

Birdsong Nature Center

July-August, 2025

TRAILS AND BIRD WINDOW OPEN WEDNESDAYS, FRIDAYS, SATURDAYS AND SUNDAYS Hours: Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays 9 to 5

Sundays 1 to 5

July

Thur. July 3 Butterfly Garden Workday

Sat. July 5 Free Family Day

Sat. JulySat. JulySummer Morning Trail RideSat. JulySummer Birding Walk

August

Sat. Aug. 2 Free Family Day

Thur. Aug. 7 Butterfly Garden WorkdaySat. Aug. 9 Early Morning Nature Walk

BIRDSONG NATURE CENTER

WEB SITE: www.birdsongnaturecenter.org EMAIL: birdsong@birdsongnaturecenter.org FACEBOOK: Birdsong Nature Center YOUTUBE: Birdsong Nature Center

PHONE: 229-377-4408

Please, no pets on Nature Center property.

Admission: members, free; non-member adults, \$5.00; children 4-12, \$2.50

SUMMER BREAK SCHEDULE Closing on Sunday, August 17th Reopening on Wednesday, September 3rd

BUILDING IMPROVEMENTS UPDATE

We have been focusing this spring on our most challenging building improvement – renovating Roy's House, a.k.a. the Cabin. We are so fortunate to work with our amazing team of volunteer construction specialists, and they have been very busy! These gentlemen have worked hard on getting this old tenant home renovated for the past several years. In recent months, they have cleared everything out from under the house; repaired all holes in the floor and around the ceilings; painted all of the walls and ceilings of all the rooms but the kitchen and bath; prepared, painted and installed trim throughout the house; matched and stained all the siding and trim in the Bird Window room; replaced lighting; removed all kitchen cabinet doors; painted the kitchen and cabinets; painted the kitchen and cabinet doors; and moved all of their tools and equipment and gear out of the house in preparation for the flooring workers who will be arriving next week. We could not possibly do this project without our wonderful team: Glenn Berman, Buddy Holshouser, Phil Williams, Jon Yarbrough, Steve Kunst, and Mike Brezin. They do all this work and make it look easy, and with such good humor! Thank you!

As mentioned, Don Quick Flooring workers will start next week on a somewhat tricky project: leveling the subfloor. This old tenant house has gone through multiple room additions over the years including having a room added, old porches walled in, a fireplace removed, and more recently an interior wall removed. The floors are very uneven and unmatched, so the leveling needs to take place in order to install a new pine floor. Thanks to our board member Ellery Sedgwick, the new flooring will be donated by Red Hills Lumber, the same company that donated the milling of the lumber for the main House bathroom renovation. We offer our sincere thanks to Ellery.

We have also arranged for Platinum Roofing to arrive soon after the flooring is installed. We don't now know exactly when that will be, but we are on track for a new metal roof on the cabin shortly!

We are still procuring estimates for the work yet to be done on the outdoor bathroom project and will need to do more research on the metal roofing for the historic Barn. We will keep you posted on our progress. We thank all of you who gave so generously to the Buildings Improvements appeal – your funding is being utilized, and we are looking forward to sharing the results with you!



SUMMER CUTTINGS

Our summer is the only one of the four seasons that feels like itself every day and every night.

In winter we have long stretches that look and feel like spring. Trees come into bloom in January and by February day after day of warm temperatures can mislead gardeners and their plants.

The first weeks of fall feel just like summer. Temperatures are still in the 90's and humidity is high.

And cold temperatures and icy rains in late March can make spring feel like winter. Unexpected freezes send us scurrying to cover tender plants and haul pots into the house overnight.

But summer is summer. From mid-June to mid-September you can count on it. No surprises, and no relief.

Our summers are perfect for growing plants from cuttings. Gardening magazines give advice about how important it is to keep humidity high so the cuttings stay moist. Put a glass jar over them, plant them in wet dirt in a clear plastic box with the lid on, put a plastic bag around the pot. We don't need to do any of that. From June to September it feels like we in South Georgia and North Florida LIVE in a clear plastic box of wet dirt with the lid on. It is uncomfortable for us, but cuttings of tender perennials and shrubs thrive during these reliable months of steady heat and humidity with very little help.

