

Newsletter of the
Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve

July - August 2014

Chairman's Message

By Barb Hoffman

If money was no object, what would you like to see happen at the Preserve? We are in the early stages of creating a Foundation for Brooker Creek Preserve. A foundation is different from a Friends group. A Friends group is a citizens action force that can shape the direction and policy that guides the Preserve. The Friends meet with staff and commissioners about Preserve needs. We are a grassroots group. Also, in our case, we take an active role in events at the Preserve.

A Foundation secures funding on a large scale. They work hand-in-hand with Friends groups, but their role typically is to provide the source of funding for major projects.

The staff and the Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve see many funding needs for the Preserve that go way beyond that which the County can provide. That is why a foundation is needed.

Prior to creating a foundation, we need to define the Preserve needs, and this is where you, as members of the Friends and volunteers for the Preserve, play a huge part.

Please help us create and define a list of needs for the Preserve. The Friends Board of Directors and Ed Center Staff already have started the list, but we need to hear from you.

You have an affection for the Preserve and certainly have great hopes for its future. If money was no object, what would you like to see happen at the Preserve?

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We had two workshops about this in June. If you were unable to attend, please email your thoughts to us at fobcp@tampabay.rr.com or by phone (727) 934-2680. The needs list as of June 2014 is printed on pages 2 and 3.

Join us in helping to make Brooker Creek Preserve the best it possibly can be.

Barb

Draft Brooker Creek Preserve Needs 2014 (as of 6-19-14)

Goal

Need

**Ecological Health
of BCP Lands**

Fecon Forestry Mulching Mower (FFMM)
Employee to run FFMM
FFMM maintenance
Full Time Land Manager - controlled burns, invasive species
Wilde Tract (and all lands north of Keystone) connected and restored
Loop Site restoration
Restore natural sheet flow; fill old trails to grade
Control of exotic vegetation
Removal of "Mount Brooker" and other mounded sites
Prescribed Fires

Outreach/Communication

Networking with other Friends groups in Tampa Bay watershed
Encourage youth, teens, young adults to volunteer/join Friends
Quarterly magazine
Scholarships for teachers
Dedicated staff
Yard signs - visit Brooker Creek Preserve
Magnetic signs, bumper stickers, window clings, bus wraps

Research

Partnerships with SPC, Eckerd College, USF
Species Surveys
Scholarships for students
Dedicated staff
Corporate sponsors

Education

Coordination with public and private schools, colleges
Ed Center open 7 days a week
Dedicated staff including director
Trail cameras with motion sensors
Web cams at hot spots
Plant ID's along Ed Center trail
More educational signage on trails
Invasive Species Exhibit for Ed Center
Exhibit upgrades and annual budget to continue
Portable display boards
Solar power
Program budget
Corporate sponsors



(continued, page 3)

Draft Brooker Creek Preserve Needs 2014, continued

<u>Goal</u>	<u>Need</u>
Public Use	Wilderness Trail reroute Pinellas Trail extension Composting toilet near trailhead Overnight facilities, low maintenance Observation tower Canopy tree walk Off-site parking with transportation
Volunteer Support	Scholarships Equipment Appreciation Events Golf cart
Nature Store	Increased stock Signage - Keystone entry, store entry, on boardwalk Advertising
Friends Support	Golf cart maintenance budget Fundraiser sponsorships Increased membership Executive Director position Events sponsorships

Four Lakes Hammock Hike

Saturday, July 12, 11:00 am - noon

This hike (originally scheduled for July 26) takes place in the extreme northwestern section of Brooker Creek Preserve. This easy, one-mile hike will last about one hour. Hike Leaders: Barb Hoffman & Mark Yeager. Please RSVP to fobcp@tampabay.rr.com or call (727) 934-2680. Once you RSVP, you will get directions to the hike start (it is a different location than the Education Center area). Please note that there are no rest room facilities. Come enjoy this beautiful site, not open to the public!

Save the Dates Friends Events for 2014

First Saturday of each month: Book Club
Last Sat. of each month: Wildflower Garden Club

July 12	Four Lakes Hammock Hike
July 12	Return the Preserve Work Day
August 9	Return the Preserve Work Day
August 16	Film: Chasing Ice
Sept. 14	Off the Beaten Path Hike
Oct. 8-12	Paint & Photograph Brooker Creek Preserve - a Plein Aire Event!
Oct. 18	Fall Wildflower Festival
Nov. 8	Friends Birthday Bash!
Dec. 6	Natural Wreath & Ornament Making Class
Dec. 7	Off the Beaten Path Hike

Wilderness Hiking Trail - Finding A Better Way

By: Craig Huegel

On Friday, June 6, Brenda Klindt, Barb Hoffman, and myself met at the southern end of the Preserve with the goal of re-routing the final leg of the wilderness trail from its current path to one more scenic. For nearly 20 years, the wilderness trail has existed, bisecting the length of the Preserve from the education center to the southern boundary fence in Oldsmar. Nearly 8.5 miles long, with all its bends and curves, the wilderness trail has only been used in specially guided hikes. The hike, in its entirety, is surprisingly rigorous and the hikes I have lead on it have often been called "death marches," but I have always felt a great fondness for this trail as it is one of the very few places in the region where a person can get truly immersed in wilderness and get physically drained by the experience.

