



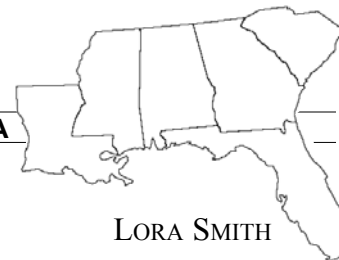
# The TORTOISE BURROW

Newsletter of the  
**Gopher Tortoise Council**

[www.gophertortoisecouncil.org](http://www.gophertortoisecouncil.org)

Volume 21, No. 3  
Fall 2001

ALABAMA FLORIDA GEORGIA LOUISIANA MISSISSIPPI SOUTH CAROLINA



LORA SMITH

## Notes from a Co-chair

I am in the midst of preparation for the annual meeting, so please excuse the brevity of this column! As most of you know, the theme for this year's annual meeting is *The Impact of Roads on Upland Species in the Southeast*. The agenda will include a variety of presentations ranging from specific projects dealing with the effects of roads on reptiles and amphibians, birds, and large mammals to issues related to transportation planning and national forest access policy. Speakers will include representatives from the Florida Department of Transportation, the U.S. Forest Service, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, Conservation International, private consultants, and various southeastern universities. For registration information, visit our web site at [www.gophertortoisecouncil.org](http://www.gophertortoisecouncil.org).

We have made progress on a number of projects since the last newsletter. The Gopher Tracks project is nearing completion thanks to the efforts of Laura Wewerka and George Heinrich. I'd like to extend my appreciation to Laura and George for initiating this project and to all of our members whose donations have made it possible. Through this effort, the Council has helped to distribute information to school children throughout the southeast about the importance of conserving gopher tortoises and upland habitats. Laura Wewerka and I presented a draft of the Gopher Tortoise Council slide show to the Southeast PARC education committee last month. Committee members offered a number of helpful comments on how to improve the content of the slide presentation. We hope to have the presentation ready for distribution to volunteers sometime in 2002. Mark Bailey continues to do an outstanding job of maintaining our

web site (if you haven't already done so, visit the site soon to view recent additions). Karl Studenroth, co-chair of the Rattlesnake Conservation Committee, has revised the eastern diamondback brochure, which is now posted on the web site and will be reprinted soon.

We are still accepting donations of items for the silent auction (contact George L. Heinrich or Laura Wewerka if you'd like to contribute). Funds from this year's auction will go toward bringing a Southeast Asian turtle biologist to the U.S. for training in field techniques. This is a large undertaking for an organization our size, but we really feel that with the expertise available here in the Southeast, we can make an important contribution toward turtle conservation. Many thanks to those who have already donated.

Finally, as I look at this column, I realize once again that while we are fortunate to have had a small but dedicated group of volunteers over the years, we desperately need new members to step forward and assist with Council projects. For example, there is always a need for articles and photographs for the newsletter and web site. Steve Shively, the Louisiana State Representative, has resigned his position, so we are looking for a replacement. Thank you, Steve, for your years of service to the Council. We also need folks to help represent the Gopher Tortoise Council at education events. If you are interested in becoming more involved in Council activities, please contact me at the address or phone number in the back of the newsletter. Thanks!

# First Federal Conservation Bank Announced for Threatened Gopher Tortoise Near Mobile, Alabama

From a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Press Release

## Contacts:

Christine Eustis, USFWS, Southeast Region 404/679-7287

Barbara Allen, USFWS, Daphne, AL 334/441-5181 ext 33

Robert Bonnie, Environmental Defense, 202/387-3500

Mary Mullins, Bellwether Group (for Mobile Area Water and Sewer System) 334/433-3993, ext 201

In June 2001, The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS), the Mobile Area Water and Sewer System (MAWSS), Environmental Defense, and Southeastern Natural Resources announced a Habitat Conservation Plan for the threatened gopher tortoise at Converse Reservoir (Big Creek Lake) near Mobile, Alabama. The public-private partnership creating a 222-acre conservation bank will help protect the threatened gopher tortoise and restore the longleaf pine ecosystem, for which it is a keystone species.

