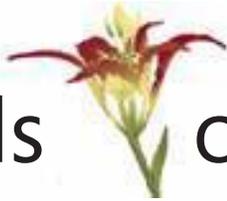

Newsletter of the
Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve



November - December 2010

Come one, come all!
Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve

**- ANNUAL MEETING -
CELEBRATE THE PRESERVE!**

Saturday, Nov. 13, 2010
Brooker Creek Preserve
Environmental Education Center

9:00 a.m. (optional) Hike -

Join us for a guided walk along the Ed Center and/or Flatwoods Trails. Bird and wildflower experts will be with us.

11:00 a.m. Lunch -

Enjoy a host of delicious, catered goodies—soups, salads, fruits, and desserts! Lunch will take place in the Education Center Auditorium.

Annual Summary & Look to the Future

Barbara Hoffman, Chair

Preserve Update

Dr. Steve Harper, Operations Manager,
Natural & Historical Resources,
Pinellas Co. Parks & Conservation Resources

Board Elections & Misc. Business (see p.2)

Hiking trails & Exhibit Hall will be open!

Important! RSVP by 11/11/10!

Voicemail 727-934-2680, leave message

Email fobcp@tampabay.rr.com

Feel free to invite potential new members!

Annual Meeting 11/13/10 p. 1
Business Meeting items p. 2
Adopt-A-Mile p. 2
Chairman's Message
 by Barbara Hoffman p. 3
Preserve News
 by Steven Harper p. 4
Wildflower Festival Success
 by Barb Hoffman p. 5
Pine Lily by Craig Huegel p. 6
Nature Arts & Crafts Class
 by John Burr p. 7
New Program Registration
 by Phyllis Kolianos p. 7
Education Center Programs and
 Upcoming Events p. 8
Mission Statements p. 9
Contacts p. 9



Cross Vine

Annual Meeting Saturday, Nov. 13: Items for the Business Meeting

Item 1: Three proposed changes to Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve bylaws. Additions are underscored; deletions are ~~struck through~~.

ARTICLE V: Membership, Section 1. Classes of Membership. The Corporation shall have various classes of membership including, but not limited to, Students, Individuals, Family, Business, and Organizations, ~~Honorary, and Advisory.~~

ARTICLE VII: Board of Directors, Section 1. Election and Tenure. The affairs of the Corporation shall be managed by a Board of Directors, composed of not more than twenty-five (25) Directors. Each Director shall be elected by the membership at the Annual Meeting for a two-year term, except as provided herein.

The Chairman shall appoint a Nominating Committee of ~~3-5 members~~ at least 30 days before the Board of Directors meeting preceding the Annual Meeting.

ARTICLE VIII: Officers, Section 2. The officers of the Corporation shall be elected annually by the Board of Directors either at the Annual Meeting or at the first Board of Directors meeting following the Annual Meeting for terms of one year *beginning December 1 and ending November 30 of the following year. Current officers whose terms would have ended on September 30, 2002 will have their terms extended to November 30, 2002.*

Item 2: Directors up for re-election for a two-year term:
Allyn Childress, Walt Hoskins, Chuck Parsons
New Director: Robert Host

Keep Pinellas Beautiful (Adopt-A-Mile)

On Saturday, Sept. 11, we held our road clean-up along Keystone Road in front of Brooker Creek Preserve. The Keep Pinellas Beautiful project provided us with orange safety vests, gloves, and big plastic bags

The pick up was a big success, thanks to the ten volunteers who spent their morning with us. Our Trash Picker Uppers (pictured above in their orange attire) were Hank Dykstall, Fred Clark, Jim Stewart, Barbara Hoffman, Pat Coughlin, Cathie Foster, Janet Wheeler, Laurie Angyn, Scott Shellabarger and Ken Rowe. We will be holding more pick ups in the future and will announce dates. If you would like to participate, please call Ken Rowe at 727-781-0745 or ksr28@verizon.net



CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

By: Barb Hoffman

As 2010 draws near to a close, we can be joyous and thankful that Brooker Creek Preserve Environmental Education Center is still open. It was heartbreaking to say goodbye to the final two environmental educators on Sept. 30, and we will miss them all. But the Ed Center is still here, the Preserve is still here, and WE ARE STILL HERE.

