



the Tarpaper

The Tarflower Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society



Volume: XVII February, 2005 ISSUE

FEBRUARY PROGRAM: Vermiculture – How Nature Recycles

Join us Tuesday, February 1 as Bernie Moro tells us everything we want to know about worms!



THE STARS OF TOSAHATCHEE

Paul Eisenbrown

Saturday evening, January 8, the Central Florida Astronomical Society and Kissimmee Prairie State Park set up their telescopes for a public viewing on St. Nicholas Road in the Tosohatchee State Reserve. The cloudy skies cleared just in the nick of time, like it was scripted for a movie. There were plenty of telescopes. Here were all of these experts answering any kind of question we could throw at them no matter how hard or easy. The first thing you noticed was that telescopes
See "Stars" page 2.

SEAROCKET INVITES EVERYONE TO JANUARY MEETING

The Searocket Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society will host Andy Root on January 26 at the Brevard County Agriculture Center, 3605 Lake Drive, Cocoa at 7 PM. The general public are invited to attend. Andy spent most of his adult life in swamps and wetlands with many a "tall tale" to tell.
See "Searocket" Page 6.

UPCOMING EVENTS

1/26	Andy Root will speak in Brevard County
2/12	Oakland Nature Preserve Workday
2/19 – 2/20	The Rally for the Ocklawaha
2/26	Orlando Wetlands Park Festival
3/5 – 3/6	The Harry P. Leu Garden's Annual Plant Sale
5/12 – 5/15	FNPS Annual Conference

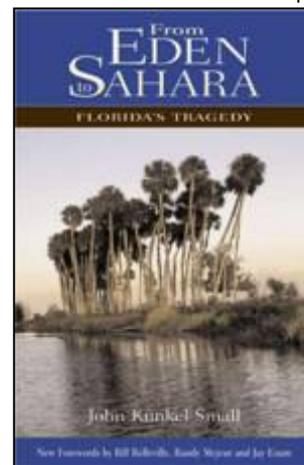
See "Events and Opportunities" on page 2 for more details.

BOOK REVIEW- From Eden to Sahara: Florida's Tragedy

Randy Mejeur

Along with noted Florida naturalist and author Bill Belleville and the Seminole Soil and Water Conservation District (SSWCD), Glatting Jackson ecologists Jay Exum, Ph.D. and Randy Mejeur, M.S. had the opportunity to participate in a project to re-publish a Florida classic entitled *From Eden to Sahara: Florida's Tragedy*. Originally published in 1929, this visionary book by John Kunkel Small foretold the loss of interesting plants and animals and the vegetation communities that supported them throughout Florida due to human induced alterations. Published in a small release first edition, this seminal book on the threats faced by Florida's ecology was out of print for many years until the SSWCD obtained the copyright and re-published the book in November 2004.

Employed as curator of the New York Botanical Garden, John Kunkel Small was a noted naturalist and botanist who traveled extensively throughout the Southeast, especially in Florida, during the early 1900s.
See "Book Review" page 2.



VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Anne Cox, Chair of the Public Lands Partnership Committee, is still seeking assistance from Chapters so that we have at least one representative from each county on land management review teams. This is a great opportunity to increase FNPS visibility in your region and statewide. Please be sure that your Chapter contacts Anne (annecox@bellsouth.net or 561/744-9531) with a ready volunteer.

“Stars” continued from page 1.

have become quite sophisticated. There were refracting as well as reflecting types. Some had motors that kept the scope in line with the movement of the stars due to the earth's orbit. Others had computers where you could punch in what you wanted to see and the scope would point to it. One person had a monitor that you could view apart from the telescope lens.

As the evening grew dark the space station came over, bright enough that you might mistake it for an airplane. We saw Saturn and its rings. The Machholz comet near the Pleiades Constellation was also visible. We learned about the Messier or M clusters and viewed some of them. We saw the Orion nebula. Sirius, the closest star to the earth, looked like a sparkling diamond when viewed through the telescope. Did you know that in 15,000 years the north star will no longer be due north? It will be replaced by another star that currently is a little west of north. We'll just have to take this at its word, since most of us won't be able to confirm it. Some falling stars and man-made satellites were seen. One couple I talked with actually saw a meteorite explode into smaller pieces. We had about 10 Tarflower Chapter members attend, expanding their horizons from the usual plant fare. The youngest viewer award goes to Mandy Rhead's new baby boy. Overall, it was fun and educational, well worth the time. We thank everyone who made this happen, especially Tosohatchee for having a quality event such as this.

