

The Quarterly Journal of the Florida Native Plant Society

Palmetto



The Sustainable Conference

Ray Wunderlich III, 2008 Conference Chair

Many of you may remember last year's wonderful, poignant keynote address by Janisse Ray. Her talk challenged us, as the Florida Native Plant Society, to be more environmentally aware and proactive in our measures, even if these decisions sometimes lead to ruffled feathers.

This year we have accepted the challenge Janisse gave us. The 2008 conference implemented several zero waste ideals. At each event we had recycling bins for glass, cans, plastic, and paper. Lunches were provided in brown paper bags instead of boxes or plastic containers, and utensils were made of corn or potato based products. Most conference registration was completed online, significantly reducing the amount of paper necessary.

For next year's conference, we will be sending out email notification of the upcoming conference schedule and field trips rather than our traditional mailing. We will still use postal mail for those who request it, but this method will significantly reduce our footprint.

Boxes were placed at the registration tables for returning name badges so we could use the sleeves again next year. Conference attendee bags were not filled with brochures or advertising that is often simply thrown away later. The Salvation Army picked up all extra food after Friday and Saturday night's social events.

We hope these pro-active ideas will act as templates for future FNPS conferences and that more ideas for sustainability are added.

While 2008 may not have been a completely zero waste conference, I feel strongly that these endeavors are a good

start on advancing our goals as a Society. I also hope that each of us took several of these ideas back home to use in our chapter, homes and places of business in order to decrease our carbon footprint.

Our goal for this year's conference was to set a high standard of excellence in presenting quality, scientific and innovative information of a broad scope relating to Florida native plants. The

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conference included topics such as defining fertilizer ordinances, legislative reports including the funding for the Florida Forever Program, incentivizing alternative energy sources, improved landscape ordinances that include mandatory minimum percentages of native plants, learning about our estuaries, orchids, landscape design, research updates, environmental activism, our rivers, stormwater pond design, plant rescues, environmental art, historical botanists in Florida, how native plants

save lives during natural disasters and much more.

We reached a diverse group of individuals. This broad approach enabled us to affect our health in a more positive way, being that our health is affected by the quality of our air and water, and the quality of the landscape we inhabit. This in turn will bring about a higher awareness and consecutiveness with the natural landscape. At the 2006 conference, Richard Louv, author of *Last Child In The Woods*, spoke on the subject of how today's children are experiencing what he terms nature deficit disorder. Our society as well, is becoming more disconnected with nature. We, the Florida Native Plant Society, need to reverse this trend and become even more connected with nature and share this with as many individuals, businesses, elected officials, municipalities and government decision makers as possible.

The Society is heading in a great direction. Through Past President Shirley Denton's leadership, and our new, dynamic President Gene Kelly and Executive Director Karina Veaudry's unending energy, the Society continues to further our mission of preservation, conservation, and restoration, and recognize the changing priority of environmental issues current in today's headlines. I am glad to see our Society taking a positive role in these endeavors, and I hope others like Janisse Ray continue to challenge us so that we may become even better stewards of our native plant communities and have the strength and tools to continue to strive to preserve a cross section of the biodiversity in Florida.



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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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Editorial Content

We welcome articles on native plant species and related conservation topics, as well as high-quality botanical illustrations and photographs. Contact the editor for guidelines, deadlines and other information.

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