Over the past few years, the southern end of the trail has been usurped by a plowed fire break and then a wide-open, sunny, unimproved roadway. After hiking all day through wilderness (and occasional shade), that last mile is brutal. All the pleasantries of a day in wilderness are soon lost by sun and disturbed habitat. Our goal was to find another way that would preclude the need to ever leave the beauty of the wilderness.

From my past experience, I knew we would have to cross some cypress swamp to do this. How much and in what condition were unknowns. Barb brought a good aerial map and we had GPS on our cell phones to help us navigate the distance between the trail and the southern boundary fence. Armed also with a compass, the three of us set off cross country, flagging our route as we settled on which way we would wander. I had figured we would be out most of the day, but we made surprisingly good time - partly because we found several old pathways in the woods that we could use for some of the distance.

As expected, the route took us twice through cypress swamp. Though beautiful, these short distances will probably need to have simple boardwalks constructed through them to protect the fragile habitat and to provide a somewhat higher level of safety for the hikers. The rest of the trail will pass through pinelands and should be fairly easy to mark and modify for hiking.

Since my earliest days at Brooker Creek Preserve, I have envisioned the day when outdoor enthusiasts, like myself, could spend the day with only wilderness surrounding us, in Pinellas County where far too many people are the norm. The Friends will be working hard in the months ahead to make the completion of this trail a reality. We hope you will share our enthusiasm and continue your support.



Thank You Kissner Family and AIG!

A huge thank you to the Kissner Family who made possible a \$500 donation from Gerald Kissner's employer, AIG! AIG provides a matching grant program in which AIG will match 2-for-1 dollars to non-profit organizations chosen by its employees. Thank you, Kissner Family, for choosing the Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve, and AIG, for the generous contribution!

Return the Preserve Work Day, May 17

By Evan Earle Jr.

May 17th was one of those Saturday's that don't come along very often. Meteorologically speaking that is. Because the weather was P-E-R-F-E-C-T. Perfect for being outside and pulling down some more grape vines! Cooler temps and lower humidity! Thank you Mother Nature!

Our third Return The Preserve Work Day was once again a testimony to the wonderful people we have in the Friends Of Brooker Creek Preserve and to the volunteers who showed up to participate. The goal of our Return The Preserve Work Days is to help restore Brooker Creek Preserve to its natural beauty. If you have been monitoring our progress, we have held three Return The Preserve Work Days since February of this year and we have made steady inroads in removing the overgrowth of grape vines from the area to the west of the parking lot.

This workday was blessed with perfect weather and perfect people to create the perfect storm of grapevine removal! Let me share with you the names of those who were there to tackle the vines: Scott Bates, Marcie Connors, Carmela Gottfried, Trevor Okunlewski, The Mapakoi Family (Bill, Sheila, William, Gavin, and Keanna), and Marion Yongue

This crew was amazing. They had the bed of the truck filled every twenty minutes! The pile of debris from this work day was the fastest growing yet! And what a difference! The before and after view speaks volumes.

Tall and short, young and well, other than young. This crew kept the bar raised high on making a difference. I cannot thank them enough! The oaks and the bays, the saw palmettos and the wax myrtles are open to the sunlight. Visitors can now see through to the water!

After a morning of cutting, pulling, chopping, lopping, raking, and hauling, we enjoyed a pizza lunch in the picnic shelter next to the parking lot. Did I mention the perfect weather? Oh yeah, I did. Well, that wonderful May weather, fresh delivered pizzas (thank you Ruth Earle) new friends, and returning friends all added up to a great lunch for a great bunch.

We still have work to do, but the last section of grape vines has a target on it. It trembles in fear (or is that just the breeze that now blows through the branches of its neighbors) knowing that there is a Return The Preserve Work Day in its future.

One more time, thank you team! Your hard work is sincerely appreciated! You have helped the Friends Of Brooker Creek Preserve take another step in returning Brooker Creek Preserve to its natural beauty.



