JANUARY CHAPTER MEETING  
At the Hillsborough County Extension Office  
The Monarch/Milkweed Initiative  
Presented by Scott Davis  
Wednesday, January 18, 7 PM

St. Marks Refuge Ranger, and FNPS member, Scott Davis has developed a long term plan to support the monarch butterfly in the Big Bend of Florida by sourcing local ecotypes of milkweed species to provide an ongoing viable seed source for the refuge, as well as distributing as many seedlings as possible to the conservation lands. More milkweeds = more monarchs!

The Monarch-milkweed initiative at St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge is a program that sprang up in response to the federal campaign to “Save the Monarch!” http://www.fws.gov/savethemonarch/.

Scott will discuss the progress of the initiative in conserving and mapping native milkweed populations in 2016, the data from the 2016 fall migration, and the goals for the initiative in 2017. Updates to the project may be found on their Facebook page:  https://www.facebook.com/StMarksMilkweeds/?fref=ts

Scott Davis is a busy biologist, with Ethnobotany among his passions. He is a state board member for the Florida Native Plant Society, and president-elect for the Magnolia (Tallahassee) Chapter. In addition to his day job as ranger at St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge, he serves as Coordinator for the new Milkweed-Monarch Conservation Initiative, VP for Friends of Wakulla Springs, and as a committee member for the FWC Great Florida Birding Trail and Black Bear Stakeholders. He also owns a native plant nursery and is an officer of a non-profit agency on urban forest conservation.

Light refreshments are served and a native plant auction follows the presentation.

- submitted by Donna Bollenbach & Janet Bowers
The 2017 SNPS Board of Directors was approved at the November membership meeting:

- President: Donna Bollenbach
- Vice President: Virginia Overstreet
- Treasurer: Gar Reed
- Secretary: Tina Patterson
- At Large: Andy Taylor

The first board meeting of 2017 will be on Thursday, 1/12/2017 at 10 am at Bob Evans, 11720 Tampa Gateway Blvd, Seffner, FL 33584. All SNPS chapter members are invited to attend any board meeting.

If you have any questions email Donna at donna.bollenbach@gmail.com

We welcome back Donna as president, she made a big contribution in 2016 by leading SNPS and representing us at events. Her efforts with the FNPS regional Landscaping with Natives brochure made the difference in actually making it happen.

Gar is also a return member, he has been a critical part of the board as treasurer for several years. This role requires organizational skills and fun things like filing paperwork and paying taxes to the state. Thank you for continuing to support SNPS.

We have 3 new board members- Virginia Overstreet is our VP and meeting speaker coordinator. She has an extensive background as a Master Gardener with lots of public speaking experience and is a certified arborist. Tina Patterson is our secretary, taking minutes at the board meetings. She has jumped right in at Lettuce Lake taking care of the garden and helping with our walks. She is an enthusiastic native plant advocate. Andy Taylor is our board member at large, he has county government experience as well as being a FNPS contractor with development director duties. His contacts will continue to help FNPS and SNPS be better known. Welcome aboard to the new SNPS board members!

Everyone is welcome to help and we need your support too. From bringing snacks to meetings, submitting newsletter articles, helping at plant sales or garden workdays - even a couple hours can make a difference. Please volunteer and make SNPS even better in 2017. See page 8 for information about the Education Committee’s goal to reach out to children or let a board member know if you are interested in another area.

UPCOMING SPEAKERS-

- Feb 15 – Damon Moore of Perico Preserve will talk about the preserve and lead our fieldtrip
- March 15 – TBD

Thanks for helping with the November meeting -

- Bunny Worth, Janet Bowers for providing plants for the plant auction
- Bunny Worth for bringing snacks
- Joel Jackson for auctioning the plants

Page 2 The Suncoast Grapevine - January 2017
Happy New Year....

The holiday season was a bit hectic for me. A last-minute rush to finish up the FNPS landscape brochure competed with the time with my family, and when the brochures finally went to the printer I felt like digging a hole and hiding in it for a few weeks, but common sense told me the best thing I could do for myself was to take a hike.

So, the first day of the new year I spent hiking in Kissimmee Prairie Preserve. In fact, I led the “First Hike” of the new year at Kissimmee Prairie Preserve. Instead of writing about it, I am going to share an image from January 1, 2017 in the “real” Florida. It’s not a plant, but I thought you would forgive me this time.

