



Cocoloba Jam

April 2013

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Kellie Westervelt, FNPS Executive Director, April speaker

FNPS Executive Director, Kellie Westervelt, will be on hand on Thursday, April 11th to talk about the important role that FNPS plays in Florida conservation, the efforts the Board is taking to strengthen the organization through strategic planning, and of course, the 2014 conference .

Kellie Westervelt joined the Florida Native Plant Society after serving over 20 years in the non-profit conservation community. She has worked at the local, regional, national, and international scales and is now looking forward to returning to the statewide level to help protect Florida's natural heritage. Throughout her career, Kellie has focused on biodiversity conservation. Her experience ranges from fundraising, strategic planning, and program development to restoration and resource management.

Kellie began her career with the Florida Park Service as a District Program Development Specialist in Miami and the Florida Keys where she developed volunteer programs for 14 state parks and raised over 1.2 million dollars for natural resource management and historic preservation. When Hurricane Andrew leveled one of the parks in her district, she joined the American Littoral Society to launch the Cape Florida Project.

The Cape Florida Project was an ambitious restoration of Bill Baggs Cape Florida State Park on Key Biscayne. Although the project was born from a natural disaster, the park had been an ecological disaster long before the storm. It had been overrun by invasive Australian-pines. In one fell swoop, Hurricane Andrew accomplished what resource managers had tried for years. The storm removed over 98% of the park's exotic tree canopy and set the stage for restoration on a scale unprecedented in the history of Florida state parks.

As Director of the Cape Florida Project, Kellie helped establish restoration guidelines and oversaw the volunteer-driven effort aimed at restoring native plant communities to the 436-acre site. Working within Miami's multicultural community, Kellie developed the fundraising, educational, and volunteer programs that sustained the project for over a decade. Thousands of people participated and tens of thousands of volunteer hours were committed to exotic plant control, nursery operations, and planting native species. Today, Cape Florida remains one of the more storied community-based restoration projects, acknowledged in three books and numerous articles.

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Kellie Westervelt (continued)

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Kellie went on to become the Habitat Director for the tri-state Delaware Estuary Program where she worked with stakeholders across multiple jurisdictions to promote growth management, land acquisition, and ecological restoration. She then worked for the Wildlands Network, an international organization dedicated to averting species extinction through landscape connectivity. She has served on numerous boards including the Society for Ecological Restoration International and the Environmental Fund for Florida. Some of her publications have included educational curricula such as Plant-A-Seed, reference material such as A Guide to the Natural Communities of the Delaware Estuary, and most recently “From Adversity to Diversity,” a chapter in The Human Dimensions of Ecological Restoration published by Island Press.

In her new role as Executive Director for the Florida Native Plant Society, Kellie is looking forward to helping the Society grow its capacity, synthesize its programs, and position itself to achieve its important mission “to promote the preservation, conservation, and restoration of the native plants and native plant communities of Florida.”

Gayle Edwards will also be presenting her informative “Invasive Exotic of the Month.” This month’s feature will include Air Potato (*Dioscorea bulbifera*) along with Primrose Willow (*Ludwigia peruviana*).

Socializing begins at 6:30pm. The presentations start at 7:00pm with a business meeting to follow. Meetings are open to the public and held at the Eco-Living Center at Rutenberg Park, Fort Myers.

President’s Corner

By John Sibley, Coccoloba Chapter President

I’m always so relieved when daylight savings time arrives because it provides opportunity to enjoy more time later in the day for activities best suited for sunshine. Among my favorites of course are observing the nuances of seasonal changes spring heralds. It seems to inspire a sense of renewal looking at the new growth in plants after a season of dormancy and the arrival of those marvelous Swallow Tail Kites and Cedar Wax Wings. And few things in nature bring more pleasure than the proliferation of butterflies having newly emerged from their chrysalis, fluttering about taking in the nectar of the many spring flowers. So I walk along, enamored with the joys of nature when there comes a nagging sense of urgency to mind. What are you doing wandering around mindlessly? There’s work to do! Oh yes, that’s right, I should be doing this and that and

the other. Among them is the planning for the FNPS conference that Coccoloba will be hosting in 2014. Lots to do, but so much is done already. We’re so delighted at having secured FGCU, “Florida’s Environmental University” as the venue and getting so much support from all levels of staff there. Oh geez, got to get started planning for the Coccoloba spring plant sale at Rotary park too. That’s only a few weeks away now! So we focus our energy, like the Wild Tamarind forcing out its new summer leaf canopy and the Cinnamon Bark buds preparing to open and display their intricate, but remarkable flowers. For all of us Coccoloba folks, there are many tasks at hand, both big and small. I’m sure there’s one for you, **SO GET INVOLVED, GIVE US A CALL!** Remember, it’s not fall behind, it’s spring forward!

