

PLC CONSERVATION COURIER

Putnam Land Conservancy - *Conserving land and water for people and wildlife*

Volume 5, Issue 1

Past and Upcoming Events – Celebrating Nine Years of Grass Roots Conservation

SAVE THE DATE!

May 2, 2015 • PLC FUND RAISER

Plan to join us at on Saturday May 2nd at Little Orange Creek Nature Park for PLC's Spring Fundraiser Picnic with live music, plant exploration walks, dip netting in the creek and silent auction of items by our local artisans.

February 5-8, 2015

Earth Skills Weekend at Little Orange Creek Nature Park

PLC conducted its fifth annual Florida Earthskills Gathering at Little Orange Creek Nature Park, Feb. 5-8 in Hawthorne. This year's event brought about 800 people (most of whom camped out for the four-day event) from near and far (including Canada) for this environmental education event. It has become a national event and one of the largest of its kind in the country. The gathering focuses on teaching sustainable and simple living skills, ecology, woods skills and creating meaningful Earth-based community. Rediscovering the sustainable skills of past generations (including the Stone Age) is a large focus of the gathering.



Work crew in front of timber frame built by Earthskills. L to R John Kraus (instructor), Aaron, Barron Brown (instructor), Christopher Watts, Lily, Jayden, Keith Grenoble



Handmade wares in the camp store

There were more than 200 workshops most of which offered "hands-on" instruction. Chuck "Peace Eagle" Thomson, site coordinator for the event, said, "Folks came for the skills, and stayed for the community."

One important aspect of the Gathering was to be a living example of the skills and ideologies being taught. These were incorporated into the infrastructure and daily life at the gathering. All food was cooked with wood mostly on stoves

carved out of the earth, participants were asked to pack out their own waste, all kitchen scraps were composted, much of the infrastructure utilized natural building techniques using natural materials, and much of the food was from local sources.

Early mornings offered dawn yoga, stretching and birding classes. There were two main workshop sessions during the day, one in the morning

Continued on page 5

PLC 2014 Successes

April 12, 2014 Fundraiser Held at Luther Springs on the Shores of Beautiful Lake Vause

A great big thank you to all who attended the annual PLC fundraiser or sent donations in celebration of our eighth year and shared efforts in land and water conservation in Putnam and surrounding Counties. Our supporters enjoyed a delicious Cajun boil with vegan wraps, live music, guided nature walks, and a silent auction of works by local artists. It was a great opportunity to support land conservation, learn about PLC projects, hang out in nature, and a chance to speak with members of our board about your local land conservancy.

An added bonus was an outdoor class in field ecology. Professor emeritus Richard Franz guided an enthusiastic pond dip-netting excursion to a nearby wetland providing an opportunity for folks to appreciate the importance of even small ponds to the ecology of an area. Tim Harris lead nature walks discussing conservation options and the history of the lake and surrounding area.



Top: Guests enjoy celebrating PLC's 8th conservation anniversary. Middle: Guest speaking with Treasurer, Willy The Losen. Bottom left and right: Guests enjoying dip netting pond critters outside with Professor Emeritus Dick Franz.

Conservation Award in Recognition of PLC Efforts



Carson Bird, Lisa Modola, Claude Brown and Willy The Losen at award ceremony.

PLC President receives recognition as 2014 Conservationist of the Year Award presented by Santa Fe Audubon. Claude Brown, president of the Putnam Land Conservancy (PLC), received the award at Santa Fe Audubon's 5th Annual Meeting on March 11. Each year, Santa Fe Audubon honors a person who has made valuable and significant contributions to the conservation cause by giving the Conservationist of the Year Award.

Claude is a Chemist with the Florida LAKEWATCH program that monitors the health of Florida's lakes and enlists many "citizen scientists" in our area to collect data. Claude was one of the original founding members of the PLC and has continued to work diligently to further the organization's mission of conserving land and water for people and wildlife in and around Putnam County.

