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LOUISIANA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

Inside this Issue:

LNPS Election Results	*1*
Highlights from the Annual LNPS Conference	*2-8*
New Board Members	*9*
2024 LNPS Grant Recipients	*10*
Flowering Trees and Shrubs, March 2025	*11-12*
Lights Out Louisiana	*13*
Report on Ongoing Activities	*14-15*
iNaturalist and the City Nature Challenge	*16-20*
Homegrown National Park	*21*
2025 Karlene DeFatta Award	*22*
LNPS Notices	*23*

- To preserve and study native plants and their habitats
- To educate people on the value of native plants and the need to preserve and protect rare and endangered species
- To promote the propagation and use of native plants in the landscape
- To educate people on the relationship between our native flora and wildlife

LNPS Election Results

The LNPS business meeting was held February 15, 2025 at The Acadian Baptist Center (ABC), Eunice, LA. The annual elections resulted in the following Officers and Directors for years 2025-2026.

The Officers for 2025-2026 :

President: Lawrence Rozas

Vice– President: John Michael Kelly

Immediate Past President: Tammany Baumgarten

Secretary: Susan Norris-Davis

Treasurer: Jackie Duncan

Directors at Large:

Janie Braud

Colette Dean

Caitlin Robbins

Annette Word

Newsletter Editors:

Jackie Duncan, Janie Braud and Wendy Rihner

Highlights from the Annual LNPS Conference

February 14—16, 2025 Eunice, Louisiana

On February 14th, more than 150 native plant enthusiasts chose to spend their Valentines weekend at the LNPS Annual Conference as a demonstration for their love of native plants. Informative speakers, meeting other plant fans from throughout the state, and field trips provided something for everybody. After many years at the Wesley Center, this year, LNPS ventured out to a new location, Acadiana Baptist Center, which contributed new opportunities as well as challenges (from registration to finding our way around a larger campus). In addition, LNPS hosted the largest number of attendees ever! LNPS welcomed newcomers as well as members that have never missed a conference in its history. I was heartened to see the increased interest from the "younger" generation as well as the seniors, those new to natives, and those dedicated to making changes in their home landscape.

Lawrence Rozas welcomes the attendees Friday night.

Dr. Tammy Greer

Dr. Tammy Greer (Southern Mississippi University) opened the Friday speaker series with her presentation, "The Importance of Our Plants in Cultural Revitalization". Her membership of the United Houma Nation was evident as she shared stories of spiritual and medicinal uses of native plants. On Saturday afternoon, Dr. Greer engaged participants in a hands-on workshop to create works of art using natural plant dyes on fabric.

Participants creating art on fabric with natural dyes.

Highlights from the Annual LNPS Conference

February 14—16, 2025 *cont.*

Emily Miller

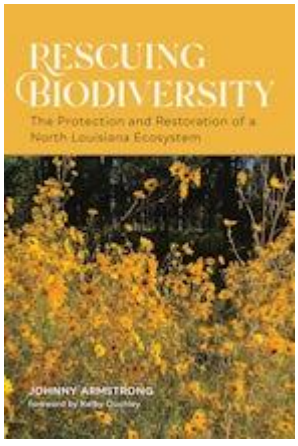
Emily Miller is a graduate student at University of New Orleans, and she talked about native plantings in our coastal zones. She emphasized the importance of all components of an ecosystem working together drawing on a quote from Aldo Leopold – "don't throw things away if you don't understand it". She welcomes members to visit the areas they have worked to replant around Coastal and Estuarine Research Federation (CERF) areas. .

Eric Fuselier from Arkansas shared with us the multitude of values that native plants have on the environment that have the potential to improve the quality of air, water, and soil. These include the breakdown of heavy metals, petroleum products, pesticides, and carbon sequestration.

Lattimore Smith, author and ecologist, shared with us his experience in restoring shortleaf and longleaf pine ecosystems. We learned about the diversity of the herbaceous groundcovers of these areas and the challenges for their restoration.

Johnny Armstrong, retired physician and author of *Rescuing Biodiversity*, provided us with his experiences in restoring his ranch in the Ruston area. Not only did we learn about interesting plants but the diverse wildlife as well. Who knew that bees go up backwards in the flower of the butterfly pea!

