

2018 Annual Year in Review Report

After 34 years of guiding CPI, our beloved founder, D. Bruce Means, stepped down from the Board and as Executive Director in October. He is now free to frolic on his property and pursue his varied research interests. As you explore this Annual Year in Review, you may notice a few other changes: the report has a new look, we have a new logo, we have annual membership benefits, our mailing address has changed, and we also have new positions for our longtime ecologists!

Ryan Means, President



Ryan is the proud son of CPI founder and former leader, Bruce Means, and he is excited and honored to lead CPI into its next conservation era. Ryan has spent his entire life as a scientist and

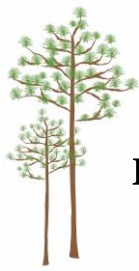
conservationist working within the southeastern U.S. Coastal Plain. He has been a conservation biologist at CPI since 1996 and served as CPI Director since 2012. His scientific research interests include ephemeral wetland ecology, development of conservation strategies for imperiled species and their habitats, and longleaf pine ecosystem conservation. Ryan rejuvenates his well-being through frequent forays into remote, wild areas. As a father, he proudly passes on the conservation mantra to his daughter. He also works in a variety of ways to help others establish their own connections to the natural world.

Rebecca Means, Director



Rebecca has been with CPI since 2001. She has been the principle or co-principle investigator on many projects relating to ephemeral wetlands, amphibians, and science education. Rebecca's recent work has been with the striped newt repatriation project and a program she developed called Building Communities that Conserve Wetlands that engages the public in our conservation efforts through citizen scientist training and in-field educational experiences.

On a personal note, Rebecca is passionate about food, adventure, and homeschooling her daughter. She teaches ecology, activism, and citizen science classes at a cooperative school as well as organizes weekly summer programs at Wakulla Springs State Park for the homeschool community.



Research

Our research in 2018 mostly focused on our striped newt repatriation project and monitoring amphibian populations of ephemeral wetlands in the Munson Sandhills of the Apalachicola National Forest.

The striped newt repatriation project continued into its sixth year of releasing captive-raised newts into Apalachicola National Forest wetlands. Dry conditions in the winter and spring prevented us from releasing adults this year, but we were able to release 259 larvae and efts into the wild in June. This brings the grand project total number of releases to 1,698!



We proudly partner with dozens of agencies, zoos, NGOs, and citizens in our efforts to create new populations of this imperiled species within its former habitat inside the Apalachicola National Forest. In June, we hosted a Striped Newt Release Party. Staff from four zoos stayed with us for two to four days to help with marking and releasing newts. We look forward to more collaborative events in 2019.

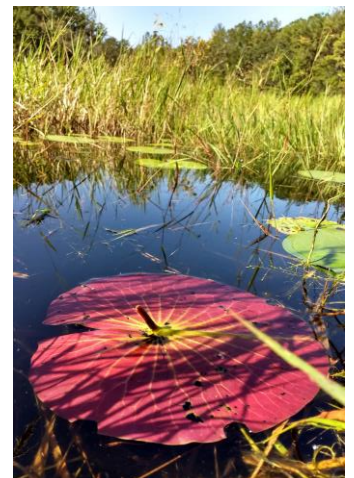


We documented some very positive signs of repatriation success at two of our release wetlands this year including: multi-generational reproduction, terrestrial recruitment (larvae metamorphosed into terrestrial eft stage and left the wetland for the surrounding uplands), and returns of terrestrial adults originally released as aquatic larvae.

We must continue to release more newts and expand this success into many more ponds. We look forward to continued support and partnership to make this happen. Only together can we save this species from the brink of extinction.



The wetlands in Munson Sandhills remained mostly dry throughout the winter and spring months so there was little breeding activity from winter-breeders like gopher frogs, ornate chorus frogs, and mole salamanders. The summer was quite wet, though, and we documented breeding success of species like pine woods and barking treefrogs at many wetlands.





Education

We focused on two of our educational programs in 2018: the field trip program we call What Lives in the Wetland and our Adopt an Ephemeral Wetland program. We also created a new program through a partnership with the Palmer Monroe Teen Center, Wild Wetlands. All programs are offered free to the public thanks to a grant from the Disney Conservation Fund and donations from our members!

What Lives in the Wetland

We brought over 300 citizens to our striped newt repatriation project this year to learn about rare species conservation, longleaf pine ecology, scientific research, and much more! We also developed new partnerships with the Oasis Center for Women and Girls and UF's College of Wildlife and Ecology.



Wild Wetlands

We are excited about our new partnership with the Palmer Monroe Teen Center. Through guided hikes and the Adopt an Ephemeral Wetland program, teens meet us monthly in the Apalachicola National Forest to experience wetlands and uplands firsthand. Their task: to create a music video and other art to inspire their peers and the general public to conserve wetlands.



Adopt an Ephemeral Wetland



The Adopt an Ephemeral Wetland program continues to be an excellent way to engage the public in wetland ecology and conservation and collect essential data on amphibian populations. This year all 50 wetlands were adopted and we are excited about the data coming in. We've developed new partnerships and continued old ones with school groups and community organizations.



New this year is monthly Dipnetting Days when we invite the public to a wetland for a few hours of dipnetting as a community. This helps reinforce identification skills for program participants and introduces the program to potential new ones. We hope to make these events more engaging in 2019 by providing transportation, incorporating a new pollinator citizen science project, and including kids activities, music, and food. Interested? See our website or contact us for details.



Our Preserves

Rowlett's Creek Preserve

This preserve is the crown jewel of our properties and is completely surrounded by the lovely western Apalachicola National Forest. It is an 80-acre tract of mature slash pine plantation we are restoring back to a longleaf pine forest. Longleaf pines, planted nearly a decade ago by some of you, are rising up off the forest floor. CPI utilizes this property in a variety of ways including education and wilderness rejuvenation. Join CPI at the \$100 level and get free daytime access!



