


Newsletter of the
Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve

November - December 2015

Barb's Final Chairman's Message

By Barb Hoffman

It is with both a glad heart and heavy heart that I write my final Chairman's Message. If I had my druthers, I would remain Board Chairman to the end of my days. But change is necessary for any Board or else we become stagnant. The time has simply come for us to elect someone new to provide fresh ideas and a new face.

When I took the reins in 2009, the recession was in full swing and the County, in order to balance their budget, laid off nearly every member of the 37 staff for Weedon Island and Brooker Creek Preserves.

The Friends stood fast by the Preserve, meeting with County officials to come up with ways to keep the doors open. Over time since our inception in 1994, we have evolved to meet the needs of the Preserve. In 2009, the need was for education programs and other ways to keep the public coming. Since then, we successfully:

- Organized and conducted six Fall Wildflower Festivals (the first in 2010)
- Organized and conducted five Wildlife Safaris (the first in 2011)
- Helped to move the 4th Grade Program to Brooker Creek Preserve
- Became a key catalyst in getting the Tri-County Trail established (to be built in 2016!)
- Held a series of Adult Ecology Workshops and Programs
- Started Off the Beaten Path Hikes
- Started Night Hikes
- Opened a Nature Store

Chairman's Message

by Barbara Hoffman	p. 1
Save the Dates	p. 2
The Iron Ranger is Back	p. 3
History of Friends Chairmen	p. 3
Fall Wildflower Festival 10/17	p. 4
Thank You Festival Sponsors	p. 5
Off the Beaten Path Hike 10/18.	p. 6
Florida Wildlife Corridor 10/22	p. 6
Friends Annual Meeting & Volunteer Appreciation 11/7	p. 7
Music in the Woods 11/15	p. 8
Headwaters Preserve Hike 11/15	p. 9
Wreath-Making Workshop 12/5	p.10
Music Jamboree 12/13.	p.11
Eco-Printing Workshop 1/10/16	p.12
Off the Beaten Path Hike -- Swamp Amble 1/17/16	p.13
Fall Color by Craig Huegel	p.14
Invitation from Barry	p.15
Return the Preserve Work Day by Evan Earle Jr	p.16
Brooker Creek Book Club	p.17
Nature Store News by Kathleen Nichter	p.18
News from the Wildflower Garden by Pam Brown	p.18
Pam's Gardening Tip	P.19
Volunteer News by Lara Miller & Julia Myers.	p.20
Calendar of Events	p.22
Mission Statements/Contacts	p.23

The trails are closed only the day after Thanksgiving (Nov. 27) and Christmas Day (Dec. 25).

- Began the Music in the Woods Series
- Organized art classes and events

We also helped with Preserve maintenance by:

- Maintaining the Wildflower Garden
- Conducting Return the Preserve work days

Programmatically, we:

- Restructured our newsletter to include Brooker volunteers
- Rerouted the Wilderness Trail
- Began a beekeeping program
- Established an Iron Ranger
- Began and maintained a good working relationship with the IFAS and County staff
- Supported the County volunteers with scholarships, Appreciation Day, the coffee/snack fund, and more



We still need to embark on a capital campaign for huge needs related to the health of the Preserve. As you know and understand the importance of fire ecology, frequent fire is a missing necessity of the pine flatwoods. The County needs large, costly equipment to begin a fire regime in places that haven't experienced fire in over 30 years - way, way too much time. I hope to play a big part in this.

Many, many thanks to the fantastic Board of Directors who served during my tenure as Chairman. Each Director supports a specific job or project, or more than one, and we couldn't succeed in all of our many endeavors without them. I am so grateful to know them and to have worked with them, and I look forward to continued adventures . . . in another capacity on the Board!

Barb

**Save the Dates
Friends Events for 2015/16**

- Nov. 7 BC Preserve Book Club
- Nov. 7 Friends Annual Meeting & Volunteer Appreciation
- Nov. 15 Music in the Woods
- Nov. 15 BC Headwaters Nature Preserve hike
- Nov. Wildflower Garden Club
- Dec. 5 BC Preserve Book Club
- Dec. 5 Wreath-Making Workshop
- Dec. 13 Music Jamboree
- Dec. Wildflower Garden Club
- Jan. 10 Eco-Printing Class
- Jan. 17 Off The Beaten Path Hike --Swamp Amble



To Moth. Photo by Julia Myers



Marion Yongue, Evan Earle, and Phil Kesel pause after digging a huge hole and filling it with cement.

