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UPSTATE happenings

MARCH 2013

Saturday, Feb 23, 9:00 am Green Woodland Orchids Workday in Berea

Naturaland Trust recently acquired 10 acres of *beautiful marsh on the Reedy River* in Berea, near Furman. It contains hundreds of green woodland orchids and some bunched arrowhead. There are some exotics to remove – privet, shrubs, and some ivy. Wear boots or shoes you can get wet. There is poison ivy on the site, so wear long pants and long sleeves. We will meet in the parking lot of Berea Middle School on Berea Middle School Road at 9 am and walk to the site. We should be finished by 11.

Please let us know you're coming by sending an email to Bill Sharpton, gsharpton@aol.com. Be sure to provide a phone number! If you have questions, contact Frank Holleman (holl2759@bellsouth.net).



Friday-Sunday, March 1-3 Spring Southern Home & Garden Show

Thanks to the generosity of the Home Builders Association of Greenville, we have **Booth #680** at the 2013 Home & Garden Show. Thousands of attendees will have an opportunity to learn about native plants and about SCNPS — *if you will help staff our booth!*

Volunteers receive an exhibitor's badge and an exhibitor's parking pass, both good for the duration of

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Get the latest buzz:

The Honeybee in America today

Where would we be without the honeybee? Very hungry, for starters. Honeybees directly pollinate two-thirds of our food crops. Not to mention the heavenly sweet stuff they produce in their hives.

Yet, honeybees are in crisis. Our March program will provide an opportunity to learn more about the essential role bees play in our modern agriculture system, as well as their relationships with some of our native plants.

Charlotte Anderson, a Pickens County beekeeper who has been showered with state accolades in the past year, will be our guest speaker. South Carolina's 2012 Beekeeper of the Year, Charlotte plans to emphasize the origin, biology, and fascinating management of bees — and why we should care about the fate of the buzzing insects. She will also discuss how beekeeping has changed over the past 25 years.

Charlotte's bees collect nectar from a wide range of sources, including red maple, holly, blackberry, tulip poplar, and sourwood blossoms.

"I will discuss some of our native plants that provide nectar/pollen for the bees," she said. "The plants probably help the bees more than the bees help the plants, as far as natives are concerned."

As the first female Master Beekeeper in South Carolina, Charlotte spends a good deal of time sharing her knowledge and experience with new beekeepers, as well as educating the general public. She has taught at Clemson University's OLLI (Osher Lifelong Learning Institute), provoking more than one senior to consider embarking on his own beekeeper adventure. She has served as an instructor for the SC Master Beekeeper Certified Level Short Courses in Pickens County, and as a mentor to many new beekeepers. She'll sometimes make a house call to coach a novice beekeeper through finding a queen or making a first colony split.

As owner and operator of Carolina Honeybees, Charlotte produces raw honey, creamed honey, as well as beeswax candles, lip balm, and honey soap. Although she has no retail store, she sells

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Charlotte Anderson

Carolina Honeybees

Tuesday, March 19, 7:00 pm

Founders Hall in Dining Commons, Southern Wesleyan University, Central

For a map and more information, visit <http://www.scnps.org>

A Meadow... not just for Bears

Walking through a forest of tall hardwood trees, a bear steps out of the shadows into the brilliant sunlight, like opening a curtain to daylight in a darkened room. The bear has traveled into a beautiful open space, with tall grasses and wildflowers swaying in the wind, alive with many animals scattering about...the bear has wandered into a landscape called a meadow.

Biologist Skip Still with the SC Department of Natural Resources (DNR), a bear-ologist, naturalist, and official storyteller of unbelievable bear stories, is an advocate for these rare places called meadows. Skip, who retired from the SC DNR after more than 30 years of adventures in bear and natural resources management, has helped to preserve and manage wildlife habitats around the state. In honor of Skip and his work, a small demonstration meadow that will be used for educational purposes is being restored at the DNR office in Clemson and will be dedicated as the "Skip Still Meadow." Not only Skip, but also bears and other wildlife realize the importance of meadows, which are the small-scale versions of one of the Piedmont region's most significant and now missing landscapes, the piedmont prairie.

The piedmont prairie was once a prominent landscape and habitat in the upstate that provided many environmental and ecological benefits. The prairie is historically described by early ex-

plorers as "clear, rolling grassland" and requires grazing, fire or mowing to maintain open space. The soil in a prairie is rich with organics and nutrients. The plants are native, or indigenous, grasses and forbs, which means they established on their own and adapted to the local climate, geography and hydrology over many thousands of years. Forbs, derived from the French word for "pasture," are herbaceous flowering plants. Just a few native trees may grow in this landscape. The root systems of the native plants are deep, thereby stabilizing soil and preventing erosion. Rainwater or snowmelt in a prairie recharges groundwater instead of flowing over the land as water runoff. And, a prairie provides an amazing habitat for native wildlife, especially insects, birds, reptiles and mammals. Whether called a prairie or meadow, the benefits of this ecosystem are plentiful.

