



### 2011 Meetings

- Monday, September 26      HISTORY OF LONGLEAF PINE. Larry Earley will reprise his talk on the history of Longleaf Pine, with an update. Larry will talk about the many uses of Longleaf wood and products, discuss the ecology of the Longleaf system, the loss of this forest type, and the outlook for the future.
- Monday, October 24      THE NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM. Misty Buchanan of NCNHP will speak on what the Natural Heritage Program is and does. She will concentrate on the County Natural Areas Inventory, which is nearing completion in all 100 counties in NC, and how the inventories help to steer land protection.
- Monday, November 28      MOVIE. “An Uncommon Curiosity: At home & in nature with Bernd Heinrich” follows Bernd Heinrich, one of the world’s most insightful and original biologists, over the course of a year as he reflects on his past and shares his ideas about nature, science, art, beauty, and writing. Heinrich has been both a Guggenheim Fellow and a Harvard Fellow, and has been awarded two honorary doctorates. Considered by many to be today’s finest naturalist author, Heinrich has written 18 books on various aspects of the natural world (*Mind of the Raven*, *Winter World*) and published numerous scholarly papers, professional book reviews, book chapters, and articles for magazines and newspapers as diverse as the *New York Times*, *Outside*, and *Runners World*. In addition to his scholarly work he is a world-class ultra-marathoner, currently holding a U.S. 100-mile track record.
- December      NO MEETING. Happy Holidays!
- Meeting Times:      7:00 p.m. - Fellowship and Socializing. 7:30 p.m. - Meeting and Program.  
Program Location:      Weymouth Woods Visitors’ Center Auditorium.  
Phone 910-692-2167 for directions.

\*\*\* We normally meet on the 4<sup>th</sup> Monday of each month. \*\*\*

## Upcoming Field Trips

**September 14 & 15 7:00 p.m. Swift Night Out.** Join Scott Hartley for the annual count of Chimney Swifts that roost in our area chimneys on their journey back to the Upper Amazon Basin. Meet in front of the Southern Pines Post Office on Broad Street. We will walk or carpool to one of the chimneys. Please call Scott to sign up: 910-638-5225.

**September 24 9:00 a.m. Sandhills Geology.** This is the make-up date to join Bob Ganis to see examples of Sandhills geology. Meet at Reservoir Park off of Route 22 north of Southern Pines. Please sign up with Bruce Sorrie: 910-949-2625.

**October 23 9:00 a.m. Mushrooms** with Rytas Vilgalys of Duke University. This promises to be fun, as there probably hasn't been a prior SNHS trip for mushrooms. Meet at Weymouth Woods. Sign up with Bruce Sorrie: 910-949-2625.

**November 12 9:00 a.m. Soils.** This is a natural follow-on to the previous Sandhills Geology lecture/trip. Join David McCloy for a short driving tour to a few spots in Moore County to study soil profiles. Meet at Weymouth Woods. Please sign up with David McCloy: 910-692-5094.

***IMPORTANT: Call or email the field trip leader to register for a trip. Please do so at least one day before the trip to ensure that the trip is still on schedule.***

## Trip Leaders Needed

**December/January Pee Dee NWR and/or Pungo Lake area.** Trip leaders needed for these. Please contact David McCloy, Carol Bowman, or Jeff Beane to volunteer! (See their email addresses on the last page.)

We receive a lot of trip ideas from members; what we need are members to lead these trips. You don't necessarily have to be an expert to lead a trip. You just need to be willing to schedule, meet, and do the logistics. So please consider leading one of the following:

Falls Lake-Triangle Lakes for waterfowl  
Uwharrie National Forest  
Bay Lakes  
Bog Turtle search

If you have other field trip ideas or would be willing to lead one of these trips, please contact the Field Trip Directors: David McCloy, Carol Bowman, or Jeff Beane.

## Trip Report

**Ft. Bragg Red-cockaded Woodpecker Banding plus Wildflowers**  
**Leader: Bruce Sorrie**

**May 21**

Thirteen participants started with a demonstration of how Red-cockaded Woodpeckers are banded. Beth Evans and a co-worker from Bragg's Endangered Species Program met us at Overhills, just off NC 690. They explained how biologists monitor the breeding birds in RCW family groups, checking on the status of nestlings. When nestlings are about 7-10 days old, their legs are the right size for one aluminum USFWS band plus 3 plastic color bands, which are arranged so that each bird gets a unique combination. After erecting ladders to reach the nest cavity, they captured two nestlings with an ingenious snare of rubber tubing plus a loop of soft line. The

chicks had not yet opened their eyes, and had not yet grown feathers, so they were quite helpless! During the procedure, Beth explained how Ft. Bragg had, in 2005, met the FWS goal of a "Recovered Population." That means that Bragg has enough breeding groups to be appropriate for the amount of habitat here, and that Bragg will be a "Source Population" that will supply nearby areas with birds. We also learned about cavity inserts—boxes ideally suited to RCWs that have been fitted into pines to increase the number of available nesting holes.

