



Rhexia mariana ©Darel Hess

# The Rhexia

Paynes Prairie Chapter  
Florida Native Plant Society  
February 2006

## MONTHLY MEETING

February 14, 2006

"Ditch of Dreams"

### **The Cross-Florida Barge Canal and Its Impact On Natural Communities Of The Ocklawaha River**

Steve Noll and Dave Tegeder will discuss the Cross-Florida Barge Canal and its impact on natural communities of the Ocklawaha River.

Steve is a lecturer in history at UF and Dave is a professor of history at SFCC. Together, they are co-writing a history of the Cross-Florida Barge Canal, entitled *Ditch of Dreams: The Cross-Florida Barge Canal and the Fight for Florida's Future* for University Press of Florida.

Joining Steve and Dave will be well-known local naturalist Bob Simons, Trustee, Florida Defenders of the Environment. Bob will talk about the adverse impacts the barge canal project had, and continues to have, on the native plant and animal communities of the Ocklawaha River system.



<http://www.fladefenders.org/publications/RestoringOcklawahaPart3.html>

## MARSH PLANTS

### **MAKE WAY FOR WOOD STORKS**

Late autumn in north Florida offered a long-lasting display of golden marsh marigolds, *Bidens laevis*, buffered by green stands of emergent grasses *Panicum hemitomon* and *Sacciolepis striata* at local ponds and marshes. Now, as winter descends, the marsh plants have withdrawn to provide a subtle background and improved feeding sites for arriving storks and cranes. These wading birds bring spectacle and life to a near dormant arena. The resonating calls of the sandhill cranes, high up on mid-morning thermals, announce their popular nesting-season stay.

Less obvious, and regrettably less common, are the imperiled wood storks, *Mycteria americana*. In 2004, just over 5200 nesting wood stork pairs were observed in Florida. The species remains listed as Federally endangered. Especially alarming is that their biggest threat is simply the loss of places to eat. The birds have accomplished a major feat during very recent times by relocating their nesting grounds northward. This was in direct response to the massive loss of feeding habitat in south Florida, primarily the result of changes in surface water levels. Wood storks rely on shallow water for feeding. They capture small fish by a special method called tacto-location. In water only about 6 to 10 inches deep, they feed by probing, their bills partly open and then snapping shut when touched by a fish. High fish densities, improved by concentrating fish in shallow water, are integral to this technique. Wood storks may feed 40 to 75 miles from their nesting areas. That means ponds and marshes on your property might support nesting populations in Columbia, several east coast or central Florida counties.



<http://www.nps.gov/ever/current/wdstork2.htm>

Support wood stork survival by staying 300 feet back from feeding birds and allowing ponds and wetlands to draw down naturally with the spring dry season. This is a period in the storks' life history that feeding, and thereby nesting success, is crucial. Smaller ponds and wetlands may be the only available feeding sites during recent wet years where larger, natural area habitats remain deeply flooded.

*Contributed by: Colette Jacono*

Citations: Meyer, K.D. and P.C. Frederick. 2004. Survey of Florida's Wood Stork Nesting Colonies, 2004. Final Report to USFWS by Avian Research and Conservation Institute, Gainesville, FL. Ogden, J.C. 1990. Habitat Management Guidelines for the Wood Stork in the Southeast Region. Report to USFWS by Wildlife Research, Everglades National Park.

# RALLY FOR THE RIVERS

February 17-19, 2006

Event Features Smart Growth Workshop, Field Trips, Art Show, and Music Festival

Join us for the second Rally for the Rivers, a festive and fun three-day event to promote restoration of the Ocklawaha and St. Johns Rivers; promote and demonstrate the potential of nature-based tourism; increase environmental awareness; teach the principals of smart growth; and, empower activists.

Come interact with candidates running in the 2006 election and demonstrate the economic value of nature-based tourism in a festive and fun atmosphere.

Sponsored by the Putnam County Environmental Council, most events are free and all are open to the public.

Scheduled events include:

**SMART GROWTH WORKSHOP:** Friday, February 17, 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. A free, all-day growth management workshop at the Riverfront Inn in Palatka. Space is limited; pre-registration is required. Call Margy Bielling at 352-685-2434 for more information (page 4 has additional information).

