
Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve

May - June 2019

Chairman's Message By Cathie Foster

May brings to mind **Mother's Day**. I always think this is the perfect day to show appreciation to anyone who has played a nurturing role in your life, or anyone else's. And if that person lives locally, we have you covered! If that "Mom" in your life loves birds, start the celebration early with **Songbird Sunrise on Saturday, May 11 at 5:45 am** (I meant it when I said 'early'). A great way to start the day! Just bring chairs to sit in, a mug of coffee, and maybe a picnic breakfast and listen to the day coming to life with Barb and Bob, our bird experts. Then continue the birding experience on our monthly **Beginning Bird Hike starting at 8:00 am**. Register for either or both of these at [Eventbrite](#).

Save the Dates Upcoming Friends Events

- May 4 FOBCP Readers Club 9:30-10:30 am
- May 5 Beekeepers Club 9 am
- May 11 Night Hike 7:30-10:00 pm
- May 12 Paint for the Wild 12-3 pm
- May 19 Youth Beekeeping Class 1-2 pm
- May 25 Wildflower Garden work day 8-10 am
- June 1 FOBCP Readers Club 9:30-10:30 am
- June 2 Beekeepers Club 9 am
- June 2 Friends Photography Exhibition
Opening reception 1-3 pm
- June 9 Ken Rowe Bird-a-Thon
- July 20 Return the Preserve work day 8-11
- June 23 Off the Beaten Path:
Interior Wildlands 9 am
- June 29 Wildflower Garden work day 8-10 am
- Sept.22 Off the Beaten Path Hike:
In Search of Catesby's Lily 9 am
- Oct. 5 Fall Wildflower Festival
- Oct. 19 Return the Preserve Work Day 8-11
- Oct. 26 Owl-O-Ween
- Nov. 19-23 Eco-Tour to Cuba



Native plants for sale in the nursery beside the Nature Store.

Sunday, May 12 brings more options for you and that special someone!

9:00-10:30 am Mother's Day Mother Nature Hike. Register at:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/mothers-day-mother-nature-hike-tickets-59910004436>

12:00-3:00 pm Paint for the Wild Paint Class (see registration info on page 16)

If you are still looking for a Mother's Day gift, visit our Nature Store and Native Plant Nursery! Gift certificates are available!

Right, nature photos by volunteers Karl and Kathleen Nichter, framed and unframed.



Above, Recycled paper jewelry. Below, Tree of Life jewelry. All handmade by BCP volunteer Brian Croteau.



Notecards- Create your own variety-pack! All photos were taken at Brooker Creek Preserve

Attention Friends Photographers!

Would you like to be part of our Friends Summer Photography Exhibition? If you have a photo you have taken within the Preserve and you are a member of the Friends, we invite you to be a part of our upcoming exhibition. Please see page 6 for more details.

What are those scorched areas on the drive into the Preserve?

by Lisa Baltus, North County Land Manager
Pinellas County Parks & Conservation Resources

As you drive into the Preserve, you will notice some areas that have been burned recently. This was part of a week-long training conducted by the Florida Forest Service for basic wild land firefighting. There were approximately 20 students from various agencies in the Tampa Bay area. Nine of the students were Pinellas County Parks and Conservation Resources Park Ranger I's. This is one of several trainings that the rangers can take toward their requirements to become a Ranger II. On the last day of class, the students participated in a 2-acre prescribed burn NE of the ed center by the recycle dumpster.

Since January, 2 prescribed burns (54 acres) have been completed at Brooker north of Keystone Rd. Additional burns will be completed at Brooker and other PCR lands through the rest of 2019 as weather and workloads permit.



*Welcome to our new
Friends members:*

**Richard Buschart
Murat & Denay Gultepe
Steve Gates**

Note from Cathie: Keep your eye on this area! It is 'greening up' quickly and we're seeing lots of deer and gopher tortoises feasting on tender young shoots that are sprouting everywhere.


Many thanks to

Ric Hoover

For restoring the Nature Store sign
At the Keystone Road entrance!



Pygmy rattlesnake at Brooker Creek Preserve, photo by Marcelo Rescala.

Friends  of Brooker Creek Preserve
**ACRE ADOPTIONS FOR
BROOKER CREEK PRESERVE**

Many thanks for the following Acre Adoptions for Jan./Feb. 2019:

In honor of Janice Petersen (2 acres) — from Lou Petersen

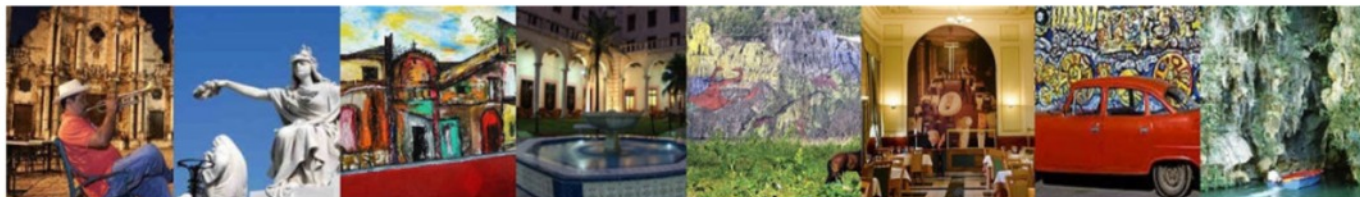
Kathy Abbot (1 acre)

Please consider adopting an acre as a birthday gift, memorial or to honor a special person. See p. 26 for Adopt an Acre Form and additional information.

Click the link for trip details: [FOBCP Eco-Tour to Cuba](#)

BROOKER CREEK PRESERVE PRESENTS: AN AMAZING CULTURAL ECO-TOUR TO CUBA!