“Book Review” continued from page 1.

His travels first took him to Florida in 1901, where he visited all the way to Miami, which was then the home of only 2,000 residents, and continued annually for more than 35 years. Arguably one of the most important botanists in Florida, especially in the early 1900s, Small named and described at least 270 new species of plants and contributed immeasurably to the botanical understanding of the vegetation communities of Florida, especially his beloved tropical hardwood hammocks. His *Manual of the Southeast Flora* is still one of the most definitive works for floristic reference in the southeast.

Driven by his observations of the environmental changes wrought throughout Florida by the land boom of the 1920s and the loss of the tropical hardwood hammocks he so enjoyed, Small self-published the book *From Eden to Sahara: Florida's Tragedy* in 1929. This book summarized trips that Small took in the early 1920s throughout Florida and includes many “ecological gems,” such as the locations of rare plant species and/or communities, observations on land management techniques in the 1920s, and the

hydrology of wetlands as dredging and canalization was taking place. However, his detailed observations are overshadowed in the book by his prophetic message that the loss of these gems observed during his travels would continue and lead to a loss of the ecological richness of Florida for the future as well.

Following a difficult search to track down original copies of this seminal work, the SSWCD obtained the copyright to reprint this book, thereby ensuring that observations recorded by Small would be readily available for the scientific use of modern day ecologists and the education of all those interested in the ecology of Florida. As part of the process they enlisted the noted nature writer and filmmaker Bill Belleville to write an updated preface for the book and shepherd the book through the re-printing process. He approached Jay and me to write a new introduction for the book that placed Small's observations into an updated scientific context. In addition to the introduction that we cooperatively wrote, I had the pleasure of delving throughout the book to develop an annotated glossary that updated Small's botanical references to modern naming conventions. The re-printed book was launched at a book-signing party on November 20 in Sanford and is now available from the SSWCD's web page (<http://www.sswcb.org/>).

EVENTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Dani DeBiase

Saturday, February 12 – *ONP Workday*. Join Tarflower chapter at the Oakland Nature Preserve as we continue working on our plot and pruning the area around the Jack Amons Trail Shelter. This month our work day coincides with the Oakland Nature Preserve Member's workday. So we have the opportunity to associate with others of like mind. Some potential new members, maybe? Meet at 8'ish at the Amon Trail Shelter on the West Orange Trail. Bring a shovel, work gloves, bug spray and water. Before you head out, call 407 340 8316 to coordinate the exact time.

Saturday and Sunday, February 19 and 20 – *The Rally for the Ocklawaha*, sponsored by the Putnam County Environmental Council, Inc. will be a weekend full of great field trips, with a big party of live music by Dale Crider and other Florida folk musicians and Al Burt as featured guest. It's an opportunity to have fun and make a difference in the ongoing struggle to restore the Ocklawaha River. The northern part of the Ocklawaha River has been impacted by several dams and a canal. While local officials and the business community fear a negative economic impact if the river is restored, PCEC has planned a fun-filled weekend event to demonstrate the positive impacts of nature-
See “Events” page 5

TURTLE MOUND WITH THE LAKE CHAPTER by Sam Hopkins and Carol Palmer

Under the leadership of Dr. Elaine Norman, we visited the Canaveral National Seashore specifically to see the Turtle Mound Area. We were in a group lead by Patricia Burgess, the wildlife expert from Lake County and by Ben Gugliotti of our Tarflower Chapter. The



group is seen in the accompanying picture at the start of the trip.(S) As we went into the grounds of Turtle Mound, we saw *Myrsine* or Guiana Rapanea (*Myrsine floridana*) along the path. *Myrsine* is found in the rocky



pinelands, coastal hammocks and coastal strands of Central Florida. (C) Marlberrry (*Ardisia escallonioides*) is an evergreen shrub or rarely small tree to 12 feet tall.



