As I drive around Florida it no longer surprises me to see plants that are actively controlled in natural areas being planted in new developments. These are hearty plants that can withstand heat, wind, periodic drought and inundations. However, there are also many native plants that exhibit these same characteristics. Palm Beach County, where I live, uses a list of preferred plants to guide landscaping in new developments. Unfortunately, there are a handful of Category I and II species on that list. Some of them (such as Queen palm) don’t seem to be terribly invasive in most Florida natural areas. Others like bottlebrush are certainly problematic. The County Zoning Board recently held a meeting to discuss the Preferred Plant List and also to vote on changing the current landscaping standard that requires 60% of new plantings to be native to only 50%.

The Dahoon Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society attended the meeting to encourage them to remove six plants from their Preferred Plant List and to vote to maintain the 60% native standard. The FLEPPC BOD wrote a letter in support of this initiative, which was presented to the members of the committee. While the committee voted to maintain the 60% standard, they decided not to remove any plants from the list as this time. While the result was disappointing, I feel that the conversation was worthwhile and I’m certain that we will take up this matter again in the future, hopefully with different results.

The point of this story is that acting on a local level is important and can sometimes be more fruitful than actions directed at higher levels, especially these days. We all have the ability to initiate these conversations with our local governing agencies. I don’t typically make New Year’s resolutions, but I did make one this year – to connect with my local representatives and speak out when I feel strongly about something. I would also like to see FLEPPC do more to support its members around the state. This could be done in any number of ways; from writing letters of support to attending events. Please contact me if we can support a local effort in your community. I’m looking forward to a productive new year.

Many thanks,
Christen Mason
Note from the Secretary:
This Newsletter contains news from our members and highlights from our October 30, 2017 and January 30, 2018 BOD meeting. Our next meeting will be held on Tuesday, April 3, 2018 at 4:00 p.m.

Annual Meetings & Upcoming Events

Florida CISMA 4th Wednesday
Monthly Call
1:30 PM
floridainvasives.org/cismas.cfm

April 4-6, 2018
FLEPPC Annual Symposium
Crowne Plaza - Oceanfront, Melbourne, FL
fleppc.org

May 17-20, 2018
FNPS 38th Annual Conference
fnps.org

October 15-18, 2017
FAPMS Annual Conference
Daytona Beach, FL
fapms.org

Research and Educational Grants

Julia Morton Invasive Plant Research Grant Program

FLEPPC and FISP CISMA Grant

Kathy Craddock Burks Education Grant Program
2018 Board of Director Candidate Elects

Andrew Lawrence, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

Andrew Lawrence, is a Biologist for the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission’s Invasive Plant Management section. He received a bachelor’s degree from the University of Central Florida in Environmental studies. After graduation he has worked in the private sector specializing in ecosystem restoration and volunteered with Seminole County Natural Lands and Back to Nature Wildlife refuge. Andy is currently focused on upland invasive plant management.

Sarah Martin, The Nature Conservancy

Growing up in Arizona and southern New Jersey, Sarah developed a conservation ethic and love for nature early. As a child she spent much of her time hiking, camping and exploring the vast desert landscapes of the Southwest and the coastal wilderness areas of the great Mid-Atlantic. Sarah completed undergraduate studies in Washington State at Seattle University, where she received her Bachelor's degree in Environmental Studies and French and completed independent studies abroad in Belize and France. After graduation, Sarah completed an internship and further graduate studies in Landscape Architecture and Regional Planning, working with the natural areas of the University of Pennsylvania’s Morris Arboretum. Sarah came to Florida in 2008 to work with The Nature Conservancy as a restoration technician on the South Florida landscape. She then worked as a resource management intern with AmeriCorps for the Florida State Parks in South Florida. Sarah spent five years working in Miami, Florida as a biologist and coordinator for The Institute For Regional Conservation’s Pine Rockland Initiative program. She returned to The Nature Conservancy in 2014, where she now works as the South Florida Land Conservation Coordinator for the Florida Chapter’s South Florida Program.

