


Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve

March - April 2018

Chairman's Message by Cathie Foster

The Friends recently received an extremely generous and unexpected donation from one of our dedicated volunteers, Jackie Labus. In addition to her regular weekly volunteer hours at the front desk and planning and implementing Book Time each and every Thursday, Jackie regularly supports the Friends' major annual events by volunteering at them and by sponsoring the events financially. So when we received this donation we were very pleasantly surprised, to say the least, and appreciative beyond words!

We have so many great Friends, like Jackie, who give of themselves because the Preserve is in their hearts. You are invaluable to the Brooker Creek staff and to the Friends. We can never fully express how thankful we are for the many ways you, our members and volunteers, provide support to the Friends, at any level.

In talking to some folks more knowledgeable about finances than I am, I learned something really interesting about making a donation that I'd like to share with you in case you are not aware.

Many individuals today have large qualified retirement plans such as IRAs. Annual withdrawals from these retirement accounts are required after age 70 1/2. Once the owner begins to receive payments from the qualified plans, the distributions are taxable income. However, if you are in the fortunate position of not needing your distribution for living expenses and are charitably inclined, you can reduce your overall tax liability by donating all or part of a required distribution directly to a qualifying charity. If you were to have your distribution deposited to your bank account and, from there, make the donation, the full amount of your retirement distribution would be taxed.

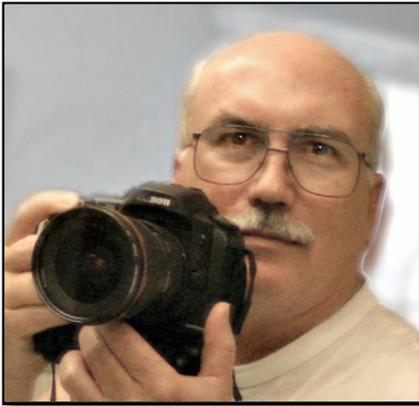
Now, I am not a financial advisor. This was just something I didn't know about. Now I do, and so do you! I've included some links that explain this more fully. If you might consider making a donation to the Friends in this way, please make sure you seek professional advice first.



<https://money.usnews.com/money/retirement/iras/articles/2017-12-04/how-to-donate-your-required-minimum-distribution-to-charity>

<https://www.kiplinger.com/article/taxes/T054-C032-S014-qdcs-a-strategy-to-get-more-from-2018-rmds.html>

Many Thanks to Skip Holmes!



We certainly appreciate the volunteer work of Skip Holmes who designs the flyers for our Friends events . . . and there are many!

Skip has been a photographer for

forty plus years. Twenty-four of those years were spent as a combat photographer and video documentary photographer for the U. S. Navy. He practiced graphic design since 1994 and, after retiring from the Navy, worked at a local newspaper designing advertisements. He was hired and worked with Pinellas County at the Department of Environmental Management, Environmental Lands Division for nine years. This department was responsible for Brooker Creek and Weedon Island Preserves and the associated education centers plus many other environmentally sensitive lands. It was Skip's job to produce brochures, invitations, posters, and many other graphic items for these Preserve properties. In 2009, the department was disbanded and Skip was laid off along with 90% of the Preserve staff. He worked for a few more years in commercial printing and then retired three years ago. Skip now enjoys bike riding, camping, canoeing, fishing, and photography. And, lucky for us, he designs our flyers. Check out this newsletter issue for flyers he created for the upcoming Music in the Woods and Wildlife Safari.

Thank you, Skip Holmes! You are appreciated!

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Heartfelt thanks to volunteers Jim and Marilyn Collins for their donation of a bench in memory of their son, Sgt. James S. Collins, who was killed in action in Iraq on August 28, 2007. In their words, "He would have loved this place."



Jim, daughter Jo (holding photo of her brother) and Marilyn.

Friends  of Brooker Creek Preserve

**ACRE ADOPTIONS FOR
BROOKER CREEK PRESERVE**

Many thanks for the following Acre Adoptions for January & February 2018

In memory of...

Janice Petersen

from Lou Petersen (2 acres)

Duncan MacGregor

from Barb & Eddie Hoffman

Patricia Markham

from Barb & Eddie Hoffman

Rey Ortega

from Barb & Eddie Hoffman

Lorraine Straub

from Barb & Eddie Hoffman

See p. 25 for
Adopt an Acre
Form and info.

Ethan Jenkins volunteered at our January 20th FOBCP Return The Preserve Work Day and he was UNSTOPPABLE. Here is Ethan proudly wearing his "I went Wild At Brooker Creek Preserve" T-shirt. His parents emailed "Ethan was very happy to get this "awesome" shirt! He wants to wear it to school tomorrow and to know when we're going back to pull more vines." -Evan Earle, Jr.



