

2024 Suncoast Year in Review

January:

Board for 2024: Virginia Overstreet (President), Shirley Denton (Vice President), Niki Marino (Treasurer), Tina Patterson (Secretary), Mike Fite, Linda Steele-Green and Sue Heyer (at -large directors)

Meeting: 2023 Year in Review and Elections on Zoom

Field Trip: Bullfrog Creek Wildlife and Environmental Area

Theresa Blanchard organizes Bonfire t-shirt campaign. Merrilee Wallbrunn coordinates site visits. JoAnn Hoffman retires from Hillsborough County Extension.

February:

Meeting: In-person bromeliad tour and mounting demonstration at Cliff Brown's house

Field Trip: Blackwater Creek

\$288 FANN sponsorship. "The Grapevine" final edition.

March:

Meeting: Mary Miller at Jimmie B Keel Library on "Bluebirds"

Field Trip: Little Manatee River State Park, North Loop

\$500 grant to Bell Creek Preserve to buy native plants for the office entrance. Past Suncoast President, Harriett Wright dies.

April:

Meeting: Brennan Wehrhahn, "Living Shorelines", on Zoom

Field Trip: Brooker Creek Headwaters

\$100 to sponsor the Tampa Audubon Bluebird Trail. \$100 ad for the Tampa Bay Butterfly Foundation native garden tour program. Spring Plant Sale at USF.

May:

Meeting: Converting a Yard to Native Plants, in-person with Janet Bowers.

Field Trip: Cockroach Creek Greenway Preserve

Suncoast member Susan Early joins the FNPS board as Education Chair. \$100 honorariums for Brennan Wehrhahn and Janet Bowers.

June:

Meeting: No general meeting. Interested members met with Sue Bedry of the Tampa Bay Times about a new insert on native plants for Newspapers-in-Education.

Field Trip: Alafia Scrub Preserve

July:

Meeting: Joint meeting and Potluck Dinner with Tampa Audubon and Sierra Club at Tampa Garden Club. Audubon hosts with speaker Dr. Paul Gray, Everglades Science Coordinator for Audubon, on “Everglades Restoration”.

Suncoast FNPS donates plants to give as door prizes.

No field trip

FNPS annual meeting. Mike Fite wins the Green Palmetto award for service.

\$250 sponsorship for the Florida Birding and Nature Festival in October. \$200 to buy native plants to give away at the joint meeting.

August:

Meeting: Past FNPS president Mark Kateli hosts an online trivia game about native plants. T-shirt prizes.

Field Trip: Bell Creek Preserve (changed from Alderman’s Ford due to flooding closures)

Shirley Denton resigns from Suncoast Board and moves to North Carolina.

September:

Meeting: Michael Jenkins, FDACS, speaks on Zoom about rare and endangered plants and their conservation.

Field Trips: Camp Bayou and Vista Gardens

\$100 donation to FNPS to thank Mark Kateli. \$100 honorarium to Michael Jenkins.

October:

Meeting, Field Trip and Myakka River State Park camping trip canceled because of hurricane impacts. USF Fall Plant Festival canceled.

Suncoast tables at the Florida Birding and Nature Festival. Niki Marino will resign as Treasurer at the end of the year. The Board also needs to replace Shirley as Vice President.

November:

Meeting: Online member share program “Favorite Fall Wildflowers”

Field Trips: Lower Green Swamp Preserve and Bullfrog Creek WEA (makeup from October)

Merrilee Wallbrunn and Theresa Blanchard volunteered to serve on the 2025 Board of Directors. Theresa has volunteered as Treasurer and Merrilee as Council of Chapters representative. Elections to be held in January.

December:

Holiday Picnic and Plant Swap at Trout Creek Park, December 14 from 11 – 2.

Elections for 2025 Board: Virginia Overstreet, Tina Patterson, Mike Fite, Linda Steele-Green, Susan Heyer, Merrilee Wallbrunn, Theresa Blanchard were elected unanimously by the members present.