

B.W. WELLS ASSOCIATION

“Man living in harmony with nature.” B.W. Wells

Spring Newsletter 2018

15th Annual B W WELLS HERITAGE DAY Saturday April 7 from 10 am to 4 pm
Free Event Sponsored by NC PARKS AND RECREATION

Enjoy a day of Guided Walks and Tours – Featuring Activities for Kids and Adults, Free Plant Raffles, Wildflower Walk, Geology Walk, Hog Farming Tour, Capital Tree Walk, Family Ecology Walk, and more!

For more information email greg.orcutt@ncparks.gov or call 919-676-1027. B W Wells State Recreation Area is located at 1630 Brent Road in Wake Forest, NC. Take Hwy 98 to Stony Hill Road to Bud Morris Road then to Bent Road, follow signs go to the end of the road.



What is the future of Rock Cliff Farm?

The B.W. Wells Association is interested in developing a concept plan for the future use of B.W. Wells State Recreation Area which includes Rock Cliff Farm and the contiguous acreage managed by NC Parks and Recreation. Through a \$10,000 grant from NC Parks and Recreation and \$5,000 from the B. W. Wells Association, the Durham company *Alta Planning + Design* is developing a feasibility study for future usage of property. The anticipated completion date is May 2018.

The concepts to be explored include:

- *B.W. Wells as a significant figure in the conservation movement in North Carolina
- *Understanding and appreciation of North Carolina's biological diversity
- *Potential uses of Rockcliff Farm by general user groups, including outdoor education, picnicking, hiking, scouting, lake access for canoeing, etc.

The Alta Study will investigate the kind of communities that are being served by the various types of city, county and state park facilities and the programs existing within the geographic service area. They will evaluate the potential demand for existing and new facilities and programs at the B. W. Wells State Recreation Area. The Alta Study will determine potential user groups and demand within the service radius, possible revenue generation, and potential financial sponsors.

Depending on the level of interest by NC Parks and Wake County Parks in the usages that are determined to be feasible, funding will be sought for preparation of a physical site plan. **(Do we want to mention anything about working with Wake County Parks???)**

New Roof on B. W. Wells Studio

The studio where B. W. Wells painted and enjoyed visitors now has a new roof and sky light thanks to NC Parks Falls Lake staff. The long waited project, completed in early February, will secure the condition of the wooden structure for the foreseeable future and make displays of Wells' art work possible.



Wells Pixie Moss still grows at Spout Springs

by Ken Moore, March 10, 2018

As B.W. Wells describes in *The Natural Garden of North Carolina*, he first saw Pixie flower (*Pyxidantha brevifolia*) at Spout Springs, between Sanford and Fayetteville in 1928. After personally visiting and consulting with noted southern botanist, J. K. Small, in New York City in 1928, B.W. felt confident in describing this miniaturized variant of the common pixie moss (*Pyxidantha barbulata*) as a distinct species.

Early efforts by Wells and the North Carolina Wildflower Preservation Society to preserve the longleaf pine - turkey oak sandhill site failed and over the years, the original dry, deep sand site has been severely compromised by a trailer park and adjacent construction debris dumping so that in recent years the plant at this original site has been considered obliterated.

On March 6 of this year, accompanied by my keen-eyed wife, Kathy Buck, I visited the site hoping to find some remnant of the little patch I last saw in 2004. We parked off the road in a fill-dirt dumpsite turnaround next to the old trailer park, and I walked through the edge of rubble into what was left of the distinctive sandhill habitat I last visited. I quickly found the little patch I remember from thirteen years ago. After a bit more searching Kathy found the largest patch I've ever seen - 2 ft x 3 ft.

Although there are several hundred populations on the adjacent Fort Bragg Reservation, I think the site where Wells first observed this sandhill endemic plant, is still well worth preserving. Perhaps some individual or group can negotiate with the land owner to purchase several acres, fence it, and provide for annual monitoring and appropriate management so that plant enthusiasts can easily observe this unusual diminutive shrub. What a fine tribute to B. W. Wells and to the plant heritage of our state that would be.



Flower Hill a 'freak of nature' says B. W. Wells in 1937

Notes from the Triangle Land Conservancy

It was that phrase, uttered by B. W. Wells, noted North Carolina botanist and ecologist at NC State, on a visit in 1937 that brought this geographic anomaly on the Johnston/Nash County line to national attention. Wells had been invited to tour the property and immediately identified it as a disjunct mountain community, a microenvironment that survived the retreat of the last ice age 10,000 years ago to leave a cool, sheltering environment friendly to Catawba rhododendron, galax, trailing arbutus and other flora more commonly found 200 miles west in the southern Appalachians.

Wells visited the site at the invitation of Bill Ragsdale, the county forest warden. In the late 1930s, Ragsdale leased Flower Hill, built trails and promoted the site, attracting more than 12,000 visitors from throughout the state and even New England visited Flower Hill over the course of three weekends in May 1937. An account of Wells' visit in the Smithfield Herald picked up the "freak of nature" observation. Suddenly, Flower Hill was the place to be. The masses returned the following spring to catch the rhododendron bloom, but after that, interest in Flower Hill mysteriously dwindled.

Interest in the site declined until 1988, when the Johnston County community launched a fundraising and public awareness campaign to save the natural area from residential development. In 1989, Triangle Land Conservancy purchased the first 10 acres and in May 1993 opened the preserve to the public.

Today Flower Hill is a 25-acre preserve open to the public every day from dawn to dusk. Take a walk at Flower Hill and discover mountainous plants growing far from their nearest relatives. See the web site of The Triangle Land Conservancy for more information. [\(Waiting for 2018 hike info from TLC\)](#)

B. W. Wells Association, Inc. Board of Directors:

Joel Bailey
Sanford Bailey
Craig Cooper
Mary Kate Keith
Debra Ludas
Julie Moore
Hugh Nourse
Becky Parsons
B. H. Powell
Jimmy Ray
Pete Schubert
Donna Walsh

Volunteers needed to:

- Paint the studio
- Maintain trails
- Help with events
- Weed the cemetery and rock wall
- Prune shrubs and trees at the home site

B.W. Wells Association

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

We encourage you to join the B.W. Wells Association to enjoy these and other benefits:

- Organized walks and lectures pertaining to botany, ecology and geology
- Attend meetings and receive our Newsletter
- Interpretive displays
- Maintained hiking trails
- Environmental education project for students of all ages
- Special events

Membership Categories:

(check one) (make check payable to BW Wells Association)

- Student/Senior\$10.00
 Membership (Individual).....\$15.00
 Membership (Patron).....\$50.00
 Family.....\$30.00
 Club Membership\$75.00
 Sponsor/partner Organization.....\$75.00
 Life Membership\$100.00
 Donations.....\$ _____

Member Information:

(complete and submit to the address below)

name _____
street _____
city _____ state _____ zipcode _____
phone _____ email _____

I am interested in volunteering



PO Box 1901 · Wake Forest · NC · 27588

The B.W. Wells Association is classified as a public charity under sections 509(a) (1) of the IRS Code so that any donations are tax deductible.