It flowers from August through December in tropical and coastal hammocks, coastal strand and pinelands. It ranges throughout in most of the coastal areas. (S) Marine or Sorrel Vine (*Cissus trifoliata*) is a deciduous



climbing vine with unbranched tendrils and climbing stems producing arial roots. It flowers from May to October in coastal hammocks, dunes and shell mounds. (C)

This plant, below, is known as Poor Man's Patch (*Mentzelia floridana*) because the leaves and other parts



readily adhere to clothing making "patches". It is found mostly in January through March in the coastal counties. It is endemic to Florida and is found in the coastal strand and hammocks and beach dunes. (C) Wild Plumbago, below, (*Plumbago scandens*) has brittle, viny, partially woody stems that climb, recline



or are erect. It flowers April through November in coastal hammocks, shell mounds and disturbed sites. It is found in most of the coastal counties. (S) Below is the flower of the Plumbago which is terminal, short stalked and in spike-like clusters. (C) A form of



fruticose lichen which is a tangled mass of gray-green branches forming the tallus of *Usnea strigosa*. Then slender branches are rounded, tapered at the ends and covered with a multitude of very fine hair-like fibers which usually grow at right angles to the branch. (S) Below is a type of the century plant family, Spanish Dagger or Bayonet (*Yucca aloifolia*) which grows to 5 feet tall or more. Found in the coastal strand and grasslands, maritime hammocks, sandhills and



disturbed sites of the coastal counties. (C) Christmas Berry or Matrimony Vine (*Lycium carolinianum*) is a shrub to 6 feet tall with sprawling, spiny branches. It flowers from March to December on beach dunes, salt floats, salt marshes shell mounds and hammocks. (C)



The Life Plant (*Kalanchoe oinnata*) is found on the beach in disturbed areas into which it was introduced from tropical Africa and is now naturalized. (C)



The names of the following plants are in doubt. If you know what they are, please let us know.



This is a peculiar looking ball of material and the second picture shows the texture of the ball. We have no idea what it is. Can you help?



“Events” continued from page 2.

based tourism that could result from a restored river. So if we come to Putnam County during President’s Day weekend, enjoy the field trips and tours that have been arranged for us, stay at least one night and eat at the local restaurants, we are then asked to turn the receipts over to PCEC, who will tally them up and report back with the results to these apprehensive officials. Here’s a preview of what you can expect. Saturday morning you’re in for a botanizing treat if you sign up for the native plant hike led by biologist Adele Mills, Brenda Herring of FNAI, and orchid expert Paul Brown. You’ll hike a portion of Deep Creek that is called the “crown jewel of the Cross Florida Greenway”. Saturday afternoon you can cruise the Ocklawaha River at Rodman Dam, join a mushroom ID walk, or visit the solar-powered home of Randy Cullom and Liz Seiberling. The house, situated on 60 acres near Interlachen, is NOT connected to the utility grid! You have the opportunity to find out HOW THEY DID THAT! Saturday evening at 7:30 we’re all invited to the FREE music and fun-filled pep-Rally for the

Ocklawaha River at Ravine Gardens State Park in Palatka. You still have time to join in the fun! Call me at 407 423 3554, or e-mail evybaby@juno.com so you can get the list of 52 field trips. Or visit the web site of Florida Defenders of the Environment at <http://www.fladefenders.org/events> Some of us are camping. But there are RV hook-ups, and a list of motels and bed-and -breakfasts if you wish.

Saturday, February 26 – Come and enjoy the *Orlando Wetlands Park Festival* from 9am to 3pm. This world renowned example of Wetlands Engineering is a 1,650 acre oasis for flora, fauna, and feathered friends in Christmas, Florida. The Orlando Wetlands Park represents the world’s first large scale wetlands treatment system. This wetland treatment system is a series of impoundments, which were planted with many different species of aquatic plants. These impoundments are now treatment marshes that polish excess nutrients from the reclaimed wastewater before it is discharged to the St Johns River. The water that is sent to the St Johns River is cleaner than the water within the river. So in a sense, the Wetlands are serving to help clean up the St Johns River. Besides showcasing this unique water filtration system, the festival will include native plant hikes, lead by Tarflower chapter. There will be bird banding and mist-netting demonstrations, police canine demonstration, live folk music and Native American demonstrations performed by the Talako Indian Dancers. Plan on being there and come visit us at our booth! Want to lead a plant tour? Call Daniela DeBiase at 407 423 3554.

