“Passion of our time is land conservation”

Patrick Noonan, founder and Chairman of The Conservation Fund, recalled in a moving speech at the recent Red Hills Biannual Spring Dinner that Oliver Wendell Homes once said, “To live fully is to be engaged in the passion of one’s time.” After 35 distinguished years in the land conservation business, Mr. Noonan is more enthusiastic than ever about the direction the nation is heading to make land conservation the passion of our time. He said that as the federal government moves away from protecting landscapes for national parks and wildlife refuges, America’s conservation movement will move from public ownership to private stewardship. “In the twenty-first century, conservation will be more about efficiency and effectiveness, about return on equity and return on investment, with joint ventures, strategic alliances, and new forms of co-ownership of properties the wave of the future. The business framework for conservation will require us to bring together the two most powerful forces in America today – the free enterprise system and the environmental movement.”

Mr. Noonan stated conservation easements are the most important land conservation tool. “Easements have the awesome ability to direct growth – zoning in perpetuity. Landowners have the power to make that decision. You have the power to ensure personal stewardship, an ethic in your children and grandchildren by placing that easement.”

He remarked, “Tall Timbers is at the forefront of conservation by sportsmen who love the outdoors, who enjoy hunting and fishing, and who believe in fair chase… The piney woods and waters of this area are important for conservation. They’re fragile, they’re beautiful, they’re resource rich and they’re emblematic of America.”

Mr. Noonan concluded by saying, “We are engaged in the passion of our time and the eyes of the nation and conservation are on your organization. You are far ahead of any other conservation group in terms of success—one third of your land set aside, absolutely remarkable…. Yet, you have an enormous challenge before you…. And I would hope that the vision for tomorrow is conservation, by gift or credits or incentives, of all those lands. How well you lead will set the example to follow.”

Red Hills Conservation Program looking for a few good stewards

Tall Timbers Board of Trustees recently created the Red Hills Conservation Program Endowment. The purpose of the Endowment is to provide stable, long-term financial support for the conservation programs of Tall Timbers. As the Red Hills Region continues to grow, the future sustainability of our conservation programs will be critical to ensure the long-term protection of this beautiful rural landscape that we all love so dearly.

We are currently in the process of kicking off the first phase of the campaign, aptly named the 100 Stewards of The Red Hills. Spearheaded by Tall Timbers Trustee, Dr. John R. Lewis, the 100 Stewards of the Red Hills will comprise 100 founding members who share a passionate interest in protecting and conserving the distinct natural resources and cultural traditions of the Red Hills. The ultimate goal of the endowment will be to perpetuate the funding of Tall Timbers’ unique and nationally recognized Red Hills Conservation Program.

If you have an interest in becoming a founding member of this exclusive group of conservation minded individuals, please call us at 850/893-4153, x343. We will be more than happy to provide you with information about joining.
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S REPORT

By Lane Green, Executive Director

The Southwest Georgia Prescribed Fire Council (SWG-PFC), an advocacy group for prescribed fire, was formed in June 2003. During its inaugural year, I will serve as chairman of the Council. The mission of the Georgia Prescribed Fire Council is “to encourage the exchange of information, techniques and experiences among practitioners of prescribed fire in Georgia, and to promote public understanding of the importance and benefits of [the] safe use of prescribed fire.” A steering committee that represents both private and public interests will guide the organization and coordinate meetings. The first meeting will be held at The Plaza Restaurant in Thomasville, GA on September 9, 2003 from 9:00 AM - 3:00 PM. Approximately 600 meeting announcements were mailed to groups and individuals with an interest in prescribed fire in the following 19 southwest Georgia counties: Dooly, Sumter, Crisp, Terrell, Lee, Worth, Turner, Calhoun, Dougherty, Tift, Early, Baker, Miller, Mitchell, Colquitt, Seminole, Decatur, Grady and Thomas.

The meeting agenda will include discussions on threats to burning, fire use in Georgia, and a panel discussion on regional challenges to the use of prescribe fire. After lunch, a tour of Greenwood Plantation in Thomasville has been organized.

Kevin McGorty, RHCP Director

The Florida Wildlife Federation has chosen Kevin McGorty as the recipient of the 2003 Land Conservationist of the Year Award. The award honors those that have made a significant contribution in developing sound land use planning or land conservation practices. Kevin has been the Director of the Red Hills Conservation program at Tall Timbers since 1994. Since Kevin has been Director, the RHCP has permanently protected approximately 60,000 acres in the region through securing conservation easements and promoting better community planning.