The Iron Ranger is Back!
 Thanks to the efforts of Evan Earle and crew, the Iron Ranger has been built bigger and better and is back at work collecting donations!



Evan Earle placing the final touch - the lock - on the new Iron Ranger.

DID YOU KNOW?
History of Friends Chairmen

1994-1998	Judith Buhrman (4 years)
1998-2000	Barb Hoffman (2 years)
2000-2002	Ken Rowe (2 years)
2002-2003	Tom Pickard (1 year)
2003-2006	Cathie Foster (3 years)
2005-2006	Mathew Poling* (1 year)
2006-2007	Walt Hoskins (1 year)
2007-2009	Allyn Childress (3 years)
2009-2015	Barb Hoffman (6 years)

*Senior Executive serving with Cathie Foster



Don't forget to visit the Nature Store for great holiday gifts! There is something for everyone!

Fall Wildflower Festival 2015, 10/17

by Cathie Foster

Over 900 people attended the Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve's 6th annual Fall Wildflower Festival on Saturday, October 17. Begun in 2010 as a way to showcase the Preserve's Education Center, hiking trails and its proliferation of beautiful fall wildflowers, this year's event was, as always, free to the public and had something for folks of all ages. Throughout the day, visitors attended presentations by experts to learn about Pinellas County wildflowers; how to landscape with them, how to photograph them and which ones are edible (or not!). The beekeepers with their Observation Beehive and honey for sale were busy all day long, as was the Kids Craft Zone, where younger visitors learned about the butterfly life-cycle, created fanciful insect art and enjoyed meeting live caterpillars up-close. The Wildflower Quest got participants out on the trails in a scavenger hunt-type search for native plants and wildflowers. Upon completion of the Quest, they received a Florida wildflowers and butterflies pamphlet, sticker and a \$1 gift certificate to our own Nature Store. The main attraction, as always, was the huge butterfly tent by Butterfly Workx. Filled with over 250 live butterflies, the tent was also filled all day long with people marveling in awe at the variety of butterflies around them. Inspired by the wildflower theme of the festival, many folks visited the native plant sale to purchase plants for their own yards. By the end of the day, almost every plant had been sold!

A huge event like this, of course, can only happen with the dedication and hard work of the many Friends members, Preserve volunteers and community members who gave approximately 300 hours of their time on the day of the event. The Friends extend sincere thanks to each and every one of you. You are an amazing group! We also thank our many sponsors. We could not have done this event without all of you!



Barb Hoffman (left) and Cathie Foster. "She's in charge." "No, she's in charge." Photo by Karl Nichter.



Photos by James Stevenson



Friends  of Brooker Creek Preserve

Fall Wildflower Festival
Brooker Creek Preserve
Saturday, October 17, 2015

MANY THANKS TO OUR SPONSORS!

Barry and Cathie

Burr Family

Council of North County Neighborhoods, Inc.

Doug Eiland, MD - Radiology Associates of Tarpon Springs

Evan C. Earle, Jr. and Marion T. Yongue

Flagship Community Bank

Garden Club of Tarpon Springs

Marleen & Len Gravitz

Hoffman Architects, PA

Jane & Jeff Myers

Nichter Photography

Palm Harbor Garden Club/Lois Weber

Pampered Gardeners, LLC

Chuck & Kim Parsons

Louis T. Petersen

Tom Rosier-Florida Luxury Realty

Barbara Schultz, Financial Professional-Prudential Advisors

Waddell & Reed Financial Advisors

Julie Wade

Wilcox Nursery and Landscaping

Anonymous (1)



Off The Beaten Path : In Search of the Catesby Lily, 10/18

As the name implies, the hike was certainly off the beaten path. In fact, at this spot, there was no path at all! Photo by Barb Hoffman



The eleven brave people who hiked off the beaten path, led by Dr. Craig Huegel (back row on left). Photo by Barb Hoffman who attended the hike and was added to the photo by the publisher.



The elusive quarry

Florida Wildlife Corridor Program and Reception, 10/22

Photos by Evan Earle Jr.



