



January 2024  
NEWSLETTER

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

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# Sea Rocket Chapter Announcements:

## **Chapter Elections**

We'll be electing 2024 Sea Rocket Chapter Officers during our Annual Meeting February 28, 2024. Please consider volunteering for any of our open Officer positions which currently include Vice-President and Treasurer. Officer terms are annual from March through February. If interested, please speak with any Board member or contact [srsecretary@fnps.org](mailto:srsecretary@fnps.org). Your help is needed to keep our Chapter going!

## **Volunteers needed!**

Stay tuned for important information on these upcoming events where the Sea Rocket Chapter will have outreach booths.

- 2/10/24 Pioneer Day, Sams House, Merritt Island
- 3/16/24 Thousand Islands Festival, Cocoa Beach

If you would like to volunteer, send an email to [srsecretary@fnps.org](mailto:srsecretary@fnps.org) and Laura will put you in touch with the lead person for that event, or speak with any Board member.

## **Sea Rocket Chapter Reminders:**

January 19th ECO-FEST, Cocoa Village Be sure to stop by the Sea Rocket Chapter Outreach booth in the amphitheater when you attend the 2nd Annual ECO-FEST sponsored by EEARS (Environmental Education Awareness Research Support and Services). **See page 6 for more information.**

Sea Rocket Chapter General Membership meetings are held at the Enchanted Forest Sanctuary, 444 Columbia Blvd, Titusville. FL. We have a Social Time from 6:00 – 6:30PM when the business portion of the meeting begins. Join us for our next meeting on January 24<sup>th</sup>!

Our Chapter's first Plant Sale of 2024 will be held March 9<sup>th</sup> at The Enchanted Forest Sanctuary.

Check out the QR code to our Chapter's NEW Facebook Page! <https://www.facebook.com/searocketchapterfnps>



# Join Us For Garden Workday on January 6<sup>th</sup>!

Written and Photographed by Laura Covell



Above: Members Aaron Jones and Jesse Baker are pruning horsemint, dune sunflower, gaillardia, and tropical salvia to encourage beautiful growth during the next growing

Thank you to Madeline Klinko, Jesse Baker, Aaron Jones and Paul Schmalzer who worked at the Enchanted Forests Gardens on Saturday, December 2<sup>nd</sup>. Volunteers weeded and deadheaded plants that have finished flowering. They also planted some Sunshine Mimosa..

Our next workday will be Saturday, January 6th, from 9:00 – 11:00AM.

If you would like to join us, please bring water and garden tools if you have them, and dress for outdoor activities. Don't forget the sunblock! Here are a few recent pictures from the Garden



From Left to Right, developing seed pods of Necklacepod, Madeliene and Paul carefully weeding, dune sunflower bloom.

# Pine Island Conservation Area Field Trip Announcement

## Saturday January 13, 2024, 0900-1200

Pine Island Conservation Area. This is a joint project of the St. Johns River Water Management District and the Brevard County Environmentally Endangered Lands (EEL) Program. Vegetation is primarily flatwoods and marshes. It is the site of a major wetlands restoration project.

We plan to hike some of the trail through flatwoods. After the hike, there will be an option to visit Sams House, a restored historical building, which is now the Management and Education Center for the Central Region of the EEL Program.



### Directions:

(Option 1) SR 528 East to Merritt Island, exit on SR3 and go North for about 5 miles, turn left on Pine Island Road and proceed West about 2.5 miles to entrance gate at end of road

(Option 2) SR 405 East to Merritt Island/Kennedy Space Center, turn right on Space Commerce Way (new road) to SR 3, turn South (right) on SR 3 to Pine Island Road, then right on Pine Island Road and proceed West to entrance gate.

Bring a hat, sunscreen, water, and insect repellent.

Note: This is the Pine Island Road entrance to the Conservation Area not the entrance by Sams House Management and Education Center. Also, the Indian River Lagoon bridge on SR 405 is under construction, and Space Commerce Way is being enlarged. Speed limits are reduced in the construction zones.



# January 19th ECO-FEST, Cocoa Village

Be sure to stop by the Sea Rocket Chapter Outreach booth in the amphitheater when you attend the 2nd Annual ECO-FEST sponsored by EEARS (Environmental Education Awareness Research Support and Services). There will be presentations inside the Cocoa Civics Center with face painting, games, live animals, raffles and giveaways. The Cocoa Village Amphitheater (adjacent) will have educational booths, vendors, raffles, live music, and more! It's sure to be a fun, educational time! For additional information, see the event listing on our Website's calendar.

