

TUESDAY, APRIL 7

NATIONAL NAVAL AVIATION MUSEUM AND NATIONAL FLIGHT ACADEMY

5:00 - 8:00 p.m. **Welcome Reception**

***Must have a valid picture ID available for base security. Please mention you are visiting the Naval Aviation Museum at base security if you drive yourself.**

Join us for a fun evening with heavy hors d'oeuvres, networking, and tour the world's largest **National Naval Aviation Museum**. Share the excitement of naval aviation's rich history and see more than 150 beautifully restored historic aircraft displayed both inside the museum's nearly 350,000-square-foot of exhibit space and outside on its 37-acre grounds. Additionally, tours and simulator flight time will be offered of the **National Flight Academy**, a uniquely interactive experience aboard the virtual aircraft carrier *Ambition* (CVT-11). Located adjacent to the National Naval Aviation Museum, the National Flight Academy is a 102,000-square-foot, four-story structure designed to be fully and intensively immersive. Each deck of *Ambition* is designed scenically and theatrically to simulate a modern aircraft carrier.

FRONT LOBBY, HILTON PENSACOLA BEACH GULF FRONT

3:20 p.m., 4:15 p.m., and 4:45 p.m.

Meet shuttle buses directly in front of the Hilton.

***Please note that the National Flight Academy is approximately 40 minutes from the hotel. Bus capacity is 55 people, so please take your registered departure.**

4:00 - 6:00 p.m. **National Naval Air Museum open for self-guided tours**

***Mention you are part of the Annual Stewardship Partners Meeting when you arrive for admission and after-hours voucher.**

4:30 - 6:30 p.m. **Tours and Flight Simulators at the National Flight Academy**5:00 p.m. **Reception starts under the outdoor tent located between National Aviation Museum and National Flight Academy**7:00 p.m. **Opening Remarks**

Emcee: [Brian Yablonski](#), Director, External Affairs, Gulf Power
[Lt. Gen. Duane D. Thiessen](#), USMC (Ret.), President and CEO, Naval Aviation Museum Foundation
[David O'Neill](#), Vice President, Conservation Programs, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation
[Stan Connally](#), CEO, Gulf Power

8:00 p.m. **Return shuttle bus service to Hilton Pensacola Beach Gulf Front**

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 8

HILTON PENSACOLA BEACH GULF FRONT

ROYAL PALM BALLROOM

7:15 a.m. **Continental Breakfast**8:00 a.m. **Greetings and Introductions**

David O'Neill, Vice President, Conservation Programs, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation

Larry Monroe, Chief Environmental Officer, Southern Company

Kim Greene, Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer, Southern Company

8:45 a.m. **Session 1 - Flyway Conservation: Supporting the Southeast's Shorebirds from a Global Perspective****Atlantic Flyway Initiative**

Each spring and fall, the phenomenon of bird migration plays out across the U.S. landscape. As many as 20 billion birds move to and from their breeding grounds in the U.S. and wintering grounds into more hospitable climates. Shorebirds represent the extreme in migratory species – some nesting close to the North Pole and wintering tens of thousands of miles to the south in the Caribbean and as far away as southern South America. As shorebirds move between hemispheres, they are reliant on a suite of sites – like hopping stones – between their summer and wintering habitat. Removal of one site can have a profound impact on one or more species. The southeastern U.S. supports many such sites that, if degraded or destroyed, could have profound impacts on one or more shorebird species. Recognizing this, scientists and conservationists have proposed a full-life cycle or “flyway” approach, which focuses on conserving a discrete number of critical sites along a species’ entire migratory route. This approach – the Atlantic Flyway Shorebird initiative – is an ambitious effort to bring together the foremost experts and conservation practitioners to address key threats to shorebirds along the Atlantic coast. Through safeguarding critical sites, the Initiative will ultimately sustain healthy populations of shorebirds and contribute to the health, resilience, and prosperity of coastal towns and cities.

Larry Niles, Wildlife Biologist, Conserve Wildlife Foundation of New Jersey, American Littoral Society

Strategic Species Conservation: Tying it Together

A look at two case studies focusing on beach nesting birds in the Southeast and how they fit into the bigger picture of conserving species across the Atlantic Flyway

Moderator: Ian Davidson, Director, Bird Biology and Conservation, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation

Case Study 1: Building a stewardship ethic to conserve beach nesting birds along the Gulf
The American Oystercatcher and the Florida Panhandle

Julie Wraithmell, Director, Wildlife Conservation, Audubon Florida

Case Study 2: Piecing together the conservation of migratory shorebirds
The role of the South Atlantic Coast

