

**From:** Connie Barlow [conniebarlow52@gmail.com](mailto:conniebarlow52@gmail.com)  
**Subject:** Torreya Symposium near TNC reserve FL - opportunity  
**Date:** January 29, 2018 at 9:31 AM  
**To:** Hugh Possingham [hugh.possingham@TNC.ORG](mailto:hugh.possingham@TNC.ORG)

CB

Hello Hugh -

Know that a "Torreya Symposium" organized by a U Florida plant pathologist has **E. O. Wilson as keynote speaker** March 1-2.

TNC is not on the speaker list, which is good for **Torreya Guardians** because our relationship with TNC has never been congenial (TNC has "Apalachicola Bluffs and Ravines Preserve" right next to Torreya State Park Florida, where the symposium will be held).

You may find this surprising (given your participation in Bonebrake et al. 2018), but my Torreya experience indicates that, with the exception of one **North Carolina Audubon** group in 2008, **citizens in "recipient ecosystems"** are thrilled to receive an endangered tree to help with. Indeed, it was an article I wrote for the **Tennessee Chapter Sierra Club** newsletter that brought on board in 2015 the planting situation I am most excited about: 200+ acres of stewardship forest on the Cumberland Plateau, with 400 seeds donated by us and free-planted (no protection) into mostly ravine forest slopes, showing remarkable early results November 2017. This is not just "species preservation" or "ex situ planting" or "species redistribution", it is "**rewilding**" — helping the tree to escape the hospice wing of the hospital that has incarcerated it in Florida and to instead show humanity how strong and capable it actually is, with just a bit of help from Guardian friends in moving poleward.

The **citizen resistance re Torreya has instead been in the "donor ecosystem"** — and that resistance has been huge. Residents of Florida and Georgia (and especially those privileged to have Torreya growing wild on their property) are very possessive about their tree. They do not want to face up to the sad fact that in order for their beloved species to have a viable future it really does need to leave home.

OPPORTUNITY: Know that all the scheduled speakers are scientists. Go to the symposium page and scroll down to see the speaker list:

<https://www.torreyatreeoflife.com/> Given E.O. Wilson's presence, would this be something you would want to speak at? (Note on the speaker list that the President of **American Chestnut Foundation** will be speaking there.)

The fact that **neither TNC nor Torreya Guardians** were invited at the outset to attend I think is simply that we are not scientists. The lead organizer (Prof. Jason Smith) responded to my inquiry by welcoming us to send one of our northward planters to experience the symposium. I get the sense that Jason (who published a 2011 paper naming a new pathogen harming the tree, *Fusarium torreyae*) just wants a **core group of scientists to figure out what to do next**. His perspective of course comes from a **pathology paradigm** — not the **paleoecology paradigm** that motivated the Barlow and Martin 2004 paper, "Bring Torreya taxifolia North Now." Fortunately, Rob Nicholson (Smith College) is a speaker, too, and he has the longest Torreya involvement of any in the symposium. Even in the earliest years (late 80s) of his involvement, he leaned toward the **glacial relict / "left behind"** perspective (1990 article in Natural History Magazine plus pers. comm. with me), so I am confident that the group will seriously consider that foundational thinking.

**I am working entirely behind the scenes** in trying to influence what happens at the Symposium, as I am not attending and as our Torreya Guardian representative is a congenial volunteer planter with no expertise nor interest in debating the science or management decisions.

Since **you have been a global voice in the assisted migration issue** from the get-go I just want to ensure that you personally know about this Symposium. I have zero knowledge of TNC science leanings, but I suspect resistance to "**species redistribution**" among TNC USA staff is probably still strong. The only two places I am aware USA TNC has had to wrestle with this is in its Apalachicola Bluffs Preserve and for several years in its collaborative **work in northern Minnesota** — notably, shifting from telling private landowners to replant with boreal tree species after fires and instead switching to using seed stock from the closest Red Oak habitat.

To quickly learn about TNC role in these extreme north and south sites, go here:

• MINNESOTA TNC response to boreal tree climate shift: <https://www.forestadaptation.org/node/216>  
See Barlow's own annotation and links to MEDIA reports on that project here: <http://www.torreyaguardians.org/assisted-migration.html#minnesota>

• APALACHICOLA FL TNC - nothing on any TNC site about climate concerns. But you can see a shift toward "glacial relict" thinking in TNC North Florida's David Printess quotations in 2008 v. 2017. To see the 2008 (very negative) quotes go to this page on my website: <http://www.torreyaguardians.org/guardians.html> and click on the top-left image of ORION MAGAZINE 2008 article featuring Torreya.

And then go to this page: <http://www.torreyaguardians.org/extinction.html> and do an internal "Find" for Printess to see his 2017 quotes.

Finally, know that the same botanically savvy freelance **journalist** who wrote the feature article on Torreya Guardians in a 2010 issue of **Audubon Magazine** will be attending this Torreya Symposium. Her name is Janet Martinelli. She is already doing background work: Janet Marinelli <[jmarinelli@earthlink.net](mailto:jmarinelli@earthlink.net)> Also, know that a **former TNC staff person**, now volunteering with Friends of Torreya State Park (and who purchased a nearby home with Florida Yew on her property), tells me that she has been invited to attend the symposium. So, at minimum, you could recruit her to observe and report back to you on the event and possible TNC opportunities as a result. She is: Leigh Brooks <[lbrooks2wd@nettally.com](mailto:lbrooks2wd@nettally.com)>

May the forest be with you

may the forest be with you,  
Connie Barlow