

## February – May 2021



### **The Beautyberry**

Lake Beautyberry Chapter of the  
Florida Native Plant Society  
P.O. Box 88 Umatilla, FL 32784

### **Website:**

**<http://lakebeautyberry.fnpschapters.org>**

### **Chapter Contacts:**

President: John Benton  
Vice Pres: Neta Villalobos-Bell, Programs  
Secretary: Pam Jennelle  
Treasurer: Barbara Loudon  
FNPS Chapter Rep: Patricia Burgos  
Field Trips: Lavon Silvernell  
Newsletter: Nadine Foley

## **Lake Beautyberry Chapter – Spring 2021 Calendar**

### **Clean-A-Spot/LBB Field Trip - Right of Way Alexander Springs Sunday Feb. 21 1:30 to 4:30 p.m.**

Wildflowers and Roadside Litter do not belong together. So, on Sunday, Lake Beautyberry Chapter, FNPS will partner with Keep Lake Beautiful to “Clean Up a Spot”. We will meet at the entrance to The Alexander Springs Recreation Area on CR 445, park beside the road, then walk to the bridge over Alexander Springs Creek. We will stop to admire any wildflowers and pick up any litter we find along the way. We will also remove trash from the launch area next to the bridge. KLB will provide trash grabbers, bags and gloves. To sign up for this activity, email [lakebeautyberry@gmail.com](mailto:lakebeautyberry@gmail.com) as we need to borrow the correct amount of equipment.

If you would like to learn more about Keep Lake Beautiful and its opportunities to make Lake County a more Beautiful place to live, visit: <https://www.lakecountyfl.gov/keep-lake-beautiful/>.

### **Fight the Invaders – Save the Wildflowers Workdays** Thurs. Feb.25 & Sat, March 20 9:00 to noon

Lavon Silvernell has planned these work days and sends this explanation. Last fall I bicycled the new Good Neighbor Trail from the Withlacoochee State Trail to Brooksville. It was glorious with wildflowers, especially the section in the Withlacoochee State Forest. There were lavender Indian paint brush and Blazing Star, pink Agalinas; yellow Honeycombhead, Partridge Pea, Goldenrod, White topped Aster and more... it is hard to ID while pedaling. This abundance may be due to the recent disturbance to build the trail, which allowed light to reach the ground and seeds to sprout.

Unfortunately, the disturbance also introduced, or allowed the seed germination of some individual plants and patches of undesirable plants: Natal grass, hairy indigo and tropical soda apple are the ones I spotted. At this point there are relatively small numbers of these invasive exotic plants. I

have watched this cycle of change many times and I fear I know what will happen next. Now that the bike trail has opened this area of the forest and introduced these more aggressive plants, they will take over the space, out competing the wildflowers.

I have reached out to the Forest Service and Hernando County, and while they see the value of fighting the invaders to preserve the wildflowers, it is just one of many needs on their list and money and staff time are limited. However, both agencies have given the Florida Native Plant Society permission to fight to protect this amazingly diverse display of wildflowers. Check out the work dates of Feb. 25 and March 20, then if you can help remove some of these emerging invasive exotic plants, email [lavonsilvernell@gmail.com](mailto:lavonsilvernell@gmail.com) to let her know your name, contact information and any questions. If you cannot personally help, please share this message with someone who needs something they can dig their fingers into to make the world a little more beautiful and healthy. No specific plant ID skills needed. It is an hour drive from my house. You can Google our meeting point “Croom Motor Bike Parking1” for an idea of how long the trip would be for you. It is a long drive, but we drive for fun so why not to protect a little bit of nature. And there will be spring wildflowers to see along the way.

**Discovery Gardens Workdays** – First Tuesday of the Month at 9:00 a.m.

The next workdays at the chapter’s native plant garden will be on March 2, April 6 and May 4. Lavon Silvernell and Jan Kolb would welcome help if you can join them in their efforts tending the garden and adding new plants as needed. Lavon sent this message: “Since I was a teen, laurel oaks losing their leaves and wild cherries in bloom meant Spring and beach weather coming soon. Now those signs of Spring mean it is time to trim back brown freeze damaged plants and prune for new spring green. It also means it is time to ask for donations of clean\* oak leaves to use as mulch at our Native Garden at Discovery Gardens. Sorry I don’t rake them, but I will pick up bagged leaves and you can know their nutrients are being recycled rather than adding to the landfill. \*Clean oak leaves means no camphor, other non-native trees, or air potatoes are nearby to drop seeds into the leaves. Thank you. Please email me: [lavonsilvernell@gmail.com](mailto:lavonsilvernell@gmail.com) if you have some to donate.”

