

Fall 2021 Term Fall Brown Bag descriptions and biographies

September 15 | 11:00 am – 12:00 pm | Pebble Hill

Maggie Johnston and Janice Barrett present *Get Wild Alabama!*

Wild Alabama's mission is to inspire people to enjoy, value, and protect Alabama's wild places! It is a nonprofit organization that protects, maintains, and educates about these wild places, especially the Bankhead and Talladega National Forests and the three Wilderness areas within them, Sipsey, Cheaha, and Dugger Mountain Wilderness area. We train volunteers to not only maintain and do clean-ups of these areas but also how to engage with the public that they encounter along the way. We lead groups into these special places to help each citizen experience the magic of connecting with the natural world, a gift that many have forgotten that they need! Want to learn more and get involved? We can make it happen! Check us out at www.wildal.org.

Maggie Johnston lived near the Talladega National Forest and taught science at the Alabama School for the Deaf in Talladega for many years. She "retired" from teaching and moved to live near the Bankhead National Forest and work at Camp McDowell as the director of McDowell Environmental Center and later Dean of Education at McDowell where she helped start the McDowell Farm School and Magnolia Nature Preschool. She "retired" ... again unsuccessfully and is now the Executive Director of Wild Alabama. She is married to Mark Johnston and they have four children, four grandchildren, four pups, and several chickens! Janice Barrett first volunteered as an artist and writer at the Bankhead Monitor in 1992, continuing when it became Wild Alabama in 1994, and Wild South in 2004. She joined the staff in 2002, and has since created a variety of National Forest programs for Alabama communities, families, children, and Native American youth. Janice helped create Wild South's volunteer wilderness ranger program for the Cheaha, Dugger Mountain, and Sipsey Wilderness Areas, and continues to coordinate Bankhead National Forest volunteers in stewardship and biodiversity conservation.

September 22 | 11:00 am – 12:00 pm | Pebble Hill

Elicio Winds presents an Alabama focused concert

Clockwork is a five movement work inspired by the varied landscapes of Alabama. In addition to collaborating with the composer, this piece is part of a multimedia collaboration with Auburn University's media studies department. Videographers from that department are working to create a video that will accompany the music in performance, visually depicting the same landscapes that Davis depicts musically. "Remember it's a sin to kill a mockingbird.' By writing those words into Atticus Finch's mouth, Harper Lee framed Tom Robinson as an innocent songbird and made me wonder which birds might be embodied by other characters in her iconic novel *To Kill a Mockingbird*. This was the jumping-off point for *Birds of Maycomb*, wherein each movement imagines citizens of Maycomb, Alabama, created by Lee, as different species of birds native to Alabama, complete with the distinct calls of each bird. Rather than a retelling of the story, the piece is a reflection on the nature of the characters, an exploration of their identities as much as their actions." – Timothy Hagen

Elicio Winds is a musical ensemble composed of Virginia Broffitt Kunzer (flute), Kathleen Carter Bell (oboe), and Conor Bell (bassoon). Their mission is to promote chamber music, support diverse American composers, and provide engaging community outreach opportunities. The ensemble strives to create dynamic and interdisciplinary programming which engages the larger artistic community and audiences at large. The three all currently teach on the Music Faculty at Auburn University.

Composer Craig Michael Davis is an internationally known composer, conductor, and pianist from California. He travels the world performing a solo keyboard show and with The Craig Michael Davis Ensemble, which he founded in 2015. Living in New York City in his 20s, he received a Master's Degree in Theory and Composition from the New York University. Moving to Bloomington, Indiana, in 2016, he

received a Doctorate in Music Composition, from Indiana University's Jacobs School of Music. Currently, Craig is on faculty at the Jacobs School of Music, teaching music.

Timothy Hagen is an internationally acclaimed composer and flutist. As a composer, Hagen has won awards from the National Flute Association, American Composers Forum and MetLife Creative Connections. His chamber and solo works for flute, published by Owl Glass Music, have been commissioned and performed by individuals and organizations throughout the United States, including the Texas Flute Society and Froot Fire. His pedagogical and scholarly work is published by Owl Glass and in national and international journals, such as the NFA's Flutist Quarterly and the British Flute Society's Pan.

September 29 | 11:00 am – 12:00 pm | Pebble Hill

Sarah Wolak presents *Native and Invasive Plants*

Sarah will share her knowledge about the ecological importance of including native plants in our gardens, and highlight some of our best native garden plants. She will also discuss some of our most problematic non-native invasive species and how to identify them.

Sarah Wolak grew up in south Florida, in a family that loved taking month-long summer camping trips around the country and exploring the outdoors. She earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Wildlife Ecology and Conservation from the University of Florida, and then went on to work as a field biologist in all sorts of ecosystems in Missouri, Florida, New Mexico, Oregon, Massachusetts, Nevada, and Montana. During these nomadic years, where she was mostly paid to work with birds, she discovered that she was increasingly drawn to the diversity of plants in these wild areas. While attending graduate school at the University of California, Riverside, she started propagating plants native to the coastal sage scrub, chaparral, and desert ecosystems of southern California. In California she met her husband, and after graduate school the two of them moved to northern Scotland, where he worked as a post-doctoral research fellow. Four years and two children later, they found themselves moving to Auburn, Alabama. She now spends her time caring for their two boys and propagating thousands of native southeastern plants for her fledgling native plant nursery.

October 6 | 11:00 am – 12:00 pm | Pebble Hill

Gary Mullen presents *Bioluminescent Insect Larvae of Dismals Canyon, AL*

One of the most overlooked natural wonders of Alabama is a quiet, out-of-the-way site in Franklin County, south of Russellville, along Dismals Creek near the town of Phil Campbell. This is home to a population of light-producing fly larvae called "dismalites" that glow at night, creating bioluminescent displays in a canyon-like setting during the warmer months of the year. The privately owned location is called Dismals Canyon, where visitors can take guided night tours to view them. In recognition of its unique biological significance, the site was registered as a National Natural Landmark by the US National Park Service in 1975. It also is a designated "Treasure Forest" by the Alabama Treasure Forest Association.