Information Resources

GIS AND INFORMATION SYSTEMS

By Rose Rodriguez, Information Resources Manager

The primary focus of the GIS/IS staff this year has been on maintenance of existing data on the Tall Timbers computer network server, refining the GIS Data Library, and other existing databases. A major clean up of the server was accomplished in anticipation of a much-needed upgrade to a new one in 2004. A new fire weather station was also installed and the historical weather database was completed. The weather database and fire weather station will allow for modeling of fire behavior on Tall Timbers using new and existing models. The analysis of 40 years of historical aerial photography is ongoing and we are looking at using new technology such as LIDAR (Light Detection and Ranging) to expand the project through collaborative efforts with University of Georgia. We have also started the process of scanning and geo-rectifying historical aerial photos from the 1920s to compare land-use practices to those of today.

Extension work has focused on helping local landowners develop GIS/GPS capability and supplying owners and land managers with maps to assist them in their management activities. The satellite images that were ordered in 2002 have proved a valuable resource to both Tall Timbers and the Red Hills community.

Joe Noble was invited to join the faculty of FARSITE (Fire Area Simulator) and continues to teach and support fire behavior and GIS activities on wildfires across the country as time permits. Both Kathy Marois, our database manager, and Joe look forward to another productive year in 2004.

LIBRARY

By Rose Rodriguez, Information Resources Manager

Thanks to the perseverance of Librarian Ann Bruce and Library Technical Assistants, Jean Hatfield and Faye Salis, Tall Timbers has a new online card catalog (TTCAT) that includes 7,764 holdings.

In July, the library initiated an automated book check out system that uses bar codes recently applied to over 7,000 books. The library user scans each of their items with a bar code reader to create a record of what they have checked out. Library staff maintains this system, watches for overdue items, and sends reminders to users via email.

The TTRS EV Komarek Fire Ecology Database received 9,703 requests for information from January-July, 2003. The database, which was updated in August of this year, now includes 14,766 records. We are in the second phase of a project for the US Forest Service Southern Research Station adding fire science records pertaining to the southeast.

In cooperation with the Research staff, Ann has conducted an analysis of the journal collection to review costs in this tight budget year and to bring titles up to date.
Tenant House Restoration Project receives full funding from 2003 Florida Legislature

Previously, Tall Timbers has been fortunate to receive funding for Special Category grants from the Florida Department of State. Former grants were used to restore the Beadel house and the barn, but in a year of state budget cuts, our number one ranked historic tenant house restoration project appeared to be doomed for funding. Last minute conference committee negotiations saved some historic preservation grant funds, and it was decided to fully fund the first nine projects that the Florida Historical Commission recommended for funding. Our project leaders had already been instructed to resubmit our grant application for next year. Tenant family members and other community supporters had rewritten and submitted their letters of support when the news came that the grant had been funded and the funds would be released July 2003. Staff, tenant family members and local supporters were ecstatic. All of these groups have shared their time and enthusiasm for the plans generated for this project.

Family support has remained constant, but really peaked with involvement in the archaeology project this year. A family “Dig Day” was organized on February 8 with project archaeologist, Ross Morrell. What an experience to see three generations of families discovering the past. Grandparents had wonderful stories to tell as patent medicine and beauty care bottles, iron pots, wood stove pieces, shoe soles, cooking utensils, farm tools, etc. were excavated. It was an exciting event.

Another event was the second annual fish fry the last Saturday in February. The stormy weather limited the wagon trips to the Jones House to newcomers who had not been on the wagon trip last year. This year’s program featured archaeologist Ross Morrell and artifacts from the house and corncrib site. Once again, many anecdotes were shared. Family members also participated in filling out family history forms prepared by archivist, Delbra McGriff and Ashley Williams. Valuable genealogical information was collected and organized. With Delbra’s help we are now conducting individual, as well as group oral history interviews; and archaeological research continues. One new feature discovered on the farm site is an old syrup mill that has most of the brickwork still intact.

