



THE NIGHT FLYER

NEWS FROM THE FLORIDA BAT CONSERVANCY



OUR MISSION

To preserve & protect native bat populations within the state of Florida.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

FBC in the Community 2

Historic Temple Terrace Bat Tower To Rise Again 3

Eagle Scout Builds for Bats in the Chassahowitzka Wildlife Management Area 4

Proposed Regulation to Protect Bats in Buildings 5

Conservancy Speaks Up for Bats in Bridges 5

POPULAR WITH PEOPLE & BATS: THE LOWER SUWANNEE NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

By Steve Barlow

The large bat house which greets visitors to the Lower Suwannee National Wildlife Refuge Office was partly inspired by the successful University of Florida bat house. Another source of motivation was the overflowing backyard-sized bat house adjacent to the office, which soon had bats hanging on the landing ramp and on the side of the refuge office!

I mentioned to the previous refuge manager, Ken Litzenberger, that perhaps a solution was to build a larger bat house slightly further from the office. I shared my vision of the house becoming a popular wildlife viewing site for the public complete with interpretive signs and viewing area. Refuge ranger Pam Darty was also instrumental in all

aspects of the refuge bat house, and helped me politic our supervisor to give us the "go ahead" on the project. Pam later designed a wonderful interpretive sign for the house and associated landscape fencing to keep visitors from getting too close to the house.

The house was constructed in July 2002 with assistance from Jayde Roof (FWC Biologist) and David Romano (FWC Wildlife Technician), along with help from the refuge's summer Youth Conservation Corps members. The design

was based on using standard sized sheets of plywood to minimize any cutting in the field. The dimensions of the original house were 4' tall by 8' wide by 4' thick; we maintained 3/4" between each roosting partition and



(Continued on page 4)



Board of Directors

President / Treasurer

George Marks

Vice President

William H. Kern, Jr.

Secretary

Polly Kimball

Directors

Ken Arrison

Nancy Douglass

Sarah Kern

Cyndi Marks

Mary Angela Strain

Ann Walker

Scientific Advisors:

Jeff Gore

Mark Ludlow

Executive Director:

Cyndi Marks

Editor:

Mary Angela Strain

Contact us:

P. O. Box 516

Bay Pines, FL 33744

727-710-2287

Floridabats@aol.com

www.floridabats.org

FBC IN THE COMMUNITY

October 8—14: Ding Darling Days, Ding Darling National Wildlife Refuge, Sanibel Island. A week of activities, including the Federal Duck Stamp contest, culminating with a bat presentation by Cyndi and George Marks on Sunday, October 14th at 3 pm. FBC will have a booth on Sunday from 11-4 at the refuge along with other environmental organizations for Family Fun Day, a day full of environmental activities and wildlife programs. *For a schedule of events visit:* www.dingdarlingdays.com

October 19: Bat Education Program, Weedon Island Preserve, St. Petersburg, 7 pm. *More Info:* call the preserve (727) 453-6502.

October 20: RiverFest, Riverfront Park, Temple Terrace 11—2 pm (see Page 3).

October 20: Creepy Creature Feature, Hobe Sound Nature Center, 6:30—9 pm. Promised to be an evening of fun and educational activities. FBC will present a program on bats at 7 pm.

October 22: Bat Education Program, Pelican Island Preservation Society, North Indian River County Library, Sebastian, 7 pm. *More Info:* call the library (772) 589-0636.

October 26—29: Nature Coast Birding & Wildlife Experience: A Celebration Of Natural Diversity, Cedar Key. FBC will present a program on bats October 26 at 3 pm as part of the event. Participants are then invited to join Cyndi and George Marks at the Lower Suwannee Bat House (see cover story) at dusk to watch the bat emergence and listen to echolocation calls with bat detectors. Registration is required for the event, which includes birding, shelling, and visits to historic shell mounds. *Download information and registration forms by visiting:* www.ncbwe.com

October 27: Lubee Bat Festival, Gainesville, 12—3:30 pm. Don't miss this chance to meet some amazing fruit and pollinating bat species at the Lubee Bat Conservancy, a non-profit organization that works with others to save fruit and nectar bats and their habitats through conservation, research and education. FBC will also host an information booth during the festival. *For more information, visit:* www.lubee.org

October 28: Bat Education Program and Night Walk, Pinellas County Extension Office, Largo, 6:30—8 pm. Space is limited—call for reservations (\$3/person): (727) 582-2673.

November 3: Bat Education Program, Lakes Regional Library, 15290 Bass Road, Ft. Myers, 10:30 am.

November 3: Bat Education Program, South County Regional Library, 21100 Three Oaks Parkway, Estero, 2 pm.