4-Night, 5 Days – November 19-23, 2019



Visiting: ▶ Havana- ▶ Las Terrazas- ▶ Playa Larga- ▶ Zapata Peninsula- ▶ Salinas Park ▶ Cienfuegos Botanical Gardens ▶ El Nicho Waterfalls ▶ Santa Clara

As a travel destination, Cuba is well-known for its amazing culture, charming colonial villages, highly regarded vintage cars and immaculate beaches, but travelers who are environmentally conscious and gravitate towards ecotourism, can find more than clichés in Cuba. You can explore the largest Caribbean island which can offer more than any other island in the Caribbean Sea by its sources of biodiversity. Home to 263 protected areas and six UNESCO Biospheres, Cuba has a lot to offer ecotourists.

On Nov. 11th, the FOBCP Board unanimously voted to sponsor for next November an eco-tour to Cuba for FOBCP members. The 4-night, 5-day trip would also be a fundraiser with \$100 of the individual cost donated to the Friends as a tax-deductible donation. As a fund-raiser, the board is hoping for significant participation in this unique once-in-a-lifetime travel opportunity. The tour will be hosted by our own Dr. Craig Huegel. Our Cuban guides will introduce us to the diverse ecological wonders of Cuba, including the **UNESCO** Biosphere Reserve at La Terrazas, the swamp lands of the Zapata Peninsula, and the forests and waterfalls of the Gran Parque Natural Topes de Collantes in the Sierra Escambray mountain range. The eco-tour is being organized by the fully licensed and OFAC compliant Cuban travel specialists at Carlson Maritime Travel in Tarpon Springs.

SOME OF YOUR HIGHLIGHTS WILL INCLUDE:

La Yoandra rare fruit tree farm, Havana *Sustainable Biosphere, Las Terrazas, hiking, lecture Cuban Orchid Farm *Finca Marta (organic farm) *Zapata Peninsula – Playa Larga (Cuba's largest wilderness area) *Salinas Park- Rare bird watching, Cuban Crocodiles *Cueva de los peces (Caves of the fishes for swimming) *Cienfuegos Botanical Gardens with private guide *Gran Parque Natural Topes de Collantes/ El Nicho Waterfalls *Che Guevara Museum *Fully Escorted / Private Guides / Private Driver



This group is being organized through a fully licensed Travel Service Provider. Carlson Maritime Travel, LLC is authorized to provide services in connection with travel to Cuba for U.S. citizens who are authorized to engage in travel-related transactions involving Cuba under either a general or specific license. CU-2014-307835-1 Dept. of Commerce License: D1118969

Auditorium Gallery Update By Lynn Whitelaw, Gallery Curator

The FOBCP Art Collection

Over the past few months several hundred people have seen the Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve Art Collection on view in the Auditorium Gallery. The collection includes a print portfolio by Robert Butler, created for the 75th anniversary of Pinellas County, and the recent gift from Christopher and Kelly Still of 10 prints representing the large historical paintings Christopher created for the House of Representatives in Tallahassee. While the collection was up, the Pinellas County Commissioners and Tarpon Springs Chamber of Commerce, among other groups, had events in the Auditorium and were able to see the collection.

A special thanks goes to FOBCP volunteer Jon Burr who has faithfully been a Gallery Docent on Sundays. It is not unusual for Jon to meet and greet as many as 40 people on a Sunday afternoon. This is an invaluable service for the Friends and additional Gallery Docents are needed. As a Gallery Docent you are an FOBCP ambassador who welcomes visitors, answers questions and provides a human connection, plus it can provide some time to read a book or just enjoy the views of the Preserve seen from the windows of the Auditorium. Please email fobcp@tampabay.rr.com if you would like to provide this valuable service.

If you have not seen the FOBCP Art Collection yet, it will still be on view through Mother's Day, May 12.

Coming this Summer: FOBCP Members' Photography Exhibition

Word out in the Preserve is that many FOBCP Members have some very nice cameras and have taken remarkable images while exploring the Preserve. As volunteers we sometimes have unique opportunities to document the wonder and beauty of Brooker Creek, often in ways many visitors never get to experience (and sometimes we even capture these special images on our cell phone cameras!). To share these "captured" moments, consider submitting your best photographs to the FOBCP Members' Photography Exhibition this summer. The show will be on view June 2 through August 18 and will showcase only photographs taken in the Preserve, no matter the aesthetics - color, black and white, manipulated, or using other photographic processes or techniques.

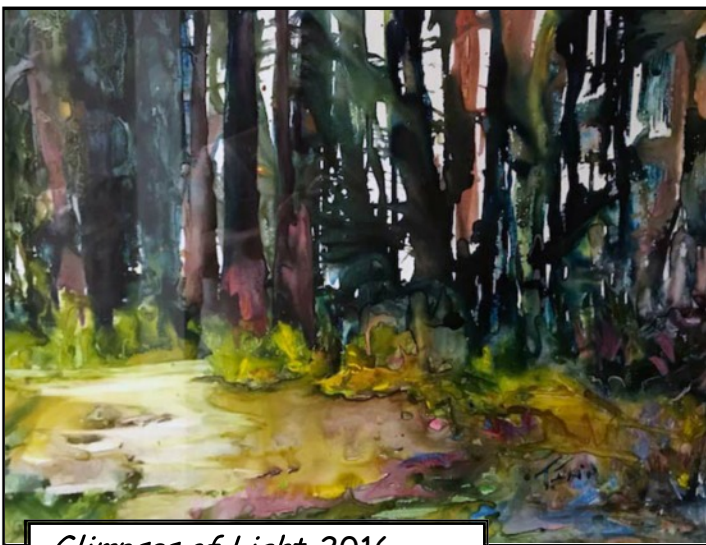
Up to three works may be submitted, but each photograph must be framed and ready to hang with a horizontal wire on the back, so they can be displayed using the Auditorium's track and wire system. To enter, email Lynn Whitelaw, Gallery Curator, at rlwhitelaw7@msn.com with your

NAME, TITLE OF WORK, SIZE (height by width - indicate whether image or frame size), MEDIUM (color, b&w, special process, etc.), and SALE PRICE (if for purchase). Also make a copy of this information and place it on the back of the framed image. Your photographs can then be taken to the Nature Store any time during the month of May where they will be stored until the exhibit opens. If too many photographs are submitted to hang, a committee will select the final photographs for the exhibit (this problem would only mean we need to do this show again!). If a work is sold, 10% of the sale price will be donated to the Friends by the artist.

