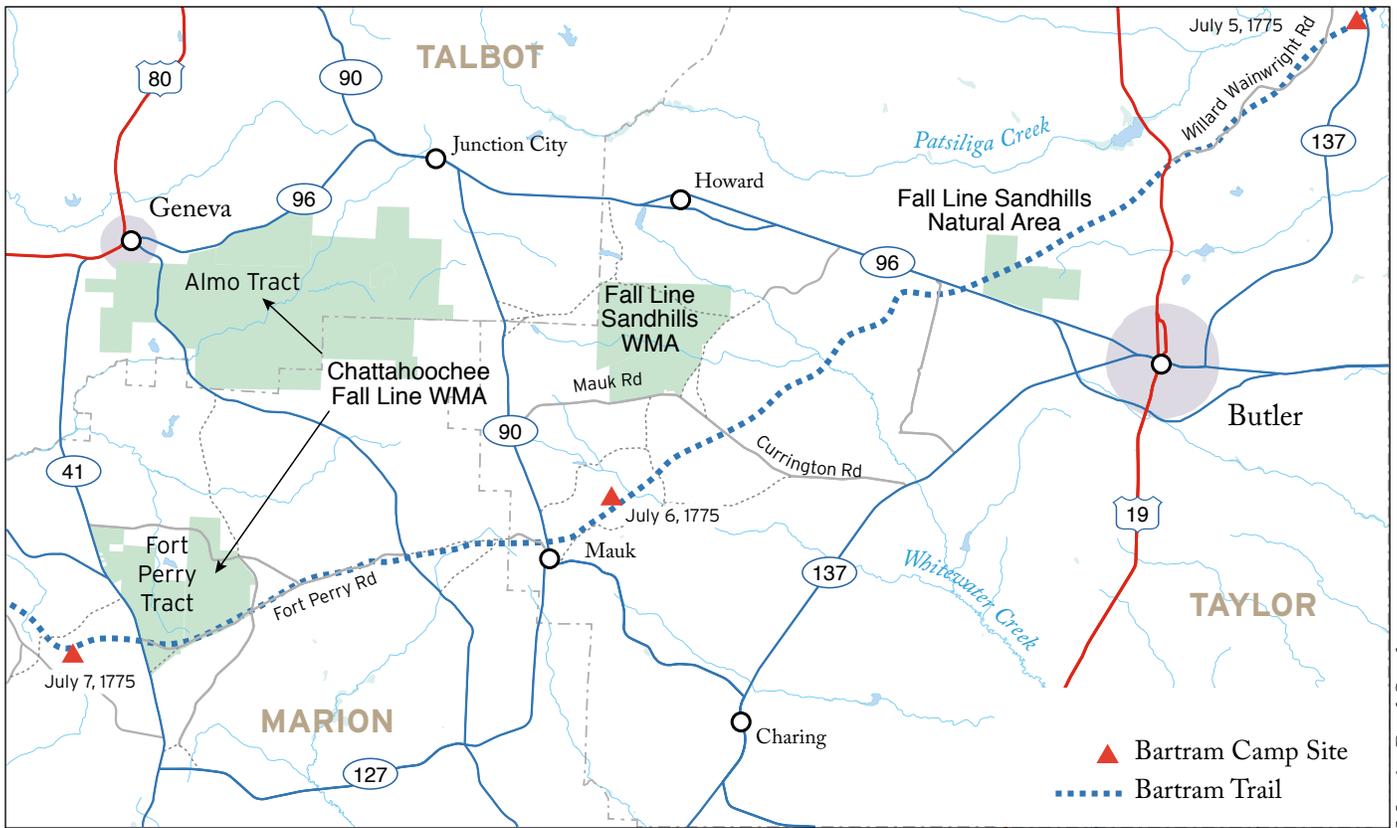
Hal Massie (center) of Georgia DNR leads Georgia Botanical Society members on an exploration of Fall Line Sandhills WMA. Photograph by Brad Sanders