PLC 2014 Successes

"Swim for Conservation" Raises \$500.



On May 24, Bob Virnstein of Putnam Land Conservancy (PLC) successfully swam across the St. Johns River, raising \$500 in donations for land conservation in this "Swim for Conservation." PLC is your local land trust, "Conserving Land and Water for People and Wildlife."

The swim was from Esperanza Shores in East Palatka to Tanglewylde Nature Park at 299 West River Road. Tanglewylde was originally the home of

Frances Brown Frank, an ardent conservationist. Mrs. Frank dedicated the property to conservation in 1990, and the county acquired ownership of it in 2003 by a Florida Communities Trust grant. The PLC sponsored event was a fundraiser used to bring attention to an under used public resource on the St. Johns River.

The swim was a little over a mile and took a little over an hour. Bob was slowed by tidal currents and leg cramps. For safety, Captain Karen Chadwick drove a powerboat alongside Bob, and PLC president Claude Brown and Lisa Modola paddled along in their canoe.

PLC vice president Tim Keyser organized the event and welcomed the River crew to shore at Tanglewylde Park. Everyone then enjoyed a picnic lunch at the park along the shore of the River.



Board member Lisa Modola scouts shoreline for alligators while Bob successfully completes his cross-river swim!!

New Roof for LOCNP Educational and Environmental Center

PLC, through a grant from the Felburn Foundation was able to pay for a much-needed new roof on Education and Environmental Center at Little Orange Creek Nature Park. The roof replacement was necessary for safety and to preserve the structure for future opening of the center.

PLC Purchases Cemetery Outparcel

Through an anonymous donation PLC was able to purchase the only outparcel (1/2 acre) in the Historic Carlton Cemetery at Little Orange Creek Nature Park. This important purchase will aid in the restoration and management of the historic cemetery and prevent conflicts that an out parcel could create.

PLC Partnerships and Updates

Putnam Land Conservancy signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in partnership with City of Hawthorne, Alachua Conservation Trust, Conservation Trust for Florida, Alachua County Forever and Friends of Little Orange Creek for cooperative management of contiguous conservation lands. The conservation partnership was created to develop a unified management plan for the now 2587-acre preserve. ACT is using state wetland mitigation funds to increase the preserve by another 238 acres in 2015.

The conservation partnership is focusing on acquiring and conserving the remaining parcels of Fowler's Prairie basin and surrounding uplands. The partnership is working on establishing long-term management and restoration plans of various habitats while being mindful of addressing improvements needed for better recreational access.

Conservation partner Alachua Conservation Trust (ACT) was selected to take the lead role in additional land acquisitions and management planning, while all partners will share in management duties and infrastructure development.



Bridge loan Used to Acquire Conservation Acreage

PLC used a bridge loan to increase conservation efforts in Mondex due to the limited time option for purchasing over 115 acres to place in conservation. The transaction was completed and thanks to all our supporters that specifically made donations for this acquisition the loan has been satisfied. PLC has now protected about 1/3 of the land (215 acres) in Mondex.

Rare Orchid Located on COH Parcel of Little Orange Creek Preserve Provides Research Opportunity

In North America there are about 250 species of both epiphytic and terrestrial orchids. It's interesting to note that 118 of these orchids occur in Florida with 17 being state threatened and 56 being state endangered. Florida native orchids are faced with continual habitat loss due to land conversion, agricultural uses, habitat urbanization, exotic plant invasion, poaching, and habitat mismanagement. While no Florida native orchid is federally listed as endangered or threatened, many of our state's orchid species face the immediate possibility of extinction if conservation and recovery plans are not developed and implemented. Since 1999, Mike Kane, Professor and Director of the Plant Restoration, Conservation and Propagation Biotechnology Program at the University of Florida and his students have been studying the reproductive biology, ecology, seed culture and general conservation of Florida native orchids.



Left: The giant or crestless plume orchid *Pteroglossaspis ecristata* (Fernald) Rolfe
Above: Student prepares specimens for tissue culturing.
Below: Graduate students with Dr. Mike Kane far right.



