



HAMILTON HOLT NEWS

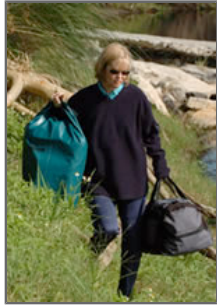
What's New
Profiles

Hamilton Holt School

Voice: 407.646.2232
Fax: 407.646.1551
holtsschool@rollins.edu

LESLIE POOLE AND EQUINOX DOCUMENTARIES, INC.

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Leslie Poole, MLS '91 and Equinox Documentaries, Inc., a nature film company, are producing a documentary on the St. Johns River for the Public Broadcasting System (PBS).

A Rollins environmental studies instructor, and graduate of the Master of Liberal Studies Program, Poole and colleagues retraced a historic journey made 70 years ago by Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings and her friend Dessie Smith. That trip is described in the "Hyacinth Drift" chapter of Rawlings autobiographical work, "Cross Creek."

"I am Rawlings fan and teach her work in my environmental literature class," said Poole. "I always find that students connect with her, particularly because she describes a rural, simple life that seems to have largely evaporated in Florida's booming growth and development."

Now in production, the film called "In Marjorie's Wake," will air this fall. The instructor and her friend Jennifer Chase, spent seven days in October traveling the identical route that Rawlings and Smith took from Christmas to the Ocklawaha River near Welaka. "We hope to show the beauty, fragility, inspiration, and ecological importance of the St. Johns River," she said.

The women camped two nights in wild areas and one night in a fish camp, and also stayed with people along the river. The crew taped interviews with people and documented the "fabulous nature" of the St. Johns.

While Rawlings and Smith were worried about bears in the wilderness, and carried guns for protection, Poole and Chase carried cell phones and microphones.

Equinox has been planning the documentary for more than three years, raising money for it prior to filming. "We received significant support from the Central Florida area, particularly among Rawlings admirers and those who cherish the river as much as we do," she said.

Rawlings companion Dessie Smith died just two years before the filming began. Poole, however, completed a taped interview with Smith just prior to her death. That footage will figure prominently in the film.

"She was a true Florida Cracker, an independent, good-natured soul who was great friends with Rawlings and taught her about life in the Florida scrublands, said Poole. The crew also filmed Marjorie Rawlings former home at Cross Creek, now a Historic State Park located 25 minutes south of Gainesville.

"The purpose of the film is to educate the public and to inspire them to love the river, as we do, and have them travel with us on this journey of exploration."

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