**RIVERFEST:** Saturday, February 18, 10:00 am – 5:00 pm. Join other restoration and conservation advocates at Palatka's Riverfront Park on the St. Johns River for an arts and crafts show with live music, food, storytelling, conservation seminars, St. Johns River cruises, information tables, and a very special raffle. This will be your chance to speak one-on-one with candidates who are running in 2006 for state and federal offices. Contact Karen Ahlers at [pcecriver-rally@hotmail.com](mailto:pcecriver-rally@hotmail.com) or 352-546-3560.

**FIELD TRIPS:** Saturday and Sunday mornings, February 18-19: Over 50 field trips, mostly free and led by experts will be offered for adventurers of all types. Contact David Zeigler at [davidpzeigler@aol.com](mailto:davidpzeigler@aol.com) or 352-546-4715.

**OCKLAWAHA RIVER WRAP PARTY:** Sunday afternoon, February 19, 1:00 pm. Join event organizers, volunteers, and fellow Rally participants for a relaxing afternoon on the banks of the Ocklawaha on the southwest side of Rodman Dam for boat rides, music, food, and campfire fun. Bring something to contribute to the soup pot or a dish for the table and your own drinks, a blanket or chair for comfort, binoculars, cameras, musical instruments ....whatever it takes to help you wrap up the weekend and wind down.



Last year, the Rally brought 1,500 people from 34 Florida counties, seven states, and six countries. With the help of Audubon and other conservation organizations, PCEC successfully demonstrated that nature-based tourism does pay. PCEC calculated that the two-day event had an overall economic impact of up to \$288,000.

The Florida Wildlife Federation recognized the importance of the 2005 Rally by awarding PCEC Conservation Organization of the Year.

A block of rooms have been reserved at the Riverfront Inn in Palatka. Call 386-328-3481 to make your reservations at the event rate of \$60-\$75, good through February 2, 2006. Be sure to mention the Rally to ensure the conference rate.

Go to the Florida Defenders of the Environment website at [www.fladefenders.org/riverrally.html](http://www.fladefenders.org/riverrally.html) for more information, including lists of camping and dorm-style accommodations, area restaurants, and field trips. Participants are encouraged to sign up for field trips soon. The most popular trips tend to fill up fast. Hope to see you there!

*Submitted by: Karen Ahlers*

Rally Art citation: <http://www.fladefenders.org/FDETemp.html>

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## ARTICLE SUBMISSION AND ON-LINE NEWSLETTER

The editors request that all future articles be e-mailed to: [Rhexia@gmail.com](mailto:Rhexia@gmail.com). We will endeavor to publish the newsletter for you in a timely manner, so you can plan on attending meetings, field trips, and other fun events.

If you would like to receive the Rhexia via your e-mail, please contact Annie with your information at: 377-9056 or e-mail at: [anniebret@bellsouth.net](mailto:anniebret@bellsouth.net).

**Indicate in the subject line: FNPS**

**Deadline date is February 22, 2006 to submit articles for the March newsletter.**

## PAYNES PRAIRIE CHAPTER OF THE FLORIDA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

The *Rhexia* is published monthly September - November and January - May by the Paynes Prairie Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society.

The purpose of the Florida Native Plant Society is the preservation, conservation, and restoration of the native plants and native plant communities of Florida.

See our website at [www.fnps.org](http://www.fnps.org).

# GARDENING FOR BIRDS

## WITH FLORIDA NATIVE PLANTS - WOODY SHRUBS

CONT'D FROM OCTOBER 2005

The fruit and nectar of native woody shrubs comprise a huge part of the diets of local and migratory birds. In fact, I will name so many species here that this article is going to look like a laundry list.

I will start first with one of the most abundant and adaptable plants in Florida, the wax myrtle (*Myrica cerifera*). This plant has separate sexes, so make sure you have a female, because only females produce berries. Wax myrtle also has insecticidal properties, so planting near dog kennels or houses can reduce the flea population. Historically, Florida residents would cut wax myrtle and place it beneath the crawlspace in their houses to repel insects. There are five species of *Viburnum* (*rufidulum*, *dentatum*, *acerfolium*, *nudum*, and *obovatum*) that all produce a large crop of berries and can be worked into most any area of your landscape.

American Beautyberry (*Callicarpa americana*) produces one of the most visually stunning groups of purple berries that are eaten by many species of birds, especially catbirds. I have noticed that they are fed upon more when there is no drought, like this year's dry spell during the heavy fruiting period. My old standard, the wild olive (*Osmanthus americanus*) produces a luscious crop of blue berries coveted by birds, but again, this plant has separate sexes and you must get females for berry production.