LOOKING AHEAD:

Saturday and Sunday, March 5 and 6 – The Harry P. Leu Garden’s Annual Plant Sale will be in the beginning of March, rather than later on in the month. This is our big fundraiser for the year, so mark the weekend down in your day planner! Volunteers are needed for set up Friday late afternoon, March 4, and from 8am to 4pm Saturday and Sunday. What would you be doing as a volunteer? Talking plants and planting techniques with other plant lovers, encouraging novices to use native plants in their landscapes, as well as helping with sales, stocking, and cashing out. Call Daniela DeBiase at 407 423 3554 if you wish to be a part of this event. If you can help Mark Godts, of green Isle Gardens (and a long time Tarflower member), with plant delivery, call him at 321 436 4932.

May 12 thru 15 - The Annual conference is scheduled for May 12-15, 2005, Hilton Rialto in Melbourne, Brevard County, hosted by Conradina, Sea Rocket & Eugenia Chapters. Mark your calendars now!



SAY GOOD-BYE

Jean Vasicek

The endangered scrub lupine once grew along the roadway just off of Apopka-Vineland Rd. near Turtle Creek Subdivision. Several months ago this area was home to many gopher tortoises, indigo snakes, scrub jays, and endangered/threatened plants. Now the area contains a very large building. Where do you suppose all of the wildlife will live now? Many of the tortoises were probably buried alive. What kind of future does the scrub lupine have? Thousands of years ago the scrub lupine chose Central Florida for its home. Due to extensive construction, the lupine survives in only a few locations such as Shadow Bay Park in Southwest Orlando. The population in Shadow Bay is constantly threatened as neighboring homeowners

rally for more tennis courts, soccer fields, and baseball courts. Soon, the only place to view the beautiful scrub lupine may be in pictures. (Fortunately, my dog eats NutriMax from the grocery store and can live almost anywhere.)

“Searocket” continued from page 1.

Providing transportation to remote areas has evolved into a lifetime goal of protecting and enhancing pristine areas, wetland creation, mitigation and monitoring. As the head of Viera East scrub and wetlands, Andy has brought environmental awareness to the community. He speaks on the importance of an educated public and how a new twist in the ecotourism industry can bring more awareness of the preserved areas and the true beauty of Florida. Bring a friend to this free presentation and call 459-3606 for additional information.

\$25 Individual - \$30 Family
 \$50 Non-Profit
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Make Checks Payable to:
 FNPS
 Florida Native Plant Society
 P.O. Box 278
 Melbourne, FL 32902-0278
 Phone: 321-271-6702

SOCIETY NEWS:

Chapter Meetings

Chapter meetings are held the first Tuesday each month at

HARRY P. LEU GARDENS, (1920 N. Forest Avenue, Orlando). The next meeting is **Tuesday, February 1** promptly at 7:00 P.M. Refreshments 6:30-ish. See you there! (For directions, call 407-246-2620 option 1)

Executive Committee

The next board meeting will be TBD. For more information contact Rich Ehle. Members are welcome to attend.

President - Rich Ehle 407-349-0502
 Vice President (Program) - Karina Veaudry 407-388-4781
 Vice President (Events) - Daniela DeBiaze 407-423-3445; evybaby@junio.com
 Secretary - Phyllis Gray 407-253-5462 (w)
 Treasurer - Jackie Sward 407-647-5233
 Field Trips - Paul Eisenbrown 407-876-5191
 Membership - Phyllis Gray 407-253-5462
 Director - Gregg Walker 407-359-0506
 Plant Rescue - Margorie Holt 407-679-6759
 Editor - Jean Vasicek 407-363-9061; jean_fmns@yahoo.com
 WebMaster - Daniela DeBiaze 407-423-3554; evybaby@junio.com
 Mailing - Chuck Roux 407-851-8889; croux@bellsouth.net
 Director-at-Large - Ben Guelthi 407-678-7873
 WEBSITE - http://fmns.org/chapters/tarflower/main.html

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