This is the first federal conservation bank for the gopher tortoise. "It is a win-win partnership for the species, the habitat, conservationists, landowners, and local, state and federal officials," said Sam D. Hamilton, Southeast Regional Director for the USFWS. "This is a great step in conserving the gopher tortoise and its habitat in the face of rapid development in Mobile County."

How it will work: A routine permit can now be issued to property owners for relocation of tortoises from their property to the bank property. Mitigation costs of \$3,500 per tortoise cover species and habitat management at the bank in perpetuity.

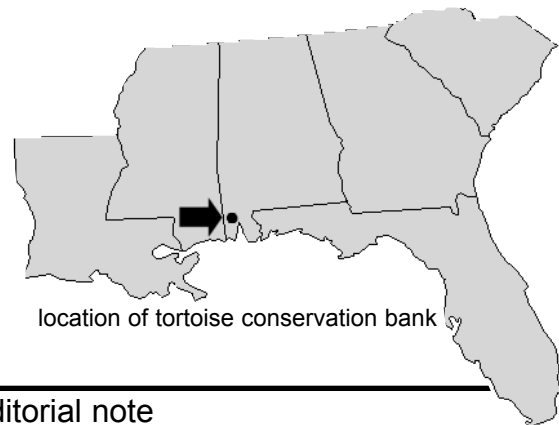
Habitat destruction is the greatest threat to gopher tortoises, particularly in Mobile County, which has undergone a 94 percent increase in residential development in the past eight years. Approximately 1,300 homes will be constructed this year, many of which will be located on lands that provide habitat for the tortoise.

"This collaborative effort is indicative of how the Endangered Species Act should work. This plan meets the needs of the local community, creates positive incentives for habitat restoration, and establishes a reserve where gopher tortoises and the longleaf pine ecosystem will thrive," said Robert Bonnie, Economist for Environmental Defense.

The gopher tortoise is listed as threatened in southwestern Alabama, Mississippi, and eastern Louisiana under the

Endangered Species Act. The law provides protection from direct human threats, such as killing and trapping, or habitat destruction.

The 7,000-acre area around Converse Reservoir -- an impoundment of Big Creek and the Mobile Water and Sewer System's primary resource for providing water to the Mobile area -- sits in the midst of the area being most heavily impacted by new development. MAWSS, USFWS and Environmental Defense jointly developed the habitat conservation plan to provide solutions for Mobile County's homebuilders while also benefiting the gopher tortoise. MAWSS agrees to set aside its private property without any development and to restore and manage it in perpetuity to provide optimal habitat for 125 gopher tortoises. Property owners who have gopher tortoises can be completely relieved of Endangered Species Act responsibilities by participating in this bank.



## Editorial note

*The Gopher Tortoise Council applauds the Mobile County gopher tortoise conservation bank for restoring habitat and consolidating small populations in this important portion of the tortoise's range. However, the conservation bank is not a solution for all tortoise/development conflicts in the area. It provides habitat for only 125 tortoises and allows destruction of tortoise habitat. There is no zoning or land-use planning in the unincorporated areas of Mobile County. Such planning would reduce urban sprawl, stop "leapfrog" subdivisions and otherwise minimize the impacts of unplanned development. Parts of Mobile County have suffered irreversible fragmentation of natural habitats. Only under such extreme circumstances are compromises such as this conservation bank an acceptable conservation strategy.*

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Partners in Amphibian and Reptile Conservation (PARC) jointly sponsored the "Eastern Indigo Snake Conservation Summit" on 30-31 May 2001. Lora Smith (GTC Co-Chair) and I represented the Council at the meeting which was held at White Oak Plantation in Yulee, Florida. The group reviewed the status and conservation of this imperiled species and addressed specific conservation concerns. Progress was made in identifying actions that should be undertaken to conserve this species, most notably in the areas of research and education. A second meeting is being planned for spring 2002. Those interested in receiving an electronic copy of the fourteen page final report titled "Eastern Indigo Snake Conservation Summit: Research and Outreach Needs" should contact George L. Heinrich at [highpine3@aol.com](mailto:highpine3@aol.com).

