

Mark your calendars

Aug 2 - Monthly Membership meeting. Moccasin Lake Nature Park 7:30 pm. Topic: Scientific Names

Aug 5 - Field trip to USF Herbarium. Contact Bill Bilodeau 322-9695

Aug 23 - Board Meeting. Clearwater Library 6:30 pm - 9:00 pm

Aug 26 - Clam Bayou Planting Day. Contact Danie Cutler 709-4658

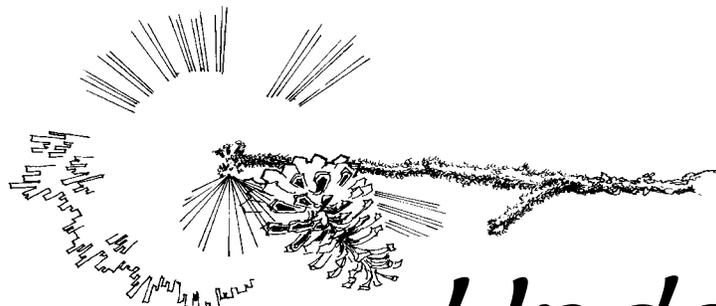
Sept 6 - Monthly Membership meeting. Moccasin Lake Nature Park 7:30 pm. Topic: Islands in Our Backyard

Sept 9 - Field trip to Honeymoon and Caladesi Islands. Contact Bill Bilodeau 322-9695

Sept 27 - Board Meeting. Clearwater Library 6:30 pm - 9:00 pm

Welcome New Members

Erica Powell, Michael Manlowe, Phillippe Piquet, Lucy Trimarco, Sarah Walls and Steve Weaver



The Understory

The Future is Here!

As you may have noticed in the last newsletter I mentioned we will be converting to a paperless newsletter soon. Soon is now.

There are numerous reasons to change to paperless. Our newsletter consumes approximately 6000 sheets of paper per year. Any unnecessary production, usage, and disposal of paper has economic and environmental costs in terms of resources and pollution. Receiving your newsletter in email format will save printing and mailing expenses that can be better spent on other activities. The expense of printing and mailing the newsletter over a one year period can send six children to summer camp. The printed copy is sent in black and white format, while the email will

enable us to share full color photos. Web links that are in the newsletter will be just a copy and paste away. Tired of searching through piles of papers to find a certain article? Now you can store articles, or the entire newsletter, in easy-to-find files.

We will be sending out the newsletter in email format to all members for whom we have email addresses. If you received your printed copy but didn't receive one via email, or you received the email and find that you prefer it in a paper form, please contact me at lkcurry1@tampabay.rr.com or 727/595-2073 and I will make the correction. A quick download of Adobe Acrobat Reader will enable you to read the PDF file.

TBEP Presents

"Tampa Bay: Living Legacy" chronicles Tampa Bay's transformation from a relatively unspoiled paradise in the 1950s, to a waterway battered by pollution in the 1970s, to its amazing rebirth and recovery beginning some 25 years ago and continuing today. Compelling archival images help tell the bay's story, along with extensive new footage showcasing the extraordinary beauty of the bay's habitats and inhabitants.

This one-hour documentary film produced by the Tampa Bay Estuary Program will be broadcast on **WUSF-TV (Channel 16) on Wednesday, August 23 at 8 p.m.** It also will air on WEDU-TV (Channel 3) this fall.

President's Message

“Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot, Nothing is going to get better. It’s not.” Dr. Seuss, “*The Lorax*” (1977)

These words of Dr. Seuss are just as powerful today as they were in 1977. We are being buffeted by change. Every day there seems to be a new assault on our county. We have all read about Brooker Creek Preserve, Ft. DeSoto, Bird Island, Shell Key, the pressure of intense commercial development and the high density residential development, particularly north of Weedon Island.

Pinellas has very little undeveloped land left, and demand is high for its use. Even the land that has been put aside for a preserve is slowly being nibbled to death.

The well-attended Green Expo sent a message to officials that the public does care about the environment. City Hall is packed when there is a publicized event.

However not all the plans made to change the use

of public lands is a worthy news event, like a Wal-Mart on Gandy. It is what you don’t see in the paper that needs attention also.