Traditionally, Tall Timbers has only been recognized as the former home of Henry and Genevieve Beadel; however, during the years they owned the property a number of tenant families thought of their Tall Timbers farms as home too. This sentiment became clear when a group of elderly ladies of former tenant families came for their first visit to Tall Timbers since World War II. As they passed sites they recognized, one of my passengers kept saying over and over how thankful she was to be able to “come home one more time.” The old saying “home is where the heart is” seems applicable here. The tenants may not have owned the property, but they had a great love for Tall Timbers. For many, it’s where they were born, played, courted, worked, married, raised families, hunted and fished. When they were able to purchase property, many of them bought nearby and are currently Tall Timbers’ neighbors. We are fortunate to have so many human resources available in the restoration and interpretation of this historic property as quality museum exhibits.

Mellon Archives building to be renovated

Tall Timbers recently received a $100,000 grant from the Trustees of the R.K. Mellon Family Foundation and Mr. and Mrs. Armour N. Mellon for the renovation of the Mellon Archives Building. The Mellon Building was the first facility constructed on the campus of Tall Timbers in 1961, to house and preserve the personal records of naturalist Herbert L. Stoddard, the Beadel family records and films, the Komarek papers and Tall Timbers institutional records. Over the years it has also served as a research lab, administrative offices, and the previous home of the Red Hills Conservation Program. After recent renovations and additions to other campus buildings, the Archives no longer has to share its building with other programs. We are grateful to the Mellon family for their generous gift that will bring the building up to modern archival standards. The renovated building will provide much improved physical and intellectual access to our special collections for our staff and the public.
Research momentum is gathering, as the Research Program begins to coalesce with the addition of key personnel this year. Dr. Palmer continues to lead a tremendous quail research program that is increasingly being called upon for expertise in management for bobwhite quail by agencies, landowners and managers across the South. Including my ongoing quail projects, we have a cooperative research presence in nine southern states. Dr. Robertson has developed a soils lab within the Fire Ecology unit that is addressing basic ecological questions in terms of plant distribution and community composition, which will increase immeasurably our understanding of the ecology of the Red Hills. This sorely needed data will have a direct influence on land management and will provide guidance for the Red Hills Conservation Program as easements are developed. Jim Cox in Vertebrate Ecology has in place exciting studies on Bachman’s sparrows, brown-headed nuthatches and Red-cockaded woodpeckers that are showing surprising results about their ecological relationship with fire. Stuart Jackson with Forestry is gathering baseline data on the forest at Tall Timbers for our long-term database that will serve as a cornerstone for future research. Eric Staller in Land Management has embraced the idea of land management as research, thus turning his program into an important contributor for research development and testing of ideas to share with not only landowners and managers but also the ecological community. Each of our programs has developed innovative research thrusts that will continue to keep Tall Timbers in the forefront in ecological thinking and in applying what we have learned on the ground.

FROM THE GAME BIRD LAB By Bill Palmer

Cooperation is key to conservation

We typically report on research projects occurring in the Red Hills and by far and away most of our research effort is spent right here. However, it is important to the future of the sport of quail hunting that the knowledge learned through research and successful land management in the Red Hills benefit bobwhite populations throughout the Southeast. Therefore, we began several new projects this year in cooperation with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, Georgia Department of Natural Resources, University of Georgia, Albany Quail Project, University of Florida, and Quail Unlimited, that address problems facing bobwhite in the Southeast. These projects include studies on the management of bobwhite quail and wild turkey populations on private lands. However, two of these projects stand out as particularly important for the conservation of bobwhites in the Southeast.

The first of these two projects, cooperatively funded by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission Foundation, University of Georgia, and Quail Unlimited, is just underway. This project team seeks to establish a research and demonstration farm in the Panhandle of Florida to document the costs and benefits of restoring early-successional habitats for wildlife. The goal is to boost bobwhite populations, as well as the populations of other declining species, by using all available knowledge and resources. The plan is to implement the best management practices for bobwhites and “test” how useful the cost-share and incentive programs through Federal and State programs are for assisting landowners toward this goal. Further, we will assess the economic ramifications for longer timber management rotations versus short rotation management. For many landowners, a major impediment to conducting excellent land stewardship is the unknown economic consequences of adopting alternative management actions.

The second project seeks to document the long-term effects of “isolation” on the health and persistence of bobwhite populations. This study has two components; first we are documenting the existing genetic condition of bobwhite populations in the Red Hills, where they are presumably healthy, and comparing these results to the genetic condition of declining, isolated populations elsewhere. Many of the plantations in the Red Hills donated quail wings for this study and the lab work is currently underway. A second aspect of this project is to document the genetic effect of relocating wild bobwhites to an isolated bobwhite population. Theron Terhune, a Ph.D. student at University of Georgia, is monitoring the survival and reproduction of wild bobwhites relocated to an isolated bobwhite population in middle Georgia. The transfer of wild bobwhites was conducted by Auburn University, Albany Quail Project personnel this past spring. This overall cooperative effort will help to answer the question; can the restoration of huntable bobwhite populations in areas where few wild birds exist be improved through the relocation of wild bobwhites?