The opening reception will be on June 2, 2019, from 1:00 to 3:00 pm. Come enjoy light refreshments and maybe even live music as you enjoy Preserve photography by fellow Friends and volunteers. As some works will be for sale, you may wish to bring your check book or credit card!

Recent Donation - Taylor Ikin Originals!

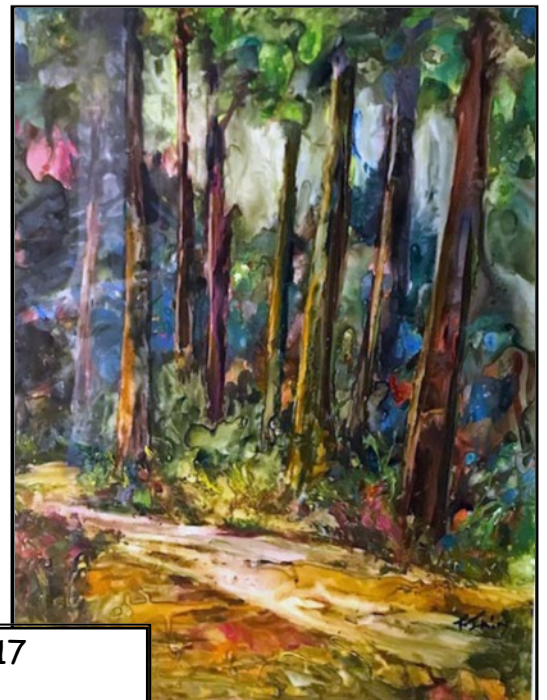
Two framed watercolor paintings by artist Taylor Ikin were recently donated by the artist to the Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve for the Art Collection. Both paintings are inspired by Brooker Creek Preserve and one of the works was in the *Taylor Ikin: Into the Woods* exhibition in the Auditorium Gallery last year (Jan. 21 - Apr. 1, 2018). Ikin is called the Queen of YUPO, a synthetic material that allows her to manipulate paint to capture the movement and energy of flora and fauna. Ikin chose to give these works to the Friends because of her admiration for the work we do saying, "conservation, preservation and a love of nature is my love, too, and is the subject of my artwork."



Glimpses of Light, 2016

20 x 28 inches

Watercolor on YUPO paper



Heavenly Hike, 2017

24 x 18 inches

Watercolor on YUPO paper

Off the Beaten Path: Sandhill Scramble - 3/24/19 By Craig Huegel

It is always a special thrill for me to share one of my very favorite places within Brooker Creek Preserve with those who choose to hike with me as part of the Off the Beaten Path series designed as a fundraising effort for the Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve. Situated north of Keystone Road, this area includes some of the highest-elevation habitats within our borders and is home for plants and wildlife that are not found elsewhere. We had a beautiful day for a walk in the woods and a full contingent of hikers. Along the way, we found the last of the blooming sky-blue lupines and the first blooming of native blueberries and huckleberries. Resident eastern bluebirds eventually made their appearance as did the ubiquitous white-tailed deer. These hikes are special to me as we visit areas not open to the public; areas that are especially unique and beautiful. We still have two hikes remaining in this year's schedule. I hope you will be one of those who join me, but registrations fill quickly so don't dawdle.



Sky-blue lupine with juvenile katydid (top),
and sundew with captured insects



Pictured here are the hikers who were lucky to attend and see this area that is closed to the public — Brooker Creek Preserve's beautiful and only true sandhill.

9th Annual Wildlife Safari - 4/6/19

1 beautiful day + 47 hard-working volunteers + 14 wildlife presenters and their critters + about 900 attendees = a very successful Wildlife Safari!



A big shout out to all the **volunteers** who were there helping greet, guide, and help our visitors in so many ways!



This year **Girl Scout Troop 503** provided a cool alligator craft for kids. Thanks to **Amarie Armstrong, Bianca Middleton, Isabella Robinson and Alexis Steiner** for teaching us more about respecting the alligators that are ever present in Florida!



Photos by Julia Myers and Cathy Vogelsong

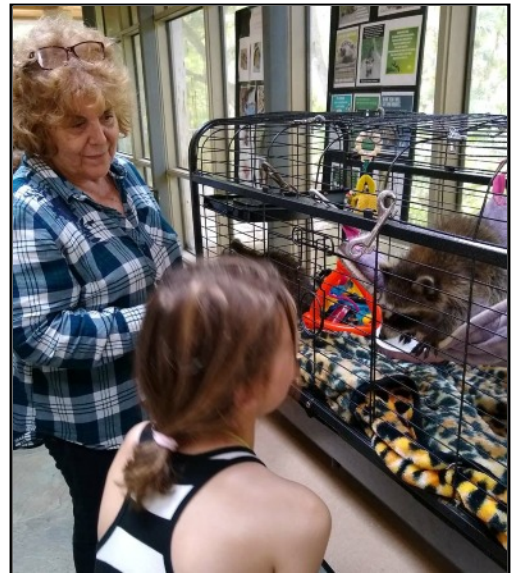
We sincerely thank our generous **Safari sponsors**. Their support makes it possible for the Friends to continue to offer this educational and fun-filled event to the public.