The Gopher Tortoise Council is joining Southeast PARC and the Audubon Zoo as co-sponsors of a national PARC Education/Outreach Working Group organizational meeting. This working meeting will be held at the Audubon Zoo (New Orleans) on 17-19 January 2002. The primary goal will be to develop a structure for the national Working Group, including identification of co-chairs and regional representatives. In addition, attendees will review the accomplishments of all regions to date, as well as identify future plans for national projects. Each region will have the opportunity to highlight accomplishments at regional and local levels and will be encouraged to bring ideas for the direction of national PARC education. For more information, please visit the PARC website at [www.parcplace.org](http://www.parcplace.org).

## Tortoise Killing Unsolved

RAY ASHTON

The perpetrator who killed an adult gopher tortoise in Turning Hawk subdivision just south of Ocala last July is still at large despite the \$17,500 reward being offered by the Maro family and friends.

The mutilated tortoise was presumably placed in front of the Maro family home as a warning and threat by someone who is not happy with the activism that Ms. Maro has demonstrated in protecting gopher tortoises. As a coordinator for the Gopher Tortoise Conservation Initiative Community Tortoise Stewardship Program, she trains volunteers that help neighbors who are clearing land, gets permits and protects tortoises.

If anyone has any information about this case, please contact the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission at 1-800-342-9620.

## Information Requested

Ashton Biodiversity Research & Preservation Institute is collecting detailed information on sites where there have been apparent die-offs of gopher tortoises. Of particular interest are sites where a number of carcasses are scattered over an area.

If you know of such a location contact Ray Ashton at [Tortfarm2@aol.com](mailto:Tortfarm2@aol.com) or call 352-495-7449. He will either get the exact location of the site or send you a detailed questionnaire about the site. The purpose of this study is to determine details related to the probable cause and time of death, current tortoise population density on the site and its current Upper Respiratory Tract Disease (URTD) status.

## Silent Auction Items Needed

Donations of auction items are needed for the silent auction that will be held at the upcoming annual meeting. Last year's event raised a significant amount of money for the eastern indigo snake educational signage project.

The success of last year's event has encouraged the GTC board to dedicate the funds raised at this year's silent auction to support a two-month visit by a Southeast Asian turtle researcher/conservationist. For more information on this exciting new project, please see George Heinrich's article titled "GTC to Sponsor Visit by a Southeast Asian

Turtle Researcher" on page 5. GTC members can contribute to the success of this project by collecting and contributing auction items. We particularly need items with a herpetological theme, including artwork, jewelry, posters, books, scientific publications, field equipment, t-shirts, and other related items. It will save the organizers considerable time if you can mail the items before the meeting. Items should be mailed to the Gopher Tortoise Council, c/o George L. Heinrich, 1213 Alhambra Way S., St. Petersburg, FL 33705-4620. Thank you for your support.



# Gopher Tortoise Council Annual Meeting Final Notice

October 26-28, Reitz Union, University of Florida, Gainesville, Florida

See the summer newsletter for registration materials or download form at [gophertortoisecouncil.org](http://gophertortoisecouncil.org).

## Friday, 26 October:

### **Special Topic: The Impacts of Roads on Upland Species in the Southeast**: 9:00 am - 5:00 pm

This session will focus on issues related to the impacts of roads on upland fauna in the southeast and will include a series of presentations about recent projects to mitigate these impacts. Topics will range from the effects of roads on red-cockaded woodpeckers and scrub jays to an overview of Department of Transportation mitigation projects for Florida panther, black bear and herpetofauna of Paynes Prairie State Preserve.

**Social**: 5:30 pm - 9:00 pm. Join us for a relaxing social gathering hosted by the Florida Museum of Natural History, at Powell Hall. Drinks and light snacks will be provided.

**GTC Business Meeting**: 6:00 pm - 9:00 pm.

## Saturday, 27 October:

**Special Topic: The Impacts of Roads on Upland Species in the Southeast** and Gopher Tortoise Council Annual Meeting Presentations: 9:00 am - 5:00 pm. Presentations on the impacts of roads will continue. There also will be a series of speakers providing an update on the current state of Gopher Tortoise research.

