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# STPAL NEWS

The Southeastern Trust for Parks and Land

## A Word from the Executive Director

We have taken steps with each of our 17 properties to create parks with public recreation, science education, habitat development, and other community benefits.

In the coming months we need assistance with boundary marking, trail marking, trail maintenance, and signage creation and installation. We have the materials and will be on-site with you. We can do projects any day of the week. We can do projects that suit any age, ability and experience. If you would like to spend a day working outside with us please email me at [bill.jones@stpal.org](mailto:bill.jones@stpal.org)

Happy Trails!  
Bill



## STPAL Acquires New Property in Coastal Georgia: Gum Branch Nature Preserve

It has been an exciting end to 2014 for STPAL, acquiring 7 new properties totaling over 2,500 acres! With these additions, STPAL has now proudly conserved a total of 5,375 acres on 17 separate properties. Among these new properties is the Gum Branch Nature Preserve in Camden County, Georgia. The 324 acre property is just a few miles inland from Cumberland Island. The Property is in the upper reaches of Gum Branch, which is a meandering branch flowing generally eastward to waters of the Crooked River and Cumberland Sound. The property originally was composed of flatwoods type longleaf and slash pine forest with heavy blueberry and gallberry understory. Interspersed with this type would have been open pine, wet savanna, hardwood areas containing various bays, oaks, and gums, and stream side cypress, gum, oak, and maple swamp. It is currently in a condition consistent with its recent use as timber land. Restoring it to its native state is our primary objective in order to improve habitat for the biodiversity of coastal Georgia.

**Join STPAL's Mission of Conserving Land!**

Want to join STPAL and help support our mission of conserving land? Simply visit our website at [www.stpal.org/donate/](http://www.stpal.org/donate/) to become a member. Our lowest level of annual membership is only \$20!



Featured Board Member:

## Alex Ottley



Alex Ottley has been a board member of STPAL since 2013. Alex is a perfect fit for the STPAL Board as his background includes over 20 years of combined experience as a field biologist and environmental consultant. He has recently been trained in Phase I Environmental Site Assessments and has taken the ASTM International course for Phase I and Phase II Environmental Site Assessments for Commercial Real Estate. Alex's areas of expertise include working with threatened and endangered species and stream restoration. He can often be found hiking on STPAL's properties.

## Thinking about Spring? Tips to make your garden welcoming for pollinators

As the cold winter settles upon the southeast, many folks are already dreaming about warmer weather. The majority of STPAL's members and properties are located in the "Southeast Mixed Forest" ecoregion, and so these tips are geared towards the preferences of local pollinator species. Among the native species in the Southeast Mixed Forest are a diversity of bees, butterflies, moths, beetles, flies, and birds.

### Simple tips to make pollinators welcome in your garden:

- **Water:** Pollinators require a clean, reliable source of water. This can be a natural water source nearby your garden, or small containers placed in your garden, such as a bird bath.
- **Shelter:** Your garden should offer protection for pollinators from severe weather. This can be as simple as incorporating different canopy layers and leaving dead snags in place and nesting sites, or as deliberate as building bee boxes to encourage bees to nest on your property.
- **Diversify:** Try to plant a variety of species that will offer nectar to pollinators for all of the growing season.
- **Let it be:** Resist the urge to have a neatly manicured landscape. Leave leaf litter and dead wood in place to provide sources of organic material for pollinators and other insects.



Bumblebee atop milkweed at STPAL's Bald Mountain Creek Nature Preserve, North Carolina. 2014.



Visit the Source for more information on what plants are best for your garden!:

<http://pollinator.org/PDFs/Guides/SoutheastMixedForestrx5FINAL.pdf>