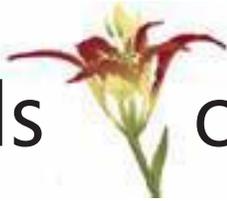


---

---

Newsletter of the  
**Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve**



January - February 2014

---

---

**Chairman's Message** By Barb Hoffman

**Happy 2014 to You! Happy Birthday to Us!**  
2014 is a big year for Brooker Creek Preserve! Twenty years ago, the Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve was born, and ten years ago, the Environmental Education Center first opened its doors. We have a year full of festivities planned culminating with a big birthday bash in November! Woohoo!

I am still high on cloud nine after my big adventure last month. I attended the opening reception of Clyde Butcher's photographic exhibit, *Preserving Eden*, at the Leepa-Rattner Museum of Art (LRMA) on Saturday, December 7. As one of



the last people there, I wound up walking out to the parking lot with Clyde. He had been hearing about Brooker Creek Preserve from many people all night. I got brave and said, "I'm going hiking in the Preserve tomorrow. Would you like to come?" He said yes! Wow! So I picked him up at his hotel the next morning and we hiked for about two hours. He took

**Chairman's Message**

|   |      |
|---|------|
| by Barbara Hoffman . . . . .                                    | p. 1 |
| Clyde Butcher, <i>Preserving Eden</i> . . . . .                 | p. 2 |
| Music in the Woods Series . . . . .                             | p. 3 |
| Welcome New Board Members . . . . .                             | p. 3 |
| Friends Membership Statistics . . . . .                         | p. 3 |
| Return the Preserve<br>by Evan Earle Jr. . . . .                | p. 4 |
| Dinner and a Movie . . . . .                                    | p. 4 |
| Holly Jolly Christmas<br>by Craig Huegel . . . . .              | p. 5 |
| Off the Beaten Path Hikes . . . . .                             | p. 7 |
| Potential Help for Brooker Creek<br>by Deborah Chayet . . . . . | p. 7 |
| Fiscal Year 2013 Accomplishments . . . . .                      | p. 8 |
| Wildflower Garden News & Tip<br>by Pam Brown . . . . .          | p.10 |
| Volunteer News by Lara Miller . . . . .                         | p.10 |
| Wreath-Making Class . . . . .                                   | p.12 |
| Brooker Book Club News<br>by Laurie Angyn . . . . .             | p.13 |
| Tampa Bay Times Article . . . . .                               | p.13 |
| Nature Store New<br>by Kathleen Nichter . . . . .               | p.14 |
| Upcoming Programs & Events . . . . .                            | p.14 |
| Mission Statements/Contacts . . . . .                           | p.18 |

seemingly hundreds of photos (with his 100 megapixel iphone camera) and kept commenting on how beautiful the Preserve is. At the end of our hike, to my incredible surprise and ultimate delight, he stated that he would like to return in the summer for a THREE WEEK PHOTO SHOOT of our beloved Brooker Creek Preserve!!! I am just giddy with excitement! What a fabulous way to celebrate our birthday and a fitting way to honor the Preserve!

**Barb**



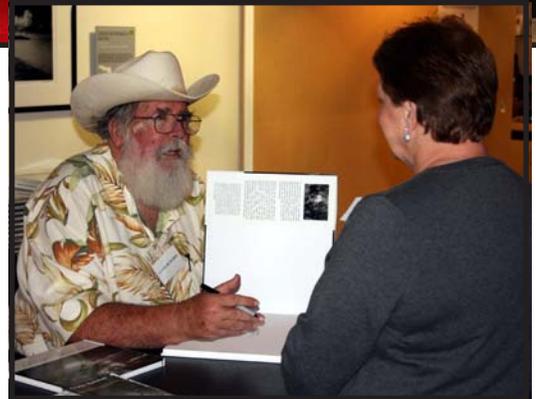
Left, new board member, Evan Earle, Jr. enjoyed the hike with Clyde Butcher, too! Below, Clyde Butcher and Barbara Hoffman photographing tiny mushrooms.



Barb getting a personal photography lesson - wow!



**Opening reception with Clyde Butcher, Saturday, December 7, 2013 at Leepa-Rattner Museum of Art.** Clyde Butcher was present at the LRMA to open an exhibition of his photography. After a brief welcome, he was present to sign books and answer questions from visitors about his beautiful gallery display *Clyde Butcher's Florida Photographs: Preserving Eden* (at LRMA through February 16, 2014).



**Welcome New Board Members!**

The following new board members were voted in at the annual meeting in November:

- Evan Earl, Jr.
- Len Gravitz
- Brenda Klindt

The following continuing board members were voted in for another two-year term:

- Pam Brown
- Cathie Foster
- Barb Hoffman
- Craig Huegel
- Carson Morrow
- Barbara Schultz

The following board member was voted "Member Emeritus":

- Ken Rowe

**Friends Membership Statistics as of Dec. 12, 2013:**

- 3 Corporate/Business Members
- 74 Family Members
- 6 Huegel's Eagles
- 48 Individual Members
- 4 Lifetime Members
- 4 Non-profit Organization Members
- 4 Sponsor Members
- 21 Sustaining Members
- 164 Total Members

**SAVE THE DATE!**

Friends  of Brooker Creek Preserve

**Music in the Woods Series**

presents the modern roots music of



**BETWEEN BLUFFS**

**Saturday, March 15, 2014**

**6:00–9:00 pm**

**Brooker Creek Preserve Environmental Education Center  
Outdoor Music Pavillion (or the auditorium if it is raining)**



Photo by Patti Young

## Return The Preserve

By Evan Earle Jr.

