THE BALANCING POINT

EQUINOX DOCUMENTARIES

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Spring has sprung!

For most critters, the winter months are the time for slowing down, hibernating and conserving energy. But not for Equinox! It has been quite a busy first quarter for us!

We saw the release of ***In Marjorie's Wake*** to PBS stations across the country; held our annual board meeting; wrapped up production of our short piece on the Carr Cabin; continued production on our new film, ***Eden to Sahara***, and participated in a number of outreach events—with still more to come!

If you weren't able to check us out at the ***St. Johns River Revival*** or ***Wekiva RiverFest*** earlier this month, be sure to drop by the ***Florida Black Bear Festival*** this weekend where you'll have the chance to view the Carr Cabin piece. (More info on this event on page 2.)

Yes, there's a lot going on at Equinox, but we still manage to find time to explore our natural environment.

Spring in Florida doesn't last long but it's the perfect time of year to see wildlife. Nature is abuzz with activity as birds begin building nests and looking for mates, deer and bear emerge to seek out fresh sprouts to eat, and blooming wildflowers attract a bevy of bees and butterflies.

It's a wonderful time to be in Florida so make the effort to get out there and enjoy the season before the summer heat and thunderstorms roll in!

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

St. Johns River Revival 2
Black Bear Festival 2
IMW on PBS 2
What About Bob? 3
YFP Deadline Approaching 3
Where in the World is Bill? 4
Carr Cabin Project Update 4

Middle school students volunteer for Equinox

Equinox Advisory Council member Ann McGregor teaches Middle School at the Montessori School of Celebration, where her students have read *The Yearling*, watched ***In Marjorie's Wake***, and studied Florida ecosystems.They've enjoyed several field study days and canoe trip down the Wekiva River with Equinox co-founder Bill Belleville.

Celebration Montessori students Najudy, Bryana and Amber at Wekiwa Springs State Park

As part of their service to community, the middle schoolers volunteered to staff the Equinox booth at the ***Wekiva Riverfest*** on Saturday, March 7. In preparation for the event, they met with Advisory Council member Leslie Poole and learned about the organization. They collected all materials needed for the booth, and set up and manned the booth during the festival. Below is a report from one of the students, Bryana, about her experience:

"On Friday, March 6th, 2009, my classmates and I went on a field trip to meet with Leslie Poole who is a professor of environmental studies and a member of Equinox's Advisory Council. She informed us on what Equinox was all about and what to expect when volunteering.

After speaking with Leslie, we went to their office and picked up our tent and all the other things to create our booth for the Riverfest.

On Saturday morning we set up our booth and started informing others about Equinox. Some people have never heard of this wonderful non-profit organization. The people we informed also got to tell us about their booth. Most of the booths there were all about saving Florida and our animals which is what Equinox tries to teach those who want to learn about Florida and its lovely nature that comes with it.

I would definitely volunteer for Equinox Documentaries again because it is wonderful to see Florida's nature instead of all the tourist attractions. It's also priceless to see how great people respond when you tell them what you are volunteering for and how they can help."

To read reports from other student volunteers, visit our blog at **www.equinoxdocumentaries.org/blog/**.

Equinox joins Riverkeeper for St. Johns River Revival

Equinox partnered with the St. Johns Riverkeeper in Jacksonville in early March to celebrate respective projects designed to promote and sustain the grand and noble St. Johns at the ***St. Johns River Revival***.

The historic 5 Points Theater in the neighborhood by the same name generously hosted the programs with support from the Resident Community News, which helped publicize the event and designed posters for it. Equinox and Riverkeeper distributed information in the lobby during the programs, which took place from 2pm to 6pm.

Both Bill and Bob introduced ***In Marjorie's Wake*** and answered questions afterwards. Later, Michelle Thatcher, who is producing a documentary about her river trek in partnership with Equinox, showed a short film trailer and powerpoint to illustrate her solo river journey. Kayakers Seth Dent and Keith Legette also shared stories and photos from their own paddle on the river system.