Melissa Smith, USDA, Agricultural Research Service, Invasive Plant Research Lab

Melissa Smith is a research ecologist with the Invasive Plant Research Laboratory at the USDA-ARS facility in Fort Lauderdale. Dr. Smith is a graduate of Willamette University in Salem, Oregon (Biology) and Washington State University in Pullman, Washington (Botany), where she completed her dissertation looking at ways to predict plant invasions through physiological responses. Melissa started her work with Florida ecosystems in the immediate aftermath of Hurricane Wilma when she was an education and interpretation ranger in Everglades National Park. Returning to Florida to build a career looking for long term solutions to large-scale plant invasions is the culmination of many years of hard work and fortunate circumstances. Melissa joined the Invasive Plant Research Laboratory as a post-doctoral researcher in 2012 and she currently explores ways to integrate biological control into invasive plant management strategies with particular focus on *Melaleuca quinquenervia*, *Rhodomyrtus tomentosa* and *Acacia auriculiformis*. Melissa is a forming member of the Biology Graduate Student Association at Washington State University and served as a graduate senator for four years.

Deb Stone, St. Johns River Water Management District

Deb Stone graduated from USF with a B.S. in Biology in 2004, then began working as the Rare Plant Intern at Bok Tower Gardens, where her passion for all things botanical began to blossom. She then moved to Hillsborough County’s Environmental Lands program in 2006, working on invasive plant control, monitoring and prescribed fire. Deb started as the Restoration Steward for The Nature Conservancy at The Disney Wilderness Preserve in 2008, where she focused on invasive species prioritization, GIS technologies, working with local Cooperative Invasive Species Management Areas, ground cover restoration and vegetation monitoring. In 2014, Deb moved to St. John’s River Water Management District as the Invasive Plant Program Supervisor, where she continues her focus on invasive species prioritization, restoration and GIS technologies. She recently finished her M.S. in Forest Resources and Conservation at the University of Florida and is pursuing her Ph.D. in the same program. Go Gators!
UPDATE: FLEPPC PLANT LIST COMMITTEE MEETING
Tony Pernas, Botanist | National Park Service, Big Cypress National Preserve | tony_pernas@nps.gov

The Plant List Committee (PLC) met on December 8, 2017 at Austin Carey Experimental Forest in Gainesville, FL. Presentations by Chuck Bargeron, Associate Director of the Invasive Species and Information Technology at the Center for Invasive Species & Ecosystem Health (Bugwood) at the University of Georgia, and Deah Lieurance, Coordinator of the IFAS Assessment at the University of Florida UF, largely encompassed the procedures and methodologies regarding the efforts to standardize listing criteria and how to incorporate specific websites and assessment tools with the proposed FLEPPC list format. It was recommended that once the FLEPPC website has been updated, there should be prominent links to the listing criteria sheets and an online submission form should be created. Additionally, the PLC will send all available Category I and Category II criteria sheets to Chuck for inclusion on website.

The PLC elected four (4) new members to the committee:
1) Alan Frank: Florida Plant Atlas, USF, especially focused upon emerging invasive species
2) John Kunzer: previously worked for the FPA at USF, DEP for 8-9 years, FWC-IPMS for 5 years
3) Deah Lieurance: IFAS Assessment for five years, PhD in invasive plant ecology, worked at USDA/APHIS in Davie w/ Paul Pratt, developing Melaleuca bio control
4) Jimmy Lange: Botanist, Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden

A motion was made to add Dexter Sowell, FNAI research biologist (he has accepted the nomination and will be voted in at next PLC meeting).

The next PLC Meeting will be announced once the time and location had been determined. Objectives for the next meeting include:
• Vote to approve Dexter Sowell, FNAI Biologist as a member of the PLC
• Discuss the possibility of combining Kalanchoe x houghtonii and other Kalanchoe spp.
• Tony will work with Keith Bradly and Andy Firk to complete a criteria sheet for Philydrum lanuginosum, which has been observed growing in Hardee County in the Crewsville area on a rural roadside.
• Continue discussion of tabled items: Pistia stratiotes, Heteropogon melanocarpus, Oxycaryum cubense (Cyperus blepharoleptos)
• A review of the Category II species list

FLEPPC EDUCATION GRANT ARTICLE
Douglas Rogers, Environmental Specialist I | Savannas Preserve State Park | doug.t.rogers@dep.state.fl.us