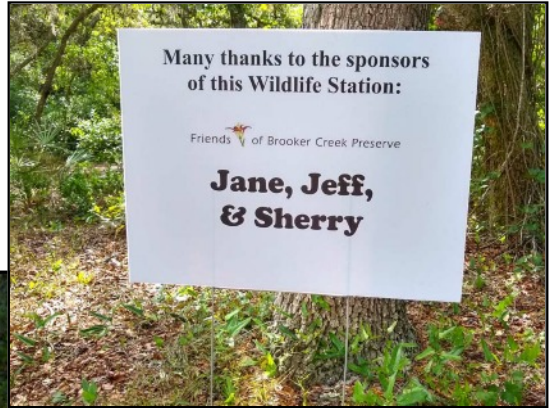
And, of course, we are so grateful to the **wildlife experts** and their animals who spent the day with us sharing their expertise on the types of animals that make Brooker Creek Preserve their home. Our Safari gives everyone a chance to see these cute critters up close and personal! (Yes, even the baby alligator was cute!)



- Betty Rossie (turtles)
- Friends of Boyd Hill Nature Preserve (raptors)
- Reptile Discovery Program (baby alligator)
- Suncoast Herpetological Society (snakes)
- Tampa Bay Bats
- Wright Ranch Rescue (baby raccoons and opossums)







THANK YOU 2019 SPONSORS!

- The Burr Family**
- Hoffman Architects, PA**
- Jane, Jeff, and Sherry**
- Nichter Photography**
- Chuck and Kim Parsons**
- Louis T. Petersen**
- Margaret Rosar**
- Vettore's Pizzeria and Restaurant**
- Julie Wade**
- Prudential Advisors: Barbara Schultz and Michelle Malacinski**



FOBCP Return the Preserve — 4/22/19

By: Evan Earle, Jr

Our next RTP work day will be Saturday, July 20. Join us!

April 22, 2019 marked the 49th anniversary of Earth Day. We celebrated Earth Day at our Return The Preserve (RTP) Work Day by doing what else? Cutting down trees. Wait! What?

Who celebrates Earth Day by cutting down trees? Well, we do because sometimes less IS more. The Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve (FOBCP) worked closely with Preserve Staff, Lisa Baltus, who marked trees that were extremely crowded. Thanks to Lisa's thoroughness, we had plenty of trees to cut down. And cut them down we did. Over 100 marked pine trees, TEN trailers worth, were cut down and over 1,000 saplings were removed. By the way, we did all of this by hand! With 30 volunteers! At the end to our RTP Work Day, I had a much healthier respect for beavers and for pioneers who chopped down trees for their homes! The areas on which we worked look better than ever and will hopefully thrive with their newfound room.



Speaking of respect, I can't tell you how much I appreciate our volunteers who support our RTP Work Days. We had students from Mitchell High School (including long time volunteers Sandy, Jeremy, and Jacob), Palm Harbor University High School (thank you Colby and your Environment Club peers), and Berkeley Preparatory School (well done Griffin). When students join us they always bring enthusiasm and knowledge. All of these students were joined by other volunteers willing to give up their Saturday morning to help BCP. I'll say it again. Our RTP Volunteers are the hardest working volunteers there are!



FOBCP members who made a difference: Cathie Foster who made time to help us before working at our Nature Store, Barry Andress who helped clean up the fallen trees, Barbara Hoffman who was there from beginning to end and provided the trailer that carried the 10 loads of trees, Ruth Earle who delivered our pizzas, and Marion Yongue who is at every RTP Work Day!.



A HUGE shout out and THANK YOU to BJ's Restaurant And Brewhouse at Westfield Countryside Mall for their generous donation of 10 delicious pizzas for our lunch. BJ's has stepped up time and time again. Thanks to their generosity, a lot of happy volunteers enjoyed the delicious pizzas! When RTP Work Day volunteers get quiet, that is a compliment to the chef!

Thank You Keep Pinellas Beautiful

Keep Pinellas Beautiful (KPB) is the Pinellas County affiliate of Keep American Beautiful. They have been providing leadership on environmental stewardship and healthier communities since 1992. KPB has been a valued partner for our Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve (FOBCP) Return The Preserve (RTP) Work Days by donating reusable water bottles, t-shirts, gloves, tools, bug spray, sunscreen, and more. They provide Chik-Fil-A gift cards - yum! KPB staff and volunteers have participated in our RTP Work Days. THANK YOU KPB for your generosity and ongoing partnership with us. You are helping us in our mission and in showing our volunteers just how much we appreciate them.



Friends  of Brooker Creek Preserve


Back by popular demand...

OFF THE BEATEN PATH

A nature-based fundraising hike series

Description: This series of four hikes will take place in beautiful areas tucked away within Brooker Creek Preserve in sites that are closed to the public. Our guide, Dr. Craig Huegel (SPC Biology Professor), can identify everything, from the tiniest moss to the tallest tree including animal prints, bird calls, lichens, and more. He is full of stories and very patient in answering questions. The hikes will be not only educational, but a lot of fun as well! The hikes will begin at 9:00 a.m. and be about 3-4 hours long. Bring water and lunch.

Cost: \$80 donation for the series or \$25 donation per hike with a 10% discount for members of Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve

 **June 23, 2019 – Interior Wildlands** – We will be in parts of the Preserve so remote that cell phones won't work, areas so pretty you won't believe you are in Pinellas County!

Sep. 22, 2019 – In Search of Catesby's Lily – Located in the eastern part of the preserve, we will search for the threatened Catesby's Lily. In so doing, we will see a profusion of beautiful fall wildflowers in full bloom.

Reservations Required: Reserve your spot by emailing fobcp@tampabay.rr.com. Sign up early! Only 20 spots are open for these fabulous hikes *off the beaten path!* Questions? Email fobcp@tampabay.rr.com or call 727-934-2680.

