22nd Annual FNPS Conference
Native Plants in Native Places:
Botanical Treasures off the Garden Path
Hosted by the Magnolia Chapter
March 21-24, 2002
Ramada Inn North, Tallahassee

Sid Taylor, Hernando Chapter (on the left) and Barbie Wilder, Tarflower Chapter, help each other up the steep slope of a North Florida forest.

It might be the far north for some, but Tallahassee welcomed over 400 people, including nearly 350 paid conference registrants plus speakers, field trip leaders, vendors, volunteers, friends, and family. The Magnolia Chapter’s education focus was well appreciated with 18 jam-packed field trips, a full slate of programs, and the first-ever offsite workshops (filled in the first two weeks of registration). Sid Taylor, Hernando Chapter, shares a few of the tidbits he managed to write down for us:

“Angus Gholson said the most conspicuous tree in the Chattahoochee area at the time of World War II was the Torreya. It was called Gopherwood and the locals said that they lived in the Garden of Eden and Noah’s Ark was built from Torreya. Its demise is theorized to be related to suppression of fire. As smoke would settle in the slope forest ravines, it may have held back or killed the fungus which now is bringing the Torreya to the brink of extinction.

Gil Nelson said the Alum Bluff (owned by The Nature Conservancy) is 138° above the Apalachicola River and contains more woody species than any other place in the U.S. Some of the significant botanists of the area over the years have been A. W. Chapman, J. K. Small, John Torrey, Aser Gray, R. M. Harper, K. Wagner, Herman Kurz, Robert K. Godfrey, and still with us: Angus Gholson, Loran Anderson, and André Clewell. Dr. Chapman sounded the first alarm for the sake of Torreya in 1885 in an article that appeared in Botanical Gazette. Torreya was being overused for posts, shingles, and other exposed construction because of its ability to endure the elements.

Loran Anderson said the French risked their lives during Spanish occupation of Florida to come and collect medicinal plants and smilax roots for making Sarsaparilla.

John Tobe said Magnolia grandiflora is restricted to the coastal plain with its nearest relative in North Mexico in the mountains, suggesting an ancient land bridge between Florida and Mexico. Gil Nelson called Magnolia aubii the “tropical aspect of slope forests.”

Wilson Baker said American Beech (of Beech/Magnolia Slope Forests) won’t come back in after it is clear-cut, this destroys the ecosystem.”

Society Business

Proposed Amendment to FNPS Bylaws

The FNPS Board of Directors proposes an amendment to the bylaws changing the length of executive officer terms and staggering terms of executive officers. The board believes this amendment will improve the society’s ability to maintain continuity of the executive committee for longer periods of service and decrease annual turnover of the entire executive committee. The proposed amendment reads as follows:

“5.04 Elections. All officers shall be elected by a plurality vote at the annual meeting of FNPS members present and voting. Those elected shall serve for terms as specified below; they shall take office as soon as possible, and shall serve until duly replaced.

In even years, the president, vice president of finance and secretary shall serve a two-year term.

In odd years, the vice president of administration and treasurer shall serve a two-year term.

The president and vice presidents shall be limited to two consecutive terms, and the secretary and treasurer shall be limited to three consecutive terms, in a given office.”

For questions or to review the bylaws, please contact your Chapter Representative or the FNPS Vice President of Administration.