Together, through cooperation among organizations and agencies, these projects will provide useful information to private landowners about how to improve bobwhite numbers when they currently have very few quail. This is the condition of most private lands in the Southeast today. Without reliable knowledge on how to be successful and what it will cost to do so, many landowners opt against habitat improvement, which has dire consequences for bobwhites. The conservation of bobwhite quail and most early successional species will be more difficult to accomplish without the dedication of private landowners who manage habitat for bobwhites.

Information on how to manage for bobwhites in the Red Hills is valuable for private landowners elsewhere in the Southeast.
Tall Timbers was one of only 20 organizations nationwide to receive funding ($97,500) from the Private Lands Stewardship program administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The grant creates a new outreach position at Tall Timbers dedicated to working directly on properties in our region. Greg Hagan, who has worked for the Turner Endangered Species Fund for the past four years, will fill the position and devote his time to promoting the values of longleaf forests as well as performing on-the-ground management activities beneficial to Red-cockaded woodpeckers. Specifically, Greg is available to:

- Discuss Safe Harbor and other federal, state, and private incentive programs;
- Locate and mark woodpecker cavity trees;
- Develop and provide maps that show the locations of cavity trees;
- Conduct baseline surveys for Safe Harbor agreements;
- Stabilize and expand woodpecker groups through construction of artificial cavities; and
- Assess sites for other potential management needs.

We hope landowners will take advantage of this new service and look at the various incentive packages that help to recognize the great land stewardship that Red Hills landowners have practiced. Please contact Jim Cox (phone: 850/893-4153, x223; e-mail: jcox@ttrs.org) if you or your land manager would like to set up an appointment to discuss aspects of this new program.

Demographic monitoring of Red-cockaded woodpeckers on the Wade Tract has shown that longleaf pines are not the only elders on this old-growth tract. As of June 2003, four adult woodpeckers greater than eight years of age had been recaptured and given new color bands. We suspect there are many other senior woodpeckers on the tract given the number of old and discolored bands we’ve seen. The demographic profile still under construction may help to demonstrate that annual survival rates are exceptionally high on this old-growth tract.

Safe Harbor agreements have been completed for six new properties, which bring the total acreage covered by this voluntary program to 29,000 acres (and 80 woodpecker groups). The package of incentives offered through Safe Harbor agreements provides an important tool for efforts to conserve this endangered species. We especially want to thank Mr. Warren Bicknell III, for his continued support and promotion of the Safe Harbor Program. We would also like to thank the Sedgwick Land Company, Mr. Charlie Chapin, and Mr. Warren Bicknell for allowing new recruitment clusters to be constructed on their properties.

Tall Timbers Research Station, Pebble Hill Plantation, and numerous other organizations staged Georgia’s first official bird festival earlier this year. The Pinewoods Bird Festival at Pebble Hill plantation drew an estimated crowd of 450, with some coming from as far away as Colorado and North Carolina. Attendees were treated to field trips, exhibitions, and a special raptor show put on by Georgia Southern University. Plans are underway for next year’s festival, which will take place on Saturday, April 3, 2004.

Work on the nesting ecology of brown-headed nuthatches continued to expand this spring. With the help of technician Susan Roth and volunteers Brad Hartman and Bob Henderson, 45 adults and 70 nestlings were banded. Among the new discoveries were two groups with two non-breeding helpers (total of four adults), two instances where a helper attained breeding status within the territories of their recently departed parents, dispersal of a first-year female to a neighboring territory, and 80% retention of first-year birds in the territories where they were born. Social breeding systems such as this are known only for a fraction of bird species, and understanding such systems may be key to understanding population declines in this species of management concern.

Another new subject for research came into sharper focus this year. Bachman’s sparrow is considered to be a species of special management concern both by Partners in Flight and the U.S. Forest Service. Population health in this secretive sparrow is closely tied to ground cover conditions, and a new project aims to look at relationships between ground cover condition (which is influenced by the season and frequency of burns) and survival. Before the work could be initiated, however, an efficient means of capturing and banding sparrows had to be devised. A technique using taped calls and mist nets is a very effective and can yield six to eight birds in two hours.
Since the new Fire Ecology Program began in January 2003, we began several fire ecology studies. Thomas Ostertag joined the staff in May as the Fire Ecology Specialist, and the program has benefited greatly from the hard work of summer interns Anna Deyle and Andrew Rush.

