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# Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve

July - August 2017

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## Chairman's Message

by Cathie Foster

At the end of each newsletter is a simple two-month calendar of happenings at Brooker Creek Preserve. I always print that out and put it on my refrigerator.

It's a quick, easy way see what's coming up so I don't miss a program, hike, or other activity that I'm interested in attending. It occurs to me that many folks in the community, and even some of our members, may not understand the difference between activities the paid Preserve staff are responsible for and those that the Friends (all volunteers) is responsible for.

In the end, of course, the goal of all programs at Brooker Creek Preserve, regardless of who provides them, is to educate visitors so they better understand the connection between themselves and the land. To that end, the Friends offers support for the wonderful education programs provided by the Preserve staff by volunteering our time and, sometimes, by providing financial support. This year our budget includes over \$2000 for speaker fees for educational programs, \$910 for volunteer support and \$500 for educational materials and support.

You are probably all aware of our three big annual public events; Spring Wildlife Safari, Fall Wildflower Festival and Owl-O-Ween. But did you know that these are completely volunteer-driven?

They are solely "Friends" events; envisioned and planned by the Friends, then carried out with the help of the Friends and County volunteers.

## Chairman's Message

by Cathie Foster .....	1
Save the Dates .....	2
BCP Gallery Reopening .....	2
Gallery Volunteers Needed .....	2
FOBCP Activities & Events .....	3
Grand Opening Keystone Bike Trail ....	4
Ken Rowe Birdathon 6/11 .....	5
Birdathon 1 <sup>st</sup> place prizes .....	6
New Communications Chair .....	6
Audubon Water program .....	6
Water Steward training 7/12 .....	7
Off the Beaten Path:	
Interior Wildlands 7/9 .....	9
Summer Herpetology Camp 7/10-14 ..	10
Youth Watershed Workshop 7/19-21 ..	11
Sensing Nature Summer Camps	
Wetland Adventure 7/24-28 .....	12
Jr. Naturalist Camp 7/31-8/4.....	12
Music Jamboree 8/20 .....	13
Music in the Woods 11/11 .....	13
Merigiare String Quartet 12/10 .....	13
Spending Time in Nature is Healthy	
by Craig Huegel .....	14
Return the Preserve Work Days .....	16
Acre Adoptions .....	17
News from the Wildflower Garden	
by Pam Brown .....	18
Pam's Gardening Thoughts .....	18
FOBCP Readers Club by Jon Burr.....	19
Nature Store News	
by Kathleen Nichter .....	20
Volunteer News by Julia Myers.....	21
Calendar of Events May/June .....	24
Mission Statements/Contacts .....	25

On page 3, you will find a comprehensive list of other activities and programs planned and provided by the **Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve**. Many of these are free. Others are considered fundraisers so that we can continue to provide financial support to the programs offered by Education Center staff, as well as to provide necessary financial support for land management of the Preserve itself. **All** of them exist and continue due to the generosity of indispensable volunteers, whether they are Friends members or Pinellas County volunteers. We are all volunteers, in this together, with the aim of helping others connect with Pinellas County's Wildest Place - **Brooker Creek Preserve**.

## Save the Dates Upcoming Friends Events

- July 1 FOBCP Book Club
- July 9 Off the Beaten Path:  
Interior Wildlands
- July 12 Audubon Water Program training
- July 15 Return the Preserve Work Day
- July 20 Grand Opening Keystone Road  
bike /walking trail
- July 29 Wildflower Garden Work Day
- Aug. 5 FOBCP Book Club
- Aug. 20 Music Jamboree
- Aug. 26 Wildflower Garden Work Day
- Oct. 7 Fall Wildflower Festival
- Oct. 8 Off the Beaten Path Hike
- Oct. 28 Owl-O-Ween
- Nov. 11 Music in the Woods
- Dec. 10 Meriggiare String Quartet

## Announcing the Reopening of the Brooker Creek Preserve Gallery

The Friends are excited to announce the reopening of the Brooker Creek Preserve Gallery! After many years of being closed due to staff constraints, the County has given responsibility of the gallery to the Friends. Located within the auditorium of the Environmental Education Center, the gallery will feature three exhibitions a year of area artists who focus on nature and/or environmental issues through their paintings, drawings, or photography.

Lynn Whitelaw, who has been a member of the Friends for many years, has volunteered to be the gallery's curator. Lynn brings with him a wealth of experience as the recently retired curator of the Leepa Rattner Museum of Art at the Tarpon Campus of St. Petersburg College.

The first artist the gallery will showcase is Lisa Fitch of Pasco County whose atmospheric nature photography will grace the walls for six weeks in October/November. Stay tuned for the dates and times of the artist reception.

## Preserve Gallery Volunteers Needed!

Starting in October, a new volunteer position will be available - gallery docent! With the reopening of the Brooker Creek Preserve Gallery, the Friends will need volunteers to "man" the gallery on Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays. Tell Sheree or email [fobcp@tampabay.rr.com](mailto:fobcp@tampabay.rr.com) if you are interested.

## Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve Activities & Events

**Fall Wildflower Festival** held in October – a full day event including a butterfly tent with 250 butterflies, a wildflower scavenger hunt on the trails, a children’s craft area, a native wildflower plant sale, and presentations on wildflower natural history and beekeeping, photography, edibles, and landscaping.

**Owl-O-Ween** – cohosted by Clearwater Audubon and held in late October, this event features owls and includes live owls on display, owl presentations, story times for children, owl nest box building, an owl pancake breakfast, and more.

