

## 2018 SPRING TRAIL WALK



The Spring 2018 OSLT hike took place on March 31 and began at the Fairchild Oak, north of Ormond Beach. We began at the foot of the grand and ancient live oak. Our guide, Dr. Don Spence of Bethune-Cookman University, provided a fascinating talk on the amazingly diverse plant and animal life supported around and on the tree itself and set that in the larger context of the relationship between species diversity and a

healthy ecosystem generally. He highlighted some of the pressures on species diversity surrounding us today, including ones we inadvertently impose ourselves by introducing invasive species, heavy water use for landscape irrigation, and species deserts we may create in our landscapes by using pesticides, herbicides, and landscape plants not suited to east central Florida animals, birds, and insect pollinators.

The group then went out on a 1.5 mile hike. Our hike took us by a seepage slope, along a fresh water marsh, and through an upland forest.



Species we observed included southern magnolia, redbay, live oak, sabal palm, red mulberry, American elm, American hornbeam, sweetgum, climbing hydrangea, Virginia creeper, cross vine, red cedar, laurel oak, lizard's tail, Florida violet, toughbully, native bamboo, green ash, blue sage, giant leather fern, coontie, black cherry and various epiphytes including spanish moss, a variety of tillandsias, and an epiphytic orchid. We also encountered one snake, a black racer.

We had perfect weather for a walk in the woods and, thanks to Dr. Spence, we left with a much-enhanced understanding and appreciation of the natural and scenic resources along our National Scenic Byway. Keep an eye out for our next guided trail walk this fall.