Calling all Friends & Volunteers!
You are invited to the
Friends Annual Meeting
& Volunteer Appreciation

Saturday, November 7, 2015
10:00 am - 12:00 noon

10:00 Breakfast pancakes cooked to order by staff.
Fresh fruit, egg casseroles, bacon, sausage,
coffee, & OJ provided by the Friends.

11:00 Presentations! Awards! Elections! Prizes!

RSVP by email: fobcp@tampabay.rr.com
Or by phone: 727-934-2680

The Friends Board of Directors is pleased to offer the following slate of directors up for election at the upcoming annual meeting on **November 7**:

Pam Brown
Evan Earle
Cathie Foster
Terri Gonzalez
Len Gravitz
Barb Hoffman
Craig Huegel
Barb Schultz
Mark Yeager

Juvenile Cottonmouth.
Photo by Julia Myers.



Friends  of Brooker Creek Preserve

Music in the Woods Series

presents the *smooooooth* music of



Our Fall Music in the Woods will take place Sunday, November 15, rain or shine. Come enjoy music performed by the Tarpon Springs High School Jazz band in the music pavilion at the preserve. We will move inside the auditorium if it rains. Come support the youth of Tarpon Springs as well as your preserve! A \$5 donation for adults is requested.

TSHS Jazz Band

Sunday, November 15, 2015

5:00–7:00 pm

Brooker Creek Preserve Environmental Education Center
Outdoor Music Pavillion

\$5/person donation requested

Make sure to bring drinks and lawn chairs or a blanket to sit on.

Bring a picnic dinner if you wish!

(Sorry, no pets or alcoholic beverages allowed.)

Questions: fobcp@tampabay.rr.com or 727-934-2680



Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve

Join the Friends on a special field trip to
Brooker Creek Headwaters Nature Preserve

a SWFWMD property located between
Lutz-Lake Fern Road & Van Dyke Road in Hillsborough County

Sunday, November 15, 2015
9:00 am - 1:00 pm
Hike Leader: Dr. Craig Huegel
\$15 Donation per person requested

Public ownership of this 1,111 acre preserve ensures protection of important wildlife habitat and wetlands. The site serves as the headwaters of the Brooker Creek system. The property includes a mosaic of forested swamps, floodplains and low-lying uplands. The uplands include pine flatwoods, xeric oak hammocks, mixed hardwood, and pine prairies. We will hike together along some very interesting trails and see where Brooker Creek begins!

For more information about the site, go to:
<http://www.swfwmd.state.fl.us/recreation/areas/brookercreekheadwaters.html>

Questions and to RSVP: fobcp@tampabay.rr.com or 727-934-2680

Amazon Smile -- Did You Know?

Amazon will donate 0.5% of the price of your eligible AmazonSmile purchases to Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve Inc whenever you shop on AmazonSmile. AmazonSmile is the same Amazon you know. Same products, same prices, same service. Support Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve by shopping at: <https://smile.amazon.com/ch/59-3302182>



Don't forget to "like" the BCP Environmental Education Center on Facebook - [Brooker Creek Preserve Environmental Education Center](#)

BURN HOTLINE

For information on wildfires and prescribed burns at Brooker Creek Preserve: 727-582-2876



Friends  of Brooker Creek Preserve



Wreath & Ornament Making Workshop Using Natural Materials

Saturday, December 5, 2015

10:00 am—12:00 noon

Music Pavillion

Brooker Creek Preserve

Environmental Education Center

All ages welcome!



Learn to make beautiful holiday wreaths from grapevines and ornaments from cabbage palms and other natural materials gathered from the woods. Each participant will go home with a completed wreath suitable for hanging and ready for the holidays!



\$10 members

\$15 non-members

RSVP by
emailing fobcp@tampabay.rr.com
or by calling 727-934-2680.

The class caps at 20.



Photos by Craig Huegel,
taken during the Fall
Wildflower Festival.



Friends  of Brooker Creek Preserve

Music Jamboree!

Brooker Creek Preserve
Sunday, December 13, 2015

3:30 – 5 p.m.

All Ages Welcome!

Dust off that guitar, fiddle, banjo or other acoustic instrument and bring it down to the outdoor pavilion near the auditorium for a jam session. Meet other musicians and learn some new songs. Music lovers of all ages are encouraged to attend, listen and enjoy. The jam session will be lead by a local musician.