**Banquet**: 6:30 pm - 9:00 pm. The banquet will be held in the upstairs dining room at the Reitz Union. The meal will consist of a buffet with a variety of entrees (including options for vegetarians). Pre-registration for the banquet is required.

**Silent Auction**: Friday and Saturday. The silent auction will open during the morning break on Friday and will continue through the afternoon break on Saturday. Once again, George Heinrich and Laura Wewerka will organize this year's auction. If you wish to donate items, please see information provided elsewhere in the newsletter. The proceeds of the auction will go towards funding a training opportunity for a Southeast Asian turtle researcher.

## Sunday, 28 October:

### **Optional Field Trips** (*register at the meeting*)

Lodging: Attendees must make their own arrangements for lodging. Make reservations as soon as possible. All the motels listed are on SW 13th Street (U.S. 441), south of the University.

Super 8 Motel (352) 372-3654.	Single: \$44, Double: \$45.
Scottish Inn (352) 376-4423.	Single: \$35, Double: \$45.
Econolodge (352) 373-7816.	Single: \$49, Double: \$53.
Comfort Inn (352) 373-6500.	Single or Double: \$54.
Cape Cod Inn (352) 371-2500	Single: \$44, Double: \$47.
Sheraton Gainesville (352) 377-4000.	Single or Double: \$99.

Camping: Paynes Prairie State Preserve, Micanopy, FL (352) 466-3397.

**Meals**: Lunches are not included in the registration--there are numerous restaurants inside the Reitz Union and within walking distance of the auditorium. Light food and drinks will be provided at the Friday night social. *Dinner tickets cannot be purchased after the September 30 pre-registration deadline.*

Airports: Gainesville Regional Airport (20 minutes from UF campus); Jacksonville International Airport (1½ hr).

### **Directions to UF's Reitz Union:**

#### From the north or south:

From I-75 take exit 76 (SR 26 or University Ave.) and head east toward the University of Florida. After you pass 34th Street look for the University campus on your right. Enter the campus by turning right on North-South Dr. (you'll see the football stadium at this intersection). Follow North-South Dr. to Museum Rd. and turn left. The Reitz Union will be on your left. The conference will be held in the second floor auditorium.

#### From Jacksonville:

Take U.S. 301 south to Waldo. In Waldo bear to the right on SR 24. Follow SR 24 south to University Ave. and turn right. Stay on University Ave. until you reach the University Campus. Then turn left on North-South Dr. Follow North-South Dr. to Museum Rd. and turn left. The Reitz Union will be on your left. The conference will be held in the second floor auditorium.

#### From The Gainesville Airport:

Turn right when exiting the airport and then take a left at the first stop light (this is SR24). Follow SR 24 south to University Ave. and turn right. Stay on University Ave. until you reach the University Campus. Then turn left on North-South Dr. Follow North-South Dr. to Museum Rd. and turn left. The Reitz Union will be on your left. The conference will be held in the second floor auditorium.

### **IMPORTANT PARKING UPDATE**

On Friday, October 26, parking will be available for conference participants in the O'Connell Center parking lot, located at the intersection of North-South Drive and University Avenue. Pre-registrants will receive a campus map and parking pass by mail.

On Saturday and Sunday, October 26 & 27, parking will be available directly across from the Reitz Union on Museum Road.

**Visit [www.gophertortoisecouncil.org](http://www.gophertortoisecouncil.org) for last-minute updates and announcements**

## GTC to Sponsor Visit by Southeast Asian Turtle Researcher GEORGE L. HEINRICH

The Gopher Tortoise Council is organizing an exciting new project that will provide an opportunity for a Southeast Asian turtle researcher/conservationist to visit the southeastern United States during the summer of 2003. The visiting researcher will learn about gopher tortoise field research techniques, captive collection management, and the role of education in conserving southeastern U.S. turtles. The primary goal of this project is to provide the visiting researcher with a well-rounded experience that can be applied to tortoise conservation efforts in Southeast Asia. This effort is being patterned after an existing New York Turtle and Tortoise Society supported project that brings Southeast Asian turtle researchers to the Wetlands Institute in southern New Jersey. Researchers visiting there learn about research and conservation efforts pertaining to diamondback terrapins.