Diana

The Earth is what we all have in common...

Happy New Year
January 14 - Winter Walk in the Scrub

In partnership with Hillsborough County, SNPS will be leading a walk at Golden Aster Scrub. 12181 East Bay Road, Gibsonton, FL, 33534 at 9 AM.

The walk is FREE, but you must pre-register on the Hillsborough County Parks site.


3-4 mile walk
Moderate difficulty
County contact is Chris Kiddy (813) 853-1177

Florida State Fair Opportunity

FNPS is looking for volunteers to man our booth at the fair. The dates are Feb 9-20. The theme is "Why Plant Natives?" We hope it will be fun and educational. We also have one nursery selling plants. Volunteers will work 3 hour shifts 10am-1pm, 1pm-4pm and 4-7pm, every day. Weekends will be busiest, so we can double-triple up those days. If you have anyone interested, let me know. Tickets are free for anyone who volunteers (and their guests because I will call them volunteers also!).

Also, if you have any "Blooming" plants for February, we could use them. The more flowers the better. Hope to hear from you.

Happy New Year,
Jonnie Spitler, Nature Coast Chapter
jspitler1120@gmail.com

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Hillsborough County Volunteer Information

Many of you have been asking me how you can apply to be a volunteer at the Hillsborough County Conservation Lands Parks. A shortened application has been promised, and it is online. Make sure you return it to the address for the Conservation Lands as noted in the instructions. Here is the link:


Donna

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Mark Your Calendar

Jan 11 7 PM Susan Cerulean talk at Clearwater Campus SPC Arts Auditorium, 2465 Drew St, Clearwater, hosted by the Pinellas FNPS chapter

Jan 14 9 AM Donna is leading a walk at Golden Aster Scrub for the County, register at:

Jan 14 10:30 AM Plant ID class at Brooker Creek Preserve - free eventbrite reservation

Jan 20 Florida Arbor Day - plant a tree or two! See page 6 for some native nurseries.

Jan 28 9:30 AM Lettuce Lake plant walk, starting at the Native Plant Garden

February 9-20 FNPS booth at the Florida State Fair, volunteers are needed to man the table

April 8-9 USF Spring Plant Sale

April 8 Kissimmee Prairie Preserve State Park Spring Wildflower Walk

April 26-30 Camping at St Joe’s Peninsula State Park, reserve your camping site now.

May 18-21 FNPS Annual Conference at Westgate River Ranch Resort near Lake Wales

http://www.fnps.org/conference/2017
January 21 Fieldtrip
Alderman Ford Regional Park

Where: Alderman Ford Park Dr., Plant City, FL, 33567
When: 9:00 AM
$2 entry fee per car (up to 8 people)

Our January field trip will be to Alderman Ford County Park. This park provides a mix of natural communities including the floodplain of the Alafia River, seepage slopes, and sandhill.

We plan to meet in the main parking lot and then explore on foot. We will visit the floodplain via a boardwalk which will provide good views and easy walking. We will then cross the river and walk downstream through the upper part of the floodplain and return to the parking lot on the other side of the river. This is all multi-use trail and paved.

Depending on weather, we may take a side excursion up a primitive trail that goes up through the seep slope into the sandhill. Expect 1.5 to 2 miles of walking. The seep slope can be wet.
Difficulty – easy if you stay on the boardwalk and multi-use trail, moderate if you go up through the seep slope.
There are three bathrooms and three water fountains along the paved trail.

Shirley Denton is the contact 813 625-5031

Lettuce Lake Walk January 28

2017 brings more walks at Lettuce Lake, join us on the 28th of January to see what is happening at Lettuce Lake Park. $2 per car (up to 8 people).

There should be birds, alligators and a few plants blooming by the boardwalk.

See you there!

