Pitcher perfect

Group buys land to preserve pine savanna

By MIKE DUNNE

ABITA SPRINGS — Kehayn McIlvaine uses her pocketknife to cut the top of a carnivorous pitcher plant to see what kind of insects had been trapped inside.

"Among the boggy areas throughout a small brown mug. It filled its cup a few times and then it overflowed. A small, green pitcher grew out of a pitcher plant — a green tubelike plant that has a trap that attracts prey and digests the plant," McIlvaine said.

Inside was a frog. The tiny, green-tipped, red-eyed arrowhead patiently waited to gobble a meal before the plant could "swallow" the intruder.

Two varieties of pitcher plants surround McIlvaine and Goodysue Bake. These water swamps are common to many areas in Louisiana where the Gulf of Mexico is not far away.

In the Vermilion Parish, the Florida Parishes, and the Atchafalaya Basin, these swamps are common to many areas in Louisiana where the Gulf of Mexico is not far away.

McIlvaine, the Florida Parishes co-executive for The Nature Conservancy, said only 2 percent of the original boggy pine savannas remain. At least 1,400 acres of new savanna will continue to rain, but it's a matter of the savannas being protected by the conservancy, and the conservancy has no plans to preserve another 1,400 acres.

The conservancy bought the property in St. Tammany Parish, southwest of Abita Springs for $4.2 million.

Moody Hill Nature Center is developing a wetland preserve in the area next to the preserve, but Goodysue Bake also wants to make sure plenty of wildlife remains. On the site in The Nature Conservancy was a pitcher plant — a green tubelike plant that traps prey and digests the plant. It is a wetland preserve on the north shore of Lake Pontchartrain. It will be known as the Talihatchie Pine Wetland Preserve.

The pitcher was a local favorite of many in the Vermilion Parish prior to development.

The savannas — spread of grasslands that make up the local landscape — catch fire easily when the grasses dry out at the end of the rainy season. Local bird lovers and birders have made it a "wetland paradise" for birds, especially during the winter months.

The conservancy is working to protect the savannas and the pitcher plant. They can grow to 12 feet tall and their needles are 15 inches long and cover six to 12 inches long. Louisiana's pitch pine is very rare, but it's a unique habitat.

A pitcher plant can grow up to 15 inches tall and has a thick, green stem. It is a common sight along the coastline, often growing in areas with marshy conditions. It is called "swallowing" by the intruder.

"It is not too late to jump up until it is too late," McIlvaine said. "Little pitcher plants can grow up 2 feet per year.

The pitcher plants are the "gem of nature" for people looking for a "wetland paradise." They can grow to 12 feet tall and have needles that are 15 inches long and cover six to 12 inches long. Louisiana's pitch pine is very rare, but it's a unique habitat.

Mature trees grow straight and make good poles and piles. The needles are

A green frog hiding in a pitcher plant waits for unsuspecting bugs at the Talihatchie Pine Wetland Preserve in St. Tammany Parish.

"We want to make sure that there is plenty of habitat for the savannas," McIlvaine said. "It is not too late to jump up until it is too late," McIlvaine said. "Little pitcher plants can grow up 2 feet per year. The pitcher plants are the "gem of nature" for people looking for a "wetland paradise." They can grow to 12 feet tall and have needles that are 15 inches long and cover six to 12 inches long. Louisiana's pitch pine is very rare, but it's a unique habitat.

"We want to make sure that there is plenty of habitat for the savannas," McIlvaine said. "It is not too late to jump up until it is too late," McIlvaine said. "Little pitcher plants can grow up 2 feet per year. The pitcher plants are the "gem of nature" for people looking for a "wetland paradise." They can grow to 12 feet tall and have needles that are 15 inches long and cover six to 12 inches long. Louisiana's pitch pine is very rare, but it's a unique habitat.

"We want to make sure that there is plenty of habitat for the savannas," McIlvaine said. "It is not too late to jump up until it is too late," McIlvaine said. "Little pitcher plants can grow up 2 feet per year. The pitcher plants are the "gem of nature" for people looking for a "wetland paradise." They can grow to 12 feet tall and have needles that are 15 inches long and cover six to 12 inches long. Louisiana's pitch pine is very rare, but it's a unique habitat.
Perfect

Above: Mature tangled grass even ten feet high in Alegria Preserve at the Tetapanywi Preserve in St. Tammany Parish.

Below: Longleaf pine grows in Alegria Preserve.

TheÛserves' conservation efforts are aimed at protecting the unique plant and animal life native to the area, ensuring the diversity of life on Earth by preserving the lands and water they need to survive.