



For immediate release
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Contact: Diana Brewer
251.990.5004 | diana@weeksbay.org

Grab your popcorn (trees) and check out the action at Rangeline Preserve

FAIRHOPE, AL – The restoration of the Weeks Bay Foundation’s upcoming nature preserve—Rangeline Preserve—in south Mobile county, is well underway. Earlier this year, the Foundation worked with local restoration experts to complete forestry mowing and understory thinning. With a newly opened canopy and much more sunlight, a huge population of green pitcher plants popped up on the 70-acre preserve, slated to open in 2020.

“Unfortunately, a substantial crop of invasive plants was not far behind” Yael Girard, executive director of the Weeks Bay Foundation said. “Invasive species are plants or animals that come from other areas and take over their new habitats in which they grow. Why? Because they have no natural predators or pests and they can often thrive in the weather conditions of their new home. On Rangeline, and in our region in general, the popcorn tree (Chinese tallow tree) is one of the worst offenders.”

“Lucky for the Foundation, we have some great partners and community members who were willing to get their hands dirty in the name of conservation,” Girard said.

Over the month of October, GulfCorps program participants and volunteers from the area helped remove thousands of popcorn tree seedlings from the property. By hand pulling the seedling trees and their roots, the Foundation can use much less herbicide on the property and can be sure that the trees will not re-sprout in the next growing season.

“When the Weeks Bay Foundation decided to create this preserve in Mobile County, along with its sister property on Fish River, we wanted to make sure the public was part of the process,” Girard said. “Over the last year, we have had 100 volunteers remove invasive plants, plant trees, and put up fencing to keep out damaging four-wheelers. We wanted community members to be able to say ‘I restored these places that we can now enjoy’.”

Over the next year, the Foundation will do additional invasive plant removal, prescribed burning, and trail construction. The Rangeline Preserve is slated to open to the public with a mile and a half nature trail, educational signage, and a parking area.

To find out more or make a donation towards this project, please visit weeksbay.org or call Diana Brewer at 251-990-5004.