MEMBERSHIP
Make a difference with FNPS
Your membership supports the preservation and restoration of wildlife habitats and biological diversity through the conservation of native plants. It also funds awards for leaders in native plant education, preservation and research.

Memberships are available in these categories:
- Individual: Multi-person household;
- Sustaining: Lifetime; Full-time student; Library (Palmetto subscription only); Business or Non-profit recognition.

To provide funds that will enable us to protect Florida’s native plant heritage, please join or renew at the highest level you can afford.

To become a member:
Contact your local chapter, call, write, or e-mail FNPS, or join online at www.fnps.org/join

The purpose of the Florida Native Plant Society is to conserve, preserve, and restore the native plants and native plant communities of Florida.

Official definition of native plant:
For most purposes, the phrase Florida native plant refers to those species occurring within the state boundaries prior to European contact, according to the best available scientific and historical documentation. More specifically, it includes those species understood as indigenous, occurring in natural associations in habitats that existed prior to significant human impacts and alterations of the landscape.

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ON THE COVER: Conradina brevifolia (short-leaved false rosemary) is endemic to the white sand scrub habitat of the mid- to lower Lake Wales Ridge in Polk, Highlands, and Osceola Counties. Photo by Mike Jenkins, Florida Forest Service.
At Lake Griffin State Park in Fruitland, Florida, stands a giant live oak tree that is more than three centuries old, and its branches create a beautiful shaded canopy. The park’s centerpiece may be this old oak, but the park also protects a swath of rare and valuable sandhill habitat.

The sandhill at Lake Griffin State Park is distinct as it is home to one of the most stable populations of clasping warea (Warea amplexifolia). The distribution of the federally endangered species is limited to a small strip along the northern part of the Lake Wales Ridge.

Protection of the park’s habitat is guided by a 10-year unit management plan. That plan, shaped in part by volunteers who sit on an advisory committee, sets goals for protection and restoration.

The clasping warea at Lake Griffin State Park depends on the careful application of prescribed fire to its sandhill home. Other species like sand skink, scrub buckwheat and gopher tortoise also benefit from the application of fire to this community, and fire is our main management tool at the park.

The timing of fire is especially important for clasping warea given its annual life cycle and endangered status. Because clasping warea is an annual, the application of prescribed burns must be timed to avoid key reproduction cycles such as germination, sprouting, blooming and seeding. Preserving this species requires specialized knowledge, and land managers must consider a wide range of ecological factors.

In June, park staff and Florida Department of Environmental Protection biologists were joined by Florida Native Plant Society Executive Director Juliet Rynear and Tarflower Chapter member Brian Brandon to survey the park as part of a state land management review. Help from native plant experts like Juliet and Brian improves how the Florida Park Service protects imperiled endemic species such as clasping warea.

Land management reviews help ensure that publicly owned lands are managed in the best interest of Florida’s native ecosystems and wildlife, and for resource-based recreation. Dedicated volunteers like Juliet and Brian work behind the scenes to improve how we care for conservation
lands. The work of land management review volunteers may be invisible to many visitors, but our research shows that natural Florida landscapes are what draw people to state parks.

The Florida Native Plant Society is a valuable partner in preserving natural state park landscapes for residents and visitors to enjoy. Last year, FNPS volunteers served on 100 percent of state land management review panels.

The relationship between FNPS and Florida State Parks is continually growing. Each state park unit management plan will now get input from an additional native plant advisor from the FNPS land management review team. This input will help state park planners make informed decisions based on the in-depth familiarity FNPS land management volunteers have with many parks.

I’m thankful for the many volunteers who have served on land management review panels in the past. The review process gives us the opportunity to use your knowledge and experience and make a real impact on our public lands.

If you would like to volunteer for a land management review, please contact FNPS Land Management Partners Committee Chair Grace Howell at partners@fnps.org.

About the Author

Eric Draper is the director of the Florida Department of Environmental Protection’s Florida Park Service. Florida’s 175 state parks and trails provide resource-based recreation, and preserve, interpret and restore Florida’s natural and cultural resources. Learn more at FloridaStateParks.org.

Photos courtesy of the Florida Department of Environmental Protection.