In February of 2016 the Savannas Preserve State Park in Jensen Beach, FL was awarded the 2016 Kathy Craddock Burks education grant. Our goal for the grant funded project was to educate neighbors and park visitors of the Savannas Preserve about the threat of invasive exotic plants in our natural areas, specifically the Savannas. The Savannas Preserve is surrounded by more than 20 miles of urban interface along its borders. The park is linear in nature which contributes to seed source migrating across boundary lines for invading invasive exotic plants. In our interpretive efforts to educate the public we promoted native landscaping and encouraged the removal of invasive exotic plants in home landscapes. We integrated the use of printed materials with a promotional invasive exotic plant work day to kick off the project and unveil the new poster and other printed media. In our effort to educate the public we addressed several FLEPPC listed species including Suriname cherry, melaleuca, Brazilian pepper, old world climbing fern, and natal grass. We aimed to address a suite of diverse invasive exotic plants which possessed easily recognizable traits, had some degree of public awareness associated, and attributed a significant impact on the resource.

The funding from the grant allowed us to create posters and door hangers that target a specific audience and educates them about invasive exotic plants which can be found in their own backyards. Funding specifically purchased ten 24x36 posters, 250 large door hangers, and 250 post cards that were used as invitations to the
invasive exotic work day. The event took place on April 22, 2016 – Earth Day. A week prior to the event, park staff and Florida Conservation Corps (FLCC) members took to neighborhoods surrounding the park to distribute informational door hangers and invitations to the function; all together 150 door hangers were distributed prior to the event. The FLCC members Joshua Kuhn and Brian Tacher played an integral role in creating, promoting, and delivering the information provided on the posters and door hangers and have continued to use the materials following the Earth Day 2016 event. These members serve an 11-month term at individual Florida State Park locations with the primary focus on invasive exotic plant removal and education.

The initial event did not have the turnout we expected. Of the 16 people at the event, 4 were volunteers, 3 of which were new to the park; the remainder were primarily FLCC members and park staff. All 4 volunteers had received or were aware of the materials distributed the week prior. The poster and remaining 100 door hangers have subsequently been used at events such as the National Public Lands Day on September 24, 2016 where 20 participants joined FLCC members and park staff on a guided hike which addressed plant identification and resource management techniques like prescribed fire and invasive exotic plant removal. The materials also made an appearance at the Indian River Lagoon Science Festival which took place on October 22, 2016 where the Savannas Preserve table saw 599 visitors at its display table, most of which had questions regarding invasive exotic plants. These questions were addressed by FLCC member Brian Tacher and Ranger Robert Wiggins. In addition, the poster is on display in the Savannas education center where park staff and volunteers report that it receives great attention. Here it serves as an interpretive icebreaker for invasive exotic plant education for the centers 30-50 average daily visitors.

We attribute much of the attention that the printed material receives to its eye catching visual appeal, with a bright green background, attractive layout and colorful photos of invasive exotics in fruit. It's impossible to walk by without noticing the message. The poster and hang tag both feature the FLEPPC logo on their top right hand corner adjacent to the Florida Park Service logo.

The Savannas Preserve State Park and its staff and volunteers are thankful for the opportunity to participate in FLEPPC’s Kathy Craddock Burks Education Grant program. The grant has provided a practical and useful tool to help further our mission by educating the public about the threat of invasive exotic plant species to our preserve and other natural areas. This goes along with our commitment to maintaining our state preserve lands in perpetuity for future generations by restoring areas infested by invasive exotic plants. This is a commitment which we have spent thousands of staff and volunteer hours striving to achieve, in accompaniment with supportive programs such as the Florida Conservation Corps and the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission’s uplands invasive plant management program. Materials acquired with this grant will see continued use by park staff and future FLCC members to provide outreach and education opportunities to members of the public.
Ohio is taking a swing at nature’s bullies. Under new rules that went into effect Sunday, January 7, 2018, the sale and distribution of 38 destructive, invasive plant species will become illegal. In its list, the state agriculture department included various types of honeysuckles, Bradford pear trees, autumn olive shrubs and fig buttercup flowers that line freeways, coat forest floors and choke wild spaces across Ohio. State officials who already inspect nurseries and garden centers will keep an eye out for the now-prohibited species. Many of the plants were at some point nursery favorites for desirable qualities such as fast growth, low maintenance and big leaves and flowers — traits that also make them capable of aggressively spreading beyond garden beds to parks and preserves. “A lot of these species offer all those qualities people look for when they’re buying a plant; there’s demand for them,” said Alistair Reynolds, a forester for the Ohio Department of Natural Resources. “Up until now, we didn’t have any rules preventing the sale of them. There were no rules keeping them from getting into Ohio.”