Our plant sale workers have taken the first batch of cuttings of our best-selling Pentas plants that we got from Betty Jinright years ago. We potted up 20 last week. But we need a source to get a second and third batch of cuttings. If you have one of these old-timey Pentas will you let us know when it gets leggy and needs to be cut back? We will happily take your trimmings and start cuttings that will be ready for the spring plant sales. Also please let us know if you have other favorite plants that might grow from cuttings – salvias, hydrangeas, or a special gardenia. We are always looking for interesting plants that have a history of thriving in our difficult climate.

- June White Plant Sale Chair

A VERY SPECIAL GIFT

When I claimed my "forever home" in 1987 I had no idea of the treasures that would arise from that purchase. Besides the great thrill of home ownership, there was the sweet nurturing relationship of my "Grandmother Pecan"—an enormous Pecan Tree in our front yard. She shaded and cooled the entire front yard through spring and into early autumn. This was a great boon in the early days of living in our new home, with jalousie windows and one window-unit air conditioner. I learned to revel in that shade with my young family. My children played in sprinklers and on "slip-and-slides" to cool down while giggling with glee.

"Grandmother" taught me the rhythm of the seasons in North Florida. Spring did not truly arrive for me until she began showing her new leaf growth. She shielded us from the summer sauna as we departed our eventually completely air-conditioned home. By late-October/early-November she would begin to drop her leaves and husk-covered pecans. Every year she'd drop pecans, however her bonus crops came about every three years. Those "bonus" crops were celebrated by friends, neighbors and family. Turns out our neighborhood had been a pecan grove before most of the homes were built in the 1970's. So scattered around the neighborhood were other pecan trees, but none so cherished as "Grandmother." She produced the tastiest and most desired pecans of our community.

In winter she became barren, all leaves gone, sleeping through our cool season, resting. During the winter months, on sunny days I was grateful to witness a bit of winter. In previous years I had lived in central Florida with maybe two seasons, warm and HOT. Even overcast days were good for me. "Grandmother" was a constant solace in my life, through ups and downs.

In mid-August of 2016, as Roland and I were preparing for my son and daughter-in-law's reveal party for their first child, "Grandmother" leaned her entire self over and rested on our porch, carport, living and dining room roofs. It was a great shock in that moment! We quickly assessed the situation, called our insurance company, our favorite tree service company and my son. The bottom line was we were all okay. The house could and would be repaired and improved.

Now here's the rest of the story. Planks of the pecan lumber were milled for us and stored at my son's home for the past 7½ years. While attending Birdsong's Open House this past November, I met Buddy Hull and mentioned my stash of pecan wood and desire to gift something from it to Birdsong. Buddy's enthusiasm for this idea motivated me to "move my feet." Collaborating with my son, Roland, Kathleen, Lynn and Buddy, we recently placed 2 beautiful benches in the House, one on the back porch and one in the Bird Window room. Please enjoy them on your next visit.

With much love and gratitude, Cheryl

Thank you, Cheryl, Roland, and Buddy

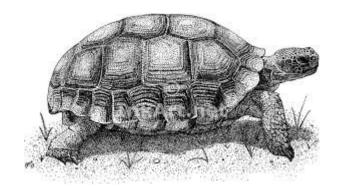
We want to thank Cheryl Burnett and Roland White for their very meaningful gift to Birdsong. We also thank Buddy Hull, artist and woodworker of St. Augustine, for his creativity and skill in building the two beautiful benches out of Cheryl's beloved pecan wood. Please come and enjoy these functional works of art on the back porch and in the Bird Window the next time you are at Birdsong. We love them and know you will too. We think Betty would be very pleased. Our heartfelt thanks go to Cheryl and Roland and their family, and to Buddy Hull.

SUMMER MORNING TRAIL RIDE Saturday, July 12 9:00 – 11:00AM

Join us for a summer morning tour of the property on a trail ride with Kathleen Brady and Alan Parker. It may be hot at this time of year, but interesting things are happening on the property. We will ride the main loop trail and make a number of stops to discuss Birdsong's history, wildlife, and recent prescribed burning at places such as the gopher tortoise neighborhood, longleaf pine planting site, Big Bay Swamp, the Farm Pond, Star Pasture and others. We will point out gopher tortoise burrows, Eastern Bluebirds and other birds that may be raising their final brood, tracks or other signs of wildlife, and summer wildflowers in bloom. At various stops we may take short walks to nearby sites of interest, so be prepared for some walking.

