



Sarracenia Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society **The SARRACENIA TRUMPET**

SPRING 2025

UPCOMING EVENTS

March 29, 2025 – Field Trip

Guided trail walk on the upper Sopchoppy River (Wakulla Co.) on Fla. National Scenic Trail. Come and see the wild azaleas in bloom.

April 2 – 6, 2025 – FNPS Annual Conference

The 43rd Annual Conference of the FNPS takes place in Gainesville this year. **See article in this newsletter for details.**

April 12, 2025 – Festival and Plant Sale

Our chapter will have a booth at the annual Worm Gruntin' Festival in Sopchoppy, FL. We will have our wildflower display, brochures/educational materials, free wildflower seeds, our Sarracenia t-shirts for sale, **and a large plant sale** offering a variety of Florida native plants indigenous to the local area to fit different landscaping needs. Come early to get the best selection.

April 15, 2025 – Chapter Meeting

Exploring Freshwater Lakes of the SMNWR
Nia Wellendorf, Aquatic Ecologist at FL DEP

Ms. Wellendorf will describe her study of the water quality and floral characteristics of the small freshwater lakes at the SMNWR and will discuss changes that have been observed in the lakes in recent years.

May 20, 2025 – Chapter Meeting

Land Management Reviews – Caring for State Lands
Ann Reams

Ms. Reams will be giving a detailed look at what goes on behind the scenes of state managed lands and one of the tools that keeps it on track. Land Management Reviews bring everyone together.

June, July & August – NO Chapter Meetings

Stay tuned to our Sarracenia emails for information about upcoming field trips and activities during the summer months. We will have exciting new programs beginning in Sept. 2025.

Chapter meetings begin at 6:30pm at the Wakulla County Library, with refreshments at 6:00pm

CHAPTER PRESIDENT'S UPDATE

Melanie Trexler

Greetings, Sarracenia Members and Friends!

A fine coating of pine pollen on everything lets us know that Spring has, indeed, sprung in north Florida! With that, comes new habitats to explore on the several field trips that Sarracenia has planned, along with more opportunities for you to engage with your fellow native plant enthusiasts.

This year, our chapter is growing and developing new strategies for public outreach and education, along with ways for you as members and friends to participate and enjoy our meetings and planned activities. Be sure to involve yourselves in the upcoming event, the April 12, 2025 Sopchoppy Worm Gruntin' Festival and Annual Sarracenia Native Plant Sale. Please volunteer to hang out with some very cool folks at our booth for a couple of hours! We have several other events and field trips planned as 2025 unfolds, and you don't need any knowledge of plants to participate in any or all of Sarracenia's offerings. We will keep you well-informed!

The importance of native plants to our lives - for food, wildlife habitat, air and water purification, and beauty - motivates the Florida Native Plant Society. We hope that you will join us in preserving our native plants and habitats!



2025 FNPS Annual Conference Logo (April 2 – 6 in Gainesville, FL)

FNPS ANNUAL 2025 CONFERENCE

April 2nd through the 6th is the next annual FNPS conference. This is the first in-person conference since the COVID pandemic. It is being held in Gainesville at the UF Hilton Hotel.

The conference features great speakers, workshops, social gatherings, field trips, a silent auction and a giant plant sale.

The UF Hilton is booked up for this conference but nearby hotels, AirBnB, VRBO and other venues are available with a search online. And, if you cannot make it to Gainesville you can sign up for virtual attendance at a reduced rate.

Online registration closes on March 26 and on-site registration begins April 2nd.

To see the conference schedule and for all the details and registration for the conference: [Florida Native Plant Society \(FNPS\)](#).



BALD POINT STATE PARK SCRUB RESTORATION

by Ann Reams

Cruising down Alligator Point Road, you will see a significant swath of vegetation that has been cleared. Near the roadside there is a sign, "HABITAT RESTORATION IN PROGRESS Bald Point State Park" and a contact phone number. Immediately you wonder, "Why was this done to this section?", "What will it look like as it matures?", "How much does something like this cost?". For perspective, here is a little history of Bald Point State Park and a look inside state park management.