Look at the pile of grape vines in the back of the truck thanks to our volunteers



Before work began . . . and after

Return the Preserve Work Day, June 17

By Evan Earle Jr.

Final Score: Brooker Creek 47
Snails 0



Our Return The Preserve (RTP) Workday on Saturday, June 17th, was a little different. Let's just say that this RTP workday allowed people to jump right in. Literally. Instead of tackling grapevines out by the parking lot, we tackled invasive Apple Snails and their eggs in the creek. Let me tell you, we did a number on those invasive snails and their eggs!

Our RTP Workday began with a presentation by Lara Miller, Natural Resources Extension Agent UF/IFAS Extension Pinellas County. Lara did a great job explaining the problem with the invasive snails and how they crowd out the native Apple Snails. She showed us what to look for and how to identify the invaders and their eggs. The invasive Apple Snails are larger and their shells are more deeply grooved. In addition, their eggs are pink in color and much smaller than the white, pea sized eggs of the native Apple Snails. Armed with the excellent information Lara provided, the team was ready to get busy, get wet, and get muddy.

And we DID get wet and muddy. The team headed to the boardwalk, kayaks, buckets and gloves in hand (or on hand as the case may be). We had volunteers in Kayaks cruising Brooker Creek, we had volunteers walking the banks of the creek, and volunteers walking IN the creek. It wasn't long at all before eggs were spotted and collected into our buckets. And the hunt was on for the snails themselves.



At the end of the day, thanks to the amazing snail spotting eyes of our volunteers, we had collected 47 snails. They could run, but they could not hide. And, to be honest, they were snails. How far could they really run? The collected snails were frozen to euthanize them and then they were buried. A large amount of snail eggs were gathered and destroyed.

I want to personally thank "Team Friends" for their outstanding effort while standing up to their belly buttons in water: Nanette, Gail, Rick, Tom, Alice, Betty, Scott, Simona, Ruth, Marion, Keanna, Gavin, William, Billy, Sheila, Lara

I have to give a shout out to Keanna, Gavin, and Keanna who would have given a Snail Kite a run for it's money with their snail vision! They really zeroed in on the snails all morning! I also want to thank Lara for the presentation she shared with us and for her leadership in making this RTP Workday a success.

The entire team did an excellent job! We saw parts of the creek none of us had ever seen while making a big dent in the Invasive Apple Snail population. We could repeat this event in the future to help keep these invaders in check to the best of our ability. So keep your buckets ready!

Once again, the volunteers have helped to Return The Preserve to its natural beauty. The Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve thank you and appreciate your hard work and dedication!



Return The Preserve Work Days For July and August

The heat is on and Summer is upon us. With that in mind, our Return The Preserve Work Day for July will be on **Saturday, July 12th** from 8:00 to 11:00. We're shortening the hours and stopping at 11:00 for this Work Day to avoid the hottest part of the day. We will do maintenance on the areas that we have tackled so far, removing any new grapevines or exotics that think they're going to sneak back in. Not on our watch!

As always, water (LOTS of water) and breakfast snacks will be provided. Please bring your loppers, choppers, and pruners. Work gloves, closed toe shoes, long sleeve shirts, long pants, hats, eye protection, sun screen, and bug repellent are strongly recommended.

If you have any questions, please contact Evan Earle: phone 727-515-9545 or email to earlejr@gmail.com.

The Return The Preserve Work Day For August will be on **Saturday, August 9th**. The target for that work day will be determined and announced so that you will know what you're signing up for and getting into (as in up to your knees in water possibly).

Thank you for your outstanding support and we look forward to our ongoing Return The Preserve Work Days as we help to return Brooker Creek Preserve to its natural beauty.

Iron Ranger Installed!

Thanks to the diligent efforts of Evan Earle, Jr., Evan Earle, Sr., and Barbara Hoffman, the Iron Ranger is installed. Intended to be a gentle, peaceful, non-ostentatious spot for donations, the Iron Ranger should bring in extra donations from folks who hike in the Preserve or visit the Preserve when the Ed Center (where the inside donation boxes are located) is closed.



Iron Ranger Report

Our FOBCP Iron Ranger donation box is off to a good start. As of 06/29/14, donations from the Iron Ranger total \$240.59 which is an average of \$40.10 per week for the first six weeks. Thank you to everyone who has donated!

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO US!



Brooker Creek Preserve
Environmental Education Center
10 years!



Friends  of Brooker Creek Preserve - 20 years!

