

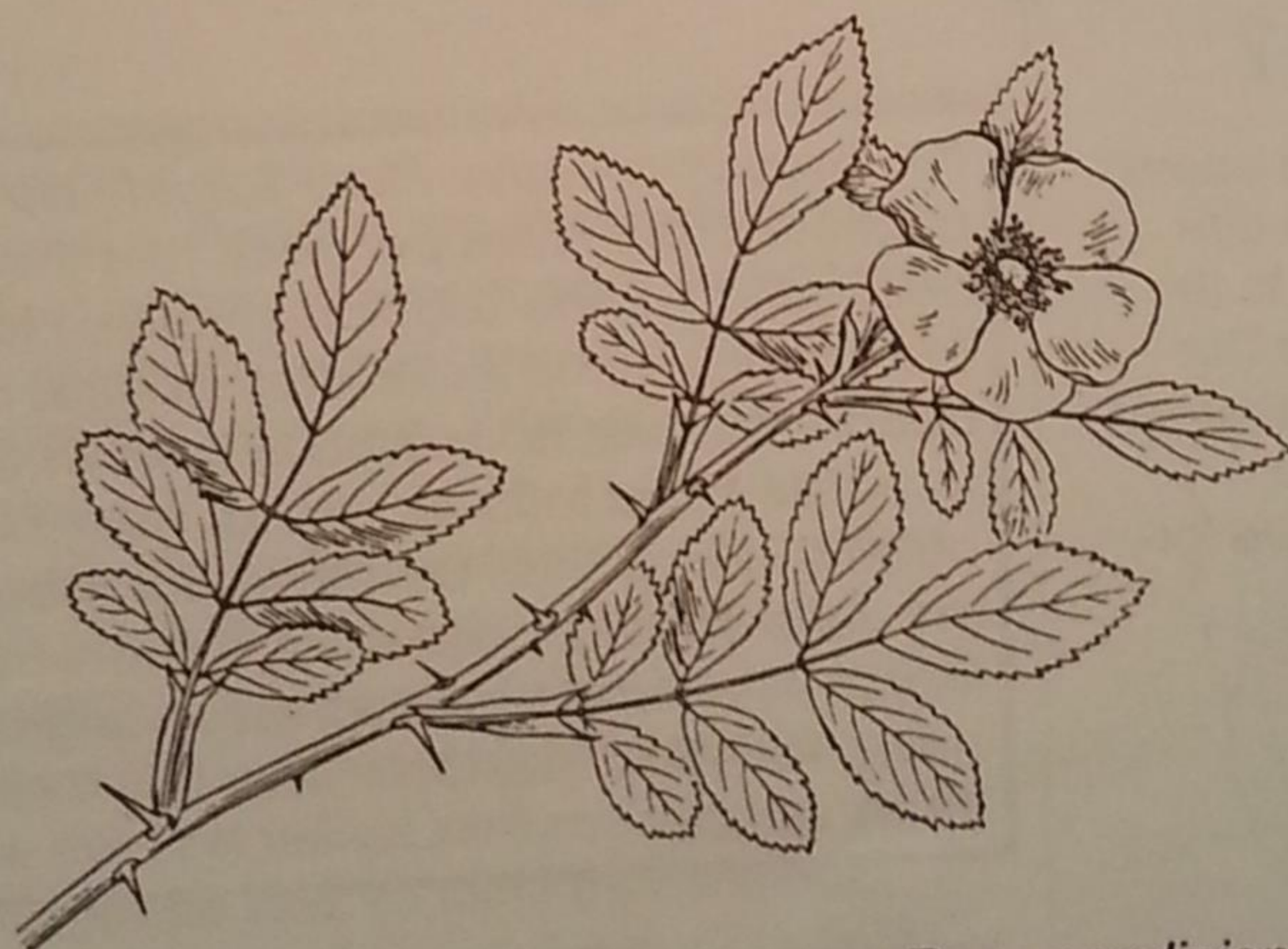
## On the Kisatchie Issue...

Prose from the president's pen...*Jim Foret, Jr.*

Hello native plant folk! I am so glad to see spring get here. Winter is a great season, but the change is welcome. Please mark your calendar for our May and June field trips. If I am not mistaken, the June trip is our fall field trip. It will be a busy early summer this year.

Speaking of the May trip, it will take place in the Vernon District of KNF. If the Army has its way, this will be our last opportunity to use our National Forest without consulting Army personnel first. The Forest Service will have to check in with the military also. Oh, there you are, I figured that would fire you up. I went to a public meeting on this topic last week in Baton Rouge. The army put it on to inform the public on their environmental assessment for increased military training use of the Vernon Ranger District, KNF. They wanted to inform us as to how they were planning to use our public forest more and how they did not intend to hurt it much and if they did they would fix it back and not to worry because they would watch over our precious resource for us. Trust them to make it available to us whenever they were not blowing it up and running over those little trash trees and scrub. They also said they wanted to hear our opinions of their plans for our national forest.

(Continued on page 2)



*Rosa caroliniana*

## Summer Field Trip Planned for Northeast Louisiana

The LNPS annual summer field trip is planned for June 5, 6, & 7 in Morehouse, Ouachita, and Caldwell Parishes, with a short jaunt over the Arkansas state line into Ashley County. Saturday morning, the group will visit Rector's Prairie on the Bastrop Ridge north of the town of Bastrop. This remnant tallgrass prairie is a spectacular collection of native species, common and uncommon. The prairie was burned this past February, and should be especially beautiful. The property, which is adjacent to and overlooking the Handy Brake National Wildlife Refuge is privately owned and is not open to the public. A second stop in Morehouse Parish will be the 19,000 acre Mollicy Tract adjacent to the Ouachita River. This area is also off limits to the public. The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service is in the process of re-creating a bottomland hardwood forest on the tract. Most of the land is between the levee and the river, and offers

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inside...