Gary Mullen is an entomologist and professor emeritus in the Department of Entomology and Plant Pathology at Auburn University. A native of Upstate New York, he joined the faculty at Auburn in 1975. He previously has taught a number of OLLI classes on insects, spiders, mites, and related arthropods.

October 13 | 11:00 am – 12:00 pm | Pebble Hill

Tina Mozelle Braziel presents *The Shape of the Branch: How Waterways Inspires an Alabama Writer*

Between brief readings of her poetry and prose, Tina will describe how Alabama waterways shaped her and her words, inspiring her to imagine all the world as water. She will answer questions and sign books at the end of the talk.

Tina Mozelle Braziel is the author of *Known by Salt* (Anhinga Press), winner of the Philip Levine Prize for Poetry, and *Rooted by Thirst* (Porkbelly Press). She has been awarded an Alabama State Council on the

Arts fellowship and an artist residency at Hot Springs National Park. As the Magic City Poetry Festival's 2019 Eco Poet, she collaborated with the Cahaba River Society to develop eco-poetry curriculum and videos. Raised on the Coosa River, Tina earned a BA at the University of Montevallo, an MA at the University of Alabama at Birmingham, and her MFA in poetry at the University of Oregon. She directs the Ada Long Creative Writing Workshop for high school students at UAB. She and her husband, novelist James Braziel, live and write in a glass cabin that they are building by hand in Blount County. They are currently writing a memoir about building their home.

October 20 | 11:00 am – 12:00 pm | Pebble Hill

Hayward Warren presents *The Alabama Pinhoti*

The Pinhoti Trail is considered the realization of forester Benton MacKaye's original 1921 vision of a trail extending the length of the Appalachian Mountain chain, connecting several existing trails, and sprinkled with permanent camps and constructed to "stimulate every line of outdoor non-industrial endeavor," including recreation, recuperation, agriculture and study. He hoped to spark a "back to the land" movement to relieve the ills of urban industrial life. Construction of the Alabama Pinhoti Trail began in 1970 within the Talladega National Forest in east central and northeast Alabama. In 1977, the Talladega National Forest portions of the trail were designated a National Recreation Trail. By 1983, 60 miles (100 km) of trail had been constructed and Mike Leonard of the Alabama Wilderness Coalition proposed connecting the Pinhoti to the Appalachian Trail in Georgia. The U.S. Forest Service and Alabama's Forever Wild land trust aided in the acquisition of major wilderness tracts. The Pinhoti Trail currently travels through some of those acquired lands and others in which it is planned to go through. The Pinhoti Trail was initially completed in February 2008, and officially opened to the public on March 16, 2008. Efforts continue to improve the trail, mainly involving moving road walk sections of the trail onto trails away from the road. A new southern terminus of the trail at the base of Flagg Mountain, opened in March 2015. Although the majority of the Pinhoti is on USFS property - including the special Cheaha and Dugger Mountain wilderness areas - the trail faces some serious threats. I look forward to discussing those more with you and others.

Hayward Warren's main involvement in *The Alabama Pinhoti* is in its maintenance and the organization of volunteer efforts along the nearly 180 mile path. He's been involved with the Pinhoti for about 12 years and is most familiar with its recent history. Hayward also serve on the board of the Alabama Pinhoti Trail Association, a nonprofit committed to the building, maintenance and preservation of the Pinhoti.

October 27 | 11:00 am – 12:00 pm | Pebble Hill

Mary Ann Rygiel presents *Wilderness in Literature*

This presentation is based on the book by Roderick Nash, *The Wilderness in the American Mind*. It begins with the Biblical view of the wilderness, then goes through the Anglo-Saxon root word for wilderness, describes the view of the Puritans (which is like the Biblical view), discusses the Romantics' view of nature, and ends with Henry David Thoreau, and Teddy Roosevelt. Although in subsequent editions Nash took his concept further and described legislation surrounding Alaska and other National Forests, this presentation will not cover those few extra chapters on the legislative treatment.

Mary Ann Rygiel is a retired teacher. She taught English composition and literature for most of her career, math from pre-algebra through Algebra II for 5 years, and a year of social studies. Mary Ann feels at home in the classroom and welcomes this opportunity to talk about earlier cultural ideas about wilderness.

November 3 | 11:00 am – 12:00 pm | Pebble Hill

Anne Bailey presents *Forest Bathing*

This talk on Forest Bathing, Shinrin Yoku in Japanese, explores the origins and health benefits of immersion in nature. From the roots in ancient Japanese culture to the forefront of current evidence-based medical research across the globe, we will look at the Forest Therapy movement today.

Anne Markham Bailey is a writer based in Birmingham, Alabama. A graduate of Barnard College at Columbia University in New York, Bailey majored in East Asian Studies with a concentration in Chinese language and literature. She holds an MFA in Book Arts and an MA in English, Creative Writing. She has published two books of poems *Cold Stone, White Lily* and *Nancy Marguerite's Chopin*, and a children's book, *The Daring Egg*. Her upcoming book is an awareness practice manual, *The Practice of Being*. Her podcast Present Tense produced a 13-part series, "The Fight For Alabama's Last Wild Places" in 2019. She supports the practice of global awareness to encourage the health and wellness of all beings. In 2021 she founded Creative Awareness Institute to offer courses, programs and conversations about the benefits of awareness. www.annemarkhambailey.com; www.creativeawarenessinstitute.com