Save the Dates Upcoming Friends Events

- Jan. 21 - Apr. 1 Gallery Exhibit: Taylor Ikin
- Mar. 3 Brooker Book Club 9:30-10:30 am
- Mar. 4 Beekeeping: Intro to Honey Bee Basic
- Mar. 10 Night Hike 6:30-8:30 pm
- Mar. 11 Beekeeping: Equipment
- Mar. 25 Music in the Woods: Bonnie Whitehurst 2-4 pm
- Mar. 25 Beekeeping: Keeping Hives Healthy
- Mar. 31 Wildflower Garden Work Day 9-11 am
- Apr. 7 Wildlife Safari
- Apr. 7 Brooker Book Club 9:30-10:30 am
- Apr. 8 Music Jamboree 2-4 pm
- Apr. 14 Night Hike, 8-10 pm
- Apr. 21 Return the Preserve Work Day
- Apr. 28 Wildflower Garden Work Day 8 am - noon
- Jun. 2 4th Annual Ken Rowe Birdathon

Note: "I went Wild At Brooker Creek Preserve" T-shirts are available in our Nature Store in children's sizes for \$10.

Amazon Smile

If you'd like to make a donation to Brooker Creek Preserve every time you shop using Amazon - please consider using Amazon Smile and designating Brooker Creek Preserve as your charity. The Preserve has a unique charity-link to take customers directly to our smile.amazon.com site:

<http://smile.amazon.com/ch/59-3302182>

Ask your donors, volunteers, employees, and friends to bookmark this link so all their eligible shopping will benefit Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve Inc.

Return the Preserve: Kicking Off The New Year The Right Way — Sat., 1/20/18

By: Evan Earle, Jr.

Our first Friends Of Brooker Creek Preserve (FOBCP) Return The Preserve (RTP) Work Day on Saturday, January 20th, was, without a doubt, a tremendous success! With over 50 volunteers, we made great strides in removing:

- unnatural overgrowth of grape vines and cat briar in the parking lot
- Caesarweed from around the education/office building
- St. Augustine grass from the muhly grass along the sidewalk from the delivery loop

I think it is fair to say that we were batting a thousand. We were certainly three for three that day!

Special shout outs to the following groups and people who made this RTP Work Day even better. Tampa Bay Estuary Program (TBEP) showed up with volunteers, a tractor, and a trailer to help us out. Wow! The tractor and trailer really made hauling debris so much easier and faster. Not only that, but TBEP provided a delicious Chick-fil-A lunch for everyone. Who doesn't love a little Chick-fil-A? And it was delivered. Thank you Chick-fil-A. And again, thank you TBEP for being such a great partner.



Keep Pinellas Beautiful (KPB) partnered with us again, providing tools, garbage bags (for the invasive plants this was especially helpful and important), and water. Thank you Paul and Kelly!

Thank you KPB!



We removed a HUGE amount of grapevines from the parking lot - an estimated 24,000 lbs. of vines and debris! W-O-W! If you were tired when we finished, you earned it!

Marion Yongue formed a squad to remove Caesarweed. As always, he was on a mission. To say that Marion hates Caesarweed is truly an understatement. But he channels that into thoroughly removing this invasive and carefully bagging it up to avoid helping it spread any faster than it does on its own. The dumpster was full from the results of his squad's hard work.

Barbara Hoffman gathered a team to go kick some grass and remove St. Augustine grass. Truth be told, she just does not like St. Augustine grass! What a great job. Bags and bags of this pest plant were removed. Barbara is such a wonderful leader and really motivates and educates her team.

To all the high school students who showed up, thank you for your time and effort on a Saturday morning. Your energy and enthusiasm made a huge difference (and it didn't hurt to have some really tall teenagers to help reach those hard to reach vines). And finally, a special thank you to a first time volunteer who showed up with his mom and dad.



Above, part of Barb's team "kicking grass!" Photos by Barb Hoffman.

Ethan Jenkins, you were an unstoppable force. If you could reach it, you pulled it down or pulled it out of the ground. Thank you Ethan and I hope you will come back again. We can use your energy.

To everyone who participated, a very sincere "thank you."

I appreciate each and every one of you that takes the time to help us at our RTP Work Days because you make us successful. I'll say it again, we removed an estimated 24,000 lbs. of trash on January 20! That is amazing! What's more amazing is the improvement in the health and beauty of the Preserve. You open up trees that are choked with vines. You remove invasive plants to allow our wonderful native plants to return and thrive. You work hard, very, very hard. And the preserve is a better place thanks to your commitment and support. Come back and enjoy the Preserve. Take a hike. Attend a class. Go and enjoy our Music In The Woods concerts. When you do, take a moment to look at those areas where we have worked as part of our RTP Work Days and notice how much healthier, ergo prettier, they are.



