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ANCIENT WONDERS



Kevin Main

Gopher tortoises are just one of the species studied at Archbold Biological Station.

Archbold Biological Station celebrating 75 years of research and preservation

Located nine miles south of U.S. 27 on Old State Road 8, Archbold Biological Station was founded in 1941 by colorful aviator and explorer Richard Archbold. He led long-term explorations in Madagascar and to New Guinea where his team discovered an entire civilization unknown to the world at that time.

The original 1,000 acres of what would become Archbold Biological Station was originally called "Red Hill" when it was planned as an estate for John A. Roebling II, grandson of the Brooklyn Bridge designer. When Rose-

bling's wife died, he lost interest in the project and offered it to Archbold, who saw it as ideal for an ecological field station with its diverse natural habitats and several well-constructed buildings. Their sturdy construction, during the 1930 to 1931 era, was likely the result of the devastation of the 1926 "Great Miami" hurricane and the 1928 Okeechobee hurricane, the second most deadly hurricane in the United States. The buildings are still in daily use today.

Archbold financed the field station with his portion of his family's fortune. His grandfather, John Dustin Archbold, was involved early on in the oil industry in Pennsylvania and eventually served as president of Standard Oil of New Jersey from 1893 until his death in 1916.

Richard Archbold died in 1976, still holding the position of Resident Director where he had served since 1941. He left his fortune to continue to fund operations.



Brian Hurley
The Frances Archbold Hufty Learning Center is a LEED Green Certified building



The Station grew substantially during the 1970s and 80s, adding important new property (including ancient Lake Annie), three full-time research biologists, a librarian, a business manager, four research associates, a machine shop building, renovated laboratory space, a fleet of four-wheel drive vehicles, and other vital research equipment. In 1986, an annex was added to the main building to house research collections, lab and computer space, and an auditorium.

Additional land was added as well. Archbold Biological Station now comprises 8,840 acres which includes ABS, the Archbold Reserve, and the 90-acre Lake Annie. Two new buildings, less than four years old, are the Adrian Archbold lodge, named for Richard's brother, and the Frances Archbold Hufty Learning Center, named for Richard's sister. In 1988, Archbold Biological Station became the manager of the 10,000-plus acre Buck Island Ranch, leased from the John and Catherine MacArthur foundation. The working ranch hosts the MacArthur Agro-ecology Research Center.

The ability to conduct long-term scientific studies is what Archbold Biological Station is noted for. One such study is ongoing — a 46-year study of the Florida scrub jay. The study involved banding and tracking the birds for 13 generations. One important result of this study has been learning of the importance of burning. It was determined that regular burning, every

10 years or so, was important in the ongoing ecological system. Regulated, controlled burns of various parcels of its land on that 10-year cycle enables scientists to continue the study.

Another study is conducted by Dr. James Carrel, associated with the University of Missouri. Dr. Carrel has been coming to ABS a very long time, 30-plus years to study the burrowing wolf spider. Archbold houses huge biological collections of invertebrates. The database of information of such studies is equally large. The amount of information available and the research facilities available allows Education Coordinator Dustin Angell to make an interesting comparison. He says visiting Archbold Biological Station is like seeing southern Florida in its original state.

Until recently, the research station was visited by a limited group of people — primarily scientists interested in research and tours for upper elementary, high school, and college groups. Archbold Biological Station is now reaching out to the public to come and visit. Well-marked trails are open to visitors.

Archbold Biological Station is celebrating its 75th year of continuous operation in 2015 with a number of special events. Much of its rich history can be seen on a sprawling mural at Miller's Central Air on West Interlake Boulevard in Lake Placid. The massive painting was completed in 2007 by master mural artist Keith Goodson.

A wealth of information about Archbold Biological Station (history, events, research, access, etc.) is available on the website, www.archbold-station.org. Archbold also welcomes volunteers to help with upper elementary school field trips, visitor greeting, data gathering, assisting field studies, ground maintenance, etc. A monthly newsletter reports on recent events and research at the station. It's free and delivered via email.