In Spring 2003, a study on Pebble Hill Plantation was begun to measure fuels for fire in pinelands, determine what fuel types result in most effective woody stem kill, and to study the relationship between pine tree cover and fuel loads. So far the results suggest that wiregrass and two-year roughs provide the most desirable fires for controlling woody stems, and that pine trees closer to 60 than 30 ft² basal area per acre provide the highest fine fuel loads. The research project will be continued to determine the longer-term effects of fuel conditions and weather on woody stem kill.

In Spring/Summer of this year, we conducted a study to test the hypothesis that certain upland areas within the Red Hills Region were naturally covered with shortleaf pine and associated hardwood species. We predicted that mature shortleaf pine communities would have higher clay content, shallower clay horizons, and more nutrients than longleaf pine/wiregrass areas. We took soil samples at 14 locations throughout the Red Hills Region on private property generously made available by the owners. Although shortleaf sites did not have higher clay contents, their mineral nutrient levels were higher than longleaf sites. Also, most of the shortleaf sites showed no signs of erosion in their soil profiles, suggesting that their distribution is not restricted to degraded soils. These results provide some evidence that shortleaf pine forests were a natural part of the Red Hills landscape associated with relatively high-nutrient soils.

With the guidance of Research Director, Ron Masters, fire behavior measurements have been incorporated into the Fire Ecology Program. We took fire behavior measurements on the Stoddard Plots as well as the Wade Tract during a prescribed burn on May 28. There we tested and confirmed the usefulness of high temperature probes for tracking temperature changes in flaming fronts to compare with fire behavior and effects. We also mapped unburned patches using Geographic Positioning Systems (GPS). These methods will be used in future burns as part of a long-term monitoring program to relate fuel and weather conditions to fire behavior on the Wade Tract and other important areas.

We are currently initiating a project to better understand differences between “old-field” and “native ground cover” areas in the pinelands of the Red Hills Region. This research will contribute to conservation efforts by evaluating the usefulness of wiregrass and other native species as indicators of high biodiversity. We are also starting a study to determine if and when native ground cover returns to isolated areas of disturbance, such as firebreaks and food plots, and what can be done to encourage reestablishment. We look forward to an exciting year of learning more about fire and ecosystem management in the upland pine communities of the Red Hills.

Resource management staff burned 1,156 acres at Tall Timbers Research Station (TTRS), 1468 acres at Pebble Hill Plantation (PHP), and 178 acres at the Wade Tract in 2003. A total of 916 post burn evaluations data points were taken on the properties. After burning, thickets and areas that did not burn within the burn units were mowed.

A Gopher tortoise inventory on Tall Timbers has begun with approximately 50% of the north side sampled. Habitat sampling of the active (n=10), inactive (n=12) and abandoned (n=23) burrows will be conducted this summer. Pebble Hill continues the timber/vegetation cruise that will cover the entire study site every five years.

Land management continues to spread supplement feed for quail and put out stationary feeders with a mixture of milo and 50% laying mash during the nesting season as part of an ongoing study on supplemental feeding at TTRS and PHP.

Twenty Wood Duck nest boxes are maintained on TTRS, and 13 more will be made and erected with the help of a local Boy Scout troop.

Tall Timbers joined with the National Wild Turkey Federation’s Wheelin’ Sportsman Program to coordinate three deer hunts for 15 disabled hunters in 2003. Our plans are to continue, improve, and expand this program in 2004.

For more information about the Wheelin’ Sportsman Program or land management at Tall Timbers, call Eric at 850/893-4153, x240 or e-mail: erics@ttrs.org.
The objective of the Tall Timbers Forestry program is to meet the ecological forestry research needs of the Red Hills Region. Since the 1930s, properties in the Red Hills Region have been managed to produce beautiful, high quality timber and spectacular quail numbers. And in so doing, a wealth of rare and endangered species have also thrived. Other goals are to better understand the ecology, dynamics and economic opportunities behind this type of forest management.

