

Sabal minor

A bi-monthly newsletter for the members of
THE FLORIDA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY



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2017 CONFERENCE OVERVIEW *by Sid Taylor*

The 37th annual FNPS conference was held very remotely at Westgate River Ranch in Polk county, just west of Yeehaw Junction. This put us just south of Lake Kissimmee and at the top of the five phases of the Kissimmee River restoration. Phase 5 (the last phase — for now or forever?) is going to be completed this year. The Thursday field trip pontoon boat out of Riverwoods Field Lab showed us both current work to the north of the lab and vegetative and river restoration to the south. The lab is managed in partnership by Florida Atlantic University's Center for Environmental Studies and the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD). Lab Director Loisa Kerwin hosted us. (She will share her expertise with a group of 12 to 17 and house you onsite overnight. Contact her at 863-462-0025 or lkerwin@fau.edu.) The C-38 canal that straightened the river was 56 miles long, 300 feet wide and 30 feet deep. The soil/marl that was taken out and piled at the site is being pushed back in with 43 (actual flowing) miles being restored. Two dams are being removed. The river was channeled (1961 to 1972) for \$30 million dollars; as soon it was completed, they knew it was an environmental faux pas and started taking it apart — at a total cost of \$500 million. On Friday, Dr. Stephen Bousquin, project manager of SFWMD's Kissimmee River Restoration Evaluation Program, showed slides of the vegetative success of Phase I (1999-2001).

Also on Friday, Dr. Ernie Cox gave a comprehensive history of land conservation in Florida. The good news: The people of Florida own 31.4% or 10,870,000 protected acres counting stewardship agricultural acreage (stats from Friends of Florida). The new number of people moving to Florida is 1100 per day, with over 20 million now and a projected 30 million by 2051. More good news: There are still 9.95 million acres undeveloped. We still have the potential to nearly double our watersheds. Dr. Cox encouraged everyone to read "Closing the Gaps" (http://talltimbers.org/images/ve_images/Cox_Kautz_MacLaughlin_Gilbert_1994.pdf).

He also stated that there are no feral hogs to deal with in Collier County anymore because the panthers have eaten them all. Visit <http://fnai.org/webmaps/ConLandsMap/> to see a map of the already approved potential purchases (ArcGIS ability may be necessary).

Jennifer Reed, director of the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Florida Forest Service's Rural and Family Lands Protection Program, gave an overview of all 26 properties under their umbrellas since 2008 and the already approved acreage being added. Visit www.freshfromflorida.com/content/download/75036/2133094/RFLPP_All_Projects_Numbers.pdf to view the 2016 Approved Acquisitions Projects Map. To learn more about the program, visit www.freshfromflorida.com/Divisions-Offices/Florida-Forest-Service/Our-Forests/Land-Planning-and-Administration-Section/Rural-and-Family-Lands-Protection-Program2.

Dr. Tonya Clayton kicked off the conference with a talk on "Sea Level Rise in Florida." In a later talk, we saw a picture of an octopus swimming around in a parking garage flooded with seawater from a "king tide" in Miami Beach. Check it out here: www.miamiherald.com/news/local/community/miami-dade/miami-beach/article115688508.html. Apparently we are having Sunny Day Floods and tidal events in Florida now, in Ft. Lauderdale, for example. I was most shocked to see a current elevation map that shows the

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2017 FNPS BOARD OF DIRECTORS ELECTIONS

The following board positions were elected by the membership at the 2017 annual conference:

President-elect: **Susan Carr**, Paynes Prairie Chapter
Vice President of Administration: **Don Spence**, Pawpaw Chapter
Secretary: **Jackie Rolly**, Tarflower Chapter
Treasurer: **Peter Rogers**, Conradina Chapter
Director-at-Large: **Wendy Poag**, Lake Beautyberry Chapter
Director-at-Large: **Carol Sullivan**, Sparkleberry Chapter

The following positions were announced at the meeting:

Education Committee Chair: **Nicole Cribbs**, Suncoast Chapter
Landscape Committee Chair: **Ron Blair**, Tarflower Chapter
Council of Chapters Director: **Donna Bollenbach**, Suncoast Chapter

(The Council of Chapters held a separate election.)



