

MANGROVE CHAPTER



Report from Your Acting President:

by Lois Cantwell, Past President

What a lovely Holiday Pot-luck supper we had in December! Lots of good food, good company (about 30 people attended), and good conversation. The Silent Auction presented lots of interesting choices. Thanks to all those who responded to the call for help and showed up early to help set up the room. Much appreciated.

Grant Report for Indigo Isles Mobile Home Park

Two ladies from Indigo Isles Mobile Home Park (Sandy Weston and Carol Prah) gave a presentation on their native planting project funded in part by a 2019 Mangrove Chapter Grant. They showed photos of the entire process, and the end result was such an improvement compared with the original plot, which was situated at the entrance to their park. Carol Leonard, past Grant Committee Chair, presented them with the signage that puts the finishing Carol Prahleir project. Pictured are Carol Prah, Sandy Weston and Carol Lenard



There will be four more \$250-grants available in 2020. Copies of these Grant Applications are at Cedar Point Environmental Park. Heads up Members: we need at least 3 people to volunteer for this committee going into the 2020-2021 season! Al, Bobbi and **Bonnie** are still on this committee until the end of April. Get on board early and learn how this is done.

Support Your Local Native Demonstration Garden!

It doesn't require a lot of "plant knowledge" to qualify for this Volunteer Opportunity. Whether you are a Mangrove Chapter member, local resident, or snow bird, this job is for you. Our "Garden Keepers" enjoy lots of camaraderie while performing the simple tasks of weeding, dead-heading, pruning, raking, refilling bird baths, potting up plants, mulching pathways, etc. We are at the demonstration garden on Monday mornings from 9:00-11:00 AM at Cedar Point Environmental Park. Stop by and check in with us. We also have a variety of native plants available for sale on those Mondays. We will continue to pot up more in the coming months. This is also an educational opportunity. Learn about "the natives" as you work with our group.

Pictured below are the Garden Keepers at a holiday luncheon, Left to right, Lois Cantwell, Carolyn Gregsak, Jane Wallace, Bonnie Moore, and Gail Finney. Not pictured are Marcia Gromada, Ann Caron, and Debbie Wiggins.



Update: Filling Vacant Positions on the Board

We are slowly making progress with open positions. Unfortunately, **none** have applied for the Officer's seats, as in Pres., VP, Sec, Treas., Chapter Rep. On the bright side, we have 4 volunteers for Field Trips, one sorting out the "where and when", and 3 as leaders. We would like a diverse group of "trail guides" in hopes of having at least 7 people to cover about 8 to 10 walks for the 2020-2021 season. People can pair up if they would like to do that. If you are currently leading walks for CHEC, LBC, or SC, you certainly qualify as candidates and welcome to join the list. Also, if any of you have suggestions regarding favorite parks, or specific locations that you would like to see on a field trip, please pass those along.

We also have 2 volunteers for the Membership and Historian Committee Chair positions! They will be working with Linda Wilson to get comfortable with those responsibilities.

So, here's the gig: For those who are having trepidations about taking on what might seem to be daunting tasks, remember that you are making these positions your own! Do as much or little as you see fit. Lend your own style to the job. Look at the Bylaws and make changes, cut back, modify, etc. Your current officers have taken on a lot of extra activities over the years—we wear multiple hats because no

one else was stepping up. Re-invent, re-design, down-size, and create a foundation you can build on. There are administrative people at FNPS that will assist you with any problems. Their contact info is on the website (www.fnps.org).

Times are changing, go with the flow. Just don't waste too much of it deciding to volunteer for something. The sooner you can get started, the greater the level of comfort. If you want to do your part to save this Chapter from dissolving, sign up now!

