

**January-February  
2017**

*Nature Coast Chapter meetings, field trips, and activities are open to FNPS members and the public alike.*



## *A Message from the President*

*Where have we been and where are we going.....*

2016 was a very good year and 2017 looks to be even better.

The Nature Coast Chapter fulfilled some important goals in 2016. The passage of the Ecological Corridor Ordinance in Pasco County by the Board of County Commissioners was a huge accomplishment. It was a work in progress by the Land Acquisition Team of the county for 15 years. Our chapter support, providing emails, support stickers and people at the meetings was instrumental in the passing of the ordinance. Our Conservation Chairperson, Jan Howie, will keep us informed in 2017 on the issues that we need to address in the coming year.

Membership has risen dramatically in the last year. Our goal in 2017 is to continue the trend and keep the membership solid. Don't forget to renew on-line and consider changing to sustaining membership.

The display at the 2017 Florida State Fair will be a first for us. As a volunteer you will receive a free ticket to spend the day at the fair and spend some time outreaching to the public about the Florida Native Plant Society. Thousands of people will learn about our mission.

I hope each of you has grown in some way in 2016 by being a member of our chapter. If you have enjoyed the monthly programs or field trips, met new fun people and especially if you have learned more about native plants and added some native plants to your environment, then the Nature Coast Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society has accomplished a great deal.

I want to thank the 2016 executive officers and committee chairs for their hard work. Without this solid group of idealistic and dedicated people, we would not have the wonderful chapter that we do.

**And now on to 2017 and new adventures!  
Participate, make some Native Plant goals  
for yourself and have fun!**

*Jonnie Spittler*



**Monthly meetings  
are held the 2nd  
Tuesday of each  
month at 7 p.m.**

**Location: Land O' Lakes  
Community Center, 5401  
Land O' Lakes Blvd (US  
41), Land O' Lakes, FL  
34639 in the back meeting  
room. Entrance is off the  
courtyard on the south  
side of the building.**

## **Inside this issue:**

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**WELCOME NEW MEMBERS**

**Rob Beekman**

**Mary Ann Floyd**

**Cheryl McAloon**

**Kathleen Olenic**

**Gene Schell**

**Mary Ann Floyd**

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## Meetings/Programs

### Successful Coexistence with Trees

Speaker: Joe Gross

January 10



The mystical and positive bond between trees and humans has never been stronger, but living in sometimes cramped quarters can strain even the closest of relationships. Joe will offer advice to maximize the collective experience, especially in the urban forest.

**Speaker Bio:** As a native Floridian, Joe respects our unique environment and constantly seeks to better understand and share its ecological marvels. A certified arborist since the late 1990's, he is also a Master Naturalist (2012) and Master Gardener (2013). He and his family reside in Land O' Lakes.

**To suggest a program contact Pat Kelly at (352) 588-0266 or [patriciak03@gmail.com](mailto:patriciak03@gmail.com)**

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### Florida Scrub-Jays: Nowhere Else in the World

Speaker: Marianne Korosy

February 14



How is Florida's only endemic bird species faring across the state? Learn about these scrub-adapted, charismatic birds and how you can get involved in monitoring and protecting Florida Scrub-Jays and helping restore their unique habitat.

**Speaker Bio:** Marianne Korosy began working for Audubon Florida in 2009. Her work is focused on shorebird and sea-bird conservation in addition to coordinating the statewide Jay Watch program. Marianne has a master's degree in geology from FSU and a PhD in conservation biology from the University of Central Florida.

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## A Passion for Public Lands



The Society fulfills its mission in many ways, including supporting conservation land acquisition and management of those lands that enhances the diversity of our native plants as well as the health of our native ecosystems.

As Society members we have unique opportunities to use our knowledge and passion to help usher along the stewardship of our public lands. Aldo Leopold (1887–1949) championed environmental stewardship based on a land ethic "dealing with man's

relation to land and to the animals and plants which grow upon it."