FNPS board members (left to right): Catherine Bowman, Don Spence, Juliet Rynear, Wendy Poag, Peter Rogers, Donna Bollenbach, Susan Carr, Paul Schmalzer and Shirley Denton

CONNECTIONS: ABOVE AND BELOW submitted by Donna Bollenbach on behalf of the 2017 Conference Committee

“Connections” was the theme of the 2017 Florida Native Plant Society Annual Conference. The connections theme, as so beautifully illustrated by Linda Conway Duever, was intertwined in our presentations, field trips, awards and more.

Connections of the presentations were environmental, ecological and cultural: Speakers discussed the ties between trees in the forest and fungi in the ground, melting icebergs in Antarctica and sea-level rise in Florida, rural land ownership and land conservation, and the effect of water quality in the north on the quality of life in the south.

In other words, they explored a multifaceted environment that is linked near and far, above and below the surface, across land and culture.

From the young graduate student Laura Super’s “super cool” presentation on mycorrhizal fungi in the forest, to veteran speaker Roger Hammer’s amusing talk on plant names, to Craig Huegel and Larry Weaner’s innovative approaches to ecological landscaping, and all the up-to-date research presentations on habitats, plants and pollinators, there was something for everyone at the 2017 conference.

Field trips drew the connection further by visiting a vast array of ecosystems that connect in central Florida to form a long natural corridor from north to south through the center of Florida. These included ancient scrubs, dry prairies, swamps and flatwoods. We had field trips



Field trip participants at Tiger Creek Preserve. Photo by Janet Bowers

that let people see good land management practices and environmental stewardship on some of our working agricultural lands.

Whether it was a trip to the historic Lake Wales Ridge, a buggy tour through Kissimmee Prairie Preserve, a visit to Bok Tower’s sandhill restoration, a view of Adam’s Ranch (a working cattle ranch), or an exploration of a wildlife management area, participants on the field trips witnessed rare plants in their native habitats, outstanding land management practices and met some of Florida’s best field botanists and ecologists.

Recognizing outstanding individuals and groups for research and activities that support the FNPS mission is also an important part of the conference. While many chapters have something to brag about, the Pawpaw Chapter was the recipient of the Green Palmetto Award for



outstanding chapter and former Pawpaw chapter president, Sonya Guidry, received the prestigious Mentor Award for an “outstanding lifetime of contributions that forward the mission of the society.” Land management and conservation awards were also given to recognize the science and ecological practices that best support the FNPS mission.

Entwined in the presentations, field trips and awards, a deeper connection was also happening at the conference; it was a connection of minds, chapters and individuals:

There was a connection of minds: Many of our speakers, old and new, praised the quality of speakers and programming at the conference, and said they made new connections with FNPS members and other presenters that will continue beyond the conference. One speaker proclaimed he was impressed with the “world-class” level of the proceedings.

There was a connection of chapters: When FNPS members come to the conference, they learn that they are part of something bigger than their individual chapter, and no chapter exists in a vacuum. The conference is where we share ideas, discuss challenges, and learn how each chapter can work together to support FNPS and each other.

There is a connection of individuals: I frequently hear people say, “FNPS folks are good people.” It’s true. Whether enjoying great food, playing a game of Plant Pictionary, attending a field trip together, or line dancing at the saloon, the conference socials are a great opportunity to spend time with old friends and make new ones.

Thanks to the conference committee, the volunteers, the speakers, the field trip leaders, the staff of Westgate River Resort, and each and every one of you who attended, the 2017 FNPS conference was a great success, and with your continued support, the 2018 will be even better.