During this year, we have:

- Been the catalyst to successfully move the Pinellas County School 4th grade environmental education program to Brooker Creek Preserve
- Provided scholarships to summer camp at Brooker Creek
- Enhanced and revamped our newsletter
- Begin a partnership with Brooker Creek volunteers
- Successfully planned and conducted the Fall Wildflower Festival
- Established and maintained several bird feeders at the Ed Center



Sunshine mimosa

New Members

Bill & Pam Brown, Mary Grace Duffy, Robert M. Host, Brenda Klindt, Jacqueline Labus, Isobel Sapp, Julie Wade

- Launched a positive publicity campaign about the preserve
- Obtained responsibility for the butterfly garden

But there is still a lot of work to be done.

We must be vigilant about the vitality and health of the preserve environment, not just the Education Center, but the whole 8,700 acres. We need to demonstrate our concern by stepping up to volunteer to maintain trails, to fight the seemingly ever-present exotic vegetation, and to help keep up with bird and butterfly counts.

Some further important needs include:

- Pushing for the Ed Center to be open two more days per week, Wed and Sunday.
- Opening the 6-mile Wilderness Trail one weekend per month and if successful, every weekend.
- Reducing our carbon offset by pushing for the Pinellas Trail to be continued to the Ed Center (it's simply absurd that the only way to get to the Ed Center is by car).
- Helping and supporting bringing in interesting speakers and adult education workshops.
- Trying some new events like a "concert on the green" music/picnic series

Yep, a lot of work to be done...but very doable!

Barb

Preserve News

By: Steven J. Harper, PhD
Director, Environmental Lands Division

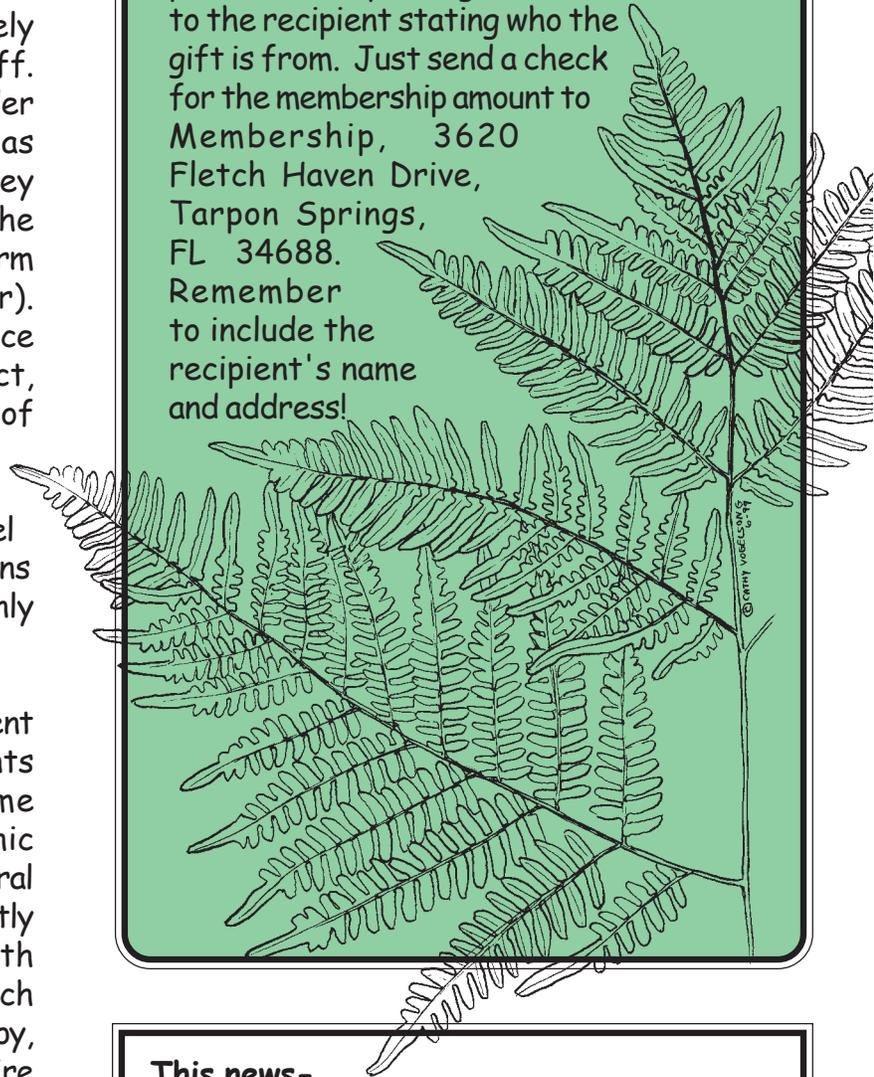
Visitors to Brooker Creek Preserve, as well as residents of the northeastern part of the county, may have observed the tell-tale signs of recent fires. These were set deliberately under the careful watch of experienced staff. Because such burns must be carried out under specific conditions using detailed plans as prescribed by the Division of Forestry, they are known as "prescribed burns" (given the uncertainties associated with any fire, the term "controlled burn" has fallen out of favor). Those new to the area may ask if this practice is harmful to the plants and animals. In fact, fire is a natural and necessary component of many ecosystems here in the southeastern U.S. It promotes the recycling of nutrients, growth of native species, and reduction of fuel loads. Many species show striking adaptations to the presence of fire, and perform best only under a cycle of periodic burns.