<https://searocket.fnpschapters.org/calendar/>

**JOIN US FOR**  
**EEARSS**  
**TO THE ENVIRONMENT**

**2ND ANNUAL**  
**ECO-FEST**

**JAN 19TH DAY**  
**COCOA VILLAGE**

WILDLIFE PRESENTATIONS & GAMES INSIDE CIVIC CENTER 9AM-5PM  
LIVE BANDS, MUSIC RIVER FRONT PARK 3PM-11PM

GAMES ART SCIENCE EDUCATION

FREE EVENT MUSIC LIVE WILDLIFE

**PRESENTATION SCHEDULE:**

- One Lagoon, Indian River Lagoon Council (Duane De Fries)
- St. John's Water Management District
- Florida Manta Project, Marine Mega Fauna
- Sea Turtle Preservation Society
- Arochs.org
- Florida Wildlife Hospital

**www.earss.org**

**FREE ADMISSION**

Logos for sponsors: FISHER, HELSEY'S, E.A.R.M., Gold Tone, RIDER Outdoors, bifym, MJA, and others.

## Next General Membership Meeting January 24, 2024

**SPEAKER:** Thomas H. Perez, MPH, MASS, R.Ph.

**TOPIC:** Florida's Right to Clean Water

Florida's Right to Clean Water (RTCW) initiative started in earnest when the Orange County Charter Review Commission placed the first RTCW Charter Amendment on the 2020 ballot. The State Legislature fired back with a preemptive provision that appears to make it illegal for local governments to declare that Nature has Rights. Having seen this, Titusville residents petitioned to have a fundamental Right to Nature added to the City's Charter. We also petitioned the Brevard County Charter Review Commission. They didn't appreciate it however, declining to advance it to ballot for the County. Meanwhile, Titusville's ballot initiative passed with an overwhelming 82% of the vote.

- Tom Perez is one of 4 Speak Up Titusville officers on the Political Action Committee (PAC) responsible for putting the Titusville Charter Amendment on the Ballot.
- Tom is now working with the Florida Rights of Nature Network (FRONN) to bring Clean and Healthy Waters to the Florida Constitution in 2026 after an unsuccessful 2024 attempt.
- Tom is the Director for the East Central Florida District representing several counties. The organization is made up of county Captains and ambassadors who help coordinate and collect the state petition.



## SPECIES SPOTLIGHT: *Lantana involucrata*, BUTTONSAGE

WRITTEN AND PHOTOGRAPHED BY BRITTANY BAYLISS

BUTTONSAGE IS KNOWN FOR ITS TUFTS OF LIGHT PINK TO CREAM COLORED BLOOMS THAT ARE FOLLOWED BY BRIGHT PURPLE FRUITS. THIS EVERGREEN LONG LIVED SHRUB TYPICALLY REACHES HEIGHTS OF 6FT-10FT AND WILL PRODUCE BEAUTIFUL CASCADES OF FLOWERS AND BERRIES FOR MANY YEARS. PLANT YOUR BUTTONSAGE WHERE IT CAN RECEIVE FULL TO PARTIAL SUN AND MINIMAL SALT SPRAY EXPOSURE. ONCE ESTABLISHED, BUTTONSAGE PREFERENCES TO STAY ON THE DRY SIDE AND THRIVES ON NATURAL RAINFALL, MAKING THIS PLANT A PERFECT ADDITION TO ALMOST ANY NATIVE PLANTING SITE.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE VISIT

[HTTPS://WWW.FNPS.ORG/PLANT/LANTANA-INVOLUCRATA](https://www.fnps.org/plant/lantana-involucrata)



ABOVE: FRUITS OF BUTTONSAGE.

BOTTOM LEFT: SPECIMEN PLANT OF BUTTONSAGE GROWING AT BOK TOWER GARDENS.

BOTTOM RIGHT: BUTTONSAGE BLOOMS, THESE CHARMING ARRANGEMENTS ATTRACT A DIVERSE GROUP OF NATIVE POLLINATORS





**Report For 12/09/23 Field Trip Indian Mound Station Sanctuary**  
**Text: Paul A. Schmalzer, Ph.D. Photos: Madeline Klinko**

Eight people attended the December 9, 2023, field trip to the Indian Mound Station Sanctuary (IMSS) (photo 1) in Mims, Florida. This Sanctuary was acquired by the Brevard County Environmentally Endangered Lands (EEL) Program. It consists of two sections: the northern one (63 acres, acquired in 2011) adjoins Holder Park, a Brevard County Park, and the southern one (85 acres, acquired in 2006) is on the south side of Parrish Road. Plant communities on the site include oak-saw palmetto scrub, scrubby flatwoods, hydric flatwoods, freshwater marshes, and hardwood swamps. The southern section also protects a Native American burial mound.