Eric Fuselier



Lattimore Smith and Johnny Armstrong set up with tech support.

Highlights from the Annual LNPS Conference

February 14—16, 2025 *cont.*

Nature Walk at ABC with Jennifer Blanchard

Jennifer Blanchard, Instructor of Horticulture and Medicinal Plants at LSU, led us on a guided nature walk at ABC in which she provided interesting information on the plants, their historical and medicinal uses. Her research at LSU focuses on the extraction of plant compounds for industry.

Highlights from the Annual LNPS Conference

February 14—16, 2025 *cont.*

Natural Dyes with Dr. Tammy Greer at ABC

Highlights from the Annual LNPS Conference

February 14—16, 2025 *cont.*

Plant Auction, Vendors, and Exhibitors

Highlights from the Annual LNPS Conference

February 14—16, 2025 *cont.*

Prescribed Burn Demonstration
Acadian Baptist Center

A new event at the LNPS Conference was to provide a prescribed burn demonstration. James Newsom, Director of Acadian Baptist Center, gave attendees a brief history of the prairies at ABC. Steve Nevitt, owner of Louisiana Native Seed, described the planning and preparation necessary to safely and successfully conduct a prescribed burn — a necessity to maintain prairies and other fire-adapted habitats. Important considerations include weather conditions (e.g. humidity, wind speed and direction), soil moisture, and vegetation characteristics. Structures and habitat on the adjacent properties must also be taken into account.

Although conditions were not ideal, with light and variable winds, wet soils and vegetation—Steve and his crew were able to demonstrate a prescribed burn on a section of the ABC prairie. Participants learned a great deal about doing a prescribed burn safely and where to get more information and receive training to become licensed to do prescribed burns themselves.

Steve Nevitt

Field Trip
Arboretum at Chico State Park

Highlights from the Annual LNPS Conference

February 14—16, 2025 *cont.*

Palmetto State Park Field Trip

Videos of the LNPS 2025 Conference Presentations may be viewed on our YouTube Channel:

https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL866QRF3aEzqNirqrXrFkTafYsLQ8xrSS

New Board Members

Collette Dean

Colette Dean lives in Baton Rouge and currently serves as board president of the Friends of LSU Hilltop Arboretum. She is past president of the Louisiana Master Naturalists of Greater Baton Rouge and serves on the program committee for the Baton Rouge Audubon Society. In 2016, she helped start the Therapeutic Horticulture program for the East Baton Rouge Parish Master Gardeners at OLOL Children's Hospital where she continues to volunteer. She has been a freelance writer for *The Advocate* newspaper for over 25 years, most recently writing about nature in Louisiana.

Colette and her husband, Dr. John (Andy) Dean, have three grown children (with spouses) and three grandchildren - who at ages 1.5, 3 and 7 love birds, butterflies, frogs, snakes, flowers and trees.

Colette and grandson, Thompson, holding the LNPS Certified Habitat sign.

Annette Word is one of LNPS' newest Directors. She was born in Houston, but raised in Pineville and lived there until the mid-70s, when she moved to Houston. There she worked in a variety of professional offices, until she worked in a law firm, as a legal assistant for 30+ years. She moved to McAllen, Texas in 2000. While in McAllen, she became an avid hobbyist nature photographer, and there learned about the beauty of native plants. She learned about birds, insects, and plants native to the Rio Grande Valley, as well as migratory birds and butterflies. In 2015, she retired, and moved back to Pineville. She is excited about learning more about plants native to Louisiana, especially Central Louisiana, and looking forward to seeing more people plant natives.

2024 LNPS Grant Recipients

A special thanks goes out to the 2024 LNPS Grant Committee for devoting time to grantee application evaluations and to ZOOM call participation. The 2024 LNPS Grant Committee consisted of: Bayli Brossette (chair), Tammany Baumgarten, Christina Calcaterra, Kimberlee Burt, Jackie Duncan, John Michael Kelley, Linda Auld, and Patrick O'Connor. A total of $5,723 was awarded to the following projects.