It is the absence of regular fire, and subsequent build-up of fuels, that is dangerous to plants and animals. Forests that have become overgrown are susceptible to catastrophic wildfire if they do ignite (whether due to natural sources, such as lightning strikes, or accidentally by human carelessness). In contrast with prescribed fires, wildfires typically burn much more intensely and reach higher into the canopy, severely damaging or killing trees. Because fire is so important to these ecosystems, conducting prescribed burns remains an integral part of our resource management program.

Information can be obtained by calling the burn hotline at (727) 582-BURN. When you hike the trails or drive the entrance loop, realize that many of the natural communities that surround you thrive with fire, an integral component of the ecosystem.

Go green this holiday!

Give a gift membership to the Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve! What better way to show how much you care about the preserve! A special gift card will be sent to the recipient stating who the gift is from. Just send a check for the membership amount to Membership, 3620 Fletch Haven Drive, Tarpon Springs, FL 34688. Remember to include the recipient's name and address!



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

To contact The Friends:
Email: fobcp@tampabay.rr.com
Phone: (727) 934-2680
(please leave a message and your phone number for a return call)
www.FriendsOfBrookerCreekPreserve.org

Fall Wildflower Festival -- A Great Success! by Barb Hoffman

Whatever the reason - the perfect alignment of the stars, the beautiful weather, the St. Pete Times front page picture and article, or maybe just a ton of planning and hard work - it all came together for a fabulous Fall Wildflower Festival! Nearly 1,000 people attended (the actual count was 946) and a good time was had by all!

The biggest hit by far was the butterfly tent. The Friends rented this exhibit for \$2,500, and it was well worth every penny. Children and adults alike enjoyed being up close and personal with 250 butterflies flying and landing on the many flower, and on people, too!

We were delighted to have Joyce Lang and Miles Carter from the Tampa Bay Beekeepers Assoc., who brought a live honey bee hive, and stayed all day to answer questions and sell honey! They look forward to returning next year!

Our wildflower plant sale went great! We purchased 175 plants to sell - about 12 different species of all colors and textures - and sold all but six. It was fun to watch the wild butterflies come and go all day. People were happy to go home with a pretty flower, and we were happy to make a small profit!