Photo 1. Group on fieldtrip along firebreak.



Photo 2. Virginia chain fern (*Woodwardia virginica*).

**Report For 12/09/23 Field Trip Indian Mound Station Sanctuary cont.**

Both sections of the Sanctuary had been unburned for more than 40 years when acquired. Restoration of natural structure has required timbering of dense pine canopies, mechanical treatment of tall, dense scrub, and prescribed burning.

We saw many plants characteristic scrub, flatwoods and wetlands. In a wet area near the trailhead, Virginia chain fern (*Woodwardia virginica*) (photo 2) was common with rusty-colored sori (bearing spores) on the undersides of the leaves. In an open, sandy area of the trail the low-growing candyroot (*Polygala nana*) (photo 3) was in fruit. This plant had not been reported at IMSS previously.

Vanillaleaf (*Carphephorus odoratissimus* var. *odoratissimus*) (photo 4) was also along the trail; it had completed flowering but was readily identified by its strong vanilla odor.



Photo 3. Candyroot (*Polygala nana*).



Photo 4. Vanillaleaf (*Carphephorus odoratissimus* var. *odoratissimus*).

**Report For 12/09/23 Field Trip Indian Mound Station Sanctuary cont.**

Two species of pines with contrasting life histories occur on the drier sites of IMS. Sand pine (*Pinus clausa*) is a short-needled pine (photo 5) with mostly serotinous (closed) cones. It is typically killed by fire, but the serotinous cones open, releasing seed, that may germinate in the mineral soil exposed by fire. Longleaf pine (*Pinus palustris*) is a long-lived, fire-tolerant tree. It has a characteristic grass stage, where it looks like a clump of grass (photo 6), which is very fire resistant as the apical bud is protected by the cluster of needles and scales. After growing for some years in this stage, it then bolts quickly in height. If successful, this rapid height growth elevates the apical bud above the height of the flames if the fire is low to moderate intensity assisting its survival.



Photo 5. Sand pine (*Pinus clausa*) with male cones (strobili) about to release pollen.



Photo 6. Longleaf pine (*Pinus palustris*) in grass stage and young juvenile stage.

**Report For 12/09/23 Field Trip Indian Mound Station Sanctuary cont.**

Other interesting scrub plants observed included wild olive (*Cartema americanum*) (photo 7), formerly called Osmanthus, and scrub bay (*Persea humilis*) (photo 8), which is similar to red bay (*Persea borbonia*), but the undersides of the leaves of scrub bay are covered with rusty hairs.

With protection and management Indian Mound Station Sanctuary protects native species and plant communities, as well as unique archaeological resources. An experimental translocation of *Dicerandra thinicola* (Titusville mint), a rare plant found only in northern Brevard County, is underway at this site, and initial results are positive.



Photo 7. Wild olive (*Cartema americanum*).



Photo 8. Scrub bay (*Persea humilis*).

## Report for Sea Rocket Chapter Annual Holiday Party

### See you Next Year!

Written and Photographed by Elizabeth Bishop

On December 2nd 14 of us plant enthusiasts met at Dixie Crossroads in Titusville for a Christmas Holiday dinner. We had the Cove all to ourselves so we could converse and share as a group. It was a fun delightful evening.

The food and service were excellent. Our waitress was attentive and pleasant and patient. Kim introduced some of us red wine connoisseurs to Kendall Jackson Merlot, which will be on my future wine list. The Corn fritters were abundant and warm. There were a few take home boxes, but most of us were in the clean plate club. There were a few of us who ordered vegan and the restaurant more than accommodated us.

The first toast was in honor of Aaron Jones, our youngest attendee, who is within a week of becoming an uncle. This is an exciting time for his family as he and his family and his pregnant sister-in-law are awaiting the birth of this child that will also make his mom a grandmother. This is a memorable season for this family. We are looking forward to baby photos at our January meeting.

The second toast of the evening was from Kim in honor of Paul and Laura for all of their work on behalf of our chapter. Paul is President, acting Treasurer, Field Trip Leader, and coordinator of Plant Sales. Laura is the chapter Secretary, Social Media coordinator, and she schedules programs and speakers for our chapter meetings. Kudos to them for all that they do. We do appreciate them. Please consider volunteering for an office in 2024.

The evening ended with hugs and good wishes and a lot of optimism and positivity for 2024.