November 4: Sunday in the Park, Woodmont Park, Temple Terrace 12 – 4 pm. Visit FBC's bat booth—we'll be there to help to support the Temple Terrace Bat Tower rebuilding project!

November 4: Bat Education Program, Chinsegut Nature Center, Brooksville, 7 pm. *More Info:* call the center (352)754-6722.

For more information on any program, you may also call FBC: 727-710-2287



*Temple Terrace Bat Tower as
photographed in 1969*

TEMPLE TERRACE HISTORIC BAT TOWER TO RISE AGAIN

The *Friends of Temple Terrace Parks and Recreation* and the *Temple Terrace Preservation Society* have partnered on fundraising to rebuild the greatest of Temple Terrace icons: the **Temple Terrace Bat Tower**.

Background: The historic tower, built on the banks of the Hillsborough River by Temple Terrace's original developers in 1924, was based on plans purchased from Dr. Charles Campbell, an early pioneer of bat studies and Nobel Peace Prize nominee. The tower was intended to be a roost for bats that would eat the mosquitoes that caused malaria. Today,

there are three Campbell bat towers still standing (out of an original fourteen worldwide): one in the Florida Keys, and two in Texas. The Temple Terrace tower measured 10' square at the base and was 40' tall from ground level to the top of the roof ridge. It was burned in 1979 by arsonists.

Plan: The plan is to rebuild the tower based on measurements taken from the remains of the original tower and the existing Campbell bat tower on Sugarloaf Key, Florida. The exterior proportions, structure, and materials of the new tower will exactly match those of the previous historic tower. The interior of the tower will be completely re-configured with assistance of George and Cynthia Marks of the Florida Bat Conservancy so that it will serve as a functional roost (it is not known whether bats ever lived in the original tower). This will allow the city to reduce its use of harmful pesticides while providing local bats with a home.

The proposed site for the new tower, which will be in the planned 150-acre Riverfront Park, is based on research by Temple Terrace Parks Planner Dana Carver and recommendations from the Marks'. The new tower will be a focal point for the park and is far from existing residences; the historic site of the tower is now on private property and would not be available for public viewing.

Fundraising: Members of the Florida Bat Conservancy are encouraged to make a donation to help see the Temple Terrace Bat Tower rise once again on the banks of the Hillsborough River. If you would like to help, send your donation, made payable to FBC and marked "Temple Terrace Bat Tower," to: P. O. Box 516, Bay Pines, FL 33744. We will collect donations through the end of the year and present the Friends organization with a check to help launch their 2008 efforts in January. Donors will be recognized in the Winter edition of *The Night Flyer*.



**SUPPORT THE TEMPLE
TERRACE PROJECT—
ATTEND RIVERFEST 2007!**

**Saturday, Oct. 20 from
11 am to 2 pm; FREE.**

Riverhills Park
329 S. Riverhills Drive

*The 7th Annual
RiverFest is an
interactive event
focusing on the
Hillsborough River and
surrounding habitats.*

*Experience the beauty
of the river with the
Canoe Challenge
at 9 am (\$47 if you
need a canoe; \$27 with
your own canoe). Entry
fee includes T-shirt and
lunch.*

*Free activities begin at
11 am with hands-on
exhibits, animals,
children's fishing, canoe
racing and more!*

*The Friends of Temple
Terrace Parks and
Recreation and the
Temple Terrace
Preservation Society
will host an "Adopt a
Bat" booth during
Riverfest: for a small
donation, those
attending can take
home small plush toy
bats. All proceeds will
help rebuild the Temple
Terrace Bat Tower.*

(Continued from page 1)



alternated between vinyl mesh roosts and roughened plywood roost sheets.

The first bat occupants were several hundred evening bats (*Nycticeius humeralis*), which had the run of the place for four-six months, at which time Brazilian free-tailed bats (*Tadarida brasiliensis*) took over. The free-tails came in by the thousands within a short time. Soon the entire house appeared to be packed full. Another advantage to our house design was the ability to easily add additional roosting quadrants. In early 2005, two additional roosting quadrants were added on both sides of the original house, making the house 8'x8'x4', in effect doubling the original size.

Lower Suwannee National Wildlife Refuge encompasses 52,935 acres in Dixie and Levy Counties, Florida. For more information, visit:

www.fws.gov/lowersuwannee



EAGLE SCOUT IMPROVES REAL ESTATE FOR BATS IN THE CHASSAHOWITZKA WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA

Last spring, Dean Linton, an enthusiastic 14-year-old boy scout from Brooksville, was ready to begin his Eagle Scout project. He met with Jennifer Roberts and Paul Hansen of the Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission to discuss Eagle Scout projects ideas. One of the ideas they suggested was to build and install bat houses in the Chassahowitzka Wildlife Management Area (WMA) in Hernando County. Dean became excited about this project and its benefit to the bats which in turn benefit us by controlling insects.