This past summer Mike Stallings brought to the attention of Dr. Mike Kane the existence of a large flowering population of *Pteroglossaspis ecristata* (Fernald) Rolfe, commonly called the giant or crestless plume orchid, at the Little Orange Creek Preserve. With the assistance of Mike Stallings, the Kane research group have made several trips to the Preserve to examine the vegetative and seed production of this interesting orchid with the hope to conduct both laboratory and field studies in the future. The existence of this local population provides an exciting opportunity to study this state threatened species. This orchid is somewhat a mystery. Although the giant orchid's distribution range extends into North Carolina, for some unknown reason this designated state threatened species is increasingly becoming rare in Florida. In the past it has been proposed to designate this species as state endangered.

PLC's designated Land Manager Mike Stallings continually comes across a variety of plants and animals in his regular travels around LOCNP and Preserve. In fact he has located several rare terrestrial orchids, a variety of edible mushrooms and a host of animals that he posts pictures of on his Little Orange Creek Facebook page.

Mike's on-going effort documents the many species currently present and enables PLC to establish a wildlife list of observed species. These include insects, spiders, amphibians, reptiles, bird, and animal representatives of the various habitats and ecosystems on the property. Mike takes a great pride in taking photographs and noting the location of these critters to share with school age groups and curious visitors to the Park and Preserve.

March 21, 2015 - Third Annual Bartram Days Hosted by Hawthorne Historical Society

The Hawthorne Historical Society hosted this year's community event to help raise funds to open the Little Orange Creek Nature Park. Several local groups and the City of Hawthorne are working to bring resources to this project.

Putnam Land Conservancy, Friends of Little Orange Creek, and Alachua Conservation Trust manned information tables to bring awareness to the various aspects of the park and preserve.

The well-attended event included live music from local musicians and talks on William Bartram. The Hawthorne Chamber of Commerce prepared food. Local folks exhibited crafts and there was art for sale from en plein air paint out event that took place at the park.

A Neighborhood Conservation Project Needs Your Help—Elgin Grove Nature Park

In East Palatka, a 13-acre parcel has been for sale. Neighbors decided that they would prefer owls and foxes next door versus houses and people. Banding together with local conservationists they decided to negotiate the purchase of the property and place it in conservation. PLC would be the agent to receive and manage the parcel. It would be preserved forever by placing a Conservation Easement on the property.

The property has considerable conservation and recreational value. About half the property is high and dry live oak/magnolia hammock, highly suitable for walking trails. Also there are about 4 acres of wetlands, with a small pond. The original asking price was \$99,900. After considerable negotiations, the owner has agreed to sell the property to PLC for \$70,000. Our contracted option to purchase comes due by August 3, 2015.

Now the hard part – raising the purchase price. Tax-deductible contributions can be made to PLC, with donations earmarked for "Elgin Grove Nature Park."

continued - Earth Skills Weekend



Above: Susan Marynowski leading a plant exploration walk. Upper left: Blacksmith instructor, Ben Rogers, trains student Middle left: "Thorn" of the television program "Live Free or Die" teaching how to construct fish spears from bamboo. Bottom left: Sugi Owl teaches carding and spinning wool.

and one in the afternoon, as well as demonstrations during that time. There were about 75 instructors, many of them experts in their fields, including Thorn from National Geographic's documentary series "Live Free or Die". The 200 plus workshops included topics for all ages and for a wide variety of interests. A sampling of subjects included ecology, blacksmithing, botany, mycology, basket making, organic gardening, herbal medicine, wild edible plants, primitive pottery, bamboo flutes, carving, crochet, food preservation, finger weaving, native nutrition, yoga, bee keeping, tool sharpening, timber framing, Native American style beadwork, elder wisdom, knot tying, massage, fire by friction, tracking, flint knapping and drumming. For a detailed list of the classes taught go to www.floridaearthsills.org/classes/.

