

## 2023 Spring Festival Speaker Event Line- up!

### 2023 SPRING FESTIVAL SPEAKER HIGHLIGHT

10AM

#### Davis Byrkit on The Importance of Caterpillars In Your Yard

Davis started his native plant career working for a small gardening company that maintained native yards, getting hands-on experience with many of Florida's native species. From there, he went on to Wilcox as a Nursery Specialist, gaining more exposure to the diversity of plants that Florida has to offer.

Davis is now the General Manager of Wilcox Nursery and Landscape. He is also pursuing a Bachelor's Degree in Biology with a focus on Ecology from USF.

### Davis Byrkit



### 2023 SPRING FESTIVAL SPEAKER HIGHLIGHT

11:30am

#### Tex and Kay Carter, Save the WKP

WK Preservation Group President W.L. "Tex" Carter and Director of Operations Kay Kennedy Carter have guided the leadership of the nonprofit's board since 2020. Tex has fifty years of international project development and construction experience, leading teams from a few to thousands. With expertise in a wide range of assignments, Tex has served on corporate and service boards, and actively contributes to the development of people and groups interested in improving the quality of life in our world. Kay, formerly the WK Preservation Group treasurer, has 50 years of leadership experience in the realms of education, business, social, church and volunteer activities worldwide. She utilizes her unique communication, organizational and mentoring acumen to skillfully guide WKPG board operations.

### Tex and Kay Carter



# 2023 SPRING FESTIVAL SPEAKER HIGHLIGHT

1PM

## Remnants of a Forest: Gopher Tortoise Conservation on Small Public Lands

George L. Heinrich is a field biologist and environmental educator specializing in Florida reptiles. His company, Heinrich Ecological Services ([www.heinrichecologicalservices.com](http://www.heinrichecologicalservices.com)), is based in St. Petersburg, Florida and conducts wildlife surveys and research, natural history programming, and nature-based tours.

George served twice as co-chair of the Gopher Tortoise Council, is an invited member of the IUCN Tortoise and Freshwater Turtle Specialist Group, and is the executive director of the Florida Turtle Conservation Trust ([www.ftct.org](http://www.ftct.org)).

Geroge Heinrich,  
Heinrich Ecological Services



ATKINSON (5-29-21): PHOTOGRAPH BY BEN ATKINSON

## Remnants of a Forest: Gopher Tortoise Conservation on Small Public Lands

Gopher tortoises (*Gopherus polyphemus*) are ecosystem engineers that create extensive burrow systems and disperse seeds, significantly contributing to upland habitat biodiversity. This keystone species is listed as Threatened by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission. The burrow systems provide important refugia from extreme temperatures, fire, and predators for the tortoises, as well as 364 other documented species rangewide.

This presentation will examine the value of gopher tortoise conservation on small public lands and discuss the challenges of managing natural areas bordered by urban interface.



RHNP CT #108 9-12-19: PHOTOGRAPH BY GEORGE L. HEINRICH