



Florida Native Plant Society

Sea Rocket

Chapter Update

November 2025

Announcements

- **Next Meeting – November 19th**

It's Budget Time!

We'll be voting on our 2026 Budget during the November 19th Membership Meeting which will be held at the Enchanted Forest Sanctuary, 444 Columbia Blvd., Titusville. As always, we'll have a social time from 6:00 – 6:30pm, followed by a quick business meeting and our presentation. A copy of the proposed budget, which was approved by the Board during their October meeting, is included with the Chapter Update email.

You'll also have an opportunity from 5:30 to 6:15pm to purchase plants remaining from our last sale, before they are offered to the public during our next sale on November 15th.

Speaker: Teresa Nick, Presentation Title: "The Future of the Forest."

Teresa Nick is a Naturalist with the Enchanted Forest Sanctuary and the Environmentally Endangered Lands Program, bringing over two decades of educational experience to her role. Originally from the northern United States, Teresa has called Florida home for more than half her life. She holds a Bachelor's Degree in Biological Sciences with a minor in Science Education from the Florida Institute of Technology and previously taught Advanced Placement (AP) Environmental Science and Biology for 16 years in Brevard County Schools.

A passionate advocate for Florida's unique ecosystems, Teresa is especially enthusiastic about native plants and their vital role in supporting local wildlife. She enjoys sharing her knowledge through interpretive hikes and community programs that connect visitors to the natural beauty and ecological importance of the region.

In addition to her work as a Naturalist, Teresa volunteers with the Canaveral National Seashore Turtle Watch Program and participates in citizen science initiatives focused on habitat restoration and conservation. Her lifelong dedication to education and the environment continues to inspire others to explore, understand, and protect Florida's natural heritage.

Remember, the November meeting will be held on the third Wednesday, instead of our usual 4th Wednesday, to not conflict with the Thanksgiving Holiday.

- **Newsletter Editor Needed! *Volunteer Opportunity!***

Templates and technical assistance are available, if needed, for anyone who has a basic understanding of Microsoft Word, but the documents could be prepared in any application that can be turned into a pdf. If you are interested in becoming Newsletter Editor, or in preparing the Chapter Update until a Newsletter Editor can be located, please contact Paul Schmalzer schmalzp@digital.net.

- ***Plant Sales Volunteer Opportunities!***

- **Last Sale October 4th**

We had a very successful plant sale on October 4th. We sold 146 plants out of the 240 we had. Thanks to Beverly, Jesse, Autumn, Kim, Madeline, and Paul for assistance with the plant sale. We also had a Garden Workday the same day. Thanks to Madeline, Woody, and David for their efforts on the Enchanted Forest Butterfly Garden.

- **Next Sale November 15th**

Our next plant sale will be held on November 15th at the Enchanted Forest Sanctuary, 444 Columbia Blvd., Titusville from 9:00am to 1:00pm.

We will be sending out the list of plants we expect to have and posting the information to our web site and Facebook Page about a week before the meeting. If you would like to volunteer, please contact Paul Schmalzer at schmalzp@digital.net. ***Remember, Sea Rocket Chapter members are eligible for discounts!***

- **Annual Meeting February 25th**

Please mark your calendars now so you can plan to attend our next Annual Meeting on Wednesday, February 25th where we'll be electing Chapter Officers (President, Vice-President, Treasurer, Secretary) for next year. If you would like to know more about opportunities to serve, feel free to attend any Board meeting or contact Paul Schmalzer at schmalzp@digital.net. Our President and acting Secretary are carrying heavy loads, which they cannot continue to do.

- **FNPS – Announcing 2025 Photo Contest Winners**

FNPS recently announced the Winners of the 2025 FNPS Photo Contest and are thrilled to celebrate the talented photographers who captured the beauty and spirit of Florida's native plants. Thank you to everyone who participated! You can see the winning photos and photographers at buff.ly/Vvelh2t.

- **T-Shirts!!!**

Our latest order of larger sized shirts has been received, and we still have a supply of medium and small sized shirts in several colors. The shirts look amazing, and you can too for only \$10.00!! Shirts are available for sale during most Sea Rocket Chapter events.

