

TERN TRACKS

Newsletter of The Environmental Resources Network, Inc. (TERN) ~ www.tern.homestead.com

Winter 2018

Help Support Georgia's Nongame Wildlife At the 30th Annual Weekend for Wildlife Benefit

Join hosts Governor and Mrs. Deal, DNR Commissioner Mark Williams, fellow TERN members and the Georgia Natural Resources Foundation at the 2018 Weekend for Wildlife benefit on January 26-27 at The Cloister on Sea Island, Georgia. Visit wild coastal places on trips led by experts. Enjoy a Friday night cocktail reception and silent auction rich in getaways, artwork and wildlife memorabilia. Revel in Saturday night's exciting banquet and verbal auction.



Weekend for Wildlife is one of the nation's most successful conservation events, raising some \$10 million since 2001 for conserving Georgia's nongame wildlife.

Each year, TERN sells gift items to over 400 guests at the MarketPlace booth and solicits donations like handmade jewelry, fishing expeditions, autographed collectables and original artwork for the silent and verbal auctions. *Please support TERN by donating items for the booth or auction* (visit www.weekendforwildlife.com for auction donation forms and additional auction details). Or, if you prefer, *a monetary donation would also be helpful*. Donations are 100% tax deductible. All of the proceeds are used to fund various Nongame Conservation Section projects that will be voted on by TERN members at the summer membership meeting in May 2018.

For more information on the 30th annual Weekend for Wildlife and how to register to attend the 2018 event, contact event coordinator Amber Carter (404-232-1474) or visit www.weekendforwildlife.com for an electronic copy of the brochure. To donate a gift item, contact Wanda Granitz at wandagranitz@windstream.net. We hope to see you in January!

Georgia's Breeding Bird Survey Receives Unique Support from Exceptional Youth

Todd Schneider, NCS wildlife biologist

With financial assistance from a TERN grant, Angus Pritchard, a teenager from DeKalb County, surveyed one of Georgia's 96 Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) routes this past June. A few things are unique about this accomplishment. To survey a BBS route, you need to be able to identify all bird species likely to be encountered on that route (usually about 100 species) by their songs, calls, and by sight (this is an exceptionally rare skill that perhaps fewer than 100 individuals in Georgia possess). Almost all route surveyors are seasoned birders in their 30s or older. Of the more than 2500 routes surveyed nationwide each year, only a handful are surveyed by teens. Angus has exceptional bird identification skills that have been developed over the past decade. He has participated



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Friends of Georgia's Nongame Conservation Section

The Environmental Resources Network, Inc. (TERN) is the official friends group of the Nongame Conservation Section of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources. Contributions made to TERN go directly to help fund important nongame plant and animal projects conducted in Georgia. To become a member or donate to TERN, visit: www.tern.homestead.com

TERN Funded Project Update

Georgia Project WILD's 2017 Outdoor Wildlife Leadership School (OWLS)

Amber Barrow and Kim Morris-Zarneke, Charlie Elliott Wildlife Center

Over the week of July 10-14, 2017, thirteen educators from all across the state came to learn more about Georgia's ecoregions with Project WILD's advanced workshop Outdoor Wildlife Leadership School. Outdoor Wildlife Leadership School is a series of summer advanced Project WILD workshops that focus on a different ecoregion, and we take an in-depth look at the natural communities found within each ecoregion. In this workshop we focused mainly on the upper coastal plain with field trips, lessons, and adventures led by Nongame Conservation Section staff. Trips included a tour of Ochopee Dunes Wildlife Management Area (WMA) with botanist Mincy Moffett, canoeing in Bond Swamp National Wildlife Refuge and learning frog calls at night with herpetologist John Jensen, a prescribed fire lesson with fire ecologist Shan Cammack, mist netting for bats in Piedmont National Wildlife Refuge with biologist Trina Morris, and a birding walk with wildlife biologist Todd Schneider. Educators also got an electro-shocking demonstration from Luke Baker and the WRD stream team and visited Dauset Trails Nature Center near Jackson. In addition to all these hands-on field trips, lessons from the Project WILD curricula were taught to the participants to take back to their schools and education centers to share with their students. Many of the lessons fit the new Georgia Standards for Excellence state standards in multiple subject areas. Georgia Project WILD greatly appreciates the continued support and funding for this vital wildlife education program.



2017 Project WILD Outdoor Wildlife Leadership School (OWLS) participating educators with Nongame Conservation Section biologist Mincy Moffett on a class field trip to Ochopee Dunes Wildlife Management Area in Emanuel County, Georgia.

Start your New Year's resolutions with TERN, Consider giving to conserve Georgia wildlife Here are three easy ways:

#1 Buy or renew an eagle or hummingbird license plate. Many Georgians don't know that sales and annual renewals of these attractive tags are the No. 1 fundraiser for the Georgia Nongame Wildlife Conservation Fund, which was created to conserve rare and other nongame animals, plants and habitats. Many also don't know that a recent law change reduced the price of DNR wildlife tags to only \$25 more than a standard plate and increased the amount dedicated to wildlife. Since the law change, \$19 of each purchase and \$20 of each renewal goes to help wildlife. That's as much as 80 percent of the license plate fees dedicated to the Wildlife Resources Division programs that depend on them. Upgrade to a wildlife tag for only \$25 and show your support!



