



President's Report

This has been a wonderful time to be with the Bartram Trail Society of Florida (BTSF)! Our adventures this past quarter have been joyous and fruitful. As always, if any of what you see intrigues you, don't hesitate to check out our [upcoming events](#) and see if you want to [join us!](#)

April 15: Little Orange Creek Nature Park Bartram Day Celebration

We met some wonderful Bartram fans, and enjoyed having our exhibit next to the latest Bartram Trail Conference historic marker.



Left to right: Cousin Mary Bartram (Carole Adams), Kalia Baillene, Billy Bartram (Mike Adams), Randi Cameon, Elizabeth Bartram (Linda Crider), Janice and Ken Mahaffey at the dedication of a new historical marker at Little Orange Creek Nature Park and Education Center, Hawthorne (May 2022) Photo: Emma Olmos

April 17-21: Nearly 1,000 Putnam County students attend the Frolic on the St. Johns River Education Program

The program was led by the St. Johns Riverkeeper in cooperation with the Putnam County School District, and has touched over 4,000 students and teachers since we started in 2017. It's so much fun! Billy Bartram (Mike Adams), Job Wiggins (Robert Wilson), and the Long Warrior (Jim Sawgrass) are the stars of the program. The Riverkeeper's boat cruise is, for many students, their first boat ride.



Frolic on the St. Johns River April 17-23, 2023, Palatka Photo: Mike Adams

April 22: 8th Annual St. Johns River Bartram Frolic on the riverfront in Palatka



Frolic on the St. Johns River April 17-23, 2023, Palatka Photo: Mike Adams

We estimate over 1,500 folks attended this year, enjoying events including Pride-of-Palatka River boat tours, guided kayaking tours and the Passport-to-the-Past Adventure. This year we had two new Passport stations - the Ixia Chapter of the Native Plant Society of Florida who brought a blooming Bartram's Ixia for us to see, and the Wetaka National Fish Hatchery which brought a beautiful four-foot-long indigo snake to pet. The weather was perfect and the numbers of families and young people eagerly seeking to get their Passport stamped made this event our best since its inception!

April 23: 9th Annual Bartram Symposium

This was an incredible event for Bartram aficionados, as always.

- We learned about the Bartram Ixia from Billy Bartram himself and Adam Arendell of the Ixia Chapter FNPS.
- Bartram scholar and BTSF friend Kathryn Braund discussed Bartram's fear of alligators from her latest publication "THE ATTENTION OF THE TRAVELLER".
- Mark Emery, award winning videographer, scared us all with four minutes of alligators bellowing so loudly that the walls in Westminster Hall were shaking. We got to see the vibrating alligators with tails lifted high, water vapor streaming from the mouths of 14-foot alligators, and the incredible jaw slap (UF Gator chomp). Mark's stories of "swimming with gators for 35 years" amazed the audience.
- River scientist Rob Mattson described the St. Johns River in present day compared to the river Bartram knew.
- Joe Foy impressed us with his maps and description of Bartram's travels from Spalding Lower Store to the Alachua Savannah. Joe proved that Francis Harper's route is in error and the book literally needs to be re-written.
- We hosted 20 online guests for this event.

We enjoyed meeting friends old and new from across the country! Two thirds of our guests were from outside Putnam County.

April 23: Annual Bartram Bus Guided Tour

We visited or viewed 15 Bartram sites culminating with our Quaker friend Peter Ackerman reading Bartram's passionate and inspirational prayer for environmental stewardship from atop Mount Royal. We'll be frolicking again at the next St. Johns River Bartram Frolic - April 27-28, 2024. Mark your calendars now!



Alpine Park Bartram Bash Photo: St. Johns County Parks and Recreation Dept.

May 6: Billy Bartram, and the Long Warrior participated in the 17th Annual Bartram Bash at Alpine Groves Riverfront Park in St. Johns County

Mike Adams, who plays Bartram, has participated in the Bartram Bash since its inception.

May 26-28: Performances and Exhibit at the Florida Folk Festival

This was our second invitation, and we've been invited back for 2024! Billy Bartram, guide/trader Job Wiggins, and Lee Pinkerson as Bartram's Troubadour entertained with their storytelling, which was well received. We met a ton of new Bartram fans, and connected with some key stakeholders who want to help us build the Bartram Trail in Florida.

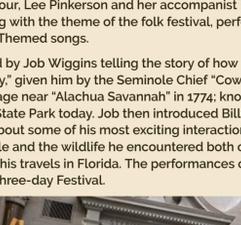
The [Bartram Trail in Florida](#) includes six Florida counties which either have Bartram Trails or are committed to establishing trails like the Putnam County Bartram National Recreation Trail. We are in the process of building new sections on our website and growing our social media channels to be more useful and relevant to the growing BTSF community.

We are a fun, dedicated and motivated group building a pathway through Florida inspired by Bartram's travels.

Bartram Trail Society of Florida needs your support, whether as a donor at any level, or as a volunteer! The smallest act or donation can help us maintain our momentum and growth.

Visit bartramtrailsociety.com and our [Facebook](#) page to see what we are up to.