Check our website: www.brookercreekpreserve.org

Location: Brooker Creek Preserve
3940 Keystone Road
Tarpon Springs, FL 34688

Park in the main parking lot which is about one-mile from the Keystone Road entrance. Then follow the boardwalk to the Outdoor Music Pavilion.

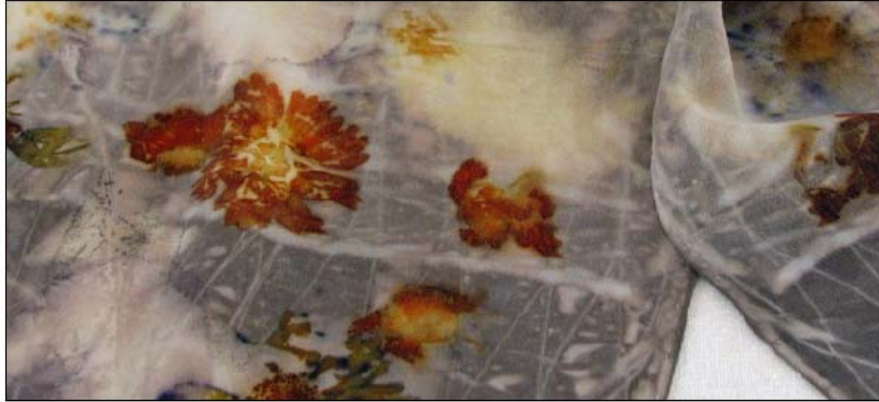
Questions?

Call 727-934-2680

Email fobcp@tampabay.rr.com

Friends  of Brooker Creek Preserve

ECO-PRINTING WORKSHOP



Nature's prints on fabric

Saturday, January 10, 2016

1:00 pm - 4:00 pm

Brooker Creek Preserve

Environmental Education Center Classroom

Instructors:

Dr. Barbara Kazanis & Marian Borchers

\$20 per person - Class caps at 15

*Attendees will go home with a beautiful finished product
of silk or wool fabric suitable for wearing or hanging.*

RSVP Email fobcp@tampabay.rr.com

Or telephone (727) 934-2680

Friends  of Brooker Creek Preserve

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

Sites Off the Beaten Path:

Oct. 18, 2015 – In Search of the Catesby Lily – Located in the eastern part of the Preserve, we will search for the **threatened** Catesby Lily. In so doing, we will see a profusion of beautiful fall wildflowers in full bloom.

Jan. 17, 2016 - Swamp Amble – Located in the southern part of the Preserve, this site features orchids, ferns, and epiphytes. The swamp should be dry this time of year, a treat for those who like adventure!

March 20, 2016 – Sandhill Scramble – The only true sandhills of Brooker Creek Preserve. This site is in the northern end of the Preserve and will feature an abundance of spring wildflowers.

June 12, 2016 – Wildlands Walkabout – 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!

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.

Fall Color

By: Craig Huegel

When you receive this newsletter, we will be nearing the height of fall color here in central Florida. Not quite what we see in North Carolina or Vermont, but it's what we have here. Many of us are willing to spend substantial sums of money and time to witness fall color in all its glory outside Pinellas County, but many of us don't seem to truly understand what causes it.

The color we see in fall, the reds, oranges, and yellows, are not caused by pigment changes in the leaf itself. These colors occur inside the leaf the entire time it remains attached to the plant. Their color is simply masked most of the year by the overwhelming dominance of chlorophyll - the pigment largely responsible for photosynthesis. Chlorophyll makes leaves (and stems) appear green, not because it is a green pigment, but because it absorbs all the other colors of the light spectrum EXCEPT green. The green wavelengths in the light spectrum are not used for photosynthesis so green light is reflected back to the universe where we see it. As long as plants are actively photosynthesizing, they are green and this "greenness" overwhelms every other pigment inside the leaves.

Plants recognize the change in seasons due to increasing length of nighttime darkness. They have specialized pigments that recognize day length and they "know" when winter approaches. If they are one of the great many plants that shed their leaves in winter (i.e. deciduous), they plan for this well ahead of time and one of the many things they do is to quit producing new chlorophyll. There is no reason to produce chlorophyll if the leaf is to be dropped and not replaced until next spring. As the existing chlorophyll degrades, other pigments that have always been there start to make their presence known. The power of chlorophyll to mask these pigments disappears.

