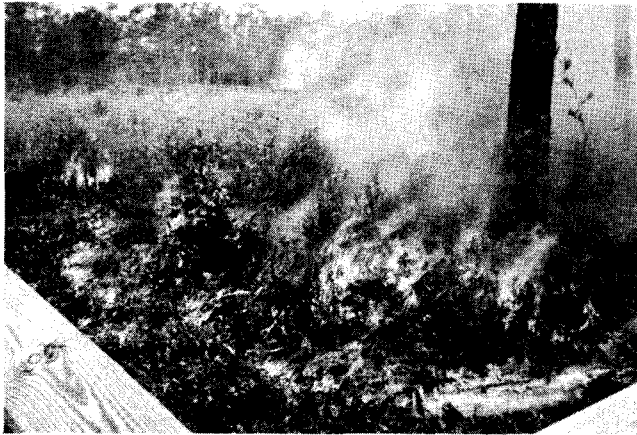


# The Pelican Post

Weeks Bay Reserve Foundation Newsletter  
Summer 1998



## Fire Plays Role in Rejuvenation of Weeks Bay Pitcher Plant Bog

Volunteers of the Weeks Bay Reserve gathered at the Pitcher Plant Bog on Thursday, July 9 to assist Reserve staff and the Alabama Forestry Commission staff with a controlled burn of the pitcher plant bog. The "Burn" is a necessary process to rejuvenate the fertility of bog soil for pitcher plants and other wildflowers. It also reduces competition from more woody plants in the area.

Volunteers and Reserve staff arrived early to safeguard the boardwalk by strategically placing large buckets of water around the perimeter. Members of the Magnolia Springs Fire Department were also on hand as a resource.

Foresters from the Alabama Forestry Commission began the "Burn" along the back acreage of the bog, gradually working their way up to the outer circle of the boardwalk and around the gazebo. The bog area in the inner circle of the boardwalk will be burned later this year.

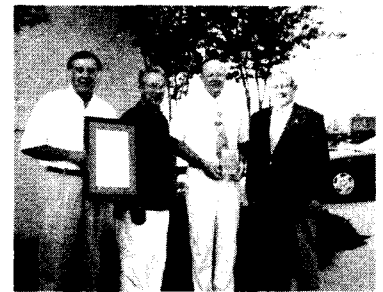
The Weeks Bay Reserve extends many thanks to everyone who helped with this important project. Special thanks go to **Matthew Perkins**, a local Scout who mobilized a team of Boy Scouts to assist.



## Foundation Receives Environmental Award

The Weeks Bay Reserve Foundation was recognized as the most outstanding Environmental Organization in the first annual Baldwin County Environmental Awards Program coordinated by the Baldwin County Environmental Advisory Board. The honor, which was presented at the July 7 County Commission meeting in Bay Minette, recognized both the on-going volunteer efforts and significant fund-raising of the Foundation, as well as the 1997 purchase of an additional 105 acres of land at auction, including the Baywatch Marina and Safe Harbor RV Resort.

Commissioners **C. Dean Hansen** and **Joe Faust, Sr.** presented a plaque and citation thanking the Weeks Bay Reserve Foundation members, Reserve staff and many volunteers for their strong commitment to the environment, their community and Baldwin County. The purpose of the awards program is recognizing citizens, businesses and agencies that illustrate sound environmental principles in their day-to-day operations, implement practices beyond those which would be ordinarily required, and activities that produce exemplary results.



Accepting the 1998 Outstanding Environmental Organization Award for the Foundation are (l-r): Skipper Tonsmeire, Carey Bentley, and Dr. John Borom with Thomas Schmitz, Vice Chairman of the Baldwin County Environmental Advisory Board.

Other award recipients included: Individual Citizen, **Webster and Min MacCartee**, Minamac Wildflower Bog, Silverhill; Small Business, Dixie Oaks Conoco, **John, Larry and Michael Wilson**, Marlow; Large Business, Flowerwood Nursery, Manager **Pat Duck**, Loxley; Agriculture/Forestry, Penry Farms, **Bill Penry**, Daphne; Educational Organization, Biophilia Nature Center, **Carol Lovell-Saas** and **Fred Saas**, Elberta; and Governmental Agency, National Resources Conservation Service Baldwin County Office, **Larry Morris**, Bay Minette.

