



Saving Our Scrub

A newsletter dedicated to sharing information about the Florida scrub ecosystem



Volume 2, Number 1 February 2001

Florida Scrub Symposium 2001

Dawn Zattau, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

We are rapidly approaching the deadline for submission of abstracts for Florida Scrub Symposium 2001. If you plan to present a paper, I will need to have your abstract no later than **March 31, 2001** (early submissions will be much appreciated!). For details on format, etc., please see "Florida Scrub Symposium 2001, Call For Papers" in the November 2000 issue of *Saving Our Scrub*. The Symposium will not be a success unless you want to share information!

I also need for anyone interested in attending the symposium to fill out the form located on page 6 of this edition of the newsletter and ASAP either fax it to me at 904-232-2404 or send by snail mail care of me at: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; 6620 Southpoint Dr. S., Ste. 310; Jacksonville, FL 32216. I have heard only from a few of you that you are definitely interested in attending. I have a deadline of March 4, 2001, to cancel my contract with the Radisson Plaza Hotel in the event that there is not enough interest in the symposium to make it worthwhile. After that date, we'll pay for the symposium whether we have 5 people listening to one paper or 300 people listening to two days' worth of papers (my preference would definitely be the latter!). On **February 16**, we will make the decision on whether or not to hold the symposium based on the number of folks registered. Feel free to pass information along to anyone who may benefit from attending the meeting, and please, get those forms sent my way today!

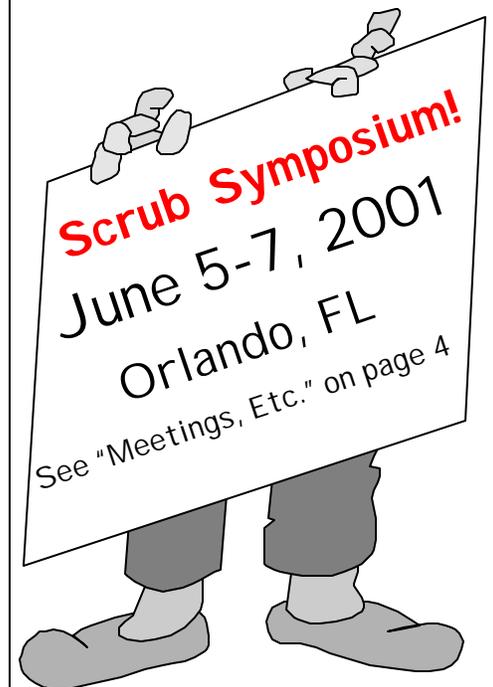
Also, please note that the block of rooms I have reserved at the Radisson will be held no later than **May 14, 2001**. If you have not made your reservation by that date, any unused rooms remaining in the block will be released, and you will not be able to stay in the hotel at the special rate of \$77.00 per night (plus tax). Please contact Radisson's Central Reservations office at 1-800-333-3333 or the Radisson Plaza Reservations desk at 407-425-4455 and make your reservation today. In order to receive the special rate, be sure to tell them you will be attending U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's scrub symposium.

For those of you who need some type of meeting agenda to receive approval from your agency or supervisor to attend the symposium, please be aware that I'm not planning to put a detailed agenda together until I have received the abstracts and the program committee has had the opportunity to group and schedule those papers which have been accepted for presentation. I will post a draft detailed agenda at that time on our web site, at <http://northflorida.fws.gov>. I have put together a preliminary agenda for you to use in order to receive approval (see page 6). If your supervisor needs additional information, please have him or her contact me at 904-232-2580, extension 107, or by email at dawn_zattau@fws.gov.



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Mark your calendars and start thinking about what you would like to contribute to the symposium. This will be the best opportunity we will have to share our knowledge among our peers. The call for papers has come; see November 2000 edition of *Saving Our Scrub* for details.