Brooker Creek Preserve is such a gift. The Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve are such an active element of the Preserve. To continue contributing to this wonderful relationship, we will be undertaking quarterly projects that will allow us to help "Return The Preserve". Quarterly, we will select a specific, defined area of the Preserve to return to its natural setting. This will entail work such as removing overgrowth and exotics to give the native plants their chance to live, flourish, and "shine" for our visitors. This will allow our guests to see more of Brooker Creek Preserve and appreciate even more of its true beauty.

Once a quarter, we will work with Brooker Creek Preserve personnel to select an area and define what needs to be accomplished, e.g. removal of grapevine overgrowth, removal of exotic plants, etc. The areas to be worked will be clearly identified and manageable for the anticipated level of participation, i.e we will keep this realistic in what we can accomplish, but we will ensure that we can see the rewards of our accomplishments. The area to be worked will be accessible by the volunteers. We will schedule a Saturday and reach out to our membership for participation and support. We will start early (8:00 am) and finish early (2:00 pm). Water will be provided.

Our first Return The Preserve work day will be Saturday, February 1st (Rain day will be Saturday February 8th, if needed). We will be removing the grapevine and other exotics from the main parking lot area. We'll meet in the main parking area at 7:45 am and get started by 8:00. Please bring clippers and work gloves. Pole saws will be available to help reach those hard to reach places. Dress appropriately. We will be in the thick of things (pardon the pun) in removing vines and overgrowth. Longs sleeves, jeans, and closed toe shoes are recommended. And don't forget your sunscreen and hats. Bottled water will be provided so we can stay hydrated.

All of our members and volunteers contribute so much in so many ways. These work days will be for those members who enjoy the opportunity to donate some hands-on sweat equity to the Preserve. It will be for those members who enjoy lacing up their work boots and putting on their work gloves. It will give us a chance to really see the "before and after" of our efforts.

Our target, our goal, is a healthy, natural Brooker Creek Preserve. To "Return The Preserve" to its true beauty.

### Dinner & A Movie Series...

Longtime Friends members, Len & Marlene Gravitz, have started what they hope will become a fundraising idea for everyone to use - a themed dinner and movie night! For this February 15 evening event, Marlene is putting together an African feast including wine, appetizers, entree, and dessert. Her delicious cuisine will be coupled with the showing of the classic movie, African Queen. Len & Marlene are hosting this event in their beautiful Pasco waterfront home for 20 people. Len and Marlene "cooked up" this idea as a fun way to personally fundraise for the Friends. They welcome and encourage other Friends members to use this idea for their own themed dinner/movie events. Thank you, Len & Marlene, for helping the Friends in this very fun, entertaining, and personal way!



# Hope You Had a Holly Jolly Christmas & Decked the Halls with Boughs of Holly . . . . .

By: Craig Huegel

With Christmas just passed, I thought it fitting to reflect a bit on a few of the lyrics you most likely heard. All of us know the tunes above and have grown up hearing them at the holidays, but the history of holly at Christmas is one that dates back thousands of years. Holly was the sacred plant of Saturn and was used at the Roman Saturnalia Festival to honor him. Romans gave one another holly wreaths and carried them about decorating images of Saturn with it. Centuries later, in December, while other Romans continued their pagan worship, Christians celebrated the birth of Jesus. Early Christians used holly to decorate their homes during the Roman festival of Saturnalia to avoid persecution. Using the "Saturnalia" holly made them seemingly fit into the pagan culture of the times, but was really a code amongst themselves that demonstrated their Christian beliefs. As Christian numbers increased and their customs prevailed, holly lost its pagan associations and became a symbol of Christmas.

lightning. In West England, it is said sprigs of holly around a young girl's bed on Christmas Eve will keep away mischievous little goblins. In Germany, a piece that has been used in church decorations is regarded as a charm against lightning. In England, British farmers put sprigs of holly on their beehives. On the first Christmas, they believed, the bees hummed in honor of the Christ Child. The English also mention the "he holly and the she holly" as being the determining factor in who will rule the household in the following year, the "she holly" having smooth leaves and the "he holly" having prickly ones. Other beliefs included putting a sprig of holly on the bedpost to bring sweet dreams and making a tonic from holly to cure a cough. All of these references give light to "decking the halls with boughs of holly."

Hollies belong to the genus *Ilex* and this genus is distributed worldwide, throughout a vast array of different climates. Most species make their home in the tropics and subtropics, but they have a worldwide distribution in temperate zones as well. The greatest diversity of species is found in the Americas and in Southeast Asia. Four species of holly are found in Brooker Creek Preserve.

The use of holly in winter also predates the Roman invasion of the British Isles. The Druids believed that holly, with its shiny leaves and red berries stayed green to keep the earth beautiful when the sacred oak lost its leaves. They wore sprigs of holly in their hair when they went into the forest to watch their priests cut the sacred mistletoe.

The plant has come to stand for peace and joy; people often settle arguments under a holly tree. Holly is believed to frighten off witches and protect the home from thunder and

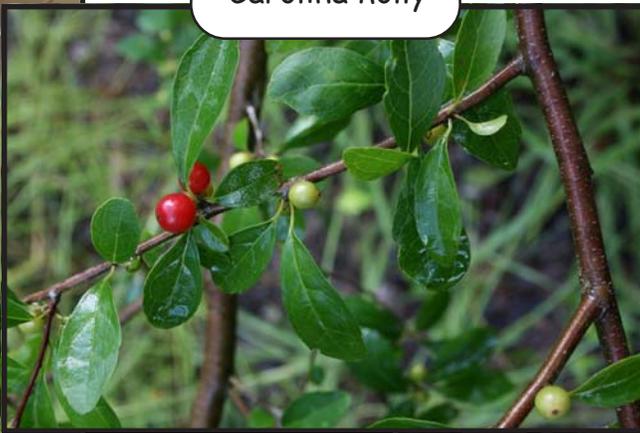


dahoon holly

One of the most common species in the Preserve is **dahoon holly** (*Ilex cassine*). Dahoon is most common in wetland areas of the Preserve though it can do well in uplands and invades pinelands that are not regularly burned. Dahoon is an evergreen tree that eventually reaches a mature height of about 30-35 feet. Its shiny green leaves do not have the sharp points seen in the traditional American holly, but it shares the latter's smooth white bark. Dahoon often has multiple trunks and the branches are frequently quite crooked.