Forest Inventory
Our current ecological forestry research projects include a detailed forest inventory on Tall Timbers Research Station (TTRS). The database generated from this cruise will provide a baseline of data and enable all of our scientists to monitor change over time in response to differing fire regimes or other management practices. Sample intensity is a one-tenth acre plot with various additional sub-samples of groundcover.

The table below shows the most common tree species and their average diameter at breast height (DBH). By grouping all the sampled trees into six size classes (0-3”, 4-8”, 9-12”, 13-18”, 19-26”), and greater than 26 inches), we can see how the prevalence of species shifts as DBH increases. The results indicate that while shortleaf pine (Pinus echinata) is the most prevalent tree on the station, live oak trees have the largest average DBH. Note the low percentage of longleaf pine at Tall Timbers at present. A relatively high percentage of sweet gum and water oak along with other hardwoods exists in the smallest size class (0-4 inch). This reflects the hardwood removal that began in 1998. Larger hickories may not have been harvested because of heart-rot. This may serve as a warning of future hardwood encroachment as these trees mature. The continuing need for frequent prescribed fire is very evident.

Even with the hardwood removal, pines compose only 41% of the trees across all size classes on the small area sampled thus far. However, the samples were from generally low-lying and moist areas and do not represent all parts of our forest. As our longleaf restoration and prescribed fire efforts continue, this percentage is expected to increase.

From 1970 to 1997 hardwood encroachment into the uplands occurred on TTRS. It is hypothesized that the increased open canopy resulting from the hardwood harvest begun in 1998 may explain recent increases in the number and distribution of quail populations. To link what is quantified on the ground with what is seen from the air, we are sampling historical aerial photographs. Early examination of hardwood removal data imply presence of mid-story hardwoods as a possible influence on the loss of Red-cockaded woodpeckers from Tall Timbers. Additional parameters include historical weather data and fire history. This collaborative project draws from our GIS, game bird, vertebrate ecology, and forestry programs.

Forestry Extension
Tall Timbers Forestry along with other TTRS departments participate in the North Florida Prescribed Fire Council and the newly created Southwest Georgia Prescribed Fire Council. We are also cooperating with the Florida Forest Legacy Program (FLP) a federally funded program to aid Florida protect forested land directly threatened by deforestation. In addition, we are participating with many other agencies in the Tri-state Steering Committee for a Longleaf Pine Ecosystem Restoration Symposium. Efforts will focus on the logistics of how to restore wiregrass and other native ground-cover plants from the longleaf ecosystem. Recently, TTRS was represented at a Society of American Foresters (SAF) conference, Practical Sustainable Forestry and the Marketplace: Making It Work. Much discussion focused on forest certification programs such as those offered by the Sustainable Forestry Initiative, the Forest Stewardship Council, the American Tree Farm Association and others.

If you have any questions about the Tall Timbers Forestry program please contact Stuart Jackson at 850/893-4153, x340, or email: SJackson@ttrs.org.

Percentage of Trees in Six Diameter Classes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Size Classes</th>
<th>DBH (inches)</th>
<th>Shortleaf</th>
<th>Sweet Gum</th>
<th>Water Oak</th>
<th>Loblolly</th>
<th>Live Oak</th>
<th>Hickory</th>
<th>Longleaf</th>
<th>Black Cherry</th>
<th>Dogwood</th>
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<tr>
<td>I.</td>
<td>0-3</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
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<td>4-8</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III.</td>
<td>9-12</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
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<td>5</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>V.</td>
<td>19-26</td>
<td>46</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>9</td>
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<tr>
<td>VI.</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
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Preliminary results from the initial samples on the south side of Tall Timbers.
Conservation tax incentives

Congress is considering two major tax incentives for land conservation. The first incentive would expand the income tax deduction a landowner can take for donating a conservation easement, and the second incentive would cut taxes on the sale of land or a conservation easement to a land trust or government conservation agency.

In April the U.S. Senate passed, by 95-5 vote, the CARE bill (S 476). Section 106 of the bill allows landowners who donate a conservation easement to deduct the value of their gift over 16 years instead of the current six years. In addition, the bill increases the amount that can be deducted in any one year from the current 30 percent of the donor’s adjusted gross income to 50 percent. Section 107 of the bill would cut capital gains by 25 percent on sales of land or of conservation easements.

According to Rand Wentworth, President of the Land Trust Alliance (LTA), “These incentives will help farmers, ranchers, and other landowners who want to protect their land from development. The Senate recognizes that private, voluntary land conservation offers the best hope for protecting the American landscape. These new tax benefits will dramatically increase the number of landowners who will choose to conserve their land.”