Many of you are return volunteers! That is so encouraging and rewarding. I hope you will work with us again on Saturday, April 21. We're planning a special RTP Work Day to celebrate Earth Day 2018. I can't think of a better location to celebrate Earth Day than Brooker Creek Preserve!

Thank you for all that you do to return the Preserve to its natural state.



Above, one of our OUTSTANDING RTP volunteers showing off the reward for his hard work - one less cat brier tuber in the preserve! Photos by Evan Earle, Jr., unless noted.

Gallery Opening: Taylor Ikin - Sunday, 1/21/18

The delights of Taylor Ikin's Opening Reception were relished by three senses. The first, by our eyes, with the incredibly beautiful paintings by Taylor. Her use of vivid colors on YUPO paper captured her spirit and true love of the environment. The second, by our ears, as the Dedicated Dulcimers of Dunedin warmed our souls with beautiful music, so fitting for the occasion. The third, by our taste buds, as we enjoyed delicious homemade treats.



The artist Taylor Ikin, and her painting *Daytime Hike*.



Details of *Skimming the Shore* (far left) and *On the Hillsborough*, showing how paint can be manipulated on YUPO paper.

This exhibit will be open thru April 1 in the Auditorium.



The Dedicated Dulcimers of Dunedin.

New Director- Ray Poynor

We welcome Ray Poynor to our Board of Directors. Ray has been a long-time volunteer at the Preserve. He is an amazing hike guide, often assisting with our Night Hikes. He has used his talents as a skilled wood-craftsman to design and build the display cases for the bobcat, coyote, turkey and other animals on display in the Exhibit Hall, among other projects. He has a deep love of nature, and especially Brooker Creek Preserve. Welcome, Ray!



Jane Myers was asked by many people for her Cowboy Caviar recipe that she made for Taylor Ikin's reception. Here it is!

"Cowboy Caviar" from Jane Myers

1 can Shoe Peg corn (Green Giant at Publix)

1 can black-eyed peas drained and rinsed

1 can black beans drained and rinsed

1 diced tomato

1 diced avocado (add when ready to serve)

1/2 cup diced red onion

1/4 cup cilantro (fresh and chopped up)

1/2 cup red bell pepper

Dressing: 1/4 c olive oil; 1/4 c red-wine vinegar; 1-2 cloves garlic minced; 1/2 tsp cumin; salt and pepper



Cardinal, photo by Mike Young.

Music Jamboree — 2/4/18

Our February Jamboree was a wash - it was raining and there were 4 of us including our wonderful bandleader, Brad Myers. He played us some songs for about 45 minutes in the Auditorium. Please put April 8th 2:00 - 4:00 on your calendar for our next Jam! Rain or shine - we can use the Auditorium if the weather is bad; otherwise we will be outside at the Music Pavilion.



Brad Myers, playing at the Music Jamboree.

Music in the Woods Series: Florida Cracker Cowboys - 2/11/18

On February 11th about 80 people enjoyed the Florida Cracker Cowboys and their selections of bluegrass and original music outside at the music pavilion. All enjoyed the mandolin, guitar, bass and dobro in our beautiful wooded area. At intermission folks were enjoying the art gallery and the beautiful art of Taylor Ikin! People were also browsing in the Nature Store and purchasing cold drinks and snacks as well as our nature themed items.



Two band photos thanks to Mrs. Munoz, a band member's wife .



Article and crowd photos by Jane Myers.



Our next Music in the Woods event will be Bonnie Whitehurst on Sunday, March 25th in the Auditorium at The Preserve. (See flier, next page)

Yupo Workshop with Taylor Ikin was a Wonderful Success! — 2/17/18

By Lynn Whitelaw

Eight enthusiastic participants attended the Painting on YUPO Workshop conducted by Taylor Ikin on Saturday, Feb. 17. The workshop was a related event to the *Taylor Ikin: Into the Woods* exhibition on view in the Auditorium through April 1. Ikin is called "The Queen of YUPO," because she uses YUPO paper, a synthetic paper that allows for paint to easily be manipulated on the surface.



Taylor Ikin (right), with Joan Swetland, her assistant. Ms. Ikin also led the workshop participants on a tour of her exhibit in the Auditorium.



Above left to right, Cathy Ordiway, Sharon Seaton and her mother Marleen Gravitz, and Pam Brown.



From left to right - Sandy Witman, Susan Anderson, Joanne Anderson and Linda Roberson. Photos by Lynn Whitelaw.



Introduction to

BEEKEEPING

A Hobby with Sweet Rewards
3 Part Series!



March 4~ 9:30am-12pm

Part 1: **INTRO TO HONEYBEES:** This program will introduce you to the basics of honey bees, their biology and the guiding principles of beekeeping.



