



“Otto the Otter”
Mike Kaplan

**MYAKKA RIVER STATE PARK
OCTOBER 2018
EDITION 1, VOLUME 2**



WONDROUS WILDFLOWERS

It is wildflower season at Myakka River State Park! As water levels recede, the Dry Prairie becomes the perfect blooming ground for many of Florida’s native wildflower species.



The Narrowleaf Sunflower is an unforgettable perennial bloom in North and Central Florida. They naturally grow in large clusters, and they are a spectacular sight in Myakka’s backcountry. Each plant can reach 4’-5’ tall and can have dozens of flowers. Each individual flower is about 2 to 3 inches in diameter. Narrowleaf Sunflowers flourish in ample sunlight and very wet conditions. Additionally, their roots are adept at growing in the soft, sandy soils of the Florida Dry Prairie.





PC: Will Stuart

In contrast to Myakka’s sea of yellow are Shortleaf Blazing Stars, stalks seemingly dipped small purple flowers. Each stalk can be 3’-6’ tall and the top 20” will sprout clusters of small, lavender flowers. For most of the year, the *liatris tenuiflora* stay as little green plants with sprouts that look like a small clump of elongated pine needles.

On the right is a picture of the Pine Lily, also known as Catesby’s Lily. They are typically reddish-orange in color with distinguishable spots on their petals. The flowers are about 3 to 4 inches in diameter and each flower blooms for about one week. At MRSP, they begin blooming in September and continue into October.



PC: Bob Porter

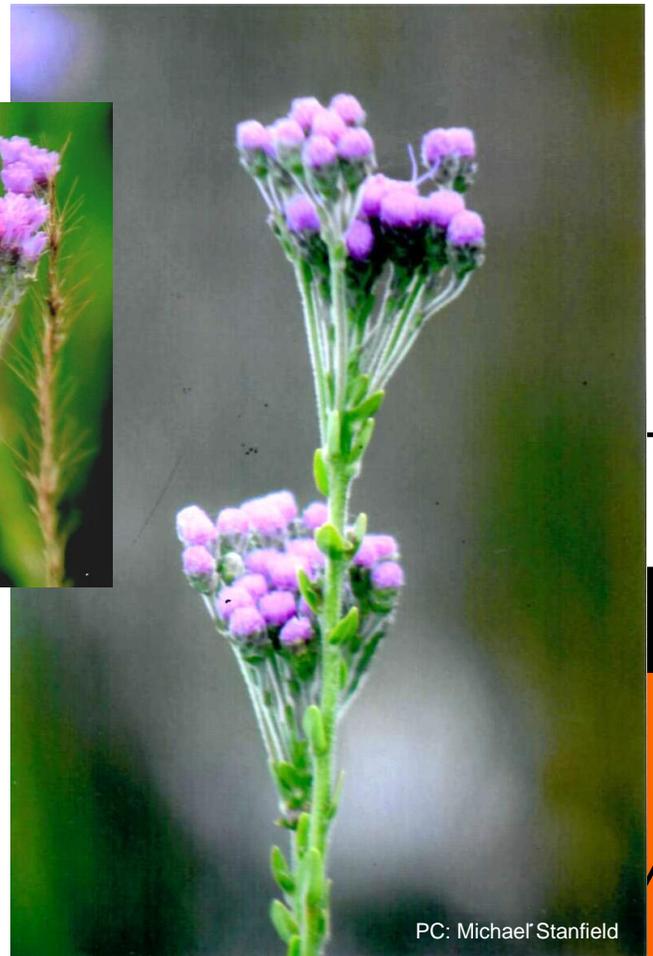
Pine lilies require very specific conditions to bloom- including lots of light, space, and soil nutrients. They are a fire-dependent species, meaning they can only bloom in areas cleared of overgrowth with frequent fires. Because of these restrictive demands, it is considered a threatened species. The US Endangered Species Act defines threatened as "any species which is likely to become an endangered species within the foreseeable future."



