Many people say that the terms economic growth and environmental protection are mutually exclusive. In other words, you'll never find a Florida panther anywhere near downtown Miami, nor, on the other hand, will you find many people making a living in Everglades National Park.

South Florida, more than most other places, represents the front line of the continuing battle between our short term financial needs and our long terms biological needs. There can be no question that population growth has been a major source of ecological stress in Florida.

One hundred years ago Florida was a virtually uninhabited wilderness. Thirty years ago, we had 2.7 million people. Today we have somewhat over 10 million, and by the year 2000, Florida will have 17.5 million inhabitants.

This enormous growth rate, coupled with expanding agricultural activities, phosphate mining, and other industrial uses of the state's land, water, and air, has resulted in extensive alteration — and even threatens large-scale destruction — of various natural ecosystems. Some of these changes are irreversible.

Tremendous economic growth, as well as vast natural system destruction, has been occurring over the past century in the unique region of Florida between West Palm Beach and Miami. This emerging megalopolis of over 3 million people owes much of what it is today to Henry Morrison Flagler.

It is impossible to overestimate the economic impact that Flagler has had on the state of Florida. He transferred millions in wealth acquired from Standard Oil Company into building a railroad down the entire east coast of Florida and eventually to Key West. All along the way he wheeled and dealt himself into a variety of agricultural and resort enterprises.

But just what was the extent of Henry Flagler's knowledge of the South Florida ecosystem? Remember, this was in the 1890s and only in the last 30 years has a serious effort been made to study the effects of man-caused change on the environment.

Henry Flagler, for all his business expertise, knew relatively nothing of the local environment or of what long term effects his actions might cause. In fact, the native environment was referred to as "a wilderness of waterless sand and underbrush."

In 1878, fifteen years before Flagler got to the island that eventually would be called Palm Beach, the Spanish brig Providencia, bound for Spain, washed ashore loaded with coconuts from Trinidad. Early settlers planted coconuts up and down the island, and by the time Flagler arrived in 1893, exotic coconut palms greeted him, enticing him to build not only large resorts like The Breakers and Royal Poinciana, but his own home, Whitehall, as well.

An important part of Flagler's development formula was the replacing of native vegetation with exotic, in order to fully re-create a tropical paradise for his family and guests. Such was the attitude of the times: famous botanists such as Fairchild gathered plants from all over the world and brought them to South Florida where it soon became known that, with abundant sunshine and fresh water, "you can grow anything."

What little evidence remains today of the original vegetation shows a unique blend of temperate and tropical species: live oaks and gumbo limbos. But native vegetation was generally considered worthless underbrush. Whole virgin forests continued next page
CHAPTER NEWS

SUNCOAST

The Suncoast Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society has grown to 94 members. We hold monthly meetings on the 3rd Wednesday, 7:30 p.m., at the Hillsborough Community College Library, room L100. In March, Mark Moffler presented a program on seagrasses, and Charlotte Withers talked about iris species and hybrids. At our April meeting, Will Moor spoke on native plant usage for urban forestry. We also held our first plant sale in April and were pleased with its success.

Dave Crewz gave a program on mangroves at our May meeting. In June, Bruce Hansen showed slides of a representative plant from all of the Suncoast vascular plant families, and in July, Bill Ackerman educated us on mangroves at our May meeting. In July, Mark Moffler presented a program on native plant usage for urban forestry. We also held our first plant sale in April and were pleased with its success.

We have visited Morris Bridge well field area, trampered through the Upper Tampa Bay Environmental Center and Oldsmar area, visited a rich wooded hammock, rock hammock, tidal marsh, and sandscrub area at Crystal River. We were guided through the Homosassa Springs Nature World, and also took a canoe trip down the Chassahowitzka River. On our last field trip, July 20, we visited Chinsegut Hill.

Our chapter is in the process of making plans for the FNPS Conference we will hold in October.