The native garden is located in the back south-west corner of Discovery Gardens at the Ag Center, 1951 Woodlea Road, south of Tavares off SR 19. To let Lavon know you are willing to help at the garden, call her at 352-223-4761 or just show up to help.

**Program Meeting On Zoom** – Butterfly Identification – March 21, 2021 at 2:00 p.m.

How can we possibly identify those splashes of fast moving color into the bushes and into the sky? And, when they land on a flower to sip of the flower’s sweet nectar, they’re off again.

Help is here. Attend the member meeting Zoom presentation by Dr. Marc Minno who has a PhD in zoology and over 21 years of professional experience as an interdisciplinary scientist and ecologist. He currently serves as the Lead Ecologist and co-founder of Eco-Cognizant, Inc. where he serves as a lead scientist in the conservation of imperiled species of plants and animals and conducts research on the distribution and ecology of invasive species.

Dr. Minno is also keenly interested in conservation biology and has authored/coauthored six books, five book chapters and more than 90 other scientific articles. His butterfly books are detailed with beautiful

photographs. He will share his helpful tips for identification. Instructions for joining in on the Zoom meeting will be sent out before the meeting.

**PEAR Native Plant Sale – “Barb’s Beauties”** Wed. April 7, 2021 9 am – 1 pm at PEAR Park.

Thanks to the generosity of Barb Grigg and her relatives, we were able to rescue a small, but nice selection of native plants from her home property in Sorrento. The PEAR Association will offer these plants to our members, and friends for a donation. Since her husband Tony’s passing, Barb has been residing at Brookdale Lake Tavares, an assisted living facility. Barb is a longtime member of our Lake Beautyberry Chapter, our resident botanist and native plant mentor to many of us.

There will also be some of Barb’s collectible vintage items available for donation. These include, grey enamelware, old glass bottles and other neat items. If anyone wants to donate any extra native plants from their own gardens to the mix, that would be great. Please bring them a half hour or more before the sale. The sale will take place at the nature center building at PEAR Park, 4800 University Ave. Leesburg, FL 34784. For other information contact Peg Urban at 352-530-7479.

**A Visit to the Carr Cabin** – Sunday, April 18, 2021 at 1:30 p.m.

In 2013 the Carr Cabin was just an old falling down hunt camp at the end of a dirt road on the edge of the Ocala National Forest. But it was not just any old cabin. It had been built and used by the Carr family of famous Naturalists and Scientists Archie, Tom and Margaret. The property was donated by Tom Carr to the Ocala National Forest. Volunteers repaired it and the “Friends of Carr Cabin” formed to watch over it; but since the access road travels across private property, visits are limited to “by appointment only”.

Lake Beautyberry is fortunate, “Friends of Carr Cabin”, President Dalton Yancy, has agreed to unlock the gates giving chapter members and friends the opportunity to visit the property. In addition to the romance of visiting a site once used by the Carr family, there are a variety of plant communities to be enjoyed on the Carr property. In 2013 the property had sundews and other wetland plants on the shoreline of Lake Nicatoo, a more upland hammock with a spectacular display of sabal palms whose trunks were covered with mosses, ferns, and lichens from pink to burgundy and green. Moving further upland, the forest had open patches of sugar sand, sand pines scrub plants and evidence of bear. It will be interesting to see what the site is like today. If you would like to visit the Carr Cabin with Lake Beautyberry on Sunday, April 18 at 1:30 p.m., exact meeting point yet to be determined, then sign up by email to [lakebeautyberry@gmail.com](mailto:lakebeautyberry@gmail.com). If you would like to learn a little more about the cabin and the famous family that used this cabin: visit <https://carrfamilycabin.com/legacy/>.

**Plant Terminology 101 Workshop** – Saturday, April 24, 2021, 9:00 a.m. to Noon

The instructors for the workshop will be our own Lavon Silvernell and Neta Villalobos-Bell. The workshop will be held at PEAR Park, 4800 University Ave, Leesburg . The \$10 fee will be collected on the day of the workshop. Registration is required: [lakebeautyberry@gmail.com](mailto:lakebeautyberry@gmail.com). Class size is limited. Masks required. Social distancing implemented.