# Beekeepers Donate Observation Beehive

What's all the "buzz" about? Weeks Bay Reserve is the new home to yet another of nature's wondrous creatures. The Weeks Bay Reserve Observation Bee Hive is the only permanent observation bee hive on public display in Mobile or Baldwin counties. The only other one in Alabama is located in the Botanical Gardens of Huntsville.

The Baldwin County Beekeepers Association is the proud donor of this working hive which one day could see as many as 20,000 honey bees. The Beekeepers donated the hive in the hopes of educating the public on the importance of honey bees.

The hive was installed in May. Built by beekeeper **Joe Salzman** of Elberta, the hive stands nearly five feet tall in the lobby area of the Weeks Bay Reserve main building. Encased to protect the honey bees, it has an access tube which connects the bees to the outside world. Bees travel back and forth through the tube daily as they bring nectar and pollen into the hive for storage.

The honey bees that live in the Weeks Bay Reserve Observation Hive are described as "gentle bees" by the beekeepers. In fact, beekeepers **James and Patricia Heidelberg** use no protective gear on their weekly visits to maintain the hive. Scientifically speaking, the honey bees are Caucasian bees (black bees) from the Caucas Mountains in Georgia, Russia.

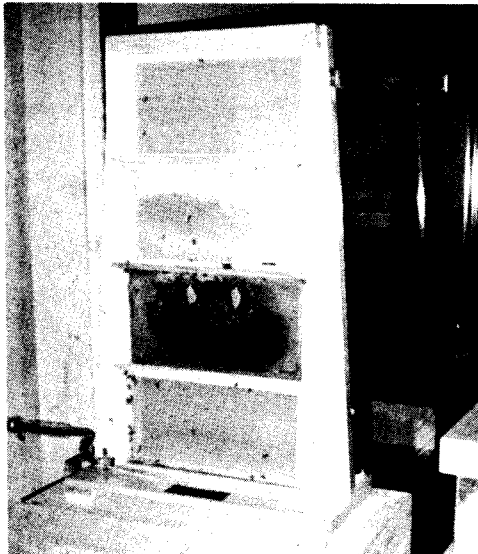
If observers look closely, they might catch a glimpse of the queen honey bee. The Reserve hive is alive with activity brought on by the birth of this queen bee. The queen's unique scent keeps the hive focused on its primary mission - the survival of the colony.

Alabama is recognized internationally as the "bee breeder" state. Many third generation bee breeders reside in Baldwin County and breed different races of bees for shipment all over the world.

Contact the Baldwin County Beekeepers Association for more information on honey bees. President **Mike Morris** can be reached at (334)943-2796. This group meets the first Tuesday of every month at 7 p.m. Future plans for the group include offering beekeeping classes and selling honey at the Reserve!



*Baldwin County Beekeeper Association members with the exhibit include (clockwise) Jack Duncan, Michael Morris and Alan Norden.*



*The Reserve's newest exhibit is buzzing with activity!*

## THE "BUZZING" FACTS

### Bee Facts

- Bees do not like hot, humid weather or rainy weather.
- If a hive of bees were let loose, they probably would not sting you.
- The most common way to be stung is to pick up a bee and accidentally mash it.
- Bees are curious.
- Bees are attracted to perfume and cologne.
- Bees do not like hairspray or bananas.
- Bees do not like red or black colors.
- Every third bite of food we take is pollinated by the honey bee.
- One bee produces 1/2 teaspoon of honey in its entire lifetime.
- People should move slowly around bees. They will defend themselves when attacked.