RESERVATIONS, PLEASE. Please call or email by noon on Friday July 11, to reserve a space. There is room for 12 people on the trailer. Dress for the weather, bring binoculars and bug spray. Bring lunch if you'd like to stay after the ride.

\$10 Friends, \$12 nonmembers, children half-price.

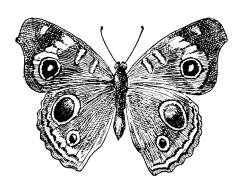


BUTTERFLY GARDEN WORKDAYS Thursdays, July 3 and August 7 9:00 to 11:00AM

Birdsong's Butterfly Gardeners meet on the first Thursday of each month at 9am.

Please feel welcome to join this accomplished and active crew of volunteers to tend our beautiful Butterfly Garden! We may also do some invasives removal at the main garden around the house. Your involvement would be very welcome. Bring gardening gloves, knee pads, clippers, and lunch if you wish to stay afterwards.

For more information call Donna Legare at (850) 386-1148 or Birdsong at (229)377-4408.



EARLY MORNING NATURE WALK Saturday, August 9 8:00 – 10:00AM

Birdsong is a lovely place to be in the early morning. Join Executive Director Kathleen Brady for an easy-paced walk through a variety of wildlife habitats. We will discuss the current nesting season, our recent burning and ongoing land management, and look for the birds, wildflowers and animal sign that Birdsong may have to offer on a summer morning. Bring sun protection, binoculars and wear waterproof shoes and long pants; the grass trails will be wet early in the day and we may go off-trail. We will visit the Bird Window and Butterfly Garden upon our return.

RESERVATIONS, PLEASE. *Please call/email* by noon on Friday, August 8th.

\$8 Friends, \$10 nonmembers, children half-price.

SUMMER BIRDING WALK with Charlie and Cindy Baisden Saturday, July 26 8:00–10:00AM

Please join us for a leisurely summer birding expedition at Birdsong with our new volunteer Bird Walk leaders Charlie and Cindy Baisden. Please see their bios below. Summer is a wonderful time of year to see and hear birds in the throes of ongoing courtship, nesting, and feeding offspring. We'll walk to a variety of different habitats in locations such as the Gin House Field, Farm Pond, Big Bay Swamp, the longleaf pine planting site, and others. We will be looking for all our usual resident birds including Cardinals, Blue Jays, Eastern Towhees, Tufted Titmice, Pine Warblers, Eastern Bluebirds, all our local wonderful Woodpeckers, as well as other summer nesters such as Ruby-throated Hummingbirds, Summer Tanagers, Indigo Buntings, Blue Grosbeaks, Northern Parulas, several different Vireos, and others. At the end of our walk, we'll wrap up with a visit to the Bird Window.

Dress for the weather, bring sun protection, and prepare for a walk through the woods and fields of Birdsong in the summer. Bring binoculars and field guides.

\$8 Friends, \$10 nonmembers, children half-price. RESERVATIONS, PLEASE. *Call by noon on Friday, July 25th to reserve your space.*

Please welcome our new program volunteers, Cindy and Charlie Baisden

Cindy and Charlie are native Floridians and alumni of Florida State University. Charlie retired from the Florida Park Service as a park ranger at Wakulla Springs State Park. In his past life, he was a C.P.A. working in C.P.A. firms and corporations. Charlie is a Florida Master Gardener and a Florida Master Naturalist.

Cindy is a retired elementary school teacher. Currently, she volunteers with the Leon County Public Library as a homework tutor and library clerk.

Charlie and Cindy recently taught the Florida Youth Naturalist classes through the Leon County 4-H program.

Cindy and Charlie are enthusiastic birders and enjoy spending time outdoors birding and experiencing the wonders of nature. Recent birding adventures have included trips within the United States, Canada, and Central America.

FREE FAMILY DAYS First Saturdays: July 5 and August 2

On first Saturdays of the month admission is free and we offer a \$5-off membership special. If you know of any families who have never been to Birdsong, please let them know about this opportunity. This is a nice chance for first-time visitors to enjoy getting to know the property, hike the trails, and visit the Bird Window, Gift Shop, and Butterfly Garden.