**Wildlife Safari** held in the spring – a full day event with wildlife stations set up along the Ed Center Trail. Families visit the stations, learn about the wildlife, and get their passports stamped.

**Night Hikes** – led by Friends volunteers, the public is invited to experience the Preserve in the dark and learn about nocturnal wildlife. Slated every two weeks during October – April.

**Star Parties** – held loosely twice per year, local astronomy clubs bring their telescopes and the public is invited to see the stars. Night hikes take place as well

**Artwork on the Auditorium Walls** – tasteful, handsome, natural history-type of artwork for display.

**Birdathon** – held once or twice per year, a contest for birders to find the most number of species.

**Music Jamboree** – the public is invited to bring their instruments and play music together.

**Music in the Woods** – held twice per year, featuring a local band or orchestra.

**Family Camp-Out at Four Lakes Hammock** – loosely two times per year.

**Off the Beaten Path Hikes** – held quarterly, these hikes take place in areas of the Preserve closed to the public but are rich in ecological integrity.

**Art Classes & Workshops** – held loosely twice per year

**Plein Air Paint & Photo** – held once per year co-hosted by Tarpon Springs Art Association. Four days of artists working outside, and a reception on Day 5 for awards and food.

**Adult Ecology Workshops** – an invited speaker holds a workshop pertaining to Preserve natural history. Typically a classroom/auditorium portion plus a trail walk component.

**Wreath-Making Class** – held in December, students learn to make holiday wreaths from natural items such as grape vine, holly branches, cedar twigs, and pine cones.

**Group Hikes by Request** – occurring only on-demand for adult groups seeking guided hikes beyond those that are offered by the Ed Center.

**Wildflower Garden** – continued maintenance and planting of native wildflowers and grasses with public help on the last Saturday of each month.

**Return the Preserve Work Days** –FOBCP volunteers remove invasive and/or exotic plants and animals

**Friends Annual Meeting** – typically held the first weekend of November.

**Four Lakes Hammock Hike for Friends & Volunteers** – a 2-hour hike open to all ages to experience the natural history of this area.

**Wilderness Trail Re-route** – mapping and flagging a potential new route for the southern end of the Wilderness Trail.

**Nature Store** – the store offers a variety of items as reminders of the Preserve (t-shirts, caps, patches, postcards, notecards) or are helpful with natural history (books, pamphlets). The store also has toys for children, hiking supplies, a native plant nursery, a used book section, and a used item table. This store is completely managed and staffed by volunteers.

## Grand Opening of Bicycle/Walking Trail

The grand opening of the bicycle/walking trail along Keystone Road is set for July 20, 2017 at 9:30 am, within the old pasture at the SE corner of East Lake Road and Keystone Road. Officially named the Coast to Coast Trail, this paved trail will link the Pinellas Trail with a future trail in Pasco County and then eventually be linked across the state of Florida to the east coast. Immediately following the speeches and ribbon cutting, attendees of the event are welcome to try out the trail from its beginning at East Lake Road to its end at the extreme NE corner of Pinellas County within Brooker Creek Preserve. A refreshment stop, hosted by the Friends, is scheduled along the way at Brooker Creek Preserve. Staff and Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve are very excited to have a "green" mode of transportation to the entrance of the Preserve, its hiking trails, and the Environmental Education Center. Being able to walk or ride a bike through the northeast section of the Preserve, an area until now closed to the public, is exciting as well.

# COME CELEBRATE THE Pinellas Trail Coast-to-Coast Trail Connector

## RIBBON CUTTING CEREMONY

THURSDAY • JULY 20, 2017 • 9:30 A.M.



The 5-mile segment will connect the County's Pinellas Trail to Florida's Coast-to-Coast Trail.



Southeast corner of East Lake Rd. and Keystone Rd. in Tarpon Springs.  
Parking available on location. Please wear comfortable shoes.



*With Partners We Can Do More!*



Pinellas County complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act. To obtain accessible formats of this document, please call (727) 464-4062 (V/TDD). 06/17

**3rd Annual  
Ken Rowe Birdathon  
Brooker Creek Preserve  
Sunday, June 11, 2017  
5:30 am - 11:30 am**



Eight teams of 2-4 birders competed! 82 species were recorded!



**Congratulations to the winning team with 69 species:**

**Cunyet Yilmaz, Joanna Clayton (Team Leader), Tom Mast, & Melissa James**

Many thanks to Alison Shepard for the beautiful, hand-crafted, ceramic trophies she created especially for this event!

