

Environmentally Endangered Lands Program
North Region



A Quarterly Newsletter

Fall, 2006

Fence Lines and Life Lines

Volunteers and staff dedicated hundreds of hours this summer repairing fence lines and relocating gopher tortoises at the Enchanted Forest Sanctuary. Erosion had caused soil along SR 405 to wash away from under the boundary fence, allowing gopher tortoises to cross the dangerous divided highway. After several tortoises were hit by cars, the Sanctuary devised a plan to reinforce its boundaries. However, some tortoises had entrances to their burrows either on the fence line or just outside of it, in which case the burrow itself crossed into the Sanctuary. Land Management Technician Kris Brown applied for and received state permits to relocate these tortoises inside the Sanctuary fence.



Gopher Tortoise

Each burrow was completely excavated to ensure no tortoise hid at the end. Since burrows can reach an average of 15 feet in length and go just as deep, it took many sweat-drenched hours to excavate each burrow. Some burrows even traveled between coquina rocks! Gopher tortoises dig and use many burrows within their home ranges, so each tortoise had burrows available to live in other than the one dug up. Once burrows were excavated and the tortoises tagged, they were released inside the newly repaired fence line. These tagged tortoises will join the database of other tortoises tagged on the Sanctuary to assist in determining diet, population size, life span, home ranges and other biological information.

To date, 70 tortoises have been tagged at the Enchanted Forest!! Work has also begun on other North Region lands to tag torts. For more information, or to donate sweat and tears (no blood, thank you) to gopher tortoise tagging projects, contact Kris Brown at 321-264-5185.

Fall Event Calendar

October

- 14 Mushroom Hike
10:00am - 12:00pm
- 15 Forest Funday
2:00pm
- 18 FEF Meeting
6:00pm
- 28 Indian River Flute Circle

November

- 4 Forest Festival
10:00am - 3:00pm
- 15 Craft Program
10:00am
- 15 FEF Meeting
6:00pm
- 15 Volunteer Open House
7:00pm
- 23 Thanksgiving Holiday
Sanctuary Closed

December

- 2 Music at Sunset
5:30pm - 7:30pm
- 16 Forest Funday
2:00pm
- 20 FEF Meeting
6:00pm
- 24&25 Christmas Holiday
Sanctuary Closed
- Jan 1 New Year's Holiday
Sanctuary Closed



Happy Halloween!!

Indian Mound Station Sanctuary

The EEL Program's newest land acquisition is the Indian Mound Station Sanctuary in Mims. This 85-acre Sanctuary includes scrub, scrubby flatwoods, and wetland ecosystems. Protected species observed on the site include gopher tortoises and bald eagles. Immediate management needs include removal of trash, removal of exotic plant species, securing the site with a fence, and implementing prescribed fire. The Sanctuary is named for an Indian burial mound located on the site. Studies suggest that the mound was constructed sometime between 3000 BP (before present) and 750 AD. Unfortunately, the mound has been desecrated for many years by looters, ATVs and other illegal activities. The EEL Program has worked with Tom Penders, a local archeologist, to plan a restoration project for the mound. Public access opportunities are planned for the future, but are dependent upon additional land acquisition in the area and upon completion of the mound restoration plan. Existing trails will be used for hiking and interpretive signs will highlight the unique biological and historical features of the site.



EEL Program staff and volunteers after a recent trash clean-up at the Indian Mound Station Sanctuary.

Deadheaders Report

Look at our new addition! The North Region purchased a greenhouse this fall to assist with native plant restoration projects. The 20'x10' greenhouse will be used to propagate natives for habitat restoration and our native plant and butterfly gardens. The Deadheaders spent several Saturdays assembling the house, which is located behind the Management and Education Center.



Volunteers spent several Saturdays assembling the greenhouse.

Running a greenhouse is no small project, and the **Deadheaders could use your help!** They will be designing and constructing the interior of the house, propagating plants and participating in native plantings at North Region Sanctuaries, in addition to managing the Enchanted Forest gardens! Intense work is being conducted in October to spruce up the gardens for Forest Festival on November 4th, so come on out!

North Region Staff

My, my the changes!! There are so many new faces around The Enchanted Forest, we thought we'd do a round of introductions!

Judy Gregoire
Land Manager



Xavier De Sequins
Asst. Land Manager



Joanie Faulls
Sanctuary Steward



Shari Blissett Clark
Land Management Technician



Kris Brown
Land Management Technician



Sandy Edmondson
Naturalist



David Celli
Maintenance Tech



Prescribed Fire Planned

The EEL Program welcomes our new Fire Manager, Dean Vanderbleek, who has put the Enchanted Forest on the schedule for a prescribed burn this fall as part of our scrub restoration. The areas to be burned include the eight-acre portion of south Ridge Trail that was not burned in 1999 plus three acres of scrub on the north side of the Addison/Ellis canal. Both areas were severely overgrown in the absence of fire, and were

being colonized by hardwood trees and exotics. The vegetation was so dense, in fact, that first reducing its height was necessary. This keeps a prescribed fire cool and on the ground rather than creating a hot, vertical canopy fire that might be destructive. In September, contract crews and EEL staff began the scrub restoration project by mechanically removing tall vegetation and clearing fire lines (which in many cases are hiking trails). It's a startling sight to behold, but once burned, the scrub habitat will regenerate quickly. In six months, fire effects will be virtually invisible. In fact, some species in scrub habitat, such as longleaf pine, depend on fire for survival. But fire suppression for many decades has dramatically affected Florida ecosystems. Prescribed fire as a land management tool is a crucial component of Florida's natural communities.



This trained wildland firefighter uses a driptorch to start a prescribed fire.



Tall vegetation is removed from the scrub in preparation for a prescribed burn this fall.

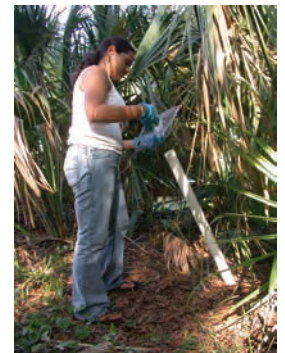
Volunteers at Work



Deadheader Jane Likon works in the native plant and butterfly gardens.



Volunteers work to remove invasive air potato on EFS.



Nathaly Ciprian, a student at Titusville High, studies frogs for a science project.



Volunteer John Clark (left) assists with conducting a bat house workshop.



Volunteer Helen English makes oyster mats at a Friends meeting.



Volunteer and SMC Chairman Ross Hinkle (Center) leads an Advanced Guide Training hike.

The Enchanted Forest Sanctuary



Guide Training

Do you enjoy sharing your enthusiasm for nature with others?

You're invited to participate in the Enchanted Forest Sanctuary's annual Volunteer Guide Certification Program!!

Volunteers will be trained and certified to lead hikes and related activities. Course topics will include presentation techniques, natural history, plant identification, wildlife identification and cultural history of the Forest and the local area.

Training will be held on five Saturday mornings and five Tuesday evenings beginning January 30, 2007. To learn more, contact Joanie at: 321-264-5185.



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We need hosts for the busy winter season. If you're interested, call Joanie at the Forest!