March 11~ 9:30am-12pm

Part 2: **GETTING STARTED:** We will cover what it takes to get started with a focus on the equipment and tools necessary for beekeeping. We will review the components of the “modern” bee hive and explain Florida’s rules & guidelines.



March 25~ 9:30am to 12pm

Part 3: **HEALTHY HIVES:** We will review how to maintain healthy honeybee colonies, discuss how to recognize pests and diseases, and have an in- depth discussion on what you can do to support your bees, with a focus on organic beekeeping practices.

UF | **IFAS Extension**
UNIVERSITY of FLORIDA

Pinellas
County



An equal opportunity institution.

You can use the following links to register for classes through Eventbrite:

[Part 1: Intro to Honeybees](#)

[Part 2: Getting Started](#)

[Part 3: Healthy Hives](#)

Friends  of Brooker Creek Preserve
presents

Music in the Woods Series
A Musical Tribute to Florida History
Bonnie Whitehurst



Sunday, March 25, 2018 • 2:00 – 4:00 pm
Brooker Creek Preserve Environmental Education Center Auditorium
Light refreshments included

Celebrate the rich history of Florida through the words and music of its finest Troubadours. BONNIE WHITEHURST performs the songs of our state's well known musicians including her own original material using dulcimers, harps, psaltery, guitar and keyboard.

\$15/person donation requested, children under 16 FREE!
Benefits: UU Church of Tarpon Springs & Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve

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

Hey Kids!

If you are between the ages of 4-12
Bring an adult and join the...

WILDLIFE SAFARI

Saturday, April 7, 2018

Arrive any time between 9:00 am - 2:00 pm

The Safari walk takes about one hour.

Join in the fun at this educational and fun adventure for children through 12 years old! The children begin with a blank Wildlife Passport, then walk with their families along a one-mile loop of adventure with live owls, snakes, baby raccoons, hawks, and more! As the children visit each Wildlife Station, their Passport gets stamped. At the end, they get a special prize for completing the journey. Cost is \$5 per child.

This event is sponsored by Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve.

3940 Keystone Road, Tarpon Springs, 34688

Questions? Call 727-934-2680

Email fobcp@tampabay.rr.com



Sponsorship Form



Saturday, April 7, 2018
9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.
For children ages 4-12

Thank you for sponsoring this fun and educational adventure for kids.

Your business name and logo will be placed on a sign in a prominent location as a sponsor of one of the wildlife stations along the safari.

Wildlife stations cost \$200 each. You may choose to sponsor one station by yourself (\$200) or share a sponsorship sign with another sponsor (\$100 each).

Deadline for sponsorships is March 28.

Sponsorship Donation Amount: _____\$200 _____\$100

Name as you want it to appear on the sign:

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Contact Person: _____

Businesses: Please email your logo to: fobcp@tampabay.rr.com

Check payable to: Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve
3940 Keystone Road, Tarpon Springs, FL 34688

Questions? Call Cathie Foster 727-204-8303

Wildlife Safari Volunteers Needed!

We are gearing up for one of our most exciting events of the year! The annual **Wildlife Safari**, featuring animals native to Brooker Creek Preserve will be **Saturday April 7, 9 am - 2 pm**. We cannot conduct this event without you! If you would like to help, please contact Julie Wade at the1midge@aol.com or call 727-942-0166.

Morning Shift (8:30-11:30) & **Afternoon Shift** (11:30-2:30):

Registration Table- Sign people in, collect money, give out passports, answer questions.
Location - picnic shelter near parking lot

Morning Shift (~~8:30-12:00~~) filled already! & **Afternoon Shift** (12:00-3:30):

Greeter Table- Greet everyone, answer questions, count number of people.
Location - boardwalk entrance at parking lot.

Morning Shift (9:00-12:00) & **Afternoon Shift** (12:00-3:00):

Prize Table- Hand out prize to each passport-holder.
Location - Ed Center Exhibit Hall.

Morning shift 7:30-11:30 and/or **Afternoon shift** 11:00-3:00

Safari Guides -Guides will (1) help set up the station, (2) help the wildlife experts carry their animals and equipment to and from the parking lot and their wildlife station, (3) assist the experts during the event, (4) stamp the passports, (5) help take down the station.

Thank you!

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.



Friends  of Brooker Creek Preserve

**MAY THE FOREST
BE WITH YOU.**



Feel the Power of the Preserve this Earth Day.

Return the Preserve Work Day

Saturday, April 21 7:45a - 11:00a

Brooker Creek Preserve



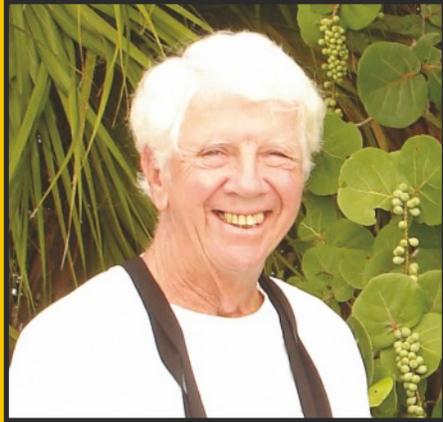
To Register Contact:

Evan Earle

earlejr@gmail.com 727.515.9545



The 4th Annual



Ken Rowe Birdathon

At Brooker Creek Preserve

Saturday June 2, 2018

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 April 30, 2018.