#2 When preparing your taxes, give to the Wildlife Conservation Fund state income tax checkoff. The Give Wildlife a Chance checkoff made up 10 percent of contributions to the fund this year.

#3 Contribute directly to the Nongame Wildlife Fund. Donations are deductible to the extent allowed by law.



Explore donation options at www.georgiawildlife.com/conservation/support. Or call the Nongame Conservation Section at (770) 761-3035 or (478) 994-1438.

TERN Funds Help Restore Coastal Georgia Habitats

Eamonn Leonard, NCS wildlife biologist

The Coastal Georgia Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area (CoGA CISMA) is an alliance that was established in March 2012 to work across Federal, State, Local, and private lands for invasive species management in 11 counties along Georgia's coast. For five years, CoGA CISMA has hosted Student Conservation Association (SCA) interns to assist with the laborious tasks of invasive species removal across 3,900,000 acres of upland habitats, wetland habitats, historic sites, scenic sites and recreational areas with over 100 miles of coastline, about 350,000 acres of salt & brackish marsh, and a series of 8 barrier island clusters.



CoGA CISMA would like to thank TERN for providing three grants in 2013, 2014, and 2016 that funded the purchase of a box trailer, chainsaws, hedge trimmers, GPS units, safety equipment and other supplies, as well as longleaf pine seedlings for a restoration site. TERN funds have made a tremendous impact towards CoGA CISMA's invasive species eradication goals!



Poster Contest's 28th Year Highlights

Georgia's Wildlife Diversity

Linda May, NCS environmental outreach coordinator

Teachers and students across the state are invited to honor Georgia's wildlife and students' artistic interests by participating in the 28th annual Give Wildlife a Chance Poster Contest.

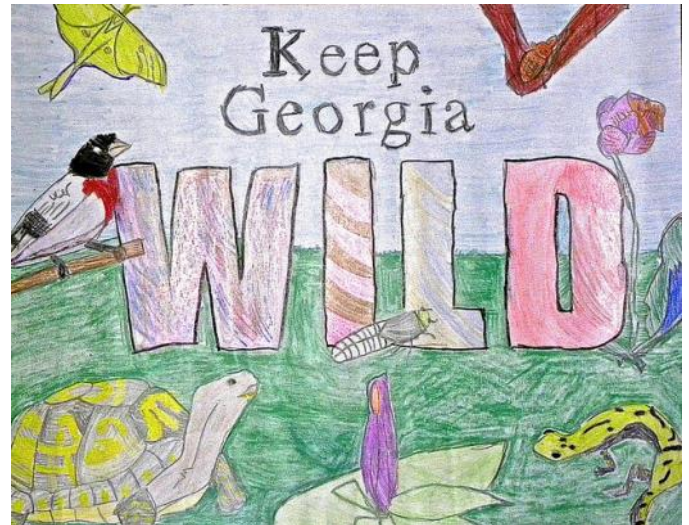
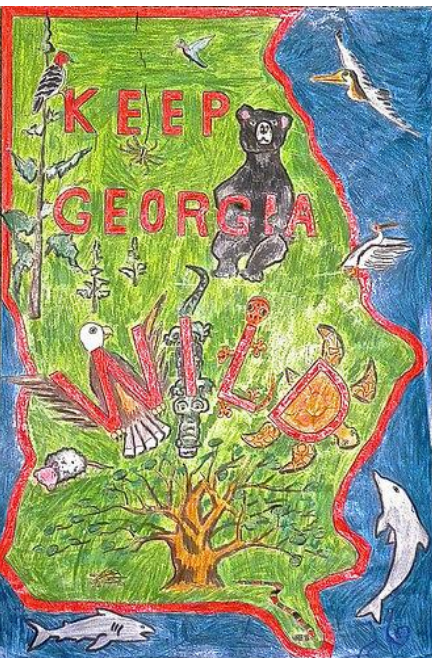
The goal of the competition, open to grades K-5, is to generate a greater knowledge and appreciation of Georgia's diverse and increasingly threatened nongame wildlife and their habitats. Nongame species (those not legally hunted or fished for) vary from rare animals and plants such as Barbour's map turtle and dwarf trillium to common species such as the Carolina chickadee and tulip poplar.

This popular art contest is sponsored by the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, the State Botanical Garden of Georgia and TERN. The theme for the 2017-18 school year is "Nature at Night." The topic highlights the various adaptive behaviors of wildlife as well as their interactions with plants.

