Conservation, Stewardship and the Freshwater Land Trust

“Conservation, yes, but what does the Freshwater Land Trust have to do with stewardship?” Tonight’s speaker, Jeffrey Drummond, will explain. Since its beginning in 1996 -- established as the result of the first Supplemental Environmental Project in the United States – the Freshwater Land Trust has become an innovative, transformational leader in conservation in central Alabama. Today, it is one of the largest owners of private nature state. This point is Drummond, will never be the acquisition bedrock of the mission. Through Program, the landowners in nature through easements.

However, once land is acquired, it must be cared for, which is the responsibility of our Stewardship Program. Stewardship staff is responsible for monitoring and actively managing the fee-owned and easement properties to increase their conservation value. This job includes collecting and analyzing data and – sometimes developing novel approaches to restoration and/or wildlife and forest management. Through these two inseparable programs, the Freshwater Land Trust and its partners hope to protect the diverse, beautiful wildlands of central Alabama and the ecosystem which they support.

Jeffrey Drummond, Stewardship Director, Freshwater Land Trust

Drummond grew up in North Carolina, where he says that “having interactions with my Cherokee grandfather at a young age instilled a passion for wildlife and the outdoors. From the time I can remember, no matter where, I could hear my father whistling for me to come home from the woods...with the attached expectation that I would leave the critters where they were –although I often disregarded this expectation. “

As an undergraduate, he studied Ecology and Evolutionary Biology and, along the way, researched behavioral differences between urban and rural bird species and the connection between amphibian behavior and species distribution. With an M.S. in Biology in hand, Jeffrey worked as a Wildlife Biologist for the U.S. Forest Service; taught biology courses, and led a crew tasked with avian surveys and habitat descriptions on timber lands.

In December, 2016, he accepted the Director of Stewardship position at the Freshwater Land Trust. “When I’m not working,” says Jeffrey, you will still find me in the woods. But, on the rare occasion I’m not found in the forest, I’m somewhere writing music, reading, and generally living a simple life.
Big Foot Bio-Bash

November 18, 2017
8:30 – 2 pm at beautiful Cheaha State Park

Enjoy a family friendly trail run and a day of fun, hands-on activities – all while helping out at the Alabama Wildflower Society’s booth at Cheaha State Park on Saturday, November 18.

As many of you know, Big Foot is an ardent conservationist and he is very passionate about wildflowers. At the AWS exhibit, where Susan Hammack and Linda Sherk will be representing us, they will be giving out buttons saying Bigfoot Loves the Alabama Wildflower Society.

They will also have a very in-demand item, a brochure entitled What Bigfoot Eats at Cheaha, all about the edible plants at the state park. Many thanks to Karen Hutchison and Linda Sherk for co-creating the brochure, and thank you again to Karen for the cute Bigfoot buttons!

Volunteers are needed!

Linda Sherk and Susan Hammack are asking for help at the AWS Exhibit, and if you can lend a hand for an hour or two, they would love your assistance! It’s a great chance to meet and greet other wildflower enthusiasts in the state. Please contact either Susan (205-527-3328) or Linda (205-415-1643) if you are able to volunteer.

By the way, Bigfoot is the new emblem for Leave No Trace Behind. To celebrate Bigfoot sightings in Cheaha (which seem to have started in either 2005 or 2007, depending on whom you talk with) there will be a variety of events on Saturday --

- **5k Trail Run at 8:30 am**, a family friendly race to the highest point in Alabama. All skill levels are welcome, and **Dressing up as Bigfoot is highly encouraged**! Online PRE-registration is available beginning 9/21/2017 at Active.com. Race day registration begins 7 a.m. http://www.active.com/delta-al/running/distance-running-races/3rd-annual...

- **10th Annual Tellabration** (storytelling): 11am with spooky, humorous, thought-provoking, and just plain fun stories as told by some of the best storytellers in the Southeast! More info at www.tellabration.org

- Hands-on activities like archery and geocaching.

**Upper Shades Creek Restoration - Volunteers Needed**

Volunteers are invited to join this restoration planting effort along the upper Shades Creek on Nov. 11. The project is a collaboration between The Nature Conservancy, Turkey Creek Nature Preserve and Ruffner Mountain Nature Coalition to restore a portion of the upper Shades Creek closer to its natural state. We will be installing native riparian plants grown by Turkey Creek and Ruffner Mountain along both banks of the creek.

The site has some steep banks and other hazards that may not be appropriate for all volunteers, especially limited mobility individuals.

We may also have need for additional volunteers to assist with set up and site prep on Friday, November 10th; time TBD. Parking will be available at the rear entrance of Publisher’s Warehouse on 2721 5th Ave South in Irondale - next to the restoration site.

If you would like to attend the Friday set-up date or the Saturday planting date, please email Jamie Nobles at jamie@ruffnermountain.org or Charles Yeager at cyeager@bsc.edu. We will be grateful for all assistance for this project!
**Plant of the Year Gateway Joe-Pye weed** was chosen by Birmingham Botanical Gardens as their featured native plant for the 2017 fall plant sale. According to AWS member Jan Midgley, Gateway is a desirable garden plant not only because of its stature, but also its historical medicinal value, lack of troublesome plant diseases, and role in the web of life. Gateway, considered dwarf compared to the pure species, will be 4-5 feet versus 6-10 feet. The taller species can be cut back by one-third to produce a shorter plant, but the new growth will yield many smaller inflorescences.