Bill introduces Jenn Chase, who wrapped up the event with a performance from her CD

The Riverkeeper screened its new 30 minute film, *My St. Johns River: Our Responsibility*, and musician Jenn Chase — who retraced the historic Rawlings river journey with Leslie Poole — wrapped up the afternoon with a medley of songs, all taken from her music CD, ***In Marjorie's Wake***. Jacksonville artist Jim Draper, who illustrated the CD cover, also appeared on camera in ***IMW***

Equinox is very proud of its partnership on this event with the Riverkeeper, and very grateful for their lead role in helping to organize it.

Equinox at Black Bear Festival

Equinox will have an exhibit at the 10th annual ***Black Bear Festival*** to be held on March 28 in Unmatilla, Florida. The exhibit will feature the public premiere of our short film on the restoration of the Archie Carr family cabin. We will also be avail-able to answer questions about the making of the film.

Equinox has donated its professional services and production time for the film because of the urgency for restoration, and the opportunity to partner with like-minded agencies and non-profits. Those agencies include the Umatilla Historical Society, the US Forest Service and those individuals who have donated time, money or products to the effort: Dr. Ray Willis of the USFS, the Carr family, Equinox board member David Strickland and Gainesville artist Eleanor Blair, among others. The cabin is sited on 46 acres of scrub and pine flatwoods recently donated to the Ocala National Forest by Dr. Tom Carr, Archie's surviving brother.

The ***Black Bear Festival*** seeks to increase awareness and promote safe coexistence of humans and bears by fostering community appreciation of the Florida Black Bear and Florida's unique ecosystems that serve as its habitats. The festival offers activities, presentations and field trips that provide participants with information about how bears live, bear behavior and how we can live and recreate in bear country safely.

The event takes place on Saturday, March 28 from 9am until 4pm at Cadwell Park in Umatilla. For more information on the Black Bear Festival, visit **http://umatillachamber.org/** or call 352-669-3511.

In Marjorie's Wake meanders throughout the PBS system

From sea to shining sea: like the slow, revealing trip that it is, ***In Marjorie's Wake*** is beginning to turn up on PBS stations around the country.

The program was released only six weeks ago and has already aired on over 100 stations. The list of stations includes all of the Florida PBS stations; Los Angeles, CA; San Fransisco, CA; Washington DC; Cincinnati, OH; Indianapolis, IN; Louisville, KY; Buffalo, NY and the statewide networks of Alabama, Kentucky, Oregon, West Virginia and Utah. It has also aired in East Lansing, MI; Rochester, NY; Charlotte, NC; Waco, TX; Corpus Christi, TX; Claremore, OK; and Evansville, IN. Many of these

stations have been running the program in both the Standard Definition and High Definition modes.

As the reports come in, the most gratifying point is that a Florida story can have so much appeal to a national audience. Nature surely transcends geography.

What about Bob?

The new year has started much better than the last one ended… at least on the activity front as it offered me two memorable "natural" experiences.

Over the holidays, I did some hiking. It was nothing extraordinary until I encountered my first pair of black bears in the wild (that is, without my camera). I was excited enough to see them from a distance, but nothing could match the excitement of having them double-back and come within 15 feet of me! The 250 lb. mother jumped a foot in the air and was gone in a flash, but the long yearling (2 yr. old) lazily continued on its way, hardly noticing my adrenaline-filled observation. That's a great way to start the new year!