2024 Grant Awardees

Project Name	Applicant	Description	Awarded
CARTER RAYMOND JUNIOR HIGH Lecompte, LA	Julius LaCaze	The eighth grade students will develop a native garden through the process of individually researching a native plant, talk to local nurseries, visit the State Arboretum, and choose plants that have played a significant role historically and/or ecologically. They will plant and maintain the native plants and develop plaques with both common and scientific names along with their historical and ecological importance.	**$600**
BRIARWOOD GREENHOUSE Saline, LA	Bayli Brossette	Equiping a greenhouse facility to help cultivate, preserve, and promote native plants at the Caroline Dormon Nature Preserve	**$1,000**
WILD ONES PONCHARTRAIN BASIN PLANT RESCUES Florida Parishes	Patty Zebrick	Rescue plants that would otherwise be lost to development or thrown away to be replanted at public sites such as Pelican Park and Big Branch Marsh National Wildlife Refuge. Some plants would also be used for rehoming at businesses or private residences.	**$1,000**
THE SYMBIOTIC SCHOOLYARD Acadiana Region	Louise Prejean	This project facilitates the purchase and implementation of a curriculum designed to guide middle school students to work as restoration ecologists, The Symbiotic Schoolyard. As a culmination activity, the students will determine a restoration site, select plants, and install a native plant garden.	**$500**
RIVIERE RAIN GARDEN Marie Riviere Elementary School Metairie, LA	Leigh Cappel	In order to address flooding issues, a bioretention basin of about 120 square feet will be installed at the fence line of Carrollton Avenue at the lowest elevation of our Pre-K playground. At least 24 native plants to hold and absorb water from rain events will be planted.	**$500**
FOREST FLORA AND BIOTA OF A.E. LABLANC NATURAL AREA Sunshine, LA	John Michael Kelley Laura Comeaux	Intended to provide baseline data on biodiversity and structure of Bald Cypress forest prior to nearby bridge construction.	**$1,000**
LOUISIANA NATIVE PLANT SIGNAGE IN THE CHILDREN'S GARDEN AT LSU AGCENTER AND BOTANIC GARDENS (previously known as Burden Gardens)	Janie Braud Wild Ones, Baton Rouge	Fund custom, botanical quality signs made to designate native plants within the Children's Garden.	**$623**
MARIGNY ELEMENTERY SCHOOL LEARNING GARDEN Mandeville, LA	Sue McGuire	Add native trees to the existing Learning Garden.	**$500**

Flowering Trees and Shrubs

March 2025, Rapides Parish

Silverbell (*Halesia diptera*)

Black Willow (*Salix nigra*)

Mayhaw (*Crataegus opaca*)

Wild Azalea (*Rhododendron canescens*)

Sweet Shrub (*Calycanthus floridus*)
Bloom not fully opened.

Loblolly Pine (*Pinus taeda*)

Flowering Trees and Shrubs *cont.*

March 2025, Rapides Parish

Redbud (*Cercis canadensis*)

Mexican Plum (*Prunus mexicana*)

Summer Huckleberry (*Vaccinium elliottii*)

Cherry laurel (*Prunus caroliniana*)

Pawpaw (*Asimina triloba*)

Small Leaf Arrowwood
(*Viburnum obovatum*)

Lights Out Louisiana

April 1 through May 31 from 11 pm until 6 am

LNPS is joining the Louisiana Wildlife Federation (LWF) in calling on residents and businesses throughout the state to join others in turning off bright or excess lighting from 11 p.m. until 6 a.m. each day during the peak spring (April 1 - May 31) and fall (August 15 - October 31) migrations to help protect the billions of migratory birds that fly through Louisiana at night during this period.

Louisiana sits within the Mississippi Flyway migratory path, with the state's vast wetlands, forests, and coastline serving as critical stops along the birds' migration routes. Twice a year, 325 bird species travel the Mississippi Flyway, including 40% of shorebirds. During the 2023 fall migration, an estimated 500 million birds migrated through the state of Louisiana. The majority of those birds migrate at night and typically start their nightly migration about 30 to 45 minutes post-sunset, with peak flights between 10 and 11 p.m.