<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/HS215>

If I had my druthers, I would make sure that every yard had a native blueberry (*Vaccinium sp.*) in it. I strongly believe that native blueberries were once much more widespread, but human population growth caused them to be eradicated by bulldozers. There are eight species of blueberry native to our area, and surely one of those species will do well in your yard. Two plants that I love grouping together in landscapes are devil's

walking stick (*Aralia spinosa*) and sumac (*Sumac sp.*), because they flower at the same time. The white bunches of flowers turn into berries that are used by many species of birds. Plus, sumac has a wonderful red color in autumn. Both of these plants will rapidly colonize via root runners, so be aware that one plant will be a grouping some day.

The red chokecherry (*Aronia arbutifolia*) is another great colonizing plant that is found in wetter areas. It produces an amazing number of berries that are strongly coveted by many species of birds and other wildlife. The American strawberrybush (*Euonymus americanus*) is a great understory plant that produces a strawberry-like cluster of berries used by birds. If you want to attract deer to your yard, this plant is one of their favorites to munch on.



*Aesculus pavia*  
Photo by Virginia Ducey  
USF Herbarium Slide Collection

<http://www.plantatlas.usf.edu/>

Finally, for you hummingbird enthusiasts, the red buckeye (*Aesculus pavia*) and coral bean (*Erythrina herbacea*) are two plants that produce red tubular flowers that help sustain our local hummingbirds, especially in the earlier months. Red buckeyes are one of my most favorite plants, because they form a slight tree in the shade and a wide bush in full sun. They leaf out and flower early, and are usually done by August. Coral bean is best managed by cutting it back to the ground at the end of every growing season. This tends to promote more flowering and fruiting.

As you can see, there are many species of woody shrubs in our native habitats that birds depend on for a food source. As humanity sprawls across our great state, those birds will depend on us to replant that which has been destroyed. I have listed only a fraction of bird plants that are available to homeowners and business owners alike, so do some of your own exploring and find out what fits in your yard.

Contributed by: Brian Quinn



## MEETINGS, EVENTS, FIELD TRIPS

- January 28 Event  
 The Great Air Potato Roundup  
 Please pre-register at: [www.natureoperations.org](http://www.natureoperations.org).  
 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m./For more information call: 334-2170.
- February 7 Board Meeting  
 Planning the April Native Plant Sale &  
 2007 Annual State Conference
- February 14 Monthly Meeting  
 Florida Defenders of the Environment  
*"The Cross-Florida Barge Canal and Its Impact On Natural  
 Communities of the Ocklawaha River"*
- February 17-19 Field Trip  
 Putnam County Field Trip-Rally for the Ocklawaha Week-  
 end
- February 20 - 26 Workshop  
 The National Association for Interpretation ([NAI](#)) and The  
 Association for Living History, Farm and Agricultural Muse-  
 ums ([ALFHAM](#)) will hold the Southeastern region workshop  
 in Gainesville from February 20 to February 26, 2006. NAI  
 runs Monday to Thursday and ALHFAM runs Thursday to  
 Sunday, so Thursday is an overlap day for both groups.
- March 14 Chapter Meeting  
 Native Planting Advice Workshop
- March 18 Field Trip  
 Native Landscapes Around Gainesville. We have set up a  
 great set of garden tours so you can see what other people  
 around town have done with native landscaping. Great way  
 to get ideas for your yard before the April plant sale.
- April 7 - 8 Native Plant Sale  
 Morningside Nature Center, Gainesville
- April 11 Chapter Meeting  
 Planting Workshop with Erick Smith. Erick Smith, a local  
 urban forester, will present a workshop on proper planting of  
 native trees. Come with lots of questions!
- April 15 Field Trip  
 Orchid Stomp-Goethe State Forest with Paul Martin Brown.  
 Goethe State Forest features an unusual number of terres-  
 trial orchids. This field trip will be a treat. Don't forget to  
 bring your copy of "Wild Orchids of Florida: with References  
 to the Atlantic and Gulf Coastal Plains."
- May 2 Board Meeting
- May 9 Chapter Meeting  
 Fire and Natives
- May 13 Field Trip  
 What a great time of year! We'll see tons of plants in flower.

