

Find more news from Stetson University at [Stetson Today](#).

STETSON UNIVERSITY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Institute for Water and Environmental Resilience's Bartram Gardens & Trail Educates Community about the Natural World

Gardens and nature trail honor American naturalist William Bartram

DELAND, Florida, May 14, 2020 – American naturalist William Bartram came upon scenic Lake Beresford in DeLand during his trip to Florida in 1774. Today, the community can experience the natural nirvana that Bartram encountered when they visit the new Bartram Gardens & Trail at [Stetson University's Sandra Stetson Aquatic Center](#) on Lake Beresford.

Named after the renowned environmental explorer, the garden includes a lush, tree-lined path with six large, interpretive kiosks that feature literary descriptions and pen-and-ink drawings and paintings of the creatures, fauna and plants Bartram found while exploring the area. The Bartram destination also includes 10 small sign panels that provide visitors with information about various planted trees and plants in the naturalist's own words adjacent to the signage. Scans of Bartram's drawings and paintings were procured from the [Natural History Museum](#) in London.

"Native landscapes require minimal resource inputs, like water and labor, and attract pollinators," said [Jason Evans, PhD](#), associate professor of environmental science and studies at Stetson. "The Bartram Gardens & Trail is a wonderful opportunity to educate and inform the community about native Florida plants and William Bartram's historic exploration in Florida, as well as water resource issues."

"The beautiful gardens and trail were created by Stetson's landscape team and include some of the native plants that William Bartram described in his drawings and books. It's a great way to get folks excited about native plants," added Evans, who is Stetson's interim executive director of the [Institute for Water and Environmental Resilience \(IWER\)](#).

"William Bartram is America's first naturalist and a triple threat who is famous for his visual art, romantic literature and scientific descriptions," said [Tony Abbott, PhD](#), professor of environmental science and studies at Stetson, who contributed his significant Bartram expertise to the project and created a Bartram paddle map for one of the large kiosks.

"William Bartram touches people," said Stephanie Liskey, managing partner at [Sailforth Productions](#), the company behind the kiosks' and sign panels' interpretive design and background that resembles the paper that Bartram used to collect his plant samples. "As an artist, his drawings aren't just scientific drawings and appear poetic and magical."

Stetson University appreciates the Bartram Trails Putnam County Committee and Sailforth Productions for obtaining scanned images used to create signage used throughout the garden. Images were used with permission from the Natural History Museum in London.

Bartram Gardens & Trail is part of the [River of Lakes Heritage Corridor](#), which includes Lake, Seminole and Volusia Counties and part of Brevard County. Stetson students, history aficionados and water enthusiasts can canoe or kayak to areas where Bartram traveled during his expedition along Lake Beresford and other waterways as well as visit the Bartram Gardens & Trail.

The Sandra Stetson Aquatic Center's stormwater pond, which is next to the Bartram Gardens & Trail, will be receiving a face-lift thanks to a \$60,000 water-quality improvement 319 grant from the Florida Department of Environmental Protection and the United States Environmental Protection Agency. Grant monies will be used to beautify the stormwater pond with floating plants on the water surface, native plants around the perimeter and a rain garden for the outfall. The grant requires a \$40,000 match, which will be funded by donors and in-kind faculty time spent working on the project.

The facility's pollinator garden is situated near the Bartram Gardens & Trail and was The Garden Club of DeLand, Inc.'s Garden of the Month in February. [Kirsten Work, PhD](#), professor of biology at Stetson, and her conservation biology students created designs and native plant lists for the pollinator garden and coordinated with Dave Rigsby, the former manager for Stetson Grounds and senior assistant for Special Projects, to bring the project to life. Jenna Palmisano, aquatic and marine biology senior, and Carson Bockoven, environmental science and studies junior, have been overseeing the pollinator garden since the planning stages last spring.

The West Volusia Audubon Society provided the Sandra Stetson Aquatic Center with \$2,500 for the pollinator garden project from a Duke Energy Foundation grant for conducting pollinator studies that increase biodiversity and help preserve Florida's natural resources in west Volusia County. Stetson alumnus and IWER advisory council member Chris Shuster donated funds for a private pollinator garden reception that was held on February 15.

The Bartram Gardens & Trail is free and open to the public daily from one hour before sunrise to one hour after sunset unless otherwise noted. Public access may be restricted during special events.

About Stetson University

Founded in 1883, [Stetson University](#) is the oldest private university in Central Florida. Stetson focuses on intense learning experiences in a supportive community that allows students to develop their voice in a connected, inclusive environment. Stetson University ranks No. 5 on U.S. News & World Report's 2019 list of Best Regional Universities (South), and has been recognized as one of The Princeton Review's 385 Best Colleges, 2020 edition. [Stay connected](#) with Stetson on social media.

Contact: Sandra Carr
Media Relations
P: 407-256-5090
E: scarr3@stetson.edu