



McFarlane Nature Park News

Sharing with those who work and care for the Park

McFarlane Future Fund Endowment

McFarlane Future Fund Endowment To make the Park more self sufficient, the task force established an endowment fund in 2023. It is exciting to report that the fund ended the year at 51% of its initial goal of \$100,000. No funds will be taken from the initial \$100,000, with future benefits to the operating budget resulting from a portion of interest earned after reaching that amount. Donors of \$1,000+ before Dec 31, 2023 are recognized as Founding Contributors.

McFarlane receives no government funds and is operated entirely by donations and volunteer time.



The Gardens

Spring is a wonderful time to wander through the gardens where spring wildflowers are already blooming. It will soon be the right time to see how many of the newly installed plants will make their appearance in the display gardens. Eight small native azaleas were installed in the wooded area west of the restrooms and all are showing signs of being alive!

Neighbors are welcome to join the Master Gardeners on Tuesday mornings, usually about 9 a.m.

Neighbors who serve on the task force to manage the Park have been stepping up in different roles.



Brent Cunningham and his crew did a seamless job of restoring the sign board, replacing the warping plywood with concrete board that will last a long time.

Dorian Conger and Jean Greenland overcame challenges to re-stain the pumphouse door and install a new latch.

Although it was designed for a left hand opening door, it works just as well upside down!



Founding Contributors

Bill & Shelley Avirett
Cecil B Day Foundation
Chattahoochee Home & Garden
Chattahoochee Plantation Community Assoc
Chattahoochee Plantation Women's Club
John and Terri Copeland
Brent and Marina Cunningham
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R Richard and Mary Guzy
Michael and Lynne Hoffman
Carter and Phyllis Smith
Darren and Caryn Sonderman
Michael and Eloise Spetko
Dr Stephen P and Melinda Stuk
Jerry and Lynn Thompson

Why are only Piedmont-native plants and trees added to the Park?

The importance of planting natives is that many birds, animals, and insects have evolved to coexist with plants that also are native to our area. Many of them have developed specific lifestyles that require specific plants. The larva of the monarch butterfly, for instance, can only feed on milkweed. It cannot, in the absence of milkweed, shift its egg laying to another plant. Their caterpillars absolutely must have *Asclepias* (milkweed) in order to live and grow. **They are specific.** Many other insects are the same, although possibly not as obvious to us. Insects are specific to other trees or shrubs or plants and require those native plants for them to thrive or even live.

We can start improving our environment by growing what are called Keystone plants and trees.

These are the species that provide the largest support for the largest number of species. At the top of that pyramid are the oak trees. Oak trees have been proven to support 447 species of plants, animals and insects. *Solidago*, or goldenrod, is frequently dismissed as a weed but ranks highest among perennial plants in the number of species it supports. By concentrating on these keystone species, we can most quickly raise the viability of our environment. *For others, see nativeplantfinder.nwf.org/*



The question then, for some people is, **why do we need to do this?** Why would I want to have caterpillars in my yard? Without those insects and caterpillars, birds cannot survive. The chickadee raising a brood has to access over 7000 caterpillars to raise her babies to fledgling. The birds actually select areas to breed where there is an availability of food for their babies. They will not breed in landscapes that are devoid of insect food.

Even our favorites, the hummingbirds, do not thrive on nectar alone. They also consume gnats, mosquitoes, and other small insects to provide protein to their diets. Although we see many species of birds at our feeders, birdseed is not the primary source of food for baby birds, most of whom cannot digest seeds. There are several kinds of birds that will eat seeds and turn it into a sort of milk for their babies, but this is not the normal situation. The birds at feeders still need to find protein in the form of insects to raise their broods.

If we want to live side-by-side with helpful insects, beautiful birds, and other creatures, then we need to take them into account in the way that we manage our own properties. More natives. No herbicides or pesticides. Less grass. More planting. And we can be less tidy. There are many creatures that depend on the fallen leaves and debris to survive the winter, to breed, and to lay their eggs.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Little Library

Take responsibility for soundness of Little Library structure.

Repairs as required.

Literature Box

Be responsible for keeping literature boxes full.

Display Gardens

Join the Master Gardener crew any Tuesday morning to maintain the gardens.

Crew chief is Kate Mason. Bring gloves.

VOLUNTEERS WHO WISH TO FOLLOW UP ON THESE OPPORTUNITIES MAY

CONTACT KARIN at karinguzy@cobblandtrust.org, or 678-860-4445

www.cobblandtrust.org

Facebook.com/McFarlanePark

The Oak Tree Collection at McFarlane

Quercus alba

White Oak

Quercus coccinea

Scarlet Oak

Quercus falcata

Southern Red Oak

Quercus georgiana

Georgia Oak

Quercus lyrata

Overcup Oak

Quercus nigra

Water Oak

Quercus marilandica

Black Jack Oak

Quercus montana

Chestnut Oak

Quercus muehlenbergia

Chinquapin Oak

Quercus phellos

Willow Oak

Quercus rubra

Red Oak

Quercus shumardii

Shumard Red Oak

Quercus stellata

Post Oak

Quercus velutina

Black Oak

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