Lights Out Initiative should follow these guidelines:

- Turn off non-essential lights nightly from 11:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m. during the migration period.
- Avoid using landscape lighting on trees or gardens where birds may be resting.
- For essential security and safety lighting, use these dark skies-friendly lighting adjustments:
- Aim lights downwards.
- Use light shields to direct light downwards and prevent an upward glare.
- Use motion detectors and sensors so lights turn on when needed.
- Close blinds at night to limit the amount of light seen through windows.

For building owners/managers:

- Adjust custodial schedules to be completed by 11:00 p.m.
- Ensure lights are turned off after custodial cleaning.

Additional Guidelines for Buildings Over 3 Stories

Dim or turn off:

- Exterior/decorative lighting.
- Lobby/atrium lights.
- Perimeter room lights on all levels.
- Floodlights.
- Lighting on interior plants/fountains.
- Lights on vacant floors.
- Lights with blue-rich white light emissions (over 3000 K in color temperature.)

Instead use:

- Desk lamps or task lights instead of overhead lights.
- "Warm-white" or filtered LEDs outdoors (less than 3000 K in color temperature.)

Individuals can monitor the bird migration in their area by using BirdCast, a migration dashboard provided by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. Find the live migration for your area by entering the Parish at this link.

REPORT ON ONGOING ACTIVITIES

1. The "Managing Roadside Mowing and Herbicide for Wildlife Habitat Benefits" Resolution was revised and resubmitted by the Louisiana Native Plant Society (LNPS) to the Louisiana Wildlife Federation (LWF) at the March 15 2025 LWF 86th Annual Meeting in Woodworth, LA. It PASSED. As you may recall, this resolution was tabled at the August 16-17 LWF 85th Annual Convention in Lafayette. After many discussions with various folks and an in person meeting with the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (LDOTD), a more general resolution was submitted. This Resolution is available for viewing on the LWF website. LNPS representatives at the LWF 86th Annual Meeting were Tammany Baumgarten (Delegate), Emily Miller, and Jacalyn Duncan.

Emily Miller and Tammany Baumgarten at LWF

2. Dona Weifenbach is heading up a team to design and implement a Louisiana Native Certification Program (LNPCP) by which local landscape professionals are trained to understand the ecology of, identification of, design with, and propagate and maintain native plant landscapes. This program would create a listing/directory of those successfully completing the instruction and their level of certification, easing the process for homeowners, municipalities and government entities of finding qualified and knowledgeable professionals in this field. The logo has been designed, and planning meetings are ongoing. Funding in the amount of $8,500 has been received from LNLFSR and BTNEP. Teams have been identified to work on assigned tasks including the writing and editing of the training manual. Venues are being scheduled. Budgets are being developed. Active committee members are: Dona Weifenbach, Tammany Baumgarten, Lawrence Rozas, Bill Fontenot, Malcolm Vidrine, Caitlin Robbins, Phyllis Griffard, Rebecca Moss, Ethan Eichler, Natalie Waters, and Katie Kogler.

Tammany Baumgarten and Dona Weifenbach

REPORT ON ONGOING ACTIVITIES

cont.

3. The D'Arbonne Master Gardeners hosted a Native Plant Workshop in Farmerville on March 8, 2025 featuring Bayli Brossette, Tammany Baumbarten, and Austin Klais. Bayli, curator of the Briarwood Nature Preserve, shared her insights on "Caroline Dormon and Louisiana Native Plants", shedding light on the incredible legacy of this pioneering conservationist. Tammany, owner and operator of BaumGardens Landscaping, highlighted the many benefits of incorporating native plants into our landscapes. From promoting biodiversity and aiding in erosion control to enhancing water conservation and reducing maintenance, native plants offer a sustainable and beautiful approach to gardening. Austin, owner and operator of Grown By Grace Native Plants, delved into the details of seed stratification and planting techniques, sharing practical insights for propagating native plants successfully. The Louisiana Native Plant Society helped sponsor this event.

iNaturalist and the City Nature Challenge

By Janie Braud

Daryl Bernard—Pitkin

Sille —Lafayette

Mary Maggorie—Franklinton

Makaoto—Marrero

Janie Braud—Baton Rouge

Lauren—New Orleans

The TOP TEN PLANTS Observed in Louisiana in 2024

Can you name them?

iNaturalist photo credits on this page -plant names given on the following page

What is iNaturalist?

