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Geology and Native Plants Walk and Talk Feb 12 in Gainesville

Two authors will team up on Tuesday, February 12 to reveal the geology of Georgia and how it influences native plants. The free program is hosted by the Redbud Project Chapter of the Georgia Native Plants Society, at the Linwood Ecology Center, 160 Springview Dr., Gainesville. The presenters are geologist Dr. Bill Witherspoon, co-author of *Roadside Geology of Georgia*, and biogeographer Dr. Leslie Edwards, co-author of *Natural Communities of Georgia*. Both books “take the general reader to Georgia’s natural wonders and explain the science that lies behind the scenery,” according to Witherspoon.

The authors will lead a walk to examine the rocks, soils, and plants of Linwood Nature Preserve at 4:30 PM. Because of limited space along trails, please reserve your attendance on the walk by emailing redbudproject@gmail.com, by Friday, February 10.

The slide talk, “Native Plants Rock!” will be part of the group’s public monthly meeting, which gathers with light refreshments at 6:30, and begins at 7:00 PM. The talk explores how an ancient seascape dotted with volcanic islands gave rise to local variations in soil chemistry. This in turn produced a spectrum of plant associations, from the pines and blueberries that grow in acidic sites to the sugar maples and shooting stars of nutrient-rich soils.

Witherspoon, who taught geology to K-12 teachers and their students for 17 years at DeKalb County Schools’ Fernbank Science Center, says *Roadside Geology of Georgia* appeals to families who travel in Georgia. “If you’ve visited an overlook in north Georgia, left tracks in the sand on Tybee Island, or floated the Chattahoochee, you’ve had a rock adventure. This book lets you spice those adventures up with a little science, by understanding the geology behind the landmarks we encounter whenever we go outside in Georgia.”

Natural Communities of Georgia teaches the public to recognize and protect Georgia’s many treasures of the natural world. “You will be amazed to learn of Georgia’s diversity, from high mountain peaks that host species that are typically found much farther north, to the incomparable Okefenokee Swamp, where alligators and plants combine to form a lush, tropical feel,” according to Edwards, who retired in 2014 from Georgia State University.

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