When encountering a new plant, you want to identify, the challenges can be more than just looking for a matching picture with instant recognition. Most field guides, in addition to pictures, give clues for leaf arrangement and margin edge, flower position and arrangement, stem structure and surface cover and more. The words they use, however, are in horticulture language you may not be familiar with. After attending this 3-hour workshop, with hands-on experience and reference material, you will be better able to successfully identify more plants.

**FNPS 40<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference** – Friday, May 14 – Sunday May 16, 2021.

The FNPS Conference will be held virtually. For all the details for the event and for registration opening in February 2021, visit the state website at [www.fnps.org](http://www.fnps.org).

### **President's Message by John Benton**

We kicked off 2021 with our first virtual chapter meeting on the Zoom platform. It was a fascinating topic of macrophotography by Dr. Steven Long. He shared some of his amazing images of insects and some of his techniques for capturing them, which can certainly be applied to plants. We would like to get a workshop together with Steve later in the year. Zoom is available to us through collaboration with other local FNPS chapters: Cuplet Fern, Passionflower and the Nature Coast Chapter. We can share the cost of a Zoom subscription and keep in touch with our membership as best we can in these times. We are looking for other avenues to cooperate with our local chapters. The annual meeting of FNPS in May will be an online event. There will be a small cost to participate to defray the expense of hosting a larger online meeting. It is a good opportunity to see how FNPS is working on the state level and get a better idea of the important work that is going on in Florida.

On a local level, we plan to have our regular meetings on Zoom until Trout Lake Nature Center can safely host larger gatherings. There will be a full complement of programming and we hope that you will join us on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of alternating months. The next program is in March. We are planning field trips and plant walks in the other months. It is a great way to get outside in a small group and engage with others. I always learn (or relearn) something. We look forward to a large plant sale in October and maybe we can open it to a wider audience this year. I am grateful for the continued support of the membership and for the wonderful efforts of the board in the operation of this chapter.

**Editor's Note:** Please see the FNPS newsletter "Sabal Minor" Jan/Feb 2021 edition, Page 10 for John's fine Chapter Update Report for 2020. The "Sabal Minor" is available on the FNPS state website: [www.fnps.org](http://www.fnps.org).

### **FNPS Chapter Representative Update by Patricia Burgos**

Although COVID has slowed down in-person meetings, the Council of Chapters and FNPS State Board continue to move forward on exciting projects. The State is asking for nominations for candidates as part of the Landscape Awards, the annual conference is being planned as a virtual event scheduled for May 14-16, 2021 at a cost of \$35.00 (students and volunteers are FREE). Members are working on new educational materials, the society has "Lunch and Learn virtual programs every Friday, and a YouTube channel has been created with wonderful videos on demand. The State Board is also encouraging members that express an interest in joining the State Board for open positions such as President-elect,

Secretary and Director-at-Large to contact Juliet Rynear, FNPS Executive Director at [executivedirector@fnps.org](mailto:executivedirector@fnps.org) . Stay healthy, Stay safe! Editor's Note: Re: New educational materials, Patricia has prepared an excellent eight-page brochure entitled "Mow Less...Provide More!" A Homeowner's Guide to Practicing Sustainability in the Landscape. Beautifully illustrated by Gene Packwood, it is packed full of good advice for home landscapes. Initial copies are being handed out and more will be available. The brochure is being shared with all FNPS Chapters through the state office.

### **Lake Beautyberry Chapter Annual Meeting**

Held via Zoom on January 17, 2021

President John Benton convened the Lake Beautyberry Chapter Annual Meeting at 2:15 p.m. and introduced our guest speaker, Dr. Steven Long who gave his presentation "The Beauty of Small Creatures" accompanied by his remarkable photos of colorful insects. After his virtual program and answering questions, he was thanked by those attending the Zoom meeting.