These other pigments are known as "carotinoids." Carotinoid pigments are real pigments - they don't simply reflect certain light wavelengths as chlorophyll does. Carotinoids are in various shades of yellows, reds and oranges (yellow plus red = orange). There are no blue carotinoids, for



Top, Southern arrowwood (*Viburnum dentatum*)
Above, tulip tree (*Liriodendron tulipifera*)
Left, witch alder (*Fothergilla gardenii*).

example What a shame... Different plants have different percentages of the various carotinoid pigments so they exhibit different fall color. Hickories are bright yellow, for example, and black gum turns bright red. These colors are merely the outward exhibit of the carotinoids inside the leaves that have been present the entire year.

Carotinoid pigments do much more than make fall leaves look pretty; they are essential to photosynthesis too. Though incapable of performing photosynthesis as chlorophyll does, they absorb various wavelengths of light that chlorophyll can't and they pass that energy over to chlorophyll molecules so that they are more efficient. Without carotinoid pigments, plants would be far less efficient in taking sunlight and converting to body mass.

The process by which plants judge it to be time to shed their leaves is complex, however, and takes into account a great many more things than reduced day length, otherwise we'd get great fall color in central Florida like areas to our north. Like animals, plants make decisions based on a complex suite of hormones. Various hormones trigger leaf color changes as well as the final leaf drop. Some of these hormones result only from changes in daylight, but others are triggered by other factors such as temperature. The entire soup of hormones that are ultimately involved with fall color is produced by several factors and they do not always come together in the same way. If we have an unusually cold fall here in Pinellas County, we will get a more dramatic show of fall color and it will happen in unison throughout the County - just as it does in North Carolina or Vermont, but if our temperatures stay well above freezing at the time the effect of daylight is causing the leaves to stop producing chlorophyll, the change in color will be in dribs and drabs. It may not even occur at the same time for all leaves on the same plant. A number of years ago, we have several nights of mid-40's F at Alexa's and my home in Seminole in early November. That year, our turkey oak was spectacular. It has never turned those colors again since that fall. Let's hope for a cold (for us, that is) snap this November.



Turkey oak (*Quercus laevis*)

An Invitation from Barry

Barry Andress, our Golf Cart Guy, invites you to take a tour with him in the golf cart along the paved 2-mile driveway loop at Brooker Creek Preserve. The golf cart provides a quiet ride and a new way to see the beautiful landscape and possibly some wildlife. Barry knows some natural history and Preserve history, and is happy to share his knowledge with you. Please email Barry to set up a date and time: alfabarry3@gmail.com.



Return the Preserve Work Day: The Few, The Proud, The Three

by Evan Earle Jr

I am not going to lie. No, I'm no George Washington. But to tell you the truth, I was NOT looking forward to September's Friends Of Brooker Creek Preserve (FOBCP) Return The Preserve (RTP) Work Day. Don't get me wrong. I still love our RTP Work Days and I still believe in them 100%. But September and I have never been the best of friends. By September, personally, I am D-O-N-E with Summer. Unfortunately, Summer is not always done with us and ignores it's September 21st deadline more often than not.

Despite Summer historically ignoring it's deadline, three of us met on Saturday, September 26th, for our RTP Work Day. Lou Petersen, Marion Yongue, and yours truly met to continue our mission. We figured, "Well, since there are just three of us, let's just do some maintenance and clean up on the 'islands' in the main parking lot. That won't be too bad." That turned out to be the equivalent of the Titanic's lookout announcing "Ice cube off the starboard bow." Three hours and many piles of grape vine and smylax later, the three of us (dirty, sweaty, and tired) realized first hand how much work is involved with "simple" maintenance and clean up. But the islands on which we worked sure did look better for our efforts.

And to be honest and fair to September, the weather had a hint of Fall in it. No, we weren't breaking out the sweatshirts, but it didn't feel like French Guyana either. All in all, it was another successful RTP day. One of the perks

is just spending time with people, sharing stories, and catching up on what is going on while you're pulling and cutting and chopping and hauling. The three of us spent Saturday morning doing just that. MUCH thanks for Lou and Marion for their time, effort, and dedication on the first RTP of Fall this year. Their efforts are greatly and sincerely appreciated. Now that cooler weather has truly arrived, I invite you to join us on the last Saturday of every month as we continue our RTP mission of returning Brooker Creek Preserve to its natural beauty.



