

Volume 34: Number 4 > 2018

The Quarterly Journal of the Florida Native Plant Society



Palmetto



Milkvines of Florida • WeDigFLPlants • Policy & Plants • Encouraging News for Land Conservation

October is Florida Native Plant Month

By Andy Taylor

The Florida Native Plant Society is gearing up for 2018 Florida Native Plant Month by building on the success of past years. The program began in 2015 as a publicity and membership campaign for FNPS, as well as a way to bring members together to share the importance of native plants with their local governments.

Last year's event brought recognition from 41 cities and counties across Florida, including first time Florida Native Plant Month proclamations by Sumter County, the City of Miami Beach and the City of Punta Gorda. Among the many local governments who issued proclamations in previous years and participated again in 2017 were Hillsborough County, Lake County, Pinellas County, the City of Naples and the City of Tallahassee.

Proclamations provide an opportunity for FNPS chapters and their partners to share accomplishments with local leaders. Charlotte Harbor National Estuary Program (CHNEP) Deputy Director Liz Donley attended the 2017 City of Punta Gorda's proclamation and

encouraged FNPS to discuss the partnerships and programs the two organizations have collaborated on in the past.

Florida Native Plant Month also generates media attention at the local level. In 2017, the initiative was featured in the Suwannee County Democrat as well as other weekly papers throughout the state.

FNPS would like to thank the Hillsborough County Soil and Water Conservation District for being a Platinum Sponsor of the 2017 Florida Native Plant Month, and the NAUI Green Diver Initiative for sponsoring all three years of the program. Thanks also to FNPS members Anne Cox and Andy Taylor for coordinating the proclamations and ensuring membership brochures were available for the event. For more photos of the 2017 event, visit <https://fnps.org/news/plantmonth/2017>.

To download a poster for 2018 Florida Native Plant Month, visit <https://fnps.org/news/plantmonth>.



Above, from left: Hillsborough County: Betty Jo Tompkins, Commissioner Al Higginbotham, Mary McCahon, Andy Taylor, Bill Guglielmi, Devon Higginbotham.



Above, from left: Citrus County: Donna Suresch, Ruth Ditmar, Theresa Waldron, Sue Wasserman, Jodi Lanier, Deb Daniels, Gail Taylor, Ben Berauer.



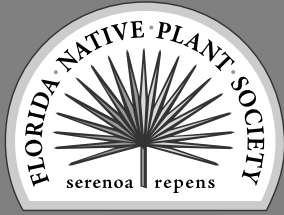
Above, from left: City of Tallahassee: Mayor Andrew Gillum, Louie Castillo, Gail Fishman, Commissioner Nancy Miller, Dara Miles.



Above, from left: City of Punta Gorda: Liz Donley (CHNEP), Al Squires, Andy Taylor.



Above, from left: Brevard County: Carol Herbert, Commissioner Curt Smith, and Susan Valencia.



Palmetto

FNPS Board of Directors

Officers

President	Susan Carr
Past President.....	Catherine Bowman
Vice President, Finance	Vacant
Vice President, Administration	Don Spence
Treasurer	Vacant
Secretary.....	Jacqueline Rolly

Committee Chairs

Communication	Shirley Denton
Conference	Marlene Rodak
Conservation	Todd Angel
Education	Vacant
Finance	Vacant
Land Management Partners	Grace Howell
Landscape.....	Ronald Blair
Membership	Anne Cox
Policy & Legislation.....	Eugene Kelly
Science	Paul Schmalzer

Council of Chapters

Chair.....	Kara Driscoll
Vice Chair	Gail Parsons
Secretary.....	Athena Philips

Directors-at-Large

Wendy Poag
Carol Sullivan
Christine Warren

To contact board members:

Visit www.fnps.org or write care of: FNPS
PO Box 278, Melbourne, FL 32902-0278

Society Services

Administrative Services	Cammie Donaldson
Editor, <i>Palmetto</i>	Marjorie Shropshire
Editor, <i>Sabal minor</i>	Maran Hilgendorf
Executive Director.....	Juliet Rynear
Social Media.....	Sarah Garcia
Webmaster	Paul Rebmann

MEMBERSHIP

Make a difference with FNPS

Your membership supports the preservation and restoration of wildlife habitats and biological diversity through the conservation of native plants. It also funds awards for leaders in native plant education, preservation and research.

Memberships are available in these

categories: Individual; Multi-person household; Sustaining; Lifetime; Full-time student; Library (*Palmetto* subscription only); Business or Non-profit recognition.

To provide funds that will enable us to protect Florida's native plant heritage, please join or renew at the highest level you can afford.

To become a member:

Contact your local chapter, call, write, or e-mail FNPS, or join online at www.fnps.org/join

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.

Follow FNPS online:

Blog: <http://fnpsblog.blogspot.com/>
Facebook: www.facebook.com/FNPSfans
Twitter: twitter.com/FNPSonline
LinkedIn: Groups, Florida Native Plant Society

Features

4 Milkvines of Florida

There are six native Florida wildflowers commonly called milkvines for their milky sap and vining growth habit. Roger Hammer examines the species and their interesting history.

8 WeDigFLPlants

The WeDigFLPlants project seeks to engage everyone with an interest in Florida's flora. Find out how you can participate in this fun and educational effort to complete the *Flora of Florida* digitally. *Article by Austin Mast and Joel Timyan.*

10 Policy and Plants:

How Chapters are Making a Difference

The "Take Your Lawmaker on a Field Trip" challenge invited FNPS chapters to organize educational field trips for local and state legislators. Three chapters rose to the challenge. *Article by Susan Carr, Sondra Driscoll, Sonya Guidry, Amanda Martin and Winnie Said.*

12 Encouraging News for Land Conservation

FNPS members played a pivotal role in the Florida Legislature's approval of \$100.8 million to fund the Florida Forever land conservation program. But there is more work to be done. *Article by Gene Kelly.*

Palmetto

Editor: Marjorie Shropshire – Visual Key Creative, Inc. pucpuggy@bellsouth.net • (772) 285-4286

(ISSN 0276-4164) Copyright 2018, Florida Native Plant Society, all rights reserved. No part of the contents of this magazine may be reproduced by any means without written consent of the editor. *Palmetto* is published four times a year by the Florida Native Plant Society (FNPS) as a benefit to members. The observations and opinions expressed in attributed columns and articles are those of the respective authors and should not be interpreted as representing the official views of the Florida Native Plant Society or the editor, except where otherwise stated.

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.

ON THE COVER: Florida milkvine (*Matelea floridana*) is a state-listed endangered species that occurs in hardwood forests scattered discontinuously from Jackson, Calhoun, and Liberty Counties east to Duval and Clay Counties, and south to Hillsborough and Polk Counties. Photo by Roger L. Hammer.



The Milkvines of Florida

Article and photos by Roger L. Hammer

There are six native Florida wildflowers commonly called milkvines (for their milky sap and vining growth habit), with three species restricted to the northern counties and three others that range into Central Florida as far south as Lake Okeechobee. These are members of the Apocynaceae, or dogbane family, and are related to the well-known milkweeds in the genus *Asclepias* that are so beloved by gardeners as larval host plants for monarch and queen butterflies. The genera of milkvines in Florida include *Chthamalia*, *Gonolobus*, and *Matelea*.