Meanwhile, the adult birds, plus their "helper" (a bird or two from last year that does not yet have a territory) kept coming in with food and waiting impatiently for us to go away! The whole banding process was fascinating and showed how much effort goes into the management of just a single species. Birds noted in the Longleaf Pines included Brown-headed Nuthatch and Pine Warbler.

We then proceeded farther into Overhills to the former Rockefeller compound. There we birded along the former railroad bed to Overhills Lake, an impounded stream that now is largely filled with Pond Cypress and White Water-lilies. A beautiful setting! We went up to see the old residence, but alas—it has fallen victim to vandals and general disrepair. Some birds noted were Eastern Kingbird, Indigo Bunting, Prothonotary Warbler, Hooded Warbler, Red-eyed Vireo, Broad-winged Hawk (2), Blue-Gray Gnatcatcher, Blue Grosbeak, Mourning Dove, Great Crested Flycatcher, American Crow, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Orchard Oriole, Blue Jay, and Chimney Swift.

Our next stop was at a power line off NC 87 that has seepage slopes and streamhead crossings. Botanically, this is a rich site, and we saw lots of Purple Pitcher-plants, Rose Pogonia and Grass-pink orchids, Bog Sundews, Orange Milkwort (or Candyroot), Wavyleaf and Hairy milkweeds, New Jersey Tea, the incredibly skinny Skeleton Plant (or Wireplant), the rare Resinous Boneset (or Resinous Eupatorium), among others. Bruce's just-published wildflower guide helped us figure them all out.

## Photography Spotlight



**Virginia Meadow-beauty (*Rhexia virginica*)**

Bruce Sorrie photo



**Water-spider Orchid (*Habenaria repens*)**

Bruce Sorrie photo

## Of This and That

### THE FLORA OF THE SANDHILLS – SOME MUSINGS

The Sandhills is that narrow area of rolling hills that lies between the flat part of the Coastal Plain and the Piedmont. It extends from North Carolina to Georgia. Note that the Sandhills Region belongs to the Coastal Plain province, not the Piedmont as stated by some authors. Its geology, physiography, climate, and botanical history belong to the Coastal Plain; this is why biologists and geographers often refer to it as the "Inner Coastal Plain" rather than any part of the Piedmont. The Sandhills represent the innermost advances of the ocean onto the continent, beginning some 40 million years ago and with intermittent advances over the eons. Even as recently as two million years ago, Fayetteville enjoyed ocean views and a maritime environment! Since then, however, the Atlantic has retreated more-or-less steadily to its present position. With each retreat of the ocean, the Sandhills region was subjected to the usual weathering processes, and also received material carried down from Mountain and Piedmont areas; therefore, the Sandhills region isn't simply old beach sand, but a complex of soil types.

In North Carolina, the Sandhills comprise parts of Cumberland, Harnett, Hoke, Lee, Moore, Richmond, and Scotland counties. No one county occurs completely within this region. For example, just a short distance east and southeast of Erwin, Fayetteville, Raeford, and Laurinburg, the landscape is dramatically flat and dotted with Carolina bays of all sizes; here you are in the "Middle Coastal Plain" and you encounter many plants that do not occur in the Sandhills proper. Conversely, just a short distance west and northwest of Lillington, Sanford, Carthage, and Rockingham, the soil has rocks in it and rock outcrops occur on riversides and slopes; here you are in the Piedmont. This rapid turnover in soil types and floras makes the Sandhills a transition zone—a zone where one can see some dramatic east-west couplings of plants. For example, in Fayetteville you can see Mountain Laurel and Galax growing within a few yards of Pond Cypress and Atlantic White Cedar! West of Rockingham, Silverbell trees and Dwarf Larkspur (*Delphinium tricornis*) grow in the same floodplain as Floating Pennywort (*Hydrocotyle ranunculoides*) and Cypress-knee Sedge (*Carex decomposita*). And at Raven Rock State Park, Creeping Blueberry grows beneath Catawba Rhododendron!

With plants from two major phytogeographic regions on either side, plus some endemics of its own, the Sandhills boasts a remarkably diverse flora for its relatively small size. Just how many, you ask? Let's first take a look at the state as a whole: North Carolina has about 4,000 species and varieties, 3,200 of them native and 800 non-native. As of August 2011, the Sandhills has 2,038 documented species and varieties; 1,708 of them are native and 330 alien. Thus, the Sandhills Region supports half of all plants known from North Carolina! In this era of "green," it is comforting to know that you don't have to travel all over the place to see a very large portion of our state's plants.