I also returned to Rock Springs in January to once again do some research diving with the Cambrian Foundation. Interestingly, the spring flow seemed to be higher than normal—a fact that my dive partners and the park manager confirmed. At a time when no significant rainfall could have caused this jump in outflow, it reminded me of how little we know about the characteristics of our aquifer. We penetrated the cave 600 feet back, which is not a lot of distance on the surface, but in the high intensity flow of a magnitude 2 spring, it's quite an accomplishment. As we continued to explore several diverging passages, we started to hypothesize that the passages may contain separate sources of water, making it difficult to determine why the outflow was so different this day. The curiousness of this event again informs me just how little we know of our underground rivers, even when we swim right through them! The more I discover in the cave, the less confident I feel about our planning knowledge of water sources. What's in the mesh research bag I carry out of the cave, you ask? A bagful of new question marks. My lesson for the day is this: Simply slow down. There's still lots to learn.

Exploring the caves of Rock Springs

Workwise, I'm still posting progress on my front yard transformation. You can follow the progress of *Bob's Place* at **www.TheLandscapeRenovator.com**. I'm continuing production of the short creation care film, *God's Stewards*, with my church, the Sierra Club, Conservation International and others. I've completed the editing of a short video for Angels Trace, *Faces of Domestic Violence*. I directed two short "character" videos for National Geographic Television for a proposed series called *Get a Life*. I'm also in the early development stages of a documentary on Florida's Surf History (with an angle on resource preservation). And I'm involved in 4 more segments of *For Your Health* for UCF-TV. Finally, I am the post-production supervisor and an editor for the pilot episode of a dramatic re-enactment series of legal briefs called *Legally Informed*.

Bill and I continue to work on early production of ***Eden to Sahara***. With the South Florida Water Management District, I flew over the restored sections of the Kissimmee River to get a modern day look at a major storyline we'll be including in the program. And as you know by now, I have completed the editing on a new 12-minute video for Equinox on the Carr Family Cabin.

I hope the next quarter brings us all better news on the economic front, but more importantly, I hope you can find the time to slow down and release a little stress by taking some quiet moments in nature. Have a good spring!

Last chance to enter Young Filmmaker's competition

It's almost here — the deadline for entries in our Young Filmmaker's nature documentary film competition! With only a couple weeks before the deadline, we're encouraging all amateur documentary filmmakers to get their submissions in right away!

By offering the Young Filmmaker's Prize, Equinox seeks to inspire young filmmakers to tell their stories of nature and spread their messages of conservation and sustainability.

One entrant, Eric Bendick of Bozeman, MT, told Equinox what inspired him to enter the competition:

"I went to high school in Florida and was captivated by the natural beauty and variety of its coasts, swamps. cypress stands, and pristine rivers, as well as the incredible species that live in these truly wild places. Today, I have begun my career as a documentary filmmaker and I am returning to showcase Florida's 'wild things,' animals like the Florida Panther and the Florida Black Bear, in 'starring roles' in my first feature film. I'm hoping that my films will help protect Florida's natural beauty for many future generations and I hope the one-of-a-kind Equinox Young Filmmakers prize inspires a wave of similar efforts from other young filmmakers."

The competition is sponsored by Equinox Documentaries and the Orlando Film Festival. The first place winner will receive a cash award of $1,000 and his/her film will screen at the 2009 Orlando Film Festival. Additional prizes will be awarded for second and third place finishers.

This contest is open to amateur filmmakers between 18 and 30 years of age, as well as those currently enrolled in film school.

For complete entry guidelines and detailed amateur criteria, or to submit an entry form, please visit **www.equinoxdocumentaries.org/yfp/**.

Entries must be received by April 2, 2009, so get those final edits polished and submit your film!

Where in the world is Bill?

Well, with the gorgeous days of spring in Florida, Bill's fighting the urge to abandon all pretense of adulthood and just head off into the woods and onto our rivers. He's big into wildflowers—perhaps following the lead of "Puc Puggy"—and he so enjoys watching our native plants unfold, like this river iris shown here.

Purple flag iris

Back in the grown-up world, Bill gave a presentation on the Rivership Romance on the St.Johns River to benefit "Keep Seminole Beautiful." Shortly afterwards, he traveled to Blue Spring State Park for four days to help facilitate the Second Annual River Classroom, sponsored by the River Alliance. He was proud to be joined by other "teachers" such as nature photographer John Moran, ecotourism guru Herb Hiller, and RiverKeeper Neil Armingeon. Our ***Marjorie*** film was shown to participants during one evening session at the park.