Facing page: Sandhill spiny pod (*Chthamalia pubiflora*). **Above, clockwise from upper left:** Angle pod milkvine (*Gonolobus suberosus*), yellow Carolina milkvine (*Matelea flavidula*), Alabama milkvine (*Matelea alabamensis*), Baldwin's milkvine (*Matelea baldwyniana*).



Above: Florida milkvine (*Matelea floridana*).

There is also a closely related, non-native vine called latexplant (*Morrenia [Araujia] odorata*) that is naturalized from South America and first recorded in Florida in the early 1970s. It has fragrant, star-shaped flowers with 5 pale-green lobes and a white central column.

Sandhill spiny pod or trailing milkvine (*Chthamalia pubiflora*) occurs in sandhill habitat from Madison, Suwannee, Columbia, and Clay Counties south to Hillsborough, Polk, and Highlands Counties, where it flowers from April into June. *Chthamalia* means “spreading on the ground,” and relates to its typical growth habit. The name *pubiflora* translates to “hairy flowers.” This state-listed endangered species was described in 1844 by botanist Joseph Decaisne (1807–1882) and later moved to the genus *Matelea* in 1941 by botanist Robert Everard Woodson (1904–1963). It has also been placed in *Gonolobus* (1877), *Vincetoxicum* (1900), and *Edisonia* (1933). Following a study of the evolution and systematics of American milkvines, Oklahoma State University Ph.D. candidate Angela McDonnell relegated it back to the genus *Chthamalia* in 2017. Its stems average 20”–28” long, with hairy, heart-shaped, opposite leaves that range up to 2” long

and nearly equally as wide. The greenish brown, 3/8” flowers are densely covered with coarse hairs internally. Cucumber-like pods bear short, soft spines. The “ch” at the beginning of *Chthamalia* is silent, in case you were wondering how to pronounce such a cumbersome-looking name. It was photographed at the Carter Creek Preserve in Highlands County.

Angle pod milkvine (*Gonolobus suberosus*) occurs in woodlands across the Florida Panhandle south through the peninsula to Charlotte, Lee, Glades, and Brevard Counties, flowering from April to October. The name *Gonolobus* refers to the angled pods and *suberosus* alludes to the corky bark on mature stems. Botanist Robert Brown (1773–1858) moved this species to the genus *Gonolobus* from *Cynanchum* in 1810, and there is still much nomenclatural disagreement regarding this state-listed threatened species. The flowers are self-incompatible and require cross-pollination by insects carrying pollinia from the flowers on one plant to another, so there is generally low fruit-set. The opposite leaves of this twining vine are somewhat heart-shaped and measure 4”–6” wide. Axillary, star-shaped, 1/2”–5/8” flowers are usually maroon to brownish at the base and green or yellowish toward the tips. It was photographed at Florida Caverns State Park in Jackson County.

Matelea is closely allied to the genus *Gonolobus* and was named by French botanist Jean Baptiste Christophore Fusée Aublet (1720–1778). It is believed to be a French Guiana aboriginal name for the species Aublet described (*Matelea palustris* is the type species). In 1762, Aublet was sent to Cayenne, French Guiana for the purpose of preparing an herbarium of about 400 tropical plants in preparation of writing his 1775 publication, *Histoire des plantes de la Guiane Française (History of the Plants of French Guiana)*.

Alabama milkvine (*Matelea alabamensis*) is a state-listed endangered species found in deciduous woods and along ravine slopes of Georgia and Alabama south into Walton, Liberty, and Gadsden Counties in the Florida Panhandle. It flowers from April into June. Stems of this species reach 6’ in length with cordate (heart-shaped) leaves to 6” long and 4” wide. The fly-pollinated, green, 1” flowers have intricate venation and a white central column surrounded by a dark yellow ring. A distinguishing characteristic is the yellow star formed in the center of the column. It was photographed in a privately-owned deciduous hardwood forest in Gadsden County.

Baldwin’s milkvine (*Matelea baldwyniana*) can be found in bluff forests of Jackson and Gadsden Counties in the upper central panhandle, where it flowers from April to August. Despite the spelling of the name, *baldwyniana* honors American physician and botanist William Baldwin (1779–1819). It is a state-listed endangered species due to its limited natural range in Florida. The broadly ovate (egg-shaped) leaf blades of this species reach about 5” long and are deeply cordate at the base. The branched, axillary, flowering stems are topped with clusters of 5-lobed, white, 1/2” flowers. It was photographed at the

Angus Gholson Nature Park in Gadsden County.

Yellow Carolina milkvine (*Matelea flavidula*) is a state-listed endangered species found in deciduous bluff forests of Washington, Liberty, Gadsden, and Duval Counties where it flowers from April into June. It was first described in 1878 as *Gonolobus flavidulus* by botanist Alvan Wentworth Chapman (1809–1899) but was moved to the genus *Matelea* in 1941 by botanist Robert Everard Woodson (1904–1963). The name *flavidula* (or *flavidulus*) means “yellowish green” and alludes to the flower color. The heart-shaped, opposite leaves reach 1" long and 1/2" wide with yellowish green, 3/4" flowers clustered in the leaf axils. The flowers somewhat resemble *Matelea alabamensis* but lack the star on top of the column. It was photographed in a privately-owned deciduous hardwood forest in Gadsden County.

Florida milkvine (*Matelea floridana*) is a state-listed endangered species that occurs in hardwood forests scattered discontinuously from Jackson, Calhoun, and Liberty Counties east to Duval and Clay Counties, and south to Hillsborough and Polk Counties. There is, however, a single 1969 collection from Miami-Dade County made by botanist Robert W. Long (1927–1976) in Brickell Hammock at the corner of US1 and the Rickenbacker Causeway in Coconut Grove. Most of Brickell Hammock was razed during the land boom after railroad magnate Henry Morrison Flagler (1830–1913) brought his railroad south from Palm Beach County at the behest of American businesswoman Julia DeForest Tuttle (1849–1898), who envisioned the area around the Miami River and Biscayne Bay becoming a great city. One remnant parcel of old Brickell Hammock happens to be in Alice Wainwright Park, right where the specimen of *Matelea floridana* was collected in 1969, so it may be a worthwhile venture to see if there is a remote chance that it could still be present. The name *floridana* relates to Florida, where it was first collected and then described in 1899 as *Vincetoxicum floridanum* by botanist Anna Murray Vail (1863–1955). *Vincetoxicum* means “poison beater” and alludes to its perceived antidotal properties for venomous snake bites, with doubtful benefits. It blooms from April to August and the maroon flowers are about 5/8" wide, borne on a twining vine with heart-shaped leaves that reach up to 4" long. It was photographed at the Tiger Creek Preserve in Polk County.

In November 2017, Alan Franck of the University of Florida alerted me to the presence of an unknown species of *Gonolobus* growing on a fence north of Homestead in the Redland district, not far from my home. My wife, Michelle, and I visited this site on November 29 and found the plants clambering across a field fence along with *Jasminum fluminense*, *Ipomoea hederifolia*, *Momordica charantia*, and other weedy species. The identity of this species is still uncertain but Alan Franck suspects that it could be *Gonolobus taylorianus*, native to Central America, and perhaps introduced locally as a food item. Although all parts of *Matelea* species, especially the

seeds and latex, are poisonous, immature fruits of *Gonolobus taylorianus* are cut on each end to remove the latex, then the skin is scraped off. They are then salted to taste, but this sounds more like famine food than a gourmet snack. We hope to monitor the population during the spring and summer of 2018 to catch it in flower and get a positive identification.