Spring Picnic at Edison Ford Estates

Coccoloba's Spring social & picnic is planned for Sunday, May 5th at the beautiful Edison Ford Estates. Debbie Hughes will be presenting an informal program at noon on how the gardeners take care of the Estate's vegetable and herb garden. Lunch will follow the program. Please plan to bring a side dish to share; the Chapter will provide the main course, drinks, and utensils. The program & picnic will take place in the nursery/vegetable garden area of the estates; watch for signs to direct you to the exact location. See you there!

Volunteers Needed! Coccoloba to host 2014 FNPS Annual Conference at FGCU

Mark your calendars! The 2014 FNPS annual conference will be held **Thursday, May 15, 2014 through Sunday, May 18, 2014** in the beautiful Cohen Center of Florida Gulf Coast University. The University is graciously sponsoring the event and will make student housing available at a rate of under \$30 per night for those cost-conscious about lodging. FGCU is providing discounted rent plus additional money toward the facilities for FNPS. This will go far in allowing us to keep conference costs low in order to attract a lot of attendees from scientists to backyard gardeners.

The basic conference structure is to provide a wide variety of field trip options on Thursday and Sunday. The educational sessions and keynote speakers will be on Friday and Saturday. There will be a two-day plant sale outside along with an exhibit hall inside, also on Friday and Saturday.

Marlene Rodak has volunteered to lead the conference planning committee, and is looking for dedicated, organized, and detail-oriented people to serve on the following sub-committees: Programs, Exhibits, Plant Vendors, Sponsorships, Field Trips, Social, Logistics (signs, etc.), Silent Auction, and Communications (conference website, printing, design, etc.).

The chapter will need **lots** of volunteers and planning help; please get in touch with Marlene (rodakma@msn.com or 239-273-8945) to assist in the Chapter's efforts. Additionally, Kellie Westervelt, the FNPS Executive Director, is coming to our April meeting (Thursday, April 11th) to help strategize and explain further details about what goes on at the annual FNPS conferences and the things we'll need to do in order to prepare.

Fire Sale!

The Coccoloba Chapter has an overstock of Janisse Ray's wonderful book, *Wild Card Quilt: Taking a Chance on Home*. While supplies last, they will be on sale for a discounted price of \$11. Copies will be available at the spring plant sale, or contact Robin Gardner at 693-7937 to reserve yours!

About the book: Janisse Ray, known for her passion for the virgin longleaf pine forests that once covered the South (as described in her book *Ecology of a Cracker Childhood*), is also passionate about conserving the richness and complexity of rural communities. In *Wild Card Quilt*, she assembles short, often hilarious or heartbreaking pieces about her return to her hometown. Whether celebrating local characters and traditions, fighting to save the local school, or spending time with her extended family, Ray dares to hope that such fragments—once saved—can pattern a vibrant, sustainable future for both people and the land.

Rotary Park Native Plant Sale Saturday, April 20th 9am – 2pm



www.fnpscoccoloba.org

- Florida native wildflowers, trees, shrubs, flowering vines, grasses
- Experts on site
- All plants provided by **LOCAL** growers



FREE Native Pine Tree with each order while supplies last!



Parks & Recreation Department



5505 Rose
Garden Road
El Dorado Pkwy
& Pelican Blvd

Proceeds benefit Coccoloba Chapter, Florida Native Plant Society



**Rain Barrel
Workshop/kit
\$45 533-7504
to pre-register**

**Florida Native
Plant Books
& T-shirts**

Florimulch only \$2/bag thanks to:



Questions? Call 239-939-9663 Cash & personal checks only



Plant More Pines!

By Sue Scott, Coccoloba Publicity Chair

As the state of Florida has been developed, especially southwest Florida, thousands of acres of native plant communities have been bulldozed and lost forever. Our beautiful native skyline of slash and long leaf pine forests are gone forever, except for a few preserved areas. Southwest Florida's sense of place, and all the natural resources associated with our native forests are severely diminished. Our native wildlife, including America's national symbol the bald eagle, have lost their homes and in many instances the ability to expand due to the lack of native trees. Can we as home and business owners turn the tide? The answer is yes! Plant more pines!

Planting more pines creates shade, habitat, noise buffering, storm protection, visual screening and a sense of place. Humans have been using pine trees for thousands of years for housing, naval stores (ingredients for ship building) turpentine and even explosives. In fact, we should be thankful to native pines every time we use toilet paper! Other animals eat the pine seeds and utilize the trees for nesting.