2017 Field Trip schedule

Feb 18 Perico Preserve - Damon Moore will show us around this new Manatee county preserve
March 18 - TBD
* April 22-27 - FNPS Spring Native Plant Tour of North Alabama organized by Devon Higginbotham. Finally, a travel tour planned by native plant people FOR native plant people! Join us in April 2017 as FNPS travels to north Alabama to discover the native plants in the Bibb County Glades, the Bank Head Wilderness, Cane Creek Canyon Preserve, Little River Canyon National Preserve AND MUCH MORE. A $50 deposit will reserve your spot on what is certain to be a sell-out tour! Call Devon Higginbotham at 813-478-1183 or email indigotravelcompany@gmail.com with questions.
April 26-30 Camping at St Joe’s Peninsula State Park, reserve your camping site now.
May 18 and 21 - FNPS conference fieldtrips near River Ranch

The Suncoast Grapevine - January 2017  Page 5
If you want to learn about Florida native plants, join the Florida Native Plant Society. It’s true, but where does this wealth of knowledge come from. While some of our “experts” are accomplished Botanist with impressive credentials, others collected their information in Mother Nature’s classroom. So, I asked these questions of three very, respected experts:

What formal education do you have in Botany?
What developed your interest in Florida native plants?
If someone wanted to learn about native plants, what would you suggest?

Steve Dickman

Formal Botany Education:
“I was not a good student. I took a couple Botany classes at USF, actually the same one twice. I failed the first time and passed with a “C” the second but it was with a different instructor.” (Steve has a couple degrees in other subjects).

Inspiration
The freeze in 1998 was an eye opener. “People with tropical trees and plants lost everything. I was working at a plant nursery in Temple Terrace called “Plant Adoption Center” and we had a small native plant section. I heard about the native plant society and spoke on open mic night with slides I had taken”. This is about the same time Steve sought and got a job working for the Hillsborough County ELAPP program. “There were a lot of knowledgeable people working in the field, other people with an affinity for native plants. I also saw that there was a lack of knowledge in the industry distinguishing between an exotic and a native plant. When I went to my first FNPS conference in 1997, went on a field trip and met knowledgeable people, the enthusiasm rubbed off”.

Suggestions for Learning
Find a mentor.
Join the Florida Native Plant Society, go on fieldtrips and attend the annual conference.
Collect books on native plants, like “Florida Wildflowers, A Comprehensive Guide” by Dr. Walter Taylor, “Florida Wildflowers and Roadside Plants” by Bell and Taylor, one of Steve’s first native plant books.
Volunteer at the USF Botanical Garden.

Note:
Steve is currently employed by the Hillsborough County, Conservation and Environmental Lands Management program, the agency that manages ELAPP (Environmental Lands Acquisition and Protection Program) properties. In 2015, Steve won the Amateur Plant ID contest at the Florida Native Plant Society annual conference and will, hereafter, be required to compete as a professional. Congratulations Steve!

Some West Central Florida Native Plant Nurseries

Green Isle Gardens Native Plant Nursery
www.greenislegardens.com
321-436-4932
See website for retail hours

The Natives, Inc.
www.thenatives.net
863-422-6664
Retail by appt.

Sweet Bay Nursery
www.sweetbaynursery.com
941-776-0501
See website for retail hours

For more retail plant information -
www.PlantRealFlorida.org
Florida Association of Native Nurseries
What We Accomplished in 2016

- Lettuce Lake workdays and walks
- HCC native plant garden adoption and plantings
- Joel Jackson received the FNPS Green Palmetto award
- USF plant sales
- Plant City Fall festival participation
- Fabulous fieldtrips
- Spectacular speakers
- 2 wonderful camping trips - Cayo Costa primitive cabins and Jonathan Dickinson cabin and camping trip

Thanks to everyone and here's to an even more exciting 2017!

Plant City HCC Native Plant Garden News

We have new signs and a sprinkler head installed by the ditch plantings. Eileen Reed made some great ornaments for the holiday decorating. The Natives bed was cleaned up in December and is ready for spring. Don’t forget to visit when the redbud blooms in February/March.

Want to help? We will be scheduling a work day soon. On-going weeding and maintenance is needed. There are still invasives in the area and we need to finish the new path.

~ Janet
**Education Committee News from Niki Cribbs**

One Education Committee goal I have heard from many different people all over the state is to have a recognizable and sustainable FNPS kids’ program. If you are interested in being part of a Suncoast Chapter committee with a focus on kid-focused events, please contact me! This group would first develop a clear vision for a children’s program, then plan, promote and lead kid-friendly, kid-focused events throughout the year. We have the opportunity to work with Hillsborough County and use their land resources and classrooms, and potentially promote events through their media outlets. This effort could be strengthened by collaborating with other groups such as Audubon, as well as reaching out to other nearby FNPS chapters. This will take a group effort on our part to make it truly successful.