Summer Field Trips  
Carl Amason on Sweet Goldenrod  
North Louisiana Prairies & Palmettos

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## Kisatchie...

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Am I sounding angry? Well I mean to. Remember last time when your elected officials wanted to just give this little patch of woods to these folks and you raised so much stink? Big Brother backed off and now they are telling us that this is going to be different. Oh yeah, the army gets what they want and you get a lot less. This is how it works: the army goes through the motions, takes public comment at meetings and then gives you folks at home exactly 19 days to send in your written comment. What a farce! The notice of the meetings was short and this written comment period is too short for us to organize in a timely manner to voice our feelings about the future of our Kisatchie National Forest, Vernon District. These are the choices they are giving us. There are five alternatives. Number One is the only one I can vote for. Two thru five commit more and more land to the army and give the army more and more control over scheduling. The army prefers number four—multiple use priority option A. The word "restrictions" appears in almost every paragraph. I do not think you would like this one. Alternative number one is to leave control and activity levels as they stand now. Boy don't you wish the army would have let you speak your mind.

I'm going to write every elected and appointed official I can think of to register my protest. I hope you do also. This brings me to my last comment. If I had your e-mail addresses in my computer or in Beth's, we could zip this information out to you in a heartbeat, well in a day anyway, Beth and I are still learning. Fax numbers are important also. See you on the field trips. I'm going on a trip to central New York in early May, I hope to visit the wild side of upstate N.Y.

*Jim*

Address for JFTC & Fort Polk public comment form is: Public Affairs Office, attn. Dan Nance  
7073 Radio Road, Fort Polk, LA 71459-5342

## Are Your Dues Due?

Check your mailing label. If the number above your name is highlighted, your dues are due with this issue. Please send your dues to the treasurer, Jessie Johnson, 216 Caroline Dormon Road, Saline, La. 71010. **Remember to send us your change of address.** The newsletter is sent bulk mail and will not be forwarded to you by the postal service.

Student or Sr. Citizen	\$5
Individual	\$10
Family	\$15
Organization	\$25
Sustaining	\$50
Corporate	\$100

The *Louisiana Native Plant Society News* is published four times per year. It is the official publication of the Louisiana Native Plant Society. The editor welcomes articles, notices of upcoming events, and book reviews of interest to native plant folks, as well as illustrations, poems, and prose. Deadlines for submissions are June 1st, September 1st, December 1st, and March 1st. Send any address changes to LNPS News, P.O. Box 126, Collinston, La., 71229.—Terry Erwin, editor.

You can e-mail Terry, the editor, and Beth, the LNPS Secretary at [kalorama@iamerica.net](mailto:kalorama@iamerica.net)

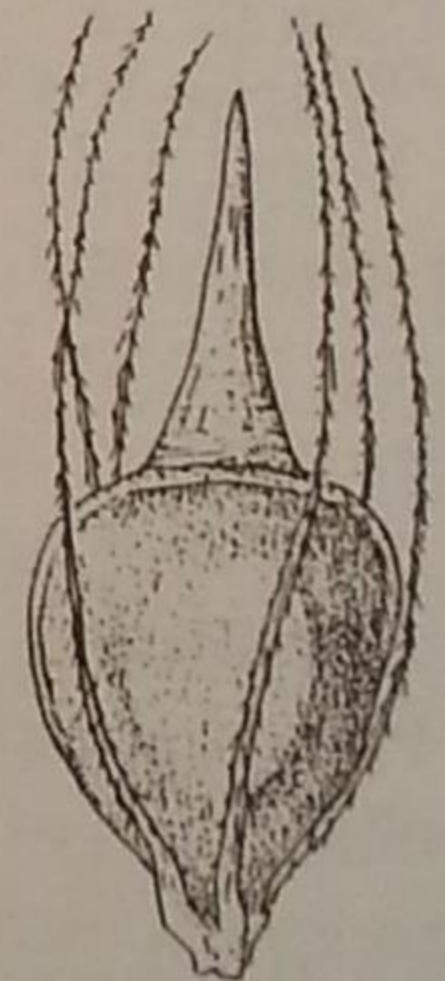
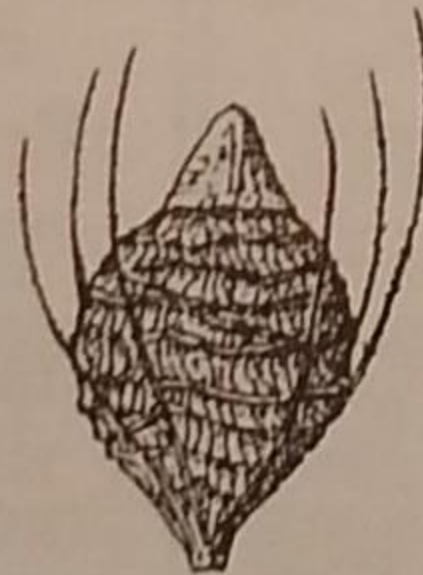


## Kelby Ouchley Receives LWF Governor's Award

Wildlife Biologist Kelby Ouchley was honored on March 7 of this year with the Louisiana Wildlife Federation's Governor's Award. The award is presented annually to the individual or organization deemed to have made the most outstanding contribution toward the protection and wise use of the state's natural resources—air, soil, and minerals, forests, waters, fish, and wildlife during the previous year, from among nominations submitted by the public. The selection for this and seven other awards was made by a panel of independent judges with expertise in a wide range of conservation fields.