Gateway needs no pruning, so you retain the impressive large head on a shorter plant. The bushel-basket-sized inflorescence is a convex mass of flower heads composed of many pink disc flowers. Examine this massive head of flowers and you will note it is covered with a large variety of insects including butterflies, particularly swallowtails and garden arachnids. Look closely, and you will notice small green anoles taking advantage of the complex food chain. The foliage is remarkably disease resistant. Chemical spraying for anything would be most undesirable since this is a major nectar and pollen station. "Whether your garden is large or small, this plant merits space," says Jan.

**Quick Facts and Keys to Success**

- **Common Name:** Gateway Joe-Pye weed; **Botanical Name:** Eutrochium maculatum ‘Gateway’; **Zones:** 4-8; **Flower Color:** Pink; **Blooming Period:** Late summer; **Type:** Perennial; **Mature Size:** 4-5 feet tall and 2 feet wide; **Exposure:** Full sun to light shade; **When to Plant:** Any time; **Soil:** Average, tolerates clay; **Water:** Medium to wet; **When to Prune:** Cut to the ground in late winter or early spring. Perfect for a wet location or a rain garden; Gateway does not like to dry out.

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**FREE CLASS!**

**THE MICROSCOPE IN NATURE STUDIES:** Pond & creek water as seen through dissecting & compound microscopes. Saturday 9 – 1 pm, November 18, Samford Univ. Biology Dept. Room 242 Propst Hall. Dr. Ellen McLaughlin will be the Instructor. **Cost:** Free.

Learn how to use the compound & dissecting microscope and make wet mount slides to perform environmental assessments of water in ponds and creeks. Field trip to Shades Creek for collections. Email Dr. McLaughlin (ewmclaug@samford.edu) or register by phone (205) 595-0806.

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Annual dues support the cost of our frequent gatherings, the speakers at the meetings, our field trips and the newsletter. Although membership dues are accepted throughout the year monies are formally collected at the annual pot luck meeting in March.

If you would like to pay your dues, please make your check payable to

**Blanche Dean Chapter – AWS and send it to our treasurer:**

**Ida Gleaton - 3201 Argonne Forest Lane - Duncanville AL 35456**

Individual Membership is $10; Family Membership is $15.

As thanks for supporting our society with your membership **new and renewing members will be able to pick up a gift plant** either at the November or March meetings. We owe our member **Patrick Daniel a vote of thanks** for his generosity in suggesting this idea and growing the plants for us!
Tonight’s meeting was held at the Birmingham Botanical Gardens. President Linda Sherk commenced with proceedings promptly at 7:00 p.m.

Treasurer Ida Gleaton announced that we had $847.51 in the vault. News announcements were: 1) Dr. Ellen McLaughlin will present a morning presentation, commencing @ 9:00 a.m., on “Fall Wildflowers and their Arthropod Companions” at Propst Hall, Samford University, Saturday, 10-21-17; 2) There will be a plant sale at BBG on 10-20 and 10-21; 3) Assistance is needed with the 2017 BioBash at Cheaha State Park on 11-18 (contact Linda Sherk), and 4) The Native Plant Conference will be at the BBG on 10-28 and 10-29.

Tonight’s presentation speaker was Ms. Sallie Lee, the Regional Extension Agent for the AL counties of Blount, Jefferson, Shelby, St. Clair, and Walker. Her topic was “Landscaping for Pollinators”. The following is a hodgepodge of notes as the information flowed like wine from a spigot.

A pollinator is essentially a beneficial insect as a butterfly, moth, bird, bat, or bee. Another resource, non-animal, would be the wind. Biotic pollination, or the behavioral act of carrying pollen grains to the plant pistil (“botanical sex”), accounts for 80% of pollination.

One third of human nutrition is associated with bee pollination. Unfortunately, the feral bee population has decreased by ~90% within the last 50 years. 90% of plants require pollinators.

There are 4000 species of ground and twig nesting bees in the U.S. The length of their tongues, a factor in pollination, varies. They have “furry” bodies, which is important. Most live in the ground.

Insects, in general, are attracted to color, having a special preference for yellow and violet. Bees do not see red. Shapes make a big difference, also.

The poster child for the pollinating bee is the honey bee, a rather docile species. They pollinate approximately 1/3 of agricultural crops. Their numbers are most impressive. They are attracted to the colors yellow, blue, and purple.

Interestingly, butterflies taste with their feet. They have a weak sense of smell. They like cluster flowers because of the provision of a “good landing pad”. They DO like red, and also yellow.

Hummingbirds are attracted to the red, yellow, and orange plants. Scent is irrelevant.

The oldest pollinator on earth is the beetle. They are attracted to green or white plants. They also like big bowl-shaped flowers.

Of extreme harm to the pollinators is loss and fragmentation of habitat. Insecticides and herbicides are also murderous. The latter kill such of their foods as clover and dandelions. There are some types less harmful than others. Spraying in the evening is preferable to earlier times.

Pollinator gardens are helpful, and recommended. To be seriously considered is diversity, minimal usage of pesticides, and appropriate habitat.

The informative and entertaining presentation concluded shortly after 8:00 p.m. We will next meet at the Homewood Public Library on Monday, November 13, 2017 @ 7:00 p.m. Please note that this is a change of location!

Respectfully submitted,
Charles E. Gleaton, Recorder

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visit us on facebook as Blanche Dean Chapter of Alabama Wildflower Society
www.alabamawildflower.org
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Vice President of Programs - Marty Schulman
Treasurer – Ida Gleaton
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