As shareholders, would you like to know more about public land ecology and stewardship? Would you like to play a role in ensuring the health and beauty of ecosystems long into the future? If so, we invite you to attend a program "A Passion for Public Lands" which will be coming soon to your local chapter.

The steps to becoming an active participant in public lands stewardship aren't difficult and we

guarantee they will introduce you to interesting ecological concepts and the fascinating relationships between plants, the ecosystems in which they thrive and other species.

We hope that you are now curious enough to want to know more about the management of your local public lands and will take a step forward in getting to know them better...stay tuned for meeting program dates.

Wendy Poag,  
Chapter Representative for Lake  
Beautyberry



Our  
**Spring**  
**Florida Native Plant Sale**  
at Land O' Lakes Community Center will be on  
**Saturday, March 25**

**FNPS keeps records of  
VOLUNTEER HOURS  
for grant purposes.**

Meetings, field trips, any volunteer time and miles driven should be emailed to Mary Ellen Gotto  
[mefgotto@aol.com](mailto:mefgotto@aol.com)  
Please include your name, date, hours, what you did, and location.

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## Field Trips

### Heartwood Preserve

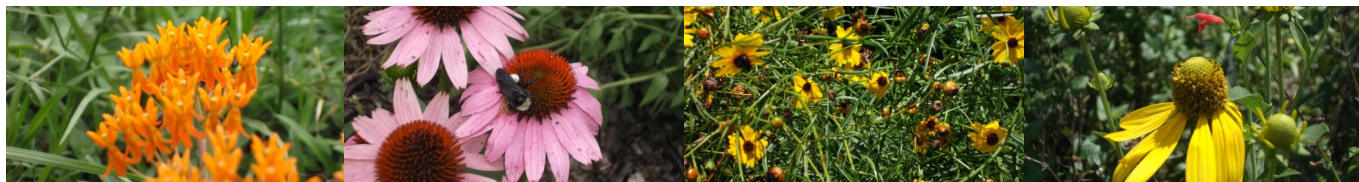
4100 Starkey Blvd, Trinity, FL  
Friday, January 20  
10:00 AM

This is a 40-acre site on the former Starkey Ranch and is owned and operated by Frank Starkey and his sister, Laura. Laura is a member of our Native Plant Society. This is a "green" cemetery site that recently opened. From their web-site: "Heartwood Preserve is a place where end-of-life decisions are made in harmony with nature, where all of life's passages are honored and celebrated, and the natural ecology of a beautiful and unique habitat is protected. In keeping with this mission, we provide burial options for green burial and the burial of cremated remains." <http://heartwoodpreserve.com/>  
Bring water, snacks. Leader: Gail Parsons 813-928-1412 (cell) [gailpar1@verizon.net](mailto:gailpar1@verizon.net)

### USF Forest Preserve – a university research site

6550 E Fletcher Ave, Tampa, FL 33647  
Friday, February 3  
10AM-12 PM

A special treat to have two university faculty lead this trip into the University's 400 acre outdoor research area south of Fletcher Ave and bordered by the Hillsborough River on the east. Dr Gordon Fox is a professor in the Department of Integrative Biology of the College of Arts and Sciences and his specialty areas are Plant Ecology and Conservation Biology. Our other leader will be Laurie Walker, Director of USF Botanical Gardens. This site has both wetlands and uplands to explore. <http://facilities.cas.usf.edu/forestpreserve/>  
Bring lunch, water and snacks. Lunch at Riverfront Park (USF property) on Hillsborough River. Leader: Gail Parsons 813-928-1412 (cell) [gailpar1@verizon.net](mailto:gailpar1@verizon.net)



## Conservation Chair News

### Restore Act-Pasco County

For those of you who read my email last month about the Restore Act, much of this will be the same but with more detail added. **The Restore Act was passed to distribute money from fines from the BP oil spill in the Gulf.** Even though Pasco County did not get any oil damage directly, many businesses did take an economic hit because fewer tourists came to Florida, and we will get a significant amount of money over 15 years. All projects submitted for funding must aid in conservation and marine restoration, workforce and job creation, improvements to state parks, increase tourism, or build infrastructure to ameliorate coastal flooding.