American Crow	Double-crested Cormorant	Pine Warbler
American Egret	Downy Woodpecker	Prothonotary Warbler
American Kestrel	Eastern Bluebird	Purple Martin
Anhinga	Eastern Phoebe	Red-bellied Woodpecker
Bachman's Sparrow	Eastern Kingbird	Red-eyed Vireo
Barn Swallow	Eastern Meadowlark	Red-shouldered Hawk
Barred Owl	Eastern Towhee	Red-tailed Hawk
Belted Kingfisher	European Starling	Red-winged Blackbird
Black-bellied Whistling Duck	Fish Crow	Rock Pigeon
Black-crowned Night Heron	Glossy Ibis	Rough-winged Swallow
Black Skimmer	Great Blue Heron	Roseate Spoonbill
Black Vulture	Great Crested Flycatcher	Royal Tern
Blue Jay	Green Heron	Ruby-throated Hummingbird
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	Great Horned Owl	Sandhill Crane
Brown-headed Cowbird	House Sparrow	Snowy Egret
Brown-headed Nuthatch	Killdeer	Summer Tanager
Brown Thrasher	Laughing Gull	Swallow-tailed Kite
Boat-tailed Grackle	Little Blue Heron	Tri-colored Heron
Carolina Chickadee	Loggerhead Shrike	Tufted Titmouse
Carolina Wren	Mallard Duck	Turkey Vulture
Cattle Egret	Mottled Duck	White-eyed Vireo
Chimney Swift	Mourning Dove	White Ibis
Chuck-will's Widow	Northern Cardinal	Wild Turkey
Common Gallinule	Northern Mockingbird	Wood Duck
Common Grackle	Northern Parula	Wood Stork
Common Ground Dove	Osprey	Yellow-throated Vireo
Common Night Hawk	Pileated Woodpecker	Yellow-throated Warbler
Common Yellowthroat		



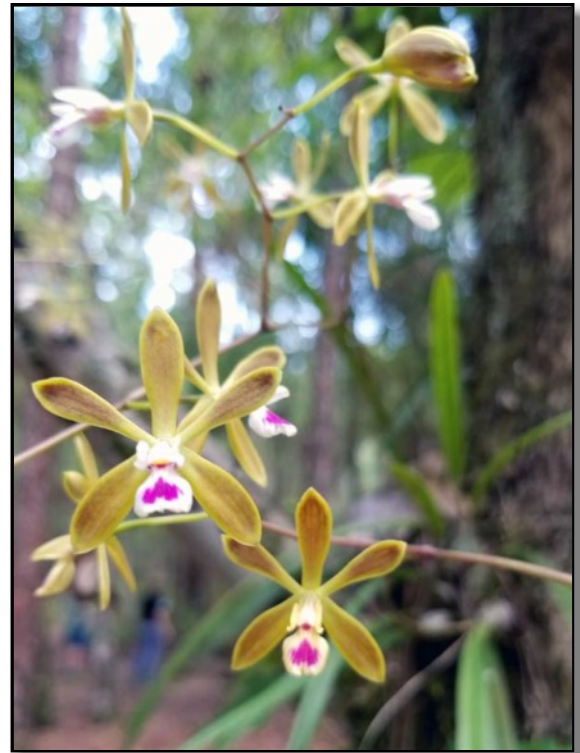
Each of the four members of the 1st Place team of the Birdathon received one of these beautiful hand made ceramic plaques created for the event by Preserve volunteer and artist, Alison Shepard. Thank you, Alison!

## Audubon Water Program

Water For Florida's Future is a grant partnership between Audubon Florida and Duke Energy focused on Orange, Osceola, Pinellas and Pasco counties. They have had a youth component to the program for the last year and are now adding an adult component. Audubon is currently working on training volunteer Water Messengers, who will learn to go out into their communities and give a 30 minute presentations. These presentations are about what Floridians can do right now to help in water conservation, and how energy and water are linked so when you save one, you save the other. The Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve is hosting one of Audubon Florida's training events at the Preserve on July 12, from 6:00 to 8:00 pm.

Please see the two fliers on pages 7 and 8 for details.

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



*Encyclia tampensis*, photo by Julia Myers.

## New Communications Chair

We welcome **Julie Wade** to our Board of Directors. Julie has been a long-time, dedicated volunteer at the Preserve. She took on the job of Volunteer Coordinator for the Wildlife Safari this past April and did an amazing job! As a Director, her job will be to handle phone calls that come to our Friends phone line and to act as a liaison between the Friends board and the Brooker Creek Preserve volunteers. We are so fortunate to have her join us.



# Audubon FLORIDA

## Become an Audubon Community Steward

Local community members can get trained to become Audubon Community Stewards! Stewards will serve as community leaders and deliver water conservation programs throughout Central Florida.

Upcoming Trainings:

**June 28, 6PM-8PM**, Maitland Public Library, 501 Maitland Ave S, Maitland, FL 32751. Registration closes June 26.

**July 12, 6PM—8PM**, Brooker Creek Preserve, 3940 Keystone Road Tarpon Springs, FL 34688. Registration closes July 10.

Trainings are free. To register for a volunteer training in your area:

Email [watmessenger@audubon.org](mailto:watmessenger@audubon.org) or call 407-644-0190

As a volunteer water messenger, you will help broaden Audubon's audience and involvement of individuals, businesses and families taking action to save water and energy.

Learn more at [WaterForFloridasFuture.org](http://WaterForFloridasFuture.org)



This program is in partnership with Duke Energy





Audubon FLORIDA

# Become a Florida Water Leader



Humans, birds, and wildlife all need healthy waterways to thrive.

Energy is part of our everyday lives.



## Water is Florida's most important resource

### What is the connection?

Water is used to create energy and a lot of energy is created to move water. Saving one helps save the other!

Audubon Florida, is launching a new program; Water for Florida's Future to engage the public in water and energy conservation. Florida faces major challenges with water supply and getting our diverse and changing population to conserve water.

People want to do the right thing but may not know the right things to do. Audubon's Water for Florida's Future program will increase public awareness of the importance of conservation and practical individual actions for saving water and energy resulting in greater use of water and energy conservation practices.

### How?

**Audubon is seeking outreach volunteers to help deliver conservation messages.** This project focuses on 4 counties: Orange, Osceola, Pasco and Pinellas.