Mark Catesby
(1683-1749)

Shown below, the Florida Paintbrush is another fan of Myakka’s sandy soils. It is also commonly known as the Coastal Plain Chaffhead. They grow about 3’ tall and have clusters of fuzzy, purple flowers. Florida Paintbrushes are a favorite perch for butterflies, as they provide an alluring nectar.

Namesake of “Catesby’s Lily,” Mark Catesby was a British naturalist. He is historically famous for his sketches and prints, as well as for collecting specimens and cataloging species in the British colonies. He traveled back and forth from America to England multiple times, selling his sketches and his book, *The Natural History of Carolina, Florida, and the Bahamas*. He was inspirational to a new generation of famous naturalists, including William Bartram and John James Audubon.



PC: Michael Stanfield

Myakka in October is an incredible blooming ground for many native Floridian wildflower species. In this transitional time, when the wet season is ending and the dry season is about to begin, vegetation is abundant. Come see the vibrant and breathtaking fields!

(Don't) Tip-Toe Thru' the Tulips!

All wildlife at Myakka River State Park is protected, but species still face challenges. Being deprived of fire, the introduction of invasive species, and direct human action can all threaten species of wildflowers.

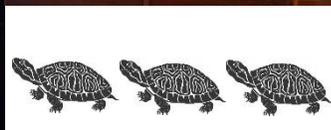
Fire deprivation at Myakka River State Park began with the Civilian Conservation Corps in the late 1930's. While well-intentioned to protect wildlife, the Florida Dry Prairie is reliant on regular fires to prosper in its biodiversity. Naturally, a wildfire would occur in this ecosystem every 3 to 4 years. Decades of fire deprivation have now allowed a dangerous level of overgrowth to occur. This overgrowth chokes out native wildflowers, which require clear, open space with access to sunlight. Myakka's resource management team combats the damages of fire deprivation by carefully prescribing zoned fires that clear unhealthy overgrowth. However, it will take decades of these carefully managed fires to return to the natural, robust ecosystem.

Invasive species also present challenges to the proliferation of native wildlife. Plants such as caesar weed and cogon grass grow in the same areas of the wildflowers, stealing space, soil nutrients, water, and sunlight. Parasitic insects come into the park by hiding in firewood, on vehicles, or present in other contaminated materials. They feast on the native plants and seeds until the plants can no longer maintain their population.

Humans can also pose a direct threat wildflower species. Picking the flowers starves the species' ability to reproduce. Careless activity can also lead to trampled, damaged, and dead flowers. As you enjoy the beauty of Myakka's wildflowers this month, please be careful of where you are stepping, biking, and driving. Additionally, do not pick any flowers. If you would like a floral souvenir, please take pictures instead! If we all help to protect them, these beautiful flowers will bring joy and awe for generations and generations to come.

The Friends' Gift Shop

Come visit the Friends' Gift Shop! The Friends of Myakka River sell T-shirts, postcards, the book *Myakka* by Paula Benschhoff, plant lists, birding hotspots, water bottles, and more! 100% of the proceeds benefit the preservation and protection of the Wild and Scenic Myakka River and Park, ensuring quality environmental resources for generations to come. The Friends' support resource management programs by purchasing equipment, materials, and providing volunteer hours. They fight invasive species and assist with prescribed burns in addition to maintaining park structures and providing educational programs for visitors.



"May 27, 1941

Sunday we encountered specimens of the rarely appearing yellow lady's slipper. This orchis is fragiley beautiful. One tends to think of it almost as a phenomenon, without any roots or place in the natural world. And yet it, too, has had its tough old ancestors which have eluded fires and drought and freezes to pass on in this lovely form the boon of existence. If a plant so delicately lovely can at the same time be so toughly persistent and resistant to all natural enemies, can we doubt that hopes for a better and more rational world may not also withstand all assaults, be bequeathed from generation to generation, and come ultimately to flower?

