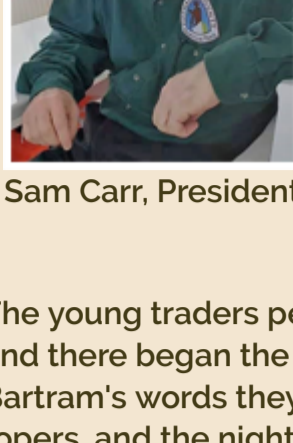




Check out the 2023 Frolic Schedule ►



Sam Carr, President

President's Report

It all started back in September, 1774. In St. Augustine, a band of 40 Seminole warriors had traded their herd of Cracker horses for "a very liberal supply of spirituous liquors, about twenty kegs, each containing five gallons." to fund a warpath on the "Chactaws" in Tallahassee. They arrived back at their encampment at Spalding's Lower Store at what we know now as Stokes Landing.

The young traders persuaded the warriors to "breach their beloved nectar" and there began the very first "frolics" in Palatka. It lasted last ten days. In Bartram's words they "merrily passed the day with these jovial, amorous toppers, and the nights with convivial songs, dances and sacrifices to Venus" until the drink was all gone. What a legacy for our town. Somehow it fits.

Fast forward to April 22, 2023 when the Bartram Trail Society of Florida will celebrate the 9th St. Johns River Bartram Frolic in Palatka. We will invite nearly 1,000 Putnam County students and 2,000 nature-loving folks to our Riverfront Park to experience our "Passport-to-the-Past" Adventure. You will personally meet Billy Bartram, Mico Chlucco, the Long Warrior - King of the Seminoles and Trader Job Wiggins.

There will also be 20 nature-based exhibits with reptiles, Cracker horses, Riverkeepers, fish, river advocates and native plants. The Pride-of-Palatka River tours annually sell out so we added another tour to include kids. We will have three Bartram kayaking adventures. We doubled the size of our Sunday guided bus tour to 12 Bartram sites. We will conclude with our Bartram Symposium on Sunday with speakers that will amaze, inspire, and educate you. But no, there will be no spirituous liquors.

The BTSF, the City of Palatka and our partners - the St. Johns Riverkeeper, Education Foundation of Putnam County, Georgia Pacific, Douglas Law Firm, A1A Taylor Architects, the Palatka Daily News and 1st Presbyterian Church have crafted this annual event for the past 8 years.

We are very happy to invite you to our celebration of the St. Johns River with William Bartram as our inspiration and legacy. Please visit our website for all the details - www.bartramtrailsociety.com

Sam Carr, President

Book Tours for this Year's Frolic now!



Book River Tours



Book Paddling Tours



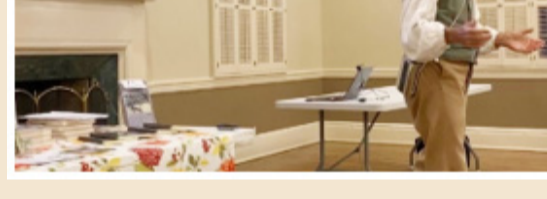
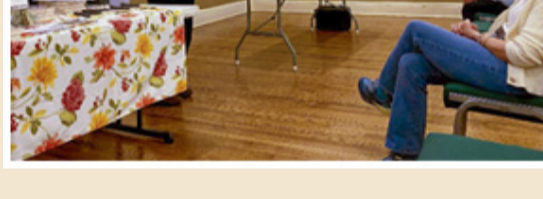
Book Bus Tour to Mount Royal



Annual Bartram Symposium

Sam Carr and Mike Adams Address the Ixia Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society

By Dean Campbell



The Bartram Trail Society of Florida (BTSF) was invited to give a presentation to the Ixia Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society (NPS) at their monthly meeting on February 1 at the Garden Club of Jacksonville. BTSF President Sam Carr and Vice President Mike Adams teamed-up to give a presentation entitled "The Bartram Trail of Florida and the Ixia Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society."

Mike began the presentation, in character, as Billy Bartram. He told the small but enthusiastic group about his (Billy's) trips to Florida in 1765 and 1774 and of his interest in collecting native plants and creating scientific and artistic illustrations of the plants he found. He highlighted a number of plants that he (Billy) discovered in Florida including the Ixia, after which the NPS Chapter is named. Given the Florida NPS's area of interest, it could be argued that Billy would easily qualify as the Society's first member, if not its founding father.