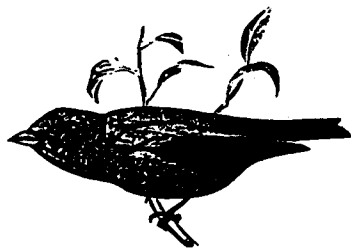
### Honey Facts

- There are 3,500 - 4,000 bees in a pound depending on the size of the bee.
- How much fuel would it take for a bee to fly around the world? One ounce of honey!
- Honey is the only natural food in the world that requires no preservative. It has its own. Honey never goes bad. It only crystallizes. You can then break it down with warm water.
- Researchers found a sample of 3,000 year old honey in the Egyptian tombs. It was still good!
- Honey will not culture bacteria.
- Milk and honey are the only two foods consumed by humans that are produced without killing another living thing.
- Honey is a good antiseptic on bed sores and burns.
- Honey contains natural hydrogen peroxide.
- We can put a man on the moon but we can't make honey!

## Gulf Coast Migration

In the spring and fall of each year, hundreds of bird species make the incredible journey between Latin America and North America. More than 200 species migrate north each spring to breeding grounds in the United States and Canada, then fly south in the fall to spend the winter in the Southern hemisphere. Even for tiny songbirds, migratory journeys of two or three thousand miles are common, and for most of these species, their flight path carries them to the shores and estuaries of the Gulf of Mexico.

There are many natural and human-induced hazards along the way, resulting in high annual mortality. In fact, studies by the National Audubon Society and others show that some species of birds have declined by as much as 70 percent. A major factor in this decline is habitat loss. In Latin America, human population increases and the destruction of tropical rain forests are major problems. With the loss of rainforests, we face the possibility of an extinction spasm as far-reaching and dramatic as anything in the history of life on Earth. The plight of migratory birds highlights the awful consequences of rainforest destruction. In North America, many migratory birds need the coastal zone for breeding, feeding or migratory stopover areas. However, as the human population increases along the coast, bird habitat is being replaced with industries, subdivisions, condominiums, shopping centers, golf courses and parking lots. In Alabama, natural areas like the Weeks Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve provide precious havens for tired and hungry migratory birds.



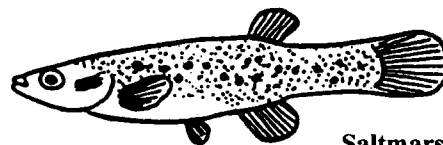
**Scarlet Tanager**  
*Piranga olivacea*

Many of our familiar favorites such as swallows, wood warblers, buntings, tanagers, thrushes, shorebirds and hawks depend on bottomland and upland forests, marshes and estuaries. Conservation of these birds is important as they represent one-third of all birds in North America, playing a major role in our ecosystems. Not only do they control insect and pest populations, but they are integral to the regeneration of Eastern forests and Midwestern grasslands. They are also good indicators of environmental health.

As migratory bird populations decline because of habitat loss, we now face the prospect of future seasons with fewer sounds and less color. There is every indication that migrant bird populations in the United States have dropped by about 40 percent. This is a major change that signals the wholesale unraveling of entire ecosystems.

Do we want future generations to remember many of our migratory birds as we remember the Passenger Pigeons? We inherited a rich, beautiful and diverse world of living things including migratory birds. If we wish to do for

the future as we have been done by, we must protect and sustain nature's bounty for future generations. Your membership in the Foundation is important because it helps provide critical habitat for migrant bird populations.



**Saltmarsh Topminnow**  
*Fundulus jenkinsi*

### Species at Risk

The saltmarsh topminnow (*Fundulus jenkinsi*) is one of the smallest North American killifishes. The maximum length is about two inches. The color is pale olive, covered except on the breast, with numerous tiny brown specks, arranged along the edge of the scales, thus giving the back and sides a checkered appearance. The opercle has a short dark band at about the level of the eye. They usually have small dark spots over the lateral surface of the body. These spots, absent in some specimens, are so blended in others as to form short, indistinct vertical bars.

This uncommon species occurs along the north central coast of the Gulf of Mexico at sporadic estuarine sites between Galveston Bay, Texas and Escambia Bay, Florida, and lives in the shallow tidal creeks around Weeks Bay. The Alabama Natural Heritage Program presently ranks the saltmarsh topminnow as G3 and S1. The G3 designation means that globally it is very rare and local throughout its restricted range. The S1 designation means that it is critically imperiled in Alabama because of its restricted specialized habitat and because of habitat destruction. The primary threat to the saltmarsh topminnow is loss of *Spartina* saltmarsh habitat.