gallberry



Carolina holly



yaupon holly

**Friends of Brooker  
Creek Preserve**  
  
**New Members:**  
Dorene Ward  
Doris Mann  
Evan C. and Ruth Earle

The other  
common holly  
at Brooker  
C r e e k

Preserve is **gallberry** (*Ilex glabra*). Gallberry is a short evergreen shrub, most commonly found in moist pine flatwoods. In certain locations, it can form large, dense colonies. The many stems make a thicket that is difficult to walk through. Gallberry has small, shiny, evergreen leaves. The female plants produce fruit that starts off rusty in color and eventually turns dark purple. As its common name implies, these fruit are quite bitter and are not eaten by birds until nearly everything else is gone.

**Carolina holly** (*Ilex ambigua*) is rather common in certain uplands of the Preserve. Numbers of them can be seen as you leave the Preserve parking lot and start to head up the "hill." There also is a large colony of them along the main hiking trail. These can be seen on both sides of the trail right after you leave the boardwalk over Brooker Creek and head up through the palmettos. Carolina holly is a deciduous shrub that rarely stands taller than 15 feet. At this time of year, it will be leafless, but the female plants with their showy red fruit will be unmistakable.

The least common holly within the Preserve, but a species that is common throughout much of Florida, is **yaupon holly** (*Ilex vomitoria*). Yaupon

has leaves that contain caffeine and, when roasted properly, makes a wonderful tea. Once used by Native Americans as a ceremonial drink, it was drunk in excess - to the point that caused vomiting; hence its Latin name. In nature, yaupon is extremely adaptable to growing conditions and can occur in nearly every type of habitat. It is an evergreen shrub that rarely stands taller than 25 feet.

Hollies are dioecious - a complicated word for a simple concept; hollies are among those plants that are either males or females. Only female plants produce the distinctive fruit that are still used as holiday decorations. Of course, males are needed to pollinate the female flowers in spring, but if you wish to use hollies in your landscape, make sure you plant mostly females. Do not attempt to plant only one holly and hope that pollination might just magically occur. Most hollies make long-lived, pest-free landscape plants and they have great wildlife value. And, they are a wonderful symbol of the holidays - a tradition that you can perpetuate.

*Back by popular demand...*  
**OFF THE BEATEN PATH**

A nature-based fundraising hike series!

**Description:** This series of four hikes will take place in beautiful areas tucked away within Brooker Creek Preserve in sites that are closed to the public. Our guide, Dr. Craig Huegel (SPC Biology Professor), can identify everything, from the tiniest moss to the tallest tree including animal prints, bird calls, lichens, and more. He is full of stories and very patient with 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

**Hikes Off the Beaten Path:**

March 16 - Sandhill Scramble - The only true sandhills of Brooker Creek Preserve. This site is in the northern end of the Preserve and will feature an abundance of spring wildflowers.

June 8 - Cypress Swamp Stomp - Located in the central part of the Preserve, this site features orchids, ferns, and epiphytes. We might get wet, really wet, as we plunge into the depths of the swamp!

Sept. 14 - In Search of the Catesby's Lily - Located in the eastern part of the Preserve, we will search for the threatened Catesby's Lily. In so doing, we will see a profusion of beautiful fall wildflowers in full bloom.

Dec. 7 - 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!

**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.

**Potential Help for Brooker Creek Preserve?**

by Deborah Chayet

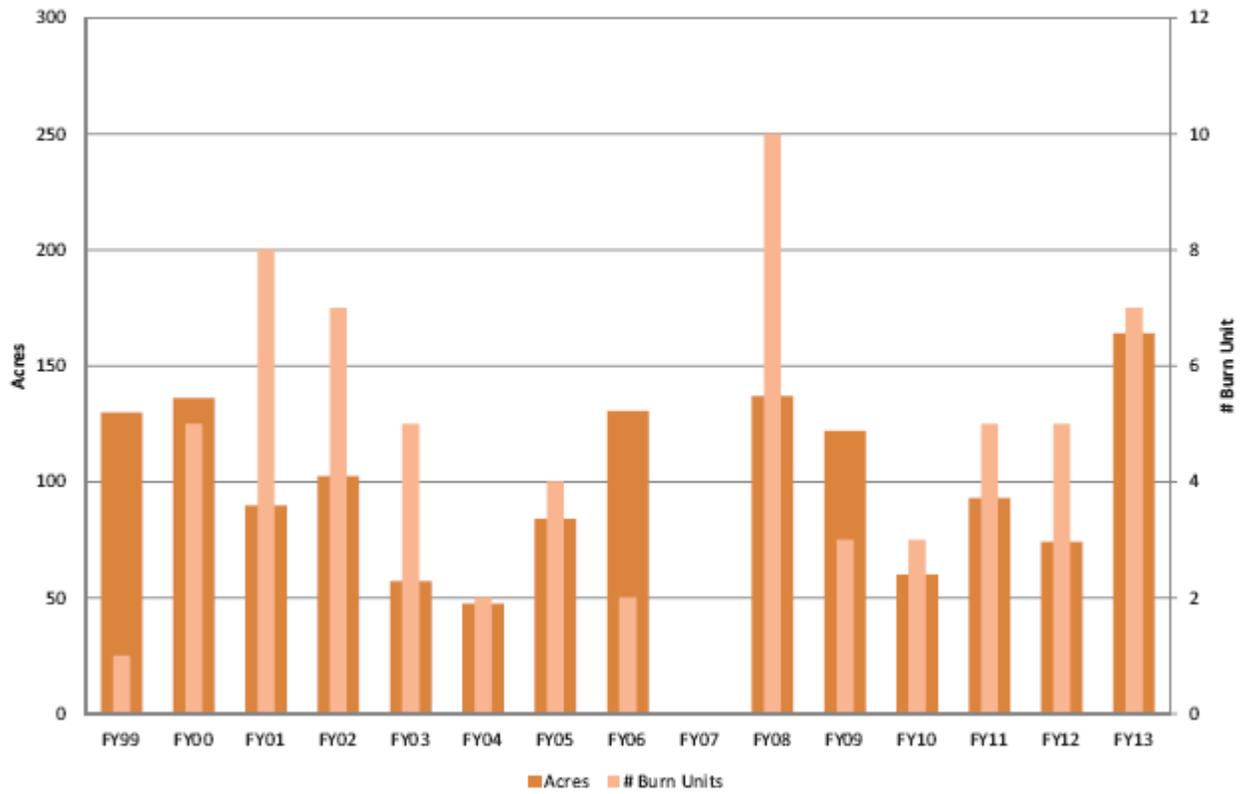
Pinellas County Office of Management & Budget