Go to our website <http://pinellas.fnpschapters.org> and click on Advocacy to find links to help you keep informed of local affairs and how to get in touch with the people we elected to do what is right. Get your name added to a list that will keep you informed on the upcoming agendas of your local government. Check into the St. Pete Times blog for the pros and cons of current affairs and post your comments. The next meeting of the Environmental Science Forum is August 10, 3 pm to 5 pm, Heritage Village, Pinellas Room; go to that.

And I haven’t even gotten to offshore drilling. The point is if you are not involved, you don’t have a right to gripe about the decisions that are made without you.

“Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot, Nothing is going to get better. It’s not.”
- Cathy Quindiagan

Natural Praise

Another morning... Yes! Another morning.
Embraced by the expansive blue sky
The pines reveal their subtle dignity.
Spirited, squawking jays accompany
The listened, life-giving stream.
Cool morning air felt on the skin, the soil underfoot...
Oranges, grapefruit, papayas, and parsley
All offer their fragrances and flavors.
Filled through the senses
I am thrilled, recreated,
And overflow
With affection and praise.

- Bill Bilodeau

Correction

In the June/July publication article “Where does the money go?” it was stated that \$100 was given to Selby Gardens in Sarasota to make updated copies of James McFarline field journals.

The money was given directly to John Beckner and not to Selby Gardens. This was a private party project with no connection to Selby Gardens. We apologize for any confusion this may have created.

***Deadline for the Oct/Nov newsletter is September 1st
Please feel free to submit early
and send any story ideas to
lkcurry1@tampabay.rr.com***

Meeting and Field Trip Information

On Saturday July 8th we followed up our monthly members' meeting on pond plants with a visit to the pond at Pinellas County Cooperative Extension in Largo. The nine attendees were most fortunate to have as our guide, Andy Wilson, the chief horticulturist at the Extension and one of the creators of the pond plantings. Many of the trees and shrubs, e.g. red maple, wax myrtle, pop ash, black gum, water hickory, bald and pond cypress, planted in the early and mid 1990s, have had sufficient time to develop and provided us with a valuable look at these species as they near maturity. One large clump of swamp dogwood was especially notable with its attractive foliage and outstanding fruit production. (See photo above courtesy of Jan Allyn)



tance preserved specimens play in the systematic study of botany and how specimens are prepared. We will finish the morning with a tour of the USF Botanic Gardens collection of native plants. For those who wish to carpool, we will be meeting at the Publix parking lot on the south side of Ulmerton Road in Feather Sound at 8 am.

Our August meeting will be "Scientific Names: What Do You Say and How Do You Say It?" Craig Huegel will give an entertaining talk on plants' "Latin" names. He'll teach us how to decode what many of them mean and give guidelines for pronunciation.

Our September meeting will be "Islands in Our Backyard." Peter Krulder, Manager of Honeymoon Island and Caladesi Island State Parks, will tell us about the plants, animals, and history of these two beautiful parks. Peter Krulder will also be our guide on September 9th to both Honeymoon and Caladesi Islands.

Our August field trip is scheduled for 9 am August 5th at the University of South Florida Herbarium in Tampa. Our guide will be Dr. Richard Wunderlin, known widely for his contributions to the understanding of Florida's native plant species. He will describe for us the impor-

For field trip information contact Bill Bilodeau 727-322-9695 or at billbilodeau@verizon.net.

Membership meetings are the first Wednesday of the month, 7:30 pm at Moccasin Lake Nature Park, 2750 Park Trail Lane, Clearwater.

Volunteers Needed

World Rivers Day Festival is on September 30 at Brooker Creek Preserve. We need volunteers who can set up and take down the chapter's informational display, distribute educational flyers and membership brochures, chat with attendees about native plants and their environmental benefits, take down the display after the event, and then bring it back to Brooker Creek the following Saturday for our fall plant sale.

You do not have to know everything there is to know about native plants. Just be friendly, share what you do know, and direct people to books, our website, our informational flyers and other resources.

Contact Jan Allyn at jallyn2@aol.com

How to Grow a Biodiverse Garden

By Janet Marinelli

Reduce the size of your lawn. Think of lawn as an outdoor living space and keep only as much as you absolutely need.

