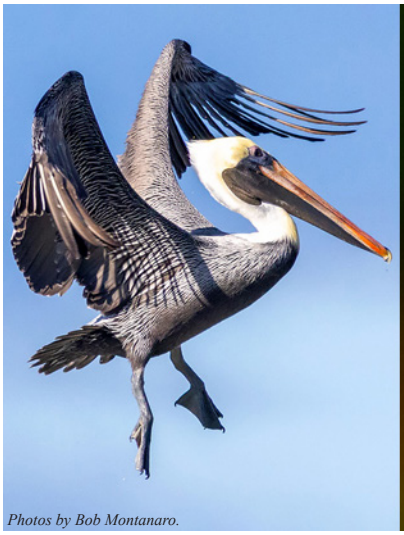
7th Transforming Landscapes for a Sustainable Future

January 16, 2027 at The IG Center

1590 9th Street SW (Oslo Road)
Vero Beach, FL 32962

Conference Schedule



Photos by Bob Montanaro.

8:00AM	**Registration** plus native plants on sale from Native Plant Nurseries
9:00-9:50	**Dr. Craig N. Huegel,** Curator, University of South Florida Botanical Garden, owner and operator of Hawthorn Hill Native Wildflowers, and teaches biology at St. Petersburg College. *Our Need for Nature and the Concept of Creating It*
10:00-10:50	**Kirsten Hines**, award winning writer, wildlife photographer, and speaker whose work champions the connection between people & nature, *Keeping Florida Wild*
10:50-11:10	Break I **Native plants on sale from Native Plant Nurseries**
11:10-12:00PM	**Dr. Gage Lapierre,** Post Doctoral Associate Manager, UF Native Plant Nursery, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL, *The Florida Meadow - A Future of Ecological Enhancement*
12:00-1:00	**Lunch with Box Lunches included in the $25 admission ticket**
1:00-1:50	**Shelby Radcliff,** Co-founder & partner at Emergent Gardens, a landscape design practice based in North Central Florida, *Lawn: What Is It Good For?*
2:00-2:50	**Dr. Grant Gilmore,** Senior Scientist, Estuarine, Coastal & Ocean Science, Inc. Vero Beach, FL, *Rewilding an Old Orange Grove: An Ecology Professor's Experiment*
3:00-3:30	**Dr. Richard Baker** - Discussion and Summary

Tickets are $25 per person & includes a box lunch. Purchase tickets online at

www.PelicanIslandAudubon.org

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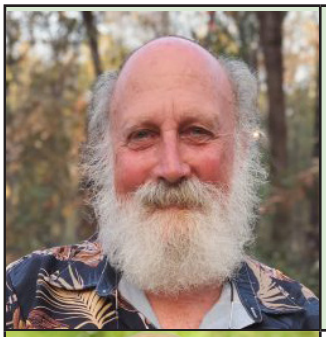
Speaker Biographies



Dr. Craig N. Huegel, Curator, University of South Florida Botanical Garden, owner and operator of Hawthorn Hill Native Wildflowers, and teaches biology at St. Petersburg College. Former faculty member , Department of Wildlife Ecology and Conservation, University of Florida where he cofounded the Cooperative Urban Wildlife Extension Program. Author of *Native Florida Plants for Shady Landscapes, Native Wildflower and Other Ground Covers for Florida Landscapes*, and *Naïve Plant landscaping for Florida Wildlife.* Uses central Florida landscapes as laboratories to evaluate native plants and grows a wide variety of species (mostly wildflowers) that are not commonly propagated elsewhere.

Kirsten Hines is an award winning writer, wildlife photographer, and speaker whose work champions the connection between people and nature. Relying on her biology background, she blends scientific insight with artistic vision to tell personalized stories that spark curiosity and conservation action. Kirsten's ten books include *Birds of Florida, Wild Florida: An Animal Odyssey, Attracting Birds to South Florida Gardens and Recovering Caribbean Nature*. Her photography also appears in exhibitions, public art programs, and major nature photography showcases. A lively speaker and top rated instructor, she travels widely to teach, guide, and inspire. Learn more at KirstenHines.com.

Dr. Gage LaPierre is a Research Associate at the University of Florida. He recently completed his Doctorate of Philosophy, studying groundcover restoration at the School of Forest Resources & Conservation. With a Master of Science in Ecological Restoration and a Bachelor of Science in Environmental Science, Gage's academic and professional journey has been dedicated to understanding and restoring natural ecosystems. In his current role, Gage is actively involved in developing the Florida Native Seed Partnership, a key initiative for ecological restoration and enhancement. While in school, Gage founded the UF Native Plant Nursery Project and continues to work to expand it into a comprehensive program or center within IFAS. During this time, Gage also acted as land manager for the Natural Area Teaching Laboratory (NATL), where he remains connected as a member of its advisory board. Gage's is also a dedicated educator, having served as a lead instructor and teaching assistant for various UF courses, and regularly conducts tours and workshops to share his expertise with students and the wider community.

Shelby Radcliffe is a co-founder and partner at Emergent Gardens, a landscape design practice based in North Central Florida. With her team, she designs and creates gardens that bring together beauty, human experience, and ecological richness. A desire to challenge conventional landscapes is central to her vision for creating life-affirming gardens in the everyday places we inhabit. Her approach is informed by a broad creative and horticultural background spanning native plant propagation, public gardens, horticultural education, garden installations, and visual art.

Dr. Grant Gilmore, is a marine research scientist and ecology professor, president of Tropical Ecoscience, Inc. a not for profit research and education organization. He taught undergraduate and graduate courses in terrestrial and marine ecology at Indian River State College, Florida Institute of Technology and the Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institution for 32 years. In 1988 he purchased a two acre field of grass for a home site and experimented with rewilding this treeless terrain. With little horticultural intervention he let the plants tell him a story. A forest evolved. Over this 38 year period he recorded and mapped the development of plant communities on his property. He also recorded the succession of animal assemblages associated with these plants (mostly reptiles, amphibians, birds and mammals).