Looking at individual counties, Richmond has the largest documented flora, with 1,450 species and varieties, followed by Moore (1,440), Cumberland (1,431), Harnett (1,334), Hoke (1,150), Lee (1,060), and Scotland (919). More important are the numbers of native plants: Richmond leads with (1,277), then Cumberland (1,247), Moore (1,231), Harnett (1,176), Hoke (1,003), Lee (925), and Scotland (797). Lee and Scotland have small floras, but for different reasons. Lee is very small in area and has not been as intensively studied as the others. Scotland does not overlap the Piedmont, nor does it have a Piedmont river running through it, such as the Pee Dee, Deep, or Cape Fear; these brownwater rivers bring many Piedmont species with them down into Cumberland, Harnett, Lee, Moore, and Richmond counties. Hoke also lacks any direct Piedmont influence, but boasts a large percent of Fort Bragg with its plethora of fire-dependent plants of the Longleaf Pine ecosystem, including many rarities. Only Hoke and Scotland have Carolina bays and associated "Middle Coastal Plain" flora.

-- Bruce A. Sorrie (August 2011)

**Don't Forget...**To check the SNHS web site ([www.sandhillsnature.org](http://www.sandhillsnature.org)) for information on last-minute field trips and/or changes in already scheduled ones. There you'll find a link to the Sandhills Natural History Society facebook page which also has all the latest information.

## Interesting Sightings:

Things are picking up at Woodlake. Within the past week we've seen a Double-Crested Cormorant, two unidentified terns, and six or eight Common Nighthawks swooping around and over our deck overlooking the lake.

-- Linda Jones

**DUES** – Dues are \$5.00 per person, per year. The dues year is from January 1 through December 31. Please mail your check for \$5.00, payable to “Sandhills Natural History Society,” to Carol Bowman, Treasurer, at:

Sandhills Natural History Society  
P.O. Box 1472  
Southern Pines, NC 28388-1472

Please include your address, telephone number, and e-mail address with your payment.

**TEES AND LANDS' END CAPS** – SNHS merchandise can be purchased at our monthly meetings. Contact David Kilpatrick at 910-295-5224 or at [snhslogo@mac.com](mailto:snhslogo@mac.com) if you have any questions.

\$10	T-shirts
\$17	Baseball caps (with embroidered logo)
\$14	Baseball caps (with plain logo)
\$12	Mugs
\$ 3	Stickers

**Recycle** your nature, birding, or gardening magazines at each monthly meeting. There will be a table where you can drop off or pick up magazines of interest to our group.



**Eastern Box Turtle (*Terrapene carolina*)**

Jeff Beane photo

## SNHS Board of Directors 2011:

<b>President</b>	Bruce Sorrie	<a href="mailto:bruce.sorrie@ncdenr.gov">bruce.sorrie@ncdenr.gov</a>
<b>Past President</b>	Brady Beck	<a href="mailto:bradybeckphoto@gmail.com">bradybeckphoto@gmail.com</a>
<b>Vice President</b>	Cassie Willis	<a href="mailto:cwillis740@aol.com">cwillis740@aol.com</a>
<b>Member-at-Large</b>	Alicia Jackson	<a href="mailto:agjackson1@earthlink.net">agjackson1@earthlink.net</a>
<b>Secretary</b>	Sara DiBacco	<a href="mailto:sdibacco@gmail.com">sdibacco@gmail.com</a>
<b>Treasurer</b>	Carol Bowman	<a href="mailto:cbowman6@nc.rr.com">cbowman6@nc.rr.com</a>
<b>Membership</b>	Chris Norkus	<a href="mailto:ccnorkus56@embarqmail.com">ccnorkus56@embarqmail.com</a>
<b>Newsletter</b>	Linda Jones	<a href="mailto:candljones@msn.com">candljones@msn.com</a>
<b>Website</b>	Susan Miller	<a href="mailto:susan@cheslar.com">susan@cheslar.com</a>
<b>Field Trips</b>	David McCloy	<a href="mailto:dmcclloy@mindspring.com">dmcclloy@mindspring.com</a>
	Carol Bowman	<a href="mailto:cbowman6@nc.rr.com">cbowman6@nc.rr.com</a>
	Jeff Beane	<a href="mailto:jeff.beane@ncdenr.gov">jeff.beane@ncdenr.gov</a>
<b>Merchandise</b>	David Kilpatrick	<a href="mailto:snhslogo@mac.com">snhslogo@mac.com</a>



C/o Weymouth Woods Nature Preserve  
1024 N. Fort Bragg Road  
Southern Pines, NC 28387

### ATTENTION!!!

**If you have e-mail and are experiencing trouble receiving all the newsletters and announcements via e-mail, please contact Chris Norkus immediately. [info@sandhillsnature.org](mailto:info@sandhillsnature.org)**

**If you do not have e-mail, please read this:**

Our field trips often have schedule changes and we send out e-mail updates to the membership. We suggest you ask a friend who receives these emails to keep you informed. You can also periodically call the field trip leader to get the latest updates. You can also check out the SNHS web site at [www.sandhillsnature.org](http://www.sandhillsnature.org).