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



Thank you, Clearwater Audubon Society, for the nice award!



Friends  of Brooker Creek Preserve

2018 NIGHT HIKE!

Join the Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve for a hiking experience along the Education Center Trail...*at night!* These nocturnal 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.

2018

Saturday, Jan. 13, 6-8 pm

Saturday, Feb. 17, 6:30 pm **Star Party with St. Pete Astronomy Club**

Saturday, March 10, 6:30-8:30 pm

Saturday, April 14, 8-10 pm

Saturday, May 12, 8-10 pm

Pre-registration is required! Once you register, more information will come to you via email. Pre-register online by logging onto:

<http://www.eventbrite.com/e/night-hikes-tickets-15245149653>

These hikes are for adults and families only. Children must be accompanied by parents. Please leave "Fido" at home. Pets are not allowed in any county Preserve.

Special Night Hikes – If you have a group of ten or more people that would like to schedule a special night hike just for that group, please contact the Friends: fobcp@tampabay.rr.com or 727-934-2680.

Questions? Email fobcp@tampabay.rr.com

Spring Birds, Bees, Butterflies, and Wildflowers

By: Craig Huegel

When I lived in northern states, spring was my favorite season. With the end of winter and the melting of snow, life took a remarkable turn. Flowers emerged from the once frozen ground and breeding birds returned to carry on their life histories. Many of us in Florida believe that we lack those seasons, but they exist here, too. You just have to look a bit closer, you don't get to watch snow melt, and you have to make your observations in natural areas - not in the surrounding urban jungle most commonly planted with tropical plants from other countries. Tropical plants generally don't change with the seasons, but native Florida ones do.

I still get excited by springtime because my landscape contains many of my favorite flowering trees and shrubs. As I write, my native plums and Walter's viburnums are in full bloom - heralding the start of spring as they do each year. My redbud is beginning to flower. Then it will be a succession of hawthorns, silverbells, and fringe trees. Our woodland wildflowers have also emerged from their brief winter dormant period. The various violets in our landscape have opened up. The jack-in-the-pulpits are also up and flowering as are the partridgeberries. In our small created wetland, golden ragwort are also back up and in full bloom.

The return of flowers also marks the return of bees and butterflies. They go hand-in-hand in a cycle that has existed since the fall of the Age of Dinosaurs, millions of years ago. Honey bees are again working my yard and it is fun to watch their work ethic in play. Many of our common native bees are not yet so noticeable, but they will be emerging shortly. We'll notice the various green metallic bees, the leaf-cutter bees, the long-horned bees and my favorites - the bumblebees.

Most butterflies also have been largely absent these past two months, but they have started to return. Orange-barred and cloudless sulfurs are, once again, laying eggs on my privet cassia and the gulf fritillaries are doing the same on the passionvines. Over the past week, I've seen a variety of swallowtail butterflies as well.

We are right now at the beginning of the big switch in birds - from saying good-bye to the various migrants that spend the winters with us to saying hello to the migrants that only move through the area from their tropical wintering grounds to their northern breeding ones. Last week, I saw my first thrush, but the waves of colorful warblers, tanagers, vireos and grosbeaks are still a few weeks away. Each year, I spend time when I can on my deck with my binoculars to witness this passage. It is a hallmark of Florida spring that far too few of us notice.

Spring in Florida is not the same as it is in more-Northern states, but it is wondrous in its own right. Landscape your own yard to take more notice of it and venture out into our natural areas to feel it even stronger. Most of the wildflowers and flowering trees and shrubs in my yard are also in full flower at Brooker Creek Preserve. Now is a perfect time to explore!

Update on FOBCP Beekeeping

by Bob Burkard

Our Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve Beekeepers program has made major strides forward in the last few months. We now have our Apiary (beekeeping site) fence up and ready for our bees, our new storage shed installed and ready for our equipment, and our beekeeping classes scheduled in March. See flier page 11 for information about classes and registration.

