



Celebrating the 250th Anniversary in Florida

By Sam Carr

The Bartram Trail Society has been busy celebrating Bartram's 250th Anniversary of coming to Florida! We estimate we will have touched over 4,000 folks with Bartram's story of visiting Florida 250 years ago as we participated in all the following events.

April 13:

BTSF began the celebrations in Nassau County as part of their County-wide William Bartram Month Celebration. We paddled on historic Egans Creek, and Billy Bartram (Mike Adams) presented the Bartram story afterward.

April 20:

Clay County's Camp Chowenawaw Eco Fest (the site of Tonyn's indigo plantation). Billy Bartram and Job Wiggins (Robert Wilson) were there with the Bartram Trail Society of Florida.

April 27:

9th annual St. Johns River Bartram Frolic with paddling, hiking, biking, and Bartram Symposium. Brad Sanders presented details of Bartam's journey to Tallasohatchte. Christopher Robinson told us about Bartram's influence on the science of bird migration. Dean Campbell, Sam Carr, Brent Martin, and TR Henderson were there representing the Bartram Trail Conference. Over 1,800 folks joined in the frolicking over the five days.

May 4:

Bartram Days Celebration at the Alachua Savannah – Paynes Prairie Preserve State Park. Over 1,400 Bartam fans met Ahaya- the Cowkeeper (Jim Sawgrass), Trader Job Wiggins, and Billy Bartam himself. Bartram Troubadour Lee Pinkerson introduced her new songs telling the Alachua Savannah Bartam story – Ahaya and Tallasohachte. A reenactment of the naming of Billy Bartram as PUC-PUGGY was performed to everyone's delight.

May 11:

Bartram's trip to Florida in St. Johns County's Alpine Grove Nature Park with appearances by the Bartram Troubadour Lee Pinkerson, Billy Bartram, the Long Warrior, Job Wiggins, and, of course, the Bartram Trail Society of Florida.

Our Annual Meeting is coming up soon!

We will send out a separate e-blast about this, and you can learn more about the event details on our [website](#) as well. Anyone interested is welcome to attend!

Time: Sunday, July 21, 2:00 p.m.

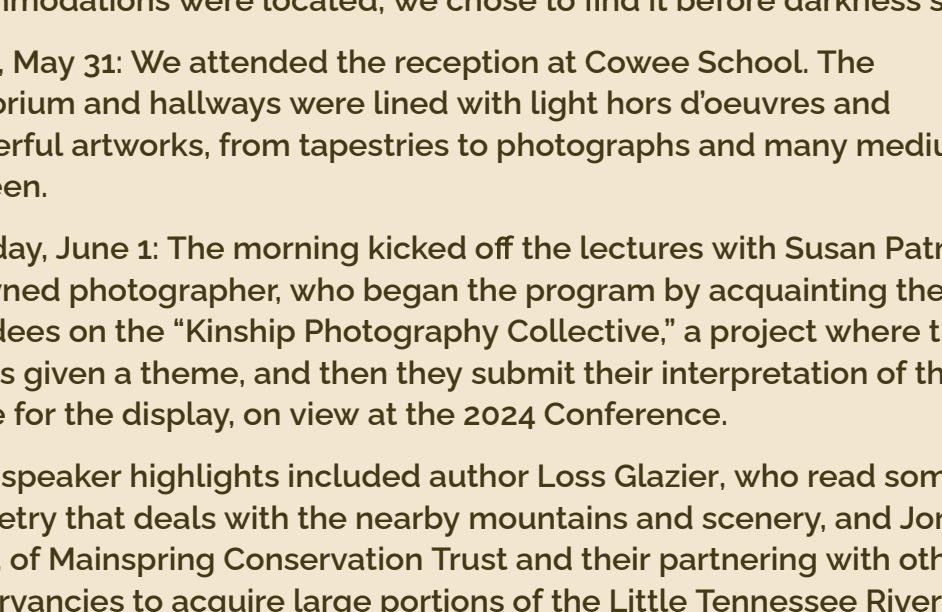
Location: Camp Chowenawaw

1517 Ball Road, Green Cove Springs, FL 32043

2024 Bartram Trail Conference

May 31 - June 2, 2024

This year's Bartram Trail Conference was held in the cool mountains of Cowee, North Carolina. Several Floridians attended, including Ken and Janice Mahaffey, Linda Crider, and Marc and Beverly Williams of Amelia Island. The Blue Ridge Bartram Trail Conservancy hosted the conference at the historic Cowee School under the direction of Brent Martin.



Wayah Bald, where one can imagine Bartram's awe at seeing "mountain upon mountains."

We arrived around 6 pm and were welcomed with a banner across the main street announcing "You Are On the Bartram Trail" at the Lazy Hiker Brewing Company. Unfortunately, not knowing where our accommodations were located, we chose to find it before darkness set in.

