

PEAR PEARLS

Volume 15 Issue 1 www.pearassoc.org Spring 2018



Pictured left to right: Terry Zinn, Board Chairman of the Florida Wildflower Foundation, Wendy Poag

Parks & Trails employee receives award from Florida Wildflower Foundation

At the annual meeting of the Florida Wildflower Foundation (FWF) held last month in Tavares, Wendy Poag, Passive Parks Recreation Coordinator with Lake County's Parks and Trails Division, was presented an Award of Merit by the FWF Board. The award was given in recognition of her work with environmental restoration and native plant promotion.

See Award p.2

Wendy joined Lake County's Parks and Trails Division in February 2007 as a Ranger. Additional responsibilities have been given her, this award recognizes why. Wendy recently completed studies for a Masters in Environmental Restoration. Lake County is fortunate to have Wendy Poag serving us.

Pear Association, Inc is a 501C3 non-profit corporation registered in the state of Florida. Our Board of Directors are:

Gary Salzman, President	323-6138
Gene Bouley, Vice-President	314-9335
Robert Putman, Treasurer	326-2045
George Wolf, Secretary	728-8956
Hal Urban, Director at Large	326-3868

Standing Committees

Budget & Finance	Bob Putman	326-2045
	Gary Salzman	George Wolf
Membership	George Wolf	728-8956
Volunteers	Peg Urban	326-3868

Other Committees

Butterfly & Demonstration Garden	Peg Urban	326-3868
Community Gardens	Gary Salzman	323-6138
Gopher Tortoise	Lynn McGann	326-4146
Heritage Memorial Grove	Gary Salzman	323-6138
Historian	Bob Putman	326-2045
Mowing & Plowing	Hal Urban	326-3868
Science & Nature Center	Gene Bouley	314-9335

Lake Parks & Trails Events Office 253-4950
Parks & Trails contact Wendy Poag 516-7456

Pear Pearls is the twice-yearly newsletter published by Pear Association, Inc. The editor is George Wolf.

Pear Park is a dual facility. The main entrance at SR 27 drops you at the recreational area. The Dog Park, Tennis and Pickle Ball Courts, Baseball field, Perimeter Trail and other attractions are here with a parking area. This we commonly refer to as the Gateway entrance. Explanation coming shortly.

The second entrance to Pear Park is by way of University Avenue. This is a road to the south of the SR 27 entrance. This brings you to the Reserve section of Pear Park, identified as the Wildlife Conservation Area (WCA).

The Reserve area is 263 acres which is land owned by the state of Florida. Lake County entered into a 50-year lease with the state in 2001 to enable establishment of Lake County's first Regional Park. The state has placed restrictions on how the county is to develop and manage this land. Hence the designation Reserve.

In 2003 Lake County purchased the contingent 50 acres on SR 27 from Grady Smith. This was financed with a grant from the Florida Trust for Public Lands and Lake County's Parks and Trails budget. Our recreational facilities were deliberately placed in this 50-acre section, avoiding any conflict with the lease arrangement for the 263-acre parcel.

Pear Association Inc. was instrumental in these negotiations from the get go. We continue to apply advice – and at times criticism, to the county personnel who manage Pear Park. Our interests are in particular with the Reserve section of the park.

You may be thinking at this point, "So, what are the goals of the Pear Association for Pear Park?" They are directly the outgrowth of the organization that cared for this land from 1933 until 2000. *"The mission of the **University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences** is to develop knowledge relevant to agricultural, human and natural resources and to make that knowledge available to sustain and enhance the quality of human life. With more than a dozen research facilities, 67 county Extension offices, and award-winning students and faculty in the UF College of Agricultural and Life Sciences, UF/IFAS works to bring science-based solutions to the state's agricultural and natural resources industries, and all Florida residents. Visit the UF/IFAS web site at ifas.ufl.edu"*

NATIVE PLANT SALE and OPEN HOUSE at PEAR PARK

Saturday, April 14, 8am-12pm

Cash and checks only

Also, Program in Nature Center on the formation of mountains, plains and plateaus by retired science teacher, Gene Bouley.