iNaturalist is an online social network of people sharing biodiversity information to help each other learn about nature. It's also a crowdsourced species identification system and an organism occurrence recording tool. You can use it to record your own observations, get help with identifications, collaborate with others to collect this kind of information for a common purpose, or access the observational data collected by iNaturalist users. (source: www. iNaturalist.org)

I had the opportunity to hear a presentation by one of the developers of iNaturalist, Ke'neichi Ueda in 2022 at a conference in California. A self-proclaimed "nature nerd", Ke'neichi developed the platform with 2 other classmates as a master's project at UC Berkeley in 2008. Their goal was to promote learning and connections with nature by pairing observations of nature with the newly created Google Maps. In 2017 an automated species identification tool was added, which is very popular and also utilized by the related app, I Seek. iNatualist has posted data as of this writing (3-6-2025) of 229,031,825 observations by 3,523,910 observers documenting 510,026 species from around the world.

How can you participate?

Registration for the iNaturalist app is free. A short video tutorial is available to show you how to make an iNaturalist observation and post it to your account. An observation may be documented by a photo or a sound recording (i.e. birds or frogs) By definition, iNaturalist is a community of naturalists – not only sharing observations but also helping others with identification. An observation becomes "research grade" when 2 or more members of the iNaturalist community agree with the identification of the species. There have been arguments as to the validity of "research grade" since any member of the community can agree with your identification. However, I have found that many of these eventually become vetted over time as those specializing in particular taxa take the time to review observations.

Anyone can help identify within the iNaturalist community. My experience has been that the bird and herp folks jump in very quickly – often moving those observations to

Betsy Trammel—Alexandria

Zorawendt—Mandeville

James Beck—Denham Springs

Braydon Mire—Ascension

iNaturalist and the City Nature Challenge *cont.*


American Beautyberry
Callicarpa americana


American Black Elderberry - *Sambucus canadensis*


Chinese Tallow - *Triadica sebifera*


Bristle Thistle
Cirsium horridulum


American Sweetgum
Liquidambar styraciflua


White Clover - *Trifolium repens*

research grade within the hour! Plant folks are slower. Some of my plant observations have taken years before someone verifies it or suggests a different id. It's no doubt that plants may not be verifiable without the proper photographs, or at the time of year to see reproductive structures. Regardless, I would like to use this forum to encourage our plant people to help with id's in iNaturalist. All registered users will find a tab – "Identify" at top of your page after logging in. You may filter what you would like to identify by location or taxa. A photo may not provide sufficient information to identify to species, but it is still helpful to identify to a more specific taxon. True to its name – iNaturalist is a community of naturalists – helping others learn. One identifier replied that she would be able to help me with greenbriar id if I provided additional photos to include the underside of the leaf and thorns further down the stem. Bingo – it was *Smilax smallii* (thank you Janet Wright from Mississippi) Not many identifiers provide tips, but it is a real lagniappe when they do!

My curiosity wanted to know more about how others view iNaturalist. I asked our own, **Larry Raymond**—2025 LNPS Karlene Defatta award winner a few questions. Below are his responses:

How accurate are "research grade" observations? Is it misleading to encourage the "ordinary" observer to believe their plant observations may be "research grade"? Many of the research grade observations are accurate and warrant research grade. In my experience, photos of vertebrates and many plant species are high enough quality to accurately identify. Plant observations can be improved by adding comments in the notes section of diagnostic features noted by the observer. Other well-known groups like moths and butterflies, dragonflies, and others are usually identifiable. I have had several of my identifications corrected and appreciate the educational value of the process. Some groups, like fungi and some invertebrates, are harder to identify to species and may remain categorized in one of the higher taxa. In my opinion, if iNaturalist is used in scientific publications, it is incumbent on the researcher to verify the identifications before using them.

Are there some taxa that are underrepresented? Are some taxa more prone to identification errors than others? I suspect that some of the groups that are less studied or known are probably underrepresented. Lower plant groups (liverworts, mosses, maybe others) and probably understudied invertebrate groups, as well as microscopic organisms are not well represented. Organisms that are tiny or require close examination for identification are not usually submitted.