Ouchley, of Rocky Branch, is a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service biologist responsible for managing National Wildlife refuge lands and the Louisiana Wetlands Management District in North Louisiana. He was recognized primarily for his efforts in the establishment and development of Black Bayou Lake

National Wildlife Refuge near Monroe and the acquisition of the 19,000-acre Mollicy tract along the Ouachita River in Morehouse Parish. Both projects were complex, requiring skillful negotiation, team-building and sensitivity to political concerns and public needs. The Black Bayou Lake refuge, situated only a few minutes from the urban area of Monroe/West Monroe, will emphasize opportunities for wildlife education and public fishing. The Mollicy Tract hosts wintering waterfowl with populations often exceeding 150,000 ducks and geese, and provides habitat for thousands of migrating shorebirds. Ouchley is also an active researcher and educator. He served on the LNPS board of directors from 1995 to 1997. He is frequently called upon to speak on conservation issues, and he creates a weekly radio program on conservation subjects for National Public Radio in Northeast Louisiana.

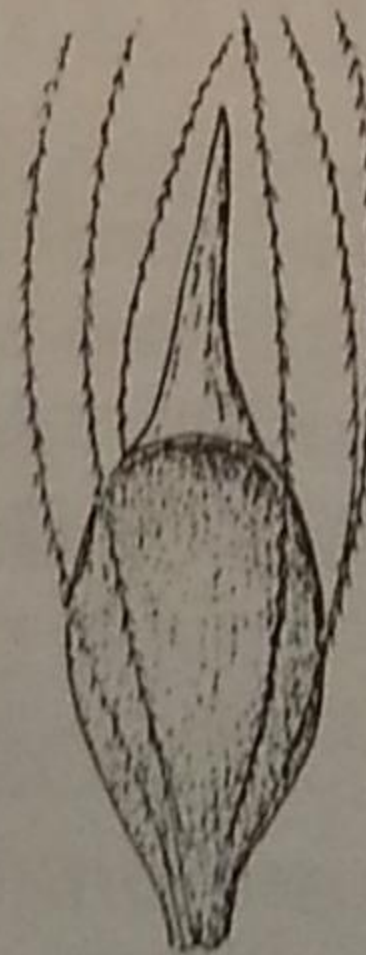


### Field Trip...

(Continued from page 1)

unique views and a chance to see plants adapted to a very specialized habitat. If time permits, we will visit a pipeline area south of Crossett, Arkansas that is also a remnant prairie, but with many different species from Rector's Prairie.

Sunday's trip will include areas along the western side of the Ouachita River in South Ouachita and North Caldwell Parish. We plan to see bigleaf magnolia, some of the hills and bluffs in that area, as well as some fine bottomland hardwood forest. Again, we will be on private land, so these trips will offer unique opportunities for the participants. The field trips will be led by Dr. R. Dale Thomas, Dr. Charles Allen, Kelby Ouchley, and Terry & Beth Erwin.



Remember these wonderful drawings of *Rhynchospora* seeds from the registration form for the 1996 regional plant conference in Baton Rouge? The artist, Julia Larke has graciously agreed to lend them to the LNPS for a T-shirt design. We would like some input on this idea.



## Bogs, Birds, Butterflies, & Bivalves + Wilson's Wonderful Wildflowers—May 9-10, 1998

The annual tour is scheduled for May 9-10, 1998 in the Leesville-Ft Polk area. Meet at Little Cypress Recreation Area at 9:00 a.m. Saturday, May 9. Tours will include pitcher plant bogs, upland areas, and other ecosystems. Orchids, pitcher plants, and other interesting plants should be seen. Several different kinds of birds including the red cockaded woodpecker, butterflies, and other animals might be encountered. Weather permitting we will stop at a stream and look at the bivalves (mussels). Bring your own lunch and water or other beverages. The bogs are wet so dress accordingly. A second tour will begin at the Little Cypress Recreation Area at 1:00 p.m. Saturday, May 9. A third tour will begin at the Wildlife and Fisheries Bunkhouse at 9:00 a.m. Sunday, May 10. Ken Wilson will show his tremendous slides of Louisiana Wildflowers at 8:00 p.m. at the Wildlife and Fisheries Bunkhouse and will be outside, weathering permitting.

To get to Little Cypress Rec. Area: If you are traveling from the east along La. 10, turn right onto Forest Service Road 400 which is approximately 9 miles west of Cravens. If traveling from the west, turn left onto Forest Service Road 400 off La. 10 approximately 4 miles east of Ft. Polk or 9 miles east of Pickering and U.S. 171. Pickering is approximately 8 miles south of Leesville on U.S. 171. After turning onto Forest Service Road 400, travel approximately

0.5 mile and turn left onto the first road, Forest Service Road 471. Little Cypress Recreation Area will be on the left approximately 1 mile from the intersection of Forest Service Roads 400 and 471. Turn left onto Forest Service Road and Little Cypress Recreation Area will be on the left approximately 1 mile.

To get to the Wildlife and Fisheries Bunkhouse, turn onto Lookout Road at the eastern entrance to Ft Polk on La 10. There is a caution light at this intersection and Lookout Road is to the right if traveling from the east and is straight ahead if coming from the west. Lookout Road crosses a cattle guard at this intersection and then travels east along the southern edge of Ft Polk. The bunkhouse is on the left about 4-5 miles and is 1 mile past the beaver pond, also on the left. The bunkhouse is about 200 yards off Lookout Road and has a fence surrounding it.

