



Oconee Azalea, Boat Rock Forest.

BOAT ROCK LEGACY GARDEN & NURSERY

Mission Statement:

The Mission is to protect, collect, propagate and distribute endangered vegetation indigenous to the woodlands of South Fulton County.

Since 2001, Michael Williams, biologist Sue Wilmoth, and Pandora Williams have collected better than 77 species of plants from the Boat Rock area in SW Fulton County (with permission) prior to huge tracts of acreage being cleared for development. These plants are presently installed in a full shade back yard. But, back yards are fleeting things. The plants need large protected woodlands to have secure populations re-established in the Atlanta metro area.

The Boat Rock Legacy Garden and Nursery was incorporated as a non profit "business" in 2007. It is not, initially, a 501(c)3. The purpose of this very small, backyard, nursery will be to propagate plants collected from the woodlands surrounding Boat Rock Preserve eventually placing them back into the public domain into safe and appropriate locations. The first target area will be SW Fulton County, as that is where the plants originally came from. There is no charge for the plants to public lands and parks; a donation of propagation medium in return for plants is appreciated.

A call for site proposals was sent out in early December of 2006 to 80 people and/or organizations in the Atlanta area that were appropriate to this project. The garden received two excellent proposals. Park Pride responded, and both Cascade Springs Preserve and Hampton-Beecher Hills Woodland in Southwest Fulton County as well as Glenn Creek Nature Preserve in Southern DeKalb County will receive plants. The garden will have many dozens of cuttings set up by the end of January. With any luck, this will result in several dozen shrubs; some will be ready in the spring, but many more will be ready by fall. To date there are cuttings of the following:

- Rhododendron flammeum - oconee azalea
- Cornus amomum – silky dogwood,
- Calycanthus floridum - sweet shrub,
- Callicarpa americana - American beautyberry,
- Euonymus americanus - hearts-a-busting,
- Viburnum acerifolium - mapleleaf viburnum
- Itea virginica - sweet spire
- Ceanothus americanus - New Jersey Tea

These are all flowering shrubs that provide high quality food and cover for wildlife.

Plant Species List: Boat Rock Legacy Garden

we hope to propagate the following plants for reintroduction into public woodlands over the next few years:

Amphicarpa bracteata - hog peanut
Aralia spinosa - devil's walking stick
Arisaema atrorubens - jack in the pulpit
Aristolochia serpentaria - virginia snakeroot
Asclepius variegata - showy milkweed
Asimina parviflora - dwarf pawpaw
Asarum canadense - ginger
Aster infirmus – cornel-leaved aster
Bignonia capreolata - cross vine
Cacalia atriplicifolia - pale indian plantain
Callicarpa americana - American beautyberry
Calycanthus floridus - sweet shrub
Ceanothus americanus - New Jersey Tea
Chimifila maculata - striped wintergreen
Chrysogonum virginianum - green and gold
Clitoria mariana - butterfly pea
Coreopsis major - whorled coreopsis
Cornus amomum – silky dogwood
Crataegus marshalli - parsley hawthorn
Cystopteris protusa – southern fragile fern
Decumaria barbara - climbing hydrangea
Desmodium rotundifolium - prostrate tick trefoil
Elephantopus tomentosus - elephant's foot
Euonymus americanus - hearts-a-busting
Gentian saponaria - soapwort gentian
Goodyera pubescens - rattlesnake plantain
Heuchera americana - coral bells/alum root
Hieracium venosum - rattlesnake weed
Hypericum ellipticum - pale St.Johnswort
Hypericum mutilum - dwarf St.Johnswort
Hypericum perforatum - common St.Johnswort
Hypoxis hirsuta - yellow star grass
Iris verna - vernal iris
Itea virginica - sweet spire
Liatris spicata – spiked liatris
Lilium michauxii - carolina lily
Lobelia puberula - downy lobelia
Ludwigia alternifolia - seedbox
Lysimachia quadrifolia - whorled loosestrife
Monarda sp. fistulosa - wild bergamot
Osmunda cinnamomera – cinnamon fern
Osmunda regalis - royal fern
Passiflora incarnata - passionflower
Pipularia discolor - crane fly orchis
Polygonatum biflorum - solomon's seal
Polystichum acrostichoides - christmas fern
Rhexia mariana - maryland meadow beauty
Rhododendron canescens - piedmont azalea
Rhododendron flammeum - oconee azalea
Rhubus trivialis - southern dewberry
Rudbeckia hirta - black-eyed susan
Sanguinaria canadensis - bloodroot
Silene virginica - fire pink