These water messengers will receive training and deliver programs in their communities to help broaden Audubon's audience and involvement of individuals, businesses and families taking action to save water and energy. Programs will be scheduled in four counties with the goal of reaching diverse community types.

### Benefits:

Saving water helps save birds and important habitats and ecosystems in Florida. Reducing energy use creates more sustainable communities. Saving water and energy saves money.

There are many simple steps individuals can accomplish to make an impact for conservation.

**Become a Water Messenger today.**

For information on how to get involved email [watermessenger@audubon.org](mailto:watermessenger@audubon.org)

This program is in partnership with Duke Energy







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, a Wildlife Ecologist with St. Petersburg College, 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:**

Jan. 8, 2017 - Cypress Swamp Stomp - Located in the central part of the preserve, this site features orchids, ferns, and epiphytes. It may be wet, it may be dry, so be prepared for either as we plunge into the depths of the swamp!

April 2, 2017 - 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. (\*Note change of date)



July 9, 2017 - 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!

Oct. 8, 2017 - In Search of Catesby's Lily - Located in the eastern part of the preserve, we will search for the endangered 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](mailto: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](mailto:fobcp@tampabay.rr.com) or call 727-934-2680.



**Summer Camp 2017**  
**Brooker Creek Preserve**  
**(Tarpon Springs, Florida)**  
  
**Herpetology Camp**



Back for its 12<sup>th</sup> year, this popular, hands-on, science-based nature day camp is designed for children with a strong interest in nature. Campers will explore the fascinating world of amphibians and reptiles side-by-side with herpetologist George L. Heinrich. Through up-close encounters with a variety of animals, such as gopher tortoises, frogs, lizards, and snakes, campers will learn about the ecology and conservation of amphibians and reptiles.

**Dates:** 10-14 July 2017 (9:00 am-4:00 pm)

**Ages:** children ages 7-11

**Registration:** \$175.00/camper

limited to 30 campers

registration is now open and is on a first-come, first-served basis

no before or after camp care is available

# Youth Watershed Stewardship Workshop

Organized by  
**Keep Pinellas Beautiful**

Keep Pinellas Beautiful has created an amazing **FREE** opportunity for students in grades 6th-8th! This three-day summer program will provide students with the skills necessary to become stewards of our local watersheds. Sessions include learning about watersheds, group discussions about littering behaviors, a walking tour, hands-on activities, and much **MORE!**

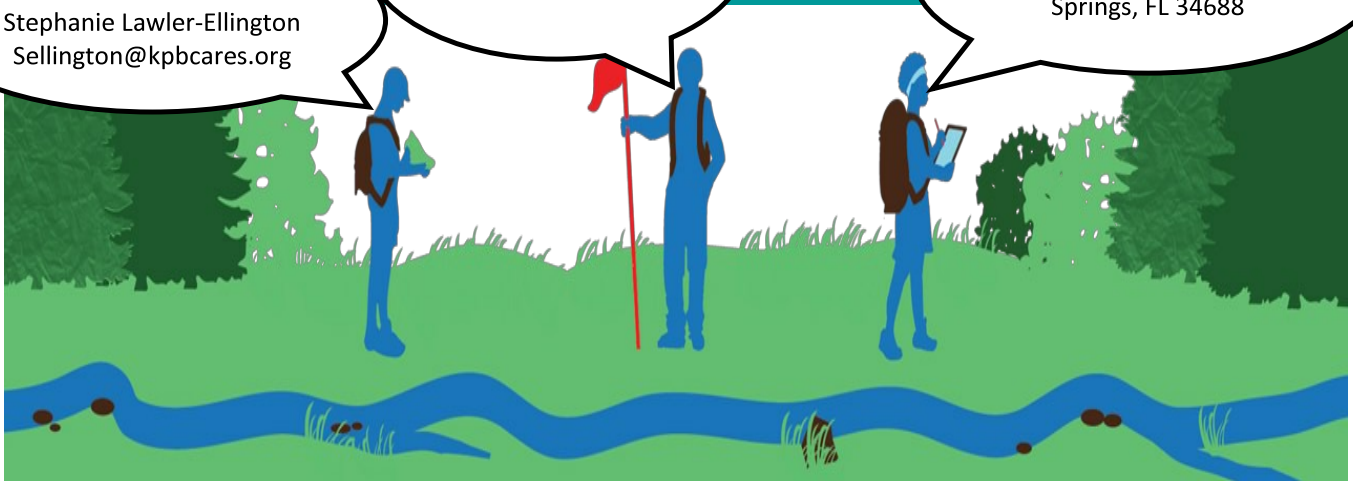
#### Students will:

- Develop environmental awareness, stewardship, and responsibility
- Cultivate an understanding of individual impact on our local water supplies
- Fulfill required community service hours
- Empower themselves to become proactive towards Source Water Protection!

**For information contact:**  
Stephanie Lawler-Ellington  
Sellington@kpbcares.org

**July 19th - 21st**  
**9:00am - 5:00pm**

**Brooker Creek Preserve**  
3940 Keystone Rd, Tarpon  
Springs, FL 34688



Keep Pinellas Beautiful 5090 66th Street North St. Petersburg, FL (727) 533-0402

## 2017 Nature Summer Camps!

Exciting ♦ Life Experiences ♦ Fun

Brooker Creek Preserve,  
Tarpon Springs



Conducted by  
Biologists & Naturalists

### July 24-28, 2017: Wetland Adventure Camp

Registration Deadline: July 10

Meet all the things that walk, wiggle and unfurl within our magical Florida wetlands during this fun-filled week. Explore beautiful swamps, marshes and even the gooey mucks with Sensing Nature's professional biologists and certified UF Florida Master Naturalists. Dip net a dragonfly nymph, swamp tromp where ferns grow, learn the tales soils tell, discover the secrets of water and help make a difference for tomorrow's wetland critters.

