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A milestone: 200th article published about Archbold

By ARCHBOLD BIOLOGICAL STATION

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Archbold Executive Assistant Laura Reed surrounded by a selection of Archbold stories published in the Highlands News-Sun.

REED BOWMAN PHOTO

Have you learned about Archbold Biological Station's mission from reading the weekly articles in the News-Sun? Archbold's mission is to build and share the scientific knowledge needed to protect the life, lands, and waters of the heart of Florida and beyond. Archbold scientists work daily to build scientific knowledge through careful research and share it through scientific publications and presentations. The Education Program works

to share knowledge with children through field trips, summer camp, and with the public through outreach and presentations, and now virtual events. But how can the local community, the general public, gain access to that knowledge and apply it to life in Highlands County?

Archbold had presented information online through its website and various social media outlets for years, but something more was needed for the local community. In 2016, Deborah Pollard, Director of Philanthropy worked with the local newspaper to start a series focused on the work of Archbold. Pollard recalls, “I thought it was important to share what we learn here, how that impacts the residents of Highlands County, and what can be learned from our science to help protect our special piece of Florida. Many people know something about Archbold but were unfamiliar with its broad mission or how Archbold’s science applies to aspects of the life, lands, and waters of the region.”

Highlands County resident and longtime friend of Archbold Jane Hancock volunteered to connect Archbold with her associates at the Highlands News-Sun who immediately accepted the collaboration. The idea was to inform Highlands County residents of Archbold’s interesting research about the Lake Wales Ridge scrub, and surrounding ranchland ecosystems, and to promote conservation of our incredible area. The first article about Archbold’s work was featured nearly four years ago, on January 6, 2017: ‘The Mysterious World of Ants,’ which focused on the work of Entomologist Dr. Mark Deyrup. Since then, Deyrup has been featured in a total of 13 articles, most describing types of insects found at and around the Station. Over the next four years, 62 different Archbold staff or visiting scientists contributed content, leading to the publication of 200 articles! For example, there have been 33 articles on plant ecology and 4 in the newest 2020 category: ‘online virtual interactions.’ Most of the contributed content has been from staff, with Director of Education Dustin Angell leading the way, involved with 21 articles. Archbold also has some great photographers on staff and among its visitors and their photographs have added to the beauty and unique value of the articles.

Executive Director Dr. Hilary Swain said, “Of course Archbold is such a bunch of scientists, we carefully fact-check each article, and that’s a lot of work.” She added, “Nonetheless, I am always touched when someone in the community comes up to me — maybe in the supermarket or at the gas station, and usually when I am wearing an Archbold T-shirt—and says, ‘I really enjoy those articles about Archbold in the newspaper, it’s so interesting what you all do down there, I look forward to reading them every week.’ I smile and often get the opportunity for a nice extended chat, meanwhile thinking to myself—this surely makes it all worthwhile.”

Archbold’s Executive Assistant Laura Reed took over the role of article coordinator in February 2020 (among her many other responsibilities!), just prior to the COVID-19 pandemic forcing major changes for Archbold research and education programs. Reed explains, “Part of my job is to encourage staff to contribute content towards articles based on their research, which can be challenging for them during busy times. Though this year has been a struggle with a new way of working, our amazing Archbold team came through with facts, quotes, and superb photographs. I am so proud that Archbold and Highlands News-Sun have never missed a week in 200 articles! Thank you to the News-Sun for all their assistance and support on this front.”

Have you read all 200 articles? If you think you have missed earlier ones, you are in luck. Reed shares, “After articles have been published in the News Sun, later on they will also be posted on Archbold’s ‘Scrub Blog’ (<https://archboldedublog.org/>) as well as linked off the Archbold website’s news page (<https://www.archbold-station.org/html/events/news.cfm>). Happy reading!”

A Moody