Boat Rock Legacy Garden greenhouse, 2007

Smilicina racemosa - false solomon's seal
Thalictrum thalictroides - rue anemone
Tiarella cordifolia - foam flower
Trillium catesbaei - catesby's trillium
Uvularium perfoliata - bellwort
Vaccinium arboreum - tree sparkleberry
Vaccinium pallidum - blue ridge blueberry
Viburnum acerifolium - mapleleaf viburnum
Viola blanda - sweet white violet
Viola hirsutula - southern wood violet
Woodwardia areolata – netted chain fern
Xanthorrhiza simplicissimus - shrub yellowroot
Zizia aurea – golden alexanders

About Boat Rock Forest

Natural History and Management Plan

By SCC naturalist and volunteer Jason Love
9/25/02

Background

Though most climbers feel the history of Boat Rock started in the late 1960's or early 1970's, the true origins of Boat Rock date back much longer. Approximately 325 million years ago (mya) an intrusion of magma formed a large dome under the earth. Cooling slowly, this dome remained buried for several million more years before erosive forces began to slowly expose the igneous rock. Today we know this igneous rock as granite.



Ladder rock, back section, 1995

The type of granite at Boat Rock is called as Ben Hill Granite and is one of approximately five batholiths around the Greater Atlanta Area (one of the more famous batholiths in the area is Stone Mountain) (Higgins and Atkins 1981). The area of the Ben Hill batholith covers approximately 109 km² (42 mi²), but it is at Boat Rock where this dome of granite is most conspicuous.

Through the erosive power of rain and other forces, the ridge at Boat Rock has been eroded to expose massive granite boulders, some which tower over nearby houses. The rocky nature of the ridge has prevented it from being converted to agriculture. From the mid-late 1800's all the way to the boll weevil blight in the early 1900's, cotton reigned over most of the land in the Piedmont. But cotton was hard on the land, causing extensive erosion. The legacy of "King Cotton" can still be seen today in most of the Piedmont: incised, gullied streams; exposed "Georgia" red clay (no topsoil); and churning orange-colored rivers and streams. Though Boat Rock was probably timbered sometime in the 1920's or 1930's, the absence of farming spared Boat Rock from the erosion and devastation caused by cotton farming. Today, the natural community of Boat Rock is a rare example of an intact piedmont hardwood forest. According to Charles Wharton, author of *The Natural Environments of Georgia* (1998), "to find a Piedmont hardwood forest that has never been in agriculture . . . is indeed a prize."

The forest at Boat Rock is an oak-hickory climax forest. These forests once covered 50%-75% of the Piedmont uplands, but most were eliminated by agriculture (Wharton 1998). Dominant overstory trees include White Oak (*Quercus alba*), Scarlet Oak (*Q. coccinea*), Black Oak (*Q. velutina*), Southern Red Oak (*Q. falcata*), Mockernut Hickory (*Carya tomentosa*), and Pignut Hickory (*C. glabra*). Other trees include Blackgum (*Nyssa sylvatica*), Dogwood (*Cornus florida*), Sourwood (*Oxydendrum arboreum*), and Red Maple (*Acer rubrum*). Understory shrubs include Dwarf Pawpaw (*Asimina parviflora*), *Vaccinium vacillans*, Maple-leaf Viburnum (*Viburnum acerifolium*), Piedmont Azalea (*Rhododendron canescens*) and Oconee Azalea (*Rhododendron flammeum*). The forest also contains a rich herb layer, including Vernal Iris (*Iris*

verna), Green Adder's Mouth Orchis (*Platanthera unifolia*), and Carolina Lilly (*Lilium michauxii*).