Pinellas County Parks & Conservation Resources Department (PCR) has received a grant award of \$15,000 from the Florida Division of Forestry to spend towards the acquisition of a Fecon mowing head. PCR will match that amount to fund the balance of the Fecon head unit. The Fecon mowing head will be used in conjunction with existing tractor(s) at various parks & preserves to reduce vegetative overgrowth, especially in areas where prescribed burning may be difficult to perform. This includes mowing fire lanes along the perimeters of properties adjacent to residential areas and other sites which may help reduce the spread of potential wildfires. This grant agreement was just executed so PCR may move forward with acquisition. (Note from Editor: the Friends will be lobbying to have the mower head used at the Preserve more than anywhere else in the county. Use of this equipment is crucial to creating much needed fire breaks so more prescribed burns can occur. Many thanks to Deborah Chayet for writing and winning this grant for the County!)

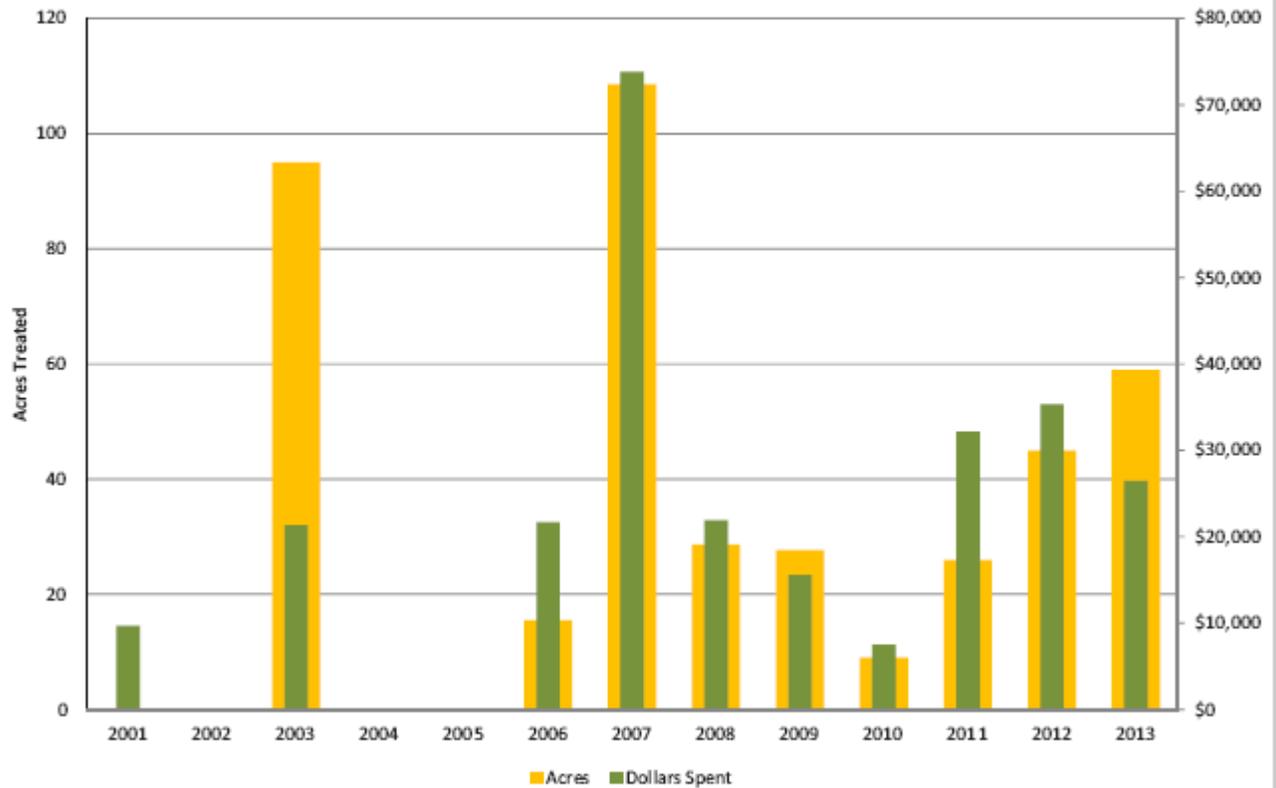
Fiscal Year 2013 Accomplishments: Brooker Creek Preserve  
Resource & Asset Management Program  
October 4, 2013