Depending on when wild animals are most active, they are considered diurnal, crepuscular or nocturnal. Diurnal wildlife (including the chipmunk, green anole and most songbirds) usually are awake during the day but asleep at night. Crepuscular animals (like the big brown bat, common nighthawk and fireflies) are most active at twilight but may be awake during the night, too. Nocturnal animals (such as the southern flying squirrel and most owls and frogs) typically are active at night but asleep during the day.

Some native plants cater to nocturnal insects to ensure pollination. For example, yucca flowers produce most of their sweet-smelling nectar at night to attract the yucca moth. Sundrops, a type of evening primrose, keep their flowers open at night so hummingbird moths, green lacewings and other pollinators can visit.

After creating artwork based on this year's theme and within contest rules, participants will enter their drawings and paintings at the local school level. Top school-level entries then proceed to the state contest at the State Botanical Garden of Georgia in Athens. First-, second- and third-place winners are chosen there for four divisions: kindergarten, first and second grade, third and fourth grade, and fifth grade. The deadline for schools to submit state-level entries is April 13, 2018.



The top 12 state-level winners' artwork will be showcased on DNR Wildlife Resources Division social media sites and displayed at the State Botanical Garden in Athens May 8-16. The State Botanical Garden offers a fascinating variety of plants as well as opportunities to view wildlife in the fields and forests. Admission is free, although donations are accepted. For directions, operating hours and a garden map, visit <http://botgarden.uga.edu>.

As a special perk for supporting this contest, each state-level winner's teacher and one parent will receive a free bald eagle license plate, courtesy of TERN! For contest rules, awards, entry forms and other information, visit www.georgiawildlife.com/PosterContest.

Acworth Educator Awarded \$1,000 Grant for Teaching Conservation

Linda May, NCS environmental outreach coordinator

A Cherokee County teacher's proposal to create a pollinator garden at her school has earned a \$1,000 grant from the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Nongame Conservation Section.

The agency recently announced that Karen Garland, K-5 Discovery Science Lab teacher at Clark Creek Elementary STEM Academy in Acworth, will receive the 2017 Conservation Teacher of the Year grant. The award is given annually to a third- through fifth-grade public or private school teacher in Georgia who demonstrates exceptional energy and innovation in teaching life sciences. The grant is made possible with funding from TERN.

Garland was selected for her Campaigning for Pollinators proposal, which she said was inspired by her students' idea to convert a monoculture of grass outside their school into a healthy habitat for pollinators such as butterflies, bees and hummingbirds. Students will design the garden, plant native perennials and record the pollinator species observed in a citizen science database. A field guide of butterfly host and nectar plants will be created for use in the media center. Also, as part of the school's STEM Day in May, students will grow and distribute milkweed (the only host plant for monarch butterflies) and educational brochures to the community.

"Clark Creek Elementary is dedicated to fostering all students' innate curiosity by empowering them to be independent problem-solvers through a variety of opportunities," Garland said. "Through this approach, students see how classroom subjects relate to the real world."



Linda May, environmental outreach coordinator for the Nongame Conservation Section, said that committee members reviewing the grant proposals "loved that Mrs. Garland's project is student-driven."

"Third-graders saw butterflies flying overhead, but the butterflies never stopped at the school since there was nothing there for them to eat or drink," May said. "The students understood the importance of pollinators and wanted to help, so they thought of ways to provide suitable habitat at their school."

Cross-curricular creativity, student collaboration across grade levels and in-kind donations that leveraged grant funds also made Garland's proposal stand out, according to May.

Additional support for the project will come from Lowe's, Save Our Monarchs, Cherokee County Master Gardeners and Monarchs Across Georgia. Students will share the responsibilities of watering, weeding and gathering data. Garland is confident the garden will serve as an outdoor classroom that benefits students and pollinators for years to come.



Anna Yellin (NCS biologist), Kim Kilgore (TERN board member) and Linda May (NCS environmental outreach coordinator) present Cherokee County teacher Karen Garland with \$1,000 Conservation Teacher of the Year grant (second from right).



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Friends of Georgia's Nongame Conservation Section

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Georgia Breeding Bird Survey Support (continued from page 1)



Angus Pritchard (tan shirt) perfecting his birding skills on Georgia's coast.

for many years in the Youth Birding Competition (YBC) sponsored by TERN and the Georgia Ornithological Society. The YBC was started to get young people interested in birding with the hope that they would become bird conservation advocates and that some of them would acquire the skills needed to run BBS survey routes and contribute to other bird monitoring efforts that take significant knowledge and skill. TERN members can be proud that through the YBC they have contributed to the development of many present and future bird conservation advocates and several highly skilled young birders capable of assisting with bird monitoring at the highest levels.

The Youth Birding Competition is a 24-hour birding event during the peak of spring migration. Youth teams spend the day finding as many species as they can as they compete against teams their own age. The competition is capped off with a wildlife show and awards banquet. The 2018 event is set for 5 p.m. Friday, April 27 to 5 p.m. Saturday, April 28. The deadline to register youth teams is March 31. For more information on how to participate in the 2018 Youth Birding Competition, visit <http://georgiawildlife.com/YBC>.