Bryan D. Watts, Director, Center for Conservation Biology, College of William and Mary and Virginia Commonwealth University

9:45 a.m. **BREAK**

10:15 a.m. **Session 2 - Landscape and At-Risk Species Conservation: Challenges and Collaborations**

Southeast At-Risk Species and the Longleaf Pine Ecosystem

The Southeast is home to an incredible amount of biodiversity, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is currently working with partners to conserve more than 400 at-risk species that could become listed as threatened or endangered unless appropriate actions are taken to help put them on a positive path. This presentation will provide an overview of the status of at-risk species in the Southeast, the importance of the Florida Panhandle and the longleaf ecosystem to at-risk species conservation, and how voluntary efforts, such as partnerships working at a landscape-level, are helping turn the tide for these species.

Mike Harris, At-Risk Species Coordinator, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Large Landscape Partnership Discussion

Large landscape-scale conservation has proven to benefit the interests of multiple diverse partners while protecting ecosystem integrity and safeguarding species populations. This session will highlight regional partnerships, including the Gulf Coastal Plain Ecosystem Partnership (GCPEP) and the Apalachicola Regional Stewardship Alliance (ARSA), which are 2 of the 17 Local Implementation Teams working on a landscape scale to restore the longleaf ecosystem across its historic range. Panelists will discuss how these conservation partnerships address the opportunities and challenges that emerge when balancing the ecological, economic, and social interests of multiple organizations and agencies while working toward a common goal of improving habitat for longleaf, associated at-risks, and other imperiled species.

Moderator: **David Printiss**, North Florida Conservation Director, The Nature Conservancy

Panelists:

Ryan Orndorff, Deputy Program Director, Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration (REPI), U.S. Department of Defense

Scott Jordan, Senior Land Management Specialist, Gulf Power

Vernon Compton, Project Director, Gulf Coastal Plain Ecosystem Partnership Coordinator, Longleaf Alliance

Deborah Burr, Gopher Tortoise Program Coordinator, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

TOWER 2 - EMERALD COAST

11:30 a.m. **Networking Lunch**

12:30 p.m. **Special Presentation and Sneak Peek: "Secrets of the Longleaf Pine"**

From the producers of "Chattahoochee Unplugged" comes a new documentary about the forgotten longleaf pine forest that once blanketed the coastal plain of the Southeastern U.S. Once comprising 90 million sprawling acres, by the 20th century human pressures had reduced the forest to just 3 million acres. Just a tiny fraction of precious old-growth remains. These remarkable patches of longleaf forest display more biodiversity than any other ecosystem in the Northern Hemisphere, rivaled only by the Amazon. Premiering on Georgia Public Broadcasting in the fall of 2015, "Secrets of the Longleaf Pine" takes you on an unprecedented journey to examine some of the unique plants and animals that can only be found here.

Rhett Turner, President, Red Sky Productions

1:00 p.m. **BREAK**

1:20 - 2:30 p.m. **CONCURRENT SESSIONS**

TOWER 2 - CORAL REEF

Session 3a - Prescribed Fire Summit: Best Practices for Improving Communication and Delivery

With more than 85 percent of forest acreage across the Southeast in private ownership, increasing prescribed fire on private lands is an important strategy for achieving the longleaf restoration and management goals established in the Range-wide Conservation Plan for Longleaf Pine. A Prescribed Fire Summit is being planned for late summer 2015. The Summit will bring together communications specialists and prescribed fire experts to discuss barriers to prescribed fire delivery and best practices for communicating with private landowners, with the ultimate goal to increase the application of prescribed fire on private lands. The panel discussion will serve as a precursor to the summit, highlighting several innovative prescribed fire communication and implementation efforts targeted to private landowners and laying the groundwork for identifying and synthesizing best practices.

Moderator: [Jennifer Evans](#), Extension Associate, Extension Forestry, North Carolina State University

Panelists:

[Amity Bass](#), Manager, Louisiana Natural Heritage Program, Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries

[Alan Long](#), Administrative Director, Southern Fire Exchange, Tall Timbers Research Station

[John Weir](#), Research Associate, Department of Natural Resources Ecology and Management, Oklahoma State University

TOWER 1 - OLEANDER

Session 3b - Building a Culture of Conservation to Safeguard Beach-Nesting Birds

Beach-nesting bird populations are plummeting along our major coastlines. Proven tools exist to mitigate and reverse the impact of human-caused decline. This discussion aims to create a foundation for developing a proof-of-concept public awareness campaign for Gulf shorebirds: What are the key stressors? Are there initiatives that have addressed these stressors successfully? How might this be applicable to the Gulf? What are the challenges and opportunities? How would success be measured? What are some next steps?