This month, the Ohio Department of Agriculture also will assemble a five-person invasive plant advisory committee to review potential future additions to the no-sale list, agricultural administrator Dan Kenny said. Biologists say there’s no time to waste. “Plants evolved over millions of years. But invasives suddenly start spreading,” said Theresa Culley, a University of Cincinnati plant biologist. “Rather than waiting millions of years for an environment to change, it can take a few years.” With speed and aggression, the newly prohibited invasive plants often consume, infect, out-compete and steal precious water or sunlight from Ohio’s 174 endangered or threatened wildlife species.

Phragmites, a common reed grass pervasive in northern Ohio, for example, casts a shadow over native neighbors by towering upward of 12 feet. Garlic mustard can release chemicals in the ground that prevent native plant seeds from germinating. Kudzu — the vine that swallowed the South — has begun to coat buildings, cars and electric power lines in Ohio’s southern regions. “They elbow out and swamp out everything else. It’s not natural,” Culley said. Several of them do more than crowd out native species or alter an area’s water and soil. Ohio State researchers have found bush honeysuckle plants can negatively impact the genetic fitness of Ohio’s state bird, the cardinal. And the Japanese barberry shrub has been linked to increased tick population and incidence of Lyme disease. “We may not see it with the naked eye when we’re walking through the woods, but it’s happening,” Reynolds said. “You see something really pretty, but you don’t see the damage.”

Invasive species can also lessen the property value of natural spaces while surging the expense of never-ending battles to hedge their presence using chemicals and hand weeding. At least half of the 50,000 non-native species introduced to the United States are plants, which wreak more than $34 billion a year in environmental, agricultural, industrial and public health damage, according to the Ohio Invasive Plant Council. “You can eliminate an invasive, but you’re always doing follow-up. A lot of money goes into this,” said Karen Siedel, a conservation project manager for the Nature Conservancy, which oversees 1,500 acres of wild space in central Ohio. “I don’t know that many people addressing invasive species would say there’s sufficient funding. We could use a lot more.”

The agriculture department’s no-sale list is a good first step, said Jim Bissell, botany curator and director of natural areas for the Cleveland Museum of Natural History. “These are among the worst,” Bissell said. “Some of these things are so rampant and widespread, unchecked they would cover every floodplain in Ohio.” The list will limit plant selection available to nurseries and landscape artists, said Andy Doesburg, president of Thornton Landscape based in Maineville, a village in Warren County. But it’s a small setback compared to the benefit of instructing professional landscapers that species do more harm than good. “We’re embracing this. I can’t argue with it, I’ve seen the impact,” Doesburg said. “We want to be good stewards of the environment. We want to do right.”
Land managers are waging costly battles against invasive species across the state, including the exotic emerald ash borer, zebra and quagga mussels, Asian carp, the West Nile virus and the bat-killing white-nose syndrome. “We seem to get new mosquitoes, new insects, new plants and animals every growing season,” Reynolds said. “We’re behind the ball; we’re going to have to work really hard. It’s a growing problem. It’s not going away.”