Mark Fishbein, professor of botany at Oklahoma State University is currently working on the treatment of this group of plants for the Flora of North America project, so expect some new taxonomic revisions in the near future.

Our native milkvines are seldom seen in cultivation but are worthy garden subjects within their natural range in Florida. To photograph this interesting group of vines, I was a lucky, and grateful, recipient of the generosity of Kris DeLaney, Virginia Craig, Billy Bailey, Floyd Griffith, and Tom & Helen Roth, who helped locate plants in flower and kept me from having to wander aimlessly for weeks, or even months, looking for them. To quote The Beatles, “I get by with a little help from my friends.”

About the Author

Roger L. Hammer is an award-winning professional naturalist, author, botanist and photographer. His most recent book is *Complete Guide to Florida Wildflowers*. Find him online at www.rogerlhammer.com



Call for Research Track Papers and Poster Presentations

Florida Native Plant Society 2019 Conference

The Florida Native Plant Society Annual Conference will be held at the Plantation on Crystal River, Crystal River, Florida, May 16-19, 2019. The Research Track of the Conference will include presented papers and a poster session on Friday May 17 and Saturday May 18.

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 length. This includes 15 minutes for the presentation, and 5 minutes for questions.

Abstracts of not more than 200 words should be submitted as a MS Word file by email to Paul A. Schmalzer at paul.a.schmalzer@nasa.gov by February 1, 2019. Include title, affiliation, and address. Indicate whether you will be presenting a paper or poster.

WeDigFLPlants has completing the historical baseline for the *Flora of Florida* in its sights and needs your help to do it.

How do we reconstruct the changes to Florida's flora over the past 200 years and determine where our plant species are distributed today? Largely from the million-plus plant specimens collected in Florida during that time and now curated in the world's herbaria. However, our ability to use the data associated with those Florida-collected specimens (including identification, date and collection location, and other information) is hindered by the fact that perhaps only half of the specimens are currently represented digitally and available for discovery at common go-to sites for finding the data online (Fig. 1).

The WeDigFLPlants project seeks to expeditiously mobilize all of the remaining data largely languishing in herbarium cabinets for more effective conservation, management, and enjoyment of our flora. The project's strategy is to engage everyone with an interest in Florida's flora in the process in ways they find to be satisfying – educational, social, or otherwise fun. Furthermore, the WeDigFLPlants vision of a completed historical baseline for our flora aligns nicely with the FNPS mission to “promote the preservation, conservation, and restoration of the native plants and native plant communities of Florida.” Here, we briefly describe how you can contribute to a completed picture of our flora and make the most of existing educational and social event resources.

Notes from Nature

At present, the core activity of the WeDigFLPlants project occurs on the Notes from Nature platform (notesfromnature.org). At Notes from Nature, biodiversity collections like herbaria post images of their specimens that include the specimen label, and then guide participants through a short series of responses. As illustrated by Fig. 2, a participant might be asked to type in



Figure 1: A summary view of the 522,000+ Florida-collected herbarium specimens already digitized and available online. iDigBio (iDigBio.org) aggregates specimen data from many of the world's herbaria. Researchers, conservationists, natural resource managers, and others rely on this specimen data, and you might find it useful as you plan a hike, search for a species to photograph, or plan public policy.

the locality, habitat, and plant description from the label. Other requested entries for this particular example are seen on other pages, including county, collector number, and collection date. Some important fields, including scientific name, country and state, were collected by the imaging technician at the herbarium curating the specimen and so do not need to be input by the participant. A brief project tutorial and help buttons provide guidance as the participant works.

WeDigFLPlants bundles the specimens into what Notes from Nature playfully calls “expeditions.” These are sets of specimens grouped in a way to make them interesting to the target audience, perhaps using taxonomy, geography, or something else. The specimen shown in Fig. 2 is a part of the WeDigFLPlants’ Comfort Food Relatives of Florida expedition, which includes Florida-collected specimens from the plant families that give us potato, sweet potato, yam and the Andean starch *oca*. As of May 2018, eighteen Florida-focused expeditions have been completed involving just over 62,000 transcriptions. WeDigFLPlants expeditions typically include “WeDigFLPlants” in the title so it is easy for participants to find them among the available Notes from Nature expeditions.

Biospex

Biospex might be thought of as the base-camp for the Notes from Nature expeditions. Its name is shorthand for “Biodiversity Specimen Expeditions.” The WeDigFLPlants administrators bundle specimen images into Notes from Nature expeditions at Biospex, steps that are perhaps not interesting to most people. But what is potentially interesting is the public dashboard that Biospex creates for each of its projects. The WeDigFLPlants page (<https://biospex.org/project/wedigflplants>) plots the number of transcriptions through time across expeditions and produces a heat map showing the number of specimens transcribed from each Florida county (Fig. 3) as well as providing further information about WeDigFLPlants.

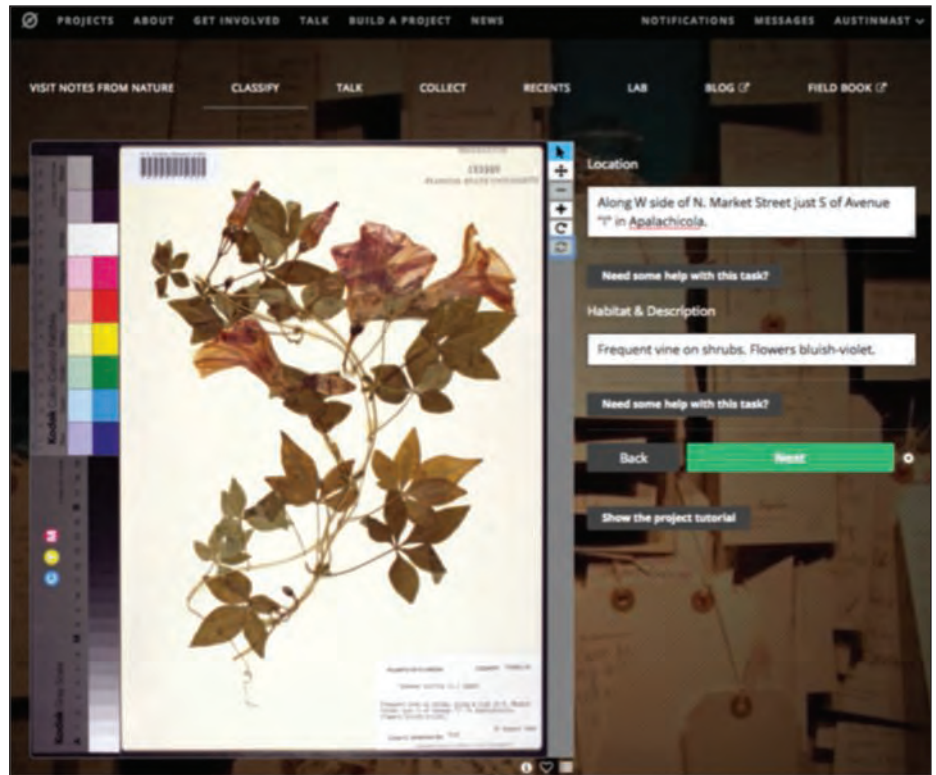


Figure 2: The Notes from Nature interface. WeDigFLPlants participation is currently centered on Notes from Nature (notesfromnature.org). Herbaria digitally image their specimens, then WeDigFLPlants participants provide information from the specimen labels (e.g., location, habitat, and description). Participants initially see the entire specimen but can then zoom and pan so that the label is larger and more easily read.