- 1) Collaborated with Tampa BayWater to transfer water use permit and reporting requirements for long term wetland augmentation project
- 2) Completed contracted spraying for exotics at designated areas totaling \$26,472
- 3) Completed in-house preventative maintenance spraying at public-use areas
- 4) Completed fire ant control at select areas in advance of special events
- 5) Utilized volunteers to remove exotics at various properties, including BCP
- 6) Monitored and removed non native pest fauna
- 7) Completed seven prescribed burns totaling 164 acres
- 8) Maintained firebreaks during non-growing season and critical firebreaks during growing season
- 9) Supported numerous on-going mitigation projects
- 10) Collaborated with Duke Energy regarding mitigation to be completed on their private property within the Preserve
- 11) Initiated plans for replanting areas on BPCEEC/boardwalk mitigation site
- 12) Supported monitoring surveys conducted by volunteers, including members of CCC
- 13) Supported researchers and educators through administration of 11 Site-use permits
- 14) Initiated collaboration with FWC and University of Georgia researchers to develop study of deer population ecology in north Pinellas County
- 15) Continued bi-annual monitoring of Central Florida Old World Climbing Fern at sentinel sites in conjunction with other local agencies and The Nature Conservancy
- 16) Supported various non-profit groups including Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve
- 17) Provided GIS support related to BCP to other programs
- 18) Provided support for PCSO Environmental Lands Unit activities
- 19) Supported appraisal process and developed FCT management plan for the Wilde Lands Acquisition and Recreation Area as part of pre grant award requirements
- 20) Developed annual FCT stewardship report for the Brooker Creek Preserve Additions
- 21) Collaborated with County staff for CIP infrastructure and boardwalk projects

### Brooker Creek Preserve Prescribed Burns (FY)



### Brooker Creek Preserve Contract Nuisance Exotic Vegetation Control



## News from the Wildflower Garden

by Pam Brown

At the November meeting of the Wildflower Garden Club, we welcomed several new gardeners. Our objective was the removal of invasive sword ferns and also seedling oak trees. We also took seeds from spent wildflowers and spread them behind the windows of the Ed Center. Hopefully some of them will sprout and thrive. We did not meet in December due to the holidays. The Wildflower Garden Club meets on the last Saturday of each month. So, mark your calendars for our next workday on January 25, 2014 from 9 - 11 a.m. Remember to bring gloves and tools. We will provide the snacks.



Cleaning up the garden after the huge flush of fall wildflowers.

### Pam's Gardening Tip

Even though plants in Central Florida stay green during the winter for the most part, they are still dormant. Many plants will grow very slowly or not at all during our coolest months. You will find that grass will not need to be mowed but every two to three weeks and will require less water. Grass that is allowed to grow a bit taller is less likely to suffer severe damage if there is a heavy frost or freeze. Fertilizer should not be applied to landscape plants or grass during the winter months and irrigation should be set to run every two weeks instead of every week.



## Volunteer News and More!

By Lara Miller  
Natural Resource Agent  
Pinellas County Extension  
University of Florida/IFAS

### Plans for 2014

Achieve over 20,000 visitors into the Education Center  
Increase the number and diversity of programs offered  
Reach 1,000 likes on Facebook  
Continue to provide excellent customer service  
**CELEBRATE OUR 10-YEAR ANNIVERSARY!!!**

### How You Can Help

Tell all of your friends and relatives about this amazing place!  
Share upcoming programs with other organizations you are involved with (HOAs, churches, community groups, etc.)

[Like us on Facebook!](#)

[Become a Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve member](#)

### A Special Program Just for YOU!

Feb. 22, 2014

**Nature Photography Class:** Karl and Kathleen Nichter are holding a photography class for volunteers only. Participation is limited to 15. If you would like to attend, bring your camera and questions and seek advice from the experts. 8:30 to 10:30 a.m. Advance registration required; please email Julie ([jvogel@pinellascounty.org](mailto:jvogel@pinellascounty.org)) to reserve your spot. Class will be held in the conference room.

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

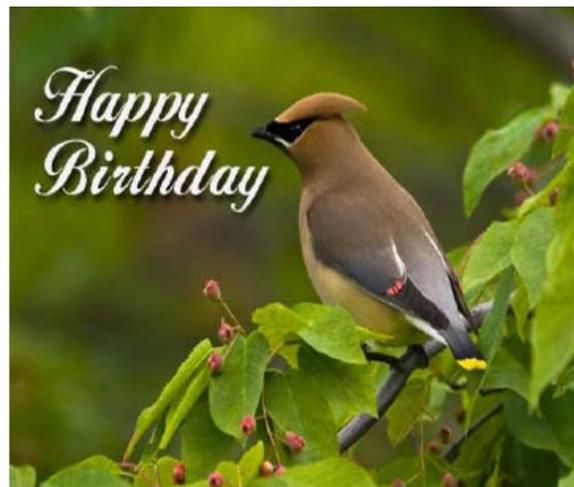
Recent Sightings at Brooker.  
Photos by Lara Miller



In honor of seeing my first Cedar Waxwing at Brooker just the other day!

[https://support.nature.org/site/Donation2?df\\_id=9901&9901.donation=form1](https://support.nature.org/site/Donation2?df_id=9901&9901.donation=form1)

A HAPPY  
NEW YEAR



*Happy Birthday*

**Send a Birthday Tribute Ecard and Protect Nature**

This elegant cedar waxwing will deliver your birthday greeting with a smile. Your generous donation made in honor of a loved-one's birthday will provide critical funds for The Nature Conservancy's work around the world.

## Wreath-Making Class a Great Success!

Sandra Miraglia, right, one of the two wreath-making instructors, helps a young student with his wreath.