DADE

The Dade County Chapter substituted a picnic at Larry and Penny Thompson Park for the regular August meeting.

Our third conference on South Florida native plants is scheduled for the 6th and 7th of October. It will be held at the Tamiami Campus of Florida International University.

Saturday's schedule includes lectures on Water Management; Our Native Ferns; Endangered Natives of South Florida; Wildlife, Part I: Our Native Butterflies; and Native Plants of Our Forefathers.

Sunday's workshops deal with two sessions: Beginning, and then Advanced Identification and Taxonomy, and a half-day field trip, emphasizing Natives in the Landscape, or "Winning the Battle," and a special lecture by Nathaniel Reed, Past Director of the U.S. Department of Interior.

We cordially invite everyone and hope you will take the opportunity to interchange ideas and make new acquaintances.

SOUTH BREVARD

Stay-at-homes can have fun, too. While our officers were at the FNPS Conference in Boca Raton, those of us who couldn't get away put on an exhibit of native plants at the Federated Garden Clubs Exhibition here in Melbourne that same weekend. We brought in enough potted trees, shrubs, herbs, ferns, and vines to create a 20-foot-wide jungle. The response was delightful. We followed it up immediately with a public tour in Sebastian State Park to cement the new interest.

Sebastian, according to the rangers there, is the only state park without a plant list. We volunteered to help develop one and have held three survey sessions so far. It will be a full year's work. One member has offered to put our survey results on computer disk which will let us search and print according to plant family, community, bloom season, or any of several other categories.

Book sales held steady even with half of our officers out of town. Two nurseries are handling "WILD THINGS" for us.

We are looking at plans to incorporate natural areas in school campuses here in Brevard. Some counties farther south have already done this. If anyone has printed material or is willing to share your "how-we-did-it" experiences, please send them to: M.J.R. Bartlett, 1393 Worth Ct. N.E., Palm Bay, FL 32905.

We'd be grateful for any information.

PALM BEACH ...... from page 11

were clear cut for buildings and farms. As time passed and the population swelled, Palm Beach served as the model example of state-of-the-art real estate development. This powerful Flagler influence continues to this day.

But there is trouble in paradise. The coconut palms are dying, the concrete seawalls can't hold the beach the way the dune line used to, and the consumption of fresh water is over three times the national average. We are outrunning our natural resources at the present rate. Former South Florida Water Management Executive Director Jack Maloy is quoted as saying, "This is a problem technology can't solve." He sees a need for a fundamental shift in people's habits of consumption, and says, "I'm talking about a need for a major social change, and it isn't going to be easy, but there isn't any choice."

Well, it may not be easy but it does not mean that we have to lower our standard of living. We just have to learn how to do "more with less." Native vegetation is not the whole answer, but I do believe that it is an important piece of the puzzle.

My experience with numerous residential and commercial developments has convinced me that native vegetation can be effectively used to produce beneficial influences on the microclimate. It is becoming economically feasible to utilize native vegetation for environmental protection. More and more people are becoming aware that healthy economic and environmental systems are inter-related and both are needed to produce something we all call "quality of life."

The late Buckminster Fuller said, "Technologically, humanity now has the opportunity, for the first time in history, to operate our planet in such a manner as to support and accommodate all humanity at a substantially more advanced standard of living than any humans have ever experienced."

We now have the technology. Do we have the wisdom to go along with it?

BIG PINE KEY

The Big Pine Key Botanical Society has grown from fifty to well over one hundred members this year under the leadership of Kathy Wolf.

The activities of 1984 have included presentations on Endangered Species of the Florida Keys, Preservation of Keys Animals and Plants by the Monroe County biologist, a field trip to Lignumvitae, a field trip to Bahia Honda State Park and a membership picnic, and a musical evening provided by Dale and Linda Cridar.

The "Save Our Natives Program" continues native plant rescue work, led by Anne Williams. It has gathered over 200 native palms, railroad vine...