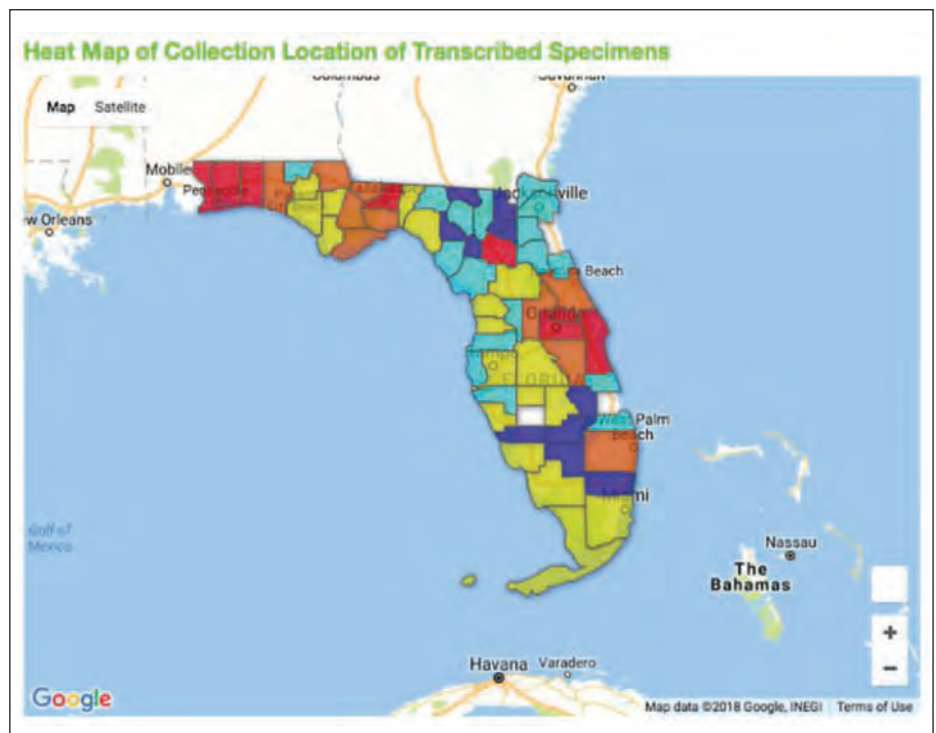


Figure 3: WeDigFLPlants heat map on the project’s Biospex dashboard. Biospex provides a plot of transcriptions through time and this heat map shows the number of specimens transcribed from each county, as well additional project information, at <https://biospex.org/project/wedigflplants>.

Online Educational Resources

Should you still be unclear on the value of herbarium specimens to science and society, or simply interested in learning more, two online videos originally created for high school science classes are a good place to start. The first, “Library of Scientific Plant Samples: Step inside an Herbarium,” provides an overview of the process of plant specimen collecting, archiving, and digitizing (<http://www.cpalms.org/Public/PreviewResourcePerspectivesVideo/Preview/166547>). The second, “Crowd-sourced Herbarium Data Transcription,” explains the process of entering the information from herbarium labels at Notes from Nature (<http://www.cpalms.org/Public/PreviewResourcePerspectivesVideo/Preview/166555>).

If you are a teacher interested in using Notes from Nature to engage your high school or undergraduate students in an authentic science activity, use the reviewed, Americans with Disabilities Act-compliant lesson plan entitled “Help Behind-the-Scenes at a Museum as a Citizen Scientist,” mapped to Florida education standards (www.cpalms.org/Public/PreviewResourceLesson/Preview/171734). Additional online educator resources can be found at WeDigBio’s Education Exercises page (<https://www.wedigbio.org/content/educational-exercises>).

Herbaria are our community’s observatories. They provide an expansive view of plant diversity across time and space to benefit science and society.

WeDig Project Names

You will notice the similarity between the project names WeDigFLPlants and WeDigBio. The Worldwide Engagement for Digitizing Biocollections (WeDigBio) project produces a popular annual 4-day event during which museums, universities, libraries, and other organizations host specimen digitization blitzes. Organizations such as the Field Museum in Chicago, Natural History Museum in London, *Naturhistorisk* Museum in Oslo, and Australian Museum in Sydney participate. WeDigFLPlants began as a WeDigBio pilot project for autonomous “WeDigInterest” groups that could maintain the excitement and productivity of the annual global WeDigBio Event throughout the year.

WeDigFLPlants is piloting this strategy of aligning specimens in need of digitization, in this case, Florida-collected plant specimens, with the missions of existing organizations including Florida’s herbaria, the Florida Native Plant Society (FNPS), and others. We then produce resources to ensure

mutual benefits among the parties such as online educational resources. You can see how the initial and, we hope, future successes of WeDigFLPlants could be replicated with other states and other groups (birds, fossils, insects, etc.), and parallel projects have emerged in Virginia, Arkansas, and other places.

WeDigFLPlants hosted an August 2017 workshop that engaged representatives of Florida’s herbaria, FNPS, the Florida Master Gardener and Master Naturalists programs, the Florida Wildflower Foundation, Notes from Nature, Biospex, and a few other interested projects to identify shared education and outreach goals for the project. WeDigFLPlants emerged as the earliest WeDigInterest group because several of the founders of WeDigBio, Notes from Nature, and Biospex are based at Florida universities.

Social Event Resources

Individual participation in WeDigFLPlants can happen throughout the year, but you might also be motivated by the social opportunities that a digitization blitz provides. Digitization blitzes are informal social events that might have a specific digitization goal and could be complemented by other activities such as a collection tour, field trip, or research talk. Many digitization blitzes are organized during the WeDigBio Event, but they need not be.

The WeDigBio Event began in 2015, and Florida herbaria have been involved since the beginning in holding digitization blitzes and producing resources for other digitization blitz planners. For example, Florida State University’s Robert K. Godfrey Herbarium developed several of the games now widely used during the WeDigBio Event, including Timeline Tracker, Habitat Bingo, Morphology Bingo, and Geolocator (<http://wedigbio.org/content/games>). Each of the games encourages participants to think more deeply about what they are seeing as they contribute, and to recognize how each of the specimens adds a piece to a larger picture of diversity and distribution.

We encourage FNPS chapters to consider hosting a local event focused on WeDigFLPlants activities, especially during the four days of the 2018 WeDigBio Event (Oct. 18–21). The WeDigBio project provides event planning resources (<https://www.wedigbio.org/content/event-planning>), and we encourage you to consider organizing a chapter event during the WeDigBio Event. Biospex is currently testing an interface that permits Notes from Nature contributors to form teams (as defined by chapter membership) during events like WeDigBio and to monitor the team’s progress.