Next John reported that we had a quorum present and he called the Annual Business Meeting to order. Then he asked Treasurer Barbara Loudon for her Financial Review. She reported that the Chapter was approved as a 501c4 organization by the IRS. The Chapter can now operate under the State FNPS umbrella as a 501c3, allowing for tax-deductible donations and other benefits. The chapter must still file taxes as a 501c4, which Barbara stated have already been submitted for this year. Barbara next presented the Treasurer Report showing there is \$4,185.25 in the treasury and \$50 in petty cash. There was a motion and second to accept the Treasurer's Report and the members approved the motion. Barbara was warmly thanked for her diligent work to get our Chapter's IRS approval reinstated and all filings organized going forward. Then, Barbara read a letter stating that the Chapter Financials were audited, per the Bylaws and declared with no discrepancies. The reviewer was Pam Jennelle and Barbara thanked her for her work. Next Barbara presented the 2021 Operating Budget. After discussion of some items, there was a motion and second and the members approved the Budget for 2021.

Following the Financial Report, John called for the Election of Chapter Officers for 2021. He asked Nadine Foley to present the nominated slate of members willing to serve on our Board for 2021:

John Benton for President

Neta Villalobos-Bell for Vice President

Barbara Loudon for Treasurer

Pam Jennelle for Secretary

Patricia Burgos will continue as FNPS Chapter Representative to the Council of Chapters.

Nadine called for any nomination from the members present. There being none, Kathryn Mennella made the motion to accept the slate of nominees. Lavon Silvernell seconded the motion and the chapter members approved the motion. John thanked the members willing to be on the Board and called on all members to help with planning and to become involved with the Chapter in some area they are interested in. Anyone may attend the Board meetings and offer suggestions for programs and trips. The meeting adjourned at 3:45 p.m.



## **Lake Beautyberry Chapter Officers Elected for the 2021 Year**

By Neta Villalobos-Bell

**President: John Benton** is nearing completion of a 35-year career with the Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission as a fish biologist. John has been involved with conservation and local government in Lake County since the late 1980's and has a deep connection with this unique part of Florida. He has been involved with the Lake Beautyberry Chapter for over 5 years, serving as Vice President for two years and President for the 2020 year. John looks forward to steering the chapter through the challenges that the pandemic has presented and returning to more great, in-person meetings.

**Vice President: Neta Villalobos –Bell** moved from Seminole County and Cuplet Fern Chapter last year to Lake County, Mt Dora and subsequently volunteered as Secretary for Lake Beautyberry Chapter.

As Vice President, she plans to increase member interest programs and support the President in the Chapter mission. Neta was a UF/IFAS Master Gardener for 11 years. Currently, she is a Certified Advanced Florida Master Naturalist and Land Steward, Certified Horticulture Professional, and Certified National Association Interpreter.

**Secretary: Pam Jennelle** has been a Lake County resident for 15 years and is recently retired from Advent Health in Orlando where she was a project manager. She is now enjoying really getting to know the natural beauty of her home state and has enjoyed making FNPS programming part of her journey. She says she is “Looking forward to getting to know everyone”.

**Treasurer: Barbara Loudon** is currently Treasurer of the Chapter and she graciously accepted to serve another term. She has worked through many challenges, sorted through the previous financial records, created simplified and organized records, followed through with government entities, such as the IRS, to resolve past unpaid taxes and shepherded the necessary chapter paperwork for non-profit status.

### **Reporting on the Chapter's Committees**

Some of the committee jobs have been assumed by our members as you can see by the planning that has already been under way. Other areas can really use some help. Our Vice President, Neta Villalobos-Bell has arranged some Programs for the first part of 2021. Lavon Silvernell has planned Field Trips and Work Days. Nadine Foley has this newsletter out with a calendar into May. The contact numbers for those folks are on the first page of this newsletter. Gina Skillings tends the Chapter's Face Book Page and her report follows this item on our committees. Gina's email contact is [ginaskillings@gmail.com](mailto:ginaskillings@gmail.com). Lavon and Jan Kolb tend the native garden and always are glad for help there. Peg Urban has faithfully tended Membership for several years and she would like a break, so that committee is in need of help. The Public Outreach is currently covered by Lavon and Nadine, but as more outreach events, festivals, etc. start again, we will need more help from members. These events are really most enjoyable and new people learn about our group and they appreciate the educational materials we hand out to them.

Our President, John Benton, says “Our chapter is in need of assistance with membership, web page maintenance and other social media outreach. If you have some time and inclination for these tasks, we would welcome the assistance. We are glad to train any willing volunteer. Please contact John or Neta.”

So, if you would like to get more involved with our chapter, come to the Board's Planning Meetings and bring your ideas and your energy.