The 5th Annual



Ken Rowe Birdathon

At Brooker Creek Preserve

Saturday June 9, 2019

5:30 am – 11:30 am Birding, 12:00 – 1:00 pm Lunch & Prizes

Birders of all levels are welcome and encouraged to attend! Teams of 2-4 people, \$10/person, includes lunch. Teams are encouraged to invite youth birders to join their team and may include them as extra members over the cap of four. Prizes will be awarded in a variety of categories including most species per team and many more... Birding will take place by teams at their own pace at a choice of several areas within the Brooker Creek Preserve boundary, most not open to the public. Maps indicating entry/parking sites, including "hot spot" locations, will be provided to participants. Data collected will be used to help monitor breeding bird populations. Team leaders must RSVP by June 6, 2019.

This event is sponsored by Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve.

3940 Keystone Road, Tarpon Springs, 34688

For questions or to sign up: Call 727-934-2680 * Email fobcp@tampabay.rr.com



Mother's Day *Paint for the Wild* class!



On **Sunday, May 12th, 12-3:00**, grab your mom, friend, or anyone and come spend the day with your favorite people enjoying a fun, judgment-free environment perfect for expressing your creativity! Throughout the class, you are guided step by step by our instructor, shown all the techniques, and provided with all the materials you need for painting this colorful Egret!
Beginner-friendly!

- All materials are provided to create your 11"x 14" painting
- Enjoy an assortment of snacks & refreshments
- Explore the exhibits and hike under the lush canopy
- Class time will be around 3 hours (including breaks)
- Indoor classroom w/ natural lighting, air conditioning, and bathrooms
- **\$35 /person** *Class benefits the Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve*

Reserve your seat at <https://paintforthewild.com/collections/all-classes-tampa-bay-area/products/sat-may-18-12-3pm>

2019 NIGHT HIKES!

Join the Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve for a hiking experience along the Education Center Trail...*at night!* These special hikes are open to the public and limited to 20 people per hike. **A \$3 per person donation is requested.** Hikes are led by Mark Yeager, a Preserve volunteer who is knowledgeable about nocturnal wildlife. The hike is about one-mile in length and will take about 1.5 hours.

Our last Night Hike of the season — Sat., May 11, 7:30-10:00 pm

Pre-registration is required! Once you register, more information will come to you via email. Pre-register online by logging onto: <https://nighthikes.eventbrite.com>

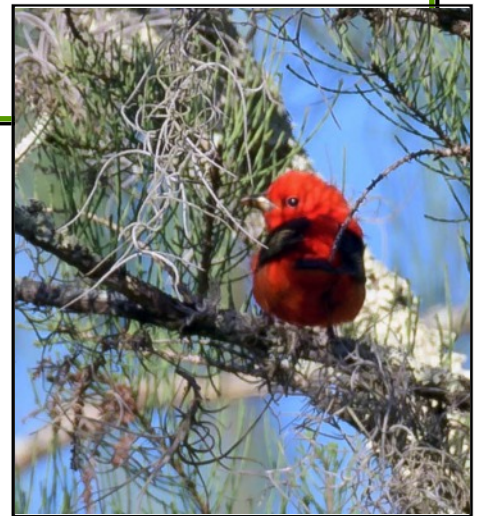
These hikes are for adults and families only. Children must be accompanied by parents. Please leave your pets at home. Pets are not permitted in County Preserves.

Questions? Email fobcp@tampabay.rr.com

Spring Migration By: Craig Huegel

For those of us that appreciate birds, this time of year is the very best time to look for them. Spring brings us some of our most amazing songbirds as they stop by from the tropics on their way further north to their breeding areas. It also brings back a variety of birds that have been absent over the winter, but that will nest within the various habitats we've protected within Brooker Creek Preserve.

The migrants likely also passed through during the fall, but most adopted much duller plumage then. Most birds go through two distinct molts each year. It does them no good to remain brightly colored when they are not in the process of attracting mates and setting up their breeding territories. Bright colors attract the attention of predators. It is dangerous so they lose those brightly colored feathers and replace them with duller ones - greens and browns, so they'll blend in better with the foliage. Breeding, however, is worth the risk. To attract a mate, male birds must put on a show to demonstrate their fitness as potential partners. The brighter their colors, the more fit they appear to be. They also demonstrate that by singing loudly and frequently from perches where they are obvious to the whole world around them. Some,



Migrating Scarlet Tanager, photographed at the Preserve in April by Marcelo Rescala.

no doubt, get picked off by hawks and other birds of prey, but acquiring a mate and raising a family is worth it. Without all the risk, the species would decline for lack of breeding.

Migratory songbirds, in particular, replace their dull wintering plumage just before migration. As they pass through Brooker Creek Preserve, and your home landscapes, they are already in full breeding colors. So, we have a few weeks to witness it. Wood warblers, tanagers, grosbeaks, and buntings can be spectacular at this time of year. Most move through within the weeks of April to early May. Each generally spends just a day stocking up on insect food before departing so there is a daily progression of birds and species as a whole. The timing is somewhat predictable, just as the timing of the famous swallows of Capistrano. There are species that are early and those at the tail end. If you watch birds annually with a good eye to what you're seeing, you'll notice that and you'll be able to roughly predict what you might see in the days ahead.

Most songbirds do their real migration at night so they stoke up a bit on food in the early morning, rest for a while and then feed aggressively in the afternoon until dusk. Those are the best hours to watch for them. Attracting them to your landscape is not difficult, but it requires you to provide what they are looking for - food and water. Most prefer to feed in the upper canopies of hardwood trees - oaks, hickories, maples, etc. They glean insects from the foliage and bark and they often spend hours there if the canopy is well developed. In my former landscape, I had a great many species each year in the canopy of my mature live oaks. I am not getting those birds this year in my new home that lacks a woody component. I'm planting it now and hope that someday it will rival what I recently left.