# ***We've been busy!***

**The Sea Rocket Chapter  
held 46 events in 2023.**

- 11 Board Meetings
- 10 General Membership Meetings
  - 1 Holiday Party
  - 1 Summer Picnic
- 8 Garden Workdays
  - 7 Field Trips
- 2 Outreach Events
  - 6 Plant Sales

***And we're looking forward to 2024!***

***Thank you, volunteers!!!***

# Sea Rocket Chapter Calendar of Events January 2024

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3	4	5	6 
7	8	9 	10	11	12	13 
14	15	16	17	18	19 	20
21	22	23	24 	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

Jan. 6<sup>th</sup>- Join us at our next Garden workday from 9:00 – 11:00AM on Saturday, Enchanted Forest Sanctuary Butterfly Gardens. Please see page 4 or visit our Chapter Website at <https://www.searocket.fnpschapters.org>

Jan. 9<sup>th</sup>- Board Meeting from 6:00-8:00PM at Enchanted Forest Classroom, open to all members.

Jan. 13<sup>th</sup>- Field Trip to Pine Island Conservation Area. Please see page 5 for directions, packing list, and recommended dress code. We'll see you there!

Jan. 19<sup>th</sup>- 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Eco-Fest is an Open to the Public FREE Event!! Please see page 6 for more information or visit [EEARSS.ORG](http://EEARSS.ORG) for more details. Be sure to stop by the Sea Rocket Chapter Outreach booth in the amphitheater if you attend.

Jan 24<sup>th</sup>- General Membership Meeting from 6:00-8:00PM in the EFS\* Classroom. Social time from 6:00-6:30PM and speaker Thomas H. Perez is prepared to give a presentation on Florida's Right to Clean Water .

EFS\*- Enchanted Forest Sanctuary is located at 444 Columbia Blvd., Titusville, Florida 32780

For more information please visit <https://searocket.fnpschapters.org/calendar/>

# Sea Rocket Chapter Board of Directors

President:  
Paul Schmalzer

Vice  
President :  
OPEN

Chapter  
Representative :  
Elizabeth Bishop

Treasurer:  
Interim, Paul  
Schmalzer

Education & Outreach:  
Kim Gibbs

Secretary:  
Laura Covell

Social Media:  
Laura Covell

Membership:  
Beverly Lewis

At Large:  
John Stiner

Gardens/Plant Sales :  
Paul Schmalzer, acting.

Hospitality:  
Elizabeth Bishop

Field Trip:  
Paul Schmalzer

Editor:  
Brittany  
Bayliss

Thank you to all Board  
Members for your efforts  
in 2023. If you are  
interested participating in  
Chapter Business, please  
contact  
[srsecretary@fnps.org](mailto:srsecretary@fnps.org)





## January 2024 Events at the Enchanted Forest Sanctuary

### **Garden Workday**

Sat. Jan. 6<sup>th</sup> 9 a.m. to 11 a.m.

Grab your hat, sunblock, and water and come help maintain the butterfly garden at the Sanctuary with the Sea Rocket Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society! Registration required. Please call 321-264-5185 to sign up.

### **Nature Storytime**

Wed., Jan. 10<sup>th</sup> 10:00 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.

Geared toward ages 5 and under. Enjoy a half hour story time at the Enchanted Forest Sanctuary! Theme: Fantastic Fungi! Join us to learn about fungi through fun activities and crafts. Registration required. Please call 321-264-5185 to sign up. NO SAME DAY SIGN UPS.

### **Sanctuary School**

Wed., Jan. 17<sup>th</sup> 10:00 a.m. to 10:45 a.m.

Geared towards ages 6 through 12. Theme: Fabulous Fungi! Enjoy learning about fungi through fun activities and crafts! Registration required. Please call 321-264-5185 to sign up. NO SAME DAY SIGN UPS.

### **Tai Chi at the Forest**

Every Sat. in Jan. 9:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.

Join instructor Kate Perez for a beginner level class on the porch! Loose-fitting clothing and a water bottle are recommended. Registration required no later than the day before class, please call 321-264-5185. SPACE LIMITED. NO SAME DAY SIGN UPS.

### **Yoga in Nature**

Every Sun. in Jan. 9:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.

Join local yoga instructors for a traditional class for all levels on the porch! Wear loose-fitting clothing and do not eat anything an hour before class. Bring water and a mat. Registration required no later than the day before class. Please call 321-264-5185. SPACE LIMITED. NO SAME DAY SIGN UPS.

### **Guided Hikes**

Openings Sat./Sun. in Jan. at 10:00 a.m.

Enjoy a 45-minute guided hike. Please bring a hat, water, and walking shoes. Registration required no later than the day before the hike. Please call 321-264-5185 to sign up. NO SAME DAY SIGN UPS. \*Days are limited due to staff availability\*.