Thank You For Your Participation

As of March 2018, WeDigFLPlants has a new logo, which is now appearing on stickers and hats (Fig. 4). The “I” in “DIG” represents Sea Oats (*Uniola paniculata*), and we have

added the tagline “Digitizing Natural History Together.” “Dig” in WeDigFLPlants is pronounced with a hard G, but it is a reference to the word “digitizing.” We will be pleased to send you a sticker as a token of our thanks for contributing 50 transcriptions, or if you contribute 200 transcriptions to WeDigFLPlants at Notes from Nature, you will receive a hat. If you think you qualify for one of these, please contact Austin at amast@bio.fsu.edu.



Figure 4: WeDigFLPlants hat and sticker. As a sporty token of appreciation, WeDigFLPlants will send a sticker to those who complete 50 transcriptions for the project and a hat to those who complete 200. Photo by Jillian Goodwin.

Conclusion

Herbaria are our community’s observatories. They provide an expansive view of plant diversity across time and space to benefit science and society. Let’s work together to build the most complete view of Florida’s flora possible. Join us on WeDigFLPlants activities at Notes from Nature (notesfromnature.org), track WeDigFLPlants progress on Biospex (<https://biospex.org/project/wedigflplants>), follow @WeDigFLPlants on Twitter, and contact us should you have any questions or suggestions. Thanks for considering this!

About the Authors

Austin Mast is a professor in Florida State University’s Department of Biological Science, director of FSU’s Robert K. Godfrey Herbarium, and current president of the Society of Herbarium Curators. He teaches Field Botany, Plants & Society, and other courses at FSU. Austin cofounded the WeDigBio Project and is deeply involved in iDigBio, Notes from Nature, Biospex, and WeDigFLPlants.

Joel Timyan is an ecologist and international consultant in environmental management, tropical forestry, geospatial applications, and botany. He serves on the IUCN Species Survival Commission and the Global Tree Specialist Group that is assessing the threatened status of trees worldwide.



Endowment Grant Research Awards, Conservation Grant Awards and the Dan Austin Award for Ethnobotany

Florida Native Plant Society 2019 Conference

ENDOWMENT RESEARCH GRANTS

The Florida Native Plant Society maintains an Endowment Research Grant program for the purpose of funding research on native plants. These are small grants (\$1500 or less), awarded for a 1-year period, and intended to support research that forwards the mission of the Florida Native Plant Society which is “to promote the preservation, conservation, and restoration of the native plants and native plant communities of Florida.”

CONSERVATION GRANTS

FNPS Conservation Grants support applied native plant conservation projects in Florida. These grants (\$5000 or less) are awarded for a 1-year period. These projects promote the preservation, conservation, or restoration of rare or imperiled native plant taxa and rare or imperiled native plant communities. To qualify for a Conservation Grant, the proposed project must be sponsored by an FNPS Chapter.

THE DAN AUSTIN AWARD FOR ETHNOBOTANY

The Dan Austin Award for Ethnobotany will provide up to \$1500 to graduate or undergraduate students who are 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 uses or historic uses.

Application guidelines and details are on the FNPS Web site (www.fnps.org), click on ‘What We Do/Grants and Awards’. Questions regarding the grant programs should be sent to info@fnps.org.

Application deadline for the 2019 Awards is March 3, 2019. Awards will be announced at the May 2019 FNPS Annual Conference at the Plantation on Crystal River, Crystal River, Florida. Awardees do not need to be present at the Conference to receive an award.

Policy and plants:

How chapters are making a difference

As part of our mission, the Florida Native Plant Society promotes land conservation to protect and manage native plant habitat. Today, public lands harbor most of the natural areas we know and love, and these were largely acquired through state-funded land conservation programs such as Florida Forever (for more on this program, see the article on page 14). Although there has been a recent uptick in funding for Florida Forever and similar programs, the trend since 2008 has been a steady decline. As advocates for native plants and habitats, our call for funding land conservation programs is critical, now more than ever, given the current political challenges.

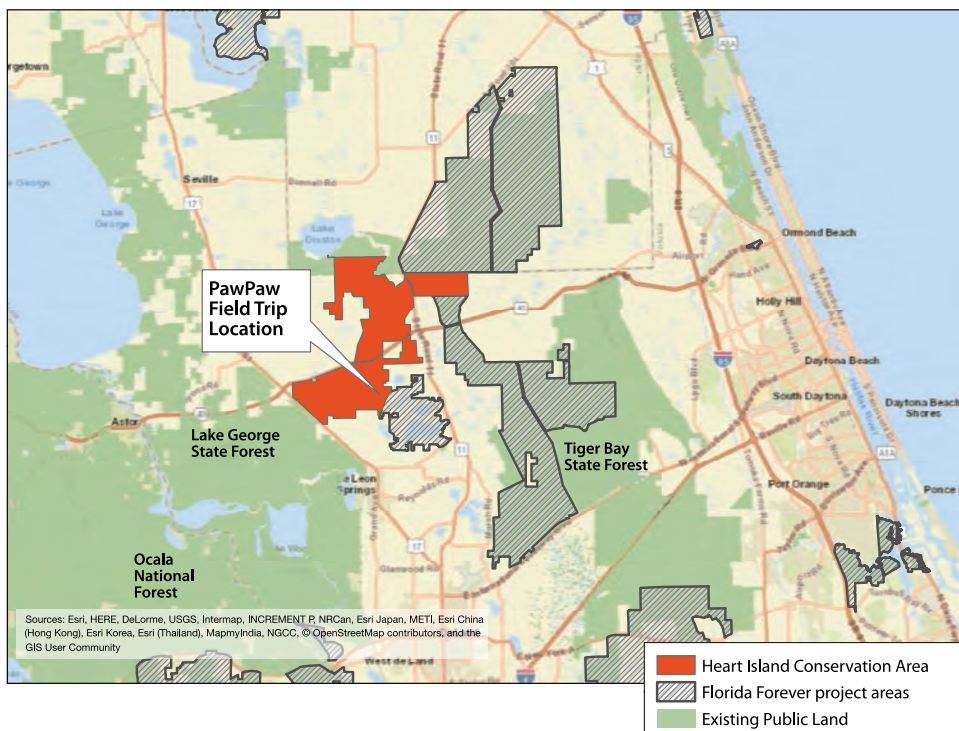
Last year the FNPS Policy Committee, headed by Eugene Kelly, issued a challenge to chapters. The “Take Your Lawmaker on a Field Trip” challenge invited chapters to organize educational field trips for local and state legislators to highlight the importance of land conservation for native plants and native plant habitats. Importantly, the challenge encourages FNPS members to engage directly with their state and local lawmakers, and show elected officials that we support increased land conservation and more funding for land protection through Florida Forever.

The challenge was heard and embraced by three FNPS chapters: the Pawpaw Chapter of Volusia and Flagler counties, the Palm Beach Chapter, and Central Florida’s Tarflower Chapter. Each chapter planned field trips to public lands which were acquired through Florida conservation lands programs and are currently managed for natural landscapes.

The chapters reached out to state legislative delegations and local lawmakers to invite them to enjoy a fun day with their native plant loving constituents and see the benefits of conservation programs. Perhaps most importantly, lawmakers learned how much their constituents care about the management and conservation of Florida’s natural habitats.