Four ongoing presentations took place during the day with a nice crowd of people always in attendance. The adults appreciated two presentations, *Landscaping with Wildflowers* by Pam Brown and *Wildflowers of Pinellas County* by Barbara Hoffman. Adults and children really enjoyed Cindy Peacock's talk on *Wildflower Pollinators* and Katy Roberts' presentation on *Edible Plants*. Katy even brought tea she made from wild plants and had samples for the audience to taste!



The adventuresome survived the Wildflower Scavenger Hunt, a difficult but fun search along the Preserve's trails to find real wildflowers in bloom. Searchers had to look high above the ground, low along the ground, out into the woods, and even into the swamp. Regardless of how many they found, everyone got a prize!

The open classroom is always a fun place to feel the fur and skins of mammals, touch and feel real bones, look into microscopes and through binoculars, and enjoy a host of games, and this day was no exception. The Exhibit Hall was open and crowded all day, too, and kept the docent "regulars" busy the whole time!

Perhaps the most successful element was the fact that the Fall Wildflower Festival brought hundreds of people to the Preserve who have never visited before, from as near as the next street over to as far away as Gulfport and Brooksville. We received lots of good comments about the event, and lots of folks said they would be back next year! Wow!



Many, many thanks to the Friends members and volunteers who helped make this event possible and a great success! Without you, it could not have happened. We were told at the beginning that we would need to do this event without staff help. Well, we did it, and we look forward to much more of these types of events in the future!

Pine Lily

By: Craig Huegel

To me, fall at Brooker Creek Preserve means pine lilies. Also known as Catesby's lily (*Lilium catesbaei*), the Latin name commemorates an early British naturalist, Mark Catesby, who made several trips to America in the early part of the 18th century; studying and collecting native plants and wildlife. His 2-volume book, *The Natural History of Carolina, Florida and the Bahamas*, described a great many species new to science and a number of them were named in his honor.

The pine lily is a state-threatened species and occurs throughout Brooker Creek Preserve in areas that meet its exacting habitat requirements. It requires open pinelands and savannas that stay moist to wet during the summer rainy season and disappears quickly if the understory becomes too overgrown or if the rains do not come. Therefore, it responds quickly after a fire and performs best following a wet winter.

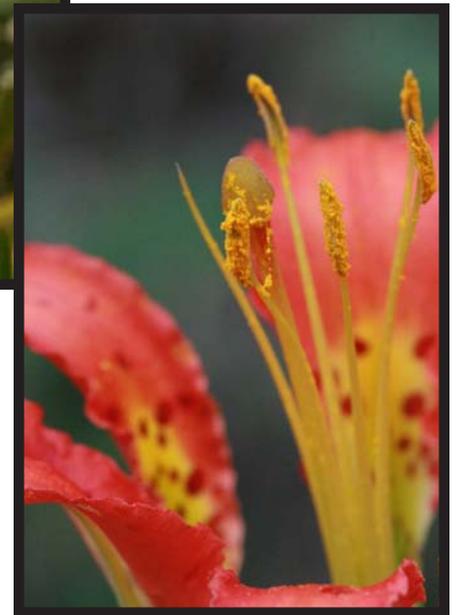
Pine lilies are deciduous and die completely to the ground each winter. They emerge in early spring; producing a few linear leaves at ground level. In years that are not favorable to them, they may persist like this through the growing season. In good years, however, they initiate production of a flower stalk. This stalk becomes evident in early summer and eventually reaches a mature height of 2-3 feet by late August to early September. Each stalk develops a solitary flower bud and blooming can occur almost any time from September to the end of November.