Using native pines and related plants creates or mimics a naturally functioning ecosystem that will be healthy and strong even in drought or storms. It also recycles the energy it uses/creates

and does NOT depend on fossil fuels to maintain itself. An acre of pine flatwoods can contain over 100 species of other plants. Leaf litter made by fallen needles is the perfect mulch. By planting a triad of pines, they grow even stronger as part of a pine "community". Our native pines are hardy at all temperatures, and with a changing climate they can handle the new extremes we are experiencing. Florida native pines are also salt tolerant, and with many communities experiencing salt water intrusion, that can make or break our landscaping.

To properly plant your pine, be patient. The tree must invest in its root system before it can grow above ground. Do NOT fill the hole with compost or any other nutrient rich matter; the roots must be encouraged to grow out into the existing soil in order to get established. Adding some native wax myrtles will help to fix nitrogen in the soil, as much as the pines will need. Since pines are part of a fire climax community, they should not be planted right next to buildings in areas where fire is commonly experienced.

Side note: Pine nuts that you find in grocery stores do not come from our Florida native pines. They come from pinyon pines that will not grow in SW Florida.

Pick up your FREE pine tree with any purchase at the Native Plant Sale, April 20th 9a-2p at Rotary Park in Cape Coral, sponsored by the Florida Native Plant Society & Cape Coral Parks & Recreation.



Charlotte Harbor Preserve State Park, Land Management Review *by Jenny Evans*

Back in January, I had the pleasure to participate as FNPS's representative on the land management review of Charlotte Harbor Preserve State Park. The sheer magnitude of this park, at 42,463 acres, presents a special set of challenges, particularly given that it can take over 2 hours to drive from one end of the park to the other! Spanning an area from Cape Coral in the south northward to Port Charlotte, the park also includes portions of Cape Haze, Rotonda, Pine Island, Punta Gorda, and all of Little Pine Island. As you can imagine, a diversity of habitats are present, including mangrove, pine flatwoods, scrub, and hardwood hammock. With a staff of only 3, management of the park proves to be a challenge, but the staff are achieving a

great deal given their limited resources. Partnerships with FWC have been beneficial to cover more territory, including patrolling much of the property that is only accessible by water. The park staff has been working diligently to control invasive exotic plants, particularly melaleuca, and also maintains a rigorous prescribed burning plan. Two rare and endemic plants occur in the park: the federally endangered plant, *Deeringothamnus rugelii* var. *pulchellus*, False Pawpaw, and *Harrisia aboriginum*, Prickly Apple, which is currently a candidate for becoming federally endangered (it is currently listed as endangered by the State of Florida). Visitors may access the park at Little Pine Island (guided walks are held there seasonally), off of Burnt Store Road in Cape Coral, or off of Burnt Store Road in Punta Gorda. Call the park office at (941)575-5861 for further directions.



Members of the Land Management Review team visiting the scrub in Charlotte Harbor Preserve State Park.

2013 FNPS Annual Conference, Jacksonville

Plan to attend the 2013 FNPS Annual Conference, May 16-19 in Jacksonville! The amazing Ixia Chapter of FNPS has put together a wonderful list of field trips throughout Northeast Florida and a trio of great evening socials (super value).

Register early and save money -- and get on that trip you always wanted, reserve a place at the dinner table with old friends or new ones, and look forward to celebrating La Florida, the land of flowers, this May 16-19, 2013, in beautiful Jacksonville!

More info: www.fnps.org/conference

REGISTER NOW: <https://www.eventville.com/catalog/eventregistration1.asp?eventid=1010214>

See you soon in Jacksonville!



Passiflora incarnata, Passionflower
Large Passion by Jim Draper, Jacksonville, Florida, oil on canvas, 60 by 48 inches
Use of this image generously donated to the Florida Native Plant Society 2013 Conference.

Minutes of the General Membership Meeting of the Florida Native Plant Society, Coccoloba Chapter

Thursday, March 14th, 2013, 7:00 pm

By Martha Grattan, Chapter Secretary

John Sibley called the meeting to order at 7:07 pm. John's opening remarks included calling attention to the upcoming events listed on the agenda. Marlene Rodak gave the Treasurer's report: current funds are \$4,420.00. This includes \$1342 netted from the Bonita Plant sale and includes a credit of \$149.30 for previously overpaid sales tax.