### July 31-August 4, 2017: Junior Naturalist Camp

Registration Deadline: July 17

Come test your investigative skills while identifying tracks, scats and signs of our native Florida wildlife with Sensing Nature's professional biologists and certified UF Florida Master Naturalists. "Read" the secrets that nature has left for your discovery. Learn the skills that biologists use for documenting our natural world including creating your own nature journal notebook, exploring the hidden treasures found in owl pellets, and testing your own observational awareness during our last day scavenger hunt challenge!

Summer Camp Ages: 7 – 12 years of age

Cost: \$175 per youth per camp

*\*Before-care & After-care is optional; additional \$25 per week per camper*

Hours: 9:00 AM – 4:00 PM

Before-care Hours\*: 7:30 AM – 9:00 AM

After-care Hours\*: 4:00 PM – 5:30 PM



Register at [www.SensingNature.com](http://www.SensingNature.com) ♦ (727) 397-2306 ♦ Email [jmurphy@sensingnature.com](mailto:jmurphy@sensingnature.com)

## Music Jamboree - Sun., Aug. 20

The Brooker Creek Preserve Jamboree has been rescheduled for Sunday, August 20th! We will most likely hold the Jamboree inside the Auditorium because of heat. Please bring your acoustic instrument and join in the fun with band leader, Brad Myers! The Jamboree will be from 2:00 - 4:00 and is free. Listeners are always welcome! Photo by Jane Myers.



## Upcoming Music in the Woods - Nov. 11

The trio "2PM" will be playing at our outdoor music pavilion on Saturday, November 11, 2017, from 4:30 - 7:00. They will be playing songs from their latest album, **Writing on the Wall**, as well as other favorites! So bring a lawn chair and a picnic and enjoy their wonderful harmonies and contemporary folk music in the woods!



## Meriggiare String Quartet - Dec. 10

Save the Date! We are once again honored to host an excellent string quartet at the Preserve!

Meriggiare String Quartet will be playing in the Auditorium on Sunday, December 10th, 2:00 - 4:00. We were happy to host them last November and it was marvelous!

## Spending Time in Nature is Healthy

By: Craig Huegel

One of the things I have known for years is that I feel better when I've spent a day in nature. When I get home from a day of work, I head outside to my side deck and watch birds. My landscape is designed to mimic a bit of the natural world and it relaxes me when I spend time in it. If I get a chance to explore a state or county natural area, like Brooker Creek Preserve, I come home rejuvenated. It has always been this way. More of my youth was spent outdoors than inside watching television, playing board games, or reading a book.

Albert Einstein is quoted as saying: "Look deep into nature, and then you will understand everything better" and Hans Christian Andersen once wrote: "Just living is not enough... one must have sunshine, freedom, and a little flower." Throughout the ages, wise people have recognized the importance of time spent outdoors. It has only been recently that the relationship between our mental health and nature has been studied by the academics.

If you search the internet or explore the shelves of the psychology section in your local bookstore, you will find an ever-increasing exploration of the relationship between our mental health and time spent in the natural world. Much of the early work in this area was put forth as the "biophilia hypothesis" developed as a part of the theory of humankind's evolutionary psychology. That humans have evolved with an innate need for nature sounded a bit too "new age" for many that were first confronted with it, but much of the early work was compiled and edited by E.O. Wilson and Stephen R. Kellert in the book *The Biophilia Hypothesis* in 1993 and this stimulated a new focus on researching whether a connection really existed.

Today, researchers around the world are finding a very real connection between us and the power of nature. One of these studies was recently published in the Proceedings of the National

Academy of Science by researchers at Stanford University. To paraphrase the results of this study: people who walked for 90 minutes in a natural area, as opposed to participants who walked in a high-traffic urban setting, showed decreased activity in a region of the brain associated with a key factor in depression. Co-author of this study, Dr. Gretchen Daily, wrote: "Our findings can help



inform the growing movement worldwide to make cities more livable, and to make nature more accessible to all who live in them."

More than half of the world's population lives in urban settings, and that is forecast to rise to 70 percent within a few decades. Just as urbanization and disconnection from nature have grown dramatically, so have mental disorders such as depression. City dwellers have a 20 percent higher risk of anxiety disorders and a 40 percent higher risk of mood disorders as compared to people in rural areas. People born and raised in cities are twice as likely to develop schizophrenia.

The question remains: Is exposure to nature linked to mental health? If so, researchers in this Stanford study asked, what are nature's impacts on emotion and mood? Can exposure to nature help "buffer" against depression?

In the study, two groups of participants walked for 90 minutes, one in a grassland area scattered with oak trees and shrubs, the other along a traffic-heavy four-lane roadway. Before and after, the researchers measured heart and respiration rates, performed brain scans and had participants fill out questionnaires.

The researchers found little difference in physiological conditions, but marked changes in the brain. Neural activity in the subgenual prefrontal cortex, a brain region active during rumination - repetitive thought focused on negative emotions - decreased among participants who walked in nature versus those who walked in an urban environment.

