

*Parks and Recreation Department
Environmentally Endangered Lands (EEL) Program*



North Region Newsletter

A Quarterly Newsletter

Spring '09

Earth Month Celebration '09

This April we will be celebrating our Earth all month with these sure-to-be-a-hit events including our annual Earth Day Celebration!

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are sure to put some fun into what once was considered to be a "sport" only adults enjoyed.

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Have a Question for us?

*Call, e-mail, or just drop by the Education & Management Center! Our contact information is listed on **Page 4**.*



Earth Month Celebration 2009 *By Barbara Hoelscher & Joe Swingle*

Instead of celebrating Earth Day on just one day, The Friends of the Enchanted Forest and the staff at the Enchanted Forest Sanctuary have decided to celebrate our Earth all month with several Earth Day-themed events in April!

Friday, April 3rd

We will start off the festivities with an Earth Day-themed *Nature Stories!* for kids program. This program is for infants through pre-k. We will read a story, sing a song, and do some exploring in the Sanctuary.

Saturday, April 4th

Our traditional Earth Day Celebration will be from 10 a.m. until 4 p.m. and will be packed with things to do and see. Over 20 exhibitors will be on hand to share their passion for their organizations and to interact with guests. Other activities

include: animal presentations, puppet shows, hikes with Enchanted Forest Certified Guides, musical performances, crafts, face painting, Native American dancing, and a birding workshop for kids, live animal presentations including reptiles, birds of prey, and bats and storytelling with Kay T. Bannon!

Saturday, April 11th

We will host a "Florida Concert on the Porch" with music by Men of the House, Chris Kahl, and more! Performances will begin at 11 a.m. with the last performance ending at 3 p.m..



Musical performance from Earth Day 2008.

Sunday, April 19th

Staff and Volunteers will be conducting "Earth Day For Kids" Sunday Funday program from 2 p.m. until 4 p.m. with exhibits, take-home projects, and a limited number of native plants to give away.



Exhibitors from Earth Day 2008 (left). The Forest will be packed again this year with over 25 exhibitors ready to share their love and knowledge of their organizations!

All these events are **free!** We hope you join us for one or more of these fun events!

Land Management Update *By Xavier de Seguin des Hons*

During the past cooler months, the EEL Program North Region staff and volunteers have been actively removing trash at the South Lake Conservation Area (SLCA) and the Enchanted Forest Sanctuary (EFS). Thanks to your efforts, a total of 3.03 tons of trash has been removed from these Sanctuaries.

In February 2009, the EEL Program fire team successfully conducted a 26-acre prescribed burn at the newly-acquired 1,500-acre property in Scottsmoor. This burn is part of several that will help restore Scrub Jay habitat in the south-eastern portion of the Sanctuary. While two families are currently using the site, an estimated total of three families could use this portion of the Sanctuary when restoration



Members of the Coast Guard volunteering their time to help remove decades worth of trash build-up (right).

efforts are completed. Unfortunately, the fire has also uncovered a lot of trash throughout the area. Two clean-up days are scheduled in March (see schedule on page 4) to try to remove the trash before the vegetation grows back.

The restoration of scrub habitat at the North Buck Lake Scrub Sanctuary began in February 2009. The scrub habitat located in the western portion of the Sanctuary has not burned in the past 10 years and is extremely overgrown. Twenty-one acres were mechanically reduced to allow the EEL Program to safely conduct prescribed fire when optimal weather conditions are present. Another 35 acres of scrub will be treated similarly in the spring. Funding for this project was made possible by a \$25,000 grant from the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service.



An old car was among the items of trash revealed after controlled burns at SLCA. The car will be removed during a future clean-up.

New Land Management Technician Lori Richardson

Lori Richardson joined the EEL Program's North Region in December '08. Lori has an Associates in Science Degree in Horticulture, has a Class A-endorsed CDL driver's license, and has recently completed several fire trainings through the Florida Department of Forestry.



Lori Richardson, Land Management Technician and expert heavy-equipment operator.



Garden & Volunteer Update

After a relatively 'chilly' winter, the weather is starting to warm up quickly which means our annual Earth Day Celebration is approaching. Help is needed to prepare the gardens for the new growth by removing last season's stems and by removing grasses. Several informal workdays have been scheduled (see below).