Consideration should be given to restricting human activities that adversely affect *Spartina* beds. Activities such as bulwark and pier construction, channelization, wake production from water craft traveling at high speeds in sensitive areas, and filling of lands adjacent to marsh areas, which results in high sediment loads during times of elevated run off and through stirring of toxic soil compounds, pose a considerable threat to this species.

### Did you know?

About half the world's population lives within 60 miles of the coast, and by the year 2025 an estimated 6.3 billion people are expected to reside there. It is precisely this large population and resulting development of coastal areas that is leading to widespread deterioration of coastal habitats.



# Watershed Celebration

The Weeks Bay Watershed Project gathered supporters and the public for a celebration of its management plan and an annual meeting Wednesday, April 29 from 9:30 a.m. - 3 p.m. at Camp Beckwith.

More than 80 people turned out amidst the rainy weather for the day's activities which featured speakers and officials from Baldwin County and around the state. Information was shared on a variety of topics which educated and informed the public about the importance of water quality in the entire Weeks Bay Watershed, a total land area of 126,000 acres in Baldwin County which drains into Weeks Bay.

The main focus of the day was an overview of the Weeks Bay Watershed Management Plan, an ambitious multi-agency effort which seeks to improve and maintain the water quality of Weeks Bay. The Weeks Bay Watershed Citizens Advisory Committee is pursuing attaining the status of an Authority which would elevate the importance of the Watershed statewide, provide stronger citizen leadership, and oversee implementation of the Management Plan.



Enjoying the celebration are Patti Hurley of ADEM, Eve Funderburk Brantley, Watershed Coordinator, and J. Don Foster, U.S. Attorney-Southern District of Alabama.

Another highlight of the day's events was a check presentation from the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs (ADECA) to the Weeks Bay Reserve Foundation. ADECA Director **Ed Gardner** was on hand to present the \$100,000 check to Weeks Bay Reserve Foundation President **Skipper Tonsmeire**. The funds will help defray expenses of the Foundation's recent \$1.5 million land acquisitions for the Reserve. Director Ed Gardner described Weeks Bay Reserve as "one of Alabama's most valuable resources."



L.G. Adams, Manager of Weeks Bay Reserve, Ed Gardner, Director of ADECA, and Skipper Tonsmeire, President of Weeks Bay Reserve Foundation at the check presentation.

In other presentations, accomplishments were outlined and future plans were revealed for the many vital programs that support the Weeks Bay Reserve and the Watershed. These included agricultural programs, the on-site sewage disposal program, watershed water quality maintenance, forestry programs, volunteer water quality monitoring, educational outreach programs at Weeks Bay Reserve, dirt roads and county-wide planning, and Weeks Bay Watershed committees.

Weeks Bay Reserve Manager **L.G. Adams**, Weeks Bay Watershed Project Coordinator **Eve Funderburk Brantley**, and Citizens Advisory Committee Chairman **Carey Bentley** with the aid of the entire Weeks Bay Reserve staff and volunteers were responsible for organizing the celebration.

In addition to those pictured here, awards recipients were **Eric Wade**; Camp Beckwith; **Mary Mullins**, Alabama Coastal Foundation; **Karon Bishop**, Fairhope High School; **Carey Bentley**; **Larry Morris**, NRCS; the Baldwin County Commission; and the Baldwin County Soil and Water Conservation District.