Management

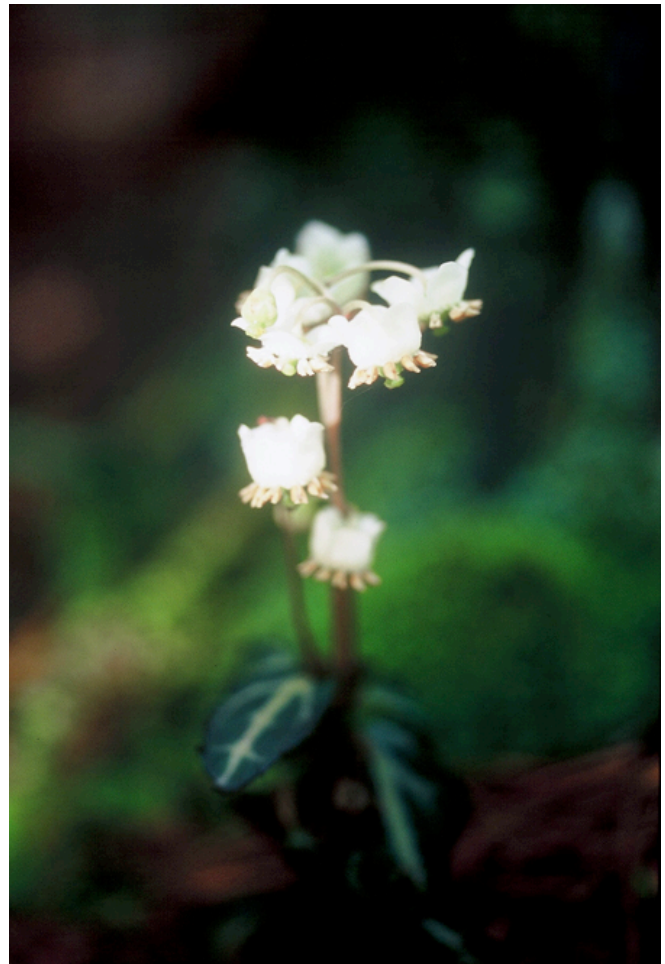
The management strategy at Boat Rock focuses on preserving the existing natural community, while at the same time permitting traditional uses such as rock climbing and hiking. Trails along the greenway will be contoured so that no portion of the trail exceeds a grade of 7%. The trails will be approximately 24" – 36" wide and allow access to the boulders. Water bars will be placed to drain water off the trail to reduce erosion. In addition, the trail will be mulched with wood chips to decrease erosion and to create a smooth surface for walking. High-impact areas, such as those below popular climbs, will also be mulched with wood chips. Wood chips will be added as the material erodes or disintegrates. Benches will be placed at scenic spots along the greenway and identification placards will be placed on or besides some of the trees, shrubs, and herbs.

Standing dead trees are home to a number of birds and mammals. Dead trees, or snags, will be left standing except when they pose a threat to property (roads or houses) or if the snag poses a threat to hikers or climbers. In these instances, the dead tree will be cut down.

Next to habitat destruction, exotic species pose the greatest threat to biodiversity. The natural community at Boat Rock is remarkably free of many common invasive exotic plants. However, exotics such as Chinese Privet (*Ligustrum sinense*), Japanese Honeysuckle (*Lonicera japonica*), and English Ivy have been observed in the forest. Fragmentation of the forest around Boat Rock will make invasion of other exotics probable. Exotic plants will be eradicated by "weeding" and cutting. Herbicides will be used only as a last resort.

The Boat Rock boulders, which are the outstanding features of the greenway, will be available for climbing. However, boulders capped with Resurrection Fern (*Polypodium polypodioides*) or dense mats of moss will be left alone. Additionally, any new routes that require an inordinate amount of "cleaning", (i.e., removal of vegetation, moss, or lichen) will not be permitted.

Trash will be removed from the area. Any graffiti on the boulders will also be removed. Trash cans will not be placed along the trail. It is the responsibility of the user to pack



Chimifila maculata - striped wintergreen

out his/her own trash. Trash cans often become the source of much trash, and they will not be made available in the greenway, however one will be installed in the parking lot.

Conclusion

Boat Rock is "indeed a prize" (Wharton 1998), not only for climbers, but for the extensive tract of forest, now nearly wiped-out, that it represents. With proper management and care, the Boat Rock greenway can continue to accommodate climbers, hikers, and residents in the community without compromising the unique geology and natural components that make Boat Rock so special.

Works Cited

- Higgins, M. W. and R. L. Atkins. 1981. The stratigraphy of the Piedmont southeast of the Brevard Zone in Atlanta, Georgia area. In: P. B. Wigley (Ed.). Latest thinking on the stratigraphy of selected areas of Georgia. Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Environmental Protection Division, Georgia Geologic Survey Circular 54-A. pp. 3-40.
- Wharton, C. H. 1998. The natural environments of Georgia. Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Environmental Protection Division, Georgia Geologic Survey. Bulletin 114. 227 pp.



Aristolochia Serpentaria - Virginia Snakeroot