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The House is drafting its own charities bill (H.R. 7). Tall Timbers is working with LTA and numerous other land trusts to urge the House to include the Senate conservation incentives into its bill. If the House approves the tax cuts in their bill, they could be enacted this year. We urge area landowners to contact their congressmen to support such legislation.

New Red Hills Conservation Program staff

Centerville Farms proposed development, Leon County’s first conservation subdivision is moving through the planning process.

Conservation subdivisions are one form of green development. Conservation subdivisions are residential developments in which the majority of land is permanently protected as open space, while houses are clustered on smaller lots on the remainder of the property. Randall Arendt, the country’s foremost author on conservation subdivisions and a recent lecturer in the Red Hills Region, has compared conservation subdivisions to golf course communities where natural open space replaces the golf course.

Tall Timbers is supportive of conservation-based subdivisions outside the core Red Hills area. Our concern is that residential sprawl is not compatible with prescribed burning, which is critically needed for successful wildlife habitat management and forest health in the Red Hills Region. It is imperative that as communities are attracted to conservation subdivisions, strict guidelines be developed to ensure that these developments are not located in lands zoned for rural uses, which could lead to what critics refer to as “green sprawl.” Conservation subdivisions are more appropriately built in transitional areas between urban and rural zones near existing infrastructure and other services.

Assisted by a grant from the Elizabeth Ordway Dunn Foundation, RHCP staff is working with the Tallahassee-Leon County Planning Department to draft policies that will guide future conservation subdivisions in the county. Key recommendations include locating conservation subdivisions in Urban Fringe land use zones, permanently protecting at least 50 percent of the land, requiring a land management plan to properly manage the open space, and requiring that the open space in conservation subdivisions connect to open space in adjacent public or private lands. Our success in drafting effective guidelines for these developments will ultimately determine whether conservation subdivisions become a useful tool for blending development with conservation or simply a new version of an old problem – sprawl.

Conservation subdivisions: creative development or green sprawl?

By Neil Fleckenstein, Red Hills Planner

Several recent national surveys show the increasing popularity of green development. Green development is a movement that recognizes that homebuyers place a high value on natural open space, native landscaping, and trails for hiking, biking and walking. A recent survey found that nearly 90 percent of homebuyers said they would pay more for green features.

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Conservation tax incentives

Congress is considering two major tax incentives for land conservation. The first incentive would expand the income tax deduction a landowner can take for donating a conservation easement, and the second incentive would cut taxes on the sale of land or a conservation easement to a land trust or government conservation agency.

In April the U.S. Senate passed, by 95-5 vote, the CARE bill (S 476). Section 106 of the bill allows landowners who donate a conservation easement to deduct the value of their gift over 16 years instead of the current six years. In addition, the bill increases the amount that can be deducted in any one year from the current 30 percent of the donor’s adjusted gross income to 50 percent. Section 107 of the bill would cut capital gains by 25 percent on sales of land or of conservation easements.

According to Rand Wentworth, President of the Land Trust Alliance (LTA), “These incentives will help farmers, ranchers, and other landowners who want to protect their land from development. The Senate recognizes that private, voluntary land conservation offers the best hope for protecting the American landscape. These new tax benefits will dramatically increase the number of landowners who will choose to conserve their land.”

The House is drafting its own charities bill (H.R. 7). Tall Timbers is working with LTA and numerous other land trusts to urge the House to include the Senate conservation incentives into its bill. If the House approves the tax cuts in their bill, they could be enacted this year. We urge area landowners to contact their congressmen to support such legislation.

New Red Hills Conservation Program staff

Kevin Pope and David Layne joined the RHCP this spring. Kevin replaces David Copps who resigned as Conservation Coordinator to return to the field of landscape architecture with the State of Florida. Kevin is no stranger to the Red Hills or conservation easements. He was formerly the Environmental Compliance Director for Leon County. In that capacity from 1996 to 2001, Kevin initiated and conducted extensive
negotiations between Georgia and Florida concerning water quality issues in the Ochlockonee River Basin. He also administered watershed studies for Lake Lafayette and the Bradfordville area.

Kevin holds a Master of Science degree from the University of Florida, majoring in environmental engineering and systems ecology. An avid hunter, Kevin is putting his experience and love of the region to good use as he completed two major conservation easement projects within his first six months at Tall Timbers.