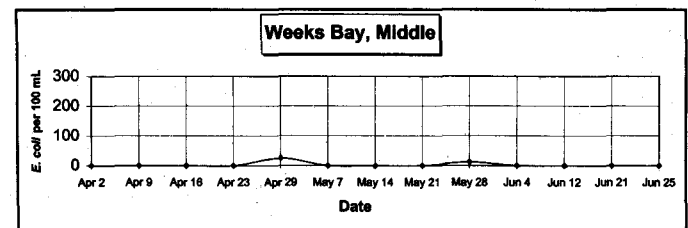
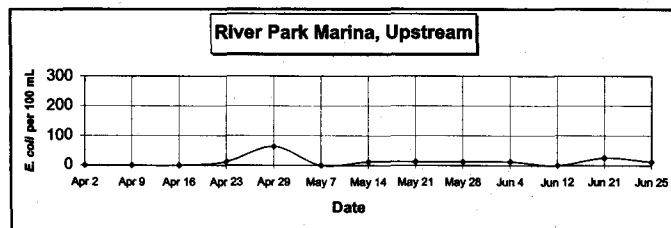
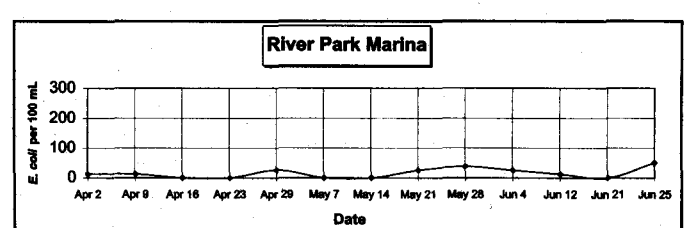
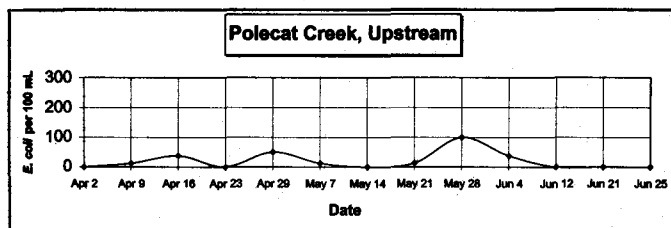
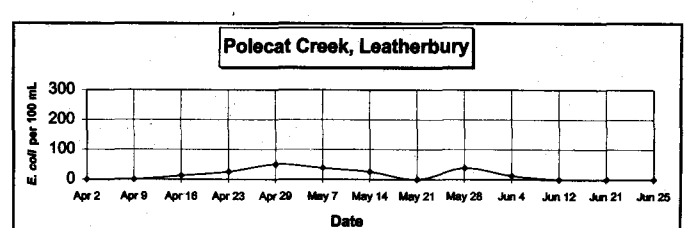
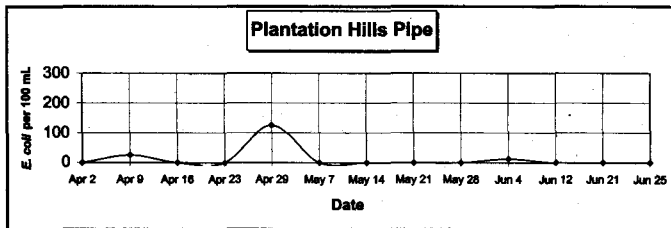
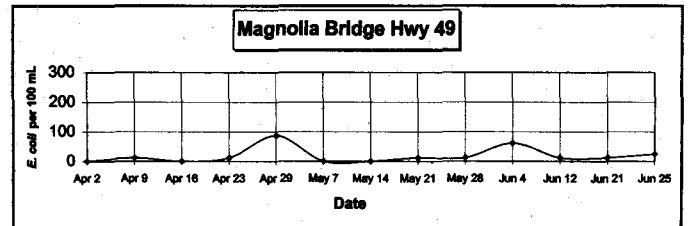
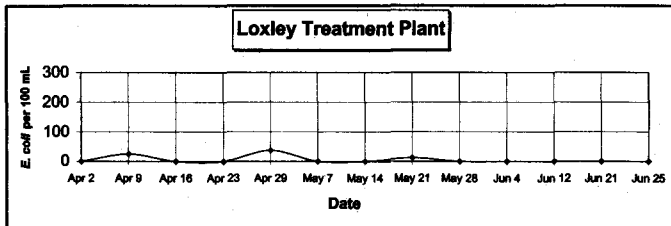
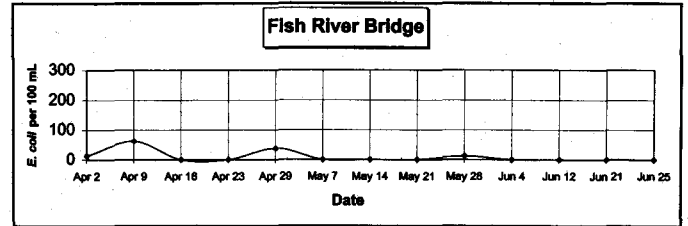
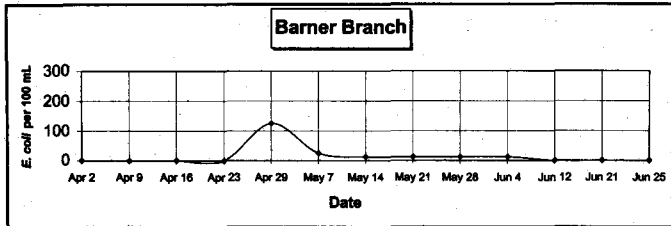
Margaret Holcombe recognizes teachers Tim Pimperl of Perdido Jr. High, Judy Reeves of Baldwin County High School and Janie Lloyd of Foley Middle School for having attended the Nonpoint Source Pollution Workshop for Educators and implementing programs.