Help is also needed for trail maintenance, greeting guests, selling items in the Gift Shoppe, and helping with our education programs.

Garden Workdays (Every Tuesday and Saturday in March)

Tuesdays:
March 17th, 24th, and 31st

Saturdays:
March 14th, 21st, and 28th

April and May dates are to-be-determined.



Equipment 'for the birds' helps out a beginner *By Joe Swingle, North Region Naturalist*

Like many other 'birders-in-training,' I can use all the help I can get when it comes to identification. A few recent events have pushed me to go past my comfort zone and 'step up' my level of birding from always depending on other birders to tell me what bird I am looking at to being able to ID 'on my own.'

First, my 9-year-old son recently attended a birding for kids workshop and ever since has been identifying birds wherever we go. Second, a friend gave me a copy of Bill Thompson's *The Young Birder's Guide* which was in part put together by the author's daughter and the rest of her fifth-grade class. I concluded that birding is not just for adults and that other kids in the area may also enjoy birding if they just knew how. So I began putting together a birding program for kids - but first I would need to sharpen my skills at identification!

Trading cards are very popular with kids in our home, so I compiled a list of birds from other birdwatching trips here at the Forest into a simple checklist format that anyone who collects trading cards would find familiar. Next, I put the *Florida Bird Songs* CD on my mp3 player, unwrapped the digital binoculars that were given to me in the holiday season, and went for a hike.

Within the first three minutes, two hawks flew overhead and quickly disappeared out of sight. Luckily, I had the binoculars and managed to get a few pictures of each hawk. Then I heard what sounded like a smaller bird calling in the distance. I looked through the checklist and



Testing out some new gear for birding: a pair of binoculars with built-in digital camera, a birding guide for kids, and an mp3 player.

started playing some of the 'smaller' bird's songs on my mp3 player. The song of the Northern Parula wasn't just a match, it sounded like the recording was taken from the exact same bird! With each trail section my list kept growing. The checklist was actually a *huge* help because I could just search for the birds on the list and skip the rest.

After the hike, I reviewed the pictures from the binoculars and consulted the *Guide* again. The book assured me that the crescent-shaped 'windows' of light coming through the wings of one of the hawks was an easy give-away - a red-shouldered hawk. Excellent! It was freeing to be able to rely on my own resources to identify the bird instead of just taking another birder's word for it. By the end I had checked off 11 birds in just a short half-hour hike!



A Red-Shouldered Hawk taken with the digital camera-binoculars. The crescent-shaped 'windows' are clearly visible

I also recently discovered that the Wings Over Florida program awards certificates according to the number of wild Florida bird species that are correctly identified. Certificate levels start at only 15 birds for kids and 50 for adults! We'll show how easy it is to get started with this program at our April 4th workshop.

Birding can be a blast for kids, especially with all the new gear that is available, and is a great excuse for spending time with young ones outdoors. I hope to see you and some young 'birders-in-training' at one of these upcoming programs at the Forest!

Upcoming Birding Programs at the EFS:

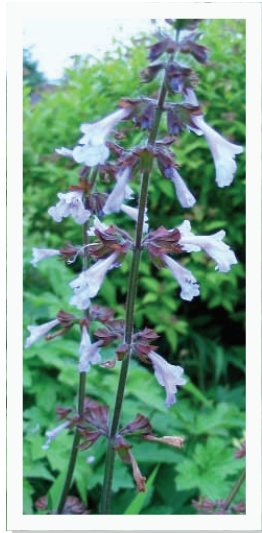
- Birding trip for all levels: March 28th at 8:30 a.m.
- Birding for Kids workshop: April 4th at 10:30 a.m.
- *Bring Binoculars and a hat!

Plant-of-the-Month *By Joe Swingle*

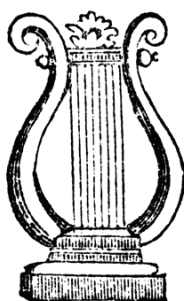
Lyre leaf sage (*Salvia lyrata*)

The grand-opening of 'wildflower season' has begun here in Florida, and the lyre-leafed sage, one of the first flowers to be seen after the cold snaps wane, leads the procession.