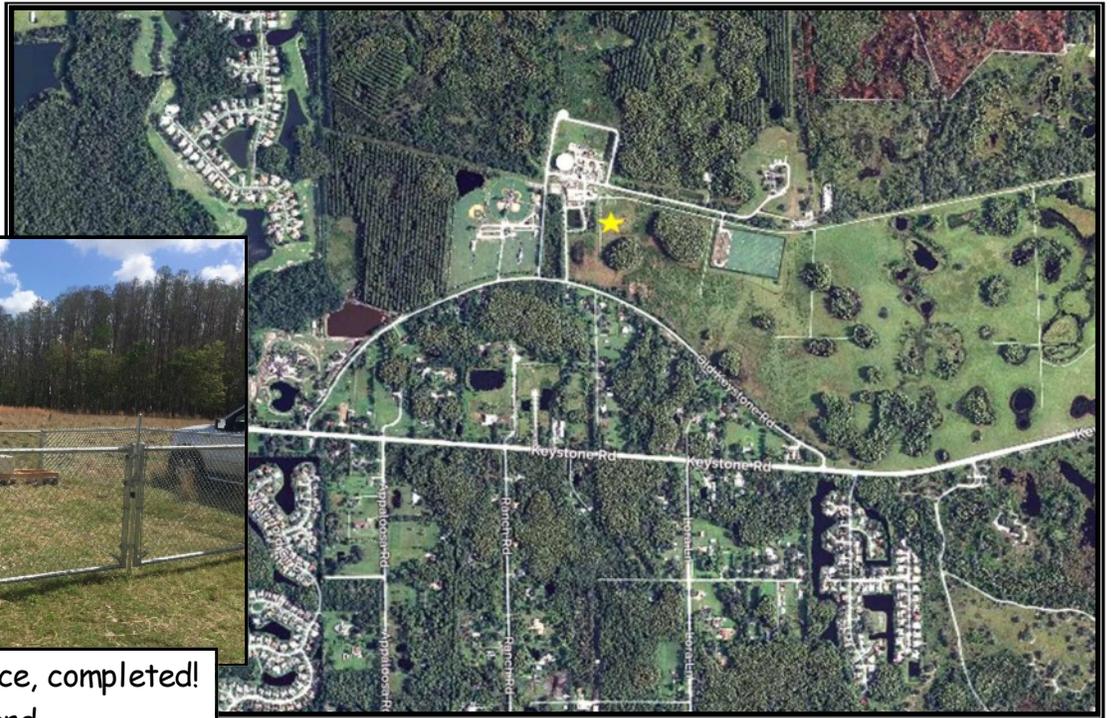
Some fun facts about our new Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve Beekeeping group:

- Our apiary is located on county-owned land north of Brooker Creek Preserve on property identified as Eldridge-Wilde.
- Our new storage shed is located near the Brooker Creek Education Center.
- The objectives of the Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve Beekeepers are to support the mission, visions, and values of the Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve by helping to inspire people to further participate in the FOBCP activities and to raise funds by selling our beekeeping products in the Brooker Creek Preserve Nature store.
- We currently have 2 bee hives and we plan to increase our apiary to 12 hives this summer.



Our new fence is up and ready to accept our beehives! Shown here are the builders from Smith Fence who installed it.

A new shed to house our beekeeping equipment. Left, the shed under construction,. Right — done! Photos by Cathie Foster.



Our new Apiary fence, completed!
Photo by Bob Burkard.

The yellow star marks the site of our beehives.

Nature Store News

by Cathie Foster

Between the winter holiday shopping season, winter visitors, and cold weather, much of our store and Native Nursery inventory was depleted. This is a great 'problem' to have as it means more money for the store which, in turn, means more money for Brooker Creek Preserve! As you are aware, all of our profit is used to support programs, activities and other needs at the Preserve. No salaries are paid. Everything is done by volunteers; making decisions about merchandise to carry, ordering and tracking the merchandise, accounting, stocking shelves, conducting semi-annual inventories, scheduling volunteer cashiers to work in the store, filling school orders, tending to our Native Nursery plants, and more! Not only have we made this work for over six years, but the store continues to grow and prosper!

No matter what the calendar says, trees are greening up and Northern parulas are warbling, so Spring has arrived! And so has a replenished stock of plush animals, plants, books and more! Come check it out...and bring a friend!



Sky blue lupine/ Photo taken at Brooker Creek Preserve, Feb.23, by Craig Huegel.

News from the Wildflower Garden

By Pam Brown

The garden is waking up after the winter rest. The first to bloom are the Florida violets and I saw many blooms in the middle of February. Next, we should see the lavender-blue stalks of the Lyre-leaf sage.

In my last update, I mentioned that we are going to create a small bog garden in a corner of the Wildflower Garden. I have set our regular workday of **April 28** as the day that we will start work on this project. Our normal work time is 8 to 10 am, but I would like to **start at 8 am and work until noon** on this day. We could use a few strong people with strong backs to help dig the area for the bog. Please let Julia know if you can help us on the 28th. We already have the liner - donated by Chuck Parsons. Thank you for helping us out Chuck.

