

Alabama Wildflower Society: Blanche Dean Chapter



Next Meeting Mon. Sept 8th at 7pm

Ruffner Mountain Nature Preserve 's Executive Director Speaks Mon, Sept 8th!

Stan Palla is Ruffner Mountain's executive director and hopes to draw more attention to Birmingham's 1,000+ acre "best kept secret". Stan will speak on his assessment of Ruffner now and what the future will be.



Self described as a minimalist, cyclist, and tree planter at this point in his life. Stan Palla has always loved backpacking and exploring the 1,000+ acres in the Ruffner Mountain Nature Preserve.

Palla has frequented Ruffner Mountain Nature Preserve since he moved to Birmingham in 1993. He's been keeping an eye out for job openings at the preserve for years. Now, he gets to be more than just a fan: Palla took up the mantle as the new executive director of the preserve.

When Palla learned last fall that former executive director Robert Fearn had left Ruffner Mountain for the Pine Island Sanctuary and Center in North Carolina, Palla said he immediately made a call.

"I've been coming here for a long time, so to be a part of it and help Ruffner Mountain grow is really exciting," Palla said.

Palla comes from a rich background of forestry and management. He left his role as executive director of the Alabama Bicycle Coalition to join the nature preserve. Palla has also worked with the Alabama Urban Forestry Organization and was a former urban forester for the city of Birmingham.

Even on his time off, Palla is dealing with trees. His goal is to plant two million trees in his lifetime. So far, he's planted 1,946,997, leaving 53,000 possible saplings left for Ruffner Mountain and Birmingham.

Even though Ruffner Mountain is one of the largest urban nature preserves in the country and just a 20 minute drive from downtown Birmingham, Palla describes the preserve as one of the city's "best kept secrets." He said he hopes to bring the Magic City and the great outdoors closer together.

"I think we can bring the idea that urban living doesn't have to look like a golf course," Palla said.

As the new executive director, Palla plans to bring more publicity to the preserve, connect with the surrounding communities, rebuild volunteer efforts to help maintain the preserve's 12 miles of trails, and protect the 37 year old preserve's history.

The Ruffner Mountain Nature Preserve Facebook page posted a three-question survey earlier today. Palla wants to see what fellow Ruffner Mountain fans want from the preserve, he said.

Palla wants to help people appreciate the "nature in the city" that Ruffner Mountain Nature Preserve provides to Birmingham.

"We're here for you to find your spirituality by getting away without really going away," Palla said.

Hope to see you at the BBG, 7 pm for our meeting Wed, Sept 8th.

Calendar

- Sept. 8,- AWS Meeting at BBG 7pm
- Sept.27—Field trip to Ruffner Mountain
- Oct 18 Field Trip—Turkey Creek Nature Preserve Pinson
- Nov 3 - AWS/AL Paleo Society Joint Meeting at 7pm AT B'HAM ZOO

ALABAMA WILDFLOWER SOCIETY- BLANCH DEAN CHAPTER

Tonight's meeting was again held at the Birmingham Botanical Gardens. It was called to order shortly after 7:00 p.m. by President Linda Sherk.

Chapter Treasurer Maryalys Griffis announced that we had \$653.93 in our operating funds. No other announcements were forthcoming.

Marty Schulman, Programs VP, announced our speaker for the evening. We had the honor of being an audience for Bethany O'Rear, a Regional Agent with the Alabama Cooperative Extension System. Her topic was RAIN GARDENS: ENHANCING YOUR HOME LANDSCAPE AND PROTECTING WATER QUALITY.

Rain gardens, growing in popularity, are miniature bio-retention areas, designed for drought and precipitation deluges. They should be capable of catching the first inch of rain water, the richest nutritional portion of a rainfall. They trap non-point source pollution and act as cleansers and filters.

Choosing a site is very important. They need to be in a relatively flat area which can drain in 48 or less hours. They need to be in full to partial sunshine to facilitate drying. Ten feet is the closest they need to be to a building foundation. Placement over a septic tank is taboo. The slope, or rise over run, should be 12% or less. A point to always remember is "don't fight the site".

The soil, be it clay, sand, or loamy, needs to be infiltration-tested with a shoveled hole and a water fill. The rate of drainage is critical. The reservoir area can be any size or shape but the long side should be the first to catch runoff.

Dependent upon soil type and size, the average depth should be 3-6 inches. Eight inches is the maximum for the center. A berm should be constructed on the downhill side.

Vegetable gardens are not suitable for rain reservoirs but various species of trees and perennials can thrive. Species choice demands study.

As points of interest, one inch of rain constitutes .62 gallons water of per square foot of impervious surface and translates into approximately 374 gallons of water at one downspout. (Time to gasp!)

Questions as when to use a catchment basin or consider an underdrain, etc., can arise. In short, whatever you do, obtain all the information you can. Rain gardens are not simplicity galore. They demand planning. The rewards can be bountiful but study and education are essential for success. IMPORTANT: Please call #811 before digging.

