



The Garden Club of Georgia, Inc.

Mission: *Beautification ... Conservation ... Education*

Theme for Martha Price Administration, 2015 - 2017:
Sowing Seeds of Knowledge Reaps Conservation with Beauty

Sowing

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Road to Success: When you want or need to know more about something, type the topic or name into your web browser or search engine and give the results ten minutes of serious effort a day. That time block is usually findable; in a week, it will make a good difference in your knowledge. Keep it up to expand your knowledge. Even better, attend the National Council study schools that GCG sponsors for more about Landscape, Gardening Study, Environment, and Flower Shows. Check them out in the GUIDE.

ENVIRONMENT

As we begin a new administration, each and all of us need to realize that there is much to learn as individuals to fill the GCG Mission, stated above (note alphabetical order). Details of the basic tenets of the concepts under which we function are contained within our Position Papers, located on our website as goals for our efforts and activities. Make yourself familiar with them. They are the foundation of our efforts.

What most of us will need to do is to visit websites for conservation information, consider membership in at least one conservation organization, perhaps the closest Riverkeeper affiliate, attend meetings, and study. Much never changes - Plato taught Aristotle in the third century B.C. about the world's four basic elements of EARTH, AIR, FIRE, and WATER. Substitute ENERGY for FIRE and it's still highly applicable.

If you were among the 310 attendees at the recent GCG Georgia's Coastal Magic Convention at Jekyll Island State Park, operated by an appointed Authority, you had a variety of opportunities to learn much about coastal and water matters. If you attended,

please share the information you received with family, friends, and especially with club members. Handouts, speakers, and tours were outstanding. Help to educate your club members. If you were not there, this issue of Scatter will give you as one of the current 10,654 GCG members an overview of what you missed. Much is available to be learned by our members at our State Conventions!

“Explore Coastal Georgia” as a handout booklet (much more information available through Georgia Department of Natural Resources website) contains helpful information, diagrams, and exquisite line drawings. It even includes a fail safe way to determine the difference between male and female blue crabs.

Along with much factual coastal information, Convention keynote speaker Paul H. Medders, Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Coastal Resources Division, paid gracious and much deserved tribute to GCG member, Jane Hurt Yarn 1924-1995. Those of us who knew Jane Yarn know how well she deserved among many other appointments and honors to be named to the White House Council for Environmental Quality and that she was instrumental in the passage of the 1970 Marshlands Protection Act. The Environmental Education Center at Talulah Falls State Park is named for her. Visit it when you can. She is part of our distinguished legacy. How she moved! How she shook!

Many of us opted for the Sea Turtle Center tour, always a fascinating experience. Watching medical treatment of turtles is amazing. It’s encouraging to know that medical specialists for humans often offer their expertise and equipment for the Turtle Center to help staff save turtles and expedite their recovery for return to the ocean. As part of his presentation at the Thursday luncheon, Terry Norton, DVM, reminded attendees that after hatching on land, sea turtles go to the ocean for thirty years or more before females return to their hatching site to lay their own eggs. Several years ago, many GCG members followed a turtle named Dylan and her journeys after treatment and release via internet and a tracking device. Dr. Norton reported that Dylan is now presumed to be living out at sea; we don’t know exactly where she is, but she does.

WATER USE

In Georgia, water is considered a natural resource to be shared and conserved both wisely and carefully. Because it exists in finite quantities, and because the state is subject to both periodic floods and droughts, its use and availability are important to industry, to power plants, to developers, to wildlife, to humanity, and to agriculture as well as for recreation. Clean water is necessary. Streams, lakes, and rivers as well as their shorelines and banks need protection to insure that water is clean: swimmable, drinkable and fishable. Buffers act vitally as filters for contamination and sedimentation from runoff.

Planning lawns and gardens carefully and using native plants is an important factor for all. At a gardening lecture in England, a group I was in was told, “Find out what grew there naturally before it became a subdivision, and focus on growing that.” Ideally, by using primarily native plants, garden club members will not have to water often or much. Many cities and counties have watering restrictions to conserve use. Follow them. Use

of native plants is therefore strongly recommended. County extension services have much helpful information as does the Georgia Native Plant Society that also has periodic plant sales. Many of those plants are ones that have been rescued from sites about to be used for highway or building construction. Bottom line: use less water to grow more.

Many of us have recently watched the Masters and have been to Jekyll. I am just back from a visit south of Myrtle Beach, golfing wonderland for most of the year, and was struck by golf course water consumptive use. California is learning that outgrowing the water supply can be a reality. Water agencies there have been recently ordered by its governor to cut urban water use by 25% from 2013 use levels. Growing Metro Atlanta demands increasing water that becomes less easily accessible.

From Jenny Hoffner, recipient of one of our past GCG scholarships who has recently been named a national vice-president at American Rivers, we learned some of the effective ways to conserve and protect water supplies as simple as having leaky faucets and pipes repaired or replaced. Jenny is the first of our many scholarship recipients to return to us as a speaker. Making that happen was a true pleasure.

WATER COURT CASES UPDATE

1. Reduction of marsh buffers in the Georgia Supreme Court: no decision yet. There was state legislation in the recent General Assembly to keep them at 15 feet. By contrast, our neighbor state North Carolina is currently considering reducing buffers from 50' to 30'. The difference in state regulations makes 15' seem skimpy.
2. The United States Supreme Court with a Session that ends next month: case has not yet been heard for the Water Wars case between Georgia and Florida about release of waters from Lake Lanier into the Chattahoochee to improve oyster and other marine life in Florida. A side effect not often mentioned is Florida's need for water for power plants. At this point, Alabama has declined participation.

SUGGESTED READING

Am reading Janisse Ray's *Drifting into Darien: A Personal and Natural History of the Altamaha River*, University of Georgia Press, Athens and London, 2011. It's a fascinating read and a much appreciated passalong from Caroline Silcox that I strongly recommend. It also has an excellent list of ways to protect and preserve a river. Janisse is one of Georgia's most active protectors of the environment and conservation advocate.

INPUT

It has been a goal for this issue to keep information at a general level. Expand your knowledge online. If you have questions about the above or suggestions for inclusion in the next Scatter, Environment, please contact me at by email at marmgl@bellsouth.net. Thank you. We're in this together.

FINAL THOUGHT “Conservation is a cause that has no end. There is no point at which we can say, ‘Our work is finished.’ ” Rachel Carson