The other component is water. Migratory birds need to replace the water they've used up during the migratory flight of the night before. They also need to "bathe." Bird baths, when designed for birds and not as lawn ornaments, can be useful, but I've found the best water features are those that use a pump to cycle water in a shallow stream. I believe that the sound of running water is irresistible to birds looking for water. The stream portion has to be shallow, with a few riffles, and it has to move slowly. There are kits available for the handy person to install

Now is a great time to go bird watching at Brooker Creek Preserve. The other great time will be Sunday, June 9, when we hold our annual Birdathon. The migrants will be long gone, but this important event lets us track the general health of our breeding species. I hope you can join us. There will be more information on it as we get closer to the event.



The Gray Catbird and Black and White Warbler over-wintered at the Preserve. Photos by Marcelo Rescala.

Wildflower Garden Update

By: Pam Brown

Our garden has put on a spectacular show this spring. The winter rain was more than usual and this fueled more blooms. I spied a two new volunteer blue-eyed grass (*Sisyrinchium angustifolium*) plants that were a nice surprise since we did not intentionally plant them. In March we spent time removing the brown dead growth from the base of the Muhly grass plants and basically tidying up. I also noticed a new Pine Hyacinth (*Climatis baldwinii*) seedling growing very near our original plant. It must have grown from a seed from the infrequent blooms of this delicate plant.



If you can help in the garden, our next workday is May 25. Our workdays are on the last Saturday of each month from 8:00 -10:00 a.m. (summer hours). We change to summer hours (8:00-10:00 a.m.) in April. Bring your gardening tools, gloves, hat, bug spray and wear closed-toed shoes. We will provide breakfast snacks, orange juice and coffee. Hope to see you there!

Pam's Tip

I attended the Florida Wildflower Symposium in Gainesville in April. It was a great conference. One thing that was emphasized was the need to provide habitat for our birds and insects that are declining at an alarming rate. The best way to do this is with native plants, including native wildflowers, which these creatures have evolved with over many thousands of years. Our extensive lawns and exotic plants can be like a desert to these creatures.

Have you noticed that when you take a car trip these days you do not get a windshield full of insects that need to be removed? Even during lovebug season? This is one way to notice that there are just not as many insects as there used to be.

Since I have written lately about declining bees and pollinators, I am focusing on birds this month. Jane Morse, retired UF/IFAS commercial horticulture extension agent for Pinellas County wrote an excellent blog post (Exotic Plants Starving Birds! 12 Things You Can Do to Help) in April of 2018. I am going to quote most of her blog post here since the information is excellent:

Birds Are Starving

Exotic (non-native) plants do not support the caterpillars that native birds need for food, causing birds to starve to death. If birds can't find enough caterpillars, they can't reproduce and they and their young starve.

Birds Need Caterpillars

Did you know that a chickadee that is the weight of 4 pennies must feed its young between 6,240 and 9,120 caterpillars in just 16 days to get them to the fledgling stage? If you think you work hard, chickadees bring caterpillars to their chicks every 3 minutes from 6 AM to 8 PM. Did you know that 80 to 90% of a hummingbird's diet is insects and spiders, and that this is true for 96% of land-dwelling birds?

Why Caterpillars?

There are several reasons caterpillars are essential to birds. They are soft so they will not hurt the young chick's throat, they are large, and they are very high in protein and fats needed for growth.

Caterpillars contain double the amount of carotenoids (nutrient) as other insects. Carotenoids stimulate the immune system, improve color vision and sperm viability, improve sexual attractiveness, are required by developing chicks, and are antioxidants.

Life for birds, lizards, frogs, bears, fox and many other wildlife depends upon an abundance of insects as a food source. Native plants support the insects needed for bird and animal survival. A world without insects is a world without biodiversity (variety of life) and a world in which humans cannot survive. That is what makes this so important.

Use Native Plants

Native plants, animals and insects have evolved together for millions of years. Plants produce compounds that make them taste bad or cause sickness or death so they won't be eaten. As insects evolved with plants, they found ways to overcome these compounds. Ninety percent of insects that eat plants can only eat the plants with which they co-evolved.

The monarch butterfly is able to feed on milkweed (which is poisonous) because it evolved to keep the plant from stopping its heart. Insects are usually able to overcome compounds in one type of plant, so they can only feed on that plant type. Exotic plants have not evolved with the native insects and therefore native insects cannot use them as a food source.

Provide Diversity

Exotic plants may have one type of caterpillar which feeds on it compared to a native oak that can provide for 395 types of native caterpillars. Diversity is important: If one type of caterpillar is having a bad year that would mean no food at all. With a variety of caterpillars produced there will always be a food source for birds and animals. For a list of plants and the number of caterpillars they support visit <https://www.nwf.org/NativePlantFinder/>

Stop Using Pesticides

We have been conditioned to think we have to spray and kill insects in our gardens. New research, along with the increasing extinction of native flora and fauna, is teaching us otherwise. Insects are a critical part of the environment and our food webs. Birds and other animals will starve without insects and caterpillars to eat.

Going, Going, Gone...

Birds need our help! Worldwide there are approximately 10,000 species of birds, with an estimated 1,200 considered to be under threat of extinction. Over 190 species of birds have become extinct, and this rate of extinction seems to be increasing. In 2014, 230 North American bird species were listed as "at risk of extinction". Two years later that number had climbed to 426. In the U.S. there are 1.5 billion fewer breeding birds compared to 40 years ago. Forty-Six species have lost half of their population. Natural areas are too small and fragmented to sustain animal populations. Invasive exotic species have escaped our gardens and taken over natural areas further destroying much needed food sources.

You can help!

Before it is too late for birds:

- Use native plants.
 - Remove all invasive species.
 - Replace exotic plants with native plants.
 - Stop spraying insecticides in your yard.
 - Replace bird feeders with plants that support caterpillars.
 - Add a birdbath or pond.
 - Plant a wildflower meadow.
 - Ask nurseries and big box stores to supply mostly native plants.
 - Keep cats indoors.
 - Talk to your government representatives about preserving and increasing natural areas and providing wildlife corridors. Ask them to change landscape codes to include all native plants. Ask them to plant wildflower meadows instead of lawns.
- Share this information with your family and friends. Birds' lives depend on you. What you plant matters!