**For more information, contact Dr. Charles Allen 318-342-1814.** He will be scouting Friday, May 8 and if you are interested in that day, also contact him.

There are several motels in Leesville and very primitive camping in the National Forest. Note-no camping is allowed on Ft Polk. The bunkhouse has bunks for about 10 people but lots of floor space and plenty of room outside in the fenced area.

### FRIENDS OF THE NLU HERBARIUM PLANT SALE

**First three weekends in April, Fridays & Saturdays, 8:00-5:00**  
at the greenhouses on BonAire Drive on the north end of the

NLU Campus, Monroe

**MOSTLY NATIVES**

*that are unavailable anywhere else*

¢¢ at VERY reasonable prices ¢¢

Contact Dr. R. Dale Thomas at 318-342-1812



## LNPS Summer Field Trip, June 6-7

The summer field trip will take place north and south of Monroe this year. For those who come up Friday evening, we will have a get-together at Kalorama whenever you get here. There is enough flat ground to pitch a few tents if you so desire. The Visitors Center should be finished and the restrooms done. For those who prefer other types of accommodations, there is the following: Chemin A Haut State Park, which has cabins(reservations only), pool, and tent sites(1st come, 1st serve) north of Bastrop; The Bastrop Inn, in beautiful downtown Bastrop; the motels of Monroe & West Monroe, some of which are listed below.

### **Bastrop:**

Chemin-A-Haut State Park: 318-283-0812

The Bastrop Inn: 318-281-3621

### **Monroe:**

*These are located at I-20/US 165 except as noted.*

Days Inn(new): 318-345-2220-I-20/Garrett Rd/Mall

Best Western Airport Inn: 318-345-4000-same as ↑

Hampton Inn: 318-361-9944

Holiday Inn Holidome: 318-387-5100

Holiday Inn Atrium: 318-325-0641-Louisville(US 80)

La Quinta: 318-322-3900

### **West Monroe:**

*These are located around the I-20/Thomas Rd. exit.*

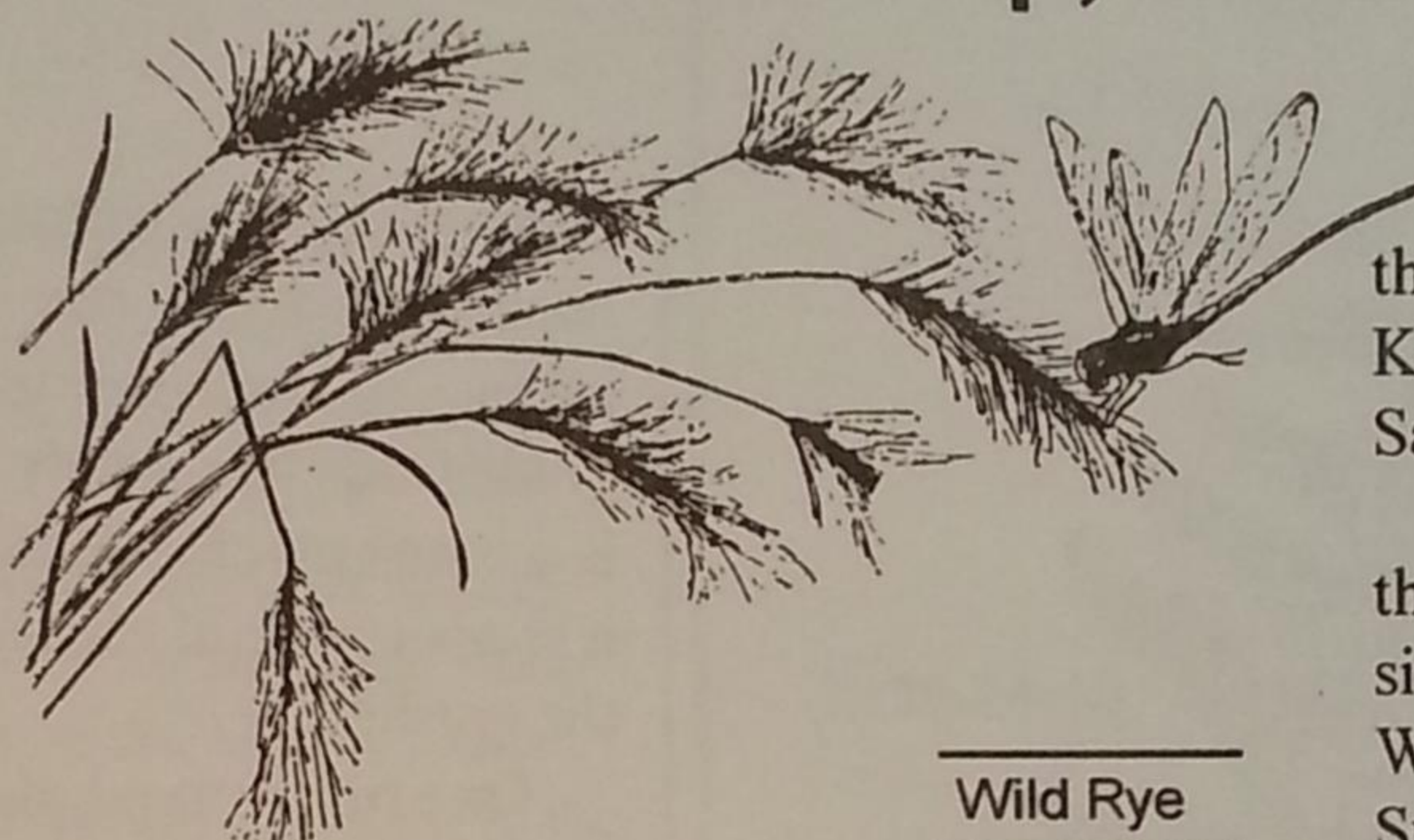
Best Western West Monroe: 318-322-9922

Holiday Inn Express: 318-388-3810

Red Roof Inn: 318-388-2420

Shoney's Inn: 318-325-5780

Contact persons: Beth Erwin at Kalorama(318)874-7777, Dr. R. Dale Thomas at NLU(318)342-1812, Dr. Charles Allen at NLU(318)342-1814



Wild Rye

We will DEPART from the Visitors Center at Kalorama at 9:00 a.m. Saturday morning.