Bald Point Habitat Restoration sign 2025 Photo by Ann Reams

Bald Point State Park is the largest coastal park in the northwest region of the Florida State Park system. BPSP land acquisition began in 1999 with the purchase of 1,349 acres with funds from the Conservation and Recreational Lands Preservation 2000 acquisition program that focused on acquisition portions of the Apalachee Bay shoreline under the Dickerson Bay/Bald Point Forever Florida Project. The park was expanded significantly in 2003 when 3,485 pine plantation acres were purchased from the St. Joe Company, making the park a total of 4,859 acres for \$10.3 million dollars. You may have heard more recently that in 2023, the state also acquired the Bluffs of St. Teresa's Tract to include 6,032 more acres (the long-desired acreage on either side of US 98 and up the Ochlockonee River estuary on the west side). BPSP land current total is 12,152 acres. Since 2023 it is administered under a Unit Management Plan (UMP) jointly with the Ochlockonee River State Park and the St. Teresa Tract of Bald Point State Park. It is an IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature) Category IV habitat and species management area and placed in the Climate Change Lands category by the Florida DEP Acquisition and Restoration Council (ARC).

In 2001 the park was initially assessed for developing and operating the public recreation and conservation of Bald Point State Park. In 2006 the Unit Management Review (a collection of advisory groups organized by the DEP) started the process of evaluating and planning the scrub and sand pine plantation restoration to old-growth characteristics, using the undisturbed Mullet Pond area as a model. 'The pine plantations are a significant seed source of an aggressive colonizer' (Choc-tawhatchee sand pine, *Pinus clausa*) 'that could alter the natural composition of overstory pines in the park's flatwoods.' This would entail clearing the pines and altering the understory to include extirpated native plants such as jointweeds (*Polygonal spp*) and blazing star (*Liatris spp*). The common scrub understory plants were saw palmetto (*Serenoa repens*), dune rosemary (*Ceratiola spp.*), conradina (*Conradina spp.*), gopher apple (*Geobalanus oblongifolius*) and red basil (*Calamintha coccinea*). Two jointweeds, sandhill wireweed and October flower (*Polygonal nesomii* and *P. polygama*) were found in the scrub flatwoods and bloom in large numbers. 'Along with the bright pink flower stalks of blazing star, these dense colonies of flowering plants create a spectacle of colors in the late summer and early fall' (BPSP UMP Approved 2006). These, and other plant seeds, could possibly be harvested and introduced to the restoration habitat.

Bald Point (cont'd.)

The 2006 budget for scrub restoration is difficult to extricate from the overlapping, park-wide line items. However, the prescribed burn required an aerial ignition machine budgeted at \$17,000, with a 10-year use cost of \$40,000. Also, the sand pine plantation survey was budgeted at \$2,500. This was out of a 10-year budget of \$7.5 million for BPSP. Ten years later, the 2016 Land Management Review showed a great improvement in scrub management but still suggested a higher burn frequency. The 2021 Land Management Review (LMR) showed that no improvement actions were necessary.

In 2023, the UMP picked up where the LMRs left off. A management goal of restoring 2,396 acres of pine plantation, 423.7 acres of which are scrub, with a 10-year, long term budget of \$600,000 was set. There are three steps in the action plan: 1) Development/planning of the site-specific restoration plan, 2) implementation, and 3) timber harvest by thinning slash pines and clear-cutting sand pines. Scrub burn management was set at every 4-5 years while slash pine has been thinned and sand pine clear cut.

Park Manager, Kristin Ebersol, is now seeking FDACS permits to implement other steps in the restoration process such as planting longleaf pine, wiregrass and native wildflowers. Over time, the natural ecology of the area will be restored. She will be a fall speaker for the Sarracenia Chapter of FNPS and will let us know how this scrub restoration process is progressing.



WEBINAR SERIES BY SARRACENIA CHAPTER MEMBER DR. JIM FOLSOM



Chapter member Dr. Jim Folsom, hosted by the Florida Wildflower Foundation, is presenting a series of webinars that began in December and will continue until June. There won't be a webinar in March, but you can sign up for April and then join in on the live webinar. Or you can go to the Florida Wildflower Foundation website and watch all of the past webinars. These recorded webinars are full of knowledge of basic

plant anatomy, and physiology and taxonomy as well as other informative botanical tidbits. Later webinars will talk about botanical jargon and plant keys.