Introduction To Natural Areas Fire Management Workshop

The Nature Conservancy, Florida Chapter

REGISTER TODAY FOR MARCH 5 - 9 NATURAL AREAS TRAINING ACADEMY'S "INTRODUCTION TO NATURAL AREAS FIRE MANAGEMENT WORKSHOP"

Land managers, conservation managers encouraged to enroll

ORLANDO, FL - The Natural Areas Training Academy, a continuing professional education program sponsored by The Nature Conservancy's Florida Chapter and the University of Florida's Institute of Food and Agricultural Science (IFAS), is accepting registrants for the upcoming *Introduction to Natural Areas Fire Management Workshop*. The class runs from March 5

to 9 at The Nature Conservancy's Disney Wilderness Preserve. Those interested can register by calling Valencia Community College's continuing professional education program at: (407) 299-5000, ext. 6701 or 6700. To inquire about workshop content, call Pete Colverson at: (407) 935-0002. This workshop is part of the Natural Areas Manager Certificate program.

The certificate program is earned after completion of five workshops designed and delivered by a team of experienced public and private natural areas managers. All workshops emphasize current conservation management practices and hands-on learning.

Courses may be taken in any order, individually or as part of the Certificate series. IFAS will confer a Natural Areas Manager

Certificate upon successful completion of the five-workshop series. Those looking to increase their knowledge in a specific area may enroll in any single workshop for continuing credit.

Other upcoming workshop dates:

MARCH 2 Building with Nature in Mind

APRIL 23-28 Vegetation Monitoring in a Management Context

MAY 1-2 Achieving Ecosystem Management Goals through Interagency Teamwork

Peter Colverson, Manager, Natural Areas Training Academy, The Nature Conservancy
pcolverson@tnc.org

New State Grants Programs In Development

Dawn Zattau, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

There is some very good news regarding some new grant programs for States, the money for which has been appropriated by Congress. While the information below is still in **draft** form, I felt the need to share it with you at this time, because when the programs have been fully developed, it will be likely that there will be an extremely short turn-around in submitting proposals for consideration. I will be working with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission's key contact for this program within the Division of Wildlife to see that Florida gets the maximum money available to accomplish some good things not only for scrub habitat, but for other endangered ecosystems, as well. Please start giving some thought as to ways these programs can best contribute to our missions:

STATE GRANTS PROGRAM IN INTERIOR APPROPRIATIONS ACT \$50 million was included in Department of Interior's appropriations bill for 2001. Allocations to the States in this program will be competitively based. To participate, each State must first develop a wildlife conservation plan, and such plans must be approved by the Service. The States have several years before final plans are due, and they may

submit proposals prior to plans being completed. In addition, States must co-share the planning effort and the projects. A committee of Service employees at the national and regional levels is overseeing development of this program, and anticipates (at press time) a 50:50 cost share on projects.

COMMERCE, JUSTICE, STATE APPROPRIATIONS FOR WILDLIFE CONSERVATION AND RESTORATION ACCOUNT \$50 million was included in this bill for States and Territories to supplement (but not replace) existing Federal Aid funds available to them. The purpose of the funds is to "address unmet needs for a diverse array of wildlife and associated habitats, including species not hunted or fished...and species with the greatest conservation need." Funds may be used for new programs and projects as well as enhancements of existing ones. The funds are to be allocated based on a formula of 1/3 land area and 2/3 population, with not less than 1% or more than 5% for any state.

Prior to fund distribution, a State must submit for approval by the Secretary (or request funds to develop) a State Conservation/Restoration program which includes wildlife conservation projects, wildlife-associated recreation projects, and wildlife

conservation education projects. After the Secretary approves the program, there is a 75% federal share of costs.

COOPERATIVE ENDANGERED SPECIES CONSERVATION FUND In 2001, this fund consists of the traditional section 6 grants to states (no increase), the HCP Land Acquisition grants (\$50 million increase, deadline has passed), and the following new grant programs:

- d** HCP Planning Grants (\$7 million)
- d** Species Recovery Land Acquisition Grants (\$11 million)
- d** Safe Harbor Grants (\$5 million)
- d** Candidate Conservation Agreement Grants (\$5 million)

Each of these new grant programs will require the State to provide a 25% cost share, as is the case with traditional section 6 grants.

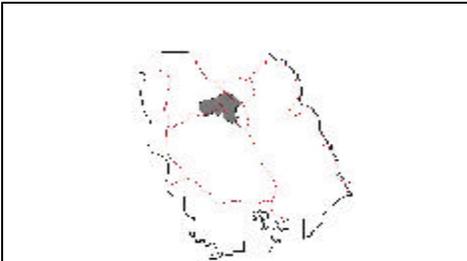


Potts Preserve Timber Harvest To Benefit Scrub-Jays

Southwest Florida Water Management District, Land Management Section

Since 1995, the District has restored approximately 306 acres of overgrown xeric oak scrub using prescribed fire and, in some cases, mechanical reduction (choppers and hydroax), and burned an additional 1113 acres of scrub and scrubby flatwoods. In 1998, the District completed a scrub management plan for the property and has been consulting with the USFWS as implementation proceeds. The Service has provided the District with support to conduct politically unpopular but scrub-jay friendly management, such as the recent timber harvest described below.