Free Programs from CHEC

Charlotte Harbor Environmental Center and the Charlotte County Natural Resource Department will be conducting the following free programs in **January 2020**. All programs can be found at www.ChecFlorida.org

Unless noted, all walks begin at **9:00 AM**. For directions or further information, call Cedar Point Environmental Park at **941-475-0769**

Thursday January 2 Join **Jessie Wilder** on a guided walk through the 81-acre **Bill Coy/Buck Creek Preserve** in Englewood. The scrubby flatwoods and mangrove swamp border Buck Creek, which flows into Lemon Bay. Meet in the parking lot.

Saturday January 4 Visit the waters of Lemon Bay on a single person, sit-on-top kayak with **Mike Weisensee** to search for marine life. All equipment provided. Participants must be ages 16 and above for the free educational program. Space is limited to 10 participants, so **registration is required**. Meet at **Cedar Point Environmental Park**.

Monday January 6 Get wild & wet! Join **Eileen Gerle** at **Cedar Point Park** on a **Seagrass Adventure Wading Trip** into Lemon Bay in search of marine organisms such as sea horse, crabs and juvenile fish. **Registration is required**.

Tuesday January 7 Join **Mike Weisensee** on a guided birding walk through the scrub and pine flatwoods of 217-acre **Amberjack Environmental Park** in Rotonda. Meet at the end of Gasparilla Pines Blvd. **Walk begins at 9 am (not 8 am as usual)**.

Tuesday January 7 Get wild & wet! Join **Eileen Gerle** at **Cedar Point Park** on a **Seagrass Adventure Wading Trip** into Lemon Bay in search of marine organisms such as sea horse, crabs and juvenile fish. **Registration required**.

Tuesday January 7 Join **Tyson Dallas**, FL Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission, on this **"Introduction to Some Invasive, Exotic Wildlife Species"** at **10 AM** at **Bayshore Live Oak Park** in Port Charlotte. These are animals that have become problematic and that we might encounter in our everyday lives. **Reservations are advised**.

Thursday January 9 Join **Jean Leavitt** on a guided walk through 308-

acre **Tippecanoe Environmental Park**. This Charlotte County park includes habitats such as scrub, pine flatwoods, marsh and wetlands. Meet behind the Charlotte County Sports Park.

Friday January 10 Join **Ruth Ward** on a guided walk through the old growth pine flatwoods and mangrove fringe of 125-acre **Oyster Creek/Ann Dever Regional Park** in Englewood. Meet at the San Casa entrance.

Saturday January 11 Visit the waters of Lemon Bay on a single person, sit-on-top kayak with **Diane Drewry** to search for marine life. All equipment provided. Participants must be ages 16 and above for the free educational program. Space is limited to 10 participants, so **registration is required**. Meet at **Cedar Point Environmental Park**.

Monday January 13 Join **Ruth Ward** on a guided walk through the scrub and pine flatwoods of 217-acre **Amberjack Environmental Park** in Cape Haze. Meet in the parking lot at the end of Gasparilla Pines Blvd.

Wednesday January 15 Join **Betty Staugler**, local Sea Grant Agent, on a “**Walk Along the Shoreline of Charlotte Harbor**” at **10 AM** at **Bayshore Live Oak Park** in Port Charlotte. Ms Staugler will cover mangrove identification and general ecology including special adaptations to the salty environment, and why mangroves are important and protected in Florida. **Reservations are advised**.

Friday January 17, 24 Take a tour of the historic “**Cookie House**” at **Cedar Point Environmental Park** from **1 – 4 pm** with Charlotte County Historical staff. Formerly known as the Bass Biological Laboratory, the scientific studies from this facility is linked to the world-renowned Mote Marine Laboratory. Cedar Point Park’s Visitor Center will be open as well.

Monday January 20 Get wild & wet! Join **Diane Drewry** at **Cedar Point Park** on a **Seagrass Adventure Wading Trip** into Lemon Bay in search of marine organisms such as sea horse, crabs and juvenile fish. **Registration is required**.