**Ohio invasive species:**
- *Ailanthus altissima*, tree-of-heaven
- *Alliaria petiolata*, garlic mustard
- *Berberis vulgaris*, common barberry
- *Butomus umbellatus*, flowering rush
- *Celastrus orbiculatus*, oriental bittersweet
- *Centaurea stoebe* ssp. *Micranthos*, spotted knapweed
- *Dipsacus fullonum*, common teasel
- *Dipsacus laciniatus*, cutleaf teasel
- *Egeria densa*, Brazilian elodea
- *Elaeagnus angustifolia*, Russian olive
- *Elaeagnus umbellata*, autumn olive
- *Epilobium hirsutum*, hairy willow herb
- *Frangula alnus*, glossy buckthorn
- *Heracleum mantegazzianum*, giant hogweed
- *Hesperis matronalis*, dame’s rocket
- *Hydrocharis morsus-ranae*, European frog-bit
- *Lonicera japonica*, Japanese honeysuckle
- *Lonicera maackii*, amur honeysuckle
- *Lonicera morrowii*, morrow’s honeysuckle
- *Lonicera tatarica*, tatarian honeysuckle
- *Lythrum salicaria*, purple loosestrife
- *Lythrum virgatum*, European wand loosestrife
- *Microstegium vimineum*, Japanese stiltgrass
- *Myriophyllum aquaticum*, parrotfeather
- *Myriophyllum spicatum*, Eurasian water-milfoil
- *Nymphoides peltata*, yellow floating heart
- *Phragmites australis*, common reed
- *Potamogeton rispus*, curly-leaved pondweed
- *Pueraria montana* var. *lobata*, kudzu
- *Pyrus calleryana*, callery pear
- *Ranunculus ficaria*, fig buttercup/lesser celandine
- *Rhamnus cathartica*, European buckthorn
- *Rosa multiflora*, multiflora rose
- *Trapa natans*, water chestnut
- *Typha angustifolia*, narrow-leaved cattail
- *Typha x glauca*, hybrid cattail
- *Vincetoxicum nigrum*, black dog-strangling vine, black swallowwort
Minutes from FLEPPC Board of Directors Meeting & Conference Call
Recorded by Aimee Cooper (FLEPPC Secretary) | January 30, 2018, 10:00 a.m.

**ADMINISTRATIVE**

Call to Order/Roll Call: 10:00 a.m.

**ATTENDING** (Officers): Karen Brown (Treasurer), Aimee Cooper (Secretary), Jimmy Lange (2nd-year & Chair-Elect) Christen Mason (Chair); (Board of Directors): Kris Campbell (2nd-year), Brian Lockwood (1st year), Mike Middlebrook (2nd-year), Katherine Murray (1st-year), Erick Revulta (1st year), Craig van der Heiden (1st year), Gregg Walker (2nd-year); (At-large Members): Jim Cuda, Gayle Edwards, Sarah Laroque, Deah Lieurance, Tony Pernas, Sherry Williams. **ABSENT:** Ruark Cleary (Officer), Cody Miller (2nd-year).

**OFFICER REPORTS**

Chair Activities/Correspondence, Christen Mason
Christen was contacted by author, Bonnie Harper-Lore, who is writing a book tentatively titled “The Politics of Plants.” She was looking for information regarding the history of FLEPPC’s Plant List and the opposition from the nursery association. Christen referred her to Dan Thayer, who was the FLEPPC Chair at that time.

The FLEPPC BOD sent a letter to Palm Beach County encouraging them to remove six (6) plants from their recommend list that are present on the FLEPPC list. Unfortunately, the committee decided not to remove them from their list at this time. They will, however, maintain the 60% native standard for new plantings.

Began the website updates with Chuck. The website sub-committee has put together a framework for the layout of the new website. Chuck is going to try to put together a mock-up of the proposed site for the April BOD meeting.

Secretary’s Report, Aimee Cooper
The minutes from our January 30, 2018 were approved by the BOD via email. These minutes will be drafted into our Spring 2018 FLEPPC Newsletter that will be distributed March 6. **Please remember:** any success stories, upcoming projects, ongoing projects, events, news releases, photos, memorials, etc. that you would like to see in the newsletter, forward them to me at coopera@stlucieco.org.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS**

Bylaws, Mike Middlebrook
Mike Middlebrook reviewed the Bylaws and SOPs, etc. Christen worked with Mike on the proposed bylaws amendment to dissolve the Editor position and replace it with a Liaison position.

Control and Evaluation, Greg MacDonald
This will not be necessary for the 2018 Symposium because we are replacing the off-site fieldtrips with the Garden of Evil Experience. Unfortunately, due to an unforeseen scheduling conflict, the Garden of Evil Experience will most likely be canceled, unless the BOD can obtain a qualified expert(s) to stand-in. The BOD is working towards an alternate plan.