President Roosevelt says he has not lost faith in democracy; nor have I lost faith in the transcendent potentialities of LIFE itself. One has but to look about him to become almost wildly imbued with something of the massive, surging vitality of the earth."

— Harvey Broome, Out Under the Sky of the Great Smokies: A Personal Journal

PC: Mike Kaplan

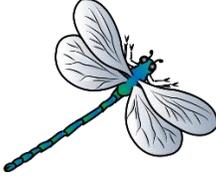
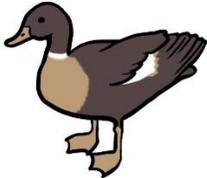
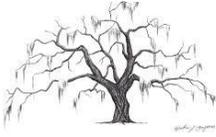
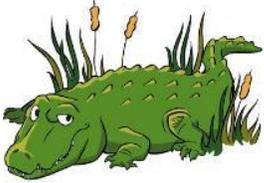
Inspired by Wildflowers

Artist Challenge

Wildflowers have inspired generations of artists. What better metaphor for the journey of life than the life cycle of a wildflower? Beautiful independently and breathtaking in a field, wildflowers have been the fixation of countless artists, musicians, poets, photographers, and novelists throughout the course of human history. Myakka River State Park would like to celebrate our flowers by inviting artists to create original works of art based on our October blooms. How do our wildflowers inspire you? Share your creation with us and receive a free day pass into MRSP!

KIDS' CHALLENGE

It's time for Myakka River State Park BINGO! Treat this grid like a scavenger hunt. When you see what is in the box, you can mark it. Try for 5 in a row, column, diagonally, four corners, or the whole thing!! Have fun exploring wildlife!

 <p>Pine Tree</p>	 <p>Tree Frog</p>	 <p>Dragonfly</p>	 <p>Cabbage Palm</p>	 <p>Deer</p>
 <p>Resurrection Fern</p>	 <p>Limpkin</p>	 <p>Moss</p>	 <p>Heron or Egret</p>	 <p>Turtle or Tortoise</p>
 <p>Gecko or Lizard</p>	 <p>Squirrel</p>	 <p>FREE SPACE</p>	 <p>Sandhill Crane</p>	 <p>Butterfly</p>
 <p>Rabbit</p>	 <p>Animal Tracks (Draw what you see!)</p>	 <p>Saw Palmetto</p>	 <p>Duck</p>	 <p>Wildflower</p>
 <p>Oak Tree</p>	 <p>Apple Snail</p>	 <p>Spanish Moss</p>	 <p>Minnow or Tadpole</p>	 <p>Alligator</p>

2018 Old Miakka Fall Hootenanny & Schoolhouse Benefit

Sunday, October 7th, 2018
Old Miakka Schoolhouse
15800 Wilson Road



It's time for a toe-tappin', knee-slappin', hootenanny of a good time!

This annual benefit includes tours of the school house, children's games, a silent auction, wheel of cake, paintings and prints by local artists, flower pots, crafts, local honey, educational booths, voter registration, homemade soaps, ceramic windchimes, handmade pottery, jewelry, live music, and more! Myakka River State Park will have one of the educational booths about our biodiversity, exotic plants, and park history. Hot dogs, drinks, desserts, and Boscotimins Country Cookin' chicken & pork meals will be available. Admission and parking is free. Proceeds will benefit preservation of the 1914 Old Miakka Schoolhouse

Can you spot our birds and butterflies?

If you love birds and/or butterflies, check out Wings Over Florida! This free program encourages people of all ages to learn about Florida's birds and butterflies. MRSP has bird lists and butterfly lists with applications for your certificate levels! Ask for one at the ranger station as you enter the park.

For more information, visit
www.floridabirdingtrail.com/wof
or email
Savanna.Christy@myFWC.com

Wings Over Florida is made possible by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, the Great Florida Birding & Wildlife Trail, and the Florida Museum of Natural History.

Wings Over Florida

A free bird and butterfly listing recognition program of the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission rewarding participants for their Florida life list achievements



Earn a new, unique certificate for each listing milestone you achieve