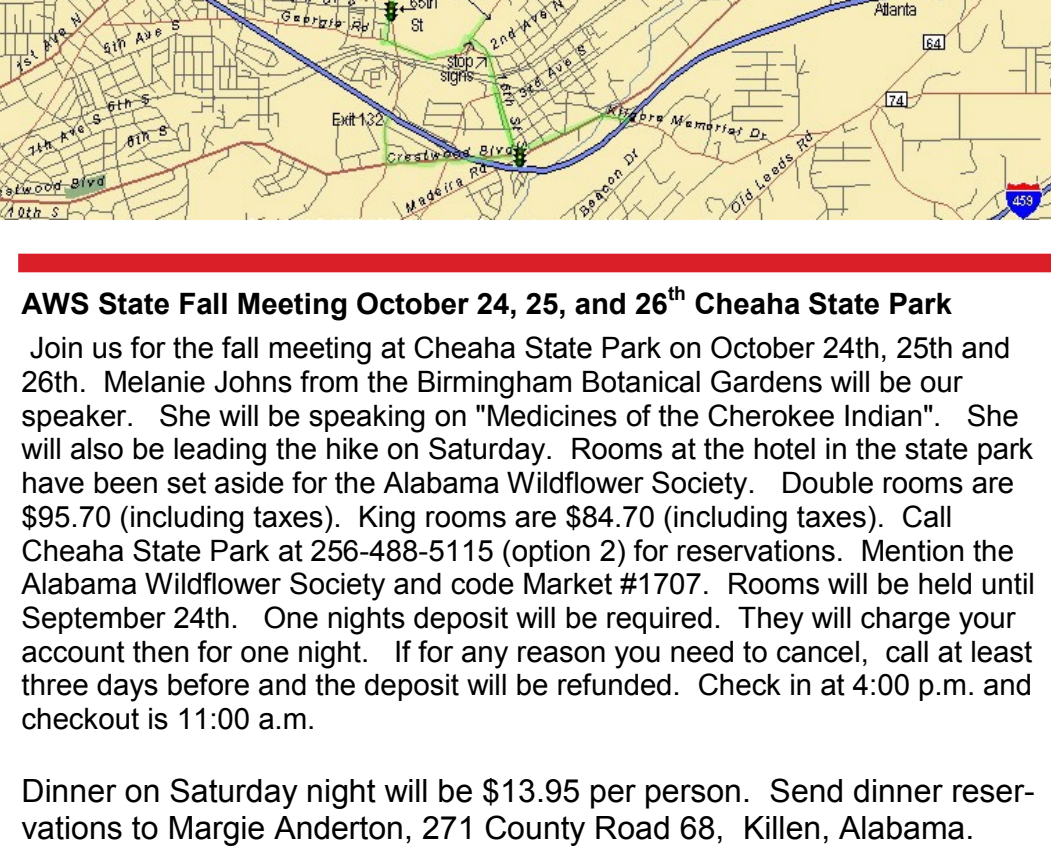
The meeting concluded at approximately 7:50p.m. We will again convene in September following the summer.

Respectfully submitted,
Charles E. Gleaton, Recorder

Blanche Dean Chapter Wildflower Hike: Saturday, September 27th at 10 am

Join us at the Ruffner Mountain Nature Preserve

Looking forward to a hike at our local preserve! We plan to meet at the East Side on Ruffner Rd at the Ruffner ball park @ 10 am. Our wildflower hike will be led by Marty Schulman with an optional lunch afterwards @ the Whistlestop Cafe in Irondale.



AWS State Fall Meeting October 24, 25, and 26th Cheaha State Park

Join us for the fall meeting at Cheaha State Park on October 24th, 25th and 26th. Melanie Johns from the Birmingham Botanical Gardens will be our speaker. She will be speaking on "Medicines of the Cherokee Indian". She will also be leading the hike on Saturday. Rooms at the hotel in the state park have been set aside for the Alabama Wildflower Society. Double rooms are \$95.70 (including taxes). King rooms are \$84.70 (including taxes). Call Cheaha State Park at 256-488-5115 (option 2) for reservations. Mention the Alabama Wildflower Society and code Market #1707. Rooms will be held until September 24th. One nights deposit will be required. They will charge your account then for one night. If for any reason you need to cancel, call at least three days before and the deposit will be refunded. Check in at 4:00 p.m. and checkout is 11:00 a.m.

Dinner on Saturday night will be \$13.95 per person. Send dinner reservations to Margie Anderton, 271 County Road 68, Killen, Alabama. 35645.

Hope to see everyone there.
Margie Anderton

AWS-Blanche Dean and Alabama Paleo Society plan joint meeting Nov 3rd.

We're excited to announce that the Birmingham chapters of the Alabama Paleo Society (APS) and the Alabama Wildflower Society (AWS) will have a special joint meeting on Monday evening Nov 3rd at 7pm...this joint meeting will be held at the Birmingham Zoo Auditorium.

Jim Lacefield will talk about living fossil trees and tree origins.

Also, AWS members are being invited to join APS members on an associated field trip (date/time/location to be announced). Plans are to collect fossils, plant & otherwise, that finders will be able to keep for their personal collection.