Despite good success in reducing the scrub vegetation to heights suitable for utilization by scrub-jays, the slash pine density remained high within a core area occupied by scrub-jays and surrounding



Potts Preserve is located in Citrus County between Lake Tsala Apopka and the Withlacoochee River. The shaded area represents the portion of Potts Preserve which has recently undergone timber management as a tool for scrub restoration.

scrub. In 2000, the District contracted with Sunshine Palms, Unlimited to conduct a timber harvest on 154 acres to improve jay habitat. The harvest extended over a period of one month, from 9

November to 8 December 2000. Fencepost (3-inch dbh) and chip-n saw (9-11 inches dbh) size timber was removed from both unoccupied and occupied scrub habitat. The loggers were careful to minimize disturbance in the occupied

area, and very little damage was incurred to scrub oaks needed for feeding and nesting. This was vitally important since much of the surrounding scrub had been hydroaxed and/or burned within the last 5 years, and utilization by scrub-jays in these areas is only now starting to be observed.

Logging decks were placed in recently reduced scrub with the intent of burning the piles at a later date in order to create bare patches in the landscape. Snags and pine trees were retained at low densities. In some low areas, pine saplings are still present and will be thinned either by hydroaxing or by burning. A burn will be conducted in localized areas in winter 2001-2002 in order to kill an anticipated high rate of recruitment of pines. The occupied scrub, which is heavily overgrown, will be hydroaxed and burned after scrub-jays have expanded their territories into the restored scrub and vegetation monitoring demonstrates that habitat is suitable for long-term needs of jays (vegetation height, bare patches, acorn production, nest trees, etc.

For further information, contact Mary Barnwell at 352-796-7211 or email her at Mary.Barnwell@swfwmd.state.fl.us



Pre-treatment of overgrown scrub with a hydroax



Scrubby flatwoods as they appeared post-burn and pre-timber harvest



Occupied scrub is shown in the background. The scrub in the foreground was hydroaxed and burned in 1999. Following hydroaxing, bahia grass expanded and is filling in bare patches. Herbicide or low intensity, patchy fire may be utilized to maintain open patches.

Suggestions are welcomed!

(Continued on page 5)

Meetings, Etc.

BUILDING WITH NATURE IN MIND

March 2, 2001, The Nature Conservancy's Disney Wilderness Preserve. For registration information, contact Valencia Community College's continuing professional education program (904) 299-5000, ext. 6701 or 6700. To inquire about workshop content, contact Pete Colverson (407) 935-0002.

INTRODUCTION TO NATURAL AREAS

FIRE MANAGEMENT WORKSHOP March 5-9, 2001, The Nature Conservancy's Disney Wilderness Preserve. For registration information, contact Valencia Community College's continuing professional education program (904) 299-5000, ext. 6701 or 6700. To inquire about workshop content, contact Pete Colverson (407) 935-0002.

FLORIDA CHAPTER OF THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY March 27-29, 2001, Gainesville, FL. Contact Carrie Sekerak (352) 669-3153, csekerak@fs.fed.us.

ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEASTERN BIOLOGISTS April 4-7, 2001, New Orleans, LA. See www1.appstate.edu/dept/biology/asb/index.htm.

VEGETATION MONITORING IN A

MANAGEMENT CONTEXT April 23-28, 2001, Archbold Biological Station. For registration information, contact Valencia Community College's continuing professional education program (904) 299-5000, ext. 6701 or 6700. To inquire about workshop content, contact Pete Colverson (407) 935-0002.

ACHIEVING ECOSYSTEM MANAGEMENT GOALS THROUGH INTERAGENCY TEAMWORK May 1-2, 2001, Camp Kulaqua, Gainesville. For registration information, contact Valencia Community College's continuing professional education program (904) 299-5000, ext. 6701 or 6700. To inquire about workshop content, contact Pete Colverson (407) 935-0002.