"Peace and love..." W. Bartram
Sam Carr, President



Sam Carr, President, presenting at the Florida Folk Festival Photo: Carole Adams

The Bartram Trail Society of Florida Elevated to the Story Telling Stage

By Dean Campbell



Left to right: Sam Carr, Job Wiggins (Robert Wilson), Kalia Baillene, Carole Adams, Billy Bartram (Mike Adams), Lee Pinkerson; Florida Folk Festival, Stephen Foster Cultural Park in White Springs (May 27, 2023) Photo: Mary Garcia

Last year, the BTSF pulled out all the stops for its performances in the Folk Life area at the Florida Folk Festival held at the Stephen Foster Cultural Center Park. Thanks to a combination of daily on-stage presentations and a continuously staffed display area, the Society earned high marks from both Festival attendees and the Florida Park Service. As a result, the Society was invited to participate again this year but was promoted to the Story Telling Stage where we were able to showcase Billy Bartram (Mike Adams) and Job Wiggins (Robert Wilson), in character, relating some of William Bartram's most famous stories taken from the pages of Bartram's Travels.

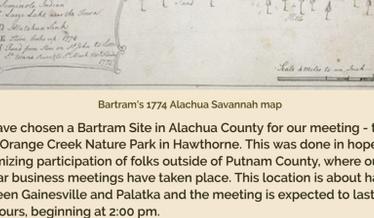
On the stage, Society President Sam Carr introduced the Society and its performers to attendees inside the 200 ft. Bell Tower where the wonderful acoustics and Mediterranean architecture setting added a theatrical flair to the performances. After the brief welcome, Sam introduced our newest Bartram Troubadour, Lee Pinkerson and her accompanist Bill Snyder, who, in perfect keeping with the theme of the folk festival, performed two original Bartram Themed songs.

Lee was followed by Job Wiggins telling the story of how Billy earned the name "Puc-Puggy," given him by the Seminole Chief "Cow Keeper," when he visited his village near "Alachua Savannah" in 1774; known as Paynes Prairie Preserve State Park today. Job then introduced Billy Bartram who went on to talk about some of his most exciting interactions with indigenous people and the wildlife he encountered both on land and on the water during his travels in Florida. The performances occurred once daily during the three-day Festival.



Bill Snyder and Lee Pinkerton on stage in the Bell Tower Photo by Dean Campbell

In addition to the performances, additional Society members Kalia Baillene, Carole Adams, and Mary Garcia staffed the Bartram Tent in the Environmental and Cultural Heritage Awareness Area of the Festival. All were kept busy telling a continuous stream of attendees about the Society's efforts to establish the Bartram Trail in Florida and to invite them to not just follow the trail, but to join in the fun of its creation. There was a lot of interest in the Trail as well as in the Society T-shirts, maps, brochures, and our Bartram on the St. Johns book, which sold out during the three-day event.



Mike Adams as Billy Bartram Photo: Dean Campbell

Everyone who participated agreed that the time working at the Festival was productive and well spent and that the Festival's Story Telling area was a perfect fit for the Society and the Bartram performances. Thanks to the number of Society members working the event, everyone, in rotation, was able to take in a few musical performances each day and to enjoy the other performers at the Festival. If you enjoy folk music, camping, fellowship around a campfire and meeting new people, keep an eye on the Society's event board and plan to help man the booth next year. We would love to have you join us under the BTSF tent!

July 23rd: First Annual Meeting of the Bartram Trail Society of Florida

By Dean Campbell

It's high time that we started having membership meetings for the purpose of getting to know one another and learning about the many opportunities for everyone to get more involved in the Society. For too long, we have focused our attention on the business of the Society and in planning for events. It's time to meet just for the fun of it! Our inaugural Annual Meeting will occur on July 23rd.



Bartram's 1774 Alachua Savannah map

We have chosen a Bartram Site in Alachua County for our meeting - the Little Orange Creek Nature Park in Hawthorne. This was done in hopes of maximizing participation of folks outside of Putnam County, where our regular business meetings have taken place. This location is about halfway between Gainesville and Palatka and the meeting is expected to last about two hours, beginning at 2:00 pm.

The program will include a meet & greet for Society members and visitors, a brief "State of the Society" message, a status report on the Bartram Trail of Florida, introductions of Society officers and directors, announcements of upcoming events and opportunities for engagement and finally, a presentation by Joe Foy on "Tracing the Bartram's Route from Spalding's Lower Store to the Alachua Savanna."

We hope to have representatives from every county along the Bartram Trail, and all members are encouraged to attend and bring a friend! Everyone is welcome and attendance is not limited to current Society Members. We look forward seeing old friends and meeting new ones!

Meeting Address: 24115 SE Hawthorne Road | Hawthorne, Florida 32640.

St. Johns River Center Re-Opening on July 4th!

By Shann Purinton

Community volunteers serving as docents Photo: Mandi Tucker

The St. Johns River Center along the riverfront in downtown Palatka is scheduled to reopen with a BANG! on Independence Day on Tuesday, July 4th. Courtney James, Cultural Activities Coordinator for the City of Palatka and many community volunteers have been working to get the Center ready for visitors to come in and learn about the rich history of Palatka, the importance of our beautiful river and its wetlands ecology, as well as the travels of John and William Bartram in 1765 and 1774. The River Center serves as the headquarters for the Bartram Trail Society of Florida.

The address for the Center is 102 N. 1st St., Palatka (located on the corner of Memorial Drive and St. Johns Avenue). The Center will be open to the public during the following days/hours:

- Tuesday - Saturday, 11:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
- Sunday: 1 p.m. - 4 p.m. (subject to volunteers' schedule)

Field trips can be arranged by contacting Courtney James: cjames@palatka-fl.gov

For more information about the St. Johns River Center: palatka-fl.gov and putnamcounty-chamber.com