

THE BALANCING POINT

Every spring is the only spring, a perpetual astonishment. — Ellis Peters

What a glorious time of year to be in Florida! The longer days are warmed by the sun yet cooled by a gentle breeze. Nature is alight with vibrant colors, beckoning us to come out and play.



We survived a wild winter here, with record lows and lots of rain. But now we are rewarded in dazzling bursts of green, white, yellow and pink. It's true, every spring does feel like the first spring to me. Like a child in a candy store, I am dazed and overwhelmed by the beauty around me; all my senses are engaged.

Each spring, I wait patiently for the Chickasaw plum trees to bloom, so

I might marvel at the thousands of tiny white blossoms that seem to appear magically overnight on their bare brambly branches.

The Tabebuia performs a similar feat, bursting all at once into an aureate crown of delicate, tubular flowers that soon will drop in unison and cover the ground in a carpet of gold.

The air is alive with the peeps and chirps of baby birds and the buzzing of busy insects; it is sweetened by the syrupy fragrance of budding citrus blossoms. I could sit outside all day, just listening, looking and breathing it all in.

Yes, it is spring in Florida — and it surely must be the *only* spring, for it has never been so lovely.



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Turtles are center stage!

Major filming has begun on our next short film, *Turtles of the Wekiva River Basin*. As an indicator species capable of giving us some insight into the health of the Wekiva River system, turtles are also the first iconic image that recreational river users usually see and talk about.



Eric Munscher captures a snapping turtle for Equinox cameras

Equinox's short film highlights a nine-year study to identify and count turtles along the river in order to gain a better understanding of the health of the population and of the river, itself. The study is being conducted by herpetologist Eric Munscher.

Previously, turtles were hand caught, the schutes of their shells notched so

they could be identified if captured again. Thanks to modern advances, turtles today are implanted with a chip that allows researchers to use a scanning device similar to those used in supermarket check-outs. The scanner identifies each turtle so researchers can monitor growth rates and age.

The Friends of the Wekiva River, Inc., our region's premier grassroots conservation group dedicated to protecting the river system, have helped fund the new tagging technology. As well, the Steering Committee for the federal Wild and Scenic Designation of the Wekiva has helped support this program.

Turtles, commonly seen sunning themselves on logs on the river, are a barometer species of river health, says Munscher, "because they eat a lot of things, and get eaten by a lot of things."

Turtles that are being counted include the peninsula cooter, Florida red-bellied cooter, Florida soft shell, snapping turtle and loggerhead musk turtle, among others. To date, some 4504 turtles have been tagged.



Videographer Tom Postel shoots the capture of a peninsular cooter

In Marjorie's Wake Continues to flow throughout the PBS system

Like the intrepid, revealing trip that it is, *In Marjorie's Wake* is beginning to turn up on PBS stations around the country. In the year since *IMW* was released to the national PBS system, Equinox Documentaries has received exposure in 4 top ten markets: **Los Angeles, CA; Philadelphia, PA; San Francisco, CA and Washington DC.**

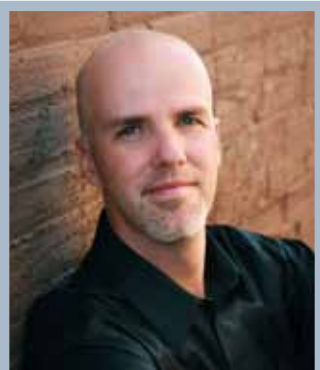
When expanded to the top 25, the program has received exposure in 11 and then 16 of the top 50 markets including **Charlotte, NC; Detroit, MI; Indianapolis, IN; Miami, FL; Orlando, FL; Portland, OR and Tampa, FL.**

It has also been seen in **Bend, OR; Birmingham, AL; Bluefield, WV; Bowling Green, KY; Buffalo, NY; Charleston, WV; Cincinnati, OH; Davenport, IA; Decatur, GA; Eugene, OR; Evansville, IL; Ft. Myers, FL; Gainesville, FL; Harlingen TX; Huntsville, AL; Jacksonville, FL; Lexington, KY; Louisville, KY; Mobile, AL; Montgomery, AL; Morgantown, WV; Naples, FL; Paducah, KY; Panama City, FL; Pensacola, FL; Tallahassee, FL; Waco, TX and West Palm Beach, FL**



The program has had at least 237 telecasts on over 106 stations and has covered 30% of the viewing audience in the United States. *In Marjorie's Wake* has truly become a national story and will continue to inform, educate and entertain audiences across the country for another year. Thank you to our sponsors for giving us this opportunity to tell Florida stories to the rest of the country!

Volunteer Profile: Alan Davidson



If you're on Facebook, you've probably noticed that Equinox now has a fan page with lots going on! That's all thanks to our newest volunteer, Alan Davidson.

Alan was born and raised in Lakeland, Florida, and currently lives in Windermere. He is a licensed counselor who travels around the world

working with expatriates living abroad. His most current trip took him to Africa where he and his wife lived for eight months. When Alan is not counseling, he is participating in as many outdoor activities as possible. He loves being on the water, especially the Suwannee River where he spent most of his boyhood summers.