How accurately does the data reflect the biodiversity of a region? Biodiversity of larger organisms is probably accurately reflected based on submitters photographing organisms they


American Trumpet Vine - *Campsis radicans*


Resurrection Fern - *Pleopeltis michauxiana*


Chinese Privet - *Ligustrum sinense*


Peppervine - *Nekemias arborea*

iNaturalist and the City Nature Challenge *cont.*

Responses from Larry Raymond—continued

encounter on nature jaunts. Terrestrial observations probably reflect biodiversity better than aquatic observations that may require special equipment to collect aquatic organisms.

There has been a steady increase in scientific research citing iNaturalist data. How have you used iNaturalist data? I am affiliated with two biological stations that each include about 600 acres. One is in the Ouachita Mountains and the other is on the south side of Wallace Lake. We have set up projects for both stations to collect biodiversity data submitted to iNaturalist. We often house educators and their classes and researchers that are working in the Ouachita Mountains area and encourage them to submit their observations to iNaturalist.

Do you have a favorite feature about iNaturalist? What about a least favorite feature? iNaturalist provides a good format to identify organisms that one may not know. I have had several of my observations that I submitted as a higher taxa, such as genus, family, or class, later identified to species for me. I have also had observations I submitted at the species level corrected by someone with more knowledge of the taxonomic group than me. In all cases, the individuals were courteous and provided an explanation for their disagreement with my identification – a great learning opportunity.

Anything else you would like to add? In my opinion, iNaturalist provides a great resource for housing photos of taxa for future use. I expect to see the data increasingly used in scientific publications. As master naturalists, we have the opportunity to contribute to this forum that will provide an historical record of biodiversity that can be used well into the future.

Responses from LNPS Vice President—John Michael Kelly

How accurate are "research grade" observations? Is it misleading to encourage the "ordinary" observer to believe their plant observations may be "research grade"? Research grade observations are generally accurate, in most groups they are >90% accurate. Vascular plants (that means no mosses or liverworts) are mostly in this 90+ range. But this is far from ideal, and herbarium specimens are ca. 95-99% accurate for most groups in my experience. These are flubbed by people having two or more iNat accounts (and thereby bumping their own observations to RG) or people going on field trips and all collectively misidentifying. Many richness numbers from iNat are inflated by misidentifications outside of research grade, but RG numbers are very low due to the paucity of experts for harder groups.

Are there some taxa that are underrepresented? Are some taxa more prone to identification errors than others? Yes, too many to count. Sedges have less than two-thirds of the known species in Louisiana identified on iNat, Dichanthelium grasses have less than half, and only about a fifth of the state's mosses have been posted. After ca. 15 years virtually no group except butterflies (88%), birds (90%), and snakes (94%) exceed 90% of the species documented by researchers using traditional means, and very few species missed by the researchers (where studies exist, moths for example have always been a weakness) have been found by iNaturalist users (surely less than 2%, likely less than 1%).

How accurately does the data reflect the biodiversity of a region? Not one person in a thousand could do a better job of identifying all the various biota than can be done with the mix of AI and community support. So,

iNaturalist and the City Nature Challenge *cont.*

Responses from John Michael Kelly—continued

very good compared to a single person across all taxonomic groups. It really lets anyone be a pretty fair natural historian. But a mediocre worker in a given speciality can easily exceed either the community support or AI in their given field. Most botanists have a far higher success rate and sight-recognition of species in their local study area than does the AI or someone from out of state, but given time the iNaturalist community will probably still solve problems they couldn't.

There has been a steady increase in scientific research citing iNaturalist data. How have you used iNaturalist data? I have used inaturalist data in more than a third of my journal articles (so 7 or 8 papers) about the flora of the southeast. It is useful, but not ideal. One particularly useful example comes from my study of a frequently mowed prairie: some plants were never in good enough condition to collect or disappeared after a few cuts, but a photo-voucher gave slightly more credence to my observations.

Do you have a favorite feature about iNaturalist? What about a least favorite feature? Favorite feature is a secret weapon, so I cannot give it away. Least favorite is probably the fact that the IOS version does not give you notifications. I wish I got an alert when something was identified, but nope.