Margaret Holcombe presents an Extraordinary Work award to Dr. Gregg Dixon of Monsanto.

## Weeks Bay Watershed *E. coli* Counts

The Weeks Bay Reserve Foundation monitors *E. coli* counts weekly at 18 sites in the Weeks Bay Watershed. Some of the results of this additional water quality monitoring program are summarized in the following graphs:



EPA *E. coli* limit is 295 colonies per 100 mL for moderately used swimming areas.



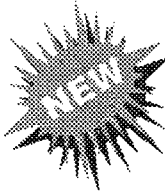
**Weeks Bay Volunteers  
Announce  
Native Plant Sale**

Saturday and Sunday, Sept. 26 - 27 are the dates for the Fifth Annual Weeks Bay Volunteers' Native Plant Sale. Held at the Reserve from 8 a.m. - 5 p.m. both days, this sale is a great opportunity to enhance your property with native plants and support your Reserve.

Many species of native trees, shrubs and perennials will be offered for sale at reasonable prices. Experts will be on hand to answer questions and offer valuable advice on plant selection and culture.

Remember, along our hot and humid Gulf Coast the Fall season is the best time to plant. Fall is also an ideal time to visit the Weeks Bay Reserve!

For more information, contact Volunteer Coordinator Maureen Nation at 928-9792 or 626-6816.



**NOW AVAILABLE!**  
Weeks Bay Reserve Foundation  
new T-shirts and Tote Bags  
with Pitcher Plant design  
Only \$10 each  
at the Reserve Information Desk

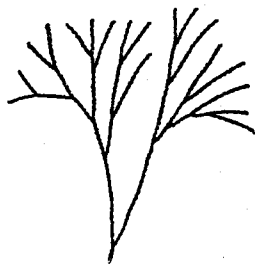
Watch for Baseball Caps - Coming soon!

**Did you know?**

New drugs often come from the most seemingly insignificant organisms. For example, the drug candidate bryostatin 1, which is now being tested in human trials by Bristol Myers Squibb as an anti-cancer agent, was originally derived from an inconspicuous marine bryozoan, *Bugula neritina*, that fouls man-made structures in harbors around the world. Physicians working with the compound are now determining dosages. Once that is done, large-scale testing will follow, leading eventually to the drug's general use if all goes well.

The name bryozoa literally means "moss animals" and they are often confused with plants. In fact, colonies are sometimes harvested, dried and dyed green and sold in plant shops as "air ferns."

*Bugula* is actually a colony of tiny animals that initially resembles a coarse, reddish-brown alga, but once identified, the confusion vanishes. Its rough texture and



Colony of the bryozoan  
*Bugula neritina*

frequent branching catch the eye. Each colony consists of a succession of tiny individual zooids attached to one another in a zigzag pattern. Each zooid is encased in a chitinous box equipped with a long aperture through which the zooid can extend its tentacles to feed.

As we develop our new technologies for exploiting nature for our profit and well-being, it is critical that the greatest possible diversity of species and populations is protected and maintained.

