

MANGROVE CHAPTER

President's Message: by Lois Cantwell



As a regular contributor to the “Mangrove Messenger” newsletter, I plan on continuing to send in various “pieces”. This is my last message as your President. So, I will use this space to take the time to thank everyone in our Chapter for your help and support during my tenure. You are all so wonderful to work with and we have accomplished a lot over the years. Our latest gig was April 28th when we participated in the Englewood Earth Day Festival. My compliments to all who came by during their assigned times to help with setting up (boy, did we need that tent), schlepping plants, interacting with visitors, answering questions, helping with plant sales,

and very importantly, helping to take down and load all of our stuff into Al’s van and my car. It was a hot day, but the clouds helped, plus the huge oak tree nearby had handy benches for those seeking respite from the sun. Everyone had an opportunity to wander around and visit other vendors and grab a bite to eat. (The Greek food was fabulous)! We had a good number of visitors and a lot of fun in the process. Besides that, we took in \$70 in donations!



Visit or choosing Plants



Mangrove Chapter Display



Booth with view of the
CHEC display

Annual Meeting and Election of Officers; Covered Dish Supper, May 14th, 6:00 PM

My how time flies! Here we are, coming up on the last Membership Meeting of the season, which certainly evaporated for me. So, those who are year-rounders’ or snow birds who haven’t flown the coop, yet, plan on joining us for a fun and

entertaining evening at Lemon Bay Park at 6 PM on May 14th. Make sure you bring a place setting with your dish to share, as well as one or more items for the silent auction. We try to stick to a nature theme for the auction items. With luck, we might even have a candidate for President. Charlie Woodruff is diligently making his way through the membership roster in search of my replacement. If you are giving it some thought, don't be intimidated by the title. We are a laid back, social group that works well together and just need someone to "herd the cats".

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[Click Here to VISIT THE MANGROVE CHAPTER WEBSITE](#)

Important - Call Today

Dear Florida Native Plant Society Members,

This alert is sent to you by the Policy and Legislation Committee. The legislature just sent Senate Bill 7068 (CS/SB 7068) to Governor DeSantis. If the Governor signs it into law, it would contradict his early statements about protecting Florida's environment by literally paving the way for construction of three major toll roads through some of Florida's most significant remaining natural areas and agricultural lands. Please call or email his office and ask him to veto this horrible legislation.

Many of us felt encouraged by Governor DeSantis' early statements about restoring the Everglades and degraded springs, improving water quality in regions ravaged by algae blooms, and funding Florida Forever. He recognized the natural environment as a major pillar of Florida's economy. Now we are at an inflection point where we will see if his words are matched by actions.

This bill proposes that we spend many billions on toll roads that would not meet any real transportation need. In the name of promoting economic development, the legislation would simply replace natural greenspace and agricultural land with suburban sprawl and exacerbate our current challenges to protect water resources and conserve natural areas. Florida already has more miles of toll road than any other state – more than we need based on toll receipts for many of them - and FNPS strongly opposes the proposed construction of more unnecessary toll roads through sparsely populated regions as proposed by CS/SB 7068.

Consider the following:

- 1) **The springsheds of at least 13 of the 30 Outstanding Florida Springs lie within the Northern Turnpike Connector and Suncoast Connector areas.** These two toll roads would bisect some of the highest groundwater recharge zones in Florida – a major reason those springs, already degraded by nutrient pollution and declining flows, would be put at even greater risk by the development the roads will spawn.
- 2) **More than 1 million acres of protected conservation land, and more than 1.4 million acres of land in already-approved Florida Forever projects, is located in the proposed corridors,** underscoring the immense conservation value of these regions that include panther habitat in south Florida; rare scrub along the Lake Wales Ridge that is home to dozens of critically imperiled plant species; and the extensive forests of the Big Bend.
- 3) **Claims that the roads would bring important infrastructure, like high speed internet, to**

isolated rural areas and help speed up hurricane evacuation have no real validity. High speed internet could be extended to those areas without investing hundreds of billions on unneeded roads, and Florida's Department of Emergency Management prefers improved evacuation planning that would allow evacuees to remain close to home as a safer and more cost-effective solution than building new roads.

4) Agriculture's contribution to our economy is second only to tourism. Collectively, the three corridor study areas encompass huge swaths of Florida's agricultural land base, including the commercial forests of the Big Bend (more than 300,000 acres in Taylor County alone), the renowned thoroughbred horse ranches of Marion County, and the large cattle ranches of the Peace River and Kissimmee River valleys. The sprawl promoted by the toll roads would compromise the future viability of agriculture in those regions. Why trade valuable agricultural land, and the perpetual economic and national security benefits of viable large-scale agriculture, for expensive suburban sprawl?