Anything else you would like to add? Yes, for reference: there are different archetypal ways in which users work with iNat, and you can group professionals by their habits separately from amateurs. This means that the scientific community still has a different philosophy of use for the program than the general usership. Regarding biodiversity inventories, those using iNaturalist are far less complete than those collected traditionally, and I will provide some botanical examples:

1. The state arboretum had a comprehensive survey by Dr. Allen in the 70s, and today, 15 years after the first iNat post from the site, only 60 percent of the species have been documented. More than 160 species have not been found.
2. At Walter B. Jacobs nature park only 30 percent of the flora (published last year) has been documented. This park has a full naturalist staff and sees 30,000 people per year. Nearly 100 species there have only been posted by me.
3. In the most well-studied parish, Caddo parish, only 68% of the vascular plants known have been observed. A single grad student in the 1970s found this same proportion in just over 1 year.

iNaturalist is another tool in the toolbox. It has not significantly harmed the professionals, and it has greatly aided the amateur. You cannot beat the cost! It provides a crutch by which our natural history students can be coddled and neglected. Specimens, dissections, notebooks, mist nets, steel traps, radio-collars and all the rest are terribly important, but more and more our students get off with a couple dozen iNaturalist posts to fulfill the requirements of a college course. This is shameful. Also, and I am well-known for saying this, "You can't get DNA from a picture." Until you can, I will be collecting physical vouchers for my scientific studies, and using iNat as an aid only.

One last thing, and particularly important for the older folks, iNat posts can be backdated! Posting your oodles of old photos from physical copies (photographed digitally with a phone) or from digital sources is a great way to bolster records especially for days gone by.

iNaturalist and the City Nature Challenge *cont.*

City Nature Challenge
April 25—April 28, 2025

The City Nature Challenge is a four-day friendly nature competition that goes on across the globe. It's a worldwide bioblitz of iNaturalist observations! This year's dates are April 25—April 28 and more than 800 cities have registered. The goal is to see which city can show the most wildlife in their area, including wild plants, animals, insects, mushrooms, fish, turtles—everything wild!

If you are in a region of a locale that has registered for the City Nature Challenge (CNC) your observation will automatically be included in the competition. If you are not within the area of a registered group, you can join the Global Project.

CNC is fun but has a more important goal. I noted from Ke'nechi's California presentation that he "hates" the concept of the City Nature Challenge but agrees that it has increased interest in nature. Contributing to a databank of life on Earth will be used by scientists for research such as the location and abundance of species, migration patterns, seasonal changes and species variation. Climate change scientists use iNaturalist data to study phenology of plants—looking for dates and locations of leaf budding, first flower, ripe fruit, and leaf shedding.

Perhaps it is in my competitive nature that I love the City Nature Challenge and using iNaturalist. I eagerly anticipate seeing the first observations loaded from across the world as the 4 day start time is a day ahead of Louisiana, USA – knowing that there is a group in New Zealand, ready to start photographing at 12:01 AM Day 1 of the competition.

Following the 4 day observation period, there is additional time allotted for identifications for entries to be counted in the competition. This year's dates to complete identifications are April 29—May 4, 2025.

I would be remiss if I did not mention that Baton Rouge has ranked in the top 20 internationally in the City Nature Challenge for the last 4 years. Quite an achievement! Let's showcase Louisiana's biodiversity and get your iNat accounts active now!

Resources

iNaturalist: A Community for Naturalists · iNaturalist

iNaturalist video tutorials: Video Tutorials : iNaturalist Help

City Nature Challenge: City Nature Challenge

April 2024 *Bioscience* journal article

city nature challenge: A global citizen science phenomenon contributing to biodiversity knowledge and informing local government practices | BioScience | Oxford Academic

Www.citynaturechallenge.com

Homegrown National Park

By Jacalyn Duncan

Note: This article recaps Doug Tallamy's presentation about his Homegrown National Park program as presented at the Hilltop Arboretum Symposium in Baton Rouge January 25, 2025.