**Calendar**

**August**

- 3 Monday. Beginning of registration for Baldwin County School Field Trips to the Weeks Bay Reserve. Contact Margaret Holcombe, 928-9792.
- 4 Tuesday. Watershed Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) meeting, 7 p.m. at Reserve.
- 12-14 Wednesday - Friday. Three-day orientation program for new Weeks Bay Reserve volunteers. To register or for more information, contact Maureen Nation, 928-9792.

**September**

- 1 Tuesday. Watershed Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) meeting, 7 p.m. at Reserve.
- 7 Monday. Interpretive Center will be closed for the Labor Day Holiday. Trails and boardwalks open.
- 10 Thursday. Weeks Bay Reserve Advisory Committee meeting, 1 p.m. at Reserve.
- 19 Saturday. 1998 International Coastal Clean Up, 8 a.m. - 12 noon. Registration for the Weeks Bay Zone 7:30 - 9 a.m. at the Reserve. Bring appropriate weather gear such as sunscreen, hat, water bottle, gloves, etc. Complimentary lunch and refreshments served at 12 noon. Boat owners interested in cleaning up area shorelines please call by Sept. 16. For more information contact Bob McCormack at 928-9792.
- 26 Saturday. "Kick off" of Weeks Bay Reserve Guest Lecture Series. **Margie Smith**, Baldwin County Beekeepers Association, will address "What Do Bees Mean to You?" 10 - 11 a.m. Reserve Auditorium.
- 26-27 Saturday - Sunday. Weeks Bay Volunteers Annual Native Plant Sale, 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.

**October**

- 1 Thursday. Beginning of registration for Non-Baldwin County School Field Trips to the Weeks Bay Reserve. Contact Margaret Holcombe, 928-9792.
- 3 Saturday. National Estuaries Day.
- 6 Tuesday. Watershed Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) meeting, 7 p.m. at Reserve.

## River Clean Up

Weeks Bay residents and volunteers celebrated another successful River Clean Up on Saturday, May 16 with more than 2.5 tons of trash collected. According to Chairman **Larry Hipsh**, more than 50 volunteers, including Boy Scouts, church youth groups, and residents along the Fish and Magnolia Rivers, joined Reserve staff in the effort.

Volunteers met at the River Park Marina and Bay Watch Marina, then labored from 9 a.m. - 12 noon with their specific assignments. Everyone returned to the Reserve for a complimentary chicken lunch and awards ceremony featuring prizes for largest piece of trash, most trash gathered, biggest volunteer group, best attitude and more. Prizes donated by area merchants ranged from coolers, stickers, T-shirts, video rentals and pizzas to Tae Kwan Do lessons.

The goal of River Clean Up is improving water quality by removing litter from roadways, river banks and bridges. In addition to being an eyesore, much of the trash is potentially harmful to people and wildlife.

Plan now to join your fellow neighbors and volunteers for the International Coastal Clean Up on Saturday, Sept. 19!



## THE WEEKS BAY RESERVE FOUNDATION THANKS OUR NEW AND RENEWING MEMBERS

*January - June 1998*

Mrs. L.G. Adams, Jr.  
Alabama Department of Postsecondary  
Education - Dr. Fred Gainous  
Alabama Power Company  
Baldwin County Historical Society  
Dr. Alan Belcher  
Rufus Bethea  
Roberta Billie  
Shannon Boutwell  
Breland Homes, Inc.  
Milton and Margaret Brown  
Dorothy Cain  
Geoff Cain  
John Carlton  
Keith Carter  
Laline Cason  
Compass Bank  
Dorothy Converse  
Mary Crawford  
Robert and Andrea Cross  
Dr. George Crozier  
J.V. Cummings Memorial Fund  
Gladys Daughtry  
Michael and Celia Delaney  
Dixie Oaks Convenience Store  
Art, Ellen and Hunter Dyas  
Charles and Patricia Earle  
Dr. Robert and Sue Eubanks  
Executive Center - Celia Trawick  
Exxon Company USA  
Fred and Blair Garth