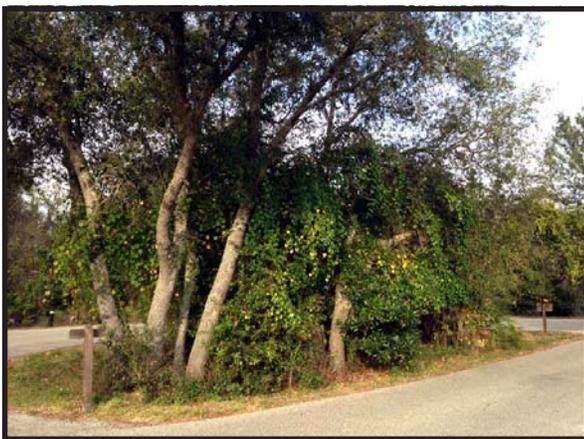


Chuck Parsons, above, the second wreath-making instructor, helps coil the grapevine for a student.



The wreaths were composed of muscadine grapevine woven into a circle.

*"Of the many fun things we did this holiday season, your workshop stands out: there was nothing more interesting, engaging, messy and fun than spending a morning in your class. On a personal note our wreaths caused visitors to our home to "ooh" and "ahhh" (ahhh..is my preferred exclamation...) Nathan and I wanted to thank you, and all involved, for the fine session." -Brad Wilkins*



The grapevine was harvested from the tree island in the drop-off area of the main parking lot. Evan Earle, Jr. and Sandra Miraglia worked for two hours pulling the vines.



The tree island after vine removal - what a big difference! Although muscadine grapevine is a native plant, it can be a nuisance when overgrown as it was here.

## **Hello from the Brooker Bookers!**

by Laurie Angyn



Season's Greetings! We concluded 2013 with a discussion of the book *Skunkworks*, the fascinating story of who and how the U2, the SR-71 and the F117A's were built. As always, our discussion was lively and enlightening. As a reminder to all - you are not required to have read the book to join discussion.

On January 4, we begin our next adventure with *2001: A Space Odyssey*. While you may have seen the movie - the book puts you right there with HAL.

Through 2014, each quarter we will review a biography, a novel and a non-fiction book related to one of the following four areas: outer-space, the atmosphere, the sea and terra firma. See the book list below.

The more participation - the more fun! Think of a question you would like to have the group discuss about the book of the month.

If you find yourself short of time - consider checking out the audio book from the library - a great way to shorten a long commute!

We meet in the Conference Room inside the Visitors Center. Please note that registration is required due to a limited amount of seats. (Books are not provided)

Happy Reading!

### **2014 Book List:**

January 4: *2001: A Space Odyssey* by Arthur C Clark

February 1: *Forever Young: A Life of Adventure in Air and Space* by John W. Young and James R. Hansen

March 1: *Mining the Sky: Untold Riches from the Asteroids, Comets and Planets* by John S. Lewis

April 5: *Around the World in 80 Days* by Jules Verne

May 3: *To Conquer the Air: The Wright Brothers and the Great Race for Flight* by James Tobin

June 7: *The A-Z of Global Warming: Climate* by Simon J. Rosser

July 5: *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea* by Jules Verne

August 2: *Jacques Cousteau: The Sea King* by Brad Matsen

September 6: *Silent Spring* by Rachel Carson

October 4: *Journey to the Center of the Earth* by Jules Verne

November 1: *Surviving the Volcano* by Stanley Williams and Fen Montaigne

December 6: *Florida's Geological Treasures* by Iris Tracey Comfort

**"For Change from Holiday Rush, Explore Brooker Creek Preserve"**

If you missed the fantastic article in the Tampa Bay Times on Christmas day, you can view it at this website: <http://fw.to/qfROEwI>

### Did you know?

The donations we receive in the donation boxes in the Education Center are earmarked for programs at the Preserve. Nearly all natural history programs at the Preserve are sponsored by the Friends using this funding.



**Brooker Creek Preserve  
Environmental Education Center  
3940 Keystone Road, Tarpon Springs.  
All programs require advance registration  
(727) 453-6800  
[www.brookercreekpreserve.org](http://www.brookercreekpreserve.org)**

### Nature Store News

By Kathleen Nichter

The holiday season is about half over as I write this. Sales usually slow during November and December, but this year we definitely saw more business than usual.

The Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve decided to expand the store again for this fiscal year. In the coming months, you will see some new store furniture (new to us, Pinellas County kindly allowed us to choose some furniture that they were not using), and a greater selection of merchandise.

Suggestions for items to carry are really appreciated. Thank you to all the volunteers who staff the store, and to everyone for their continued patronage.

**NEW! Beyond Brooker  
James and Lara are expanding to the libraries to reach more people with environmental education! *Note the four programs in red at Clearwater Public libraries.***

### January 2014 Programs

**Thurs., Jan. 2, 9, 16, 23, 30, 10:30 - 11:15**  
**Book Time at Brooker:** Children ages 3 to 5 connect to the wonders of the natural world through a story and a craft, game or other hands-on activity. Free.

**Sat., Jan. 4, 9:30 - 10:30 am**  
**Brooker Book Club:** Hosted by the Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve, the Brooker Book Club meets the first Saturday of each month. Geared toward adults, the book list includes works by Florida authors, past and present, with archeology, biography, politics and history storylines. The book selected for discussion in January is 2001: A Space Odyssey by Arthur C. Clark. Free, seating is limited

**Sat., Jan. 4, 9:00 - 10:30 am**  
**Explore the Ecosystems:** Brooker Creek Preserve certified guides will lead the hike along the 0.75-mile walk along the Education Center Trail. Observe through the forested wetland, oak hammock and pine flatwood ecosystems. Closed-toe shoes, water and hat recommended. Children under the age of 16 must be accompanied by an adult; those younger than 6 may find the hike challenging. Free.