Return The Preserve Work Days - November and December Cancelled

We won't be having Our Return The Preserve Work Days for November, 11/28, and December, 12/26. I sincerely hope that everyone has the chance to celebrate and enjoy their holidays (and maybe sneak in a visit or a hike to Brooker Creek Preserve - it is a lovely time of the year to enjoy our wildest place). We look forward to our Return The Preserve Work Days starting up in 2016 as we work together to help return Brooker Creek Preserve to its natural beauty.

Brooker Creek Preserve Book Club by John Burr

Friends of Brooker Creek Book Club
In October we finished the third part of "Tales of Old Florida." Most of us were worn out from the small print but happy that there was almost no mention of tarpon fishing. Next month, Saturday, November 7, we talk about Bob Lee's, "Back Country Lawman (True Stories from a Florida Game Warden)." December 5, it's "Home Grown in Florida," ed. William McKeen. This book has something for everyone - even something from my friend Bill Maxwell who I took for a tour of the Preserve one morning.



Photos by Karl Nichter

The book club meets the first Saturday each month at the Ed Center at 9:30am. Meetings officially last for an hour. Now, ta-da, next year: For the first seven months, Karl, Kathleen and Jon (me), have finally decided on the following centerpieces for each discussion. We have stayed with a Florida-related theme - Florida authors and/or Florida topics.

Book Club Reads for 2016:

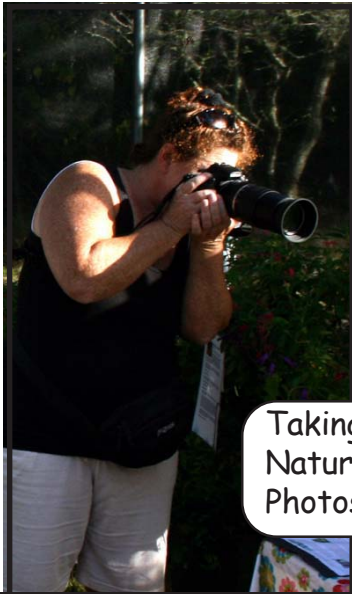
- Jan. 2: "Things I Remember" by J. B. Starkey. SWFWMD has a PDF of this for free and most local libraries probably have a copy. Great local history.
- Feb. 6: "Alas Babylon" by Pat Frank. Set in Florida, this apocalyptic tale may again be more prescient than is desirable.
- Mar. 5: We discuss "Finding Home in the Sandy Lands of the South" by Francis ("Jack") Putz, a fascinating group of short observations about living in Florida. Very 'dip-able' reading (is that a word?)
- April 2: "Rain" by Cynthia Barnett. Ms. Barnett lives in Gainesville. She visited the Preserve October 20, 2015 to discuss her book, "Blue Revolution."
- May 7: "The Everglades River of Grass" by Marjory Stoneman Douglas. This stands with "Silent Spring" and "Sand County Almanac" as one of the monuments of environmental writing.
- June 4: Craig Pittman and Ray Arsenault's book "Scent of Scandal" is a local account of the CITES law concerning endangered species. Some of the names in the book may ring a bell.
- July 2: We stay with a tad more controversial an issue with Carl Hiaasen, author of "Team Rodent."
- Aug. 2: We're doing something a little different. For the August meeting please read any book about or by Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings.

This year of the Friends of Brooker Creek book club has been a very enriching year for me and I know that with the Nichters I thank all the participants. Please consider attending. We have room for a few more.

More photos from the
Fall Wildflower Festival:



Don't forget to visit the
Nature Store for great
holiday gifts! There is some-
thing for everyone!



Taking picture and
Nature Store shopping.
Photos by Craig Huegel.



Chatting. Photo
by Karl Nichter.



Butterflies. Photo
by Cathie Foster

News from the Wildflower Garden

by Pam Brown

The Wildflower Garden looked good for our annual Wildflower Festival. Most of the Blazing Stars (*Liatris* spp.) had bloomed out a bit early, but there were plenty of the Narrow-leaf Sunflowers (*Helianthus angustifolius*) in bloom along with Tickseed (*Coreopsis* spp.), Rosinweed (*Silphium asteriscus*) and Bidens (*Bidens alba*). November brings us to our meeting time change. We will meet from 9 - 11 am until April. Another change from the normal is that we will not meet in December. With the proximity of the Christmas holiday it is just too busy for most of us. We will resume the regular last Saturday of the month meeting date in January. If you would like to volunteer in the Wildflower Garden, join us on the last Saturday of each month from 9 to 11 a.m. Bring your gardening tools, gloves, hat and bug repellent and wear closed toed shoes. We will provide coffee, juice and breakfast snacks. I would love to see you there!