We will DEPART from the McDonalds on the north side of I-20/Thomas Road in West Monroe at 8:30 a.m. Sunday morning.

For those who come in Friday evening, we will have some sandwiches, etc. at Kalorama and we will do a sort of loose pot-luck supper. Bring something if you want to. We will have plates, utensils, etc.

Directions: Kalorama is on State Hwy. 593, ½ mile north of the village of Collinston. To reach Collinston:

**From Rayville** take La. 137 north to Oak Ridge, turn left onto La. 134 for several miles, then right onto La. 138. Follow 138 into Collinston(this will entail turning right at a sycamore tree in the middle of some cotton fields). There are some zigs and zags through Collinston. On the north side of Collinston, La. 593 forks to the left toward Bastrop. Kalorama is ½ mile north of the fork at 7195 & 7197 Collinston Road.

**From Monroe** take US 165 north to La. 554 at Perryville. Turn right and stay on 554 until it intersects La. 138 at afore-mentioned sycamore tree in cotton fields. Turn left and go into Collinston and follow above directions through town to Kalorama.

**From Bastrop** take La. 139 south from the Courthouse Square. La 593 forks to the left when the 4-lane ends(there is a caution light). Kalorama is about 7 miles from there, on the right, about ½ mile past the 2nd cemetery you pass.

**You are responsible for your own food, water, insect repellent, and sunscreen.**



## Some Notes on Sweet Goldenrod *by Carl Amason*



Sweet Goldenrod, *Solidago odora*

In late summer and early fall, many composites, mostly yellow, are blooming along the roadside, especially in sunny disturbed moist ditches and roadsides. For too many people, they are just goldenrods that they believe compound their allergies of hay fever and asthma. Little do they know that the "yellow flowers" are not the culprit of their problems and little do they see except "yellow flowers." People who know something about wildflowers and really appreciate all of those "yellow flowers" of clearcuts and abandoned fields know there is a wealth of flora for the garden, be they "tame" as well as wild. They know such areas are cornucopias of wildlife food, especially in bloom when the goldenrod pollen is heavy and cannot blow about and disturb hay fever victims but is gathered by bees of many species and wasps. The nectar produced is eagerly sought by

butterflies. Any entomologist can team up with a botanist and they can have a full field trip in such areas. So can a serious gardener. Admittedly, some goldenrods are weedy and for the non-discerning it is a weed patch, but for the knowledgeable people, it is a wonderful place to find plants and seeds for the garden.

One of the most distinctive and garden-worthy plants is *Solidago odora*, sometimes called the sweet or fragrant goldenrod. In fact, it is so gentle and long lasting in the garden and in florist shops that it is frequently used in bouquets, or if you prefer, arrangements. Its requirements in the garden are rather simple—full sun and soil that is neither too dry or too wet. It blooms in late summer and perhaps into early autumn if conditions permit.

*Solidago odora* is found in Louisiana in almost every parish except those along the Mississippi River and along the Gulf Coast. The plant prefers a neutral to acid soil with a mixture of sand with red clay. From a winter rosette, there arises in the growing season four to six erect stems as a loose cluster with long narrow leaves. It is the crushed odor of the growing green leaves that give the species its specific name of *odora* and the common names of fragrant or sweet. It has a strong smell of anise. As the foliage ages, the smell of the sunflower resins can be strong. The young leaves are the preferred ones for those who gather and make herbal teas. In many mixed herbal teas, this goldenrod yields a good portion. As a personal note: I prefer the taste of coffee and ordinary tea! The anise smell is a refreshing sparkle and a comforting trait that the proper identification has been made in botanical forays.

As the summer days begin to shorten, flower heads develop into alternating forks, more or less flattened and growing to a one-sided point. An entire clump has a radiating effect, but the entire structure of the flowering heads is a fairly uniform cluster

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of height. The flowers are not really golden, and there is frequently a greenish cast to the unopened flowers. Each opened flower is held in an upright position.

With a bit of observation, the distinctive color, characteristic posture of the flowers and their fairly uniform height makes this one of the showy wildflowers, even among the other yellow flowers, in the field. Its ease of culture and its neatness of habit makes it one the most desirable wildflowers.

In conclusion, not only is it beloved by herbal tea drinkers, it is always eagerly sought out by bees and butterflies. Later in the winter, the scantily appearing seeds are just as eagerly sought out by small wintering birds. This is the finest, certainly one of the best goldenrods for gardening and it is easily learned apart in the field from the others. Such characteristic use of judgement in the field is what makes learning so exciting and in sharing with others, one of the greatest joys in gardening and field tripping. Just be aware: there are several other goldenrods that are almost as unique, desirable, and beautiful. And when one learns several of them, life will never be the same, nor will "yellow flowers" just be a mass of wild plants with yellow flowers on them.