"We are at a critical point of losing so many species from local ecosystems that their ability to produce the oxygen, clean water, flood control, pollination, pest control, carbon storage, etc., that is, the ecosystem services that sustain us, will become seriously compromised." Doug Tallamy

Homegrown National Park (HNP) raises awareness and urgently inspires everyone to address the biodiversity crisis by adding native plants and removing invasive ones where we live, work, learn, pray, and play. The mission of HNP is to regenerate biodiversity because all humans need healthy, productive ecosystems to survive. HNP is a grassroots call-to-action. Anyone can be part of the movement – individuals, businesses, nonprofits, farms, schools, places of worship, and more. It's easy, it's free, and no experience is needed. A native plant is a species that naturally occurs within a specific ecosystem (without human intervention) and shares an evolutionary history with the other species in that area. These relationships make them crucial for the health and productivity of that ecosystem. Without them, ecosystem services collapse, threatening the systems our communities depend on to survive. Co-founder Professor Doug Tallamy coined the name Homegrown National Park (HNP) to describe a new culture where we all make a difference in our habitats. This is the key to the call-to-action: "Our National Parks, no matter how grand in scale, are too small and separated from one another to preserve (native) species to the levels needed. Thus, the concept for Homegrown National Park, a bottom-up call-to-action to restore habitat where we live and work, and to a lesser extent where we farm and graze, extending national parks to our yards and communities." Everyone is encouraged to set a planting goal and to share their site on the HNP Biodiversity Map, which is an interactive, community-based visual tool that tracks the total area occupied by native plants. It is designed to be the epicenter of biodiversity regeneration by consolidating and amplifying all the extraordinary work being done by individuals and organizations across the US and Canada. Visit Home - Homegrown National Park - Regenerate Biodiversity for more information and to get involved.

Louisiana properties registered on the homegrown national park map

Homegrown National Park

2025 Karlene DeFatta Award
Larry R. Raymond

Larry Raymond was honored at the 2025 LNPS Conference in receiving the Karlene Defatta Award. This award is not an annual award but given only when an individual has displayed outstanding achievements in the areas of conservation, preservation, and education of the public in appreciation and uses of native plants. Larry has been with LNPS from its roots, along with Karlene Defatta, forming the first NW La Native Plant Society in Shreveport. He served as the President for several years and wrote the newsletter, recently contributing older editions for our archives. As the Director of the Caddo Parish Department of Parks and Recreation, he started a wildflower protection program for roadsides, finding numerous rare species and working to protect them. He has collected thousands of plant and animal specimens for museums. Larry manages native habitat preserves in Desoto Parish and in the Ouachita mountains and has published and coauthored scientific journal articles about fish, birds, salamanders, and plants. Larry is also well-known in the birding world. He was among the founders of a Shreveport Nature Study group, now called the Bird Study Group, which still meets after decades of operation. He has been a college instructor at Bossier Parish Community College and LSU at Shreveport for many years. Larry is currently a board member of Louisiana Wildlife Federation (LWF) and Louisiana Master Naturalists (LMNA). LNPS is honored to have a member in its ranks of this quality that has touched the lives of so many people and exemplifying our mission to promote native plants and preserve natural habitats.

John Michael Kelly presenting the Karlene DeFatta award to Larry Raymond

Donations and Memorial Gifts

Donations:

Jim Foret

Memorial Gifts:

David Lewis in memory of Patricia Lewis

Atamasco lily

LNPS NOTICES

1. If you are interested in the **Louisiana Certified Habitat Program,** please email louisianacertifiedhabitat@gmail.com for more information and to receive the application.
2. Report wildflower locations along roadsides by clicking this link Louisiana Roadside Wildflower Locations to DOTD for input into the Wild flower Program.
3. LAFAYETTE, LA – Louisiana Grass Roots, a short documentary that tells the story of Louisiana's forgotten prairie lands will screen at the Acadiana Center for the Arts on Wednesday, **April 2nd** at 6:30pm.
4. **LNPS 2026 Annual Conference** is scheduled for **March 6-8, 2026** at the Acadian Baptist Center, Eunice, LA.

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The deadline for newsletter articles, etc. is July 15 for the next LNPS newsletter. Any article involving native plants is welcomed.

Foxglove beardtongue (*Penstemon digitalis*)

Annual LNPS Dues

Circle one: Individual, $10. Student/Senior, $5. Family, $15. Organization, $25. Sustaining, $50. Corporate, $100.

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Checks payable to LNPS.

Mail to: Jackie Duncan, Treasurer

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Boyce, LA 71409

Or, memberships and donations may be paid online at: www.lnps.org