Bill continued to work with art historian Mallory O' Connor and author Gary Monroe on the art book *Florida's First River: A Visual History of the St. Johns*, to be released this summer by UPF. A traveling exhibition of contemporary river art, "Liquid Muse" will tour the state over the next year as a companion to the book. To help promote that project, Bill wrote an article for *Florida Travel & Life* themed to river art.

With Gainesville artist Margaret Ross Tolbert (who is featured in Liquid Muse), he planned a joint presentation that emphasizes the ways in which nature—and especially the river—have shaped art and literature over time. And with filmmaker and educator Michelle Thatcher and editor Scott Whitney, he scripted and co-produced a four minute preview "trailer" of the documentary Michelle is planning to chronicle her solo river journey on the St. Johns (**www.AlligatorPrincess.com**).

On March 25, Bill will give two lectures on nature writing during the Lake County Public Library System's Sixth Annual Festival of Reading. And, on March 29, he will be the featured speaker for the Oklawaha Valley Audubon Society at the Trout Lake Nature Center in Eustis. There, Bill will recount the making of ***In Marjorie's Wake*** in a PowerPoint format and sign books.

In early April, Bill will help lead an interpretive river tour sponsored by the St. Johns RiverKeeper between Sanford and Hontoon Island (**StJohnsRiverKeeper.org**).

Finally, on Friday April 17 at 6pm, Bill presents "One Man's Journey Into Nature Writing & Filmmaking: Adventures in Russia, Australia, Latin America — and Sanford, Florida" via the Author's Series at Orange County's SW Library, co-sponsored by the Dr. Phillips Rotary.

To catch up with Bill when he's not hunting for wildflowers or gabbing about nature literature, check out his website at **www.BillBelleville.com**.

Carr Cabin project update

Equinox's short film on the history and restoration needed for the Archie Carr family cabin premiered to an exclusive fund-raising event in late March, and is followed a week later by a public screening at the Tenth Annual Black Bear Festival in Umatilla, Florida on March 28.

The Carr Cabin by Gainesville artist Eleanor Blair

The film, which was scripted, shot, edited and produced by Bill Belleville and Bob Giguere is entitled: ***Celebrating a Forgotten Place: The Carr Family Cabin in the Florida Scrub***. The 12-minute short film includes interviews with Archie's surviving brother, Dr. Tom Carr, who donated the 46 acres and the cabin to the Ocala National Forest. Also on camera were Dr. Archie "Chuck" Carr III, Steve Carr and former U.S. Sen. Bob Graham. Mimi Carr narrated the film, which included contemporary footage as well as archival images of the cabin, three generations of the family, and the nearby Lake Nicotoon.

An oil painting by Gainesville artist Eleanor Blair was also used in the film. The painting, along with giclée reprodutions of it, will help raise funds to restore and properly interpret the value of the cabin to help the pubic understand the iconic nature of the place and the role it played in helping forge a conservation ethic for the family of Archie and Marjorie Harris Carr. DVD copies of the Equinox film will be used, along with the artwork, as premiums for large donors to the project. The non-profit Umatilla Historical Society is processing donations for the project. Archaeologist Dr. Ray Willis of the USFS first contacted Bill for support in devising a fund raising strategy, and the Equinox Board soundly supported a film project.

Board member David Strickland donated $1,000 to the making of the film, which was then gifted to the newly formed "Friends of the Carr Cabin." Bill and Bob donated most of their time to the actual production. The film fits well into the mission of our own non-profit in regard to using media for environmental education and realizing the values of "sense of place." In addition to being used as a fundraiser, the film will be entered in the "shorts" division of upcoming film festivals in Florida and elsewhere by Equinox.