Don't forget to "like" the BCP Environmental Education Center on Facebook - [Brooker Creek Preserve Environmental Education Center](https://www.facebook.com/BrookerCreekPreserve)

Have a question, but can't find the answer? [www.AskExtension.org](http://www.AskExtension.org) or stop by the Education Center and drop your question into the "Ask an Agent" box.

**Fri., Jan. 10, 9:00 - 11:00 am**

**Botany Hike:** Join a Brooker Creek naturalist to explore the fascinating plants found on the Preserve while identifying wildflowers, ferns, epiphytes, trees and more. The ecology of various plant communities will also be examined. Best suited for adults. Come prepared with a camera and questions. Free.

**Sat., Jan. 11, 8:00 - 10:30 am**

**Birds of Brooker Hike:** Join this beginning bird hike and learn how to identify the County's common birds while meandering along a one-mile trail. Bring water and binoculars. Free.

**Sat., Jan. 11, 10:00 am - noon**

**Advanced Plant ID:** This six-part plant identification series introduces participants to the basics and not-so-basic steps required to positively identify plants. The \$20 price for this series will cover the cost of a notebook and a copy of How to Identify Plants by H.D. Harrington which participants will keep.

**Wed, Jan. 15, 10:30 am - noon**

**Bugs and Butterflies in your Backyard:** What is that bug? Does it bite? This class will introduce families to the wonderful world of bugs and butterflies found in backyards. Insects play an important role in the environment. Learn how to recognize common butterflies and other insects, and find out about their benefits. Free; advance registration requested. **Clearwater Public Library Main Branch**, 100 N. Osceola Ave. Clearwater. (727) 453-6800; [www.pinellascountyextension.org](http://www.pinellascountyextension.org).

**Fri., Jan. 17, 9:00 - 11:00 am**

**Wildlife Hike:** Join an experienced naturalist and hike along boardwalks and natural trails at Brooker Creek Preserve. This is a learning experience for everyone so come prepared with binoculars, cameras, and questions. Questions that cannot be answered by the hike guide will be researched in the Resource Room upon return to the Education Center. Free.

**Sat., Jan. 18, 9:00 - 10:30 am**

**Footprints on the Land Hike:** Certified hike guides will lead a hike along the Education Center Trail. Learn of the many "footprints" that be found during this 0.75-mile walk. Sturdy closed-toe shoes are a must; water and hat recommended. Children under the age of 16 must be accompanied by an adult; those younger than 6 may find the hike challenging. Free.

**Sat., Jan. 18, 10:30 - noon**

**Family Wildlife Series Part 1- Scatology:** Wildlife biologists and naturalists use scat to determine species presence, habitat use, diet, health, and even population estimates. This presentation will allow participants to view a variety of preserved specimens. Free.

**Fri., Jan. 24, 9:00 - 11:00 am**

**Woods Walk:** Join a local natural resources agent and hike along two miles of boardwalks and natural trails at Brooker Creek Preserve. Come prepared with binoculars, cameras and questions. Inquiries can also be researched in the resource room upon return to the education center. Free.

**Sat., Jan. 25**

**Extended Brooker Creek Hike:** See how the land has changed over time and discuss the ecological footprints left by those changes on this 2.8 to 4-mile walk. Sturdy closed-toe shoes are a must and water and hat recommended. Those younger than 10 may find this hike challenging; all children under 16 must be accompanied by an adult. Free.

**Sat., Jan. 25, 8:30 - 10:30 am**

**Guided Photography Hike:** In a brief classroom session, local photographers and master naturalists Karl and Kathleen Nichter highlight the seasonal features that help participants capture the natural beauty of the Brooker Creek Preserve, then hike the boardwalk and trails looking for those shots that reflect the season. Recommended for adults and children 12 and older. Free.

**Sat., Jan. 25, 10:30 am - noon**  
**Going Coastal - Marvelous Manatees:** Learn all about the marvelous manatees including their life history, why they are an endangered species, and what you can do to help protect them. Free.

**Sat, Jan. 25, 9:00 - 11:00 am**  
**Wildflower Garden Club:** Join the Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve and get gardening hands dirty in the preserve's wildflower garden. Bring garden gloves and hat. Morning snacks are usually provided. Free.

**Wed., Jan. 29, 10:30 am - noon**  
**Bobcats:** Although rarely seen, Bobcats are very common in Florida. Learn about these fascinating wild cats and their place in Florida's ecosystems. This class is fun for the whole family. Free; advance registration requested.  
**Clearwater Public Library, Countryside Branch**, 2741 State Road 580, Clearwater. (727) 453-6800;  
[www.pinellascountyextension.org](http://www.pinellascountyextension.org).

### February 2014 Programs

**Sat., Feb. 1, 9:00 - 10:30 am**  
**Explore the Ecosystems:** Brooker Creek Preserve certified guides will lead the hike along the 0.75-mile walk along the Education Center Trail. Observe through the forested wetland, oak hammock and pine flatwood ecosystems. Closed-toe shoes, water and hat recommended. Children under the age of 16 must be accompanied by an adult; those younger than 6 may find the hike challenging. Free.

**Sat., Feb. 1, 9:30 - 10:30 am**  
**Brooker Book Club:** Hosted by the Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve, the Brooker Book Club meets the first Saturday of each month. Geared toward adults, the book list includes works by Florida authors, past and present, with archeology, biography, politics and history storylines. The book selected for discussion in February is *Forever Young: A Life of Adventure in Air and Space* by John W. Young and James R. Hansen. Free, seating is limited,

**Sat., Feb. 1, 10:30 am - noon**  
**Birds in Classical Music:** Join Lynn Sumerson as he demonstrates how, why and by whom birds were used as themes in classical music using very brief examples with musical accompaniments. Free.