Moderator: [Suzanne Sessine](#), Assistant Director, Eastern Partnership Office, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation

Panelist 1: [Kacy Ray](#), Manager, Gulf Conservation Program, American Bird Conservancy

Panelist 2: [Laura Chamberlin](#), Coordinator, Delaware Bay Program, Manomet

Panelist 3: [Margo Zdravkovic](#), Director, Conservian/Coastal Bird Conservation

2:30 p.m. **BREAK**

ROYAL PALM BALLROOM

3:00 p.m.

Session 4 - Project Updates

Grantees will highlight accomplishments and discuss the future direction of their work.

Moderator: [Jessica Freeland](#), Senior Engineer, Environmental Affairs, Gulf Power

Red-Cockaded Woodpecker Translocation

[Ralph Costa](#), Wildlife Biologist, RCWO LLC and Milliken Forestry Co., Inc.

[Will McDearman](#), RCW Recovery Coordinator, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Whooping Crane Migration

[Joe Duff](#), Co-founder and Pilot, Operation Migration

Silver Lake Wildlife Management Area

[Brent Howze](#), Acting Region Supervisor, Game Management, Wildlife Resources Division, Georgia
Department of Natural Resources

3:45 p.m.

Announcements

3:50 p.m.

ADJOURN

BALLROOM FOYER

4:00 – 4:30 p.m.

Poster Session

Stop by to learn about various conservation efforts. Exhibits will also be available for viewing throughout the day.

PERGOLA – POOLSIDE

5:00 – 8:00 p.m.

Networking Reception

Join us for heavy hors d'oeuvres in a fun, casual atmosphere to continue one-on-one discussions as we close out the **12th Annual Stewardship Partners Meeting**. There will be music and even a mullet toss competition for those who are up for the challenge.

6:15 p.m.

Mullet Toss

Most people think mullet are something you throw back to the sea or use as bait if you are unfortunate enough to snag one on your fishing line. But, here on the Gulf Coast, mullet are served proudly on the menu like a local delicacy, and once a year, thousands of people flock to the coast to gather and throw them across the AL-FL state line. Come watch or join in the festivities and try your skill at this panhandle tradition known affectionately as the Mullet Toss! The top 3 throws will be awarded certificates and prizes.

7:15 p.m.

Closing Remarks

[Jim Vick](#), Director, Environmental Affairs, Gulf Power

THURSDAY, APRIL 9

HILTON - BALLROOM FOYER

6:30 – 7:45 a.m. **Breakfast “Grab ‘n go” (available for tour participants)**7:00 – 11:00 a.m. **Networking Tours**

Meet shuttle bus or trolley directly in front of the Hilton. Water will be provided.

Tour option #1 departs at 7:00 a.m. and is approximately 45 minutes away. Tour option #2 departs at 8:00 a.m. and is approximately 15 minutes away.

Option #1: Betty and Crawford Rainwater Perdido River Nature Preserve Tour (7:00 – 11:00 am)

A conservation acquisition that protects some 7.5 miles of the Perdido River, The Betty and Crawford Rainwater Perdido River Nature Preserve boasts beautiful estuaries, longleaf forests, marshes, swamps and pitcher plant bogs. The Perdido is one of the last intact, undammed blackwater rivers entering the Gulf of Mexico and provides habitat for hundreds of plant and animal species. The preserve, purchased by The Nature Conservancy in 2003 as a living memorial to Betty and Crawford Rainwater, helps ensure that much of the Perdido River is protected from development and will continue to provide vital ecosystem services to the citizens of Florida and Alabama.

Tour guide: Brent Shaver, Director, Conservation Forestry Project, The Nature Conservancy

Attire: Casual, hiking boots

Difficulty: Moderate – walking on trails and recently burned areas that may be wet/muddy

Materials: Suggest sunscreen, hat, binoculars and bug spray

Option #2: Coastal Birding Seashore Tour (8:00 – 11:00 am)

Join Audubon Florida for a visit to Santa Rosa Island and Gulf Islands National Seashore to observe and learn more about the region’s beach-nesting birds and Audubon’s work with partners to conserve them. In addition to an interpretive coastal bird walk, participants will talk with researchers using radio telemetry to track the fates of threatened snowy plover chicks, resource managers posting and stewarding colonies to protect them from disturbance, and learn how volunteers are helping birds nesting on the flat, gravel rooftops of area businesses due to insufficient undisturbed beach habitat.

Tour guide: Julie Wraithmell, Director, Wildlife Conservation, Audubon Florida

Attire: Casual, wear shoes for walking

Difficulty: Moderate – walking in sand and on uneven surfaces

Materials: Suggest sunscreen, hat and binoculars