These once a month Zoom presentations, entitled BOTANY IN CONTEXT, require registration, but that is easy and its free. Here is the link to register and to view the previously shown webinars: [Botany in Context Webinar Series! - Florida Wildflower Foundation](#) . Along with being able to review past webinars you will have access to the slides and notes and various links that deal with native plant and native plant resources.



YOU CAN HELP SAVE OUR BUTTERFLIES

Recent research shows that butterfly populations have declined dramatically over the past two decades. In the journal *Science*, and stated in many other publications, the chief causes of the decline are due to habitat destruction, a drier and hotter climate because of climate change, and insecticide use.

What can you do to help? First, stop using pesticides on your plants – you're killing valuable pollinators. Second, you can grow native wildflowers, shrubs and trees that not only provide nectar for butterflies, but their caterpillars need native plants as host plants for food. Of course, sometimes our wildflowers get eaten up by the caterpillars, but we can rest easy knowing that our plants are helping the caterpillars to progress on to the next stage of their lives, which is to hatch out as beautiful butterflies.

You can plant one wildflower in a pot on your porch or plant a row of natives in a flower bed or even grow a wildflower meadow in your yard. Just start small and grow larger if that is what it takes at your place. You can find native wildflowers, shrubs and trees at Native Nurseries in Tallahassee, or come to the big native plant sale that our chapter is holding at the Sopchoppy Worm Gruntin' Festival on April 12th. We will have lots of plants that grow well in our region. You can also visit the Sopchoppy Depot Park anytime and see what plants we have growing there that might be just right for your yard. At our small seed depot kiosk in the park, we offer free wildflower seeds that were harvested in the park.

Butterflies (cont'd.)

Here is a link to a great YouTube how-to presented by the Florida Native Plant Society in their Lunch & Learn Series, featuring Jordan Parker :

[L&L - Native Landscaping - Butterfly landscaping for the real Florida with JPCharisma.](#)



Gulf fritillary on *Liatris* photo by Ken Duzy



SOPCHOPPY DEPOT PARK UPDATE

We still need volunteers at the Sopchoppy Depot Park. You don't have to have any gardening knowledge, just come and you'll be instructed in the best way to help. We meet at the park the first Saturday of the month and the third Friday of the month at 9am. Stay as long or short a time as you wish.

As we always do, we try to remind folks that the City of Sopchoppy maintains a website with a section for the Depot Park:

<https://www.sopchoppy.org/sopchoppy-depot-park.html>.

Our Sarracenia Chapter also has a section of our website devoted to the park (thank you David Roddenberry for being our webmaster):

<https://sarracenia.fnpschapters.org/resources> (scroll down to #3 on that page).

You can see some of what is currently blooming at the park in the weekly newspaper, *The Wakulla Sun*, where Lynn Artz's articles are featured in a column called "Flower of the Week at Sopchoppy Depot Park." With text and photos, it is a great teaching tool.



SOME QUICK LINKS

FNPS's Lunch and Learns series – hour long speaker sessions on lots of native plant topics:

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLT16Qn-flr4O7nxo1cDZll-bO0X9Oy126> .

Our Sarracenia chapter has a YouTube Channel. Here is the link: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC_xtH-t3PBaGshb6KrTI4PA .

Find out what wildflowers will grow in your area and in your specific habitat: [Florida Native Plant Society \(FNPS\)](#)

Where to purchase native wildflower seeds:

<http://floridawildflowers.com/> . For bulk native wildflower seeds, try this company: [Roundstone Native Seed Company](#) .



The Sarracenia Chapter meets on the 3rd Tuesday of each month September – November and January – May. Meetings are held at 6:30 PM at the Wakulla County Public Library. Refreshments served before the meeting. They are free and open to the public. FNPS promotes the preservation, restoration, and conservation of the native plants and native plant communities of Florida.

Sarracenia Board

Melanie Trexler
Jeannie Brodhead
George Weaver
Sandy Tedder
Lynn Artz

Please Join Us at Any Board Meeting

Email us for dates and location
Sarracenia.nps@gmail.com

Other Volunteer Help

Ask how you can help with Chapter meetings, or help us at the Sopchoppy Depot Park.

Membership information is available at all in-person Chapter meetings, or contact us at Sarracenia.nps@gmail.com, or go online to FNPS.org on the Join/Support tab.