Pam's Gardening Tip by Pam Brown

I love ornamental grasses. These grasses add a light airy look to the landscape, especially when planted in groups. We have some great native grasses that make wonderful additions to the landscape. They are not all alike, however, so you need to do some homework before you decide to plant. Many are fairly drought tolerant, or tolerant of a wide range of conditions. Sand cord grass, for instance, will thrive in wet spots near both fresh and salt water, but during a drought it does just as well without significant added water. Also, ornamental grasses provide a different look in the landscape that is a bit more informal, maybe just a little wild! To keep ornamental grasses looking good, they benefit from having the brown foliage removed in the spring by cutting the clump back to about six to eight inches before new growth emerges. This will keep the clumps looking fresh.



Gulf Muhly Grass

One of my favorites is Gulf Muhly Grass (*Muhlenbergia capillaris*). This grass grows in a clump of stiff, slender upright blades about three feet tall. It is salt tolerant and very drought tolerant once established. The stunning October blooms are purplish pink, feathery, and held high above the leaves. You can see many examples of this grass throughout Brooker Creek Preserve. Muhly grass is very tough and is useful in many different landscape sites. This grass makes a nice, fine-textured mass planting. It is virtually maintenance and pest free. Plus, you can usually find this grass at local nurseries.

Elliott's Lovegrass (*Eragrostis elliottii*) and Purple Lovegrass (*Eragrostis spectabilis*) are two smaller varieties that make a nice addition to the landscape. Both make excellent borders and accent plants and are very attractive in massed plantings.

If you have a spot where the soil stays moist, there are three grasses that make good choices; Florida Gamagrass (*Tripsacum floridanum*) is also sometimes called Dwarf

Florida Gamagrass.
Photos by Pam Brown



Fakahatchee grass; Sand Cord grass (*Spartina bakeri*) that I

mentioned earlier is a large grass that is not for small spaces; and Fakahatchee grass (*Tripsacum dactyloides*) is another large native grass.



Elliott's Lovegrass

For more information about Florida native grasses you can visit the Florida Native Plant Society web site at: <http://www.fnps.org/plants>. In the box on the left side of the page under "Plants for Your Area" type "grass" in the box under "Find a Specific Plant". This will bring up many more native grasses.

Volunteer News and More!

By Lara Milligan, Natural Resource Agent
Pinellas County Extension, University of
Florida/IFAS, and
Julia Myers, Education Support Specialist,
Brooker Creek Preserve

*Expect to
Make a
Difference!*



Thank you friends for funding the taxidermy of the owls, frogs & snake that have been in our freezer! We are excited to set up our new displays! The wonderful Ray Poyner is generously donating his talents by building the display cases for our newest additions. Thank you Ray!

We can't wait to show you our appreciation! Our Annual Volunteer Celebration will be Saturday, November 7th from 10am to noon; we hope to see everyone there so we can celebrate YOU! Stick around after the celebration for a Wetland Wildflower program with James at 1:30pm! Please let Julia know if you can make it.

Annual Volunteer Celebration!

Save the Date

Saturday,
November 7th
10am-12pm



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

Please join us to celebrate YOU!!! This year's annual volunteer & Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve celebration will feature a pancake breakfast by Chef Lara & Julia! James will also be presenting his Wetland Wildflowers program at 1:30pm if you'd like to stick around after the party!! We look forward to showing you all our appreciation!

Photos from the Fall Wildflower Festival:

Photos by Julia Myers



Joyce & Jan



Dissecting Owl Pellets with George Heinrich



Nancy & Paul

Identifying invasives with Lara



The Preserve will be closed on Friday November 27th. The Education Center will be closed on Thursday & Friday, November 26th & 27th. We will reopen on Saturday the 28th for a big day!

BROOKER CREEK PRESERVE

Cool calendar for your refrigerator!

