

Want to be in the know?  **View the hottest spots around town! CLICK HERE**

[Subscribe to Paper](#) [Online Edition](#)

Publish your Stuff
Log in | Become a Member 

Need Help? [Click Here](#)
Sign Up for Newsletters/Alerts/Mobile



Search: Site Web powered by 

[Home](#) | [News](#) | [Sports](#) | [Hot Spots](#) | [Obits](#) | [Opinion](#) | [Photos](#) | [Military](#) | [Customer Service](#) | [Squall Live](#) | [Games](#) | [NIE](#) | [Jobs](#) | [Autos](#) | [Real Estate](#) | [Classifieds](#)

[Home](#) > [News](#)

[Buy Stuff](#) [Announcements](#)
[Sell Your Stuff](#) [Browse Ads](#)

A day at Nokuse Plantation // See photos of the celebration

Comments [2](#) | Recommend [0](#)

Child-friendly E.O. Wilson Biophilia Center hosts open house

September 12, 2009 07:17:00 PM

By KIMBERLY WHITE / Florida Freedom Newspapers

FREEPORT — Nature enthusiasts shrugged off the wet weather Saturday and hit the trail adjacent to the E.O. Wilson Biophilia Center.

About 7 million of longleaf pines would not form a canopy over the trail if not for the efforts of Nokuse Plantation owner M.C. Davis and a team of scientists and volunteers who helped restore the land to its natural state.

Many of those involved in the restoration efforts — as well as its namesake, world-renowned scientist and two-time Pulitzer Prize winner E.O. Wilson — were on hand Saturday as guests strolled through the exhibit hall. Parents snapped photos of their children climbing on the red, larger-than-life Florida harvester ant that greets visitors in the front room.

Nearby, several wall-mounted flat-screen televisions showed a video that describes the history of the 48,000-acre Nokuse Plantation. Nine acres is dedicated to the Biophilia Center, which offers children a chance to learn about the natural world and the importance of biodiversity.

Schoolchildren will be explore nature on the hiking trails and in the learning center, which features exhibits ranging from various species of snakes and frogs to Native American tools to an active beehive with tens of thousands of honey bees.

Katie Scally, the 9-year-old daughter of Biophilia Center Director Christina Scally, stood in front of a panel that explained the process of photosynthesis by using a panel of multi-colored lights.

Katie, a fourth-grader at Butler Elementary School, said her class will come to the center once a week for five weeks to learn about photosynthesis, pollination, the importance of prescribed burns and how they all contribute to a healthy ecosystem.

One exhibit at the center allows visitors to step on a series of strips to find out what kinds of sounds different animals make. Another explains the importance of longleaf pine forests, which once dominated Northwest Florida but have largely given way to development.

[Print Story](#) | [E-Mail Story](#) | Font Size 



[enlarge](#)

Robert Cooper / The News Herald
M.C. Davis, left and E.O. Wilson, Ph.D. exchange gifts at the dedication of the E.O. Wilson Biophilia Center on Saturday. The center is located on Nokuse Plantation which belongs to Davis and his business partner Sam Shine. He dedicated the center to Wi

[3 of 4](#)

Other Articles in this Category

- ['I feel like one of their experiments'](#)
- [Local dojo awarded logo on NASCAR](#)
- [Meth explosion suspect innocent, he says // VIDEO](#)
- [County to unveil 2010 budget Tuesday](#)
- [Plane crashes; pilot uses parachute](#)

Most Viewed Stories

- ['I feel like one of their experiments'](#)
- [Meth explosion suspect innocent, he says // VIDEO](#)
- [Local dojo awarded logo on NASCAR](#)
- [After teen's death: 'This is racism,' mother says](#)
- [Wounded warriors coming to Bay County](#)


Most Commented Stories

- [Pit bull owners: We're not welcome here](#)
- [Airport board votes down Phoenix 'retainage'](#)
- [CAZ: Pit bull comments are biting](#)
- [After teen's death: 'This is racism,' mother says](#)
- [RON HART: Declare victory and bring our troops home](#)

Most Recommended Stories

- [RON HART: Declare victory and bring our troops home](#)
- [VIEWPOINT: Don't let your children carry your hatreds in their hearts](#)

[Traffic](#) [Weather](#) [Yellow Pages](#)



Check out live traffic on the Hathaway Bridge. [Click here](#)

Pay Off in lots of ways.



earth cents
GULF POWER
A SOUTHERN COMPANY

ADVERTISEMENT

[PanhandleVarsity.com:](#)




Mosley edges county rival Bay (See Photos, Video)

[1](#) [2](#) [3](#) [4](#) [5](#) [6](#) [Next](#)

[Home Page](#) | [Photos](#) | [FHSAA state title history](#) | [Request Login To Input Stats](#) |

Things to do in Panama City

Events	Movies	Venues	Dining
Featured Events			
 <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Journey Cirque Dreams 31st Annual Destin... Seafood, Wine & Music... KISS Alive 35 Tour 			
Click for More Events		Add Your Events	

And out on the trail system "you learn a lot of really cool things," Katie said

"There's even a tree where a beaver has chewed off some bark and there's a lot of longleaf pines out there," she added. "When you walk down the trail, you see something new every time, like a snake, a bird or something like that."