5) The Florida Department of Transportation's systematic approach to planning for our transportation future has not identified a need for these roads. They coordinate with local governments to identify and solve our actual transportation needs in the most cost efficient way possible. Siphoning billions from FDOT's budget to study and build these toll roads will only delay progress on real transportation needs and keep us mired in the outdated focus on roads as the solution to all our transportation problems. Enhancing the existing network of roads, and providing alternatives to the use of automobiles, should be the focus of our future transportation investments.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

Please telephone Governor DeSantis' office at (850)488-7146 right away and ask him to remain true to his words about valuing Florida's environment by vetoing CS/SB 7063 – the Multi-Use Corridors transportation bill and the toll roads it would allow. Choose the option to leave a voice mail if you are unable to speak directly with someone. If you prefer email, you can reach him at GovernorRon.Desantis@eog.myflorida.com . There is no time to delay in taking this action! He could sign the bill any day. Let him know it is a destructive and wasteful project, and that planning for our future transportation needs should be left to the professionals at the Florida Department of Transportation – not legislators offering a generous gift to developers.

Volunteer Opportunities

Plant Sitters needed! We are in a bit of an overstock dilemma, with upwards of 180 pots of plants left from this season's festivals. Our Garden Keepers would be hard pressed to take care of these during the summer months, fearing that many may not survive. The garden workers that remain here in the summer only work every other week and with limited hours due to the heat and humidity. So, if there are any full time members who can adopt plants to nurture for the next 5 months, drop by the garden and gather up as many as you can manage. We are also willing to offer potted specimens to any members who might want a particular species for their garden at no cost. We still need to earmark those that we plan on planting in select garden beds, so we will segregate them before our May 14th meeting. After that, come on by the Demonstration Garden at Cedar Point and help yourself to help us out. Plants that we have in the greatest quantity are: Pineland Lantana, Muhly grass, Wild Coffee, Lyre-leaf Sage, Tropical Sage, with at least a half-dozen each of: Rouge Plant, Elliott's Aster, Simpson Stopper and Wild Petunia.



Turkey Tangle or Frog fruit



Seaside Heliotrope



Thistle (Can have purple or yellow/white flowers)

Robinson Preserve, in North West Bradenton, has 679 acres of coastal grassland, salt marsh and mangrove habitat with bike and hiking trails, boardwalks and



2.5 miles of Blueway for kayaks. There is also an Observation Tower to climb. Parking was easy and free with picnic tables and a playground nearby. There is also a Visitors Center.

Eight brave souls hiked for 3 hours along the loop trail in about 85 degrees. We saw many plants, some of which are shown in the accompanying photographs, including Seaside Heliotrope which we went in search of. We also saw Coin Vine, Saltwort, Dog Fennel, Spanish Bayonet, Agave, Nicker Bean and much more.

Many butterflies flew past us including Zebra Longwings, Florida Whites and Monarchs. Taking shelter in the mangroves were a young Night Crowned Heron and a Little Blue. Red Wing Blackbirds were chasing the Crows away.



Although it was quite a long drive, and the weather was like summer, it was an interesting and impressive place we would otherwise never have known about.

Mimosa or Sensitive Brier



Skyblue Lupine



Sea Oxeye Daisy with visitor



Ground Cherry



[Rustweed (older plants turn brown)]



[Creeping cucumber vine (5 Lobed leaves)]



Cut-leaved Evening Primrose]

Field Trip Report by Lois Cantwell

There were a total of 8 of us making the trip to Bradenton for a field trip at Robinson Preserve, which includes 679 acres of coastal grasslands, salt marsh, and mangrove habitat. Sprouting up from the salty soil is a vast array of intriguing plants, including saltwort, glasswort and succulent sea purslane. Al Squires led the walk, having used a little teaser in our Chapter Calendar, “In Search of the Seaside heliotrope”. We set out on the Osprey Loop trail, which was a little over 3 miles long.

We found all sorts of “the natives” right away, all along the first segment of the trail.

Restoration activities were evidenced by roped off areas and signs. The edges on both sides of the path were planted with Muhly Grass, Beach Sunflower, Gaillardia, and a few other eye-catching plants that would serve to entice the average walker/jogger/biker with a show of color. Beyond that, we began to see the natural vegetation in this interesting habitat.



The Holylands identifying plants

We were seeing Seaside Gentian, *Eustoma exaltatum* in many places, but none in bloom, until our return. Coming in the opposite direction, we spotted some in early bloom partially hidden behind Muhly Grass. John Holyland got the only photo. That deep shade of blue-purple is gorgeous. *Eustoma* means “beautiful mouth” and relates to the attractiveness of the cupped flowers that resemble small tulips. *Exaltatum* means “very tall”, alluding to its growth habit.

We came past the observation tower, which is 40 feet tall, giving you a view of 4 counties and five water bodies.

