



# The TORTOISE BURROW

Newsletter of the  
**Gopher Tortoise Council**  
[www.gophertortoiseCouncil.org](http://www.gophertortoiseCouncil.org)

Volume 25, No. 2  
Summer 2005



ALABAMA FLORIDA GEORGIA LOUISIANA MISSISSIPPI SOUTH CAROLINA

## Announcing the 27<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting

BECKY BOLT, CO-CHAIR

Dear GTC Members and Friends,

The 27<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Gopher Tortoise Council will be held on 7-9 October in Palatka, Florida. Plans are coming together nicely to make this year's meeting a good one. Our venue, Ravine Gardens State Park, is a unique combination of history, incredible landscaping, and natural communities. It was developed from 1933 to 1939 as an effort to help the City of Palatka recover from the Great Depression. In 1999, Ravine Gardens was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in recognition of its historical significance. There are five acres of formal gardens featuring more than 95,000 azaleas and a variety of other subtropical and tropical plants. The remaining 149 acres is a lush combination of oaks, hickory, sweet gum, longleaf pine, cabbage palm, and cypress. The defining natural feature of the park is the steephead ravine formed by underground water flowing into the nearby St. Johns River. The top of the ravine is 120 feet above sea level at its maximum elevation, quite an anomaly for central Florida. Meeting facilities are very nice and comfortable. Visit [www.Floridastateparks.org](http://www.Floridastateparks.org) for information and pictures.

This year's special topic session is on Friday and entitled "Acquiring and Managing Private Lands for Conservation." We are all aware that loss and degradation of habitat is the primary threat to conservation of natural communities. Private lands must be considered and included in landscape-wide management plans if our conservation efforts are to be successful. Friday's slate of invited speakers includes private citizens, and representatives from NGO's, county programs, the State of Florida, and federal programs. Presentations will focus on the importance of private lands for large-scale conservation, the increasing options for acquiring and/or including private lands in conservation areas, techniques for

working with lands outside public ownership, and the particularly challenging problem of habitat management. This session will be well worth skipping work on Friday, so please join us.

Saturday's general papers session is also coming together. The Call for Papers is open until 1 September, and presentations on any aspect of gopher tortoise biology and ecology, uplands habitats, and/or associated plant and wildlife species are welcome. See the meeting page on the website for details of abstract submission.

The registration form on page 3 is also available on the website. Lunches Friday and Saturday, a social with food Friday night, and the banquet Saturday night will be catered. See the registration form for details; the deadline for reserving meals is 28 September. Planning for the silent auction is underway and meeting t-shirts will be available.

The meeting will end Sunday with field trips. On the schedule so far are Lake Woodruff National Wildlife Refuge and the U.S. Forest Service Southern Research Station at Ocala National Forest. If anyone has suggestions or contacts for additional field trips, or is willing to lead a field trip in the Palatka area, please email [Kristina\\_sorensen@fws.gov](mailto:Kristina_sorensen@fws.gov). Visit [www.putnamcountychamber.org](http://www.putnamcountychamber.org) for other sources of things to do in and around Palatka.

Mark your calendars, get those registration forms and abstracts submitted, and make hotel reservations now. The annual GTC meeting is the glue that holds our group together and allows us to accomplish all of the good conservation and education that occurs throughout the rest of the year. Your participation is needed and greatly appreciated.

# Annual Meeting Information

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## Preliminary Meeting Schedule, October 7-9

Friday 0830 – Registration Desk Opens  
0900 – Welcome  
0905 – Park Orientation  
0920 – Introduction to Special Topic Session:  
*Acquiring and Managing Private Lands for Conservation*  
0930 - 1200 – Invited Speakers with Break  
1200 - 1300 – Lunch  
1300 - 1600 – Invited Speakers with Break  
1700 - 1900 – Social with food and cash bar

Saturday. 0830 – Registration desk opens  
0900 – Welcome  
0905 – Park Orientation  
0920 -1200 – Presentations with Break  
1200 -1300 – Lunch  
1300 - 1710 – Presentations with Break  
1900 - 2200 – Banquet with cash bar

Sunday Field Trips – Details to be Announced

## Hotel Information:

Riverfront Inn (formerly Holiday Inn)  
201 N. First St.  
Palatka, FL 32177  
386-328-3481

Reservations must be made by **22 September**. Mention the Gopher Tortoise Council to receive the discount. We have 60 rooms blocked for us until 22 September:

2 double beds, city view \$60/night  
2 double beds, river view \$65/night  
1 king bed, city view \$65/night  
1 king bed, river view \$70/night

The Riverfront has recently been totally remodeled. There is an outdoor pool, restaurant, exercise room, lounge, and boat-docking facilities with electric and water hook-ups.

### Other Palatka hotels:

Best Western, 119 S. Highway 17, 386-325-7800  
Budget Inn, 100 Moseley Ave., 386-328-1533  
The Moorings, 247 Crystal Cove Dr., 386-325-1055  
William Penn Motel, 100 Federal St., 386-328-1587

### Campground:

St. Johns Campground, 436 S. Highway 17, 386-328-4470

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## Small's Classic Florida Book Again Available

The Seminole Soil and Water Conservation District (SSWCD) has re-published the prophetic view of John Kunkel Small. Mr. Small was a naturalist and botanist who did most of his work in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. His book, *From Eden to Sahara: Florida's Tragedy*, was not only a meticulous documentation of previously unstudied flora and undiscovered areas of Florida; it also predicts the impacts of thoughtless development. Many feel that this work helped to educate the need for conserving the wetlands of Florida and ultimately led to the creation of The Everglades National Park.