ENDOWMENT RESEARCH GRANT AWARDS

by Paul Schmalzer

Three endowment research awards were announced at the FNPS annual conference. These awards of \$1,500 each are funded by earnings from the FNPS endowment and contributions from chapters and individuals. This year, we received a contribution of \$1,500 from the Tarflower Chapter in honor of Sam Hopkins, and a contribution of \$500 from the Sea Rocket Chapter. The 2017 awards are going to:

- Iwan E. Molgo, Department of Biology, University of Florida, “Determining the origin of two recently discovered Florida endemics: Tetraploid and hexaploid *Callisia ornata* (Commelinaceae).” This award is supported by the Tarflower Chapter contribution in honor of Sam Hopkins.
- Andre Naranjo, Florida Museum of Natural History, University of Florida, “Understanding the evolution of narrow endemics for conservation.”
- Lydia M. Cuni, Department of Earth and Environment, Florida International University, “Drivers of species composition and diversity in pine rockland-hardwood hammock ecosystem transitional gradients: Implications for restoration efforts of fragmented communities.”

Overview continued from page 1

St. John's River in Volusia at low elevation (pubs.usgs.gov/sim/3047/) so it won't take much rise to inundate our biggest river. Dr. Clayton said the Florida peninsula is a big thick layer cake of limestone; and 90 percent of us get drinking water from the aquifers." Sea level in the Tampa/St. Pete area is rising about 1 inch per decade (https://tidesandcurrents.noaa.gov/sltrends/sltrends_station.shtml?stnid=8726520).

She showed an excellent saltwater intrusion illustration from USGS called Coastal Groundwater Systems: <https://wh.er.usgs.gov/slr/coastalgroundwater.html>. Teachers should use this. (Conference presentations are being uploaded to www.fnps.org/conference/2017presentations.)

Dr. Todd Hopkins of US Fish and Wildlife Service worked 10 years on Everglades restoration. He introduced us to Landscape Conservation Cooperatives that are looking at the big picture and forest composition changes. View the conservation planning atlas at pfcc.databasin.org.

Kimberly Taplin with the US Army Corps of Engineers gave an overview of the history of Everglades restoration and Lake Okeechobee (which everyone else wrote as Lake O). She has a long history herself with the Everglades (since 1994) and now serves as program manager. Kimberly explained the ongoing repairs for the Herbert Hooker Dike around Lake O, which have cost \$870 million since 2001.

During a panel discussion with Friday's speakers, a comment by Dr. Thomas Lodge stood out: He said the Department of Community Affairs in Florida needs to be reinstated to provide county oversight in planning and development.

Roger Hammer wowed us with his floral shots for his upcoming comprehensive book on the wildflowers of Florida. It is due out in time for the May 2018 conference. His taxonomy authority after Wunderlin/Hanson is Alan Weakley. His disclaimer for his slide show was x-rated, mature audiences only; I can say no more.

Larry Weaner received excellent reviews on his talk, "Breaking the Rules: Ecological Landscape Design and Traditional Landscape Methodology." I heard attendees saying, "If a plant volunteers, it likes the soil and its plant neighbors... so let it grow there." I am sure there was more; find out in his coauthored *Garden Revolution: How Our Landscapes Can Be a Source of Environmental Change* (Timber Press, 2016).

On Saturday, we learned about mycorrhizal fungi and how dependent our lives are upon their work. See *How Trees Talk to Each Other*, a TED Summit Talk from January 2016 on YouTube by Dr. Suzanne Simard. Then Dr. Alan Franck from the USF Herbarium told us our bodies are crawling with fungi. The planet is crawling with them, too. Experts believe there are between one and five million species of fungi, and only about 130,000 are known and described.

Patricia Burgos and Wendy Poag energized us with hands-on information to empower us as FNPS Land Management Partners. Join this committee to see what public lands in your neighborhood are coming up for review; become familiar with the property and its under-loved, under-paid staff and help them. Get on the mailing list for info by contacting Raymond.Jarret@ucf.edu, Patriciab@lcwa.org or wpaog@lakecounty.gov.