*Carl Amason is a superior plantsman who lives and gardens near Calion, Arkansas.*



*Cornus florida*  
Dogwood

*Wild Gardening*  
*A Native Plant Workshop*  
*Arkansas 4-H Center*  
*Ferndale, Arkansas*  
*April 22, 1998*

**8:30-11:30** Registration

**8:30-10:30** Wildflower walks depart every 20 minutes

**8:30-11:15** Exhibits open

**11:30** Lunch

**12:15** Welcome and Introduction

**12:30** Where We Are With Native Plants

*Carl Hunter, Author*

**1:15** Break-out Session I

- a. Propagating Woody Plants—*Gerald Klingaman*
- b. Seed Propagation of Natives
- c. Shade Gardens—*Russell Studebaker*
- d. Water/Bog Gardens—plants for wet spaces—*Mary Ann King*
- e. Wildflower walk

**2:15** Break-out Session II

- a. Propagating Woody Plants—*Gerald Klingaman*
- b. Seed Propagation of Natives
- c. Wild Herbs—*Tina Marie Wilcox*
- d. Sun Gardens—*Tom Dillard*
- e. Ferns—*Jim Peck*

**3:15** Break

**3:30** Break-out Session III

- a. Native Shrubs—*Gary Tucker*
- b. Butterfly/Hummingbird Gardens—*Lori Nobles*
- c. Shade Gardens—*Russell Studebaker*
- d. Landscaping With Wildflowers
- e. Wildflower Walk

**4:15-5:30** Exhibits Open

Registration is \$20 and includes lunch. Registration is limited. Deadline for registration is April 10. Contact Janet Carson, Cooperative Extension Service, 2301 S. University, Little Rock, AR 72204. 501-671-2226.

*Note: There is a registration form and exhibit space.*



## North Louisiana Prairies *by Kelby Ouchley*



*Callirhoe* sp. Winecup

The term prairie usually brings forth images of treeless landscapes blanketed in a waving sea of grasses reaching to the horizon. Indeed such was once the case across millions of acres in the American west and Midwest. This unique habitat nourished bison herds that numbered in the tens of millions together with countless other species of plants and animals.

Prairies are often classified as either short-grass or tall-grass prairies depending on the dominant types of grasses that grow there. Short-grass prairies were generally found further west in areas of low rainfall. Certain soil types often favor the development of prairies but even so, prairies were usually under constant attack from invading woody plants. Just as an abandoned lawn will eventually revert to brush and then trees, prairies will eventually turn into savannahs or forests in many cases without some type of intervention. This intervention came naturally in the form of huge herds of bison eating and trampling everything in their path during cyclic migrations. It also occurred as fire from lightning strikes or set intentionally by native Americans. In any case prairie plants thrived with this disturbance and the invading woody species were set back.

In Louisiana tall-grass prairies once covered more than 100,000 acres in the southwest coastal area. Less than 1 percent remains and most of this is found on old railroad rights-of-way. In our area of northeast Louisiana they were much less common and smaller in size, but there is no doubt that they did exist here. In 1783 Don Juan Filhiol, Spanish commandant of the District of Ouachita, made his first permanent settlement at a place called Prairie des Canots (meaning prairie of the canoes) where Monroe now stands. In 1812 Amos Stoddard, when describing the same area wrote, "on the left bank of that river are extensive prairies, the soil of which is luxuriant and productive, bearing a high coarse grass." The village of Oak Ridge in Morehouse Parish was once known as Prairie Jefferson and early maps note Mer Rouge as Prairie Mer Rouge. Some writers have conveyed that Mer Rouge which means Red Sea was named by early explorers who found the area covered in a sea of red clover. This is highly unlikely as red clovers are not native to Louisiana and were not introduced to the area until many years later.

As bison were probably never very common here, our prairies were likely maintained by fire. In 1804, William Dunbar reported "a smoky and misty appearance" in the atmosphere shortly before their arrival at Ft. Miro and attributed it to "the common practice of the Indians and hunters of firing the woods . . ."

Today only a few small areas that can be considered native prairie are known in northeast Louisiana. In addition to the grasses spring brings forth a profusion of purple coneflowers, Indian blankets, and wine cups to remind us of what was once not so rare.

*Editor's note: The preceding is the text from a program on KEDM 90.3 Public Radio, Monroe, called "Bayou Diversity." It is written and presented each Friday at 12:10 & 7:05 pm by Kelby Ouchley. Kelby is employed as manager of the La. Wetland Management District by the USFWS, Darbonne NWR, at Farmerville. He and his wife, Amy, and their two sons live near Rocky Branch, La.*



## The Familiar Palmetto

Palmettos are a familiar sight throughout Louisiana's bottomland forests. Any outdoor enthusiast has seen the familiar blades of its fan-shaped leaves when out in the woods. Most people can identify them at first sight.

There are two plants in Louisiana called palmetto. The most familiar is known as the dwarf palmetto, *Sabal minor*. *Sabal minor* can occur in dense extensive masses throughout bottomlands.

The other is the saw palmetto, *Serenoa repens*, which is rare in the state but fairly common globally. This species prefers watered areas and swamps, though it is also found on occasion in dry uplands. In bottomlands they may be found with trunks up to 10 feet tall, but are generally trunkless, especially in less flood-prone areas. Leaves fan out one to three feet in diameter.

Louisiana is at the very western edge of the saw palmetto's range. The saw palmetto thrives from the Carolinas south to Florida and west to the eastern part of our state in wet to dryish pine flatwoods and sand ridges. This species is tracked by LDWF's Natural Heritage program. The two species have similar ranges, but *Sabal minor* prefers bottomlands. Its range extends further west, to Texas and north to southwest Arkansas.