For paddlers, the preserve has 2.5 miles of blueways through mangrove tunnels, marshes and out to the open water of Tampa Bay. We crossed several bridges and a long boardwalk with great views. We elected to stay on the trail and continued our search for the Seaside Heliotrope,

Heliotropium curassivicum. Once we started seeing it, we found it to be quite plentiful. These plants are distinguished from the Pineland Heliotrope by their bluish to gray-green fleshy leaves and penchant for moist habitats. *Heliotropium* means “turning toward the sun”, referring to the directional growth of a plant in response to sunlight. The name *curassivicum* means “of Curacao, a Dutch island nation in the West Indies. In the neotropics, the plant is eaten in salads and as a potherb, dried as a tea substitute. Monarch and queen butterflies are highly attracted to the flowers. (Reference: “Complete Guide to Florida Wildflowers”, Roger Hammer)



Dune Sunflower with Gaillardia



Sneezeweed "Buoquet"

The first leg of the Osprey Trail took us out to the bay and we could see the Skyline Bridge that leads into the St. Petersburg area. We found ourselves among huge Sea Grapes and Mangroves, and an adjacent Live Oak provided shade over wooden benches for a brief rest stop. We followed the trail we were on until we reached a leg of the Spoonbill Trail, which gave us an additional mile or so to trek back to the parking lot. Linda, Bobbi and Zoe chose to take another part of the trail to see more and eat their lunches. Our remaining five-some managed to straggle the rest of the way and the sun was getting hot. We got back to our cars around noon. A bit more than we bargained for but very worthwhile.



[Seaside Heliotrope]



Blueway and Observation Tower.



Mangrove Habitat

2019 FNPS 39th Annual Conference Registration is Open

Check out the FNPS website home page for the specifics about the upcoming State Conference, which is May 16-19 at the Plantation on Crystal River. “Transitions” is this year’s theme, which is pertinent to the Nature Coast region of Florida in a number of ways—sea level rise, migrations of ecosystems due to climate change, and the transition zone between north and south Florida. The region also has a large diversity of plant communities and the transitions between uplands and wetlands are common. So, go to www.fnps.org/conference/2019 and click on the speakers, field trips, plant sales, workshops, socials and more to see what is in store for you as an attendee.

Membership Renewals

This is just a reminder to renew your memberships as soon as you receive a notice from FNPS. We see Membership lists on the website in three categories: New Members, Dropped, and Due for Renewal. Your renewal date is based on the date that you became a Chapter Member. So, if your renewal lapses after 30 days, you are placed on the Dropped List. Then you will languish there for several months and eventually disappear. When you do renew, you will reappear on the New Members List. Obviously, there are people who join various organizations, then

lose interest and move on. It is our hope that most will stay with us for a longer period of time and contribute their talents to our organization. We need you, so make your renewal notices a priority.

Lemon Bay Historical Society

The Lemon Bay Historical Society is hosting a fundraiser for the Green Street Church Museum at the Englewood United Methodist Church Museum on Monday, May 6 at 6 pm. Donation is \$6 per person. Speaker is John McCarthy on, "The History of Manasota Key".

Dr. Marty Main, founder of Florida Master Naturalist speaks in Sarasota

The award-winning Florida Master Naturalist Program is a conservation education program for adults that included multiple courses taught by a statewide network of certified instructors. In 2014, The FMNP was recognized by the Ecological Society of America with Eugene P. Odum award for Excellence in Ecology Education. Dr Main is the founder of the FMNP. Currently, UF/IFAS and Mote Marine teach FMNP classes in Sarasota County and often highlight both State and County Parks during the field components of these classes. Sarasota Uplands class begins May 22. The Event is Free with limited seating , so register now! [Click here To see the flyer](#)

CHNEP Native Landscaping Workshop

Saturday May 18th at 10:00 am -noon

Please join CHNEP for a fun Native Landscaping Workshop. Between Rain Barrels and Reef balls, WETPLAN and native species guides, we, go through easy, effective ways YOU can help the environment and promote clean water in your own backyard.

Refreshments will be served.

The event will be held at the Punta Gorda Hall

326 W Marion Ave. Punta Gorda Florida 33 950

Registration needed.

Its the Bee's Knees!

Friday May 10 at 10 am - 2 pm

Join Florida Sea Grant and UF/IFAS to learn about bees and create your own bee's wax wrap. Trudy Norsworthy will speak on how and why bees make wax before a training class is held. This is a fun way to learn about pollinators and reduce your dependence on plastic!

\$5.00 donation, free for Florida Master Naturalists.

Where Environmental Campus Training Room B 25550 Harbor View Road, Port Charlotte, Florida 33980

Contact Julie Ryder (julie.ryder@charlottecountyfl.gov 941-764-4355 to register for this event.

The 2020 Photo Contest has begun

We welcome your submissions of photography and art for the Annual Photo Contest for the 2020 CHNEP Nature Calendar.

The contest deadline is July 1st, winners will be announced in Late August.

The CHNEP Nature Calendar showcases the beauty and diversity of our program area and is distributed to thousands all over Central and Southwest Florida.

For further questions contact CHNEP Outreach Associate Intern. Sierra Moen:

smoen@chnep.org or 941575-3385

Charlotte Harbor National Estuary Program]

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