Friday, May 31: We attended the reception at Cowee School. The Auditorium and hallways were lined with light hors d'oeuvres and wonderful artworks, from tapestries to photographs and many mediums in between.

Saturday, June 1: The morning kicked off the lectures with Susan Patrice, a renowned photographer, who began the program by acquainting the attendees on the "Kinship Photography Collective," a project where the artist is given a theme, and then they submit their interpretation of that theme for the display, on view at the 2024 Conference.

Other speaker highlights included author Loss Glazier, who read some of his poetry that deals with the nearby mountains and scenery, and Jordan Smith, of Mainspring Conservation Trust and their partnering with other conservancies to acquire large portions of the Little Tennessee River Valley and secure the land for perpetuity. They returned some of the lands to the Cherokee Nation, as well as some old settled lands from before the removal in the 1830s.

We were very engaged when Tyler Hayes, BRBTC's GIS coordinator, presented a proposed BARTRAM TRAIL CORRIDOR! Mr. Hayes works with the US Forest Service and BRBTC. He has attempted to connect Bartram's visited sites through already existing trails in Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, and North Carolina.

There were a few objections to this concept due to William Bartram's documented meanderings in his book *Travels* and the idea that we should adhere to them in their historical context rather than modern-day trails that approximate his various routes.

Our keynote speaker was Charles Frazier, author of *Cold Mountain*. He was joined for a forum by Brent Martin and Mrs. Annette Saunooke Clapsadle, author, and member of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians; she has helped identify artifacts taken from Native Americans in universities and museums.

There were other presenters, and their segments were quite varied.



Out on one of the many Bartram Trails following the presentations.

After the presentations, we received box lunches, and many attendees went to several chosen sites:

A cultural and Heritage site of the Cherokee village that Bartram visited, hikes with Brent Martin, and the Cowee Mountains, among other nature hikes. Among the excursions were exploring the Cowee Mountains, a visit to the high elevation of the spruce bog, a botanical excursion along the Little Tennessee River Valley, and a hike led by Brent Martin to the Wayah Bald.

Sunday, June 2: There were additional excursions for kayakers and a hike to Whiterock Mountain that went into the late afternoon.

Billy Bartram and Job Wiggins participate in the 2024 Florida Folk Festival

July 1, 2024



Text & Photos by Carole Adams

The 72nd annual Florida Folk Festival was held Memorial Day weekend at the Stephen Foster Cultural Center and State Park in White Springs along the banks of the historic Suwannee River.

For the third year in a row, representatives from the Bartram Trail Society of Florida, troubadours Lee Pinkerson and Bill Snyder of the Harri Buffalo band, and living history re-enactors Robert Wilson and Mike Adams, portraying colonial naturalist William Bartram and his guide and interpreter, Trader Job Wiggins participated in the Festival.

Mike Adams performed the [Bartram Alligator song](#) with Lee Pinkerton, the songwriter!

This well-attended event is a traditional kick-off to summer and is renowned in the Southeast. Hundreds of visitors were educated in natural history and entertained by story-telling folk music at Trader Job's forested encampment.



Job prepared our lunch over an open oak fire – a delicious and authentic slow-simmered venison stew with fresh local vegetables!

New Fossil Exhibit at Palatka's St. Johns River Center



St. Johns River Center Manager and Cultural Arts Coordinator, Courtney James and amateur paleontologist and diver Mike Stallings, 2024.
(Photo by Mike Adams)

This local fossil display case is prominently displayed at the St. Johns River Center in downtown Palatka along the scenic riverfront. In December of 2023 and into January 2024, the paleo-team of Mike Stallings and University of Florida Museum of Natural History Herpetologist Emeritus, Dick Frantz, identified, setup and displayed fossils in the new display.



Dick Frantz and Billy Bartram, with a modern soft-shell turtle carapace.
(Photo by Andi Blount, Melrose Library Association, January 2024)

Two Welaka residents, Mike Stallings and his dive Buddy, Tony Dicarolo, discovered and collected the specimens over decades of diving in the mysterious murky waters of the St. Johns River and its primary tributary, the Ocklawaha. The fossils were retrieved from sand deposits on the bottom of these rivers. Their discoveries included more than 33 species of reptiles, birds, and mammals. Many of them are now extinct, but some have managed to live on, like the alligator, armadillo and manatee, becoming part of our modern animal kingdom. Stallings and Dicarolo have been donating scientifically important fossil specimens to the collections of the Florida Museum of Natural History in Gainesville, Florida for many years.



Bartram encountered, described, and sketched this soft-shelled turtle during his 1774 travels along the St. Johns River, in the East Florida territory.
(William Bartram's Travels, 1791)