



Magnolia Chapter

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Magnolia Chapter Happenings December 2013

Al Schotz with the Alabama Natural Heritage Program was our December speaker on Rare Plants of Eglin Air Force Base. There was high audience turnout, with many FSU students present. Al had done biological survey work at Eglin while formerly employed by FNAI and showed gorgeous photos of his time there. Eglin is an extremely diverse area due to the large spatial extent of the base. Most of the base is sandhills with characteristic longleaf pine and turkey oak. There are various wetland communities. Seepage slopes are remarkable for the pitcher plants and other carnivorous plants, as well as orchids and Southern milkweed (*Asclepias viridula*). The hummingbird flower (*Macranthera flammea*) occurs on seepage slopes and baygalls, a semi-parasite on the roots of tulip poplar, swamp black gum and others. There are also seepage streams and ravines with silky camelia (*Stewartia malacodendron*) and Alabama spinypod (*Matelea alabamensis*), and xeric coastal scrub and dunes where you'll find Godfrey's and Cruise's goldenasters (*Chrysopsis godfreyi* & *C. gossypina*). Many areas are open to the public. First you must get a recreation pass at Jackson Guard.

Contragulations to Gail Fishman, winner of blue or soapwort gentian (*Gentiana saponaria*), our plant-of-the-month for December.

For our December field trip into the Munson Sandhills of the Apalachicola National Forest (ANF), Magnolia members began the day with some morning camaraderie and banter at the St. Marks Bicycle Trailhead. We promptly tromped into the picturesque sandhill ecosystem that dominates the easternmost portion of ANF. Dozens of grass and aster species and blazing stars blanketed the ground under a mid-canopy of various species of oaks, and large longleaf pines. While hiking the backcountry trails, we traversed several of the unique karst lakes that give this area geological AND biological fame, as they hold the last known occurrences of the rare striped newt. Old stands of myrtle dahoons (*Ilex myrtifolia*) surrounded the ponds, with large colonies of myrtle St. John's wort (*Hypericum myrtifolium*) blooming at their bases. Lunch was lovely at a fine old live oak (*Quercus virginiana*) that had split nearly in half, affording us ideal sitting arrangements. We stopped to take note of a wetland that was being destroyed by off-road vehicles that were ignoring the trespassing signs, and attempted to note all of the floristic changes that had occurred as a result of the disturbance. On our way back to the trail head, we found ourselves enveloped in a lovely afternoon shower, where we all pleasantly chatted about the profusions of plant species, gopher tortoises, and red-cockaded woodpeckers. (Submitted by Field Trip Coordinator Scott Davis)

The Phipps Park Invasive Plant Education Program on December 7 had 13 people with a mix of different interests, but all wanting to learn from each other. We all had great time, taking a short hike through the lovely woods (Swamp Loop Trail, in the NFWMD section of the park), during which we made ourselves feel useful not only by identifying invasives (especially Japanese climbing fern with and without spores) but also by digging out some heavenly-smelling Camphor trees and, of course, coral ardisia. No one wanted to stop removing the plants! Brian

The purpose of the Florida Native Plant Society is to promote the preservation, conservation, and restoration of the native plants and native plant communities of Florida.

Pelc (The Nature Conservancy) and John Valenta (NFWFMD) and Catherine Sincich (City of Tallahassee, also a conservator with Department of State, Division of Archeology), and Sally and Dean Jue (North American Butterfly Association) were great educators, and Helen Roth and others pitched in too. At lunch there was more discussion of how to remove invasives, the bluebird trail, the rare butterfly in park (golden banded skipper), the butterfly trail in park, and rules about removing artifacts. (Submitted by Karen Berkeley)

Diana Picklesimer thanks the hearty volunteers who braved the weather predictions to remove invasives at Gholson Nature Park on December 14! Magnolians Scott Copeland, Leigh Brooks, Carmen Zaldivar, and concerned citizen, Lynn Ross made an eight bag effect on the coral ardisia, two types of privet, glossy (*Ligustrum lucidum*) and Chinese (*L. sinense*), as well as Japanese climbing fern. Capturing seeds from large specimens and tagging for removal were done as well. The start of Trillium profusion was the visual reward for the determined volunteers. The rain showers arrived respectfully when the endeavors were concluded. (Submitted by Diana Picklesimer)

On Deer Lake Middle School's December Family Science Night, Scott Davis of the Magnolia Chapter reached out to some of Tallahassee's youth about the importance of native plants in their community. Displays, brochures, native plant seeds, and coloring books were made available to the students, who readily took one of everything! Scott Davis spoke with some of the school's science teachers about the on-campus native wildflower garden that the school intends to create next year. An emphasis on incorporating larval host plants into the garden was strongly encouraged. Many of the children's parents were equally interested in FNPS, and brought many questions to our table. Deer Lake awarded Magnolia a certificate of appreciation for displaying at the event, and indicated an interest in us coming back in the future. (Submitted by Scott Davis)

The Board of Directors passed a budget for the 2014 calendar year. Significant assets had accrued, so the Board decided spend down some of the money by supporting a number of worthy projects and initiatives. The largest planned expenses will be for speakers and the Seek and Destroy campaign. The 2014 budget with approximately \$12,000 in anticipated expenses is probably the Chapter's largest in its history, not counting years we hosted the state FNPS conference. You may view the budget on our web site: magnolia.fnpschapters.org/index.php?id=documents.

Florida Water and Land Legacy update - A total of 961,253 petitions had been collected as of December 23, well surpassing the goal of 910,000. County Supervisors of Elections are verifying signatures, with 78% of the 683,149 needed to qualify for the 2014 ballot verified to date. Official validation from the Division of Elections is expected on February 1. Verified signatures are also needed from 8% of voters in 14 congressional districts. As of December 13, the campaign was qualified in three districts. Please consider making a financial contribution at floridawaterlandlegacy.org.

Submitted by Leigh Brooks
January 1, 2014

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