

Magnolia Chapter FNPS Monthly Update: April 2012

“Beauty and seduction, I believe, is nature’s tool for survival.” (Louie Schwartzberg)

Chapter Happenings:

April of 2012 was field time in Tallahassee. Time to get outside, take a hike, explore a new botanical site, identify a new plant, work the garden, pull invasive weeds from a park, and get to know new native plant friends. For the Magnolia Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society, April provided a good dose of hope and change.

April Plant of the Month – Royal Catchfly:

Dan Miller picked Royal Catchfly, *Silene regia*, as the April Plant of the Month for its large red blooms and hardiness in the garden. Royal catchfly is a member of the Pink family native to much of eastern North America and a few localities of the Florida Panhandle, and as with other members of its Genus has flowers that will “catchfly” or other small insects with sticky hairs. The preference is full or partial sun in moderately moist to well drained soils. Royal Catchfly is fairly easy to grow, although it is somewhat slow and resents excessive shading. The bright red flowers bloom while the plant is small in size, and attract large pollinators such as black swallowtail caterpillars and hummingbirds.

April 5, 2012 Program: Hydric Pine Flatwood Restoration and Re-introduction of Native Wetland Wildflowers

David C. Clayton, an environmental scientist with the Northwest Florida Water Management District’s Bureau of Resource Management, showed how experience, passion and patience can turn degraded north Florida woods back into wonderful wilderness. With a scientific method, a sense of practicality and a keen eye for the beauty in what looks right for a natural landscape is what is right for a natural ecosystem, David bolstered the expectations of native plant folks that landscape restoration is not just a worthy ideal, but a possible and worthwhile effort. The following is an abstract David provided for his talk, which was peppered with funny quips and included great photographs of the planning, construction, flowers and fruits of the restoration effort.

The Northwest Florida Water Management District (NFWFMD) purchased the property that would become the Sand Hill Lakes Mitigation Bank (SHLMB) site in the fall of 2002. The site was chosen due to location, hydrologic impairment of wetlands and biological diversity. When developing a wetland restoration plan, early aerial photography from the 1940’s and 1950’s was used to assess site conditions prior to substantial landscape changes, shifts in vegetation communities, hydrologic impacts or fire exclusion. Fire exclusion, coupled with hydrologic alterations resulted in the severe degradation of the hydric pine flatwoods. Nearly all of the 165 acres of hydric pine flatwoods vegetation was replaced with shrub vegetation, primarily black titi. Combining early aerial photography, soils maps and landscape/wetland conditions, a restoration plan was developed to restore site hydrology and impacted hydric pine community to pre-impact conditions. Since the implementation of restoration activities in 2005, the NFWFMD has used a variety of techniques such as shrub removal, re-introduction of fire, selective herbicides targeted at shrubs, as well as planting wire grass, toothache grass, cutover-muhly grass to help restore the hydric pine flatwoods. An initial seed bank evaluation did not indicate a diverse seed bank. In an effort to restore diversity “important” wildflower species from a pooled reference were collected and grown by a local and FDEP nurseries. In the winter of 2011, the District planted a total of 72,600 wildflowers representing 22 different species over 15.5 acres. Survival and growth of the planted species has been excellent to date. Future work will include developing additional populations of rare Panhandle endemics at the SHLMB. The NFWFMD continues to use adaptive management techniques in an effort to restore and maintain diverse, self-sustaining hydric pine flatwood communities.

April 7, 2012 Field Trip to Sand Hill Lakes Mitigation Bank in Washington County

David Clayton and Leigh Brooks led a group of sixteen on the field trip. Leigh reported:

There were 16 of us. Everyone laughed a lot, Dr. A, Bill Boothe, and David Clayton were all funny. Dr. A was fun just to watch, so exuberant. Anytime anyone announced a flower or something rare he would seem to bounce over to it. His knife, in heavy-duty leather holster, was his constant companion along with his Tallahassee recycle shopping bag (I love mine). Once he bounced over to something so fast he left his knife in the ground and his bag behind. A couple of us carried them over to him. He took lots of samples (had collecting permit) and mounted them in a portable press he carries in the car. Ann Johnson had been part of the FNAI crew that the NFWFMD had hired to do a plant survey last fall. The plant list David provided, from FNAI, was missing plants we were seeing. So Ann was busy trying to amend the list. David was happy because there was at least one species in bloom, *Pentstemon* sp., that had not been observed on the site before. There was actually quite a bit in

bloom, things of a more subtle nature in the sandhills. We saw a several karst ponds, a couple had smooth bark St. Johnswort (*Hypericum lissophloeus*). Saw a seepage slope on the side of one pond that had white top pitcher plants, club moss, and *Platanthera* orchids (but not up yet). That pond had a wading bird rookers, we could see some of the birds roosting. The ponds had row boats that you could borrow. It was amazing to imagine how the ponds were before, so thick with titi ringing them that you could not see across, to now, and the lakes are beautiful. Things in flower that I took photos of in case you asked - persimmon, beardtongue, *utricularia*, candyweed, blazing star and goldenrod (I know, out of season), silver croton, yellow indigo, Queen's delight, spiderwort, day flower, sparkleberry, blue star, green eyes, St. Johnswort, Venus looking glass, savannah milkweed, yellow star grass, water lilies, sundew. You could check with Ann for the full list of what was seen. Weather was supreme. David had planned five stops, but people were dilly dallying on the first one looking at every little thing and getting photos, so we cut it down to two stops with lunch in between. David had to leave at 2, so we left everyone there. It was a great day.