**The funds are distributed in different "pots".** "Pot" 1 is under local control (Pasco County) and will amount to 5.4 million dollars over 15 years. This breaks down to \$360,000 per year. "Pot" 2 is under control of the Gulf Coast States and is 12.7 million over 15 years. "Pot" 3 is controlled by the Federal Govern-

ment, and no amount is given for that. "Pots" 4 and 5 are smaller and are for research and monitoring.

**Here in Pasco County, the Restore Act Committee, appointed by the BOCC, scores the projects submitted to them and makes recommendations to the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC).** An initial vote of the BOCC is followed by a 45 day public discussion period. Then, after making any needed changes to the proposals and factoring in public opinion, the recommended projects are voted on again by the BOCC. The "Pot" 1 projects that pass the second vote go to the U.S. Treasury that issues grants for them. To date, three projects have been approved from "Pot" 1 and the County is awaiting the grants. These three projects are: 1) funding for the second phase of the **Sunwest Park** for \$195,000, 2) **Orange Lake Restoration** that is to restore the Lake to the way it was described in 1888 and solve storm water problems for

\$100,000, and 3) the **Port Richey Waterfront** dredging and restoration for \$667,000. In addition, another project went before the BOCC on November 19th: a request by the Pasco County School Board for funds for students to **Restore Oyster Beds** for \$25,000. Many of these projects will require additional funds to be completed, and those may be obtained by grants and partnerships.

**Another series of projects is in the works for state or federal money.** All projects for "Pot" 2 are also submitted to "Pot" 3. The following projects will be considered at the BOCC meeting on Tuesday, November 29 at the Government Center in New Port Richey. **CERN, the Coastal Environmental Center Network** (\$1,200,000), will tie in education for students in K-20 with water quality and sustainability research, have an Environmental Academy, a research institute, and a welcome center at Werner Boyce Salt Springs State Park

Continued on Page 4



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## Chapter Representative News

### TEEPÉE, ANYONE?

The theme of the 2017 Annual Conference is **Connections: Above and Below**. We'll be exploring the way things relate on many levels. For details on all the possible Connections see the Blog article at <http://fnpsblog.blogspot.com/2016/10/2017-fnps-conference-connections-above.html>, **FNPS Meets the Wild West....**

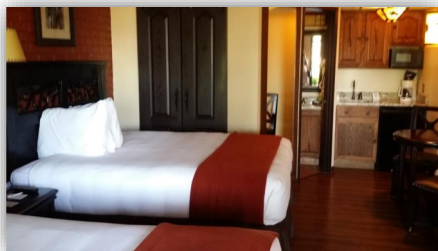
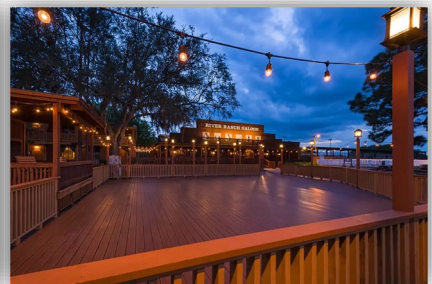
For the first time in many years, the Conference will not be held in an urban area. Instead we will be guests of the Westgate River Ranch Resort, an upscale resort in the heart of Florida, south of Lake Kissimmee.

A huge array of accommodations will be available ranging from lodge rooms, to glamping (camping in air conditioned tepees and cabins), right down to primitive camping. Costs range from \$100/night for a Lodge suite with a full kitchen to \$200/

night for glamping with 3 beds. There are RV sites also. All meals and socials will be onsite. The lodging rates will be good for 3 days before and 3 days after the conference, so members can take advantage of the venue's other activities, such as air-boat rides, fishing, horseback riding, hayrides, swamp buggy rides and more. Better make your reservations soon! Need a roommate? Email Julie Wert: [aripekajule@verizon.net](mailto:aripekajule@verizon.net) and I'll see what I can do!

