

[View this Florida Native Plant Society email in your browser](#)



## December 2025 News From Serenoa Chapter

Happy Holiday Season. We encourage you to take time for nature this month. Tomorrow is Giving Tuesday and the **Florida Native Plant Society** and our local **Serenoa Chapter** appreciate your support.

**General Meeting & Chapter Holiday Party: Monday, December 15, 2025**  
**6:30 PM - 8:30 PM EDT at Sarasota Audubon Nature Center**  
**Topic: Potluck & Nature Themed Gift Exchange**

**Field trip: Saturday, December 20, 2025**  
**9:00 AM to 12:00 PM EDT**  
**Holiday Walk at Myakka River State Park with Zachary Westmark**

### Conservation Update & Alerts

#### Apply for a grant to plant Native Plants

You could receive up to \$1,000 a grant from our chapter to build a Native Plant Garden.

#### More December Learning Opportunities

Scroll down for links and information.



**General Meeting & Chapter Holiday Party: Monday, December 15, 2025**  
**Potluck and Nature Themed Gift Exchange**  
**Social @ 6:30 PM, Meeting @ 7:00 PM EDT**  
**Sarasota Audubon Nature Center at Celery Fields**

**This is a potluck so please bring a dish to share, your own plate, glass & utensils. Turkey will be provided. BYOB.**

We will play a gift exchange game; if you want to participate, bring a wrapped, nature-oriented gift (up to \$20 value). Expect a lively game of exchange and re-exchange!

**RSVP** in meetup please. Note that Serenoa Chapter does not collect any payments via Meetup and registration for events is free. Non-Members of FNPS are welcome, but we encourage you to become a **member**.

[RSVP](#)

**Field trip: Holiday Walk at Myakka River State Park with Zachary Westmark**  
**Saturday, December 20, 2025 @ 9:00 AM to 12:00 PM EDT**  
**Myakka River State Park**  
**RSVP required. Spots are limited.**

Join Zachary Westmark on an interpretative casual walk and share in Myakka River State Park as we identify and discuss the park's flora and fauna.

**RSVP** for details. Non-Members of FNPS are welcome, but we encourage you to become a **member**.

[RSVP](#)

#### Conservation Update

Our chapter wishes one of Sarasota County's leading land stewards, Chris Meyer, a happy retirement. Chris and the Environmentally Sensitive Lands Protection Program (ESLPP) basically grew up together. Below is a picture of Chris (seated) being honored by colleagues at last month's ESLPP 25th anniversary celebration at Deer Prairie Creek Preserve. Our area's loss will be a gain to his home place of southeast Kansas, where he plans to move back in the next year or so. He's maintained his membership with the Kansas Native Plant Society for several years.



The Bradenton Herald's Ryan Ballog **reported** in August on land conservation in Manatee County. "[A] little over 67,000 acres of the county's roughly 474,000-acre land area [is conserved]. By percentage and land area," he wrote, "Manatee County's conservation efforts rank near the bottom in Southwest Florida and the Tampa Bay area."

The Florida Conservation Group **celebrates** the recent conservation of the 2,559-acre Bentley Ranch in Hardee County with a conservation easement through the Florida Department of Agriculture's Rural and Family Lands Protection Program. Stay tuned for details on our chapter's May outing and presentation, which will be focused on working landscapes.

Over the past few newsletters we've shared information about **Senate Bill 180 (SB 180)**. We are encouraging FNPS members to call their state representatives and express disapproval of SB 180 in its current form and urge repeal of the most damaging sections, especially **Sections 18 and 28**. A blanket moratorium on "restrictive" or "burdensome" building regulations will lead to the loss of more wild and native Florida that we FNPS members cherish. Many of our members live in District 73, represented in the state house by Rep. Fiona McFarland, who co-introduced the house companion (HB 1535) to SB 180. Some legislators seem to be **feeling the pressure** and are talking about making "tweaks." In telling them what you don't want from SB 180 please also let Rep. McFarland, or other members of your legislative delegation, which can be found **here** (Senate) and **here** (House), know that you want them to strongly prioritize conservation policies that protect native flora and fauna in the session that begins January 13. 1000 Friends of Florida will be streaming their 2026 Florida Legislative Preview, "with a focus on bills that could significantly affect local planning authority, land conservation, water management, and community resilience," on January 7 at 12pm. Register **here**.