Pine lily flowers are spectacular. Each is about 3 inches across and 6 inches long or more. The

color ranges from brilliant orange to deep brick or yellow and all color forms are heavily spotted. The flowers are held upright and are pollinated mostly by large swallowtail butterflies - Palamedes and spicebush swallowtails in particular. Flowers remain open for about a week and, if pollinated, rapidly develop an elliptical seed capsule filled with hundreds of thin papery seeds. Fully ripened seed capsules split open and these seeds are carried a short distance away from the parent plant by the wind.



In the early years of the program, staff conducted long-term research on this beautiful wildflower in hopes of adding to our collective knowledge of its ecology and as a way of evaluating the impacts of the prescribed fire



program. Brooker Creek Preserve, as it turns out, is one of the most significant areas in the region for pine lilies. Though the research study is no more, Brooker Creek Preserve remains important to the future of this species in west-central Florida. Look for it as you walk the Preserve's pineland trails, appreciate its beauty, and respect its place in the Preserve's flora.

Nature Arts and Crafts Class

By: John Burr

One of the programs the Friends support involves buying the supplies for the Nature Arts and Crafts class most recently held at the Brooker Creek Preserve classroom Saturday, August 28, 2010 from 1:00 pm - 2:30 pm. This class is conducted by Education Services Volunteers of the Environmental Lands Division, who were, in turn, instructed by Education Center staff. Jon Burr and Ray Poyner, volunteers at the Preserve, supervised this class. The class was described as:

"School has started and before you know it the holidays will be upon us. Bring your creativity and join us to get a jump on your holiday gifting and decorating at this nature craft workshop. Each family member can choose a nature craft to complete and take home. You will also have a chance to see samples and take home helpful instructions. Spaces are limited so register early: Recommended for families with children age 6 and up."

About a dozen families came and it was hard to tell who was having more fun; the kids, the mommies or the daddies. Picture frames were decorated with moss, twigs, pinecones, and dried seeds - all attached by a glue gun. Wreaths were made in the same fashion. T-shirts were imprinted by painting leafs and then pressing them on (Please wash separately the first time). Holiday gift cards were created the same way. The pictures shows the results of some of the crafters.

The Friends were acknowledged as supporting the afternoon's fun (and more than one contribution was made to the Friend's donation box).



New Brooker Creek Education Program Registration

By: Phyllis Kolianos, Program Coordinator

All education programs are now transitioned to the convenient on-line registration system. You can register for programs by visiting www.pinellascountyextension.org and click on the "Online Class Registration" button and then click on the "Brooker Creek" tab. Front desk volunteers at the Center, (727) 453-6800, are trained to assist participants in registering and will give additional information about events. You can also call (727) 582-2100 for more information about registering.

Cooler weather guarantees the Saturday Guided Hikes will be popular interpretive programs in November and December. In addition, another popular workshop presented by Karl and Kathleen Nichter, "It's the Photographer, Not the Camera!" is scheduled for November 13.

Informative Extension Service Classes, *Pinellas County Efficiency Project*, will be held on November 6 and "*Green Living*" on December 4. For a complete listing of events, check the Pinellas County website.



We need additional volunteers at the Brooker Creek Preserve Environmental Education Center as we continue to look for ways to improve and expand.

Brooker Creek Preserve Environmental Education Center Upcoming Events

All programs are free, unless otherwise noted, and presented by Education Services Volunteers, unless noted. Please call (727) 453-6800 for information and reservations.

Nov. - Dec. Guided Hikes

Most Saturdays (Nov. 6, 20, 27, Dec. 4, 11, 18), from 9:00 to 10:30 am, led by Education Services Volunteers, Environmental Lands Division. Take a walk through time each Saturday morning on a guided hike along the Education Center Trail. Join us for this 0.75-mile walk as we look at how the land has changed over time and discuss the ecological footprints left by those changes. Sturdy closed-toe shoes are a must, and water and a hat are recommended. Please register by noon on the Friday before the hike by calling (727) 453-6800. Free. All ages welcome - **children younger than 6 may find this hike challenging.**

BCPEEC November Programs

Pinellas Energy Efficiency Project

Saturday, November 6, 11 - 12 am.