Lead researcher, Gregory Bratman, stated: "This finding is exciting because it demonstrates the impact of nature experience on an aspect of emotion regulation - something that may help explain how nature makes us feel better. These findings are important because they are consistent with, but do not yet prove, a causal link between increasing urbanization and increased rates of mental illness. It is essential for urban planners and other policymakers to understand the relationship between exposure to nature and mental health. We want to explore what elements of nature - how much of it and what types of experiences - offer the greatest benefits."

The studies are part of a growing body of research exploring the connection between nature and human well-being. The Natural Capital Project, led by these Stanford psychologists, has been at the forefront of this work. The project focuses on quantifying the value of natural resources to the public and predicting benefits from investments in nature.

What we are learning is that the preservation of nature is significant for us as well as for the living beings that live there. This is especially important in areas of concentrated urban development such as the Tampa Bay region. Landscape your own property to allow for other living things to live there too and take a walk in Brooker Creek Preserve or any of the other natural areas in this region. It may just save your life.

## Return the Preserve Work Day: May Powers Instead Of May Flowers

by Evan Earle Jr.

I have a new enemy. Pepper Vine. Before May of this year, I had never heard of this plant. But I know it well, now. And it is NOT on my Christmas Card list.

For our May 2017 Friends Of Brooker Creek Preserve (FOBCP) Return The Preserve (RTP) Work Day, I asked "When am I going to learn to stop doing that?" Because I ALWAYS get a "good" answer. And the answer for May was "Well, there's a lot of pepper vine in the bed of Muhly Grass in the parking lot."



Pepper Vine, although a native, can take over natural areas.

Me: "Pepper vine? What's that? Never heard of it. But we'll be glad to check it out."

So, with assignment in hand, on Saturday, May 20th, we gathered in the parking lot and looked at the task before us. Fortunately, we once again had a great group of volunteers for our RTP Work Day. Members of the Mitchell High School Key Club, volunteers from Keep Pinellas Beautiful, and volunteers who just love Brooker Creek Preserve were on hand and on deck to tackle this new foe. And tackle it they did. With the great attitude and energy that has become the trademark of our RTP Work Days.

As we viewed the Muhly Grass, the pepper vine was clearly present. But pulling it out wouldn't be too difficult. Right? Well, apparently, pepper vine is Nature's version of industrial strength underground communication cable. Because as we started removing the vine, we discovered that it had wound its way through, around, and under the Muhly Grass. I don't know if you have taken a close look at that bed of Muhly Grass, but it is remarkably happy, healthy, and thick! As someone started pulling on one vine, we would have to trace it as it led over here, back over there, around

this way, and down into the soil. As we pulled (and pulled and pulled some more), one vine would lead to a junction that branched off into multiple vines. Like some sort of cruel joke that left none of us laughing. But our volunteers were not deterred. They tracked down these vines like botanical bloodhounds. Ten large garbage bags of pepper vine later, we had a much happier bed of Muhly Grass. And we can assure

you we will keep our eyes on this area to ensure that the pepper vine that may remain will be addressed immediately.



Photos by Evan Earle Jr.





Even with this amazing accomplishment in place, the volunteers weren't done. We moved on and tackled some grape vine overgrowth (always an RTP Work Day favorite) on an oak tree between the entrance to the boardwalk and the picnic pavilion. We all agreed that while not easy, pulling vines down was easier than pulling vines up. Thirty minutes later we had an oak tree that is now open to the sunlight.

It was then time for lunch. The FOBCP treated the group to a well deserved, delicious pizza lunch from Keystone Corner.

Thank you Mitchell High School Key Club. Thank you Keep Pinellas Beautiful volunteers. Thank you volunteers who were there to help. Each of you donated your time and energy to ensure another successful FOBCP RTP Work Day. In the Fall, when the Muhly Grass is showing off its beautiful soft pink/purple blooms, I hope you will come to the Preserve to see the benefits of your hard work in May! We truly appreciate YOU as we work to Return The Preserve to it's natural beauty.



And now for some news regarding our RTP Work Days. Starting in July 2017, we will be going to a quarterly schedule: January, April, July, and October. In July 2017, our RTP Work Day will be on Saturday, July 22nd. This is the FOURTH Saturday in July. But going forward, we will plan for our RTP Work Days to be on our usual third Saturday of the months listed above. I hope you will continue to join us. Despite my "complaints", it really is a lot of fun. I enjoy the before and after look we are able to create, I love meeting new people who show up to work with us, and I especially love seeing volunteers who return to work with us.

Friends  of Brooker Creek Preserve

### **ACRE ADOPTIONS FOR BROOKER CREEK PRESERVE**

Brooker Creek Preserve's Adopt an Acre Program was established to enhance its restoration and land management programs. We thank the donors listed below who have chosen to commemorate others by adopting an acre of the Preserve. See page 23 for the Adopt an Acre Form and additional information. The following individuals have renewed their Acre Adoptions:

**Barbara Genthner Moritz**

**Barb & Eddie Hoffman**

**Lou Petersen**

## News from the Wildflower Garden By Pam Brown

Over the winter and spring the garden looked so sad - the drought had browned out many of the plants. Once we had several good rains the beginning of June, it has greened up nicely and many plants that I thought might have died are going to survive. I planted a couple of new American Beautyberry shrubs at the eastern edge of the garden because two older plants looked dead. Now, I see since the rains started, there are a number of new sprouts from the bases of these apparently dead plants. I guess we should not discount the perseverance of native plants!