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**Florida Wildflower Foundation News**

We’re happy to announce the official release of the Florida Wildflower Foundation’s 139-page *Wild About Wildflowers! — A Classroom Activity Guide* for Florida’s third- and fourth-grade students.


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**New FNPS Brochure**

Of all the things that happened in 2016, I think the most significant FNPS achievement was the Native Landscaping brochure. This is my personal opinion and I’m sure many people would suggest other projects.

I watched this up close at the beginning and from afar by the end. To me, this is an important, professional document that, like the amateur handout that I helped create years ago, will be instrumental in communicating the FNPS purpose and how a homeowner can make better choices about what to plant in their yard.

Getting FNPS to agree and support a new document is no small feat and I understand the reasons and importance in having accuracy. The FNPS council of chapters’ effort under Richard Brownscombe’s leadership and Donna Bollenbach’s execution of this brochure is an example of persistence and faith. I am so happy to see the West Coast brochure printed and available at our meetings and even at Sweetbay Nursery. Thank you to everyone who made it happen. (The example brochure shown above is the Southeast version, very similar to ours.)

Please make sure that you get a copy to share with your friends or other people who want to know about natives. We are asking for $1 per copy to cover the costs of reprinting it and the brochure is well worth it. Here is physical evidence of what we can achieve together, I’m looking forward to even more happening in 2017!

~Janet Bowers
Membership in the Florida Native Plant Society enables you to receive their wonderful quarterly magazine *The Palmetto*. Joining the SNPS also entitles you to membership privileges in the Suncoast Native Plant Society and a subscription to their monthly newsletter *The Suncoast Grapevine*. Contact the SNPS membership chair, Devon Higginbotham, at 478-1183.

Check pertinent category:
- Individual $35
- Full time student $15
- Family or household $50
- Supporting $100
- Patron $250
- Gold $500
- Sustaining - $10 a month w/credit card
  - Visa
  - MC
  - Expiration
  - Card #
  - Code

Make check payable to FNPS.
Detach and mail to:
FNPS
P.O. Box 278
Melbourne, FL 32902-0278

Join FNPS on-line - http://fnps.org/participate/membershipinfo
Activities & Committee Chairs

- **Field Trips**: (813)
  - Shirley Denton: 625-5031
  - Stephen Dickman: 597-5888
- **Librarian**
  - Vikki Sinclair: 989-2896
- **Membership**
  - Devon Higginbotham: 478-1183
- **Newsletter Editor**
  - Janet Bowers: 759-2822
  - Mike Fite, Assistant: 977-0892
- **Publicity/Social media**
  - Donna Bollenbach: 679-5597
- **Outreach**
  - **Open**
- **USF Plant Sales**
  - Gar Reed: 323-0927
- **USF Botanical Garden Liaison**
  - Kim Hutton: 974-2329
- **Chapter Representative & Webmaster**
  - Donna Bollenbach: 679-5597

**Newsletter Submissions**

*Deadline for the next issue: Feb 1, 2017*

Please send articles and original artwork for The Suncoast Grapevine to Janet Bowers, by the deadline above- jbowers27@yahoo.com

**SNPS Web Address**

http://www.SuncoastNPS.org

**We’re on Meet Up & Facebook**

**Regular meetings are in Seffner**

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**2016 Board of Directors**

**President**
- Donna Bollenbach
donna.bollenbach@gmail.com

**Vice-president**
- Virginia Overstreet
  voxelstr@tampabay.rr.com

**Treasurer**
- Gar Reed
gar0426@yahoo.com

**Secretary**
- Tina Patterson
  mablepatterson@hotmail.com

**Board Members at Large**
- Andy Taylor
  andytaylor6@gmail.com

**Suncoast Chapter of Florida Native Plant Society, Inc.**
P.O. Box 1158
Seffner, FL 33583-1158

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**Meetings are normally the third Wednesday of the month at 7 PM. (no December meeting)**

**DIRECTIONS TO:**

Hillsborough County Extension
5339 County Road 579
Seffner

Take I-4 to Exit 10 (just east of I-75). Go south on 579 for two blocks. Turn left on Old Hillsborough Ave and park on the North side of the office.

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**Please deliver to:**