- May 17 - 21 Event  
 2006 FNPS State Conference  
 Daytona Beach  
 "Growing Partnerships: From Backyards to Backwoods"

**VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR:**

- Great Air Potato Roundup - 1/28
- Spring Kanapaha Garden Festival - 3/25-26
- White Springs Annual Folk Festival - 5/27-29

*Sign up for shifts or days. Get in for Free.*  
 Contact : Charlie Pedersen / [charliepedersen@gmail.com](mailto:charliepedersen@gmail.com)

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**Rally for the Rivers Smart Growth Workshop**  
**Free workshop on February 17, 2006**

Many of our most pressing environmental challenges are due in large part to the way we have built our neighborhoods, communities, and cities -- dispersed, inaccessible, and automobile-oriented; in a word, sprawling.

This and other related issues will be discussed in depth at an all-day workshop on growth management. Speakers include:

Dom Nozzi, senior planner for the City of Gainesville. Dom will present on transportation issues and their relationship to the environment.

Harley Means, Florida Geological Survey Geologist. Harley will guide discussion on water quality and supply related to growth. For example, as we grow, we replace our natural landscape with streets, parking lots, rooftops, and other impervious surfaces.

Prior to development, the stormwater runoff was filtered and captured by natural landscapes. After development, it is trapped above impervious surfaces where it accumulates and runs off into streams, lakes, and estuaries, picking up pollutants along the way.

Lesley Blackner is an environmental attorney and one of the principles in Florida Hometown Democracy, the constitutional amendment drive to amend the Florida Constitution to allow voters to vote on proposed comprehensive plan amendments.

She will speak on charter governments and legal tools citizens can use to hold elected officials accountable. Public involvement and vigilance are critical components to keeping the light at the end of the tunnel burning.

Jono Miller, Co-director Environmental Studies Program, New College, will conduct a discussion on conservation land initiatives, political action committees, and grassroots organizing.

In the past few years, voters have overwhelmingly approved ballot measures to fund land conservation buying initiatives. Protection of open space provides fiscal benefits, including increasing local property value (and property tax bases), additional tourism dollars, and decreased local tax increases (by reducing the cost of new infrastructure).

Protecting open space also ensures that prime farm and ranch lands are available, prevents flood damage, and provides a less expensive and natural supply for clean drinking water.

Joyce Tarnow, Co-Founder of Floridians for Sustainable Growth. With Florida's population increasing by 1,000 every day, no river or wilderness habitat is safe. It is time to pull in the welcome mat and install some serious discouragements to this avalanche of population growth.

There will also be a forum exploring the economics of nature-based tourism. As Florida's population increases and southern and coastal counties become more and more crowded, opportunities for folks to experience the peace and serenity of natural areas also increases.

Nature-based tourism is a natural fit for economic development in rural Florida counties.

PCEC and the Smart Growth Coalition of North Central Florida, co-sponsors of the workshop, encourage you to take advantage of this free opportunity. Space is limited and pre-registration is required. Please call Margy Bielling at 352-685-2434 for more information and to reserve your seat. Additional information is also available at [www.fladefenders.org/riverrally.html](http://www.fladefenders.org/riverrally.html).

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**Next meeting**  
**Tuesday, February 14<sup>th</sup>**  
**7:30 p.m.**  
*(Plant ID Workshop at 6:30)*  
**Doyle Conner Bldg. DPI**  
**1911 SW 34th St.**  
**Gainesville, FL**

**Monthly Meetings**  
Regular monthly meetings are held the 2nd Tuesday  
in September - November and January - May at 7:30 p.m. at the:  
Doyle Conner Building  
Division of Plant Industry  
1911 SW 34 St., Gainesville  
  
Plant ID workshops precede each meeting at 6:30 p.m.

**Florida Native Plant Society Membership Form**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Check pertinent category:

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  Individual \$25

City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_ County: \_\_\_\_\_  Family or Household \$30

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ e-mail: \_\_\_\_\_  Contributing \$40

Business Name: \_\_\_\_\_  Not-for-profit Org. \$50

TOTAL : \_\_\_\_\_ Check enclosed: \_\_\_\_\_ Please charge my credit card: \_\_\_\_\_  Business or Corporate \$100

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Library \$15

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**Please mail completed form to: Florida Native Plant Society, P.O. Box 278, Melbourne, FL 32902-0278**

A copy of the official registration and financial information may be obtained from the Division of Consumer Services by calling toll-free within the state. Registration does not imply endorsement, approval, or recommendations by the state.