This native mint-family plant can be found both along the trails and in the butterfly gardens at the Enchanted Forest Sanctuary.



Lyre-leafed sage stem with multiple blooms (above). The curvature of the leaves (far left) resemble a lyre (left) — a classic Greek stringed musical instrument.



In the garden

Lyre-leaf sage is a no-maintenance wildflower - basically you can just spread a few seeds and they do the rest.

Lyre-leaf sages:

- reseed themselves every year
- grow in full sun to shade
- easily grow in sandy areas
- provide nectar sources for local butterflies and other pollinating insects

...and best of all they require no watering or fertilizing!

This plant does tend to spread, so planting in a contained garden or in an informal wildflower garden may be preferred. Lyre-leafed sages typically only grow up to around 18 inches tall, making them an excellent groundcover plant to grow around the base of other larger plants.

The lower petals called "wings" (right), act as a landing platform for insects. As they land on the flower, insects are dowsed with pollen. Image copyright of the Smithsonian NHM — <http://botany.si.edu>



Spring Events At-a-Glance*

March

6th	Nature Stories for children (infants through pre-K)	9:15am
6th	Oyster Mat Making	12 noon-1 p.m.
7th	Archeology Day	10 a.m.-3 p.m.
14th	Scottsmoor Property Clean-up Day	9:00 a.m.-12 noon
15th	Forest Funday: Flowers & Seeds	2 p.m.
19th	Friends of The Enchanted Forest meeting	6:00 p.m.-8 p.m.
21st	Photography Club (new members welcome!)	9 a.m.
28th	Bird Watching hike	8:30 a.m.-10 a.m.
28th	Scottsmoor Property Clean-up Day	9:00 a.m.-12 noon
-Garden workdays - every Tuesday & Saturday in March!		9 a.m.-11 a.m.

April

3rd	Nature Stories for children (infants through pre-K)	9:15 a.m.
4th	Earth Day Celebration!	10 a.m.-4 p.m.
11th	Florida Concert on the Porch	11 a.m.-2:30 p.m.
16th	Friends of The Enchanted Forest meeting	6:30 p.m.-8 p.m.
18th	Photography Club	9 a.m.
18th	'Trash Bash' at the EFS	9 a.m.-12 noon
19th	Forest Funday: Earth Day For Kids	2 p.m.-4 p.m.

May

1st	Nature Stories for children	9:15am
1st	Oyster Mat-making program	12 noon
16th	Photography Club	9 a.m.
17th	Forest Funday for children	2 p.m.
21st	Friend of the Enchanted Forest meeting	6:30 p.m.-8 p.m.

*All events are at the Enchanted Forest Sanctuary (EFS) and are free unless otherwise noted. For more information about joining a club, volunteering, or to RSVP for a hike or class, call the Management & Education Center at (321) 264-5185. Guided Hikes are offered every Saturday at 10 a.m..

North-Region EEL properties currently open to the public*:

Enchanted Forest Sanctuary

444 Columbia Blvd.
Titusville, FL 32780

Open: Tuesday - Sunday, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.
(Trails close at 4:45 p.m.)

Features: 4+ miles of hiking trails including an ADA accessible trail, indoor exhibits, award-winning butterfly gardens, picnic area, screened porch, restrooms, and water fountains.

Activities: Hiking, nature watching.

Dicerandra Scrub Sanctuary (Titusville)

(Trailhead at 4900 Melissa Rd.)

Open daily from dawn to dusk

No facilities

Activities: Hiking, nature watching.

North Buck Lake Scrub Sanctuary (Mims)

(Trailheads at: 4077 Cinnamon Teal Dr.,
4150 Hidden Lakes Dr., and 4111 Hog Valley Rd.)

Open daily from dawn to dusk

No facilities

Activities: Hiking, biking, and horseback riding, and nature watching.

*For All EEL Properties:

- Service animals only; smoking prohibited

Visit eelbrevard.com
for more information
about these and other
EEL Sanctuaries



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Contact Us!

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www.eelbrevard.com