Gene Kelly and our Tallahassee lobbyist, Sue Mullins, did GOV 101 on our Florida Legislature and how a bill becomes law. Back to basics was fundamental to us: remember they DO work for us. Contact your own representative or senator and take them on a tour of public lands that were purchased under P2000 or Florida Forever and show

them what you know of it. If they or a staff member can't find time to go, buy them an FNPS membership. For more on the bios of the speakers visit www.fnps.org/conference/speakers.

All three socials were onsite, with full (and very tasty) meals served, so it was stress free. No driving home after imbibing. Thursday night we played Plant Pictionary with Donna Bollenbach in front of the Saloon. Danny Young and President Catherine Bowman set up a great plant ID challenge for us for Friday night. Saturday night's dinner was followed by an opportunity to attend the weekly River Ranch rodeo.

2016–17 BOD AND EXCOM MEETINGS

JUL 20	Board of Directors meeting, GoToMeeting
JUL 23	Council of Chapters meeting, GoToMeeting
AUG 12	Board of Directors and Council of Chapters meeting, Florida Division of Forestry Withlacoochee Training Center, Brooksville
SEP 21	Board of Directors meeting, GoToMeeting

Check the Society calendar at fnps.org/society/calendar for details, updates, directions and meeting instructions. All dates subject to change.

CHAPTER HAPPENINGS

Pinellas Chapter will host Rachel Arndt at their July 5 meeting. Rachel is communications manager for Tampa Bay Watch and will discuss restoration projects in Tampa Bay, progression from past decline and abuses up to today, and the results achieved for seagrass beds, fish and wildlife, and recreation. The meeting will be held at Moccasin Lake Nature Park in Clearwater and starts at 7pm, with refreshments and silent auction beginning at 6:30.

Suncoast Chapter president Donna Bollenbach reports that the chapter continues to stay connected with the Society on all levels. There were 18 chapter members in attendance at the 2017 conference; three were presenters and two were on the conference committee. As well, the chapter now has four members on the Society's board, with two on the executive committee. Congratulations to Suncoast member Steve Dickman, the first-place winner of the plant ID contest, expert division. The chapter is lucky to have Steve with all his botanical knowledge.

In other news, the chapter's monthly Lettuce Lake native plant walks continue to be very successful, with over a dozen people being introduced to the native plants and native plant communities each month at one of Hillsborough County's busiest conservation parks. Mary Miller continues to maintain Flatwoods Park, with the addition of a bluebird box with spycam, and Janet Bowers is instrumental to the upkeep of the Plant City Garden.

Upcoming, Suncoast Chapter will host its annual joint meeting with Tampa Audubon and Tampa Bay Sierra Club on July 19 at the Hillsborough County Extension Center and Bette S. Walker Discovery Garden. The speaker will be Ross Dickerson of the Hillsborough County Jan K Platt Environmental Land Acquisition Program.

Send your "Chapter Happenings" to fnps.sabalminor@gmail.com. The deadline for the September-October 2017 issue is August 15, 2017.



Arundinaria gigantea, or river cane, near the Wakulla River

RIVER CANE: NORTH AMERICA'S ONLY NATIVE BAMBOO

text and photos by Sammy Tedderr

Arundinaria gigantea, locally known as river cane, is North America's only native bamboo. This unique plant is a member of the grass family, with a woody, hollow sectioned stem growing from subterranean roots and rhizomes.

According to *Trees, Shrubs, and Woody Vines of Northern Florida and Adjacent Georgia and Alabama* by Robert K. Godfrey, *Arundinaria gigantea* in its larger form (33 feet tall by 1⅜ inch in diameter) only exists in fertile alluvial habitats where flooding is of short duration; the smaller, more common sized cane grows abundantly along our wet sandy ditches and creeks, especially in Wakulla County. The smaller form is considered to be a subspecies, *A. tecta*, commonly called switch cane.