Tuesday January 21 Visit the waters of Lemon Bay on a single person, sit-on-top kayak with **Eileen Gerle** to search for marine life. All equipment provided. Participants must be ages 16 and above for the free educational program. Space is limited to 10 participants, so **registration is required**. Meet at **Cedar Point Environmental Park**.

Tuesday January 21 Join **Ruth Ward** on a guided walk through the old growth pine flatwoods and mangrove fringe of 125-acre **Oyster Creek/Ann Dever Regional Park** in Englewood. Meet at the San Casa entrance.

Wednesday January 22 Join Kate Borduas on a guided walk through the scrub and pine flatwoods of 217-acre **Amberjack Environmental Park** in Rotonda. Meet at the end of Gasparilla Pines Blvd.

Thursday January 23 Join **Jessie Wilder** on a guided walk through the old growth pine flatwoods and mangrove fringe of 125-acre **Oyster Creek/Ann Dever Regional Park** in Englewood. Meet at the San Casa entrance.

Thursday January 23 Join **Jean Leavitt** on a guided walk through 308-acre **Tippecanoe Environmental Park**. This Charlotte County park includes habitats such as scrub, pine flatwoods, marsh and wetlands. Meet behind the Charlotte County Sports Park.

Saturday January 25 Take a tour of the historic “**Cookie House**” at **Cedar Point Environmental Park** from **10 am – 2 pm** with Charlotte County Historical staff. Formerly known as the Bass Biological Laboratory, the scientific studies from this facility is linked to the world-renowned Mote Marine Laboratory.

Saturday January 25 CHEC welcomes all runners & walkers to “**Trek for CHEC**” at **Alligator Creek Preserve** in Punta Gorda beginning at **7:45 am**. This event will feature competitive runs and fun walks for people of all ages along the trails of State Lands and CHEC. Also available are food, live music, children’s activities, door prizes, a raffle, and more. Further information can be found at **www.CHECflorida.org**

Tuesday January 28 Join Historian **John McCarthy**, Executive Director of Historic Spanish Point, on “**The Impacts of Raising Seas**” to the preservation of local historical treasures, and how archeologists, local citizens, and Florida’s Native Americans are working to protect the past, at **Cedar Point Environmental Park**. Included in the lecture are complimentary wine and hors d’oeuvres. Socializing begins at **5:00 PM**, with the lecture to beginning at 5:30 PM. **\$12 per person** (\$8 for Friends of CHEC). Space is limited so **reservations are mandatory**. Phone 941-475-0769.

Thursday January 30 Join **Janet Laird**, Charlotte County Master Gardner, on “**Florida Native Plants for Smaller Yards**” at **10 AM** at **Bayshore Live Oak Park** in Port Charlotte. Using cut plant samples, Ms Laird will discuss characteristics of each plant and how to use them. **Reservations are advised**.

Go to
www.CHECflorida.org
for complete program calendar

“Rising Tides, Shifting Sands, Heritage in Peril”

Charlotte Harbor Environmental Center welcomes back **Historian John McCarthy**, Executive Director of Historic Spanish Point, for a fundraising event on **Tuesday, January 28, 2020**, at Cedar Point Environmental Park at **5 PM**. Mr. McCarthy will present on the impacts of rising seas to the preservation strategies of local historical treasures, such as Manasota Key Burial site, Historical Spanish Pint, and Egmont Key. Learn how archeologists, local citizens, and Florida’s Native Americans are working to protect the past.

Included in the \$12 entrance fee (\$8 for Friends of CHEC) are complimentary wine and hors d’oeuvres, as well as the lecture itself. Socializing is from 5:00 to 5:30 PM, with the lecture to begin at 5:30 PM.

This exciting program will be conducted at Cedar Point Environmental Park, 2300 Placida Road, Englewood, Florida. Space is limited so reservations are mandatory for the informational event. Phone 941-475-0769 to reserve your space.

