



Magnolia Chapter

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Magnolia Chapter Happenings September 2013

Our Fall season started off with a moving program by landscape artist Philip Juras. He uses techniques of forensic ecology and sensory immersion to paint scenes that William Bartram described in his classic book on travels in the Southeast. He fascinated the audience with his process. It's not such an easy thing to do because many of these landscapes have been obliterated, or nearly so. The scenes he brings to vivid life can serve, like the book, as a baseline before land conversion made places unrecognizable. He reminded us how lucky we are to have a place like the Apalachicola National Forest in our back yard with its grassy savannas, fire-maintained open vistas, and longleaf pine – a wonderland gone from the Atlantic Coastal Plain. His is a message of promise that through the medium of art, people can be moved to care and act, as the Hudson River painters were able to influence the conservation of Yosemite and Yellowstone, now two of our country's most loved national parks.

The September field trip to the Aucilla Sinks Geological Area brought out 24 people. Coincidentally, it was our trip leader's birthday, Scott Davis. We met Scott's brother, who sang Happy Birthday with us. Fritz Wettstein wrote a nice trip report, plant list included. The report is posted to our web site magnolia.fnpschapters.org under documents.

Members enjoyed the Wildflowers of Wakulla social and dinner afterward at Posey's Dockside Cafe on Dickerson Bay. What a beautiful evening on the water. The Wakulla Welcome Center, for those who have not been there, is a Florida Communities Trust project with a lovely stilt building and panoramic view through picture windows of the bay and surrounding marsh. Sarracenia Chapter's fine photographers had arranged the gorgeous wildflower photos in chronological order of bloom time around several rooms. Our sincere thanks to the Sarracenians who made this possible, especially Jeannie Broadhead and David Roddenberry.

Karen Berkeley is thinking big with the Phipps Park Invasive Plant Education and Volunteer Program. A brain trust from the City of Tallahassee, Northwest Florida Water Management District, FNPS, Florida Trail Association, and Native Nurseries met to strategize. A professional, multi-pronged public education campaign may be coming our way.

Higher Education Update – FNPS is working with two colleges on native garden projects. The Florida A & M University (FAMU) Green Coalition had developed a native garden at GreenCo Park on campus several years ago that is due for a sprucing up. FNPS member and nurseryman Dan Miller is assessing the garden issues and advising FAMU. At Tallahassee Community College, FNPS and adjunct faculty member Russell Pfof worked with natural sciences faculty to propose a native garden project on campus. The project was awarded a grant from TCC Foundation's College Innovation Fund. Curriculum from several courses will incorporate experiential learning at the garden.

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.

FNPS Land Management Partners Committee (LMP) update - Brad Hartman and Guy Anglin attended the Acquisition and Restoration Council meeting to hear about the state conservation lands assessment. DEP is evaluating state lands for potential sale. Magnolians are encouraged to review the site list and maps and submit informed comments. DEP continues to update the list. The Magnolia Chapter submitted a comment letter developed by Brad and Leigh Brooks. For more information see www.dep.state.fl.us/lands/assessment.

Good news - the Florida Supreme Court has approved the constitutional amendment language for the Legacy ballot initiative. Now the rest is up to each of us - 300,000 petitions are needed in the next 9 weeks to qualify for the 2014 ballot. Magnolians continued to gather a trickle of signed petitions. Count so far: 274. We must do more! Donations are critical to fund paid signature gatherers, so please give what you can, and then some. To sign a petition or donate, please visit floridawaterlandlegacy.org.

Submitted by Leigh Brooks
Oct. 2, 2013