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## Wilderness Coast Public Libraries

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# **Florida Library History Project**

## **Wilderness Coast Public Libraries**

The Wilderness Coast Public Libraries (WILD) is a cooperative library created in October 1992 under the guidelines set by the State Library of Florida. The cooperative was formed through an Interlocal Agreement signed by the following legal entities: the Franklin County Board of County Commissioners; the Jefferson County Board of County Commissioners; the Wakulla County Board of County Commissioners; and the Wilderness Coast Public Libraries Governing Board. Each county library is also served by a local library advisory board of citizens. WILD is governed by a board consisting of two members from each participating county. The library directors and central administrator constitute the Directors' Council. The WILD Administrative Office is located in Crawfordville, Florida in Wakulla County, near the center of the three counties.

Prior to the formation of the cooperative, Jefferson and Wakulla Counties had established countywide library service. Franklin County began its library service in one room in Eastpoint on October 1, 1992 and opened a branch in Carrabelle in August 1993. The Eastpoint Library expanded to 3 rooms at the Point Mall in 1997. The Franklin County Public Library came up on the SIRSI automated system in February 1997.

Wakulla County Public Library (WCPL) in Medart, Florida recently completed the renovation of a larger one-story building they moved into in December of 1996. WCPL came up on the SIRSI automated system in November of 1997.

Jefferson County Public Library (JCPL) in Monticello, Florida has just completed a new shelving installation. It opened two upstairs rooms to the public in 1996 with a Family Learning Center, complete with Internet access for the public. JCPL was previously automated with the Follett system. It converted to the SIRSI system in April 1997.

The WILD Office is the server center for the SIRSI real time automated system purchased in late 1996. The libraries are now connected via 56 Kb lines, and should upgrade soon to support Internet direct connections. Retrospective

conversion for Wakulla and Franklin Counties has been ongoing. All three libraries have Internet access for the public as of 1997.

The WILD Bookmobile serves all three rural counties, one each week. As of September 1997, the registered borrowers number 12,393 for all three counties. There are 72,663 volumes system-wide. The circulation is 106,968. All three county libraries have increased staff time, staff compensation, service, physical space, holdings, and programs since October 1992. The 1996-97 per capita expenditure for WILD public library services was \$16.62.

WILD did extremely well with programs from 1995 to 1997. Then the library program staff gave way to technology expenses, and the county libraries resumed most program responsibilities. Distance learning capabilities are a future goal.

--Cheryl Turner, Central Administrator  
February 16, 1998