Take a Walk on the Wild Side SeaGrass Wading Trips

Join a Seagrass Wading Adventure at Cedar Point Environmental Park in Englewood at 9 AM on the following dates:

January 6, 2020

January 7, 2020

January 20, 2020

February 6, 2020

February 17, 2020

March 10, 2020

After an introductory program on aquatic environments, participants will walk a short distance to Lemon Bay where, using dip nets and hand viewers, they will wade into the mangrove-protected waters in search of the plants and animals that reside there. This exciting hands-on activity is both educational and fun for people of all ages. Participation is limited therefore **pre-registration is necessary** for this free program. All children must be accompanied by an adult. For further information and/or to register, call Cedar Point Park at (941) 475-0769.

Seagrass Adventures are organized by the Charlotte Harbor Environmental Center and Charlotte County Parks, Recreation & Cultural Resources. Cedar Point Park is a Charlotte County facility located at 2300 Placida Road in Englewood. For further information, call (941) 475-0769.

Unintended Consequences of the Fertilizer Ordinance on Lee County Storm Water Ponds



Photo Credit The Observer Sarasota Florida

**The Mangrove Chapter of The
Florida Native Plant Society
Invites You To Their January
Program**

**“Unintended Consequences of the Fertilizer
Ordinance on Lee County Storm Water Ponds”**

By Dr. Ernesto Lasso de la Vega, Biologist at
the Lee County Hyacinth Control District

Tuesday, January 14, 2020

6:15 p.m. social/snacks

7:00 Program

Lemon Bay Park

570 Bay Park Blvd., Englewood

For more information: mangrovefnpschapters.org

*Meetings are held the 2nd Tuesday of Every Month October – May
Field Trips are held the last Saturday of Every Month*

Dr. Lasso de la Vega has been working at the Lee County Hyacinth Control District in Fort Myers since 1991 as a biologist controlling aquatic weeds. He is also the coordinator of the Pond Watch Program, a volunteer monitoring program that educates homeowners about ways to minimize aquatic weed problems. He earned his Master degree from Auburn University 1988 and his Doctorate degree from University of Central Florida in 2004. In addition, Dr. Lasso de la Vega has been teaching environmental science, biology and microbiology at local universities in southwest Florida for the past 25 years to the present.

The Lee County Fertilizer Ordinance was implemented in 2008. Data collected since then by volunteers in the Pond Watch Program of the Lee County Hyacinth Control District indicates that nutrient run-off impacts may have changed do to landscape practices and other environmental factors. One of the requirements of the Fert. Ord. is a “black out” period (June 1 to Sept. 30) when fertilizer should not be applied to the lawns.

Data from the Pond Watch Program has found interesting facts regarding the fertilizers used by landscape companies and homeowners in southwest Florida.

Professor Doug Tallamy urges homeowners to cut lawn area in half

**Adding plants, shrubs, and trees will store carbon and reduce
mowing time.**

For many homeowners, weekends are synonymous with mowing, fertilizing, and watering.

“Lawn has been a status symbol for centuries, and we have bought into the commercials that tell us if it’s not a perfect lawn, our neighbors will hate us and, you know, we’re just not good citizens,” says Doug Tallamy, an author and professor at the University of Delaware.

Tallamy wants to change this way of thinking. He says perfectly manicured grass does not benefit the climate or biodiversity.

“What I suggest is we cut the area of lawn in half,” Tallamy says, “We have an area of lawn the size of New England in the U.S. right now. We’ve got to reduce that. So just look at your yard, and say, ‘I’m going to cut it in half and I’m going to cut it in half by putting plants into my yard.’”

But not just any pretty plants. Tallamy urges people to use native species that provide food and habitat for pollinators and other wildlife. And to help the climate, he says to include more than flowers. Plant shrubs and trees that will absorb and store more carbon.

The idea is to think not only about beauty but how your landscaping can also benefit the environment. “It’s a brand new way for people to look at the role of their yards,” he says.

And it’s an approach that might also free up a few more of your weekend hours.
Reporting credit: ChavoBart Digital Media.