Best of all, the area has many, many field trip opportunities, most of which will be new to the Conference. The Ranch is situated on 1700 acres overlooking the Kissimmee River, surrounded by conservation lands and state parks. For a look at what will be available, including what glamping looks like, click here: <http://www.fnps.org/conference/2017>.

*Julie Wert, Chapter Representative*



**Lodge Guestroom \$110**



**Deluxe Lodge Suite \$120**



**Glamping \$200**

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#### Conservation Chair News (cont'd)

among other things. Two reef projects are recommended, creating an **inshore reef off of Hudson** (\$510,000) and **expanding the Hudson Reef #4** (\$110,000). In addition a project will involve the **restoration of Crews Lake** that includes restoring the historic water levels, and also several storm water improvement projects are proposed to **help with flooding in West Pasco**. Some of these storm water projects are connected to Crews Lake and the Cotee River.

**Your executive committee has decided that the project that we will support in this group is the one that we think most fits our mission, the Crews Lake Restoration.** Crews Lake Park (Pasco County) is in one of the ecological corridors and has the Upper River Cottee Preserve to the north and the Serenova Tract of the Starkey Wilderness Park to the south. The larger the area of preserved land, the more value it has to the environment. So, a healthy Crews Lake will fit in nicely with the nearby preserves. After the

BOCC's second vote, the projects that pass for "Pots" 2 & 3 will be submitted to the Florida Department of Environmental Protection for approval. Projects that make that cut will go to the U.S. Treasury for grant funding.

I will let you know by email when votes and meetings are coming up. **This is our money, and we should make our voices heard.**

*Jan Howie, Conservation Chair*

# FNPS ANNUAL CONFERENCE

May 18-21, 2017

Theme: Connections: Above and Below



Connections to the Landscape  
Connections at the Edge  
Connections of Plants, Wildlife and People  
Connections from Roots to Canopy  
Connections in the Field

## FUN & EXCITEMENT FOR MEMBERS AND GUESTS

### Speakers

Dr. Suzanne Simard—University British Columbia Forestry Professor and forest ecologist whose research focuses on how organisms living in soil – like fungi – help trees establish and grow.

Tonya Clayton, Ph.D.— Freelance science writer specializing in the earth and ocean sciences.

Craig Huegel, Ph.D.—Adjunct professor at St. Petersburg College and a self-employed ecological consultant.

Roger Hammer—Distinguished retired professional naturalist, author, and photographer.

Steve Bousquin, Ph.D.—Senior Supervising Scientist for the Lake and River Ecosystems Section of the South Florida Water Management District.

Amir Khoddamzadeh, Ph.D.— Florida International University Instructor (Sustainable Horticulture/Cryobiology). He will talk about cutting-edge methods for plant propagation and preservation.

### Westgate River Ranch Resort Activities



**Airboat Rides**



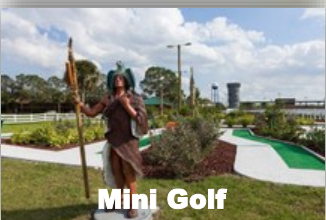
**Swamp Buggy Rides**



**Horseback Riding**



**Boat Rentals**



**Mini Golf**

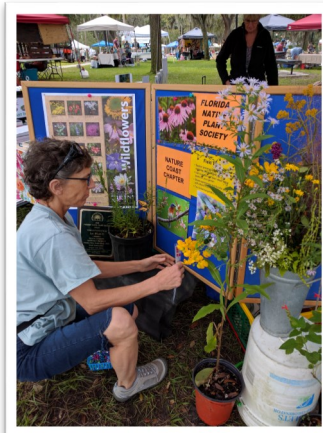


**Bungee Jumping**



## Pasco Upcycle Festival, Sims Park, New Port Richey, Nov 12, 2016

Photos by Lorna Davison



### CHAPTER DIRECTORY

#### OFFICERS:

President:	Jonnie Spitler	813.435.8143	jspitler1120@gmail.com
Vice President:	Annie Johnson	352.518.0545	annjohnson.eotrf@gmail.com
Secretary:	Julie Wert	727.863.1363	aripekajule@verizon.net
Treasurer:	Stephen Joyce	813.767.3131	savinhillbill@gmail.com
Chapter Representative:	Gail Parsons	813.920.2730	gailpar1@verizon.net