**Thurs., Feb. 6, 13, 20, 27, 10:30 - 11:15 am**  
**Book Time at Brooker:** Children ages 3 to 5 connect to the wonders of the natural world through a story and a craft, game or other hands-on activity. 10:30 to 11:15 a.m. Free.

**Sat., Feb. 8, 8:00 - 10:30 am**  
**Birds of Brooker Hike:** Join this beginning bird hike and learn how to identify the county's common birds while meandering along a one-mile trail. Bring water and binoculars. Free.

**Sat, Feb. 8, 10:30 am - noon**  
**Gopher Tortoises:** Join an environmental scientist and learn about gopher tortoises. Brooker Creek Preserve is home to many of these incredible creatures. Find out facts about their diversity, ecology and conservation. This presentation is recommended for all ages. Stop by the Exhibit Hall afterwards to crawl through a larger-than-life sized Gopher burrow. Free.

**Wed., Feb. 12, 10:30 am - noon**  
**What's That Wading Bird - an Egret or a Heron?:** Florida is home to many beautiful wading birds. Learn how to tell them apart with only a few tips. These birds also play an important role in Florida's ecosystems. Meet these birds in this class, appropriate for the whole family. Free; advance registration requested. **Clearwater Public Library East Branch**, 2251 Drew St., Clearwater, FL 33765;  
[www.pinellascountyextension.org](http://www.pinellascountyextension.org).

**Fri., Feb. 14, 9:00 - 11:00 am**  
**Botany Hike:** Join a Brooker Creek naturalist to explore the fascinating plants found on the preserve while identifying wildflowers, ferns, epiphytes, trees and more. The ecology of various plant communities will also be examined. Best suited for adults. Come prepared with a camera and questions. Free.

**Sat., Feb. 15, 9:00 - 10:30 am**

**Footprints on the Land Hike:** Certified hike guides will lead a hike along the Education Center Trail. Learn of the many "footprints" that be found during this 0.75-mile walk. Sturdy closed-toe shoes are a must; water and hat recommended. Children under the age of 16 must be accompanied by an adult; those younger than 6 may find the hike challenging. Free.

**Sat., Feb. 15, 10:30 am - noon**

**Family Wildlife Series Part II - Snakes:** Join an expert herpetologist and learn about these ecologically important, but often misunderstood, vertebrates. Brooker Creek Preserve is home to many of these incredible creatures. Find out the facts about their diversity, ecology and conservation. This live reptile presentation is one in which participants have the opportunity to learn about their natural history and is recommended for all ages. Participants must attend to receive a Certificate of Completion! Free.

**Fri., Feb. 21, 9:00 - 11:00 am**

**Wildlife Hike:** Join an experienced naturalist and hike along boardwalks and natural trails at Brooker Creek Preserve. This is a learning experience for everyone so come prepared with binoculars, cameras, and questions. Questions that cannot be answered by the hike guide will be researched in the Resource Room upon return to the Education Center. Free.

**Sat., Feb. 22, 9:00 - 11:00 am**

**Extended Brooker Creek:** See how the land has changed over time and discuss the ecological footprints left by those changes on this 2.8 to 4-mile walk. Sturdy closed-toe shoes are a must and water and hat recommended. Those younger than 10 may find this hike challenging; all children under 16 must be accompanied by an adult. Free.

**Sat., Feb. 22, 9:00 - 11:00 am**

**Wildflower Garden Club:** Join the Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve and get gardening hands dirty in the Preserve's wildflower garden. Bring garden gloves and hat. Morning snacks are provided. Free.

**Sat., Feb. 22, 9:00 - 4:00 pm**

**Citizen Scientist Workshop:** Join instructor Lara Miller for a free training to engage volunteers in the collection of local ecological information and an introduction to Nature's Notebook, a project of the USA National Phenology Network. The class will include both an indoor and outdoor component so come prepared to make outside observations. Free.

**Wed., Feb. 26, 10:30 am - noon**

**Oh, Deer:** Pinellas County has an extensive population of resident white-tailed deer found in our last remaining woodlands. Find out about these large herbivores and how to co-exist with them in a crowded county. Free; advance registration requested. **Clearwater Public Library North Greenwood Branch**, 905 N. Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue., Clearwater. (727) 453-6800; register to [www.pinellascountyextension.org](http://www.pinellascountyextension.org).

**Fri., Feb. 28, 9:00 - 11:00 am**

**Woods Walk:** Join a local natural resources agent and hike along two miles of boardwalks and natural trails at Brooker Creek Preserve. Come prepared with binoculars, cameras and questions. Inquiries can also be researched in the resource room upon return to the education center. Free.

Shiny lyonia. Photo by Barb Hoffman



**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, conserva-

tion, restoration or protection of the land and resources of the Brooker Creek Preserve.

**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:**  
www.FriendsOfBrookerCreekPreserve.org  
Email: fobcp@tampabay.rr.com  
Voicemail: (727) 934-2680

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

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

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

**Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve Board of Directors:**  
**Officers**  
Chair: Barbara Hoffman  
Vice Chair: Cathie Foster  
Vice Chair: Allyn Childress  
Secretary: Chuck Parsons  
Treasurer: Carson Morrow

**Directors**  
Director Emeritus: Ken Rowe  
Land Use Chair: Dr. Craig Huegel  
Membership Chair: Dr. Carrie Root  
Newsletter Editor: Dr. Craig Huegel  
Past Chairman: Walt Hoskins  
Publicity Chair: Barbara Schultz  
Restoration of Loop Area: Len Gravitz  
Return the Preserve Work Days:  
Evan Earle, Jr.  
Wildflower Festival Chair: Laurie Angyn  
Wildflower Garden: Pam Brown  
Wildlands Trail Rerouting: Brenda Klindt  
Wildlife Safari Chair: Brad Wilkins

Newsletter Publisher: Cathy Vogelsong

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

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