Model your biodiverse garden on a plant community native to your area. For example, people who live in the East can replant the shrubs, ferns and wildflowers found in native forests beneath shade trees on their properties. Midwesterners can replace turf with prairie grasses and wildflowers, mowing the edges for a more manicured look.

Increase habitat niches for wildlife by re-creating the layers of plant growth found in local natural areas. These strata are most obvious in forests, but they exist in all plant communities. The topmost layer of a forest is the canopy formed by the tallest trees. Below the canopy is an understory of smaller trees. Sapling trees and shrubs make up the shrub layer, while wildflowers, ferns and mosses weave a tapestry on the ground.

Choose plants to feed and shelter birds, butterflies and other local wildlife year-round. Learn which plants offer food for various butterflies and their caterpillars, and which shrubs offer fall fruits to migrating birds.

Never plant an invasive species. Check local botanical garden or native plant society websites for lists of garden plants that are invasive in your area. If they are growing in your yard, remove them.

In ecology as politics, there is power in numbers. Work with your neighbors to promote biodiversity in community gardens, schools and parks.

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Grow Wild...and Grow Native!

Create a wildlife-friendly yard officially certified through NWF's Backyard Wildlife Habitat™ program and help us reach our goal of 70,000 certified backyards as we celebrate NWF's 70th anniversary. To get started, visit www.nwf.org/bwh today.

A Salute to Volunteers

The volunteer restoration planting at the Clam Bayou Marine Science Center on June 24, 2006 proved very successful thanks to the many volunteers from the Native Plant Society. We planted close to 600 sea oats and 45 different species of ground covers, bushes, vines and trees in just a three hour period!

We would like to extend our sincere gratitude to the members of the Native Plant Society for your insight, guidance and volunteer efforts that have helped to make this project a reality. Thank you so much! We made the property more beautiful, environmentally friendly and useful to wildlife. This effort will be enjoyed and promote inspiration for years to come!

Planting of the next phase will be Saturday, August 26. We'd love it if you could make it. - Danie Cutler

To volunteer your time and energy for upcoming events please contact Joy Wharton at 522-8769 to add your name to the list. Without the dedication and hard work of our volunteers we wouldn't accomplish our goals.

Weedon Island Preserve

Saturday, August 12, Homeowner's Energy Efficiency class 10:00 am – 11:00 am

Beat the heat and the rising cost of energy. Saving money on your utility bill is important to everyone. How to save? There are numerous ways to conserve energy use, including efficient air conditioning. A free "Homeowner's Energy Efficiency Manual" from the Pinellas County Extension Service and a valuable gift from the Weedon Island Preserve Cultural and Natural History Center will be given to participants who pledge to reduce their energy needs. The fee for this program is \$3 for each participant. Registration required. Recommended ages: 10 and up.

Sunday, August 27, The Great Weedon Bird Quest class 8:00 am – 9:30 am

Come and join us on a quest to find Weedon Island Preserve birds! Learn the identifying marks and behaviors of our feathered year-round inhabitants and seasonal visitors, while helping us

compile an annual checklist of the Preserve's birds. These hikes are designed to take advantage of all levels of birding experience. Binoculars and bird guides are available. Hikes are scheduled for the last Sunday of every month. This event is free and open to the public. Recommended ages: 10 and up.

Wednesday - Sunday, June 28 - August 27, Hall Gallery Artist 10:00 am – 4:00 pm

A self-taught artist, Gary Kaminski, began drawing seriously at age eight with pencil line drawings. Throughout his lifetime, Kaminski has worked in many different art mediums, including pastels, oils and watercolors. His love of nature is evident in the careful detailed renderings of the creatures he observes in nature. Visitors may enjoy Mr. Kaminski's art during normal Center hours.

Contact Weedon Island Preserve Cultural and Natural History Center (727) 453-6500 to learn more about these exciting upcoming programs and to register.