FLORIDA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY May 10-13, 2001, Tarpon Springs, FL. See www.fnps.org.

COMMUNITIES WORKING FOR WETLANDS May 16-18, 2001, Orlando, FL. For information see the web site at www.iwla.org/sos/awm or call 1-800-965-5004.

2001 SCRUB SYMPOSIUM June 5-7, 2001, Orlando, FL, Radisson Plaza Hotel. Contact Dawn Zattau (904) 232-2580, ext. 107; dawn_zattau@fws.gov.

2001 LAND TRUST CONFERENCE June 8-10, 2001, Naples, FL, Naples Beach Hotel & Golf Club. Hosted by Conservancy of SW Florida. Contact Mimi Wolok (941) 403-4225; mimiw@conservancy.org

SOCIETY FOR CONSERVATION BIOLOGY July 30-August 4, 2001, Hilo, HI. "Ecological Lessons From Islands." See www.hear.org/scb2001.

ECOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF AMERICA August 5-9, 2001, Madison, WI. "Keeping All the Parts: Sustaining and Restoring Complex Ecosystems." See esa.sdsc.edu/annual.htm.

MISC. TRAINING in a wide variety of topics, including (but not limited to) conservation biology, permitting, and partnership building is available at U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's National Conservation Training Center, based in Sheperdstown, WV. For additional information see their web site at www.nctc.fws.gov.



Grant Opportunities

In the last edition of the newsletter (November 2000), Paula Halupa was listed as one of the contacts for Challenge Cost Share Grants. That contact information has been changed to Kathy O'Reilly-Doyle (3860 Tollgate Blvd., Suite 300, Naples, FL 34114, (941) 353-8442, Kathy_O'Reilly-Doyle@fws.gov. **Please make this change on your copy of the newsletter, since grant opportunities already printed will not be repeated in subsequent editions. As additional opportunities are found, they will be listed in this column.**

In addition to the grant programs outlined in the first two editions of Saving Our Scrub and the State Grants programs outlined on page 2, I have discovered the following. If any of you have others you would like to share, please send the appropriate information to me, and they will be posted them in the next edition.

WILDLIFE FOREVER This organization conserves America's wildlife heritage through preservation of habitat, conservation education, and management of fish and wildlife. Grants from Wildlife Forever are targeted for research, management, acquisition, and education purposes. Special emphasis is placed upon grassroots programs. Grants are offered on a "challenge" basis, to spur new initiatives, leverage available funding, and encourage a spirit of cooperation among a variety of funding sources and recipients. Grants are reviewed on a bi-annual basis; to be considered for funding, a completed application must be in their office by January 1 for the first round of review or July 1 for the second round. You can apply online at www.wildlifeforever.org.

EEL Fire Management Plan Completed

Jon White, The Nature Conservancy, Disney Wilderness Preserve (jwhite@tnc.org)

In April of 2000, the Environmentally Endangered Lands (EEL) Program of Brevard County contracted the Florida chapter of The Nature Conservancy to produce a Fire Management Manual for the EEL Program. On December 21, 2000, the final draft of the manual was completed and provided to the EEL Program Manager.

This manual serves as a guiding document for current and future EEL land managers in developing site-specific fire management plans. These site plans will include the information necessary to conduct safe and productive prescribed burns within acceptable weather and existing, as well as future, fuel and fire behavior parameters. The fire manual is intended to be dynamic, evolving as changes occur within the EEL fire management program.

There are currently 21 EEL Sanctuaries and four Parks and Recreation properties within Brevard County that EEL manages with fire. Fire management is a complex business that, on these 25 sites, involves both prescribed burning and wildfire control. Within this manual, a

(Continued on page 7)

Potts Preserve Timber Harvest To Benefit Scrub-Jays

(Continued from page 2)



Logging decks were sited in scrub which had been previously disturbed (cleared and converted to pasture) by prior landowners, and then mechanically reduced and burned by the District.



Other areas contained primarily young saplings and pulpwood-sized timber not wanted by the contractor. Some of these trees will be reduced by burning or by localized treatment with hydroax, and others may be retained in order to function as fire fuels in the future.



Pines and snags were maintained in some areas at low densities.