This year's gathering was a great success as it garnered local as well as national attention for PLC and Little Orange Creek Nature Park and provided participants the knowledge and skills to live more harmoniously on the Earth.

General News

PLC Board Representative Attends Natural Areas Training Academy

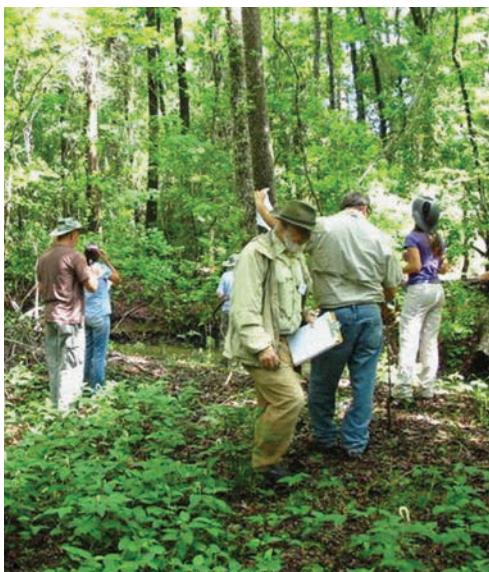
The Board of Santa Fe Audubon as part of their conservation efforts provided funds to help sponsor a PLC board member during the most recent Natural Areas Training Academy (NATA). The coursework was directed toward site assessment and Land Management Planning. Several Modules on-line provided an overview of the many resources available for Phase I Environmental assessment, Rapid site assessment and Ecological site assessment. At the Ordway Biological Station infield exercises included onsite reconnaissance and workshops where breakout groups developed land management plans based on the site assessments and changing criteria. The diverse group of participants brought additional insight into land management tools, software, and practices currently being used in various areas of the State. The PLC Board thanks Santa Fe Audubon for providing us this opportunity.

Top right to bottom:

P-1: Dr. Michael Andreu UF/SFRC leads evaluation of drainage area between lakes
P-2: Students do site assessment of prairie during dry period

P-3: Breakout session in classroom evaluating conditions and issues for multi-use management

P-4: Instructor Parker Titus discusses some detrimental impacts of management practices
P-5: PLC President Claude Brown reviews observed threats and actions to species diversity with colleagues



Marion County Special Magistrate upholds exemption of PLC non-profit status

PLC appealed the denial of our property tax exemptions as a charitable organization to the Value Adjustment Board in October. This was the second year in a row that PLC's tax exemption application was denied and the second time we appealed to the Value Adjustment Board. The 2013 appeal was unfortunately unsuccessful. The 2014 appeal was granted under the merits of the law thanks to Kevin Sharbaugh of Keyser and Woodward Attorneys at Law, who provided legal representation to PLC, and David Girardin and Jim Buchner, who presented expert testimony on behalf of PLC. The 2014 appeal was granted as a final decision of the Value Adjustment Board.

PLC Partners with Florida Forest Service

PLC is planning to construct a pedestrian spur trail for access to the South Tract of Carl Duval Moore State Forest. The PLC parcel would be used for vehicle parking and not vehicle access.

PLC Participates in 1st Putnam County Earth Summit

PLC presented a county-wide update of our activities at Putnam County's first Earth Stewardship Summit hosted by Putnam Blueways and Trails. The 10 invited organizations provided attendees a brief history of the organization, their mission and area of current focus. Other presenters were Putnam Blueways and Trails, Bartram Trail Committee of Putnam County, Putnam County Environmental Council, Friends of Dunn's Creek State Park, Palatka Pride, Keep Putnam Beautiful, Friends of Ravine Gardens State Park, The Water Works Environmental Education Center, and Santa Fe Audubon.