<http://blogs.ifas.ufl.edu/pinellasco/2018/04/18/exotic-plants-starving-birds-12-things-you-can-do-to-help/>

Friends  of Brooker Creek Preserve



BEEKEEPERS CLUB

The Friends Beekeepers Club is open to anyone who is interested in beekeeping. Those of us already in the club are very new to the hobby and are learning as we go. Bob Burkard, Beekeepers Club President, is very knowledgeable about beekeeping. We have now built TEN hives, each hosting between 10,000 and 20,000 bees.

Meetings are held the first Sunday of each month at 9:00 am. We meet at the Bee Shed at Brooker Creek Preserve Environmental Education Center, gather equipment, and then go to the apiary located about two miles away. Everyone shares in all work.

Annual dues for the club are \$25 per person. You must also be a member of *Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve* in order to join the Beekeepers Club. The Friends Beekeepers Club is an affiliate of *Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve*.

If you would like to join the **Friends Beekeepers Club** or simply have questions, please email fobcp@tampabay.rr.com.

YOUTH BEEKEEPING CLASS

Hey Kids! Curious about beekeeping and how it works? Join Bob Burkard, president of the Brooker Beekeeping Club and learn about this fun hobby with sweet rewards. Check out an observation hive and even try on a bee suit!

 Family Friendly!

Recommended for youth ages 5-11.

Sunday, May 19
1:00 - 2:00 p.m.

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Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve Readers Club

By: Jon Burr



The book for March was *The River of the Golden Ibis*, by Gloria Jahoda. I must admit that the book for me started a little slow - "pedestrian" - was my note to self. But a few chapters in I was beginning to be reluctant to put it down. I've lived here 77 years and have always been interested in Tampa Bay history. I learned more from this book about where I live than in my last 70 years of learning. The last half of the book seemed to be more like a series of articles. It was interesting to see names of people I've talked to. People like: Sam Gibbons who served in the Florida State House of Representatives, Florida State Senate, and the U.S. House of Representatives, was the same age as and a childhood friend of my mother and I wrote him following an article in the paper about him. I answered the phone when he called to say hello to mother. Or Jack Kerouac "Beat writer" (wrote good haiku). I had more than one beer at The Wild Boar in Tampa with Jack Kerouac. (I quit, Jack didn't.) There was recently an article about possibly being able to keep Jack's St. Pete house as a local landmark. Jahoda's book was generally liked by our readers.

April we discussed a very special book considered the bible of the environmental movement: *A Sand County Almanac*, by Aldo Leopold. We all liked it. The writing was almost poetic. Leopold came to champion something he called a 'land ethic'. Wilderness was something cherish for its own sake and not to be seen as something to be exploited. In a way some of his strongest criticisms were directed at agencies such as extension services. "As far as I can detect, no ethical obligation toward land is taught in these institutions." He drew an inviolate line between conservation and preservation. He saved his most stringent criticism for roads which once built invariably seemed to doom the wilderness. Easy human access meant an irreversible destruction of the natural order of the land and all those who lived or grew there. I learned some more about Leopold from the jacket of my copy which I bought some fifty years ago. He began as an avid hunter, gave up guns for bows and eventually gave up hunting altogether. This book was so much about how he discovered his love for the wilderness and how he came to understand his own behavior needed to be modified if he was honest about that love.

In May we will discuss Jeff Klinkenberg's *Land of Flowers*, and in June it's *Tracking Desire* by Susan Cerulean. Both these books are by authors we have enjoyed before. There's plenty of room at the table so join us the first Saturday of the month at 9:30 am in the Ed Center conference room.

Volunteer News and More!

By Julia Myers, Education Support Specialist, Brooker Creek Preserve



Brooker Creek Staff took a trip to the Brooker Creek Headwaters Nature Preserve! The Brooker Creek watershed is roughly 39 square miles starting at the headwaters in Hillsborough County and eventually ending in Lake Tarpon. The Headwaters Preserve is just over 1,000 acres and offers an abundance of native wildflowers. Our highlight was the large number of Hooded Pitcher plants that were sprinkling the edges of our path. This state-threatened carnivorous plant is amazing and it doesn't occur in Pinellas County. We were also delighted to meet **THREE** new species of terrestrial orchids!! So we encourage you all to go check out our headwaters too and enjoy the beauty of wild Florida!



Pitcherplants
(*Sarracenia minor*)










Grasspink orchid
(*Calopogon multiflorus*)

Our next all volunteer training/social will be on June 1st from 10:00 a.m. to noon! This training will be a fun get together to share important updates and to help us all sharpen our skills and continue to S.H.I.N.E! We will end at noon for a potluck lunch! Staff will provide the main course, so really just potluck sides and desserts! Please R.S.V.P. if you plan to come, we will also have a sign-up sheet on the island.

If you would like to join our active volunteer group at Brooker Creek Preserve, please call us at (727) 453-6800.

Nature University at Brooker Creek Preserve!



-  First of our New Adult Ecology Series
-  University of Florida Researchers will share their studies on Insect/Plant Relationships
-  May 4th 2019
-  10:30 a.m.
-  Brooker Creek Preserve Auditorium
-  Recommended for Adults
-  Register Online <http://bit.ly/2v3j1HG>



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Nature University is a new adult ecology series that James has been putting together and it is about to kick off on May 4th! We've invited researchers from state universities to present their work. Our first Nature University will feature researchers from the University of Florida Department of Entomology. They will present on insect/plant relationships and there will be live specimens on display!

Citizen Science with **MICROPLASTICS!**

Saturday, May 11
10:30 am



Lara will walk participants through the process of collecting, filtering, and analyzing a water sample for the presence of microplastics. Interested participants can sign-out a sample bottle to collect their first real-world sample and then bring it back in to filter and analyze. Contribute to a relatively new field of science by getting involved in the Florida Microplastic Awareness Project!