John stated that a new cycle of grants from the Florida Wildflower Foundation (FWF) is matching funds up to \$500.00. John would like to partner with the FWF to host roadway planting in the City of Bonita, at a site to be determined. John Sibley explained that the FWF gets its funding from license plate sales, the programs they offer include seeds and education for local school children and roadside beautification. The matching donation for Coccoloba will come from this fund. It was decided that the project needed to be completed before the end of May. Our contacts are Dave Liccardi, Mike Kirby and Matt Feeney at the City of Bonita Springs. James Wheeler agreed to meet with the City of Bonita and the FWF. Warren Bush wanted to be sure that our membership has a clear picture of the project and of the plant procurement process. Carolyn Murphey wanted to know if it was wildflowers only. John Sibley stated that it was only wildflowers. Babu Mathew wanted to know how big the space was. John mentioned that the Ortiz and Fowler Street projects were comparable. Warren Bush commented that the pencilflower ended up dominating the Hancock Bridge project. John Sibley commented that pine bark used on Fowler was not as successful as the shell. Carolyn Murphey motioned to approve the project and Martha Grattan seconded the motion. All present members voted in favor without opposition.

As a general piece of information, John Sibley passed out a copy of the FNPS grant request sent in by FNPS member Debbie Hughes. The beneficiary is the Edison and Ford Estate, it is worth \$1500.00, the purpose is to support conservation.

East County Water Control District at Hearn's Marsh: Elaine Seaman has agreed to represent the Coccoloba chapter in their public meetings.

Robin Gardener agreed to man the Coccoloba booth at the CREW wildflower festival.

The Master Naturalist Coastal Module starts April 12th, ends May 3rd, and includes two classes from 8:30 am to 4:00 pm per week. The cost is \$225.00.

Dick Workman mentioned that at this time the Coccoloba Chapter has not yet endorsed the Florida State Land and Water constitutional amendment. He would like the chapter to do this for the 2014 ballot. Marlene Rodak agreed to bring the petition for this Amendment to the next meeting. All members were in favor of endorsing this amendment.

John Sibley reminds all members to try to be present for the following events:

- Mangrove Gathering on Saturday.
- Bonita Arbor Day event.
- April 20th plant sale.
- FANN first annual trade show in Kissimmee

Motion by John to adjourn, seconded by Pat Moyer. All were in favor.

John Sibley introduced Dr. Doug Caldwell. Dr. Caldwell gave a great presentation on invasive insects and solutions to control them.

Finally, the monthly meeting plant auction combined with books donated by Debbie Preston netted \$42.00 for the chapter.



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Upcoming speakers & Chapter meetings

Meetings are held on the second Thursday of each month, 7pm, Eco-Living Center at Rutenberg Park, Fort Myers

- *Thursday, April 11th:* Kellie Westervelt, FNPS Executive Director
- *Saturday, April 20th:* Coccoloba Spring Plant Sale, Ro-

tary Park, Cape Coral

- *Sunday, May 5th:* Coccoloba Spring Social
- *Thursday, May 16th-Sunday, May 19th:* 2013 FNPS Annual Conference, Jacksonville
- *Thursday, May 15th-Sunday, May 18th, 2014:* 2014 FNPS Annual Conference, Fort Myers

Resources for Florida Native Plants and Supplies

These nurseries are owned by members of our chapter. Please support our local growers and nurseries!

- All Native Garden Center, 300 Center Road, Fort Myers, FL, 33907; 239.939.9663 www.NoLawn.com - retail & wholesale
- Bayshore Garden Center, 5870 Bayshore Road, North Fort Myers, FL; 239.543.1443 www.bayshoregardencenter.com - retail
- Calusa Nature Center, 3450 Ortiz Avenue, Fort Myers, FL, 33905; 239.275.3435 www.calusanature.com - retail
- Deep South Native Nursery, 2051 North Evalena Lane, North Fort Myers, FL; 239.826.6844- wholesale
- Earth & Spirit Garden Gallery, 5425 Maria Drive, St. James City, FL; 239.282.1025 www.earthandspiritgardengallery.com - retail
- Forestry Resources Inc., 4235 Michigan Link, Fort Myers, FL, 33916; 239.332.3966 - www.gomulch.com
- Hickory Hammock Native Tree Farm, 13321 Peace Road, Fort Myers, FL, 33905; 239.694.8220 or 239.292.4462
- The Nurseryman of SW Florida, 22023 Tuckahoe Road, Alva, FL, 33920; 239.728.2122 - retail & wholesale
- Perkins Nursery, 2575 Case Road, LaBelle, FL, 33935; 863.675.3006 - wholesale only
- Pine Forest Fruit & Flower Farm, 6670 Chipper Lane, North Fort Myers, FL, 33917; 239.543.9910 www.floridanativeplantseeds.com
- SCCF, Sanibel-Captiva Conservation Foundation, 3333 Sanibel-Captiva Road, Sanibel, FL, 33957; 239.472.1932 www.sccf.org - retail