



Land Stewards Take to the Swamps



Our eight Land Stewards went in search of a swamp thing (or two or three) in April as part of their annual team training week. Here, Mike Heneghan steers a jon boat through the Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge, followed by Taylor Shook, Caelia Wysocki, Drew Ruttinger, and Andy Hug. Each year our natural resource experts, composed of the Stewardship Team and Land Manager Drew

Ruttinger, travel to a different ecoregion in Georgia or Alabama as part of their internal education program. The Okefenokee Swamp is its own Level IV ecoregion within the Level III Southern Coastal Plains, earning special focus.

Exposing the land stewards to ecosystems outside their home region is a valuable exercise, says Stewardship Director Amy Gaddy. “It gives us all a bigger picture of what we’re protecting.” These retreats also allow these hardworking staff members, stationed in different parts of the two states, some relaxed time together in their favorite space—nature. **Check out our Facebook page** for images of some of the other swamp things—and great landscapes—that our eight adventurous land stewards encountered this past spring.



And the Greenie Goes to ...

On April 19, 2018, the Georgia-Alabama Land Trust was honored by the Coosa River Basin Initiative (CRBI) with a **Greenie Award for Land Protection**. The annual CRBI Greenie Awards are for extraordinary work in protecting natural resources in the Upper Coosa River Basin. CRBI emphasized that the Land Trust's protection of more than 54,000 acres in the Coosa and the Tallapoosa river basins benefits water quality throughout both Georgia and Alabama. Stewardship Director Amy Gaddy explained that by having riparian buffers and restrictions on activities that may occur within those buffers, the Land Trust is preventing erosion, run-off, and other negative impacts on the waters of the region.



Katherine Eddins receives the Greenie from CRBI Board President, Nina Lovel

Welcome Our New Team Members!



Steve Greenberg

Staff Attorney & Director of Protection

Steve Greenberg has a profound connection with Virginia's Blue Ridge Mountains. It was there as a Boy Scout, and later Eagle Scout, that he discovered his lifelong passion for backpacking, hiking, and camping.

[READ MORE ABOUT STEVE](#)



April Johnson

Real Estate Paralegal

April Johnson joins our Protection Staff in a role she does well, both in business and in her personal life. As a real estate paralegal based in Birmingham, she's hard at work behind the scenes, helping to keep our attorneys organized.

[READ MORE ABOUT APRIL](#)

David Riley

Director of Finance and Human Resources

David Riley, our new Director of Finance and Human Resources, feels most at home in a tent. On days when he doesn't feel like making the commute from the Piedmont office to his home in Birmingham, visit a local campground where he can hang his hammock and get dinner started on his cookstove.

[READ MORE ABOUT DAVID](#)



Debra Pitt

Administrative Assistant

Debra Pitt is comfortable in a lot of places, having traveled throughout Europe and across the United States as a Yeoman in the U.S. Navy. She's also fond of the years she spent in Atlanta, working in commercial banking. But having grown up in Cedartown, Georgia, the small-town life kept calling her.

[READ MORE ABOUT DEBRA](#)



An Evening in the City

CONSERVATION HAPPENS HERE

4th Annual Georgia-Alabama
Land Trust Benefit

Friday, September 28th

Join us for our 4th annual fundraiser – An Evening in the City. Thanks to our hosts Buck and Ellen Wiley, we will celebrate our landowners and their conservation of land under the trees in Atlanta on Friday, September 28th

Tickets \$100 – Sponsorships from \$1,000
For more information contact Lorrie Stafford

Reserve your tickets and sponsorship today

Steward's Corner

Rachel Mingea, GALT's Term Land Steward for the Southwest Georgia region, works from her home base in Valdosta, Georgia, known as "Azalea City." She discovered that she held some misconceptions about one of her favorite plants. It sent her on a quest to learn more about azaleas, leading to the discovery that both the native and non-native species have a role to play in maintaining a more sustainable region.

Rachel Mingea graduated from the University of Florida and has an M.L.A. from the Harvard Extension School



Azalea Quest By Rachel Mingea

During stewardship team training week, the Georgia-Alabama Land Trust Land Stewards got together in the Okefenokee Swamp and were lucky enough to have wildlife biologist Vic VanSant, recently retired from the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, join us to further educate the team about the ecology of the Southern Coastal Plains ecoregion. It was then that I was informed that the majority of the azalea species I'd known growing up weren't native to North America but were introduced to the region. [READ ARTICLE](#)



Photos courtesy of Patrick Thompson, Donald E. Davis Arboretum at Auburn University



**GEORGIA-ALABAMA
LAND TRUST**

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