Finance, **IMMEDIATE VACANCY**
Gregg Walker has volunteered that he would be interested in filling this vacancy.

Grants
CISMA, Gregg Walker
RFP went out September 25th. Applications were due on February 16, 2018.

Education, Kris Campbell
2017 projects:
- Pine Rockland was unable to merge their project with TAS and Miami Dade County due to set back from Hurricane Irma. Cara Abbott with IRC will be moving forward with their own invasive plant brochure as originally planned.
- UCF’s brochure and display board has been sent to the committee for review.
- The Shores of Long Bayou has finished the portion of the project funded by FLEPPC. Ernie Franke would like to present at FLEPPC this year.
• Carey Minteer (UF BCRCL) brochure has been created and reviewed. Emily Gaskin will be giving a presentation at FLEPPC on this project.

2018 projects: Six (6) projects were submitted for review; four (4) projects were chosen and are as follows:

- Youth Environmental Alliance (Kristen Hess): $1000.00
- Shores of Long Bayou (Ernie Franke): $350.00
- Bethune-Cookman (Dr. Spence): $575.00
- UF (Candice Prince): $950.00

* There is $125.00 left over that will not be used in this year’s budget.

Research, Jim Cuda
Applications were due January 20. The deadline was extended from January 20 to February 3. To date, two (2) applicants have been received. Jim announced his retirement and has recommended that the BOD contact Carey Minteer as new the chair of this committee.

Legislative, Deah Lieurance
Deah is still working on the petitions to add additional plants to the FDACS list. She plans to move forward on petitions independent of FNPS and may consider alternate ways to collaborate with FNPS in the future.

Membership, Gayle Edwards
Our current membership roster shows 153 active members. Gayle regularly sends out reminders to folks who have let their membership lapse.

Merchandise, Jimmy Lange (Christen Mason, Sherry Williams, Aimee Cooper)
In addition to the merchandise we have in stock, we have budgeted $500.00 to purchase coffee mugs with the 2017 Walking Weeds symposium logo theme without the year, as this logo theme was a favorite among the attendees, and cotton bandanas.

Strategic Planning, Sherry Williams
Sherry has scheduled Ed Osbourne (University of Florida) to set up a strategic planning meeting on Tuesday, April 3 from 9 a.m.-4 p.m. We will have our BOD meeting following the planning meeting from 4 p.m.-6 p.m.

Symposium Planning/Program, Karen Brown & Sherry Williams
The 2018 FLEPPC Symposium will be held April 4-6, 2018. There will be an Early Detection Rapid Response FISP/CISMA Session on Wednesday, April 4th. A full agenda of the Symposium will be available soon!

The BOD decided that we would have Keynote Speaker, Dr. Bethany Bradley, University of Massachusetts, Amherst; a short plenary session with three (3) speakers, and finally a panel discussion on the first afternoon of our conference (April 4, 2018). We will be focusing on range expansion of invasive species due to weather factors.

Please remember to bring an item for the Silent Auction!

Website, Chuck Bargerson/Karen Brown (Liaison)
Christen is working with Chuck on the website redesign. It was discovered that FLEPPC no longer owns the fleppc.org domain. This could present a problem soon because University of Georgia wants to implement firewalls and other features that can’t be installed if we don’t have control over the domain.

Liaisons with other organizations

NAIPC Liaison, Sherry Williams
Remember to join the quarterly webinars. Visit the na-ipc.org for details.

Meeting Adjourned & Scheduling of Board Meeting
12:00 p.m.

The next BOD meeting will be held on April 3 from 4 p.m.-6 p.m., following the Strategic Planning meeting. Land managers are waging costly battles against invasive species across the state, including the exotic emerald ash borer, zebra and quagga mussels, Asian carp, the West Nile virus and the bat-killing white-nose syndrome.
2018 FLEPPC Symposium

The Florida Exotic Pest Plant Council invites all natural resource professionals, invasive plant researchers, students, and others interested in this topic to the 2018 FLEPPC Annual Symposium, Winds of Change: Adaptive Management Under Changing Conditions, April 4th–6th at the Crowne Plaza Oceanfront in Melbourne, Florida. Register here! Check out our DRAFT Conference Agenda for all the exciting presentations and events.

Our Members and Partners