Sonya Guidry, representative of the Pawpaw Chapter and recent honoree of the FNPS Mentor Award, organized a field trip to Heart Island Conservation Area in Volusia County. This conservation area was cooperatively acquired through Florida Forever and the county-level conservation program Volusia Forever. Twenty-six people braved chilly temperatures to attend the January 4 field trip. In addition to Pawpaw members, attendees came from Stetson University and local environmental organizations such as the Audubon Society and Sierra Club. State House Representative Patrick Henry (District 26) and staff member Gina Wells joined the field trip to learn more about conservation and the interests of their constituents.

The field trip showcased the former citrus lands on Heart Island that are being restored to longleaf pine sandhill habitat. Heart Island was acquired as part of a larger Florida Forever conservation project to protect and restore remaining longleaf pine forests in North and Central Florida. Today, Heart Island features trails for hiking and horseback riding, as well as outdoor laboratories for education and ecological research.



Above: Cynthia Bennington, Professor of Biology at Stetson University in DeLand, led the group, which included State House Representative Patrick Henry (District 26), through longleaf pine restoration areas.

Left: Location map showing Heart Island Conservation Area, adjoining Florida Forever project areas and existing public land.

Left: Sonya Guidry, representative of the Pawpaw Chapter with a longleaf pine at Heart Island Conservation Area.

Cynthia Bennington, Professor of Biology at Stetson University in DeLand, led the group through longleaf pine restoration areas and explained the importance of natural resource protection. Professor Bennington and her students are studying ecological restoration of longleaf pine sandhills, including the response of native plants to ecological timber management and prescribed fire. Doug Weaver, former Volusia Forever Land Acquisition Director, described the state and local partnership process that led to acquisition of the Heart Island property, and how public lands can be protected through a variety of conservation programs and tools.

Trip leaders pointed out that lands adjacent to Heart Island are part of an approved Florida Forever project area, meaning they can be purchased from willing sellers if the Florida Forever program is fully funded. In this way, the entire area may be conserved for the purposes intended – protection of natural resources and native longleaf pine habitats.

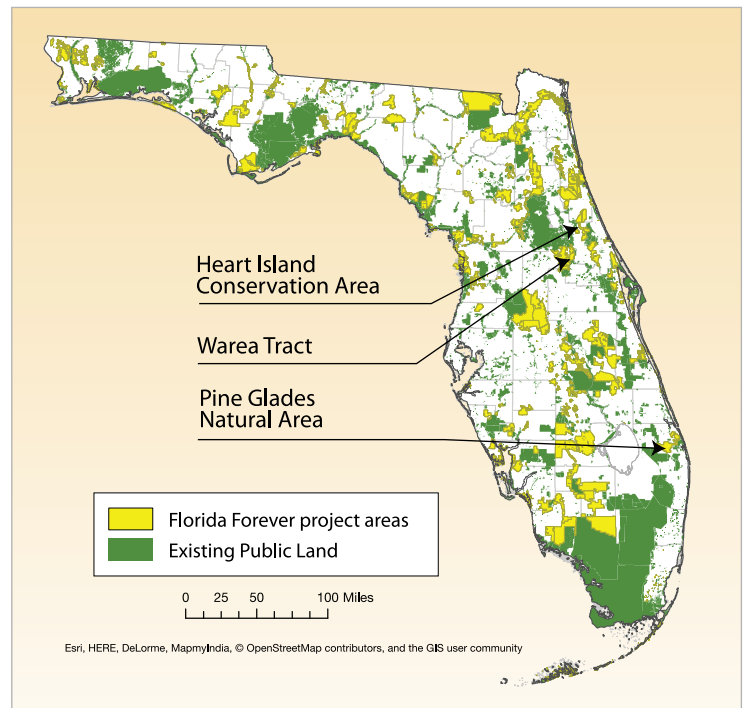
Representative Henry was impressed with the management of Heart Island and the support for the Florida Forever program shown by the group. He expressed his support for increased conservation funding in 2018 and beyond. As Sonya stated after the field trip, “The Pawpaw chapter appreciates Representative Henry and Ms. Wells’ participation in this event, and their interest in learning more about local conservation lands.”

In October of 2017, the Tarflower Chapter organized a field trip to the Warea Tract of Seminole State Forest, led by Mark Kateli and Pete Dunkelburg. The group searched for the endangered clasping warea (*Warea amplexifolia*) while they engaged with Eric Rollings, Supervisor of the Orange Soil and Water Conservation District. Mr. Rollings attended to show his support for increased funding of Florida Forever, the program responsible for acquisition of the Warea Tract. The Tract is now managed by the Florida Forest Service for numerous imperiled species, including the Florida Scrub Jay.

In December of last year, the Palm Beach Chapter held a field trip to Pine Glades Natural Area which was acquired in part through the Florida Forever program and is the Chapter’s “adopted” natural area in Palm Beach County. The Palm Beach Chapter invited their elected officials and State Representative Emily Slosberg (District 91) joined the trip along with her staff members Deniz Ozaltin and Erin Shields. Chapter members Laura Reynolds and Winnie Said led the field trip and gave an overview of the natural area and how it was protected through the Florida Forever program. Field trippers enjoyed the area by land and water, as the excursion included a kayak trip through beautiful interconnected marshes followed by a short walk through mesic pine flatwoods.

Representative Slosberg and her staff enjoyed the trip and the opportunity to ask questions and get informed answers. This trip was a great opportunity to engage with lawmakers and to help them make informed decisions that will benefit natural areas conservation in Florida.

Kudos to the chapters that stepped up last year for the “Take Your Lawmaker on a Field Trip” challenge. These field trips engaged several state and local lawmakers, and perhaps contributed to the partial funding of Florida Forever by the Legislature during the 2018 session. However, advocacy for conservation of Florida’s natural areas is an ongoing effort, and it is time again to engage our lawmakers in advance of the 2019 Legislative session. As Sonya Guidry said, “Florida Forever funding is an extremely important issue to the FNPS Pawpaw Chapter. The real native Florida cannot be reinvented after it is lost.”



Above left: State Representative Emily Slosberg (District 91), along with her staff members Deniz Ozaltin and Erin Shields at the Palm Beach Chapter field trip to Pine Glades Natural Area. **Above right:** More than twenty participants, including Eric Rollings, Supervisor of the Orange Soil and Water Conservation District, turned out for the Tarflower Chapter's trip to the Warea Tract at the Seminole State Forest.