Save the Date

14th Annual Plant Native Day

March 14, 2020

Gardening for Butterflies

What’s up in my Garden

by Lois Cantwell

It’s all about the berries! This time of year, with the coming holidays and cooler weather, having native berry-bearing shrubs in the yard, laden with fruits for the birds is a real bonus. My three wild coffee species and the rouge plants were all in full-fruit when I returned from my northern retreat. It puts one in a more festive spirit, seeing all that red-and-green all around the yard. In addition, there is also the brilliant purple hue of the beauty-berries thrown in for good measure. Those particular shrubs were extra productive this fall, the branches so heavy with berries they were bending over, and the birds have been after them. I enjoy planting for wild life.



Wild Coffee Shrub



Wild (Shiney Leaf) Coffee
Berries



Velvet Leaf Coffee Berries

However, my “coffee plantation” has become almost too plentiful. I have nearly a solid “hedgerow” about 5 to 6 feet tall in some areas all through the back yard. Other wild

coffees have grown up in the front and side yards to the point that selective removal is eminent. Too bad they don't transplant well. Then, there are the zillions of confluent little sprouts underneath, so maybe some will be potted up and passed along to new homes before they take over my entire yard. (Watch for them in our plant raffles).



Beauty Berry



Bahama Coffee



Rouge Plant

Speaking of little sprouts, my big sea grape went into overdrive and had the most abundant blooming time this past spring than I have ever seen. Fast forward to my return in the fall and there was a “carpet” of sprouts in the grassy areas below where the seeds fell. In early November, I saw an occasional bloom, plus there were scattered drupes of fruit in early stages of ripening. It seemed very unusual for this time of year. You just never know what you are going to find when you get out and tour your yard each day.

Native verses NonNative Milkweeds

Recently the Chapter was asked about using non-native milkweed to feed monarch butterflies as opposed to native milkweed. Our Past President, Lois Cantwell provided this response.

Our Mangrove Chapter, FNPS pulled this non-native milkweed from our Native Plant Demonstration Garden at Cedar Point Environmental Park a number of years ago in order to qualify for an award from the FNPS organization as a “native” garden, which is a specific reason, but stated here as the reason why it was removed. We do have a “butterfly garden” component to the demonstration garden area, but the emphasis here is providing a diversity of nectar sources to not only butterflies, but to pollinators in general. The winter months, even in Florida, are difficult for pollinators, as there are so many fewer nectar sources for them during the cooler season. Many people choose to use non-native milkweed to support the monarchs in particular, as this “introduced” species of milkweed does not die back in the colder months, as do the native *Asclepia* species.

The use of non-native milkweed in butterfly gardens has been controversial for a long time, and subject to a number of theories and debates, mostly centered around the role that it may play, at least in Florida, in the proliferation of “OE Disease” in the Florida population of monarchs, which are typically not migratory in the sense that the rest of the general population of monarchs are. The problem with milkweeds, of which there are 21 species that are native to Florida, is that they are not as readily available commercially nor are they as easy to grow and propagate. The combination of non-migratory monarchs, who are dependent on milkweed specifically as a larval host, and the prevalent use of the non-native milkweed contributes to the heavier exposure of our local monarch population to the plants that are infected with a parasitic protozoa *Oe* (*Ophryocystis elektroscirrha*), resulting in a higher mortality rate in this population compared with those that migrate throughout the rest of the continental U. S.

It gets even more complicated when you factor in the toxicity of milkweed that the

monarchs depend on as a protection from predators. The female lays her eggs on the milkweed, so that the hatching larvae feeding on the milkweed plants can ingest this “poison” that protects them from being eaten by birds and other predators that find them distasteful, although paper wasps and anoles seem to prey on the smaller caterpillars with little ill effect. The Oe protozoa do not tolerate this toxicity. However not all milkweeds are created equal in the amount of these toxins that they produce. They are dependent on the type of soils in which they are grown. It seems that certain types of mycorrhizal fungi in the soil have a lot to do with this.