The Skip Still Meadow is being restored and managed with funding provided by the Duke Energy Foundation and the partnership

of many organizations: SC DNR, Duke Energy, SC Native Plant Society, Clemson Extension Service, Clemson Experimental Forest, SC Botanical Garden and Pickens County Stormwater Partners, along with volunteers including Master Gardeners and Master Naturalists.

These groups have removed exotic invasive plants, prepared the soil and planted grasses including Indiangrass (*Sorghastrum nutans*), Bluestems (*Andropogon*), Eastern Gamagrass (*Tripsacum dactyloides*), Purpletop (*Tridens flavus*) and Pink Muhly (*Muhlenbergia capillaris*), and forbs including Goat's Rue (*Tephrosia virginiana*), Butterfly Milkweed (*Asclepias tuberosa*), Georgia Aster (*Symphotrichum georgianum*), Wild Indigo (*Baptisia australis*), Blazing Star (*Liatriis spicata*) and Smooth Coneflower (*Echinacea laevigata*). More days of planting, maintenance, and education are forthcoming.

With these organizations dedicated to working together to preserve wildlife habitat and protect the environment, a piece of landscape history is being restored and managed in honor of a biologist who has made lasting "bear" tracks around the state. And, who knows, maybe a bear will one day be so lucky to wander out of the nearby forest and into the Skip Still Meadow.

— Cathy Reas Foster, Pickens County Extension Service, and Dr. Bill Stringer, SC Native Plant Society

EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES . . .

The Botanical Gardens at Asheville is presenting a workshop on Sunday, April 7, 2:00-3:30 pm, entitled "Favorite western North Carolina native grasses for steep slopes, dry conditions, and/or ornamental beauty," taught by Gary Kaufman, a National Forest botanist/ecologist. Reservation/fee required. For more information visit www.AshevilleBotanicalGardens.org

Highlands Biological Station, an inter-institutional research center of the University of North Carolina, is offering its 2013 series of summer courses and workshops. For more information and to apply, visit www.highlandsbiological.org/summercourses/, e-mail kkandl@email.wcu.edu or mrsuigrok@email.wcu.edu, or call (828) 526-2602.

Course Sampling:
Vascular Plants of the Southern Appalachians (May 13-25)
Principles of Conservation Biology (June 17-29)
Forest Ecosystems (July 1-13)
Field Methods in Medical Entomology (July 9-20)
Terrestrial Arthropods and Their Role in Southern Appalachian Ecosystems (July 15-27)

Workshop Sampling:
Observing and Exploring Nature Through Art and Science, Journaling Nature a Day at a Time (May 6-10)
Sharing the Stories of Science (for science educators) (July 1-5)
Western North Carolina Landscape Through Literature (July 1-5)
Grasses, Sedges, and Rushes of the southern Appalachians (Aug. 12-17)

The Cullowhee Native Plant Conference celebrates its 30th Anniversary. Hear Janisse Ray and other noteworthy voices at the Cullowhee Conference, July 17-20, 2013, the purpose of which is to increase interest in and knowledge of propagating and preserving native southeast-

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The Honeybee in America today

her products at local festivals, at the Hagood Mill Folk Life Center in Pickens, and at the Slow Food Upstate-sponsored Earth Market in Greenville. She will bring some of her honey products to sell at our March meeting.

Representatives of Slow Food International from Italy visited her Pickens farm in 2011, eager to compare local practices of bee management and honey production with those in their country.

Careful management practices and educating the public about bees are more critical than ever, as recent problems with bee colonies have caused many feral colonies to perish. Local beekeepers have seen more winter losses than in previous years, said Charlotte.

Come to the March meeting and see why we should care.

— Lynne Lucas

Help Wanted

We are in need of a Field Trip Coordinator(s), to plan and coordinate field trip activities. This person doesn't have to lead the outings, or even to attend all the outings. If you think you might be interested, please contact Bill Stringer catboyz@nctv.com or 979-3169.

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ern plant species in the landscape.

Past participants of the conference have included landscape architects, commercial nursery operators, garden club members, botanists, and horticulturists from state highway departments, universities, native plant societies, botanical gardens, and arboretums. Both professionals and laypersons will gain valuable knowledge from the informative fieldtrips, lectures and workshops.

The conference is held at Western Carolina University in Cullowhee, North Carolina. Cullowhee is located between the Great Smoky and Blue Ridge Mountains, approximately fifty miles west of Asheville.

AVAILABLE AT OUR APRIL 6 PLANT SALE!



PHOTO BY JK MARLOW.

Oconee Bells: An Introduction

Oconee bells (*Shortia galacifolia*) is a very rare Southern Appalachian native plant belonging to the family *Diapensiaceae*.

It features glossy, round, deep green leaves and gorgeous fringed white to pink bell-shaped flowers which give the plant its common epithet; it spreads by shallow underground runners called rhizomes. It is often found growing on partially shaded banks alongside rhododendrons and other acid-loving Ericaceae species.