Equinox Documentaries interested him "because they stand for something that is quickly disappearing in Florida: Nature and History." He's a firm believer that there should be more grass and less concrete.

Equinox would like to welcome Alan to our family. We are grateful for his help and commitment to this organization.

Equinox exhibits at RiverFest

Bill and Bob represented Equinox with an exhibit at the Friends of the Wekiva's (FOWR) Annual RiverFest on March 6. They were joined by volunteer Julie Fisher, who helped distribute info on Equinox, and sell Equinox DVDs and other products.

The Equinox exhibit, which included mounted posters of *In Marjorie's Wake* and "Behind the Scenes," also helped share info about FOWR and hand out membership brochures for that non-profit organization.

Several hundred people at Wekiva Island saw the exhibit, and many stopped by for more information. The main Riverfest at the Wekiwa State Park also drew a number of visitors interested in learning more about the river system. At Wekiva Island, Bob shot topside video from a pontoon boat tour operated by DEP to add to our stock for our forthcoming short film on turtle tagging on the Wekiva.



Where in the world is Bill?

Everyone seems to have their own way to mark the arrival of spring in Florida. One sure sign is the natural unveiling of new sprouts and blossoms in our yards and on the rivers and trails. As our famous 19th century Yankee-transplant Harriet Beecher Stowe once observed: "Flowers are the sweetest things God ever made and forgot to put a soul into." Indeed, it seems like most everything in our Florida landscape is stoked and ready to show it. Or, as comedian Robin Williams put it: "Spring is nature's way of saying: 'Let's Party!'"

Thankfully, Bill has been outdoors as much as his grown-up schedule allows, hiking and paddling, taking photos and writing essays. He's completed a collection of his Florida-based nature essays, *Salvaging the Real Florida: Lost and Found in the State of Dreams*, to be published by University Press of Florida later this year.

Other projects underway, have also received attention. On Jan. 14, Bill gave a presentation to the regional chapter of the Florida Trail Association at Leu Gardens in Orlando about a new river art book on the St. Johns river, also published by UPF. Later in January, Bill helped Rollins professor Leslie Poole lead a field trip to Julie Fisher's rancho on the Little Wekiva River where Environmental Studies students visited a 2,400-year old bald cypress and learned more about the unique river system.

As vice president of the Friends of the Wekiva River, Bill has contributed an essay to a magazine being used to help enlist homeowners in the river basin to stewardship needs, the "Wekiva River Promise." This is a joint project with the South Seminole Rotary and also involves the PBS film Bill and Bob produced, *Wekiva: Legacy or Loss?* As for other literature-as-activism behaviors, Bill also contributed to an anthology, *Unspoiled: Writers Speak for Florida's Coast*, to be released later in April. Co-edited by author Janisse Ray, the book showcases essays by nature writers in the Southeast and Florida and makes a case against the specious logic of near-shore oil drilling in the Gulf.

On the trail, Bill helped lead a hike on Feb. 20 to show support for the vital "Florida Forever" land buying program. The hike meandered through the Econ State Forest and highlighted how state land acquisition helped protect portions of the Econ basin. The hike, sponsored by The Nature Conservancy, had counterparts throughout the state that day. Also outdoors at the "Rally for the Rivers" sponsored by the Putnam County Enviro. Council, Bill traveled to Palatka to join other authors in celebrating the long and rich histories of the St. Johns and Ocklawaha Rivers.

Back indoors in Gainesville, Bill gave the keynote presentation for the 16th annual Public Interest Environmental Conference at the Harn Museum for UF's College of Law. The indoor venue



Bill gives keynote at UF's Public Interest Environmental Conference

continued at Rollins College for two events in March: a screening and discussion of *Carr Cabin*; and a joint presentation with art historian Mallory O' Connor on the river art book *Florida's American Heritage River: Images from the St. Johns Region*.

Out on the St. Johns, Bill was the featured speaker on March 19 for UNF's annual river course that integrates science with the humanities. Bill joined Drs. Radha Pyati and Ray Bowman from UNF's Environmental Center on the river trip.

Bill teamed up with historian Jim Robison to give a presentation on their book, *Along the Wekiva*, at the Museum of the Apopkans. During that event, they gifted long-time Mayor John Land with an autographed copy of the book for his support of

the project (which benefits the Friends of the Wekiva).

Bill was soon back out on the Wekiva to lead a hands-on field course introducing participants to this special river system. The course, sponsored by the non-profit Center for Animal Therapy, was held at Wekiva Island Marina.

On March 26, Bill gave the keynote banquet presentation to the state-wide conference of the Florida Trail Association in Haines City. The lecture focused on sprawl, its impact on natural systems in Florida, and the value of effective growth management .

On April 9, Bill will keynote the annual Florida Library Association conference in Orlando with a talk on nature writing and filmmaking; the next day, he'll help interpret a stretch along the middle St. Johns for an eco-heritage boat tour of the St. Johns RiverKeeper. At Daytona State College on April 24, Bill will give a lecture on "500 Years on the St. Johns: Magic, Myth & Mayhem" via a lecture series sponsored by the Florida Humanities Council.