Admission: free

WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT NOTES June 17, 2025

Weather For those of us who live here in south Georgia and north Florida the start of summer comes well before the Summer Solstice on June 21st. It has been a summer sauna since mid-May, even though we had some lovely cool mornings here and there. Spring was spectacular this year and the greening happened fast. We are now into the darker and deeper green of early summer and the fields and woods have become leafy and lush thanks to plenty of recent rain. We really needed dry weather for our burning, so had mixed feelings about any rain during our burn season. (I take that back – we didn't want it to rain at all.) We got 3.66 inches in April, and 3.76 inches in May. This included two big storms, one each month with over 2.80 inches each.

Land Management Spring is a busy time at Birdsong: for our wildlife - with nesting and breeding season coming on; and for our staff, volunteers, and visitors - with our two Plant Sales, programs, and nice weather for getting out and enjoying the proper-Our main work focus over the past several months has been our warm-season burning. Our intrepid crew has put in many hours of work completing 15 burns this year. The weather provided many unwelcome challenges, but we are happy to report that in spite of too much rain and humidity, we were able to burn approximately 400 acres of land and got to all but two small sites totaling about 30 acres. I could spend the entire Wildlife Notes telling you stories of how all this was accomplished, but suffice it to say, we are very fortunate to have a wonderful crew. They are willing to get out in hot, uncomfortable conditions and work hard in the smoke and ash to take good care of Birdsong's land. We are very proud of the effort they made and of the amazing and effective burning we got done this year.

Thank you to our excellent crew: Russ Barrett, Scott Ball, Karen Berkley, Sandra Sallee, Carolyn Cohen, Mike Weed, Douglas Gillis, Kathy Barnett, Kris Travis, Bill Carroll, Stanton Beazley, Dylan Ryals-Hamilton, John Barksdale, Paul Parker, and Sherry Nichols. Special thanks of course go to Alan Parker, our tractor/water tank operator and land management specialist who harrows and preps the firelanes, gets the equipment ready for burning, and waters down trees and makes sure that all fire is out after a burn. We are grateful to have such an accomplished team who make very hard work fun. Thank you!

Chuck-will's-widow Our burn crew got to witness something extremely interesting when we started to burn a strip of woods in front of Roy's House. We arrived to do this small area and while getting set up

Douglas Gillis saw a large bird fly up from the grass onto a nearby tree branch. At first, he thought it was a hawk because of its size and color but when we located it, it turned out to be a Chuck-will's-widow, one of our very interesting local nightjars. Chuckwill's-widows nest on the ground and have been known to nest along our northern property line very close to this site. Apparently, this bird was a female and had recently chosen a specific place on the ground to nest. When we approached, she didn't leave, which was very unusual for a Widow, and clearly indicative of her interest in that spot. We all backed off to watch her behavior and she flew back and forth and then perched again. We needed to burn the site, but did not want to disturb a nest, so we all walked carefully in and combed the small area. We were unable to find anything, no small depression in the grass, certainly no eggs on the ground, so we proceeded with our burn. We think we got there just as she had decided on a place for a nest but had not gotten started.

It was amazing to see a Chuck-will's-widow in broad daylight. They are usually crepuscular, so getting to see one like we did is rare. Please look them up; you will be glad you did. They are oddly shaped, with a big head and very wide mouth, with beautiful brown mottled coloring that protects them from being seen when on the ground or perched in a tree. They are known for their extraordinary eponymous call – it is lilting and melodic and intense. I really hope you get to hear one someday and maybe even see one in person. Unforgettable.

Purple Martins In the last newsletter we described what has been going on with the former Purple Martin colony. Losing last year's brood to a white oak snake was a huge loss and we did not know what to expect this season. As mentioned, a few birds came by in February and then in late March a pair, and sometimes a few more birds, started coming by almost every day. They would call and sing and do flybys and check out every gourd, as if looking for a nesting site. They seemed extremely interested, singing all about it, and perching on the crossbars. It was a treat to hear Martins again and watch their aerial antics. Since that first wave of interest, we began seeing them nearly daily, several times a day, through the first half of May. By late May, their visits then became less frequent and recently, they have not been stopping by at all. At first, we wondered if they were young birds, maybe playing house. Now we are speculating that these birds may have had a nest elsewhere but were intrigued with our martin pole and just wanted to get familiar with it. At this point, with their absence during the period when a normal colony would be feeding newly hatched babies, we assume they have a nest of their own somewhere nearby and are too busy feeding young ones to go visiting. Our sincere hope is that this pair and their friends will return to Birdsong's martin pole next season and lead the way to re-establishing a happy nesting colony at our pole. We miss the sweet and noisy chaos of a fully occupied martin pole and hope these two birds will be the founding pair of a new colony! We really miss the full-time presence of these charming birds in spring.