### **Lake Beautyberry Facebook Page**

Reported by Gina Skillings, January 2021

#### **Benefits of an Active Facebook Page:**

- \* Potential new members will see that the chapter is active.
- \* Inspire readers to add native plants to home landscapes.
- \* Educate: Florida native plants and environmental issues.
- \* Inform members of events. (It appears that most members do not follow our Facebook page, so our main source of information for members should be our Newsletter.)

#### **Readership Notes and Implications:**

We have 1,000+ people who "like" Lake Beautyberry's page and an additional 1,100+ who follow our page, which indicates most of our readers are not members. Many do not live in Lake County and some do not live in Florida. Therefore, our main focus should be general inspiration and education for native plants and the environment. We cannot save the environment by educating only locals so let's take advantage of our wider audience.

- \* Only a few followers are regular readers. Is this simply the nature of Facebook (information overload)?
- \* Very few comment. Should we create more posts that encourage discussion? Could this help create more regular readers?
- \* Most "likes" come from pretty photos. Although articles may not be read by many, as long as some are read, it helps to further our objective.

#### **Going Forward:**

- \* I believe that our Facebook page's main objective should be to inspire and educate while also encouraging membership.
- \* Include more posts that encourage membership.
- \* Encourage environmental awareness and practices in our daily lives.

### **Plant Walk at Clearwater Lake**

Clearwater Lake Park in the Ocala National Forest near Paisley provides very nice walking and biking trails. Ten of our members gathered there in November to enjoy the plants and the last of the fall bloom. We divided into two groups, one led by Lavon and one by Patricia. Off we went in different directions and were soon finding Passion Flower vines, American Beautyberry with lots of fruit, Florida Elephant's Foot just past their fall bloom and patches of Goldenrod into their fluffy seeds. We came across many fallen logs sporting a wide variety and size of Turkey Tail types of Fungi in many color combinations.

Bracken Fern, Partridge Pea, Sumac in fruit and St. Andrews Cross showed up as we strolled along. Nearer the lake we found Highbush Blueberry, Deer Berry and Smilax Pumila with reddish orange berries. We enjoyed many butterflies yet in the fall season and observed the diligence of Harvester Ants working down into the clay, surrounded by charcoal bits hauled out as they improved their home.

Charcoal from a prescribed burn possibly? All in all a very pleasant outing made extra nice by a chance to talk with new members and get to know them better.

### **Cracker Christmas at Umatilla**

Instead of an in-town parade in December as usual, Umatilla moved the “Cracker Christmas” festival out to the county’s North Lake Park just outside of town with plenty of space to spread out. People visited the stationary floats and groups parked alongside the park edge and then enjoyed the exhibits and vendors on the open playing fields. Lavon, Nadine and Matt Baxter had set up our tent and outreach tables and we had a busy day talking with people and handing out our native plant educational materials. We had brought a variety of native plant cuttings with some holiday ribbon, pine cones and berries that made up into attractive holiday bouquets and decorations. They did catch people’s attention. The whole event was well managed with a variety of attractions. As the day went on, it concluded with a horsemanship demonstration by a group of young riders held before an enthusiastic audience. There is nothing better than having plenty of space to comfortably handle this holiday festival.

### **“The Beauty of Small Creatures”**

What fun for our Annual Meeting on Zoom in January! The program was presented by Dr. Steven Long showing his extraordinary photos of these colorful small creatures, up close and personal. He finds many subjects for his photography in his home garden and landscape. He gets right down on their level wherever he spots them, then takes his pictures aiming for their eyes. He mentioned the Jumping Spider that jumped onto his lens. As he showed his photos, we were struck by the bright colors and combinations of colors. And the tricky part of finding them such as a moth that looks just like an Oak leaf. Or a Tiger Beetle in greens and more that runs all the time and is very fast. How about the Giant Water Bug – that Bites! John mentioned that Bug feeds on their small fish in their lab tank.

Steven had a story for every photo and described the unique character of all of these remarkable insects amongst us. Look closely to find them such as the Tiny Sweat Bee latched onto the stem of a plant gripped tightly to sleep the night away. Or find the Acrobat Ants which get excretion from Mealy Bugs and actually “farm them” for their food. All in all, we are hopeful of meeting with Dr. Long again. He lives here in Lake County and there is talk of arranging a work shop with him in the future.