M.C. Davis co-owns Nokuse Plantation with Sam Shine.

The center initially will cater solely to fourth-graders from Bay, Walton and Okaloosa counties. Future curriculums will be created for middle school and high school students.

Although scientists can meet and conduct research there, Davis said the center is geared toward children.

"The main purpose is to get children to fall in love with nature and develop a little bit of a naturalist in them, and be able to implement that in the rest of their lives," said Christina Scally.

They will be able to observe animals and plants along the nearly one-mile trail, part of which consists of a wooden boardwalk that crosses a wetland. Several crayfish traps hang from the posts that children can pull them up and identify the animals caught before letting them go, Scally said.

At the end of the trail is a screened-in, solar-powered barn where she said students can plug their computers into outlets and type their notes for the day.

The center also features a 165-seat theater, several classrooms and a lab station, all geared toward students.

Scally said the center is affiliated with the Chipley-based Panhandle Area Education Consortium, which represents 17 counties in Northwest Florida. The consortium has its own television channel and can send and receive broadcasts to the center.

During a late-afternoon presentation, Dr. Matt Aresco, Nokuse Plantation's director, showed a slideshow about the plantation's activities, goals and achievements.

The plantation, he said, is home to 39 rare species, including reptiles, mammals, birds and insects. Conservation is of the utmost importance "so we can pass this torch on to the next generation."

"Giving young people the chance to experience and explore nature, we hope, will inspire them to continue our efforts to protect in the future," he said.

[See archived 'News' stories »](#)

Ads by Google

[Amelia Island Plantation](#)

Stay At One of Florida's Premier Resorts! View Our Rates Online. www.Amelia-Rentals.com

[Charged with a DUI?](#)

We have handled 1000's of DUI's Throughout Northwest Florida www.vanoverlawfirm.com

[EO Wilson on Biodiversity](#)

Slide show online, biography Radio interview on deforestation SaveAmericasForests.org/Wilson.html

Reader Comments

From the editor: Many of you have expressed concerns about some of the harsh anonymous comments from readers. To remedy that, we are introducing new features. You can create your own blog, publish your news and share your photos with the community. Once you fill out a simple form and leave a verifiable e-mail address, you can set up your profile page. It will display all of your contributions and allow you to track issues and easily connect with others.

We want our site to be a place where people discuss and debate ideas that foster stronger communities. We built this for you. Please take care of it. Tolerate broad thinking, but take action against obscene or hateful material. Make it a credible and safe place worth preserving and sharing.

[Oldest First](#) | [Newest First](#)



carlbennett wrote:

Detailed information on the notable E. O. Wilson Biophilia Center and Nokuse Plantation can be found at <http://www.eowilsoncenter.org/>. Question: Does anyone know of any firm plans for environmental use development of the "Conservation Land", located between Burnt Mill Creek and the Gulf Power Power Plant in Bay County, donated by the "St

- [Witnesses: Pilot parachutes from crashing plane](#)
- [Wounded warriors coming to Bay County](#)
- [PCBPD Police honor fallen K-9 // Watch video of the service](#)

Save & Share this Article [What is this?](#)

- [Digg](#)
- [Google](#)
- [StumbleUpon](#)
- [del.icio.us](#)
- [Facebook](#)
- [Newsvine](#)
- [Reddit](#)
- [Slashdot](#)

Find an Event
 what when where

Publish Your Stuff

[Log In](#) [Join Now](#) [Explore](#)



[you](#) [photos](#) [blogs](#) [forums](#) [explore](#)

HERITAGE FUNERAL HOME

Traditional Funeral to Basic Cremation

Justin Kent Joe D. Gainer

HELPING TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

247 N. TYNDALL PARKWAY

785-1316

ADVERTISEMENT

Poll

viewpoints poll

Should President Obama have given a speech to the nation's schoolchildren?

Yes
 No

Enter The Code To Vote

246fb

POWERED BY Pluck