Outreach Reports

- **Field Trip to Dicerandra Sanctuary October 18th**

By Dr. Paul Schmalzer

Eight people attended the October 18th field trip to the Dicerandra Scrub Sanctuary in Titusville. The endemic *Dicerandra thinicola* (Titusville mint, Titusville balm) was in flower. This plant is found only in northern Brevard County and is listed as Endangered by the State of Florida. It is one of six woody species of *Dicerandra* that are rare, local endemics in disjunct scrub sites in Florida. A second rare plant that we saw was the low-growing *Euphorbia* (*Chamaesyce*) *cumulicola* (Coastal dune sandmat). Many fall-flowering plants were blooming including *Chrysopsis scabrella* (Golden aster), *Pityopsis graminifolia* (Silk leaf aster), *Liatris* spp. (Blazing star), *Dalea feayi* (Feay's prairieclover), *Andropogon* spp. (Bluestem grasses), and others.

- **Last Membership Meeting October 22nd, Mike Owen**

By Dr. Paul Schmalzer

Mike Owen was the speaker our last meeting and he spoke on ***Orchids of the Fakahatchee Strand***. Mike is retired from the Florida State Parks where he spent 30 years as the Biologist at Fakahatchee Strand Preserve State Park.

Fakahatchee Strand is the largest strand swamp in Florida and, also in the world, as this vegetation type is unique to Florida. It is about 20 miles long (north to south) and 3-4 miles wide. The southern 15 miles are in the State Park while the northern 5 miles are in Florida Panther National Wildlife Refuge. This deep swamp formed about 4,500 years ago through the chemical erosion of a limestone valley. Most of it is flooded for 9-10 months a year and remains humid even when not flooded. This creates a unique environment and microclimate that supports many species not found elsewhere in Florida.

Old growth cypress (*Taxodium*) was important in this system historically but was logged between 1944-1954 before the strand was state property. Regrowing cypress, royal palm (*Roystonea regia*), pop ash (*Fraxinus caroliniana*), and pond apple (*Annona glabra*) are important tree species. The high humidity and rarity of frosts helps support many epiphytic plants including ferns, bromeliads, and orchids. *Ophioglossum palmatum* (Hand fern), *Camploneurum angustifolium* (Narrow strap fern), *Camploneurum costatum* (Tailed strap fern), and *Asplenium erosum* (Eared spleenwort) are among the epiphytic ferns. Fourteen of the sixteen bromeliads in Florida occur in Fakahatchee Strand. West Indian tufted airplant (*Guzmania monostachia*), several species of *Catopsis* (Strap airplant), and multiple species of *Tillandsia* (Airplant) occur. The Mexican bromeliad weevil has impacted the larger species of *Tillandsia*.

Orchids from the Caribbean and Central America have dispersed to Fakahatchee Strand by birds or hurricanes over time and some have established. These include *Cryptopodium punctatum* (Cowhorn orchid), *Epipendrum floridense* (Umbrella star orchid), *E. anceps* (Dingy-flowered star

orchid), *E. nocturnum* (Night-scented orchid), and others. Leafless epiphytic orchids with photosynthetic stems include the rare and showy *Dendrophylax lindenii* (Ghost orchid). Poaching of orchids by collectors is a major threat to these rare orchids. The book and movie The Orchid Thief is based on events that occurred in the Fakahatchee Strand.

- **OUTREACH October 25th Harvest Festival, Enchanted Forest Sanctuary**

Thank you, Beverly, David, Jesse, Elizabeth, Paul, and Laura who assisted with plant sales and at our educational booth during this year's Harvest Festival. Over 1,900 folks attended this festival which included lots of exhibitors, vendors, and educational booths, a harvest photo booth for kids, food-trucks, music, costumes and more! Our volunteers gave out a LOT of educational materials, and the kids especially liked the wooden coins, which have a smiley face on one side, and our Chapter name and fnps.org on the other. We also sold 23 plants.