Both palmettos are members of the palm family, as the word palmetto, Spanish for little palm,

suggests. Like many palms, the heart of the plant is edible. Dwarf palmettos have a large below-ground system of roots, in contrast to the fact that they are mostly trunkless above ground. "Because of this

underground system, it is very difficult to transplant large specimens," said Bill Vermillion, Department of Wildlife and Fisheries Natural Heritage biologist.

Most of the following information refers specifically to dwarf palmettos. They send up branched flowering stalks up to six feet tall with yellowish/whitish flowers. Wasps are the primary pollinators. Plants have an estimated life span over 250 years and may exceed 400 years. Older specimens can have the shaggy trunks familiar in many palms, growing larger than a foot in diameter. The black fruits they produce are less than half an inch in diameter. Fruits are eaten by fish crows, mockingbirds, robins, yellow-rumped



*Sabal minor*, Dwarf Palmetto  
photo by Rector Hopgood

warblers, pileated and red-bellied woodpeckers, raccoons, and grey squirrels. "As far as I'm aware, people don't eat them," said Vermillion. Different parts of the plants have been used as diuretics, sedatives, and tonics. The flowers are a source of honey and the stems a source of tannic acid. The saw palmetto is believed by some to be an aphrodisiac. Palmettos have played an important role in

(Continued on page 11)



## Rails to Trails in the Land of the Flying Crow

by Richard Johnson

My credentials are 60 years in or near the timber industry, and I am still a tree farmer. Since 1971, with the help of friends, we took a place in the backwoods of North Louisiana and turned it into a world-class tourist attraction. It has been published in more than a dozen state and national magazines.

Our critics (mostly local) said it was doomed to failure and should be turned into a tree farm. As far as the Kisatchie National Forest is concerned, I can say that I have lived and breathed it since its inception. My mentor, the late Caroline Dormon, was the one person most responsible for its establishment.

Kisatchie is a wonderful place now that the Forest Service is turning it into a true multiple use concept. It will certainly enhance the anticipated Rails to Trails park because a good portion of it is through Kisatchie National Forest land.

Tourism is the fastest growing industry in Louisiana. As a producer of jobs, full-time and part-time, it has potential limited only by the vision of our respective communities. On the other hand, the timber industry that we have relied on in the past is, as far as jobs are concerned, downsizing at a rapid rate.

The trade journals tell us the machinery salesman's selling point is—"this machine will cut your labor 30 percent and increase production 100 percent." It's a win-win situation unless you are one of the 30 percent. I am not criticizing, just pointing out the undeniable



**The artesian saltwater well dating from the mid-19th century at Drake's Salt Works caught the attention of young LNPS members on a 1994 LNPS field trip.** Photo by Rector Hopgood

facts about jobs vs. board feet. Jobs is the loser every time.

To the naysayers, I ask you to visit the Rails to Trails park in the Mandeville area. Many of the people there opposed the concept for various reasons but almost all now love the park. It is the first, I believe, of its type in our state. None of the dire predictions came to pass, and it is enjoyed by many.

Now we have a chance to experience the same enjoyment in Northwest Louisiana. I have ridden the "flying crow" train from Shreveport to New Orleans and loved every foot of the way, but my greatest joy has come on the section from Castor to Coldwater, that I have at various times walked. Most of this section is in remote forest land and some of the most

beautiful scenery in the state.

Just south of Castor you cross Castor Creek where there was once a water tank for the steam engines. Alberta was next with its post office. Guynes Spur is gone, but Topy Creek swamp is there with its maples of many colors in the fall. From there it is just a few forested miles to the village of Ashland, a place that tends to shrink with each passing year. The next spur was Skidder, with its water tank.

The logging camp is gone that housed and fed hundreds of people, but Piney Branch and Antoine Creek are there with their sandy banks festooned with trout lilies each spring. After seven or so miles is Chestnut, once a boomtown. Now the hotel, depot