Directions-4800 University Ave. Leesburg, 34748. From CR 48 & 27, go 1.8 miles south on Hwy 27, to 2nd (south) entrance for Pear Park, at University Ave. Turn right and follow for 1 mile.

Coming Events at Pear Park

April 14 – Nature Center Open House and Florida **Native** Plant Sale

April 21 – Earth Day Planting – Hiking & Refreshments by DAR volunteers

May 13, June 10, July 8, August 12, September 9, October 14 & 17 – Interpretive Hike

July 28, October 6 – Bird and Butterfly Survey

Details at (352) 253-4950

Invasives

Pear Association is engaged in the restoration of 263 acres in the heart of Lake County, Florida to its pristine condition before invasives came on the scene. Today's edition of Pear Pearls hopes to assist you with this long-range endeavor.

What do we mean by 'Invasives'? We are speaking of plants, flowers and fauna, trees and animals too. Of the more than 4,000 plant species found in Florida, 1,300 or more are non-native (those introduced to Florida, purposefully or accidentally, from a natural range outside of Florida. A naturalized exotic is one that is self-sustaining outside of cultivation.)

These non-native species come from other countries or from other regions within the U.S. At least 130 of these exotic plant species are spreading rapidly throughout our natural areas. When they cause environmental or economic harm, they are considered invasive.

In their native ranges, plants do not become a nuisance. However, here in Florida they are free

from natural enemies that exist in their native range (animals that eat them, diseases, etc.). The result is they can outgrow and replace Florida's native plants.

These '**Invasives**' are capable of permanently eliminating Florida native plants, thus diminishing Florida's natural diversity. Animals are often unable to adapt to the invasive diet, and may leave the area or die out. And aquatic invasives can completely fill and/or cover water, damaging habitat and diversity.

Invasive plants cost Floridians millions of taxpayer dollars each year to control them. If not kept in check, invasive plants can replace Florida's native plants (some of which are endangered or threatened), be toxic to wildlife and/or people, increase the severity of wildfires, and alter ecosystems. Because some invasives are aquatic, they can cause problems with irrigation, navigation and flood control. Boating, swimming, hiking and other uses of natural areas can be made difficult, even dangerous by

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Invasives from p.3

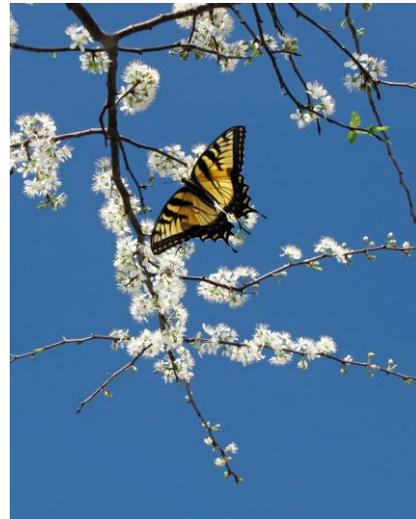
invasive plant infestations.

As the result of much research, we know that some invasive plant species will never be eradicated in Florida; they simply reproduce too fast. We strive to keep them at the lowest possible levels. Regular maintenance of invasive plants reduces overall environmental and economic damage and maintains habitat for native plants and animals.

Pear Park is controlling the spread of non-native

plants with the efforts of Lake County Parks and Trails staff, contractors and volunteers. We encourage you to learn more and become a volunteer to help remove invasive plants in your area. Landscaping of your property is best free of invasives. Be certain to ask when buying from your nursery or garden center. And take time to participate in the guided walks offered at Pear Park (listed in this issue).

I have Flatwoods Plum and I love it...a nice little shade tree in summer. Here is a photo of the gorgeous spring blossoms with a tiger Swallowtail gathering nectar from them. Peg Urban



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