We are currently exploring the possible participation of staff members at Camp Shelby (Mississippi) in hosting the six-week field portion of the visit. In addition, the Tennessee Aquarium has expressed an interest in sponsor-

ing a one-week visit to their facility where the researcher will have an opportunity to learn about managing a large collection of aquatic species. To round out the experience, George L. Heinrich and the Florida Turtle Conservation Trust will sponsor participation in a four-day Florida turtle workshop for educators.

Funding identified to date includes: 1) 100% of funds generated by the silent auction held at the 2001 annual meeting, 2) maximum of \$500 in matching funds from the GTC general account against funds raised by the silent auction, 3) proceeds raised from the sales of a new GTC t-shirt project (limited number using new GTC logo), and 4) proceeds raised from the sales of a PARC t-shirt (limited number using PARC logo). In addition, the New York Turtle and Tortoise Society has indicated an interest in providing matching funds. We are interested in securing additional partners and exploring other ideas, so please do not hesitate to contact me if you would like to support this worthy conservation effort. Please watch for updates on this project in future issues of this newsletter.

## Gopher Tortoise and Upland Ecosystem Educational Material Available to Florida Teachers

GEORGE L. HEINRICH

In 2000, the Gopher Tortoise Council completed a project that provided teaching material on gopher tortoises and upland ecosystems to the Florida Environmental Education Regional Service Project (RSP). At that time, the five RSP offices maintained lending libraries of environmental education material that were available free of charge to teachers.

Unfortunately, the RSP shut down in July 2001 due to funding cuts in the state's budget. In response to this unfortunate event, the Council and the RSP worked together to transfer the material to other regional lending libraries where it would remain available to teachers statewide. The status of the material and contact information for each region is included below. Please share this information with teachers in your region.

**RSP I (Panhandle):** Material is now housed in the Panhandle Area Educational Consortium's Professional Development Library. Contact Norma Teel at teeln@paec.org or (877) 873-7232 and ask about available

gopher tortoise and upland ecosystem educational material.

**RSP II (Crown):** Material is now housed at the Crown Region Area Center for Educational Enhancement. Contact Michel Chancey at chancey\_mi@nefec.org or (386) 329-3800 and ask about the Gopher Tortoise Resource Box.

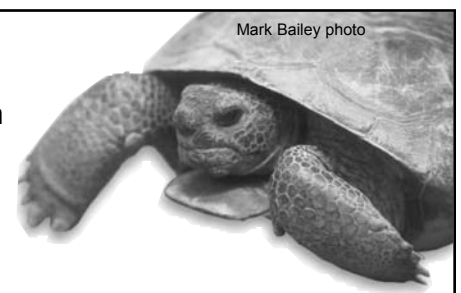
**RSP III (East Central Florida):** Material is now housed at the Region III Area Center for Educational Enhancement. Contact Kim Dahl at kdahl@mail.ucf.edu or (407) 823-3807 and ask about the Gopher Tortoise Resource Box.

**RSP IV (West Central Florida):** Material is now housed with the Southwest Florida Water Management District. Contact Beth Bartos at beth.bartos@swfwmd.state.fl.us or (800) 423-1476 and ask about the Gopher Tortoise Resource Box.

**RSP V (South Florida):** Material is now housed at the Region V Area Center for Educational Enhancement. Contact Pat Widergren at pwidergr@fau.edu or (561) 297-2198 and ask about the Gopher Tortoise Resource Box.

### THANK YOU

The Gopher Tortoise Council acknowledges a generous \$50 donation from **Robert G. Heath, Jr.** for the **indigo snake signage project**. See George Heinrich's PARC News and Views columns in this and last winter's newsletter for details.