Brush-Smith Butterfly and Community Garden

On November 1, 2014 Tim Keyser PLC vice-president and resident green thumb organized the inaugural planting at PLC's Brush-Smith Butterfly and Community Garden in historic downtown Interlachen. Six enthusiastic volunteers planted several species of native flowering plants that are beneficial to butterflies. Along for the day was mascot Bigs, the Labrador retriever. Future

plans for the park include a community vegetable garden consisting of small plots for residents to cultivate. The park is located at the southeast corner of East Washington Street and Columbus Avenue in downtown Interlachen and is adjacent to Jenkins Park the linear park that was formerly the railroad corridor



Members of the inaugural Brush-Smith Butterfly and Community Garden planting crew. L-R Jerry Walker, Tim Keyser, Bigs, Coleen McCorkle, Ellen Snow, Gary Clark.

through the town.

The Brush-Smith Butterfly and Community Garden was donated to PLC by two sisters, Janet Davis and Melinda S. Branham, in honor of their family roots in Interlachen. Their grandparents were Charles E. and Martha R. Brush and their parents were Frank C. and Virginia B. Smith. Franklin served as mayor of Interlachen from 1974 to 1976. Janet followed in her father's footsteps as a member on the city council for five years.

The Brush family became early residents of Interlachen when Charles A. Brush arrived in 1882 as the first railroad agent and became first Post Master in the same year. Charles Senior, wife Elizabeth A. and two year old Charles E. Brush made Interlachen their permanent home.



Above and below photographs by Mike Stallings

Current PLC Business Sponsors

Keyser and Woodward PA,

Attorneys at Law

501 Atlantic Avenue
Interlachen, FL 32148
386-684-4673

Pais Realty, Gainesville FL 32604

David@paisrealty.com
352-215-1580

The Satin Cord Store

www.Satincord.com
888-728-8245

Leonardo's Pizza of Millhopper

4131 NW 16th Blvd
Gainesville, FL 32605
info@leonardosmillhopper.com
352-376-2001

Ornamental Plants and Trees, Inc.

137 Sunnyside Drive
Hawthorne, FL 32640
ornamentalplants@bellsouth.net
352-481-0038

PLC Land Donation Holdings

Putnam County—640 acres, 492 parcels

Marion County —62 acres, 83 parcels—The land donation program has targeted an area of Marion County to preserve the habitat of the endangered species, clasping warea or *Warea amplexifolia* (Nutt.), as a nature park. Silver Springs Shores has the largest population of the federally endangered clasping warea in the world.

Flagler County—20 acres, 19 parcels Flagler Estates

Alachua County—0.56 acres, 2 parcels

Brevard County—1.33 acres, 1 parcel

Charlotte County—0.25 acres, 1 parcel

Osceola County—5 acres, 2 parcels



General Putnam Land Conservancy Facts

Putnam Land Conservancy, Inc. was established in 2006 as an all-volunteer non-profit Land Trust

Directly Participated in the purchase of 3300 acres for placing into conservation

Currently owns 694 acres

Perpetual Conservation Easements on 160 acres

Active land conservation projects currently in 5 counties



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President, Claude Brown

Vice President,

Timothy Keyser

Co-Secretary, Lisa Modola

Co-Secretary, Laurie Douglass

Treasurer, Willy the Losen

Mike Stallings

Robert Virnstein

David Wiles



Who We Are - Putnam Land Conservancy (PLC) is a regional, nonprofit Florida land trust dedicated to working cooperatively with land owners and public and private conservation partners to preserve for future generations our important natural areas and open spaces. These include wetlands and waters, forests and farmlands, and all environmentally significant habitats. PLC also promotes stewardship of

land through action and education, both to restore and maintain ecosystem integrity.

PLC focuses on Putnam County, but our range of activity includes connection lands in adjacent counties. We secure land through gifts and bequests, direct purchase and bargain sale, and conservation easements. By these means PLC aims to enable land owners to safeguard in perpetuity the places that define the special character of our region, contributing to its environmental and economic vitality.

PLC is a 501(c) (3) nonprofit charity created in 2006. PLC receives no government grants for general operating support and relies on contributions from private individuals, corporations, and foundations. Donations are tax deductible.

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