FNPS Upcoming Events *Mark Your Calendars Now!*

- **November 1st Garden Workday** at Enchanted Forest Sanctuary
- **November 9th Annual Landscaping with Florida Natives Tour, Melbourne**
The Conradina Chapter of the FNPS is hosting this year's native gardens tour with seven sites lined up, including the Founders Museum in Melbourne. This year they are also partnering with the Brevard Watercolor Society and will have Plein Air artists actively painting and using their skills to enhance the landscape with their art, which will also be for sale at each location. For more information, check out <https://conradina.fnpschapters.org/>.
- **November 19th Membership Meeting and 2026 Budget Vote**
- **December 2nd Board Meeting**
Chapter members are always welcome to attend Sea Rocket Board meetings!
- **December 6th Holiday Party, Dixie Crossroads Restaurant, Titusville**
We'll be gathering at Dixie Crossroads, in Titusville, on December 6th at 6:00pm to celebrate the **HO HO HOLIDAYS** this year! Please RSVP to John Stiner johnstiner85@yahoo.com by December 4th. If you would like to attend. Attendees are responsible for their own checks.
- **January 21st – January 25th OUTREACH Space Coast Birding and Wildlife Festival**
Volunteer Opportunity! We're still in the planning stages, so we'll have more information on this event in upcoming communications. See Elizabeth or Jesse if you would like to volunteer.
- **February 25th Annual Membership Meeting – Election of Chapter Officers**
Per our Bylaws:
 - o Officers will be elected during the February annual meeting by a majority vote of members present and results will be announced during the meeting.
 - o Officers will take office at the March meeting and serve until duly replaced.

- o The Board will announce a reminder of the upcoming annual Chapter Officer elections and information regarding the Nominating Committee via the newsletter. An open call for members to self-nominate or nominate other members (with their approval) for the following year's Officer positions, with a request that all nominations be submitted by the first Board meeting in December will be issued.
- o The Nominating Committee's duty shall be to prepare a slate of one or more candidates for Officers for presentation to the membership at the Annual Membership Meeting. The Nominating Committee may solicit candidates. The Nominating Committee may endorse candidates. The Nominating Committee will present their list of applicants to the Board at the January meeting so that the information can be distributed to the General Membership in the February newsletter.

Members, please mark your calendars now so you can plan to attend our next Annual Meeting on Wednesday, February 25th where we'll be electing Chapter Officers (President, Vice-President, Treasurer, Secretary) for 2026. All Board positions, including Officers, have a one-year term.

Volunteers are needed. If you would like to know more about opportunities to serve, feel free to attend any Board meeting or contact Paul Schmalzer at schmalzp@digital.net.

Other News

- **November 8th Friends of the Thousand Islands Festival**

We won't be able to participate in this year's event, but we're sure it will be a great one. Additional information is available at <https://friendsofthethousandislands.org/>.

- **Possible Donation to Friends of Enchanted Forest Sanctuary Tram Cart Fund**

The Friends of the Enchanted Forest Sanctuary are raising funds to purchase a Tram Cart for the Forest. A possible donation of up to \$1,000 is included in our 2026 budget, with caveats. This project is still in the planning stages. Information regarding funding and clarification of the caveats will be provided before the money is donated.

REMEMBER:

***All Sea Rocket Chapter events are free
and open to members of the public.***

All Are Welcome!

***Tell your family, friends,
and neighbors!***

Dates to Remember

- . November 1st – Garden Workday
- . November 4th – Board Meeting
- . November 8th – Conradina Chapter Landscaping with Florida Natives Tour
- . November 9th – Friends of the Thousand Islands Festival, Cocoa Beach
- . November 15th – Plant Sale
- . November 19th – Membership Meeting – **Budget Vote**
- . December 2nd – Board Meeting - **Nominations for Chapter Officers due**
- . December 6th – Holiday Party
- . January 21 – 25th – OUTREACH Space Coast Birding and Wildlife Festival
- . February 25th – Annual Membership Meeting – Election of Chapter Officers

Sea Rocket Chapter Board of Directors

President: Paul Schmalzer, Ph.D.

Treasurer: Megan McCormick

Chapter Rep: Elisabeth Bishop

Newsletter: OPEN

Hospitality: John Stiner

At-Large: Jesse Baker

Plant Sales/Garden: Paul Schmalzer, Ph.D.

Vice-President: OPEN

Secretary: OPEN (acting: Laura Covell)

Membership: Beverly Lewis

Social Media: Laura Covell

Education/Outreach: OPEN

Chapter Update: (acting: Laura Covell)

Want to know more?? For More Information...

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

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

Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/searocketchapterfnps>

Chapter Secretary: srsecretary@fnps.org

Florida Native Plant Society: <https://www.fnps.org/>

Facebook Page