Thanks to a grant from the US Department of Energy, Pinellas County Extension Sustainability Specialist, James Stevenson is able to provide valuable information and equipment to help Pinellas citizens save money on their power bill and reduce our overall ecological footprint. This class will provide tips and incentives to making your home more energy efficient, while still maintaining the same level of comfort. Comprehensive energy saving kits will be provided to all participants. **This class is free. All ages** welcome.

Its the Photographer, Not the Camera!

Saturday, November 13, 9:00 am - 11:00 am

Do you think the only way to take good nature photographs is to have expensive, specialized camera equipment? It is the photographer that makes the photograph, not the camera! Bring your camera and join local nature photographers

Karl and Kathleen Nichter for this two-hour workshop. Learn how to apply basic digital photography techniques and photo composition to create pleasing nature pictures with your own camera. This workshop includes both classroom instruction and practice in the field. Space is limited, so register early. Pre-registration required. Free. Best for adults, suitable for children ages 12 and up. **Free.**

BCPEEC December Programs

Pinellas Energy Efficiency Project

Saturday, December 4, 11 - 12 am.

Thanks to a grant from the US Department of Energy, Pinellas County Extension Sustainability Specialist, James Stevenson is able to provide valuable information and equipment to help Pinellas citizens save money on their power bill and reduce our overall ecological footprint. This class will provide tips and incentives to making your home more energy efficient, while still maintaining the same level of comfort. Comprehensive energy saving kits will be provided to all participants. **Free.**

Book Time at Brooker Creek: *Earl the Squirrel*

Thursday, Dec. 9, 10:30 - 11:15 am.

This program is designed to connect pre-school children to the wonders of the natural world. In addition to hearing Earl the Squirrel, your child will participate in a craft, game, or other hands-on activity related to the story. Pre-registration is required. Spaces are limited so register early! Free. Recommended **ages: 3 - 5.**

Urban Green Spaces

Saturday, December 11, 11:00 am - 12:00 pm.

Green spaces exist at the fringes of the interface between built and natural environments, are aesthetically pleasing and support sustainable goals. Join Ramona Madhosingh-Hector, Urban Sustainability Agent, in this session, explore the different types of green spaces, the benefits derived from green spaces and its contribution to developing sustainable communities. **This class is free.**

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.

Pinellas County Environmental Lands Division - Mission

The mission of the Environmental Lands Division of the Department of Environmental Management is to provide sound stewardship to the County's wild lands and opportunities for the appreciation of their intrinsic value.

Pinellas County Environmental Lands Division - Vision

Pinellas County Preserves and Management Areas are designated wild areas that will be managed for the conservation, protection, and enhancement of natural and cultural resources while allowing for sustainable passive public recreational uses that are compatible with approved management plans and applicable ordinances and laws.

Friends of Brooker Creek Officers

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

Board Members

Business Affairs: Debbie Reker
Volunteer Liason: Dave Seidel
Publicity Chair: Barbara Schultz
Land Use Chair: Dr. Craig Huegel
Membership Chair: Dr. Carrie Root
Newsletter Editor: Dr. Craig Huegel
Birdman & Historian: Ken Rowe
Beverly Billiris
John Burr
Walt Hoskins

Friends of Brooker Creek website:
www.FriendsOfBrookerCreekPreserve.org

To contact The Friends:

Email: fobcp@tampabay.rr.com
Phone: (727) 934-2680
(please leave a message and your phone number for a return call)

Brooker Creek Preserve:

Phone: (727) 453-6900
Website: www.brookercreekpreserve.org

The Brooker Creek Preserve Environmental Education Center is located at 3940 Keystone Road, Tarpon Springs, Florida, 34688

Center Hours: Thurs. - Sat. 9 am - 4 pm
Phone: (727) 453-6800

Preserve & Hiking Trails: Thursday - Sunday 7:00am - 1 hour before sunset

Horse & Friendship Trails will remain open 7 days per week

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

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