*OUR horses being hunted up and packed, sat forward again, proceeding moderately, ascending a higher country and more uneven by means of ridges of gentle hills; the country however very pleasing, being diversified with expansive groves, savannas and Cane meadows, abounding with creeks and brooks gliding through the plains or roving about the hills, their banks bordered with forests and groves, consisting of varieties of trees, shrubs and plants; the summits of the hills frequently presenting to view piles and cliffs of the ferruginous rocks, the same species as observed on the ridges between the Flat-rock and Rocky Comfort.*

*NEXT day we travelled but a few miles; the heat and the burning flies tormenting our horses to such a degree, as to excite compassion even in the hearts of pack-horsemen. These biting flies are of several species, and their numbers incredible; we travelled almost from sun-rise to his setting, amidst a flying host of these persecuting spirits, who formed a vast cloud around our caravan so thick as to obscure every distant object; ...*

*THE next day being in like manner oppressed and harassed by the stinging flies and heats; we halted at noon, being unable longer to support ourselves under such grievances, even in our present situation charming to the senses; on the acclivity of a high swelling ridge planted with open airy groves of the superb terebenthine Pines, glittering rills playing beneath, and pellucid brooks meandering through an expansive green savanna, their banks ornamented with copices of blooming aromatic shrubs and plants perfuming the air. The meridian heats just allayed, the sun is veiled in a dark cloud, rising North-Westward; the air still, gloomy and sultry; the animal spirits sink under the conflict, and we fall into a kind of mortal torpor rather than refreshing repose; and startled or terrified at each others plaintive murmurs and groans:...*

William Bartram, *Travels*, pages 384–386



Map by Brad Sanders

Management Area in Marion County. Fort Perry Road forms the southern boundary of the Fort Perry Tract. This property is of historical significance because General John Floyd constructed Fort Perry in 1813 as a supply depot on the Federal Road during the First Creek War. The fort is long gone, but visitors can explore the area when there is no hunting season.

For anyone wanting to retrace Bartram's footsteps through this region it is important to note that between US-19 north of Butler and Mauk there are no modern roads, dirt or otherwise, that follow the Federal Road. West of downtown Mauk (such as it is) the old Federal Road coincides with Mauk Road and Fort Perry Road. ❁



Above: the Georgia Department of Natural Resources is using prescribed fire to return the Chattahoochee Fall Line and Fall Line Sandhills to the natural Long Leaf Pine ecosystem. Photograph by Philip Juras.



Left: section of Muscogee County land lottery survey of 1827 showing lots in District 15 that are now the Fall Line Sandhills Natural Area (blue). The path of the Federal Road is shown passing diagonally through the lower left lot. This property is located about a mile west of Butler on GA-90.  
Muscogee County, District 15, Feb. 7, 1827; District Plats of Survey, Survey Records, Surveyor General, Courtesy of the Georgia Archives.

The Traveller  
 c/o Brad Sanders  
 189 Hidden Hills Lane  
 Athens, GA 30605

The Bartram Trail Conference, Inc., founded in 1976, has sought to identify and mark Bartram's southern journey and works to promote interest in developing recreational trails and botanical gardens along the route. The BTC also seeks to encourage the study, preservation and interpretation of the William Bartram heritage at both cultural and natural sites in Bartram Trail states.

# Bartram Trail Conference Membership Form

Annual Member Dues  
 Please check one.

- Individual \$25
- Family \$30
- Student \$10
- Contributor \$50
- Sustainer \$100
- Sponsor \$250
- Patron \$500

Please check one of the choices:

- I am a new member.
- I am renewing my membership.

Please send payment to:

Bartram Trail Conference  
 c/o Ken & Janice Mahaffey  
 477 South U.S. Hwy 17  
 East Palatka, FL 32131-4097

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail address: \_\_\_\_\_

Primary Areas of Interest in the Bartram Trail: (try to be specific about geographic locations and activities, i.e., specific Bartram sites, and whether or not you like to hike, read, garden, etc.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Your dues support our newsletter, web site, Fothergill Fellowship Awards and other Bartram Trail Conference projects.

You may also join online at:

<https://bartramtrailconference.wildapricot.org/page-1655351>  
 All you need is a PayPal account!