

# Environmentally Endangered Lands Program Enchanted Forest Sanctuary



A Quarterly Newsletter

Spring, 2007

## Prescribed Fire a Success

On Wednesday, March 7, 2007 a prescribed fire was conducted on portions of the scrub ridge in the Enchanted Forest Sanctuary. The purpose of the prescribed fire was to maintain healthy habitat for wildlife. Many species that live in or use scrub habitat depend upon fire for survival. Sounds backwards, doesn't it?! But it's true! For instance, the cones of the sand pine will only open by heat generated from fire. The seeds then nestle into the ground and germinate, fueled by the abundant nutrients that were recycled into the soil by the fire. Some animal species such as gopher tortoises and many birds need the open, sandy spaces fire creates to forage or move around.



Land Management Technician Kris Brown uses a drip torch to light the prescribed fire.



Just six weeks after the fire, the vegetation has responded tremendously! Within a few months, it will grow so high it will be difficult to detect that a fire was recently in the area.

EEL Program Land managers, like many other agencies and organizations across Florida, use prescribed fire as a management tool to maintain habitat. Without fire, the species described above, plus many others, may not survive. A "prescription" is written months ahead that requires certain environmental conditions to exist such as wind speed and direction, soil moisture, humidity, temperature and other factors. In addition, the nesting seasons of wildlife are taken into account. Other units of the Enchanted Forest Sanctuary and other North Area lands are scheduled for prescribed fire in 2007. Check back often to see our scrub grow!

## Event Calendar

### May

16 6pm – Friends Meeting  
20 12pm – Live Folk Music  
20 2pm – Forest Funday  
22 7am – Deadheaders  
26 9am - Photo Workshop  
31 7am – Deadheaders

### June

5 7am – Deadheaders  
9 7am – Deadheaders  
9 7pm – Live Music  
14 7am – Deadheaders  
16 Pond Tour  
17 2pm – Forest Funday  
20 6:30 pm – Friends Meeting  
23 7am – Deadheaders

### July

15 2pm – Forest Funday  
18 6:30 pm – Friends Meeting  
28 11am – Indian River Flute Circle

## Enchanted Forest Receives Landscape Award

The staff of the Enchanted Forest Sanctuary (EFS) is proud to announce that their gardens have been awarded the 2007 Florida Native Plant Society (FNPS) First Place Landscape Award for a Wildflower and Butterfly Garden! Shari Blissett Clark, EEL Program Land Management Technician, and Suzanne Meyer, Deadheader and Friends member, traveled to Gainesville in April to receive the award at the FNPS annual conference.

Staff and volunteers have worked diligently over the past four years to plant and maintain gardens in the disturbed areas that surround the Management and Education Center. The Friends of the Enchanted Forest Sanctuary, Inc. played an important role in making the gardens a reality. Native plants were used, which require little water or fertilizer and attract various native species of animals, including butterflies and their larvae (caterpillars). The EFS Deadheaders volunteer group, named for their role in plucking the dead heads off of flowers to promote growth, works throughout the year to plant and maintain the gardens. The butterfly gardens include a man-made pond with aquatic species of plants and animals. Various aspects of the gardens were planted with grant funds received from Keep Brevard Beautiful.

The Enchanted Forest Sanctuary is open from 9:00am to 5:00pm daily. All EFS native plant gardens are universally accessible for visitors of all ability levels to enjoy. A native plant brochure is also available for visitors to learn about the various plant species that are located throughout the gardens.

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## Welcome...

...to Robert Bolks! Robert is our new Maintenance Technician. He will maintain the building and surrounding grounds and assist with land management projects. Robert enjoys spending time with his son including surfing, fishing, hiking, and tennis.

## New School Group Curricula Developed

We had a great year that saw the testing phase of new curricula for school group visits! Education staff and volunteers created and initiated new guidelines and activities that are correlated to the state's education standards. This will help teachers identify and correlate their trips to EFS with their classroom lessons. The guides have been wonderfully open-minded and helpful in developing our new curricula and then testing it out on our spring school groups. We'll do some minor changes over the summer and fully implement it in the fall. New activities for grades K-2 include habitat games and growth cycles of wildlife. Our grades 3-5 curricula is especially fun and interesting! Students measure and calculate the age of a saw palmetto (some have been found to be almost 400 years old!) and can create a timeline of their plant. Habitat surveys for grades 6-8 compare the plant life between habitat types. The high school curricula is still in development, but will promise to be just as exciting and rewarding as everything else!

**A huge thank-you** to all our guides who participated and offered suggestions! We couldn't have done it without you! We can't wait for next year!



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## Deadheaders Report

The Deadheaders were again awarded a grant from Keep Brevard Beautiful for 2007! This year, the Deadheaders decided to spruce up the EFS front entrance. And boy they did! Firebush, gaillardia, dune sunflower, Simpson's stopper, wiregrass, and porterweed are just a handful of the new plants. The new landscaping greatly beautifies the entrance sign and road, and will hopefully attract new visitors to the Forest. Thank you everyone for all your hard work this spring!



## Small Mammal Survey

Ann Powers, a senior at Titusville High, began a research project to determine the population of small mammals at the Enchanted Forest Sanctuary. She set out small "live" traps on the scrub ridge in the evening and checked on them the next morning. Thirty traps were set from October, 2006 to March, 2007 on 15 different evenings. Ann caught and released one Cotton Rat, 26 Cotton Mice, five Golden Mice, and 16 Florida Mice. These were great findings since the Florida Mouse is a threatened species! Sanctuary Steward Joanie Fauls will be continuing the research at the Forest and will keep us informed of her findings.

## Gopher Tortoise Survey

The Enchanted Forest Sanctuary's gopher tortoise census project just wrapped up. The project actively trapped gopher tortoises for a period of two weeks. The trapping produced 45 formerly unidentified tortoises bringing our total number of identified individuals to 121 gopher tortoises. The trapping project was successful thanks to the help of 16 volunteers spending hundreds of hours setting and monitoring traps, and assisting with data collection and tortoise tagging.

## Paul Schueb Receives Community Award

We are excited to announce that Paul Schueb received The Jefferson Award for Public Service, a national recognition. Paul volunteers his time to educate the public on the importance of reptiles and amphibians in Florida's environment. Thanks, Paul, for all your hard work!



## Earth Day Photos!



# Friend's Meetings

We have exciting speakers planned for this summer's meetings! Please join us! Meetings are held at the Enchanted Forest Sanctuary. Meetings begin at 6:30 pm, and speakers begin at 7pm.

**Wednesday, June 20, 2007 – 7:00 PM**

Thomas W. Dreschel, Ph.D., Senior Supervising Environmental Scientist  
Everglades Restoration Project

**Wednesday, July 18, 2007 – 7:00 PM**

Bill Belleville, Author, *Loosing It All To Sprawl*

**Wednesday, August 15, 2007 – 7:00 PM**

Scott Taylor, Ph.D. Brevard County EEL Program  
Sam's Historic Site and House

**Saturday, August 18, 2007 – 8:00 AM**

Field Trip to Sam's Historic Site and House



Environmentally Endangered Lands Program  
North Region  
Enchanted Forest Sanctuary  
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