Otherwise, Bill continues to join Gainesville artist Margaret Tolbert in promoting the new coffee table-style book combining the science and art of our Florida springs: *Aquiferious*. The book, which includes cave maps by Eric Hutcheson and reports on cave life by biologist Tom Morris, also includes essays about sustainable use of our aquifer by former DEP springs chief Jim Stevenson and others. Bill's centerpiece essay is "Florida Springs: Eocene Memories Fueled by a Dream." Bill has also facilitated Margaret as the keynote speaker for the annual Friends of the Wekiva Banquet and Awards Dinner on May 1.

With Bob, Bill continues to work on our short film on turtle tagging on the Wekiva in preparation for a presentation of it to the federal Wild and Scenic Steering Committee in June. And he continues to collaborate with Michelle Thatcher on her documentary *Alligator Princess of America's Nile*, for which Equinox is the executive producer.



Carr Cabin wins Best Florida Film of 2009!

Equinox was honored with two awards at last month's Amelia Island Film Festival. *Carr Cabin — Celebrating a Forgotten Place in the Florida Scrub*, our original short documentary, received the Don R. Davis Memorial Award for Best Florida Film of 2009 and the AIFF Filmmaker's Choice of the Fest.

Fundraising Goals for 2nd Quarter 2010

Eden to Sahara

Total Funding \$65,272

Total Raised To Date

Lydia B. Stokes \$10,000

Match/Wekiwa Island \$ 1,250

Individual donations \$ 1,250

Total \$12,500

\$52,272

Turtles of the Wekiwa

Total Funding \$ 5,600

Total Raised To Date \$ 0

\$ 5,600

Operational Budget

Total Funding \$17,396

Total Raised To Date

Board of Directors \$ 5,000

Project Admin Fees \$ 1,250

Total \$ 7,908

\$ 9,488

Equinox is a registered 501c3 organization and depends solely on the support of citizens, foundations and businesses of Florida and the Southeast. If you can help or lead us to fundraising sources, please contact us at info@equinoxdocumentaries.org.

What about Bob?

Well, I just saw my first swallow-tailed kite over the Wekiwa River, signaling the beginning of spring in Central Florida — one of the most graceful birds and a welcome site every March! As is the slow growth of work activity.

I've spent a lot of time editing this spring, on multiple website and social media spots for a variety of clients. I've just finished the edit for a 12-minute video on women in engineering, called *This is Engineering*. I've also completed a 5-minute information piece for the National Center for Homeopathy's website. And I added a 7-minute video for one of my favorite non-profit clients, Quest, Inc. In addition to the post-production, I've started production for Market Place Events, the organization that brings Orlando the best Home and Garden show in the state. I'll be producing 11 short videos for their website, as well.

You can see me quite often behind a camera at UCF for UCF-TV's multiple forums out of the Global Perspectives office or at a few musical concerts. I've also begun teaching Video Production classes for Genius DV in Orlando. And, as a little side-bar, I dappled in some still photography this spring, getting the cover photo of this month's *Home Renovation* magazine.

And every spring I get the pleasure of serving as a science diver with the Cambrian Foundation for its ongoing research project in the Central Florida cave systems. This spring, along with lead scientists from University of

Virginia and Virginia Commonwealth University, we installed permanent collection sites with the cave systems of Wekiwa Springs and DeLeon Springs. For the next two years, the project, supported by a grant from the National Science Foundation, will examine biomass and growth rates to begin to understand how the life cycle works in these unique, dark environments. It's fascinating to be part of an ongoing science project and to continue learning about Florida's most important resource, our aquifer and water supply system.

Finally, for Equinox, I represented *Celebrating a Forgotten Place: The Carr Family Cabin* at the Amelia Island Film Festival where it was awarded "Best of Florida" and "Best of Show." I was also able to sit on a 3-hour panel with other industry professionals to talk about the process of moving from an idea to a script to the screen. And along with Bill, I represented Equinox at the Wekiwa Riverfest last month.

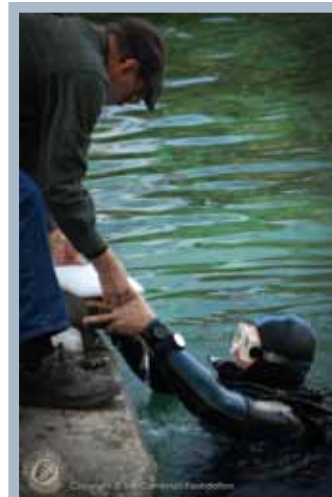
Now it's off to produce our Turtle documentary. We were able to finish up most of the filming this spring at Blue Springs and Wekiwa Springs.

Look for *Turtles of the Wekiwa River Basin* in the next few months. It will have some stunning pictures and a great story about one of the most visible icons of Florida rivers.

In the meantime, I hope a swallow-tailed kite crosses your path this spring!



Bob with sample bag in DeLeon Springs



Bob hands sampling bin of biomass to Aaron, from University of Virginia