With the contributions of several dedicated professionals, the SSWCD has re-published *From Eden to Sahara: Florida's Tragedy*. This new edition includes a new prologue by Bill Belleville, an award winning environmental author and filmmaker. Wildlife ecologist, Dr. Jay Exum, and botanist, Randy Mejeur, have provided a new introduction that puts Small's original text in a modern perspective. This high quality release of this re-discovered classic is complete with enhanced reproductions of Small's original photos and an original new cover.

The SSWCD invites you to be their partner in conservation by helping to distribute this highly educational and attractive book. They are offering this important work at \$14.95 + s/h. If you would like to utilize this opportunity as a fundraising effort or as an educational tool, the district will discount any order of 2-9 books by 20% and ten or more books by 40 percent.

REGISTRATION FORM

27<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL MEETING OF THE GOPHER TORTOISE COUNCIL  
Ravine Gardens State Park, Palatka, Florida, 7 – 9 October 2005

Photocopy (or print a copy from the website) and mail to: Rebecca Bolt, 4750 Cinema St., Cocoa, FL 32927

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Affiliation: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone: (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ email: \_\_\_\_\_

GTC member registration (received before 28 Sept.)	\$40	\$ _____
GTC member late registration (after 28 Sept.)	\$50	\$ _____
Non-member registration (received before 28 Sept.)	\$45	\$ _____
Non-member late registration (after 28 Sept.)	\$55	\$ _____
Friday lunch	\$10	\$ _____
Friday night food and social	\$15 (beer and wine cash bar)	\$ _____
Saturday lunch	\$10	\$ _____
Saturday night banquet	\$25 (beer and wine cash bar)	\$ _____
Total		\$ _____

*No catered meals will be available for those registering after Sept. 28. A list of local establishments will be provided, but we encourage everyone to eat at the park. Food will be excellent (carnivore and herbivore options), and lunch breaks will be one hour. Snacks for morning and afternoon breaks are included with meeting registration.*

Sunday Field Trips – to be announced; Food, drinks, and land transportation to sites not provided. Check the website for updates.

Membership dues:

\$15 student	\$25 individual	\$40 contributor
\$50 corporate/society	\$75 sustaining	\$300 life- one time payment

Check here if : \_\_\_\_\_ new \_\_\_\_\_ renewing member      *Circle newsletter preference: Electronic or Hardcopy*

Make checks payable to the Gopher Tortoise Council. The GTC is a nonprofit tax exempt organization under IRS Code Section 501(c)(3).

**Silent Auction Items Needed**

At each annual meeting a Silent Auction is held to raise funds for various GTC activities. Myra Noss has again volunteered to coordinate the upcoming auction. Items donated in previous years include trips, lodge/bed-and breakfast stays, books, turtle carvings, and tee-shirts. This is a great opportunity to expose your art or craft, book, or product. Maybe you know others who could contribute--use your imagination. If you have items to contribute, please contact Myra at 407-971-9503 or at [noss\\_m@bellsouth.net](mailto:noss_m@bellsouth.net).

*The Tortoise Burrow* is published three times annually. Deadlines for submission of announcements and articles are the 15th of March, July, and November. Send materials to the editor: Mark Bailey, [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 Will Knox, [wknox55@bellsouth.net](mailto:wknox55@bellsouth.net).

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# 27<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL MEETING INFORMATION INSIDE

## Directory of Gopher Tortoise Council Officers, Committee Chairs, and State Representatives

### Co-chairs

John Jensen: (478) 994-1438  
john\_jensen@dnr.state.ga.us

Rebecca Bolt (321) 867-7330  
smithrb@kscems.ksc.nasa.gov

### Secretary/Membership Secretary, Merchandise/Publication Sales

Bill Knox: (352) 542-0384  
wknox55@bellsouth.net

### Treasurer

Cyndi Gates: (352) 241-8501  
Cyndi.Gates@myfwc.com

### Newsletter Editor/Website Manager

Mark Bailey: (334) 727-2040  
mbailey@conservationsoutheast.com

### GTC Representative to PARC

John Jensen (see above)

### Standing Committee Chairs

#### *Nominating Committee*

Joan Berish: (352) 955-2230  
berishj@fwc.state.fl.us

#### *Public Information & Education Committee*

Laura Wewerka: (941) 275-3435  
laura.w@mindspring.com

#### *Upland Snake Conservation Initiative (co-chairs)*

Jeff Holmes (615) 969-7559  
jholmes@conservationsoutheast.com

Jeff Humphries:

humphri2@yahoo.com

#### *Research Advisory Committee*

Bob Herrington: (912) 931-2331  
bherrington@canes.gsw.edu

### State Representatives

#### *Alabama*

Roger Birkhead: (334) 844-4850  
birkhrd@mail.auburn.edu

#### *Florida*

Joan Berish (see above)

#### *Georgia*

William Birkhead: (706) 569-301  
birkhead\_bill@colstate.edu

#### *Louisiana*

Inés E. Maxit: (225) 765-2820  
maxit\_ie@wlf.state.la.us

#### *Mississippi*

Tom Mann: (601) 354-7303 x 116  
tom.mann@mmns.state.ms.us

#### *South Carolina*

Steve Bennett: (803) 734-3930  
sbennett@scdnr.state.sc.us

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

## GOPHER TORTOISE COUNCIL

c/o Florida Museum of Natural History

University of Florida

P.O. Box 117800

Gainesville, FL 32611-7800