Brooker Creek Preserve

Saturday, August 12, Imperiled Bears of Florida class from 10 am until 11 am

Anyone can learn more about black bears that once roamed naturally from the pine forests of northern Florida all the way to the southern Keys. Information about why the bears are listed as a threatened species and why their preservation is important will be shared by Pat Kiesylis from the Defenders of Wildlife organization.

Saturday, August 26, Florida's Fabulous "Flying Machines" event from 1 pm to 2 pm

Anyone is welcome to explore the world of Florida's birds of prey and their diversity of lifestyles. Join the Lowry Park Zoo Education Staff and meet some birds commonly seen at the preserve. Get a bird's eye view about what makes each one unique and enjoy a flying demonstration. Admission is \$3. Children 6 and younger will be admitted free.

Wednesday, August 30, at this Lizards & Skinks: Scaly Tales of the Reptiles Around Us event from 6:30 pm until 7:30 pm, participants 6 and older will

learn about some of the most common local reptiles. These mysterious creatures may be seen every day, but what's truly known about them? Why do they do push-ups? What is the orange-red flap on the lizard's neck all about? Meet a few live creatures and take a short hike around the center to practice identification skills. Admission is \$3.

Brooker Creek Preserve is located at 3940 Keystone Rd., Tarpon Springs, in northeast Pinellas County. To pre-register for August events or upcoming sessions, call the preserve's Environmental Education Center at (727) 453-6800.

Learn more about Brooker Creek Preserve at www.pinellascounty.org/environment.

Learn how to become a Friend of Brooker Creek at <http://www.friendsofbrookercreekpreserve.org/>

Plant of the Month

Coral bean, *Erythrina herbacea*, is also known as Cherokee bean or cardinal spear. It is a spiny shrub with an open, upright habit that can grow to 20 feet in height but is usually smaller. Its bright green leaves have three lobes, and its branches are armed with sharp, spiny prickles. In spring it produces two-foot long racemes of scarlet, tubular flowers that attract hummingbirds and are pollinated by insects. The flowers are followed by bean pods that hold from 2 to 8 bright red beans about 3/8" in length. The beans are beautiful but extremely toxic, and reportedly their derivatives have been used to make rat poison and to paralyze fish.

Coral bean is found throughout Florida and is recommended for USDA zones 8-11. It is extremely drought tolerant and fairly frost-resistant. Though most books call it evergreen, mine is usually leafless, or nearly so in winter. Coral bean has a very large root structure which allows it to survive even our coldest winters. Like many other members of the bean family, it can fix nitrogen into the soil. Though it is sometimes called cardinal spear, don't confuse it with cardinal flower, which is a wetland plant! Coral bean prefers well-drained, sandy or loamy soil in full to partial sun and is moderately salt tolerant.

Coral bean can be propagated by cuttings, but the seeds are very easy to start. Use an emery board to sand away a spot on the outer seed covering until a small hole develops. Then soak the seeds in water overnight and plant them in pots. I have found that they usually sprout within a week or two.

- Jan Allyn



Illustration courtesy of Cathy Vogelsong

In Remembrance

On June 5th our community lost a kind and generous man and our chapter lost a member who had supported us--and many other local environmental groups--for many years. Dave Anschuetz was diagnosed with inoperable cancer almost one year ago, and since then he and his wife Jan spent as much of their remaining time together as possible outdoors, either in their shady, naturally landscaped backyard in Gulfport or at area parks, birdwatching and enjoying the fresh air. Dave was a man of seemingly inexhaustible good humor, often at his own expense. His faith in God, his fellow man, and the restorative powers of time spent outdoors served him well. Though he had had other careers, having a nature store was Dave's life dream. From the time they opened their first Nature's Focus store in Seminole, Dave and Jan promoted local environmental groups by distributing their flyers and other information and by donating a portion of members' purchases back to their groups. The Seminole location has now closed, but the Nature's Focus store in Brooker Creek continues as a legacy to Dave. Those who knew him were blessed, and he will be greatly missed.