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Friends of
Brooker Creek Preserve

ADOPT AN ACRE



*A program to enhance restoration and land management programs in **Brooker Creek Preserve***

The **ADOPT AN ACRE** program was established by the Friends in 2016 to give individuals the opportunity to help keep intact the ecological integrity of the Preserve.

100% of funding will be used for:

- Removing exotic and invasive plants
- Restoring the natural flow of water
- Fire management
- Restoring natural plant communities

Acres make great gifts for birthdays, anniversaries, memorials and more!

Upon receipt of the donation, the donor or honoree's name will be placed on the **ADOPT AN ACRE** display inside the Environmental Education Center for one year. A certificate will be sent to the honoree acknowledging the adoption.

Donor
Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: (_____) _____

Email: _____

___in honor of ___in memory of ___for myself

Honoree
Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: (_____) _____

I wish to adopt _____ acres @ \$100/acre

Total Due: _____

Make check payable to: FOBCP

Mail to: 3940 Keystone Road
Tarpon Springs, FL 34688

Questions? fobcp@tampabay.rr.com

FEID #59-3302182 tax-exempt, non-profit corporation

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BROOKER CREEK PRESERVE

Cool calendar for your refrigerator!

May 2019

**Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve events*

THURSDAY		FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
2 Pre-School Book Time 10:30-11:30		3	4 Guided Hike 9:00-10:30 *Friends Readers Club 9:30-10:30 Nature University 10:30-12:00 <i>(Entomology)</i>	5 Guided Bird Hike 8:00-9:30 *Beekeepers Club 9 am-noon
9 Pre-School Book Time 10:30-11:30		10 Wild Things (pre-K stories & songs) 10-10:45	11 Songbird Sunrise 5:45 -7:30 Beginning Bird Hike 8-10 am Citizen Science-Microplastics 10:30-12 *Night Hike 7:30-9:30 pm \$3 donation	12 Mother's Day Mother Nature Guided Hike 9-10:30 Paint for the Wild 12-3 pm <i>Registraton required</i>
Wed 15 *FOBCP Board Meeting 6-8 pm	16 Pre-School Book Time 10:30-11:30 Nature Journaling for Youth 2:30-3:30	17 Family Fun Friday 10:00-11:00	18 Guided Hike 9:00-10:30 Youth Workshop 12:30-1:30 <i>Wire-Wrapped Pendants</i> <i>Registration required</i>	19 Dragonfly Discovery Hike 9:00-10:30 Youth Beekeeping Class Ages 5-11 1:00-2:00
23 and 30 Pre-School Book Time 10:30-11:30		24	25 *Wildflower Garden Work Day 8:00-10:00 am Guided Hike 9:00-10:30 am Youth Safety in the Outdoors 10:30-12:30	26 Wetland Explorers Tour 9:00-10:30

June 2019

THURSDAY		FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
			1 *Friends Readers Club 9:30-10:30 Volunteer Training/Social 10 am-noon	2 *Beekeepers Club 9:00 am *Friends Photography Opening Reception 1-3 pm
6 Pre-School Book Time 10:30-11:30		7	8 Songbird Sunrise 5:45 -7:30 Beginning Bird Hike 8:00-10:00	9 *Ken Rowe Birdathon 5:30am-1:00 pm
Wed 12 Skins & Skulls 10:30-12	13 Pre-School Book Time 10:30-11:30	14 Wild Things-preK stories 10-10:45 Jr. Naturalist Hike 9:30-10:30	15	16
20 Pre-School Book Time 10:30-11:30		21 Family Fun Friday 10-11 am	22 Summer Morning Nature Walk 9:00-10:30	23 *Off the Beaten Path Hike 9:00-1:00 \$25/psn donation \$22.50 for FOBCP members
27 Pre-School Book Time 10:30-11:30		28	29 *Wildflower Garden Work Day 8:00-10:00 am	30

For program details go to <http://www.brookercreekpreserve.org/programs-classes.htm> Click "Calendar of Classes/Programs/Hikes"
Hiking Trails are open every day from 7:00 am until posted time, usually one hour before sunset.

Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve - Mission Statement: The mission of the Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve is to provide public support for the Preserve through fund raising, volunteer programs, and education to ensure that the Preserve remains a natural wilderness for future generations.

Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve - Land Use Position Statement: The Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve support land uses within the boundaries of Brooker Creek Preserve which have a main purpose that furthers the preservation, conservation, restoration or protection of the land and resources of the Brooker Creek Preserve.

Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve:
www.FriendsOfBrookerCreekPreserve.org
Email: fobcp@tampabay.rr.com
Voicemail: (727) 934-2680

Brooker Creek Preserve:
Phone: (727) 453-6900
Website: www.brookercreekpreserve.org
Brooker Creek Preserve Environmental Education Center is located at 3940 Keystone Road, Tarpon Springs, Florida, 34688. Phone: (727) 453-6800
Hours: Thurs. - Sat. 9am - 4pm, Sun., 11am - 4pm.

Friends Nature Store is located in the Education Center. Hours: Thurs. - Sat. 9am - 4pm, Sun., 11am - 4pm.

Preserve Hiking Trails open 7 days a week, 7:00am to 30 minutes before sunset. Closed the day after Thanksgiving and Dec. 25.

Horse Trails open 7 days a week, all year, sunrise to sunset.

This newsletter is published every other month. Please submit articles to Newsletter Editor Dr. Craig Huegel (727) 422-6583 or email Huegelc55@aol.com

Pinellas County PCR Mission statement: The mission of the Parks and Conservation Resources Department is to maintain and protect the inherent value of the County's natural, cultural and recreational resources through sustainable access, education, and stewardship that enhance quality of life for our community and future generations.

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