In early February a slider turtle dug a nest and laid her eggs at the edge of the garden near the boardwalk. There are orange flags warning us away from this area until the eggs hatch.

If you can help in the garden, it will be greatly appreciated. Our workdays are on the last Saturday of each month from 9:00 -11:00 a.m. (winter 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 and coffee. Hope to see you there!



Both *Viola soraria*, common blue violet - the blue form and the white one. Photos by Craig Huegel.

Pam's Tip

March is the time to prune, especially if you have plants that were damaged in our winter frost and freeze. By now you should see new growth sprouting on branches. If there is an area further out on the branch that is not sprouting, prune back to the new growth keeping in mind the overall shape of the shrub. Always keep the top of any shrub slightly narrower than the bottom so that the whole shrub receives sufficient sunlight (see picture). This will help prevent the loss of leaves on the bottom of the shrub.



Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve Readers Club

By Jon Burr

For the January 2018 topic of the Brooker Creek Preserve Reader's Club we had a Hemingway free-for-all. Our usual spirited discussion covered a good



bit of the Hemingway terrain. Of particular interest to me was one of his letters (from the Selected Letters 1917-1961) telling of the aftermath of the 1935 hurricane. Last September, the reader's club read an account of the 1935 hurricane. I felt Hemingway's letter was too graphic to share! In general, I hope I'm right in saying the consensus was that he was a good story teller but perhaps not to everyone's taste.

February was a bust in a way. The chosen book by Archie Carr was just not available in any library. I gather the purchase price was higher than most of the books we pick. And we were going to have guest who had worked with Mr. Carr (our own Barb Hoffman). So, door number two was a free for all: any book, magazine issue, ezine, that deals with Florida nature or history. I had a scheduling conflict so the Nichters ran the show (a big thanks to them).

From Kathleen: We had a wide variety of reading, and a fascinating discussion which ran well over our usual hour or so meeting. We started us off with "Nine Florida Stories" by Marjorie Stoneman Douglas. After some discussion on that, we moved on to "Geologic History of Florida" by Albert Hine and learned a lot of interesting facts about the geologic formation of our state. "The Gladesman" followed, by Florida author Tim Robinson which is part of a series he has written, and then "Alligator Candy" by Albert Hine. "Hitler's Soldiers in the Sunshine State" is all about the POW camps for German soldiers here in Florida during WWII. That was a piece of history most of us never realized. All the reading led to a lot of personal experience and personal observations from the group on the various subjects, which make our reading discussions so lively and informative.

Note, we are doing the free-for-all again in March. Pick any book, magazine issue, ezine, mezzanine, so forth, that deals with Florida nature or history and share your thoughts (and recommendations) about what you read. It's ok if several of you read the same thing (on purpose or by coincidence.) You may read a previous book that might have been read before you were a member of the group. We may in the future pick other topics to allow a potpourri of writings to read.

In April we do a book by one of my favorite authors, Jannise Ray: "Pinhook: Finding Wholeness in a Fragmented Land". This is a story of Pinhook Swamp in Georgia which affects waters coming into Florida. Please join us. The requirements are minimal: curiosity and a willingness to participate in, or at least tolerate, wry humor. 9:30, conference room Brooker Creek Preserve Ed Center, first Saturday of the month. Happy reading.

Volunteer News and More!

By Julia Myers, Education Support Specialist, Brooker Creek Preserve



On January 7th, we had the pleasure of honoring Brooker Creek Preserve Volunteers at our annual Volunteer Appreciation Celebration! Volunteers are the backbone of our Preserve and we really can't thank this amazing group enough. In fiscal year 2017, Brooker Creek volunteers contributed a total of 8,194 hours to the Preserve! They do everything from being Education Center docents to leading guided hikes for the public. This past year we had a 20% increase in Ed Center visitation and our volunteers have gone above and beyond to continue making Brooker Creek a special experience for all of our visitors! We had a blast showering this group of dedicated volunteers with our appreciation.



Presentations by Julia and Lara.

Cantrece Harmon, thanked the volunteers on behalf of the Pinellas Co. Human Resources Volunteer Administration.



Karl and Kathleen Nichter, by the delicious table. Thanks for the delicious luncheon! Top three photos by Julia Myers, others by Cathy Vogelsong.



Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve

PLEASE JOIN US!

Who We Are: We are the citizens support group for Brooker Creek Preserve. We work hard to keep the Preserve ecologically healthy and open to the public.

Our Mission: We support the Preserve through fund raising, volunteer programs, hands-on involvement, and education to ensure that the Preserve remains a natural wilderness for future generations. We have been around for 20 years, (ten years more than the Education Center) with a long history of love and support for the Preserve, all 8,700 acres of it.