David Layne recently retired after 27 years with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FLDEP). A portion of David’s work with FLDEP was as a botanist and wetland ecologist involved with wetland delineation and identification of plant species. He holds a Master of Science degree in Ecology from the University of Tennessee. With Tall Timbers, he is serving as the Field Biologist/Geographic Information Specialist for the RHCP. Dr. Christine Ambrose formerly held this position. Christine was promoted to Land Conservation Specialist, expanding her role on developing and working on conservation easements in the Red Hills.

Rounding out the staff changes, Ofelia Sivyer became the RHCP Administrative Assistant in February. She did an excellent job of coordinating the Red Hills Biannual Spring Dinner. Ofelia is instrumental in keeping our office running efficiently. We welcome all these new faces and hope they find their work rewarding.

Development

SPECIAL EVENTS By Vann Middleton, Development Director

Naturalist’s Ball

The 13th Annual Naturalist’s Ball was held Saturday, February 15, 2003 at Pebble Hill Plantation. With over 150 guests in attendance, this year’s event raised approximately $33,000 for the Tall Timbers Foundation to help fund long-term studies of wildlife, forest management, fire ecology and conservation. The Ball’s success was due to the leadership and talent of Henrietta Walter and Kitty Davis. As Co-Chairmen, Henrietta and Kitty did an outstanding job planning the food and decorations, and attending to the other details that created such a spectacular evening. A special thanks goes to Mrs. Gilbert W. Humphrey, Honorary Chairman, who had overseen this event for more than a decade and who made the Ball a favorite social event of the hunting season. Finally we would like to thank our guests, underwriters, and those who made donations to the event. The Naturalist’s Ball would not be successful without your wonderful contributions.

Mark your calendars for next year’s event to be held Saturday, February 14, 2004 (Valentine’s Day) at Pebble Hill Plantation. The Naturalist’s Ball is a very popular event that sells out quickly, so make plans early to attend.

Red Hills Horse Trials Hosts World Cup Qualifier

This Six Annual Red Hills Horse Trials (RHHT) hosted the East Coast Eventing World Cup qualifier (CIC-W***), a tremendous honor for such a young event. Over 200 of the world’s best equestrians gathered in Tallahassee to compete in the three-day dressage, cross-country and stadium jumping event. Although rain put a damper on attendance, the competitors didn’t let the weather affect their performance; five riders at the RHHT qualified for the Eventing World Cup to be held in Pau, France this October.

Tall Timbers is honored to be the co-beneficiary of the charitable proceeds of this exciting event. Over the past six years, RHHT has given over $115,000 in support of Tall Timbers. We are particularly grateful to co-organizers, Sallie Ausley and Sylvia Ochs and the volunteers and staff of the RHHT whose hard work makes this donation possible.

Next year’s event will once again be held at Elinor Klapp-Phipps Park in Tallahassee the weekend of March 12-14, 2004. Mark your calendars today and plan to attend Tallahassee’s premier equestrian event. If you are interested in becoming a
7th Annual Kate Ireland/Tall Timbers Golf Tournament and Auction netted over $85,000

The 7th Annual Kate Ireland/Tall Timbers Dinner and Auction was held April 27th at Glen Arven Country Club in Thomasville. Always our most popular fund-raiser of the year, this year's events raised over $85,000 for the Tall Timbers Foundation. There were plenty of great items from which to bid in both the silent and live auctions. The always-entertaining “Colonel” T. Wayne Davis once again charmed the crowd as auctioneer for the live bidding and convinced the patrons to open their wallets in support of a great cause.

The following morning, 17 golf teams hit the links at Glen Arven to vie for a chance to win the coveted Kate Ireland Cup given to the winners of the Tall Timbers Golf Tournament. For the third year in a row, the tournament was decided by a single stroke as the team of Dave Middleton, David Middleton, David Moreton and Vann Middleton squeaked out the victory. Special thanks go to Tournament co-chairmen Kate Ireland and Jack Frazee and their committee: Chapin Frazee, Stan Barnes, John Brinson, Max Beverly, Danny MacQuirter, Lee Walters, Wayne Riles and George Simmons. We also wish to thank all of the hole and team sponsors whose generous contributions helped make this year’s event such a success.

2004 Sponsor of the Red Hills Horse Trials, this year’s Sponsor kickoff party will be held at Tall Timbers Research Station on October 9, 2003. For more information, contact RHHT organizer Sallie Ausley at 850/385-3956.

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