## Mississippi Gopher Frog to be Listed as Endangered

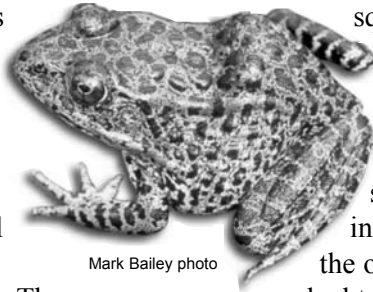
MARK BAILEY

The Interior Department announced on August 29 an agreement, in principle, to move quickly to protect two dozen animal and plant species under the Endangered Species Act. This includes issuing a final listing decision for the Mississippi gopher frog, a distinct vertebrate population that was proposed for listing May 18, 2000.

"I am pleased that we have been able to cooperate and find common ground that will allow us to protect these species under the Endangered Species Act," Interior Secretary Gale Norton said in a statement. "I hope this can be a model for future agreements."

The agreement was prompted by a letter to Secretary Norton from the Center for Biological Diversity, the Biodiversity Legal Foundation, Defenders of Wildlife and the Southern Appalachian Biodiversity Project. These groups and the Department of Interior agreed on delaying action on eight less-critically imperiled species as a way to free up resources to handle the species to be protected under the agreement.

A spokesperson for the Interior Department said in August, "While the department and the conservation organizations have reached an agreement in principle, the



Mark Bailey photo

parties must still negotiate a written settlement document. The agreement, including the written document, must then be reviewed and approved by the appropriate supervisory officials at the departments of the Interior and Justice before it is finalized and presented to the courts."

Other southeastern species to be protected through the agreement include the vermilion darter (Alabama), the Miami blue butterfly (Florida) and the Big Cypress fox squirrel (Florida).

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks, and the U.S. Forest Service have been working together since 1988 to protect the last known remaining Mississippi gopher frog population. Due to the on-going drought, this past spring the agencies worked together to ensure the only breeding site for the frog held water until tadpoles could complete metamorphosis. Water was trucked to the pond with the assistance of the Mississippi National Guard and two wells were dug at the site. Future plans include constructing additional breeding ponds. The USFWS has been working with the Forest Service since 1988 to protect this unique gopher frog population.

## New Tortoise Research Projects Funded at Camp Shelby

DEBORAH EPPERSON AND COLLEEN HEISE

The Camp Shelby Field Office, a field office of The Nature Conservancy located at Camp Shelby Training Site in Mississippi, has recently received two grants from the Department of Defense to study gopher tortoises. One of the projects will focus on the response of gopher tortoise populations to habitat management by prescribed fire. As suitable natural habitat becomes less available, either due to habitat destruction or degradation, gopher tortoises have become more concentrated in man-made ruderal areas. Ruderal areas are areas that have been cleared and are kept in a grass stage usually by mowing. Examples of ruderal areas include power and gas line right-of-ways, roadsides, and ranges on military bases.

Throughout the Southeast, suitable forested habitat has become degraded due to exclusion of fire. Biologists at Camp Shelby Field Office will investigate how gopher tortoises respond when habitat surrounding ruderal areas is improved by prescribed fire.

The other project will investigate the prevalence and distribution of upper respiratory tract disease (URTD) in relation to varying levels of military activity. URTD is a respiratory disease that affects not only gopher tortoises, but desert tortoises as well. In some Florida gopher tortoise populations where significant die-offs have been observed, URTD may have been a factor.

There has been speculation that URTD prevalence may be associated with anthropogenic stress, and previous work at Camp Shelby has documented infected gopher tortoises associated with areas of military use, primarily ranges and firing points. Biologists will sample gopher tortoises in areas with high levels of military impact (primarily tracked vehicle maneuvers), as well as in areas with little or no military training to determine if disease prevalence is associated with military activities.

## Welcome New Members COLLEEN HEISE

The Gopher Tortoise Council appreciates the enthusiastic support of our new and old members. The following new members joined in 2001. We hope that you will continue to support GTC through the years!