Summer Wildflowers It was another good season for the beguiling Ladies' Tresses orchids. These clusters of tiny white flowers, spiraling around a thread-like green stem, appear across Birdsong in the late spring every year. They emerge out of the grass, in the middle of the trails, making mowing a challenge for Alan. This happens right after the beginning of growing season, when the grassy trails need their first mowing. Alan avoids them, which complicates his workday because they are quite abundant, scattered throughout the trail system. He has to leave some well-populated areas un-mowed until these wild orchids have bloomed and seeded out and senesced. So, if the trails are a bit shaggy in spring – look for the orchids!

It is still a little early for many summer flowers, but we are seeing the onset of blooming of a few of our dear favorites. The exotic passionflower, looking like terrestrial sea anemone, has begun to show up trailside around the place; as has the equally unusual Butterfly Pea, its beautiful pale purple and white flowers welcoming the ardor of bumblebees. We are looking forward to seeing both of them in abundance in the coming months.

The Farm Pond and Upper Pond Always rich in interesting life forms, these two adjoining ponds are busy places this time of year. They are home to nesting Wood Ducks, and we've been fortunate to see the progression of the nesting season here - flocks of both male and female ducks roosting in the winter, then couples pairing off with one pair nesting nearby in the northern edge of the Upper Pond where there is no access by humans. Most recently, we've gotten to see a mother wood duck with her brood of 10 or so babies. Typically, we startle her with our appearance on the Upper Pond Dam, and she rushes out into the middle of the Farm Pond away from the sheltered edge with her babies paddling like mad to keep up, peeping away with their tiny flutelike calls. We try to move quickly out of the vicinity to keep her from being too alarmed. Right now, the floating water plants are all in beautiful bloom. In the Upper Pond, the round yellow blooms of Spadderdock are dense, their pads filling in the entire surface of the pond. Across the dam in the Farm Pond, there are extensive swaths of Fragrant Water lilies around the shore, with their gorgeous white flowers scattered across the surface. Located around the interior of the pond, where the water is deeper, are bands of bright pink blooming *Utricularia*, a fascinating carnivorous

plant. In between, the surface is covered with Water Shield or *Brasenia*, another intriguing plant that has a clear gel under its leaves – it is slippery and odd to the touch, one of the fun things that kids love to handle when we do our Take A Child Outside pond programs. The *Brasenia* will flower later in the year – we'll tell you about that when it happens. It has an amazing blooming story.

The Farm Pond is also a great place to see the occasional wading bird, such as Great Egrets, Great Blue Herons, and Snowy Egrets. Rarely, we'll see a Wood Stork hunting there. The pond is also visited by Ospreys from time to time, as well as Anhingas, who fish here and use the old inoperative "chimney" as a place to spread and dry their wings.

Summer is a good time to for a walk around the Farm Pond. There are songbirds and woodpeckers in the area and some very loud, not shy White-eyed Vireos singing from many different vantage points. Join us for one of our summer morning programs; we will most likely visit the Farm Pond and who knows what we'll see and hear!

Bird Window The Bird Window stays busy this time of year. Here is what we've recorded seeing since April 20: Northern Cardinal, Tufted Titmouse, Blue Jay, Brown Thrasher, Carolina Chickadee, Carolina Wren, American Crow, Mockingbird, House Finch, Redbellied Woodpecker and Ruby-throated Hummingbird. There were final sightings of the White-throated Sparrow on April 23rd and of the Gray Catbird on April 29th. A Yellow-bellied Sapsucker was seen on April 26th, and we've had a small raccoon eating corn non-stop almost daily!

Since April 29th we've also seen: Summer Tanager, Indigo Bunting, Northern Parula, Eastern Towhee, Great Crested Flycatcher, Red-eyed Vireo, Downy Woodpecker, and recently baby Cardinals!

We are sorry to report that we've not seen our wonderful Black Vulture duo at all this spring. They were always such an impressive sight and charmed us with their affectionate behavior towards each other. They are missed.