Before the Europeans arrived in North America, extensive canebrakes of *A. gigantea* stretched along most of the rivers from North Florida to New York. As of now, cattle grazing, fire suppression, and the clearing of fertile riverbottom for farming has reduced these once vast canebrakes to only small isolated pockets of existence.

For centuries, Native Americans used river cane for many essential every day purposes such as baskets, mats, cradles, blow guns, duck calls, flutes, internal wall panels, and structural support for mud and daub outer wall construction for dwellings. Matting and basketry technologies that used river cane have been found in archaeological sites dating back to at least 2300 BC.¹

River cane basket weaving, especially the extremely difficult double weave style, is an art form that almost disappeared but has recently been revived by Lucile and Ramona Lossiah, two of the last living people capable of passing along this tradition.

Blow gun-making has also almost disappeared, but it seems that making flutes from river cane has experienced a revival due to the increased popularity of Native American flute music over the last three decades brought about by Native American artists such as Carlos Nakai who plays cedar flutes, and especially Cherokee river cane flutist Tommy Wildcat.

In North Florida, stalks large enough for flute making (¾ to 1⅜ inches in diameter) occur only along the Apalachicola River and in a few isolated places near the Wakulla River.

Efforts are underway by the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians and the Eastern Band of Cherokee to reestablish canebrakes on tribal lands where they once existed in order to continue their artistic traditions.

References:

1. *Giant Cane Plant Guide*, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (https://plants.usda.gov/plantguide/pdf/cs_argi.pdf)

CONSERVATION COMMITTEE REPORT by Juliet Rynear

The Dan Austin Award for Ethnobotany will be offered beginning in 2018! FNPS will provide an award of up to \$1,500 to a graduate or undergraduate student studying Florida ethnobotany – i.e., the study of the relationship between peoples or cultures with plants native to Florida or Florida ecosystems. These can be current or historic uses. The application is now available on the FNPS website: www.fnps.org/participate/awards.

Please join us in thanking the following generous donors who have made this grant possible:

Dick Workman	Raymond Jungles
Suzanne Koptur	Karin Taylor
Christine Lockhart	The Villages Chapter
Sandra Austin	Palm Beach County Chapter
Thomas Gire	Sarah Davis Dean
Sonya Guidry	Nature Coast Chapter
Lisa Gordon	Martha Steuart and Paul Austin

A \$5,000 conservation grant for 2017 is being awarded to Dr. Gary Knox for his project, "Exploration into the biology and ecology of the Florida-endangered *Magnolia ashei* (Ashe's magnolia)."

The project will address pollination, seed predation, plant injury, and potential disease threats of *M. ashei*. These key factors collectively determine survival, fecundity and reproduction, and may impose significant negative pressures on *M. ashei* populations resulting from conditions such as few or inefficient pollinators, excessive seed damage from common seed pests, excessive plant injury from antlered white-tailed deer, and opportunistic pathogens invading injured trees. Effects may be compounding and likely contribute to *M. ashei*'s overall limited range and low population levels.

Please join us in thanking our grant application reviewers for 2017: Dr. Alan Franck, Michael Jenkins, Scott Davis, Dr. Susan Carr, Annie Schmidt, and Jim Buckner.

Please also join us in thanking the following generous donors who have made this grant possible:

Pinellas Chapter	Suncoast Chapter
Sea Rocket Chapter	Annie Schmidt and John Stites
Dade Chapter in honor of	Don and Joyce Gann

APPALACHIAN TOUR, SEPT. 10–15, 2017

Don't let September slip away. It will be here sooner than you think. Our native plant society is embarking on an adventure to the Appalachians this summer to botanize, socialize and explore the mountains on a refreshing trip to the temperate rain forests. Come with us while we discover the amazing world of the spruce-fir forests of the southeast with local expert guides. Invite your favorite traveling companion or come alone and make new friends. Seating is limited, but you can reserve your spot for only \$50. For more information on pricing and itinerary, visit www.indigotravelcompany.com.