Shauna R. Allen	Robert Heath
Fred Antonio	Frank Holleman
Brian Jay Bielema	Clarke Keller
René Wiesner Brown	Alan and Joan Lippman
Mr. & Mrs. Gerald Buchanan	J. Mitchell Lockhart
Michael Caparelli	Mary L. McAuliffe
Patrick Chubb	Jon A. Moore
Jamie C. Colson	Carl Muller
Nikolai Curtis	Lynn Pitney
Bert Davis	George Ramseur Jr.
W. T. Davis	William E. and Linda J. Redfern
Mike Evans	Susan Ryan
Shelly Ferguson	Raymond A. Schlueter
Tanji Ford	C. Tabor
James Garzone	Willy TheLosen
Tim Glover	Tuscany Trading Co.
Lindsay Green	Gerald Webb
Nicholas Green	Sheila Wickstrom

## Back Issues Now on Website

Beginning with the Spring/Summer 2000 issue, each issue of *The Tortoise Burrow* is archived on the website at [www.gophertortoisecouncil.org/archives.htm](http://www.gophertortoisecouncil.org/archives.htm). Current issues will not be posted on the website until a subsequent issue is mailed out.

*The Tortoise Burrow* is published quarterly (March, June, September, December). Deadlines for submission of announcements and articles are the 15th of the preceeding month. Send materials to the editor: Mark Bailey, 2040 Old Federal Road, Shorter, AL 36075, telephone (334) 727-2040, fax (334) 727-1005, [m Bailey@conservationsoutheast.com](mailto:m Bailey@conservationsoutheast.com). Decisions concerning publication of submitted material rest with the editor and co-chairs. Please send address changes to membership secretary Colleen Heise, Camp Shelby Field Office, CSTS-ENV, Bldg. 6678, Camp Shelby, MS 39407, or e-mail at [cheise@tnc.org](mailto:cheise@tnc.org).

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*position open*

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### Standing Committee Chairs

#### *Nominating Committee*

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#### *Public Information & Education Committee*

Laura Wewerka: (941) 275-3435, [laura.w@mindspring.com](mailto:laura.w@mindspring.com)

#### *Rattlesnake Conservation Committee (Co-chairs)*

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Bruce Means: (850) 681-6208, [dbm5647@garnet.acns.fsu.edu](mailto:dbm5647@garnet.acns.fsu.edu)

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Bob Herrington: (912) 931-2331, [bherring@canes.gsw.edu](mailto:bherring@canes.gsw.edu)

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*position open*

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# ANNUAL MEETING OCT. 26-28. FINAL ANNOUNCEMENT INSIDE

See the summer newsletter for registration materials or download form at [gophertortoiseCouncil.org](http://gophertortoiseCouncil.org).

## Public Information and Education Report

Laura Wewerka

The *Gopher Tracks* book reprinting project is almost complete! As I write this report, the book is at the printers and is scheduled to be printed during the first week of October. Our goal has been to complete the entire project before the annual meeting, and I'm getting a bit nervous, but know that it is still possible. Thanks again to everyone who donated money towards the reprinting. Several donations came in at the last minute and we ended up raising a little over \$9,000. That was great news for me since I had underestimated the cost of postage when I set a goal of \$6,500! Between the personal book orders and the school book orders we requested that 6,600 books be printed. We got a pleasant surprise when the printer reduced the cost of the books slightly, enabling us to order 6,700 copies. Between the donations and lower printing costs, we will be able to distribute two copies of *Gopher Tracks* to 2,931

schools! We have also been able to give the book to schools located in 88 counties that are beyond but near the tortoise's range!

Those of you who ordered books should be receiving them soon. If you did not place an order, there are at least two nature stores that purchased copies for resale, and possibly two others that ordered a large number of books. I will let you know more specifics in the next issue of the *Tortoise Burrow*.

Once *Gopher Tracks* is distributed, I'll turn my attention back to some of the other projects that are just as important, but that I had to put aside for the summer.

The display board is currently only reserved for a Reptile/Amphibian Expo at the Chinsegut Nature Center in Brooksville, Florida on October 13th, so if you know of any events that we could also attend please let me know!



The Gopher Tortoise Council is a nonprofit and tax-exempt organization under IRS Code Section 501(c)(3). ID #59-2010727

**GOPHER TORTOISE COUNCIL**  
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