So it gets down to the quality of the soil in which milkweeds grow—“bad quality” soils don’t produce the same mixtures of symbiotic fungus that affects the level of toxicity in the plants. Perhaps the native local genotypes of milkweed have established a symbiotic relationship with Florida soils, whereas the much-used “introduced” non-natives have not, therefore contributing to the proliferation of Oe disease in this population of monarchs. And the debate goes on...

Trek for CHEC

Saturday, January 25, 2020
10941 Burnt Store Road, Punta Gorda, FL 33955

Hosted by and held at the
Charlotte Harbor Environmental Center

Same day on-site registration from 6:30 - 7:30 a.m.
10K event begins at 7:45 a.m.
Performance T-shirts included for all 10K and 5K participants registered prior to December 20, 2019!

1st Annual Trek for CHEC
Formerly "Hands Across the Harbor"
2020

- 10K Competitive Trail Run
- 5K Trail Run / Fun Walk
- 1 Mile Trail Fun Walk

Family-friendly activities until 3 p.m.
Food Trucks!
Go to RunSignup.com and our web page for more information!

Raffle Tickets for Sale!
Fabulous Door Prize!
1 Ticket - \$1.00 ~ 6 Tickets - \$5.00
15 Tickets - \$10.00
Need not be present to win! Winners will be notified.

25/25 - 50 Raffle!
2 Lucky Winners!
1 Ticket - \$2.00 ~ 6 Tickets - \$10.00
9 Tickets - \$15.00 ~ 13 Tickets - \$20.00
Need not be present to win! Winners will be notified.

www.checflorida.org/trekforchec

We welcome all runners & walkers to our first annual Trek for CHEC event on **Saturday, January 25, 2020**. This event will feature competitive runs and fun walks for people of all ages. There will be food trucks, a band, special activities such as “how to fish” lessons for younger children, a Fabulous Door Prize raffle, a 25/25-50 raffle, and more! Our mission is to build awareness and encourage conservation of our area’s rich natural resources while protecting the environment. Proceeds will help further environmental educational programs for children and adults. We hope to see you

there!

The first event is a 10K competitive run. The second event is a dual 5K competitive run and 5K fun walk. The third event is a 1 mile fun walk for younger children. The first event begins at 7:45 a.m. Several (trail) routes will be used simultaneously and at staggered times – see attached and/or website (**www.CHECflorida.org**) for further information and to register.

Call for Research Track Papers and Poster Presentations

Florida Native Plant Society 2020 Conference

The Florida Native Plant Society Annual Conference will be held at the University of North Florida, Jacksonville, Florida, May 14-17, 2020. The Research Track of the Conference will include presented papers and a poster session on Friday May 15 and Saturday May 16.

Researchers are invited to submit abstracts on research related to native plants and plant communities of Florida including preservation, conservation, and restoration.

Presentations are planned to be 20 minutes in total length (15 min. presentation, 5 min. questions).

Abstracts of not more than 200 words should be submitted as a MS Word file by email to Paul A. Schmalzer paul.a.schmalzer@nasa.gov by February 1, 2020. Include title, affiliation, and address. Indicate whether you will be presenting a paper or poster.

Volunteer Sweeps for Kayak Trips Cedar Point Environmental Park

We need volunteer sweeps for the following kayak trips dates with the following leaders:

FY 2020 Kayaks 15 CP; 5 AC

Jan 21	Eileen/
Feb 11	Diane/
Mar 7	Eileen/
. Mar 21	Diane/
Apr 14	Diane/
May 2	Eileen/

From 8:30 AM to 1 PM.

Contact for more information:

Bobbi Rodgers

Resource Manager

Charlotte Harbor Environmental Center

Cedar Point Environmental Park site

941-475-0769

Mangrove Chapter Florida Native Plant Society

P.O. Box 5197, Englewood, FL 34224-1153