We encourage you to come out this summer to observe the results of our recent burning. In most places, the major goal was to control brush, so you will see the top-killed stems of hardwoods, small pines, and other plants across the entire property. We are extremely pleased with the results and are looking forward to the long-term effects of this brush removal in varied habitats. For now, the fields and woods are greening up fast, so it won't be long until we'll go out and wonder if we burned at all! It happens every year. The wildlife appears to be happy with the results, so do come out and enjoy the nesting birds, deer and turkey sightings, and the amazing array of insects and lizards we are seeing! If you have any questions about burning, please give us a call.

- KBD

NEW FRIENDS OF BIRDSONG

Tallahassee

Carissa Martin Gerry Hammond

Thomasville

Charles Gammel Kandra Williams

Monticello

Victoria Schmookler Mandy and Don Self

BIRDSONG NATURE CENTER WISHES TO THANK:

For Francis: Barbara Cooper

Special financial gifts: Susan Burnette Cheryl Burnett and Roland White Jim Cox and Katie NeSmith



BIRDSONG'S CORPORATE SPONSORS

Faceville Nurseries Native Nurseries Trillium Gardens Nursery Import Authority Seminole Alterations Chelsea Salon & Spa TNB Financial Services Target Print and Mail Armstrong Tree Service Woodleaf Senior Care Cowhey & Ward, LLC Loblolly Rise Blue Bear Farm & Cattle Co. LLC Magnolia Chapter, Florida Native Plant Society Wiregrass Electric, Inc. Homestead Imprinted Sportswear

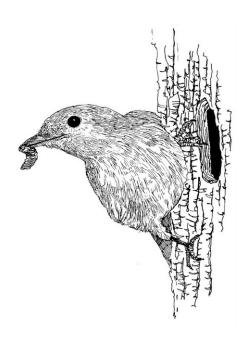


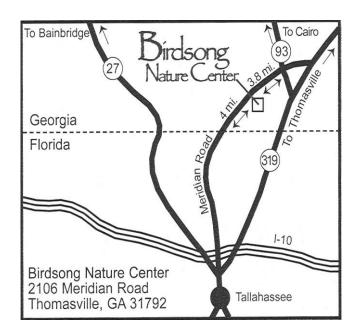
Birdsong Nature Center MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Date _____

☐ New	□Renewal		☐ Cre	dit Card □Check □Cash □Paypal	
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How did you	i learn about Birdsong? F	rom a men	nber of Birdsong, the news med	ina, word of mouth, our newsletter, etc?	
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	•	irdsong in	the following category:		
Individ	vidual Friend \$3		Bird Window and Nature Trails free during open hours.		
			Two free one-time guest passe		
		Member discount on scheduled programs.			
			10% discount on items at the Chickadee Corner Gift Shop.		
			Bimonthly newsletter. Reciproparticipating nature centers na	ocal general admission at tionwide (call for list).	
☐ Family/	Friends	\$45 All of the above benefits for each member of the immediate household. Four free one-time guest passes.			
Friends			Five free one-time guest passes in addition to above.		
	of the Chickadee	\$100	Six free one-time guest passes in addition to above.		
	Business/Corporate Friend \$100-\$1,000 One free one-time guest pass for each \$10 of membersh			for each \$10 of membership	
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Friends	of the Hummingbird	\$250	Hummingbird feeder in addition	on to above	
	f the Bluebird \$500 Bluebird nesting box in addition to above.				
	Alsong Naturalist \$1,000 Personal tour of Birdsong with Executive Director and/or Board Cl for up to 6 people. Call for more information.				
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I do not	wish to receive any (abo	ve) benefit	s with my membership and wo	uld like the whole amount tax deductible	
I would	like to support Birdson	g by volu	nteering to help as follows:		
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Memberships are renewable one year after the sign-up date. Members can upgrade to a higher category membership by sending the balance within the year. Memberships are deductible in part, depending on the value of goods and services received. Please call for information. Receipts stating the value provided and the deductible amount will be sent to those joining at the \$100 or higher level.





DIRECTIONS:

From Tallahassee: Meridian Road north, 4 miles past FL/GA border on right side of road. OR 319 north, turn left onto Rt. 93, then turn left onto Meridian Road, 3.8 miles on left side of road.

From Thomasville: 319 south, turn right at Marathon gas station onto Meridian Road, approximately 5 miles from Marathon or 3.8 miles from stop sign at Rt. 93, on left side of road.

Watch for small sign that reads "Birdsong".