#### CHAIRPERSONS:

Newsletter Editor:	Karen Watrous	813.528.2368	karen_watrous@yahoo.com
Publicity Chair:	Sandra Vanno	727.376.7663	svanno@tampabay.rr.com
Membership:	Deb Tribbey	727.857.6583	bdtrib@hotmail.com
Library Chair:	Sharon Holding	727.247.7367	shrnholding@gmail.com
Refreshments:	Rebecca Dance	813.929.9882	rstarrdance@aol.com
Conservation Chair:	Jan Howie	727.848.7689	janicehowie@aol.com
Program Chair:	Pat Kelly	352.588.0266	patriciaak03@gmail.com
Field Trip Chair:	Gail Parsons	813.920.2730	gailpar1@verizon.net
Plant Sale:	Peggy Gretchen	813.991.4812	herculesmpg@hotmail.com
Volunteer Coordinator:	Mary Ellen Gotto	727.264.8701	mefgotto@aol.com
Landscape/Garden Consultant:	Annie Johnson	352.518.0545	annjohnson.eotrf@gmail.com

## Florida Native Plant Society Membership Application

Benefits of membership include: *The Palmetto*, our quarterly magazine, which is filled with information on native plants, gardening, conservation of native habitats, etc., Sabal Minor, our bi-monthly newsletter that will keep you up to date on FNPS news and activities, membership in the local chapter of your choice, chapter newsletter, native plant gardening and landscaping information, Speakers and field trips.

☐ NEW ☐ RENEWING

☐ Sustaining member \$10 monthly from credit card  
or

#### Select Annual Membership Level

☐ Full Time Student \$15 ☐ Individual \$35  
☐ Supporting \$100 ☐ Business/Non-profit \$150  
☐ Patron \$250 ☐ Gold \$500 ☐ Household \$50

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Biz or Org \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State & Zip \_\_\_\_\_

FL County \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Chapter (assigned by location unless otherwise requested)

Make check payable to FNPS. Please detach and mail this form & payment to:

**Florida Native Plant Society**  
**PO Box 278**  
**Melbourne FL 32902-0278**

You can also sign up and pay with credit card at  
<http://www.fnps.org/participate/membershipinfo>  
Phone (321) 271-6702 email: info@fnps.org

# SUGARBERRY or Hackberry

By Peggy A. Gretchen  
FNPS Member  
Pasco Master Gardener

**Botanical Name:** *Celtis laevigata*

**Common Name:** Sugarberry, Hackberry

**Family:** Ulmaceae (Elm) or Celtidaceae (Hackberry)

**Type of Plant:** Native large deciduous tree; broad rounded crown, stout zigzag branches, and attractive gray smooth or warty (with corky outgrowths) bark; relatively fast-growing. Height: 60 – 90 ft. Width: 30 – 50 ft.

## How to Identify:

**Leaves:** Deciduous. Alternate, simple, lanceolate to ovate, often asymmetrical at base and tapering to a long, curving point, 2.5 in. long. Margins usually entire or minutely toothed near the tip. Light green in summer, turning yellow in the fall.

**Flowers:** Greenish, very small, inconspicuous, borne in leaf axils. Male flowers clustered on new branchlets. Female flowers solitary or paired. Flowering Time: Spring.

**Fruit:** A fleshy, rounded, dull orange to red drupe, about ¼ to 3/8 in. in diameter, containing a single seed. Fruits turn dark when mature in the fall.