Encouraging News for Land Conservation

– And Why FNPS Must Continue Pressing Lawmakers

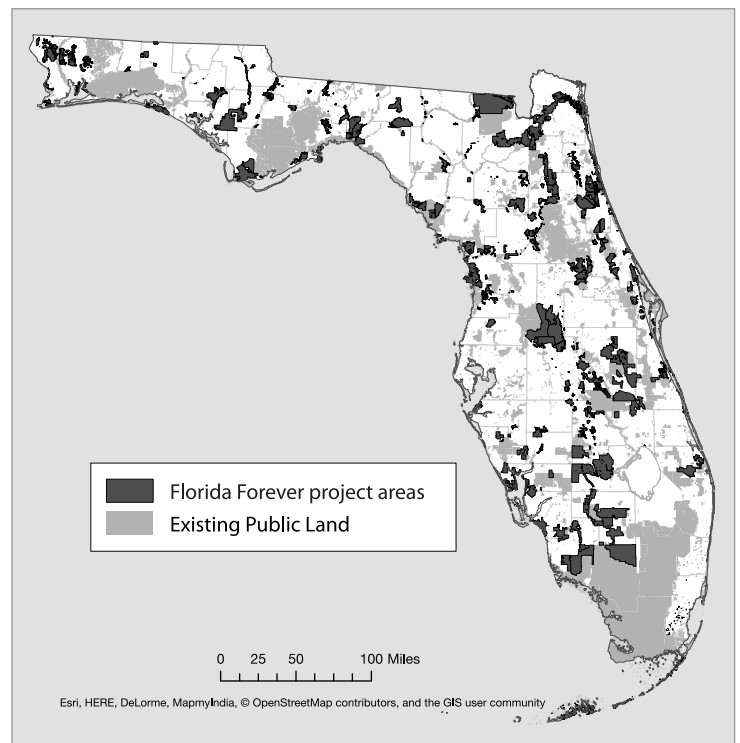
We are pleased to share news about the best thing to happen for native plant conservation in Florida in the last 10 years: the Florida Legislature approved \$100.8 million in funding for the Florida Forever land conservation program. That means \$100.8 million to help protect the places that native plants and native plant communities need to survive. Florida Native Plant Society members deserve a pat on the back because they played a pivotal role in this positive outcome after so many years of unanswered pleas and legislative intransigence. While \$100 million is far short of the \$300 million Florida Forever received annually prior to 2008, it is a big step in the right direction.

The seeds of this successful effort were planted in the fall of 2017 when FNPS lobbyist Sue Mullins coordinated with Senator Rob Bradley and his staff to develop the bill that ultimately set the stage for funding to be awarded. Senator Bradley served as Chair of both the Environmental Preservation and Conservation Committee and the powerful Appropriations Committee during the 2018 session. His sponsorship of SB 370, which would have directed at least \$100 million annually to Florida Forever, and his unwavering commitment culminated in unanimous passage of the bill by the Senate.

Unfortunately, the Florida House of Representatives had other plans. Their companion bill to SB 370 never received a single hearing. Instead, they put forward a separate bill that would have diminished the Florida Forever program by requiring most of the funds to be dedicated to projects of lesser conservation value. We asked our members to encourage Senator Bradley and Senate President Joe Negron to stand firmly against the House bill and ensure the integrity of Florida Forever would be protected from the House's attempt to re-write how the funds could be spent. When the bad House bill failed to advance, it also meant the good Senate bill could not be signed into law. It takes two to tango, and in the case of legislation it takes two bills – one from each chamber – to enact new laws. However, Senators Negron and Bradley ensured the final state budget included a one-time appropriation of \$100.8 million for Florida Forever. The “one-time” part of that is important – it means the fight for land conservation funding is not over.

More good news related to the legislative intransigence we referenced above: Circuit Judge Charles Dodson ruled in June that the legislature failed to properly implement Amendment 1, the Water and Land Conservation Amendment, by continuing to withhold funding from Florida Forever despite passage of the amendment by 75% of Florida's voters in 2014. While this good news should result in much more funding for land conservation next year, and in subsequent years, the legislature has filed an

appeal that challenges the judge's decision. The judge's ruling was actually a mixed bag. Although we appreciate the decision that Amendment 1's proceeds should go to land conservation, the judge also ruled the funds cannot be used to support land management or habitat restoration on lands acquired before the 2014 passage of the amendment. Current projections indicate that the 33 percent



share of annual real estate taxes reserved for Amendment 1 implementation will exceed \$800 million next year, and the year after that, and the year after that. We must follow and evaluate the full impact of the ruling and the results of the appeal. FNPS will not sit passively on the sidelines if the legislature seeks to continue starving Florida Forever of funds.

If you receive emailed Action Alerts from the FNPS Policy and Legislation Committee, or if you follow the Action Alert postings on our website, you are familiar with our regular calls for members to contact their legislators and press for the restoration of funding to the Florida Forever program. Maybe you have tired of hearing that refrain, year after year, and wondered whether there are other mission-related issues that have escaped our attention or otherwise been ignored. While we do not have the resources – people and funding – to engage effectively on every important issue, FNPS has advocated for native plant conservation on many other fronts, and

will continue to do so. We will share a little about some of those activities below; however, you will hear more calls for action on behalf of Florida Forever. Simply put, conserving land is the single most effective way to achieve our mission.

The legislature also budgeted \$240,000 for research on endangered plant species. As in previous years, this funding was rescinded in the middle of the session and then restored in response to pressure from FNPS. This demonstrates the important role FNPS plays in promoting native plant conservation. Ours is the only voice advocating specifically for native plants. The annual funding for endangered plants provides essential support to researchers at Archbold Biological Station, Bok Tower Gardens and elsewhere.

The legislature debated several ill-conceived bills that would have preempted the ability of local governments to adopt and enforce tree protection ordinances. Although the bills were amended in ways that made them less horrible, they still represented a power-grab that would have eroded home rule. They failed to pass following heavy opposition from city and county governments and conservation organizations like FNPS.

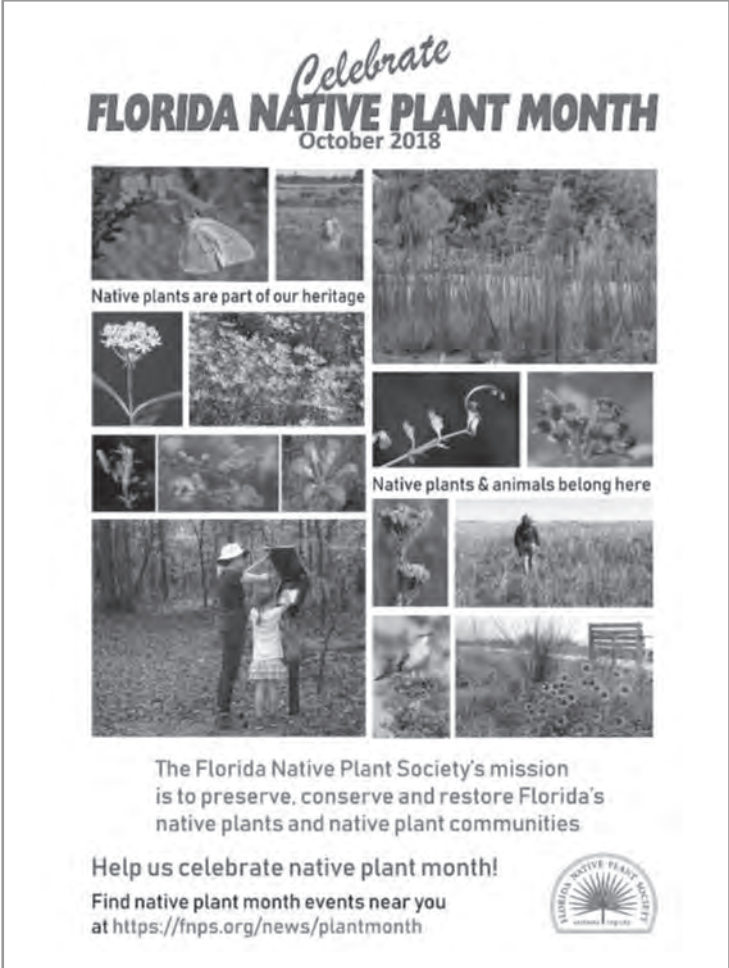
Other legislative priorities for FNPS in 2018 included an effort to secure funding for research on Texas Phoenix Palm Decline (TPPD) and tracking the state's attempt to assume permitting authority for dredge-and-fill projects from the Army Corps of Engineers. Both issues will continue to be legislative priorities in 2019. The threat TPPD poses to palms extends to our state tree, the cabbage palm, which has been shown to be vulnerable to this foreign disease. TPPD first appeared in Texas and has now been documented across much of Florida. We will continue the pursuit of funding for TPPD to ensure researchers have the resources they need to effectively study and respond to this threat. The potential transfer of dredge-and-fill permitting authority from the feds to the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) will be a multi-step process, and the devil will be in the details. FNPS will work in concert with other conservation organizations to ensure that any future transfer of permitting authority will not result in less protection for sensitive wetland habitats. Stay tuned for future updates on these FNPS concerns.