Subscribe to Statewide Action Alerts

#### Your Florida Native Plant Society Membership

Name: <<Full Name>>

Membership #: <<FNPS Account>>

Email: <<Email Address>>

Membership Type: <<Membership Type>>

Member Since: <<Member Since>>

Expiration Date: <<Membership Expiration>>

Renew Today

#### Apply for a Grant to Build a Native Plant Garden

You could receive up to \$1,000 a grant from our chapter to build a Native Plant Garden. On our **grants page**, you will find important information about the new grant cycles, and tips to assist applicants in preparing strong

Application

December 2025 Opportunities to Learn about Native Plants

Online

FNPS hosts monthly Lunch and Learns. The most recent was The Ferns of Florida with James Stevenson, [here](#). Watch for emails from the FNPS for details. Series archive with many informative presentations can be found [here](#).

Become a **Florida Master Naturalist** this Winter!

Explore **past presentations** from our chapter online!

Get Outside

Winter is a great time to garden and plant native plants. November to January is also a great **time** in our area to **start native plants from seed**.

The **Sarasota** and **Manatee County** Audubon Societies host many great events. The UF/IFAS Extensions in **Sarasota** and **Manatee** County have many events to explore and learn about nature.

Saturday, December 6 @ 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM Painted Bunting Celebration:  
**A Day of Art & Nature at Felts Audubon Preserve**

Tuesday, December 9 @ 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM **Babcock Webb WMA Guided Bike Ride** with Big Waters Land Trust in partnership with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission.

Sunday, December 14 @ 3:30 PM - 5:00 PM  
Discover the **Birds of the Celery Fields** with Rockjumper Bird Guide Forrest Rowland and Sarasota Audubon Society. Registration required.

Make a new holiday tradition. Join the 125th **Christmas Bird Count with the Manatee Audubon Society on Saturday December 20** or **Sarasota Audubon on Saturday, December 27**.

Saturday, December 27 @ 9:00 AM Explore Perico Preserve with a Master Gardener. **Register here**.

Learn more about the birds of Manatee County by taking the **Bird ID course**. SAS also has many **classes**.

**Plan Ahead as Many Events Sell out**

Serenoa Chapter Florida Native Plant Society

The Mission of the **Florida Native Plant Society** is to promote the preservation, conservation, and restoration of the native plants and native plant communities of Florida.

Go Wild! Go Native!

See our calendar of meetings and programs on the **Serenoa FNPS website**.

This **QR code** can be used to donate directly to Serenoa Chapter FNPS. If you would like to donate via check, please make it payable to **Serenoa FNPS and sent to PO Box 1224; Palmetto, FL 34420**.

Scan in your banking app to pay

Florida Native Plant Society Serenoa Ch



**zelle**



MARIE SELBY  
BOTANICAL  
GARDENS



## Archaeology of the Region

Images courtesy:

Google Earth  
Artist Merald Clark  
Florida Anthropologist  
Newspaper Archive Online  
Florida Memory - Florida Department of State  
Sarasota County Library and Historical Resources

[See past presentations on our YouTube Channel](#)



A photo from November's field trip to Wellen Park with Sean Patton, courtesy of Stephen White.

### Serenoa Chapter Board Members

President: Elliot Prout  
Vice President: Steve White  
Treasurer: Caroline Root  
Secretary: Sheryl Perkins  
Chapter Representative: Trent Berry  
Membership: Kyle Fowler  
Grants Program: Pam Callender  
Field Trips Leader: Cathy Page  
Conservation: Ryan Thompson  
Social Media: Rachel DesRosier  
Newsletter: Don Blackowiak  
Technology: Alison Bishop

At large: Chris Meyer  
Historian: Open

Contact us via email: [srepens@gmail.com](mailto:srepens@gmail.com)

Members are welcome at board meetings! Email us If you are interested in attending and we will send you a link.



*Serenoa Chapter FNPS*

*The Mission of the Florida Native Plant Society is to promote the preservation, conservation, and restoration of the native plants and native plant communities of Florida.*

*Go Wild! Go Native!*

<https://serenoa.fnpschapters.org>

*Copyright (C) 2025 Florida Native Plant Society - Serenoa Chapter. All rights reserved.*

Our mailing address is:

Want to change how you receive these emails?  
You can [update your preferences](#) or [unsubscribe](#)