The Southeast is home to two varieties, var. *galacifolia* and var. *brevistyla* which differ in the length of their styles (var. *brevistyla* being a few millimeters shorter).

S. galacifolia occurs in Jackson and Transylvania counties in North Carolina, Rabun County of Georgia, and of course Oconee and Pickens counties in our home state. Var. *brevistyla* is found in McDowell county of North Carolina and is native nowhere else.

Shortia sightings have been reported from many other counties and states but these are suspected of being persistent from cultivation.

After seeing a fragment of *Shortia* in the Paris herbarium in 1838, celebrated American botanist Asa Gray was intrigued, and he began a tireless search for it. It had been originally collected by Andre Michaux in the late 1700s from a place that his notes described as the "high mountains of Carolina." Thus Gray focused his searches in the North Carolina mountaintops.

It was not until 1877, on a hillside near the Catawba River, north of Marion in McDowell County, NC, that a 17-year-old youth named George Hyams rediscovered the plant.

Discover this fascinating plant for yourself at Devil's Fork State Park, Gorges State Park, and the South Carolina Botanical Garden. The SCBG has a beautiful pink-flowering form, which had its first bloom of the year on February 11th, and February 1st the year before (two of the earliest flowering dates we've ever seen!).

Oconee Bells are a rare and wonderful native, and there is nothing quite so enchanting as finding a patch of these diminutive plants on the forest floor. — Katie Dickson

It's time to renew your membership!
Look for a renewal form in the mailing with the state Journal,
or you can register online: <http://scnps.org/scnps-membership/renew-membership/>

**South Carolina
Native Plant Society
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Upstate Chapter

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Upcoming Events

the show. Open time slots remaining are underlined below:

Show hours/Volunteer shifts:

March 1, Friday, 12 noon to 8 pm

Shift: 12-3 / 3-6 / 6-8

March 2, Saturday, 10 am to 8 pm

Shift: 10-1 / 1-3 / 3-6 / 6-8

March 3, Sunday, 1 pm to 6 pm

Shift: 1-3 / 3-6

Sign up at the February meeting, or email Steve,
steve@marlowcreativeservices.com

Saturday, March 9, 9:00 am Bunched Arrowhead @ Furman

One of the most important populations of the *endangered Bunched Arrowhead* is on the Furman campus, but its seeps are overrun with privet. We will remove the privet to protect the seep and the plants. There is poison ivy on the site, so wear long pants and long sleeves.

We will meet at 9 am in the parking lot of the Shi Center for Sustainability, near the Bell Tower, and walk to the seeps. We will finish by noon.

Please let us know you're coming by sending an email to Bill Sharpton, gsharpton@aol.com. Be sure to provide a phone number!

If you have questions, contact Frank Holleman (holl2759@bellsouth.net).

Tuesday, March 19, 7:00 pm Maintaining Healthy Honeybees in the Upstate

See story page 1.

Saturday, March 23, 9:00 am Furman Lakeshore Restoration Workday

SCNPS invites Furman students and

the public to a volunteer workday along the Furman lake's shoreline riparian buffer.

The shoreline buffer at Furman is a great demonstration of why these riparian buffers are important for clean water and wildlife well-being.

The day will include an educational overview of the project's design and function and how that affects the health of the lake, as well as the removal of some undesirable weeds. The riparian buffer will be mown, so target plants will be small and easy to remove. We will work till noon.

Please wear appropriate clothing, long sleeves, gloves and footwear. Also, please bring your favorite small digging implement. We look forward to seeing you for fun and good conservation work.

Contact Rick Huffman at 864-901-7583 or earthdesignrick@gmail.com

The first annual BellFest at Devils Fork State Park will be held on Saturday, March 16, 2013, from 10:00 am until 4:00 pm. BellFest will be a kick-off to the local festival season, and will be a fun, relaxing day to enjoy the park.

There will be a silent auction, and local authors will be on hand to sign their books. Boat tours will be available to show visitors some of the many beautiful waterfalls on the lake, and private collections of artifacts from an earlier time in history will be on display.

The star of the day will be the



Saturday, April 6, 9:00 am - 1:00 pm

To create a landscape that supports native birds and butterflies, shop our Spring Native Plant Sale at University Center, on the corner of South Pleasantburg Blvd and Antrim Drive in Greenville.

The sale will feature a great selection of plants that provide habitat, nectar and food for our native wildlife. This is a great way to help the wildlife that call South Carolina home and to help make our state a more beautiful place to live.

BellFest!

Oconee Bell itself, *Shortia galacifolia*, which promises to be in full bloom along the Oconee Bell Trail. NPS members and Master Naturalists will be on hand to escort groups along the trail, pointing out the rare native wildflower and sharing a little of its interesting place in history. There is no fee for the event, but normal park admission applies.

If you can help man SCNPS's exhibit, please contact Joe Townsend, josephblackfeather@hotmail.com

For information on the Friends of Jocassee, please email friendsofjocassee@gmail.com.