Featured Yard

Don and Lorraine Margeson

We live in a home surrounded on two sides by brackish water canals (created years ago by the City of St. Petersburg for drainage). It's about an acre that we cleared years ago of 275 Brazilian pepper trees ourselves carefully saving the good plants and over the years introduced and/or allowed to recover at least 80 species of Florida native plants. This was not pristine land, but it has become pristine through effort and care. We had choices to make, but we left our canals without seawalls and left intact the gradient inherent in this non-filled parcel, real swampland muck. The results make us happy daily...Trop Storm Alberto was no biggie, but we sure had some wind and a bit of surge...but...a price worth paying for the aftermath vistas. Like this yellow-crowned night heron in first bright storm light as the storm surge receded just past dawn seen from our fourth floor deck.

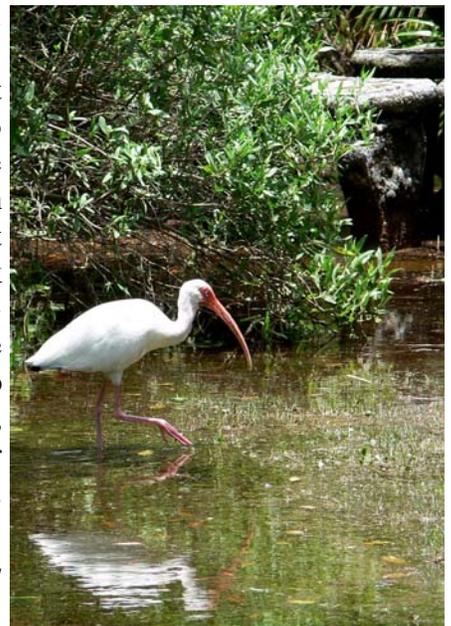


The locals are apparent after a storm in the new and temporary wetlands wonderland...all the intact mangroves, marsh elder, seaside goldenrod, sea-oxeye daisy, saltbush and fleabane...NO CONCRETE...the good stuff is an absolute buffer to the rising waters and an absolute friend to so many species of birds, reptilian and aquatic wildlife.

Ibis, great egret, great blue herons, green herons... you can giggle like a child with such delightful sightings in your own backyard.

We've got lots of bird feeders, so I'm not showing the "usual gang," but after a storm the raptors and waders are so very prevalent...and our own "Momma Coops", a female Cooper's hawk returned for a fifth season to breed and is apparently done with nesting (we think that we saw a new Coops fledge tonight, but that has yet to be verified). Momma made an appearance with her deep red eyes. For a bit ducks, were swimming around the yard, but later came to scarf off the flythrough feeder toss off's.

Now, I know that we are blessed to live in a space like this when many cannot, but we sure can work to make it possible for all to have these things to view, escape to, and cherish. For this is Florida, AND THAT'S WHY WE CAME.



Hope you fared well in this mini-storm adventure and hope this helps to explain our environmental preservation passion.

- Lorraine Margeson

Would you like your yard or some portion featured in our newsletter? Would you like to tell us what planting natives has done to enhance your outdoor experience?

Please contact Lisa Curry at lkc Curry1@tampabay.rr.com or call 727/595-2073

OFFICERS

President: Cathy Quindiagan 327-7573

Vice-President: Bill Bilodeau 322-9695

Secretary: Jan Allyn 399-1022/525-6609

Treasurer: Jane Williams 447-7394

Chapter Rep: Deborah Chayet

dchayet@verizon.net

Alternate Chapter Rep: Ray Wunderlich

Past President: Alexa Wilcox 595-4714

-Special Events/Festivals: Jan Allyn

Field Trips: Bill Bilodeau 322-9695

Membership: Cindy Peacock

Newsletter Editor: Lisa Curry 698-3136

Program Coordinator: Cathy Quindiagan

Publicity: Lorraine Margeson 525-6627

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-Plants: Bruce Turley 595-2073

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Newsletter Reporter: Jan Allyn 399-1022

Refreshments: Hilary Edenfield

Volunteer Coordinator: Joy Wharton 522-8769

Web Master: Jan Allyn

Illustrations: Cathy Vogelsong

***Pinellas Chapter of the Florida
Native Plant Society
P.O. Box 1661
Pinellas Park, FL 33780-1661***

*Chapter information line
(727)544-7341*

*Chapter web address:
<http://pinellas.fnpschapters.org>*

*FNPS Bulletin Board:
<http://fnps.org/phpBB>*

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