FNPS' advocacy over the past year has not been confined solely to legislative issues. We coordinated with the Florida Exotic Pest Plant Council to place additional nonnative species on the state's official Noxious Weed List. Listing prohibits any future sale and propagation of these species. We succeeded in placing a proposed amendment on the agenda of the Constitution Revision Commission (CRC) which would have provided additional clarity to Amendment 1 by requiring a minimum of one-third of annual Amendment 1 proceeds to be deposited to the Florida Forever Trust Fund. CRC Commissioner Jacqui Thurlow-Lippisch stepped up to sponsor the proposal, P46, and our greatest disappointment of 2018 is that P46 failed to advance through the CRC process after a number of conservation organizations we would typically consider to be allies waged a misguided campaign against it. Nevertheless, our efforts with the CRC elevated the discussion of spending for land conservation.

The Policy and Legislation Committee is proud of the support and participation we have received from our committed members. You are the source of FNPS' ability to influence decision-makers. Please watch your inbox for future alerts. This fall we will share announcements of upcoming meetings of legislative delegations. Maybe your chapter could organize a field trip for your legislators so you can tell them it is more important than ever that we conserve more land in Florida. We can provide information and other assistance if you want to organize a field trip. But first, take a moment to enjoy the encouraging results we have achieved through your advocacy for native plants.

About the Author

Eugene Kelly is a conservation biologist with a long history of working to conserve natural Florida. As the environmental lands planner for the Southwest Florida Water Management District, he helped identify lands to be protected through the Save Our Rivers, Preservation 2000 and Florida Forever land acquisition programs, and also played the lead role in writing land management and public use plans for the acquired properties. After 16 years at SWFWMD, he spent 5 years serving as the conservation planner for the Florida Chapter of The Nature Conservancy before working for several years as a wildlife biologist for the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission. He is currently self-employed as a conservation biologist and environmental consultant. Gene has also been actively involved with the Florida Native Plant Society's Board of Directors, where he has served terms as President and Conservation Chair, and is serving currently as the Policy and Legislation Chair.




Celebrate
FLORIDA NATIVE PLANT MONTH
October 2018

Native plants are part of our heritage

Native plants & animals belong here

The Florida Native Plant Society's mission is to preserve, conserve and restore Florida's native plants and native plant communities

Help us celebrate native plant month!
Find native plant month events near you
at <https://fnps.org/news/plantmonth>





The Florida Native Plant Society
 PO Box 278
 Melbourne FL 32902-0278

Non-Profit
 Organization
 U.S. POSTAGE
 PAID
 Jacksonville FL
 PERMIT NO. 877

FNPS Chapters and Representatives

CHAPTER REPRESENTATIVE.....E-MAIL

1. Big Bend	Jaya Milam	jayamilam@gmail.com
2. Broward	Richard Brownscombe	richard@brownscombe.net
3. Citrus	Athena Philips	borntrouper@yahoo.com
4. Coccoloba	Ben Johnson	bcjohnson0831@gmail.com
5. Coccoalum	Dianna Wentink	dw18hpc@gmail.com
6. Conradina	Martha Steuart	mwstewart@bellsouth.net
7. Cuplet Fern	Mark Kateli	cupletfern@gmail.com
8. Dade	Susan Walcutt	walcutts@bellsouth.net
9. Eugenia	David L. Martin	cymopterus@icloud.com
10. Heartland	Gregory L. Thomas	enviroscidad@yahoo.com
11. Hernando	Mikel Renner	pinery@wildblue.net
12. Ixia	Ginny Stibolt	gstibolt@sky-bolt.com
13. Lake Beautyberry	Wendy Poag	skyarabians@gmail.com
14. Lakela's Mint	Anne Marie Loveridge	loveridges@comcast.net
15. Longleaf Pine	Cheryl Jones	cheryls21660@gmail.com
16. Magnolia	Nicole Zampieri	nicolezampieri1@gmail.com
17. Mangrove	Al Squires	ahsquires1@comcast.net
18. Marion Big Scrub	Deborah Curry	marionbigscrubfnps@gmail.com
19. Naples	Kara Driscoll	k.dreamflow@gmail.com
20. Nature Coast	Gail Parsons	gailpar1@verizon.net
21. Palm Beach	Lucy Keshavarz	lucyk@artculturegroup.com
22. Passionflower	Susan Knapp	suzy5684@aol.com
23. Pawpaw	Sonya H. Guidry	guidry.sonya@gmail.com
24. Paynes Prairie	Sandi Saurers	sandisaurers@yahoo.com
25. Pine Lily	Taylor Figueroa	harper.tkf@gmail.com
26. Pinellas	Jan Allyn	jallyn@tampabay.rr.com
27. Pineywoods	Vacant	info@fnps.org
28. Sarracenia	Jeannie Brodhead	jeannieb9345@gmail.com
29. Sea Oats	Judith D. Zinn	jeryjudy@valinet.com
30. Sea Rocket	Greg Hendricks	gatorgregh@gmail.com
31. Serenoa	Erica Timmerman	timmerme3@gmail.com
32. Sparkleberry	Carol Sullivan	csullivan12@windstream.net
33. Sumter	Nancy Dwyer	nancy.dwyer@myfwc.com
34. Suncoast	Virginia Overstreet	voverstr@tampabay.rr.com
35. Sweetbay	Jonnie Smallman	jsmallman2@gmail.com
36. Tarflower	Julie Becker	jibecker@cfl.rr.com38.
37. The Villages	Carol Spears	caroljspears@cs.com

Contact the Florida Native Plant Society

PO Box 278, Melbourne, FL 32902-0278. **Phone:** (321) 271-6702. **Email:** info@fnps.org **Online:** www.fnps.org

To join FNPS: Contact your local Chapter Representative, call, write, or e-mail FNPS, or join online at www.fnps.org

Contact the PALMETTO Editor: Marjorie Shropshire, Visual Key Creative, Inc.

Email: pucpuggy@bellsouth.net **Phone:** (772) 285-4286

