



## FLORIDA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

Po Box 278  
Melbourne, FL 32902-0278

Policy and Legislation Committee Report  
FNPS Board of Directors  
September 19, 2019  
Go-To-Meeting  
Eugene Kelly, Chair

Members: Joan Bausch; Susan Carr; Scott Davis; Kara Driscoll; Dave Feagles; Karen Moser; Sue Mullins; Laura Reynolds; Winnie Said

### **Legislative Action**

The Policy Committee, as in previous years, has been apprizing chapters on an individual basis of the dates their legislative delegations will conduct their local annual meeting with constituents. These meetings are scheduled independently for each county, generally during the months of Aug-Nov. We encourage members to participate in order to build relationships with their elected officials and to speak on behalf of FNPS priorities. It is preferable for members who sign up to speak to refrain from identifying themselves as FNPS members and allow one representative to speak on behalf of the chapter. Otherwise, it dilutes the influence that speakers can have on their elected officials.

We have also distributed the completed Policy Advocacy Handbook (see below regarding SE Chapters Initiative) to the chapter leadership to help support our initiative for members to take their legislators on a Florida Forever themed field trip.

### **Southeast Chapters Initiative**

The 2019 Policy Advocacy Handbook, which was the last deliverable required by our contract in support of the SE Chapters Initiative, has been distributed and can be downloaded by anyone thru the FNPS website and Facebook page. Although it is an FNPS-copyrighted product, we are making it available for anyone to download. We consider this a living document that will be updated as necessary and reissued. Anyone who reviews or uses the handbook is asked to provide comments or recommendations to the Policy Committee so they can be incorporated into future updates.

### **M-CORES/ Toll Road Legislative Proposal**

The troubling legislation from the 2019 session proposes the construction of more than 300 miles of new toll roads. It was the subject of an action alert issued by the committee, and Policy Chair Eugene Kelly attended the inaugural meeting of the 3 Task Forces appointed by the

*Preserving, conserving and restoring the native plants and native plant communities of Florida*

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Legislature to prepare a report on the proposal by October 2020. The potential impacts from the proposed roads are so expansive that it will be considered a top priority for Policy Committee action on behalf of FNPS. We will coordinate FNPS representation at future task force meetings to the greatest extent possible. We have been tentatively invited by FDOT to give a presentation to each task force summarizing our concerns, which would focus largely but not exclusively on impacts to native plants and native plant communities.

### **Florida Conservation Group Meeting**

Policy Chair Eugene Kelly and FNPS Executive Director Juliet Rynear attended a meeting organized by the Florida Conservation Group on Wednesday, September 16. The FCG represents ranchers who are supportive of the Florida Forever and Rural and Family Lands land conservation programs. The meeting reflected a shared belief in the importance of land conservation and may lead to future collaboration in support of the restoration of full funding to those programs.

### **Southeastern Native Plant Societies Conclave Proposed for 2020 Conference**

In cooperation with Emily Roberson of the Native Plant Conservation Campaign, the Policy Committee and Conference Committee are attempting to organize a special session for the 2020 conference that would include representatives from the native plant societies of all the Southeastern US (Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Kentucky, Tennessee, Georgia, Alabama [Alabama Wildflower Society], Louisiana and Texas. For lack of a better term at the moment, we are referring to it as a “conclave” that would consist of an entire one-day track at the conference and include representation from the Natural Heritage programs and USFWS plant biologists (Southeastern Partners in Plant Conservation) of the included states. This is an ambitious undertaking that we hope will expand opportunities for working jointly across state lines.