Survey for “Invisible” Oak Pathogens
By: Ed Barnard, Forest Pathologist, Forest Heath Program, Florida Division of Forestry

The same old...same old? Maybe, maybe not. Surges or spikes of oak decline and mortality are not uncommon in Florida, especially during the state's hot summer months. Autopsies and biopsies through the years have identified numerous common abiotic and biotic influences that are factors related to and/or causing the trees' decline and death. Old age (in some oak species), site disturbance, mechanical injury, drought, flooding, and root pathogens including Armillaria, Ganoderma, and Phytophthora are among the suspects. Secondary canker fungi including Biscogniauxia (formerly Hypoxylon) and Botryosphaeria are often involved as well (http://www.fl-dof.com/publications/fh_pdfs/2007_OakDeath_article_complete.pdf "Coping with Loss", Parts I and II, Ornamental Outlook Magazine, November and December 2007). There are, however, disease syndromes and a number of pathogens that could be involved, but that historically have received very little serious attention in Florida. These are vascular diseases caused by "invisible" microorganisms (fungi and bacteria) that operate inside the xylem tissues of susceptible oaks. Among the candidates and the "hunted" fungal pathogens are Ceratocystis fagacearum (the oak wilt pathogen), Fusarium, Verticillium and Raffaelea species. The bacterial leaf scorch pathogen, Xylella fastidiosa, is known to occur in Florida oaks but its role in oak decline/mortality here is not well understood. This organism is on the list of the hunted as well. Dr. Jason Smith jasons@ufl.edu of the University’s School of Forest Resources and Conservation and Dr. Ed Barnard barnare@doacs.state.fl.us of the Florida Division of Forestry have teamed up to survey oaks over the next two years to specifically address vascular pathogen unknowns. The project is supported with Forest Health Monitoring grant dollars through the U.S.D.A. Forest Service, Region 8, Cooperative Forest Health Protection office in Atlanta.

Florida Bird Conservation Initiative – A call for participation
By Elena Sachs, FWC

Several organizations and agencies in Florida are helping develop a new program called the Florida Bird Conservation Initiative. We have recently launched our website and welcome you to visit this link http://www.myfwc.com/FBCI/FBCI_index.htm. The FBCI website is meant
to serve as a clearinghouse of information on bird conservation in Florida. It will always be a work in progress and we encourage any input to improve it. Specifically, please review the site and send in any additional information that you think should be included. Please be sure to stop by the “Projects” page on the site and take a few minutes to enter your avian projects into our project database. This database will be a searchable and comprehensive snapshot of avian research going on in Florida. We need your help and participation to improve communication among those of us working with bird conservation in Florida! To learn how to join the listserv please contact elena.sachs@MyFWC.com or call 352-732-1225.

Upcoming Conferences

- **Florida's Wildlife: On the Frontline of Climate Change (FLOC)**
  Aug. 20-22, Rosen PLAZA, Orlando, Fl
  For more information visit http://www.ces.fau.edu/floc/agenda.php
- **Florida Forestry Association Annual Meeting “The Future Looks Bright”**
  September 3-4, Bay Point Marriott, Panama City Beach, FL
  For more information visit: http://www.floridaforest.org/conference.php
- **Project Learning Tree, PreK-8 Educator Workshop**
  September 13th 9:00 am-3:30 pm at the Austin Cary Memorial Forest, Gainesville, FL
  PLT Certification, Activity Guide, and Valuable Teaching Resources
  $10 at the door, lunch included. For more information visit: http://www.sesaf.org/annual08.php
- **Southeastern Society of American Foresters Annual Meeting**
  “Forest Risk: The New Dimension (Earth, Wind, and Fire)”
  September 21-23, at Mountain Creek Inn, Pine Mountain, GA
  For more information visit: http://www.sesaf.org/annual08.php

Recent Research Finding

**Exploring visitor acceptability for hardening trails to sustain visitation and minimize impacts**

K.L.Cahill and J.L.Marion. 2008. JOURNAL OF SUSTAINABLE TOURISM 16 (2) 232-245

Protected natural area managers are challenged to provide high quality recreation opportunities and ensure the protection of resources from impacts associated with visitation. Development of visitor use facilities and application of site hardening practices are commonly applied tools for achieving these competing management objectives. This study applies stated choice analysis to examine visitor opinions on acceptability when they are asked to make tradeoffs among competing social, resource and management attributes in backcountry and frontcountry settings of Acadia National Park. This study demonstrates that asking visitors about recreation setting attributes unidimensionally, a common approach, can yield less informative responses. Analyses that considered direct tradeoffs revealed more divergent opinions on acceptability for setting attributes than a unidimensional approach. Findings revealed that visitors to an accessible and popular attraction feature supported trail development options to protect resource conditions with unrestricted visitor access. In contrast, visitors to a remote undeveloped island expressed stronger support for no or limited trail development and access restrictions to protect resource conditions.