Longleaf Conference & Eastern Native Grass Symposium

This conference will be hosted jointly by The Longleaf Alliance and the Eastern Native Grass Symposium in Mobile. The dates for the conference are October 21-24, 2014. Check out their conference website for additional information as well as online registration. <http://www.longleafnativegrassconference.net/>.

Support Needed Now for Invasive Species Control

It seems like every time we turn around these days we are hearing more and more horror stories about invasive species and the impacts they are having on North American fish and wildlife species, their habitats and our lands and waters. If this trend continues, it won't be long before our children and grandchildren will never know what the native biota of this country should look like.

We have long needed legislation to strengthen the Lacey Act and provide for scientific screening of species proposed for introduction into this country. If such legislation had been passed earlier, we would have had better tools available to prevent the introduction of species such as Burmese python, Asian carp, Snakehead, Lionfish, Nutria and other such invasives. H.R. 996, the Invasive Fish and Wildlife Prevention Act of 2013, and its companion bill in the Senate (S. 1153) provide an important step forward in gaining the protections we need. Copies of the two bills are attached as is a list of current endorsing groups.

In promoting these bills I am doing so, not only on behalf of myself, but also on behalf of the National Environmental Coalition on Invasive Species (NECIS), who is leading the promotional effort.

Information on the NECIS can be found on their web site at: <http://www.necis.net/>.

We are hopeful that the Alabama Wildflower Society can endorse these important bills. Unfortunately, we have only a few short months left in the 113th Congress, so time is of the essence. But several bills are starting to move, including S. 1153 which was the subject of a hearing in the Senate Water and Wildlife Subcommittee in mid July. So we need to take action now, and we encourage you to not only endorse these important bills, but to also:

1. Contact your members of Congress and encourage them to sign on in support of H.R. 996 and S. 1153.
2. Ask your representatives to join the discussion on invasive species by becoming members of the House Invasive Species Caucus recently formed and co-chaired by Dan Benishek (R/MI) and Mike Thompson (D/CA).

Your endorsement and any action which you can generate now (e.g., letters or emails to Congress, action alerts to your members, letters to the editor, etc.) would be most helpful to the National invasive species control effort. Also, if you could, I would appreciate very much if you could keep me informed of any actions you take. This would be most helpful in coordinating the overall effort and in gaining knowledge of members of Congress which our Washington, D.C. staff may want to focus on.

On behalf of the NECIS, I want to thank you for any support you can provide in advancing the cause for invasive species control!

Jerry Rasmussen
Fellow conservationist and retired U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service biologist.

Volunteering at Ruffner

We can't do it without you! Here is our Top 3 List of Volunteer Projects.

Facility Maintenance: If you've got a handy hand we would love your help on a number of maintenance projects. Learn about green building techniques and how our facilities lessen our environmental impact.

Nature Landscaping: How about a green thumb? Our native landscaping around the Visitor Center takes a team. Join local native plant experts to learn about our pollinator and rain gardens. Volunteers meet every Monday from 7:00-1:00, but we'll be happy to work with your schedule if you're unable to make it Mondays.

Trail Maintenance: Want to spend some time on the trail? We'd love your help maintaining them! Together we'll improve existing trails by fixing vandalism, keeping the trails and entrances clear of debris, improving blazing and signage, plus anything else we find while we're out.

Whether you can volunteer 2 or 20 hours a week, we welcome your participation at any time. Please contact our Volunteer Coordinator to signup!
Lindsey Darby (205) 833-8264 ex.12 Lindsey@ruffnermountain.org

WILDERNESS
50 years
1964-2014
YOURS TO ENJOY TO PROTECT

CELEBRATING
50 YEARS OF WILDERNESS

Traditional Tools
Demonstration

Bigfoot

Sky Island String Band

The National Forests in Alabama will celebrate the 50th Anniversary Wilderness on September 6, 2014 in Cheaha State Park at the Rock Pavilion. Special events will include: Speakers who were instrumental with the designation of wilderness areas in Alabama, photo contest results, a hike for wilderness including traditional tools and leave no trace demonstrations. Information will be shared on the progress made regarding the 10-year wilderness challenge. Wild South will have information regarding our Volunteer Wilderness Ranger Program, other booths will include hiking and outdoor groups, leave no trace, with a special appearance from "Bigfoot". Lunch will be provided and we will have entertainment from the Sky Island String Band. Please contact the Talladega Ranger District at 256-362-2909; the Shoal Creek Ranger District at 256-463-2272 or the Bankhead Ranger District at 205-489-5111 for additional information.

1964 - 2014
<http://www.wilderness50th.org/> or : <http://www.fs.usda.gov/alabama>

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- visit us on facebook**
- President - Linda Sherk**
 - Vice President of Programs - Marty Schulman**
 - Vice President of field trips - Michelle Reynolds**
 - Treasurer - Maryalys Griffis**
 - Recorder - Charles Gleaton**
 - Editor/Web Site - Karen Hutchinson**