Dean chose a triple-chambered bat house design from the "Bat House Builder's Handbook." He decided to build eight bat houses and install them back-to-back on 21 foot lengths of galvanized pipe. He contacted the Florida Bat Conservancy for any information and advice that would be specific for Florida's bat species. Coincidentally, we were planning to do a bat workshop and bat survey during the spring at the Chassahowitzka WMA. So, we were able to meet with Dean, and, along with Jennifer Roberts from the FWC, scouted out the best locations for the placement of the bat houses. Donations received from the community included lumber from Lowe's Home Improvement Warehouse of Spring Hill and poles from Ferguson WaterWorks of Tampa. The Florida Bat Conservancy donated plastic mesh for the roosting surfaces of the bat houses. Dean's scout troop (Brooksville Troop 796) helped with the assembly, with supervision by handyman Quentin Ziske.

The four sets of bat houses were installed on July 10th. We haven't had a report yet that they are occupied, but hopefully bats will take up residence in them soon. If you would like to see the bat houses, the Chassahowitzka WMA is just north of Weeki Wachee. The entrance is on the west side of US 19, approximately 9 miles north of Hwy 50.



PROPOSED REGULATION TO PROTECT BATS IN BUILDINGS

The Florida Bat Conservancy has been working with wildlife trappers and pest control operators for many years educating them on how to safely exclude bats from buildings, and not to disturb colonies during the maternity season. A number of operators follow the recommended procedures, but many others do not. For several years we have been requesting the Florida Wildlife Conservation Commission to adopt rules regarding bats in buildings. Finally, a proposed rule is under consideration. The deadline for comments was October 1, and the FBC sent out an "APB" by phone and email asking all who are interested to submit comments. Many responded; in fact, we heard the agency received "tons" of email in support of protecting bats. ***To all of you who took the time to submit comments, we thank you on behalf of Florida's bats.*** The Commission is scheduled to vote on the new regulation at their February '08 meeting in Panama City.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

Bat Friend: Kjell Plotkin

Regular: Mr. and Mrs. A. Tricoli

SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR RENEWING MEMBERS

Bat Conservationist: Pat Knox

Bat Supporter: Tim Glover

Bat Friend: Wendy Shagena

CONSERVANCY SPEAKS UP FOR BATS IN BRIDGES

Over 300 bridges in Florida serve as bat roosts, and five species are known to use bridges as day roosts: Brazilian free-tailed bats, big brown bats, evening bats, southeastern myotis, and Rafinesque's big-eared bats. Bats have been roosting in highway bridges for decades, but the future of bats in Florida's bridges is uncertain (*see Challenge For 2007: Bats in Bridges, the Night Flyer, Vol. 8 No. 4, Winter 2007*).

Cyndi and George Marks of the FBC decided it was time to raise the awareness level on the issue and educate those working with Florida's bridges on the nature and benefits of bats, and how they can be accommodated in highway bridges. They registered for the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) bi-annual environmental conference in Orlando, September 4-6, 2007. A special exhibit was created highlighting the issue of bats in bridges. Cyndi brought live bats and provided many participants with their first look at a live Florida bat up close. As always, just seeing the bats helped change peoples' attitudes and the interest level rose as the conference progressed.



FBC President George Marks discusses bat issues with Betsy Davis and Steve Ferrell of HDR Engineering at the FDOT Environmental Management Conference.

The Marks' found numerous opportunities to talk with FDOT staff and transportation consultants, stressing the need to include the possibility of bats being present in any plan for the maintenance, modification or construction of Florida bridges. Many were aware there were bats in bridges but few had thought of it as a specific issue that needed to be addressed. The FBC will continue to work with FDOT on issues regarding bats in bridges.



HELPING FLORIDA'S BATS

Florida Bat Conservancy

Post Office Box 516

Bay Pines FL 33744

NEWS FROM THE FLORIDA BAT CONSERVANCY



Join us and help protect these fascinating, beneficial mammals!

Please consider helping Florida's bats by becoming a member. We are a non-profit 501(c) (3) organization working hard to protect bats by means of public education, conservation projects, rescue, rehabilitation, and research.

☐ *New*

☐ Regular \$15 ☐ Bat Friend \$30 ☐ Bat Supporter \$50

☐ *Renewing*

☐ Bat Patron \$100 ☐ Bat Conservationist \$250 or more

Name: _____ Email: _____

Address: _____ Phone: _____

City: _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Make checks payable to: Florida Bat Conservancy, P.O. Box 516, Bay Pines, FL 33744