Saving Our Scrub is published regularly to provide a forum for sharing information about the imperiled Florida scrub ecosystem. The newsletter is distributed free to anyone interested in obtaining a copy. Comments, suggestions, and article submissions should be directed to the editor. The editor and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service assume no responsibility for information contained herein, or for injury or damage resulting from use of such information. Information herein will be used at the reader's own discretion and risk. Views and opinions expressed herein are those of the author or source of material and do not necessarily reflect the opinions, views, or endorsements of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

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Deadline for next issue:
April 14, 2001

Website:
<http://northflorida.fws.gov>

Scrub Symposium Registration Form

Name: _____

Affiliation: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Fax: _____

Email: _____

For those planning to present a paper, please include this form along with the other information required for abstract submission.

Name of Presenting Author: _____

Title of Presentation: _____

Key Words: _____

Equipment Needed: _____ Slide Projector
 _____ Overhead Projector
 _____ Multimedia Projector
 _____ Other (specify) _____

Poster:

In the event the program committee finds my paper to be better suited for poster format:

_____ I am _____ I am NOT

interested in presenting my work.

_____ I REQUIRE an acceptance letter sent to someone else other than the presenting author. If you choose this option, we will need to know who to send the letter to and for which author. Please provide complete details of name and complete mailing address, including fax number:

IMPORTANT NOTE: There is no charge to register for and attend this workshop. You will be responsible only for costs associated with travel, meals, and lodging.

Scrub Symposium

Preliminary Agenda

JUNE 5, 2001

7:00 A.M. Registration
8:00 A.M. Welcome
8:15 A.M. Presented papers (on topics such as scrub management and research on scrub plants, scrub vertebrates)
12:00 P.M. Lunch
1:30 P.M. Presented papers
5:00 P.M. Adjourn

JUNE 6, 2001

8:00 A.M. Presented papers
12:00 P.M. Lunch
1:30 P.M. Presented papers
5:00 P.M. Adjourn

JUNE 7, 2001

8:00 A.M. Scrub Management Workshop - chaired by The Nature Conservancy
12:00 P.M. Adjourn

NOTE: Following receipt of abstracts, this agenda will be expanded to include information on paper titles, authors, etc. The final agenda will be posted on the internet as soon as it is available.



While some of you have graciously stepped forward to offer your assistance with the upcoming symposium, I am still in need of volunteers. If you are interested in chairing a session of papers, participating on the program committee, helping with registration, etc., please contact the editor. I can't do it alone!

Brevard County And The State Step Up Scrub Protection

Anne Birch, Brevard County Environmentally Endangered Lands Program (abirch@brevardparks.com)

As in most other regions of the state, Brevard County's population of the Florida scrub-jay (*Aphelocoma coerulescens*) and other scrub dependent species are rapidly declining, primarily due to fragmentation of habitat and poor quality of remaining habitat. David Breininger and fellow researchers from Dynamac Corporation, a contractor at Kennedy Space Center, have been studying the populations of Florida scrub-jays on Brevard's public lands for nearly ten years. Their current research has revealed the importance of the south Brevard/North Indian River County region to the fourth largest population of scrub-jays in the state (Breininger *et al.* 2000). The research has also exposed the alarming trend in decline of these scrub-jay populations by more than 50% over the past seven years.

Brevard County's Environmentally Endangered Lands (EEL) Program has always looked to the best available science to guide its decision-making about land acquisition and management. This was the case just recently when the EEL Program's Selection & Management Committee (SMC) proposed amending the state's Brevard Coastal Scrub Ecosystem (BCSE) CARL project to increase the boundary by 9,500+ acres. The amendment was prompted not only by a reassessment of available lands but because of the relentless decline in scrub-jay populations revealed by Breininger's research. In December, the state's Acquisition & Restoration Council approved the county's request! Once

acquired, the additions will form a contiguous protected area network of intermingling scrub, scrubby flatwoods and various wetland habitats. The project's south boundary backs up to the 21,000+ acre St. Sebastian River State Buffer Preserve. Together, they represent one of the last areas in Brevard County where there is still a chance to preserve a large, connected landscape.