NOVEMBER 2015

THURSDAY		FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
5 Pre-School Book Time 10:30-11:15		6 Guided Hike 9-10:30 <i>(Woods Walk)</i>	7 Guided Hike 9-10:30 <i>(Ecosystems)</i> Book Club 9:30-10:30 <i>Friends Annual Meeting and Volunteer Appreciation 10-12 noon</i> Wetland Wildflowers 1:30-3	8
12 Pre-School Book Time 10:30-11:15		13 Guided Hike 9-11:30 <i>(Botany)</i>	14 Beginning Bird Hike 8-10 Let's Talk About Turkeys 10:30-12 Night Hike 6-8 pm <i>(\$3/person)</i>	15 Brooker Creek Headwaters Hike 9am-1pm <i>(\$15/person)</i> Music in the Woods 5-7-pm <i>TSHS Jazz Band (\$5/person)</i>
19 Pre-School Book Time 10:30-11:15		20 Guided Hike 9-10:30 <i>(Wildlife)</i>	21 Guided Hike 9-10:30 <i>(Footprints on the Land)</i>	22
25 (WED) Night Hike 7-9 pm <i>(\$3/person)</i>	26 THANKSGIVING ED CENTER CLOSED HIKING TRAILS ARE OPEN	27 CENTER and TRAILS CLOSED	28 Wildflower Garden Club 9-11 Photography Hike 8:30-10:30 Guided Hike 9-10:30 <i>(Our Wildest Place)</i>	29

DECEMBER 2015

(WED)	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
2 FNPS Annual Holiday Celebration 6:30-9:30pm	3 Pre-School Book Time 10:30- 11:15	4 Guided Hike 9-10:30 <i>(Woods Walk)</i>	5 Guided Hike 9-10:30 <i>(Ecosystems)</i> Book Club 9:30-10:30 Bald Eagle Program 10:30-12 Wreath-Making Class 10-12 <i>(\$15/person)</i>	6
10 Pre-School Book Time 10:30-11:15	11 Guided Hike 9-11:30 <i>(Botany)</i>	12 Beginning Bird Hike 8-10 Birds in Classical Music 10:30-12	13 Music Jamboree 3:30-5 pm	
17 Pre-School Book Time 10:30-11:15	18 Guided Hike 9-10:30 <i>(Wildlife)</i>	19 Guided Hike 9-10:30 <i>(Footprints on the Land)</i> Night Hike 6-8 pm <i>(\$3/person)</i>		
24	25 CHRISTMAS CENTER and TRAILS CLOSED	26 Photography Hike 8:30-10:30 Guided Hike 9-10:30 <i>(Our Wildest Place)</i>	27	
31	1 NEW YEAR'S DAY CENTER CLOSED			

Hiking Trails are open every day from 7:00 am until 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
Center Hours: Thurs. - Sat., 9am - 4pm

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

Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve Board of Directors:

Officers

Chair: Barbara Hoffman
Vice Chair: Cathie Foster
Vice Chair: Allyn Childress
Secretary: Chuck Parsons
Treasurer: Carson Morrow

Directors

Director Emeritus: Ken Rowe
Beekeeper: Robert Burkard
Fall Wildflower Festival Chair: Cathie Foster
Financial Advisor: Bob Host
Grants: Allyn Childress
Land Use Chair: Dr. Craig Huegel
Music in the Woods - Jane Myers
Newsletter Editor: Dr. Craig Huegel
Night Hikes: Mark Yeager
Past Chairman: Walt Hoskins
Publicity Chair: Barbara Schultz
Restoration of Loop Area: Len Gravitz
Return the Preserve Work Days:
Evan Earle, Jr.
Wildflower Garden: Pam Brown
Wildlife Safari Chair: Brad Wilkins

Further Leadership

Book Club: Jon Burr & Kathleen Nichter
Membership: Jeff Myers
Nature Store Manager: Kathleen Nichter
Newsletter Publisher: Cathy Vogelsong
Website Master: Cathy Ordiway

Registration Info: FEID #59-3302182 tax-exempt, non-profit corporation

A COPY OF THE OFFICIAL REGISTRATION AND FINANCIAL INFORMATION MAY BE OBTAINED FROM THE DIVISION OF CONSUMER SERVICES BY CALLING TOLL-FREE (1-800-435-7352) WITHIN THE STATE. REGISTRATION DOES NOT IMPLY ENDORSMENT, APPROVAL, OR RECOMMENDATION BY THE STATE. REGISTRATION NUMBER CH. 16077