We are sad to report that we lost about 25% of our tree canopy due to Hurricane Michael, with another quarter leaning severely. While we lost significant future timber revenue from this damage, the conservation value of our property has greatly increased. The surrounding ANF also was severely impacted, with hundreds of downed red-cockaded woodpecker cavity trees. Our property is in the heart of both the most dense woodpecker population and the area that suffered the most damage. This means that our Rowlett's Creek Preserve can provide important habitat as the surrounding population undergoes substantial shifts and changes. We will be working with a local biological consultant to install artificial cavities in the mature slash pines that remain standing.

Crown Pointe Preserve

Our 170-acre Crowne Pointe Preserve is situated on the eastern shores of Perdido Bay, about as far west in Florida as one can get. This is a beautiful wet flatwoods forest of mature slash pine with an extremely diverse herbaceous understory. We believe the slash pine stand is a natural one, existing in the correct habitat for the species. The endangered white-top pitcher plant exists on the property. This beautiful piece of natural Florida is protected forever through a conservation easement.

Burning is a huge challenge because of the proximity to a large housing development. We partner with the Florida Division of Forestry though, to fulfill our management objectives.

We plan to visit the property and meet with the Home Owners Association this winter. Many of the local residents care about this property and support our conservation mission.



Other Updates and Events



Open House

Due to the impacts of Hurricane Michael, we had to postpone what was to be our First Annual Open House and Membership Drive, scheduled for Oct 21st at Rowlett's Creek Preserve. We will be hosting this event in the spring instead and will have taxa tours, music, a silent auction, a membership raffle, and a Volunteer Appreciation recognition event. We are still taking items for the special auction. Contact us if you have something you would like to donate.

Grasslands Brewery

We are Grasslands Brewery's Community Pint program awardee for the entire month of November. That means that 10% of proceeds from the sales of a particular tap (the Firedrake) will be donated to us! To celebrate, we spent Nov 11th at the brewery sharing our mission with brewery customers and enjoying a beautiful fall day in their Beer Garden.



Future Events

- February 12 – Be My Neighbor Day
- March 30 – Springtime Tallahassee
- April 7th – CPI Open House
- April 27th – Urban Bioblitz with guided trips to the Munson Sandhills
- April 29th – May 1st – Showing events for NATURE's America Spring Live program

Big Bend Biodiversity Tour



We had our first Big Bend Biodiversity Tour at the end of October. The subject of this tour was the Apalachicola Lowlands. We explored many diverse habitats and discussed the multiple factors that contribute to the amazing biodiversity of our area.

CPI members get first notice of classes and trips!

NATURE's America Spring Live

We are partnering with our local PBS/NPR station, WFSU, on a special PBS NATURE America Spring Live project. Only 10 stations across the country, along with their partnering science organization, were chosen for this special feature. Rebecca spent three days at Cornell's Lab of Ornithology learning about the details of this unique opportunity. Stay tuned this spring as Our Adopt an Ephemeral Wetland Citizen Science program, plus a new opportunity we plan to roll out, will be featured as part of NATURE this spring!



Support our Mission

Our Mission is to stimulate appreciation for nature through environmental education, generate new knowledge about the values of nature through scientific research, and help conserve the native biota of the southeastern U. S. and elsewhere through land ownership and habitat stewardship.

CPI operates entirely through grants, contracts, and contributions from individuals who believe in what we do. We are very proud of all that we have accomplished on a very small annual budget and believe that absolutely no other environmental organization can match our cost/benefit ratio of income to productivity. On our website, we list the published results of our work and educational videos. Check them out and see if you agree. Please help us accomplish even more by becoming a member, volunteering, purchasing a t-shirt, or choosing us while shopping on Amazon Smile (see below).

Membership has its Benefits

- **Species *perstriatus* (\$25)** - a CPI window sticker, advanced invitation for field trips and classes, and an annual Year-in-Review Report.
- **Genus *Notophthalmus* (\$50)** - All the above plus a pack of notecards with stunning photography from around the Coastal Plain.
- **Family Salamandridae (\$100)** All of the above plus daytime access to our 80-acre Rowlett's Creek Preserve for a year
- **Order Caudata (\$250)** - All the above and an invitation to striped newt release in Apalachicola National Forest
- **Class Amphibia (\$500)** - All the above and a two-hour natural history tour of the Wakulla River for up to 4 guests
- **Phylum Chordata(\$1,000)** - All the above and a personal, catered tour of our Rowlett's Creek Preserve for up to 6 guests

Amazon Smile

You can support our efforts while shopping on Amazon at no extra cost to you! Just go to smile.amazon.com and select Coastal Plains Institute as your chosen charity. Every time you shop at smile.amazon.com, they will remember your choice and a percentage of every qualifying purchase will go to our organization!

Volunteer

Whether its checking a drift fence, adopting a wetland, or helping on field trips, there are lots of opportunities to get involved! Contact Rebecca if you are interested.

Become a Striped Newtist



We still have Striped Newtist shirts left. We are selling these organic cotton shirts, made in the USA, for \$30 as a way to raise money for the striped newt project. Women (shown at left) and Men styles available. Purchase on our website or through the enclosed card. Look and feel good at the same time!

Organizational Info

President: Ryan Means

Director: Rebecca Means

Board of Trustees: Ryan Means, Wilson Baker, Tom Ostertag

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Social Media

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Instagram ([coastalplainsinstitute](https://www.instagram.com/coastalplainsinstitute))

Twitter ([@stripednewts](https://twitter.com/stripednewts))

Website: [coastalplains.org](https://www.coastalplains.org)