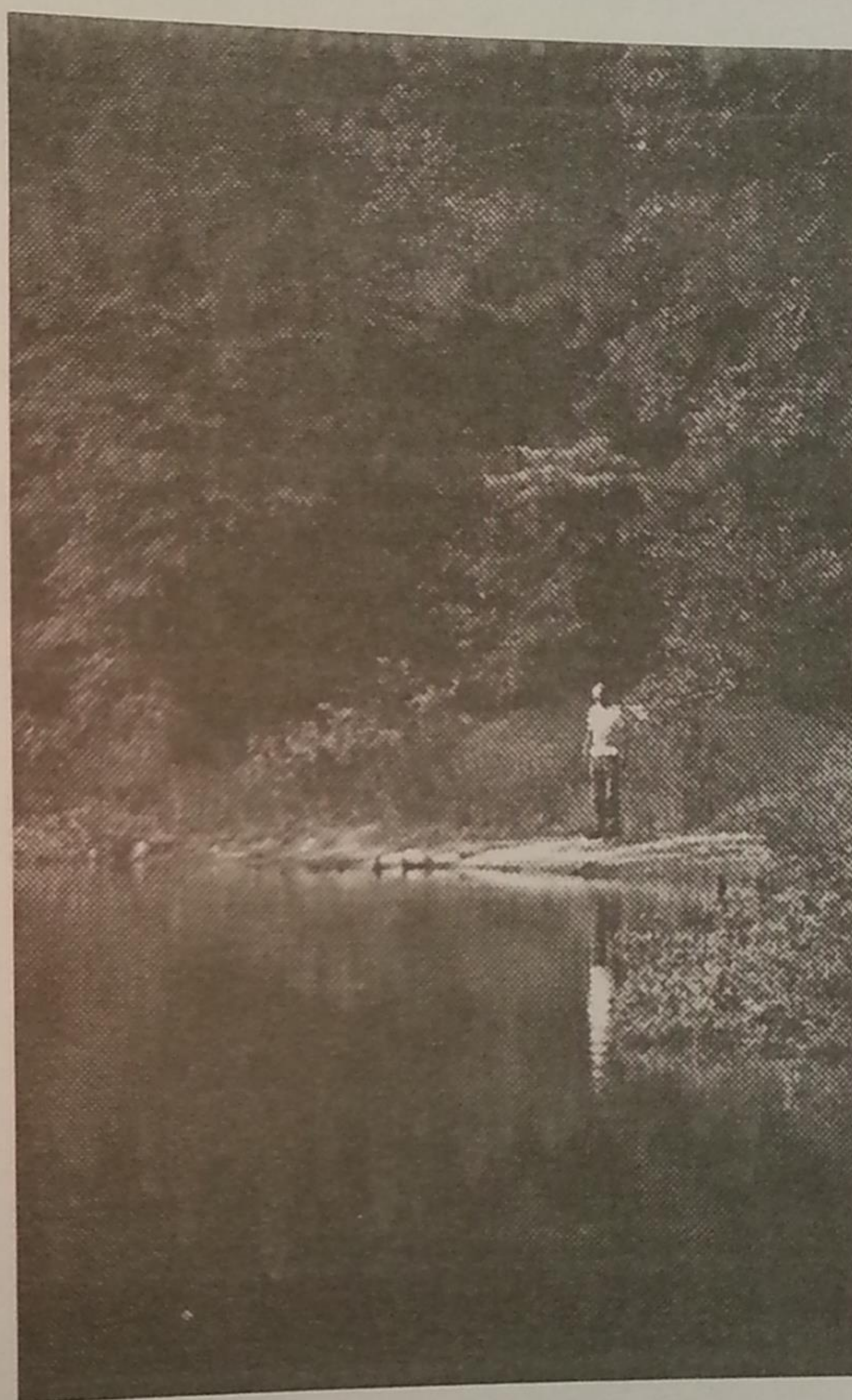


and post office are just memories. Next is a long stretch through deep forest to Oskosh Spur. Here you can barely hear the trucks on the highway miles away.

Leaving this solitude, you enter Malaudos Swamp. There you will find a creek next to another water tank complete with rams that kept it full of water. In the quiet of the forest, only frogs in the beaver pond can be heard. Further on is the historic village of Goldonna and then on to Saline Bayou. There you can see tall cypress trees where steamboats once docked. Now it is a take-out point for many canoeists.

To our left and up the creek are the salt flats. The Louisiana Purchase Maps call them Postelwaites Salt Works; now it is known as Drakes Salt Works. The Doustonioni Indians used it a thousand years earlier. Notice as you cross the Saline Bayou the soil changes to a coarse sand unique to the area. Here you will find a great number of rare plants. The area is very rich in history going back eons.

Next stop is Coldwater. If I close my eyes and listen, I can almost hear that steam engine train again, blowing for the crossing. Will you please help us save this treasured piece of our history so that our grandchildren will know about the "Land of the Flying Crow." *Richard Johnson, and his wife, Jessie, are curators of Briarwood, the Caroline Dormon Nature Preserve near Saline. This article appeared as a guest column in the Shreveport Times in February of this year. Contact State Senator Foster Campbell at 1800 Jimmy Davis Hwy., Suite A, Bossier City, La. 71112, FAX 318-746-2030 to support this initiative.*



**Richard Johnson stands on the shore of Saline Bayou near Drake's Salt Works.** Photo by Rector Hopgood.

**Palmetto** (Continued from page 9)

Louisiana's history. Its leaves were widely used by Native Americans for shelter and to make baskets and other carrying implements. They are also used by modern-day outdoors people as construction material for blinds and other concealment. The late Clair A. Brown, a botanist at LSU, wrote in his book, *Louisiana Trees and Shrubs*, "Early explorers and historians stress the relationship between the distribution of the palmetto and land subject to annual flooding. They noticed that the palmetto occurred in areas above the usual annual floods. Thus the palmetto was an index plant that could be used to indicate areas which were not flooded annually. Today it is not an indicator because construction of levees has protected lands from flooding which have subsequently been invaded by palmettos."

"Palmettos perhaps deserve more use in landscaping," said Vermillion. "They're evergreen, have little disease that I know of, produce showy flowers and provide fruit for birds. They are a native Louisiana plant evocative of our habitat." As much as any other plant, palmettos typify Louisiana bottomland hardwood systems. They capture the primeval quintessence of Louisiana's swamp lands. *The information in this article was provided by the Louisiana Department of Wildlife & Fisheries, PO Box 98000, Baton Rouge, LA 70898*



The Louisiana Native Plant Society was founded in 1983 as a not-for-profit organization. Its purposes are:

- to preserve and study native plants
- to educate people on the value and protect rare and endangered
- to promote the propagation and use
- to educate people on the relationship between native flora and wildlife.

**ATTENTION—KISATCHIE UPDATE!!! PUBLIC COMMENT DEADLINE ON KNF/FT POLK HAS BEEN EXTENDED TO APR 30. MANAGEMENT DOCUMENTS ARE AVAILABLE TO VIEW AT FOLLOWING LIBRARIES:**

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