What We Do:

- Organize and conduct events, festivals, night hikes, workshops, specialty hikes, campouts, and fundraisers.
- Provide funding for the programs that occur at the Education Center.
- Publish a bimonthly newsletter full of great information about the Preserve.
- Apply for and obtain grants.
- Fund volunteer needs including the annual Volunteer Appreciation.
- Run a very lucrative Nature Store.
- Remove exotics and nuisance plants.
- Tend the Wildflower Garden.
- Lobby and work with the county commission and state legislators for Preserve support.

We rely completely on memberships, grants, and donations to achieve our many missions. Please join us in making Brooker Creek Preserve the very best it can be!



MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Name _____

Address _____

Telephone _____ Email _____

Please select your membership level.

- ___ \$48 Preserve Pal (\$4/month)
- ___ \$120 Preserve Partner (\$10/month)
- ___ \$240 Preserve Protector (\$20/month)
- ___ \$480 Preserve Guardian (\$40/month)
- ___ \$1,200 Preserve Sentinel (\$100/month)
- ___ Other (\$_____/month)

All levels are tax-deductible; you will receive an official letter noting your membership donation.

Please mail a check endorsed to FOBCP to:

Membership, Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve
3940 Keystone Road
Tarpon Springs, FL 34688

Please note that you can join online! Go to:
<http://www.friendsofbrookercreekpreserve.org>
Through the online Paypal, you can do a single payment or schedule monthly giving, if you wish.


 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

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BROOKER CREEK PRESERVE

Cool calendar for your refrigerator!

March 2018

**Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve events*

THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
1 Pre-School Book Time 10:30-11:30	2 Guided Hike 9-10:30 <i>(Florida Forests)</i>	3 Guided Hike 9-10:30 <i>(Habitats & Communities)</i> *Brooker Readers Club 9:30-10:30 Advanced Plant ID -Part 1 10:00-2:00 <i>(Registration required - \$30 for all 3 parts)</i>	4 Intro to Beekeeping Part 1 of 3 9:30-12
8 Pre-School Book Time 10:30-11:30	9 Guided Hike 9-10:30 <i>(Native Plants)</i>	10 Beginning Bird Hike 8-10 am Advanced Plant ID-Part 2 10:00-2:00 *Night Hike 6:30-8:30 pm <i>\$3/person donation</i> Youth Program-Shorebirds 1-2 pm	11 Guided Hike 9:30-11:00 <i>(Nature of Change)</i> Intro to Beekeeping - Part 2 9:30-12
15 Pre-School Book Time 10:30-11:30	16 Guided Hike 9-10:30 <i>(Wildlife in the Preserve)</i> Family Fun Friday 10-11 am	17 Guided Hike 9-10:30 <i>(Nature's Hidden Wonders)</i> Advanced Plant ID-Part 3 10:00-2:00	18
22 Pre-School Book Time 10:30-11:30	23	24 Extended Hike 9:00-12:00	25 Guided Hike 9:30-11:00 <i>(Swamp and Sandhill Surprises)</i> Intro to Beekeeping - Part 3 9:30-12 *Music in the Woods 2-4 pm <i>\$15/person - under 16 free</i>
29 Pre-School Book Time 10:30-11:30	30 Junior Naturalist Walk 9:00-10:00	31 Nature Photography Hike 8:30-10:30 *Wildflower Garden Work Day 8:00-noon Life of Lichen 10:30-12	APRIL 1 - EASTER SUNDAY TRAILS OPEN FOR ED. CENTER HOURS CALL 727-453-6800

April 2018

THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
5 Pre-School Book Time 10:30-11:30	6 Guided Hike 9-10:30 <i>(Florida Forests)</i>	7 *Wildlife Safari 9:00-2:00 *Friends Readers Club 9:30-10:30	8 Guided Hike 9:30-11 <i>(Nature of Change)</i> *Music Jam 2-4 pm
12 Pre-School Book Time 10:30-11:30	13 Guided Hike 9-10:30 <i>(Native Plants)</i>	14 Beginning Bird Hike 8-10 am *Night Hike 8-10 pm \$3 donation Tarpon Springs Lasting Legacy 10:30-11:30	15 Dragonfly Discovery Walk 9-11 am
19 Pre-School Book Time 10:30-11:30	20 Guided Hike 9-10:30 <i>(Wildlife in the Preserve)</i> Family Fun Friday 10-11 am	21 *Earth Day Return the Preserve Work Day 8-11 am Guided Hike 9-10:30 <i>(Nature's Hidden Wonders)</i> Swallow-Tailed Kites 10:30-12	22 Guided Hike 9:30-11 <i>(Swamp and Sandhill Surprises)</i>
26 Pre-School Book Time 10:30-11:30	27 Family Fun Friday 9:00-11:00	28 Nature Photography Hike 8:30-10:30 *Wildflower Garden Work Day 8-10 Extended Hike 9:00-12:00	29

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 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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