April 14 and 22, Gholson Nature Park Workdays, Chatthoochee.

Roadside Wildflowers

Tom Jackson with Leon County and Eleanor Dietrich of the Magnolia Chapter monitored all of the Leon County pilot sites for the reduced mowing project and recorded the flowers currently in bloom in those areas, drawing on the expertise of Dr. Loran Anderson for helping with the plant identifications. Springhill Road and Woodville Highway were selected as the first reduced mowing roadsides, with an interest now in managing the wildflower bloom along SR 267, Bloxham Cutoff in west Leon County.

A report on their recent findings as well as two previous reports on this project are posted at the flicker websites below. There are some wonderful wildflowers along these roads. The advantages of such roadside management are multiple, and benefit not just the wildflowers and their interested viewers and partakers, but also allows us to consider the practical considerations for reduced mowing of roadsides, and how this can contribute to issues of sustainability and conservation. Eleanor reported on this and on other county projects (now 17 counties have passed resolutions for reduced mowing projects) at the 2012 Florida Native Plant Society state conference.

www.flickr.com/photos/wildflowersflorida/sets/72157629509786578/

www.flickr.com/photos/wildflowersflorida/sets/72157627607045773/

www.flickr.com/photos/wildflowersflorida/sets/72157625114075787/

Earth Day April 21, 2012: Florida Caverns and Wakulla Wildlife Festival

Magnolia Chapter native plant booths were at their best both south west and south for Earth Day this year.

At Florida Caverns State Park in Marianna, the plant booth was in a beautiful spot across from a blooming meadow of Indian pink perfect for the sales of native plants provided by Dan Miller's Trillium Gardens nursery. The booth was so pretty with Karen MacClendon's wildflowers, Dan's plants, colorful wildflower books and the new native plant banner. Guy Anglin and Wilson Baker were there leading tours. Florida State Parks had a display in the next booth on exotics and PPE and equipment for treating them, which was a good complement. Leigh reports "we all had such a nice time and would do it again in a heartbeat."

At Wakulla Springs State Park, the Magnolia Chapter's booth was set next to the *Sarracenia* Chapter's, in a great shady spot perfect for displaying native plants and attracting folks in for the plant sale and raffle. The morning crew was kept pretty busy and treated to a nice lunch in the lodge. Unfortunately, the afternoon crew arrived just in time for a squall line to bear down, a thunderclap to boom and the park to close the show! The park organizes such a great event that it's a safe bet that next year will be even better.

News on the Conservation Front

Just out is a report on the State of Florida's Annual Expenditures on Florida's federal-listed plants for the 2010-11 federal fiscal year (Oct. 1, 2010-Sept. 30, 2011). Total annual expenditures tallied were \$320,815 (down from \$334,169 in 2009-10 federal FY). Total land acquisition totaled \$3,702,850 (down from \$22,729,800 in 2009-10 federal FY), providing habitat for twelve species of federal-listed plants.

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Email: Michael.Jenkins@FreshFromFlorida.com
http://www.floridaforestservice.com/forest_management/plant_conservation_index.html

Web Notes

Helen Roth has volunteered to assist with the posting on the Magnolia Chapter's new "subsite" within the FNPS website. Look forward to news of the June launch of the remodeled website.

For a taste of Louie Schwartzberg's awe inspiring pollinator cinematography, visit:
http://www.ted.com/talks/lang/en/louie_schwartzberg_the_hidden_beauty_of_pollination.html

***Phoebanthus tenuifolius* Seed Needed for Research Project:**

The following request was forwarded by Mimi Williams of the U.S. Natural Resource Conservation Service. Note that this species of *Phoebanthus* is a Florida threatened species subject to permit requirements of FDACS Division of Plant Industry under state rules for the Preservation of Native Flora, Florida Administrative Code. (<https://www.flrules.org/gateway/ChapterHome.asp?Chapter=5B-40>).

Hello,

My name is Hannah Tetreault and I am a graduate student at Kansas State University in Dr. Mark Ungerers lab. I am planning an experiment with wild populations of sunflower species and would like to include an out-group species, *Phoebanthus tenuifolius*. I have been having a difficult time finding seed for *Phoebanthus* and thought maybe the plant material center from Florida could direct me to where to look. Do you know where I can find *Phoebanthus* seed?

Thank you for your time and help
Hannah Tetreault, Graduate Teaching Assistant
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