Even the finicky Pine Hyacinth (*Clematis baldwinii*) had a dainty bloom. And, also as a result of the rain, I saw one native Rain Lily (*Zephyranthes atamasca*).

We are always appreciative of volunteer help maintaining the garden. Our next workdays are July 29<sup>th</sup> and August 26<sup>th</sup> from 8:00 -10:00 a.m. (summer hours). Bring your gardening tools, gloves, hat, bug spray and wear closed-toed shoes. We will provide breakfast snacks and coffee. I hope to see you there!



Pine hyacinth and rain lily.  
Photos by Pam Brown.

## Pam's Gardening Thoughts

I have noticed lately that the native Cycad "**Coontie**" (*Zamia floridana*) has become more popular in landscapes. These plants are ancient in origin and actually form cones similar to pines and other conifer trees except that the male and female cones form on separate plants. They are currently producing cones and seeds. This is a great drought tolerant plant, but one caution - the seeds from the female cones are extremely poisonous to dogs and cats and toxic to humans. I have Coontie in my yard and I remove both the male and female cones once they appear so that seeds do not form.

One or two seeds ingested by dogs or cats can be fatal, so be cautious when you see these plants, especially if the red-orange seeds are present (see pictures). The seeds of the non-native King and also Queen Sago are just as poisonous.



Photos from UF/IFAS.

Left to right, coontie, female cone, male cone, seeds.

## Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve Readers Club 2017

By Jon Burr

In June we discussed the science fiction-fantasy novel "Moon Pool" by A. Merritt. Abe and Eleanor, his wife, were residents of central Pinellas County where present day Randolph Farms is located. He is purported to have planted the first olive trees in the county. Abe and Eleanor are buried in the Anona Cemetery just left of the entrance north of the Anona Methodist Church. Merritt was for a very long time associated with Hearst's "American Weekly" magazine eventually becoming editor.



Photo by Karl Nichter

Well, not too many attendees were thrilled with this choice of book. It was noted how prescient some of the science and historical references were for a book written one hundred years ago. The language was a little too flowery and descriptively opulent, the characters somewhat cliché and the non-humans not too believable. (The person who chose this book had to provide fresh baked cookies - oatmeal and raisin -- to appease the angry hoard, but don't expect that every time.)

Next month, July 1, 2017 at 9:30 in the Ed Center conference room, we will be discussing "Seduced" by Randy Wayne White, We previously enjoyed a novel by White from his Doc Ford series. This month's book is from his Hannah Smith series.

Coming up: "Forever Island" by Patrick Smith (August), "Storm of the Century" by Willie Drye (September), Any novel by Tim Dorsey (October), "Death in the Everglades" by Stuart B. McIver (November) and "Between Two Rivers" ed. by Susan Cerulean (December).

There is still a little room at the table. Please consider joining us.

**Friends of Brooker  
Creek Preserve**

**New Member**

**Dianne Fecteau**

Don't forget to "like" Brooker Creek Preserve Environmental Education Center on Facebook and share the page with your friends! We are also on Instagram now, you can follow us under @brookercreekpreserve.

## Nature Store News

By Kathleen Nichter

### *Which guide should I buy?*

When hiking the trails of Brooker Creek Preserve, a guide to identify what you might see adds to the enjoyment of the day. But which one of the many guides that the Nature Store carries should you buy?



The most convenient type of guide for size, cost, and ease of use is the folding pocket guide. The Board of Directors of Brooker Creek Preserve put together a custom folding guide last year with the help of many experts. It shows the most common birds, mammals, etc. a person could see on a hike at the Preserve. The guide also makes a nice, place specific souvenir of the visit.

For more targeted interests, look at the folding guides to central Florida wildflowers, butterflies and birds, and general Florida guides on raptors, dragonflies, and of course the Florida favorite, alligators.

For birders, the store stocks the two most popular guides, Peterson's and Sibley's. Which is best? It depends on your preference. Look through both, and talk to other birders as to which they prefer. Take the once each month Saturday birding hike and talk to other hikers and the hike guide for more details on their preferences.

The Golden Guides cover a more general look of specific topics such as pond life, birds, and butterflies, and tend to be the starting point for many adults and older children. The Florida's Fabulous series, while not field guides, make a good addition to the home reference library and offer more detail on the species they feature.

Feel free to come in, read and browse, talk to a few people, and take time making your decision. That is why we are here.

*Passiflora incarnata*,  
photo by Julia Myers.



## Volunteer News and More!

By Julia Myers, Education Support Specialist, Brooker Creek Preserve

### Lara's Wildlife Wednesday

**Webinars are back!** This is a free monthly lunch-n-learn opportunity

that you can participate in from a computer anywhere. Each webinar, 45 minutes in length, will share information on wildlife found in Central Florida. The webinars will highlight some frequently encountered wildlife, ways to identify these different species, and discuss their role and importance in Florida ecosystems. You can register for all upcoming webinars at

[www.polknr.eventbrite.com](http://www.polknr.eventbrite.com).



**We will be hosting four separate week long Summer Camps in July & August!** We will have our regular herpetology camp, wetland adventure camp, and junior naturalist camp, plus a new Keep Pinellas Beautiful camp as well this year. There is still room to sign up for any of these camps, so if you know any kiddos that may be interested, please spread the word!