As with any project of this scale or, for that matter, any land acquisition or management project, partnerships are key to its success. Over the past eight years, Brevard County has been working with the CARL program to preserve the biological diversity of Brevard County. The BCSE CARL project was conceived by the EELSMC and accepted by the state in 1992. It originally identified 25,000+ acres of scrub, scrubby flatwoods and wetlands and other associated habitats throughout the county, primarily along the Atlantic Coastal Ridge and Ten-Mile Ridge areas. To date, more than 12,000 acres within the BCSE CARL project boundary have been protected through acquisition of lands by the county's EEL Program, the State, the St. Johns River Water Management District and through private donations.

Just identifying land for protection is not enough. Acquisition has to happen, and quickly. To this end the county recently augmented the EEL Program's contract with The Nature Conservancy to fund an additional staff person dedicated solely to acquiring the 10,000+ acres composed of 1.3- to 2.4-acre

lots of subdivided lands within this CARL project. The staff person is hired by The Nature Conservancy, paid for by the County, and uses 100% state funds for the acquisition. If the lands identified within the CARL project are quickly acquired and managed, the south Brevard/north Indian River County scrub-jay population could recover and move from a "sink" to a "source" population. *Onward with acquisition!*

REFERENCE

Breininger, D.R., D. Oddy, M. Legare, B. Toland, G. Carter and J. Elseroad. 2000. Biological Criteria for the Recovery of Florida Scrub-Jay Populations on Public Lands in Brevard County and Indian River County. Report to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

As with any project of such magnitude, its success is due to the efforts of many people. Special thanks go to the Board of County Commissioners for supporting this project over the years, the EEL Program's Selection & Management Committee for their superb scientific guidance, the EEL staff for their comic relief and ability to get management out of the office and on the ground, The Nature Conservancy for their most excellent acquisition et al. services, and the State for their willingness to commit more and more of their resources. All deserve thanks for their part in making this happen.

EEL Fire Management Plan Completed

(Continued from page 4)

protocol for wildfire response is established along with the training, equipment, and communications needed to carry out that protocol. A prescribed fire planning process is provided in outline form to allow EEL land managers to develop both site and unit level plans. Information such as obtaining authorizations for burning, notifying the public before a burn, and burning under state regulations is also provided. Fire management would be very difficult to perform without the help from partnerships. A contact list of the EEL Program's partners, the services they provide, as well as a monitoring and annual review protocol are included. For all 25 sites, GIS maps, including DOQQ's, DRG's, FLUCFCS vegetation, and smoke management, were produced by the Brevard County Natural Resources Management Office and are provided.

The most extensive section of this manual describes how fire affects the flora and fauna of Brevard County. It is organized by plant communities in a descriptive fashion and elucidates the vegetative structure, the fire behavior, and the restoration required, if any, within that community in order to best manage the community for biodiversity. A digital image of each community is provided along with its description. Fire can behave differently between different areas within the same community due to the amount of vegetation build-up from the last fire. Some communities are therefore organized into several 'stages', each describing the appropriate fire behavior and effects. Thorough descriptions on habitat requirements and fire effects for all of the Endangered species, both plant and animal, found on EEL Sanctuaries are also provided.

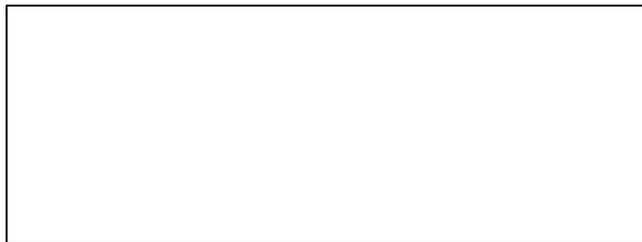
It is hoped that this manual will provide guidance to the Brevard County EEL fire management program for many years to come. Only with a clear and complete fire plan can fire management be implemented in a safe and effective manner. If you would like to receive a copy of this plan, please contact Zach Prusak, with Brevard County EEL, at 321-633-2046.

Photo by Mary Barnwell, Southwest Florida WMD



Scrub occupied by Florida scrub-jays, Potts Preserve

The editor is seeking unique scrub pictures to place in each newsletter at this location. Your photo could be anything scrub-related (e.g. general habitat shots, shots of flora or fauna, management activity, etc.). Please submit any photos and captions via email to dawn_zattau@fws.gov or mail a print, negative, or slide to Dawn Zattau, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 6620 Southpoint Dr. S., Ste. 310, Jacksonville, FL 32216. I promise to return the original to you as soon as I have scanned the image!



Address Correction Requested

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