Laura Gilpin  
John Glaze  
Carol Griffin  
Winthrop Hallett, III  
Perry Hand  
Mrs. Paul Hansche  
Dr. and Mrs. C.D. Harrell, III  
Mr. and Mrs. Ben Hoffacker  
Dr. Michael Houston and  
Dr. Barbara O'Brien  
Z.M.P. Inge  
Dr. Bobby and Lois Irby  
Dotty Johnson  
Malcolm Jones  
Brenda Kaiser and Girls  
Leslie Ann Lyda  
Malbis Memorial Foundation  
Dr. Alan and Alison Moore  
Joan Morris  
William and Pagan Mosher  
Wilhelmina Nonkes  
Mr. and Mrs. Patrick Noonan  
Carolann Norwood  
George and Abigail Panayiotou  
John and May Moss Parker  
Harold and Carlos Parkman  
Cecil Pitman  
Pitman Insurance Agency  
Patricia Quinn  
Yetta and Mary Samford  
Arlene Saucier

Jane Scott  
Dr. John and Helen Shriner  
Maud Skiba  
David and Opal Smith  
Dr. Donald Springen  
Cathy Hinrichs Stapleton  
Dr. Dwight Steedley  
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Don Taebel  
Perry and Betty Thomas  
Mac and Michelle Tonsmeire  
Skipper Tonsmeire  
David and Suzanne Trice  
Len and Pam Turner  
Don and Maud Van Eysbergen  
Vulcan, Inc.  
Freida Ward  
Linda Waselkov  
McKay Payne White  
Dr. Warner and Julie Wiggins  
Taylor Wilkins  
J. Glenn Wilson  
Boyd and Elinore Yard

**Memorials  
to Mrs. Hazel Borom**  
Kenneth and Nancy Cain  
Dr. Eric and Nancy Jenison  
M.C. and Rosemary Jenison  
Skipper and Elizabeth Tonsmeire

**Board of Directors**

- Ellis Allen, MD
- Carey Bentley
- John L. Borom, PhD
- The Hon. Jack Edwards
- Tommy Harris
- Mary E. Murchison
- Buddy Russell
- Hattie Smith
- Skipper Tonsmeire

**Newsletter Committee**

- L.G. Adams
- John L. Borom
- Skipper Tonsmeire

Suggestions and comments from readers on future topics of interest are welcome. If you know of others who would be interested in receiving this newsletter, call the Foundation at 990-5004. *The Pelican Post* is produced quarterly by PRADCOM, Inc. of Fairhope, AL, Karen McGuire Moore, President. Funds for publication are provided by members of the Weeks Bay Reserve Foundation.

**JOIN US!**

**Weeks Bay Reserve Foundation**

Weeks Bay Reserve Foundation is a non-profit organization whose members provide assistance and support to the Weeks Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve's goals and programs.

As a member, you will be joining a group of people with similar interests and concerns for natural resources. You can become directly involved with the Reserve's research and educational programs by volunteering to help with field trips, seminars, cultural events, newsletters, and special projects.

You will be regularly informed of Reserve activities through newsletters, special mailings, and meetings. The opportunities for involvement are unlimited. Whatever your talents or interests, the Reserve can use your support. You, the environment, and your community will benefit as a result of your membership. If you are not a member and would like to join, please mail this form, along with your tax-deductible donation to:

**Weeks Bay Reserve Foundation**

P.O. Box 731  
 Fairhope, AL 36533  
 (334) 990-5004

Memberships

NAME _____	___ Student \$5/YR
ADDRESS _____	___ Individual \$25/YR
CITY _____	___ Family \$35/YR
STATE _____ ZIP _____	___ Commercial \$100/YR
AFFILIATION _____	___ Corporate \$250/YR
Additional Donation - Amount \$ _____	

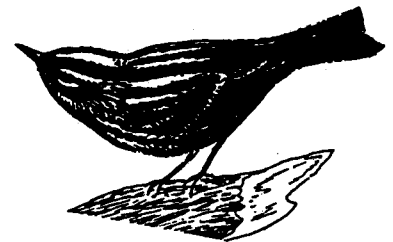
**WEEKS BAY RESERVE FOUNDATION**

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 Fairhope, AL 36533  
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*"Science can purify religion from error and superstition. Religion can purify science from idolatry and false absolutes."*

**John Paul II, Pope  
 (Karol Wojtyla)**



**Black-and-white Warbler  
*Mniotilta varia***