**Habitat:** Frequent in floodplain forests, low wet areas along stream banks, calcareous river swamps, in mixed hardwood uplands, hydric (wet) and mesic coastal hammocks, and tropical hammocks.

**Distribution:** Nearly throughout Florida, except the Keys. North to Indiana and Virginia and west to Texas. Hardiness Zones: 4 – 10.

**Landscape Use / Wildlife Benefit:** This attractive fast-growing shade or specimen tree improves with age! It does well in urban and suburban situations. Also a good choice for parking lots and roadsides. The black sweet fruits in fall attract wildlife – food source for mammals and birds, especially woodpeckers. Larval food source for the Hackberry Butterfly and also for numerous moths.

**Cultivation:** Easy to grow!

**Soil:** Does best in fertile, moist soils. Adapts well to a variety of soils from acid to alkaline. Does well in calcareous soils or where limestone is close to the surface. Does very well in disturbed soils.

**Light:** Full sun - partial shade.

**Water:** Moist – dry. Prefers moist conditions. Irrigate well to establish – keep soil moist but not wet. Will adapt to drier sites. Very drought-tolerant once established.

**Miscellaneous:** Moderately long-lived, but probably not more than 150 years. Allelopathic properties may prevent other plants from growing beneath it or nearby. May form root suckers and spread. Not salt-tolerant.

**Propagation:** By seed, cuttings, or air layering.

**Availability:** See [www.plantrealflorida.org!](http://www.plantrealflorida.org!)

## References:

- Haehle, Robert G. and Joan Brookwell, Native Florida Plants, Houston, Texas, Gulf Publishing Company, 1999.
- Huegel, Craig N., Native Plant Landscaping for Florida Wildlife, Gainesville, Florida, University Press of Florida, 2010.
- Nelson, Gil, Florida's Best Native Landscape Plants, Gainesville, Florida, University Press of Florida, 2003.
- Stibolt, Ginny, The Art of Maintaining a Florida Native Landscape, Gainesville, Florida, University Press of Florida, 2015.
- Tobe, Dr. John D. et al., Florida Wetland Plants An Identification Manual, Tallahassee, Florida, Florida Department of Environmental Protection, 1998.
- Wunderlin, Richard P., Guide to the Vascular Plants of Florida, Gainesville, Florida, University Press of Florida, 1998.
- Wunderlin, Richard P. and George R. Kish, Native Florida Plants for Drought- and Salt-Tolerant Landscaping, Sarasota, Florida, Pineapple Press, Inc., 2013.

Chapter website: [pasconativeplants.org](http://pasconativeplants.org)  
 E-mail: [naturecoastfnps@gmail.com](mailto:naturecoastfnps@gmail.com)  
[www.meetup.com/Nature-Coast-Native-Plant-Society/](http://www.meetup.com/Nature-Coast-Native-Plant-Society/)  
[www.facebook.com/PascoNativePlants](https://www.facebook.com/PascoNativePlants)  
[twitter.com/NatureCoastFNPS](https://twitter.com/NatureCoastFNPS)  
 FNPS website: <http://www.fnps.org/>



## Calendar of Events

- Jan 10 Nature Coast Chapter Meeting:  
Successful Coexistence with Trees
- Jan 18 Suncoast Chapter Meeting: The  
Monarch Milkweed Initiative 7pm,  
Hillsborough County Extension  
Office, Seffner
- Jan 20 Nature Coast Chapter Field Trip:  
Heartwood Preserve
- Jan 28 Suncoast Chapter Plant Walk  
Lettuce Lake Park 9:30am
- Feb 3 Nature Coast Chapter Field Trip:  
USF Forest Preserve
- Feb 8-20 Florida State Fair
- Feb 14 Nature Coast Chapter Meeting:  
Florida Scrub Jays: Nowhere Else in  
the World
- Feb 15 Suncoast Chapter Meeting: Perico  
Preserve: A Story of Transfor-  
mation, 7pm Hillsborough County  
Extension Office, Seffner

## SUGARBERRY

*Celtis laevigata*



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