

PRESIDENT'S REPORT 2023

The Maim Blue Chapter (hereinafter "MBC") conducted the following:

1. **Members' Meetings:** We had five member's meetings throughout 2023 including four quarterly (hybrid) meetings and one special (Zoom) meeting. Our guest speakers included:
 - Daniela Champney (Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden)
(2-5-2023) "Connect to Protect Network."
 - Andy Davis, Ph.D. (assistant research scientist, Univ. of Georgia)
(5-7-2023) "Monarch Butterflies in Florida..."
 - Roger Hammer (retired – Miami-Dade County, Department of Parks, Recreation and Open Spaces)
(8-6-2023) "Pine Rocklands – a Globally Plant Community."
 - Jaret Daniels, Ph.D. (Curator, Maguire Center for Lepidoptera and Biodiversity, Univ. of Florida)
(12-3-2023) "At-Risk Butterfly Conservation and Recovery Efforts in Florida and Beyond."
2. **Events:** We attended and had "tables" at the following 2023 events

3-08-2023	Calderon Pineland Restoration Project
3-25-2023	Native Plant Day, North Miami
4-16-2023	Girl Scouts Camp Mahachee
4-29-2023	Miami Shores Green Day
9-17-2023	Castellow Open House
9-30-2023	Florida City Pineland volunteer day & Black Forest dedication
10-22-2023	Girl Scouts' Camp Mahachee
3. **NABA "4th of July" Butterfly surveys:** MBC sponsored four surveys:

Shark Valley:	4-15-2023 and 7-15-2023
Pinecrest/Tri-County:	7-22-2023
Coral Gables:	6-24-2023
4. **Schaus' Swallowtail surveys:** Our members participated in the on-going Schaus' Swallowtail survey, which is conducted annually in the Upper (Florida) Keys (April - June); this involved approximately 150+ hours of fieldwork by approximately 10 MBC members.

5. **Other:**

- a) **Restoration efforts:** MBC supported both financially and with “sweat equity” (volunteer hours) the restoration of the Calderon Pineland (Miami-Dade Co., environmentally endangered land) and the Girl Scouts’ Camp Mahachie.
- b) **Litigation:** MBC has been involved as a co-plaintiff in a federal court action styled: *The Center for Biological Diversity, et al v. U.S. Department of the Interior, et al.*, which challenged the (in) action of the National Park Service for its failure to “consult” with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service under the *Endangered Species Act* in connection with the Miami Wilds project (Richmond Pineland).

On December 11, the federal court granted our Motion for Summary Judgment, thereby vacating the 2022 agreement and release made between the National Park Service and Miami-Dade County (that agreement was executed to facilitate the Miami Wilds project). And as a result of the Court’s action, the County is expected to declare the subject lease void.

On a related note, on the same day as the Court’s opinion, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service sent a letter to the County which stated, in part, that all of the property which constitutes the “footprint” of the Miami Wilds project is considered to be “environmentally sensitive.”