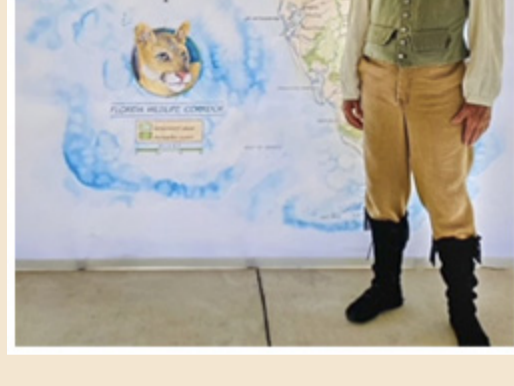
Following Mike's presentation, Sam spoke about the history of the National Bartram Trail and the crucial role of Garden Clubs in its creation. He went on to tell how the BTSF has continued the work of the Garden Clubs to develop the Trail into a cohesive unit within Florida. He described what has been accomplished to date and of the Society's plans going forward. He encouraged the NPS to join with the Bartram Trail Society of Florida to bring the Trail to fruition.

Following the presentation, NPS members asked a number of questions about Billy and his Travels in Florida. It was quite convenient to actually have Billy present so that Sam didn't have to rely on his reading of Bartram's Travels to come up with the accurate answers.

A Busy Weekend February 18-19, 2023

By Mike Adams

Saturday February 18th was the third annual Genealogy Exposition at the Bronson-Mulholland House in the Palatka North Historic District. The Bartram Trail Society of Florida was well represented with Mike Adams portraying Billy Bartram, Anne and Tom Berkey in period costumes, Janice Brown, Kalia Baillene and Mary Garcia manned the exhibit table.



On Sunday, February 19th was an Expedition Kick-off and Florida Trail Association Gateway Community Celebration hosted by the Florida Wildlife Corridor at the Ravine Gardens State Park. Mike Adams participated as Billy Bartram, since the corridor expedition was kicking off from Rice Creek Florida Trail area. Rice Creek, a tributary of the St. Johns River, was called "Gray's Creek" by Creek and William in a batteau and a half deep," they went upstream about 7 miles. I suspect the creek became impassible due to overhanging trees and/or submerged logs, plus getting late in the day. Today this site is identified with Trail signage as Site #3.

See the Putnam County Bartram Trail Map and brochure outlining all the known and documented Bartram sites.

Fire

By Mike Adams



Before Florida was so populated with human development, summer lightning strike fires were a natural part of the overall ecosystem. Historically, many Native Americans would intentionally start fires to control vegetation and encourage large game animals such as white-tailed deer, bison and others, into the burned areas to stimulate hunting. Directly following a burn, many of these large herbivores return to graze on the tender fresh shoots of the new vegetative growth. They would burn until they met a natural fire break such as a wetland, river, lake, ocean, etc.

In 1774, William Bartram encountered many of these burned forests throughout his adventures in the Southeast, particularly in Florida. In fact, he discovered, described, sketched and named the Bartram's Ixia in these fire dependent pine forests and prairies along the St. Johns River. This rare iris-like flower only occurs in seven counties in Northeast Florida. Today, the human urban development zone immediately adjacent to undeveloped forests and other fire-dependent ecosystems is called the Wildland/Urban Interface.

In modern times, because of the human development Wildland/Urban Interface and without regular prescribed burning, lightning strike fires must be watched closely and extinguished as quickly as possible to minimize any damage to life and property. However, in recent years, occasionally a wildfire will start naturally and burn in an area that poses no danger or adverse impact to life and property. Landowners, forest rangers and public land managers simply go in and control and monitor the fire, allowing it to burn and effectively reduce the combustible fuels, thereby greatly reducing future wildfire impacts.



So now, perhaps when you see a forest fire burning on a clear sunny day, there's a good chance there is highly qualified team of professionals responsible for organizing and conducting a prescribed burn to manage the ecosystem and reduce future hazardous wildfire risk. However, it's always good to notify the proper authorities Florida Forest Service or the county forester of such a situation in case arson is the unfortunate culprit.