**In May, the Brooker Creek Preserve Staff led its' first Hike Guide Training Program** for new and veteran hike guides! Congrats to the 18 graduates that attended! Photos by Julia Myers.



Lara Milligan (in blue, her back to photo) explaining how to properly start a guided hike.



James Stevenson, our Extension Specialist, talking to the group from atop a bench.



Julia Myers leading a group playing a Maslow's Hierarchy game — the little papers they are holding had different visitor responses to the Preserve.

Summer has started out strong in the Education Center! Our programs and hikes have had great attendance. Our Family Fun Friday Morning program has been a huge success so far and is sold out for the rest of the summer! Also, we have been lucky enough to add five awesome new front desk volunteers to our team this month! Help me send a warm BCP welcome to Alana Wexler, Michael Sojo, Joanne Millovitsch, Susan Marino, and Joey Whyte!



Halloween pennant, photo by Julia Myers.



### Remember!

When ordering items from Amazon, if you use Amazon Smile, a donation will be made by Amazon to Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve! The Preserve has a unique charity-link to take customers directly to our smile.amazon.com site:

[smile.amazon.com/ch/59-3302182](https://smile.amazon.com/ch/59-3302182)

### WANTED!

Mulching Mower to aid in land management!  
Only \$500,000!



### 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](mailto:alfabarry3@gmail.com).



  
**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](mailto:fobcp@tampabay.rr.com)

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

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## BROOKER CREEK PRESERVE

Cool calendar for your refrigerator!

July 2017

\*Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve events

THURSDAY		FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
			<b>1</b> Guided Hike 9-10:30 ( <i>Ecosystems</i> ) *Friends Readers Club 9:30-10:30 Owl Moon (Youth Program) 10:30-12	<b>2</b> Education Center and * Nature Store Open 11 am-4 pm
<b>6</b> Pre-School Book Time 10:30-11:15 am		<b>7</b> 11 am-12 pm	<b>8</b> Beginning Bird Hike 8-10 am The Power of Shopping 10:30-12	<b>9</b> Education Center and * Nature Store Open 11 am-4 pm *Off the Beaten Path Hike 9 am- 1 pm \$25/person
<b>Wed 12</b> Water Messengers Volunteer Training 6-8 pm	<b>13</b> Pre-School Book Time 10:30-11:15	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b> *Return the Preserve Work Day 8-11 Guided Hike 9-10:30 ( <i>Dragonfly Discovery Walk</i> ) Why Snakes are Cool 10:30-12	<b>16</b> Education Center and * Nature Store Open 11 am-4 pm
<b>20</b> Pre-School Book Time 10:30-11:15 am		<b>21</b> Family Fun Friday 10-11 am	<b>22</b> Guided Hike 9-11:30 ( <i>Our Wildest Place</i> ) Life of Lichen 10:30-12	<b>23</b> Education Center and * Nature Store Open 11 am-4 pm
27 Pre-School Book Time 10:30-11:15 am		28 Family Fun Friday 10-11 am	29 *Wildflower Garden Work Day 8-10 am Guided Hike 9-11:30 ( <i>Our Wildest Place</i> )	30

## August 2017

THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
<b>3</b> Pre-School Book Time 10:30-11:15	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b> Guided Hike ( <i>Ecosystems</i> ) 9-10:30 *Friends Readers Club 9:30-10:30	<b>6</b> Education Center and * Nature Store Open 11 am-4 pm
<b>10</b> Pre-School Book Time 10:30-11:15	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b> Beginning Bird Hike 8-10 am	<b>13</b> Education Center and * Nature Store Open 11 am-4 pm
<b>17</b> Pre-School Book Time 10:30-11:15	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b> Guided Hike 9-10:30 ( <i>Footprints on the Land</i> ) How Long 'Til it's Gone? (Youth Program) 1-2 pm	<b>20</b> Education Center and * Nature Store Open 11 am-4 pm *Music Jam 2:00-4
<b>24 &amp; 31</b> Pre-School Book Time 10:30-11:15	<b>25</b> Family Fun Friday 10-11-am	<b>26</b> *Wildflower Garden Club 8-10 am Guided Hike 9-11 am ( <i>Our Wildest Place</i> ) Discover Prehistoric Florida 1-2:30 pm	<b>27</b> Education Center and * Nature Store Open 11 am-4 pm

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 one hour before sunset

Friends events are noted in green.



**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.

**Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve Board of Directors:**

**Officers**

Chair: Cathie Foster  
Vice Chair: Robert Burkard  
Secretary: Pam Brown  
Treasurer: Jane Myers

**Directors:**

Accountant: Bob Host  
Art Director: open  
Beekeeper: Robert Burkard  
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Communications Chair: Julie Wade  
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Cathie Foster  
Grants: Allyn Childress  
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Land Use Chair: Dr. Craig Huegel  
Music in the Woods: Jane Myers  
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Newsletter Editor: Dr. Craig Huegel  
Night Hikes: Mark Yeager  
Owl-O-Ween: Barb Hoffman  
Publicity Chair: Barbara Schultz  
Return the Preserve Work Days:  
Evan Earle, Jr.  
Wildflower Garden: Pam Brown  
Wildlife Safari - Cathie Foster

**Further Leadership**

Book Club: Jon Burr & Kathleen Nichter  
Gallery Curator - Lynn Whitelaw  
Membership: Jeff Myers  
Newsletter Publisher: Cathy Vogelsong  
Website Master: Cathy Ordiway

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