

Thanks to everyone who participated in yesterday's plant sale which was a smashing success. The event raised over \$2100 dollars – a record by a wide margin for the chapter.

Hundreds of plants were sold, a steady crowd passed through, I personally spoke to people from the Beaches, Middleburg and Fernandina Beach, as well as neighbors of Native Park. A great deal of information was shared by our experts with first-time native plant purchasers and longtime club members.

We signed up new members and recruited new volunteers for the TLC days at Native Park.

Following up last week's newsletter, state senate appropriators continued their support for a proposed \$100 million for Florida Forever funding and added a proposal for another \$300 million in pending federal economic relief funding, to be dedicated to Florida Forever acquisitions within the Florida Wildlife Corridor. House budget conferees matched the Senate's offer on these items, concurring with the funding. If federal economic relief funding comes to fruition, this will be a combined \$400 million commitment to conservation land acquisition in the coming year.

In addition, both committees agreed to spend \$500 million of the federal relief funds for septic to sewer conversions (a MAJOR contributor to red tide and the state's water quality problem) and \$100 million towards the clean-up of the Piney Point disaster.

Twin Pines Minerals continues seeking permission for a heavy mineral sand mine next to the Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge. Their latest proposal asks the Georgia Environmental Protection Division (GA EPD) to grant five permits needed to excavate heavy minerals used in the production of titanium dioxide, a pigment used to whiten paper, paint, and food products.

If GA EPD grants the permits, Twin Pines' mining will destroy over 370 acres of wetlands, pump over a million gallons a day of fresh groundwater, discharge pollutants into the air and waste into the St. Mary's River basin, and cast noise and light over the refuge.

[Click here to send a simple automated response](#) to voice your opposition to this nightmarish proposal.

Lastly, something we can all sympathize with, a Maryland Homeowners Association spent over \$100,000 hiring a big law firm to fight a resident's native plant landscape on the grounds that "a garden 'without the use of pesticides in which they have maintained 'native plants' to provide food for birds, bees, and other insects and animals' is 'completely contrary to the overall design scheme for the Association, which is a planned development.'"

Long story short, she beat the HOA and convinced the Maryland legislature to protect the ability of homeowners to plant natives with passage of a new state law!

[An inspiring story](#), give it a read.