Swamp Hike - a Fundraising Ecotour way *Off the Beaten Path!*

Sixteen adventurous folks certainly got their money's worth after spending a fabulous three hours trekking through an incredible Brooker swamp. Led by wildlife ecologist, Dr. Craig Huegel, we walked, waded, and wound our way into the inner depths. Because there were no paths, we ambled single file and saw only one snake, a harmless garter, but experienced typical inner swamp life: thigh-high water, suck-your-shoes-off mud, tupelo trees so large they take your breath away, butterfly orchids in full bloom, ferns over our heads, cypress knees and tupelo roots in wacky shapes and sizes, carpets of wild coffee and jack-in-the pulpits...and we lived to tell about it. We returned wet, amazed, and educated. Afterwards we enjoyed a dry, shady picnic lunch and recapped our favorite parts. This is a place that very few people get to see and experience, a part of Pinellas County that is wild and pristine and closed to the public. Thank you, Dr. Huegel, for a great day! Can't wait for the next *Off the Beaten Path* hike!



State Approves Money for Coast to Coast Trail!

The state's recent approval of this year's budget included money for bridging the gaps for the Coast-to-Coast trail which will link Pinellas County with Brevard County. Gap Number 1 is the Starkey Gap which will link the Pinellas Trail to Starkey Park. It will go from East Lake Road east along Keystone Road to the Hillsborough County line, then turn north along the border of Brooker Creek Preserve to Pasco County where new trails will link to Starkey. Once completed, anyone who lives in Hillsborough, Pinellas, Pasco, and beyond can walk or ride their bike to Brooker Creek Preserve. WOOHOO!!!

Seeking New Board Members!

We are a "working board" whose members take on and follow through with projects. The only requirement is that you be a self-motivator and have the Preserve in your heart. These are voluntary positions - you are paid with the pride of a job well done!

Board Positions Available:

- Community Liason** - this person will actively solicit memberships and donations from local businesses.
- Grant Locator** - this person would scour the internet looking for grants for which we could apply.
- Music in the Woods Chairman** - this person would organize our new outdoor concert series.

If you are interested, please submit a short bio to fobcp@tampabay.rr.com - thank you!

Thank You, Brenda Klindt, for becoming our new membership chair!

Summertime

By: Craig Huegel

Summer officially arrived on 21 June, though it seems to have been here for at least a month. Here in Florida, it is more difficult to detect the subtle shift of the seasons than it is further north, but the arrival of summer here brings its own, Florida-specific, changes.

Summer in Florida is not about temperatures, but about rainfall. During most months, our weather is controlled by the steering power of the Bermuda High. In early winter, this high pressure cell moves away from our coast, closer to Bermuda, and this shift allows weather fronts that form to our north to enter the Florida peninsula. As you watch the winter weather-makers sweep across the Plains states in January-March, the position of the Bermuda High is what allows or prevents them from barreling down our peninsula. Most of the time, these cold fronts bring winter rain and cooler temperatures. This past winter, we received a good deal of rain and Pinellas County landscapes (and Brooker Creek Preserve) stayed moist and green.

The Bermuda High is not content to remain in one place, however, and by spring it begins to move closer to our eastern coast. In doing so, it blocks northern fronts from dropping down into our peninsula; storms that build in the western states, often cross the Panhandle as they move east, but Pinellas County rarely receives those rains. April and May are generally very dry.

By the time summer officially arrives, the Bermuda High has reached its summer position off the coast, the Gulf has heated up, and our 90° F afternoon temperatures begin to generate

regular afternoon thunderstorms. In summer, peninsular Florida creates its own weather, disconnected to the rest of the nation. The Bermuda High ensures that what we create here stays here.

Thunderstorms and regular afternoon temperatures in the low 90's is summer in Florida and it arrives pretty regularly by the official date of summer in the rest of the nation. You just have to know what you are looking at, and with summer many of our plants begin growing vigorously. The fast in growth created by the lack of springtime rains is broken by the return of moisture. Some plants greet that returning rainfall by also blooming, but summer is not our most colorful season. Most plants put their energy into vegetative growth and leave flowering for fall.

Summertime Thunderstorm.
Photo by Craig Huegel.



If you venture out onto the trails of Brooker Creek Preserve during the next couple of months, pay attention to those plants and special places that are blooming. They are the locations where our pollinators are also attracted to. Butterflies, however, are most attracted to the new growth and they are laying eggs for their caterpillars that need this higher-nutrition foliage in order to complete their life cycles. By the time they are butterflies, the pinelands should be alive with fall wildflowers.

Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve

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.

Hikes Off the Beaten Path:

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!

March 8, 2015 - 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.

Cost: \$80 donation for the series or \$25 donation per hike

Reservations Required: Reserve your spot by emailing fobcp@tampabay.rr.com. Sign up early! Only 20 spots are open for these fabulous hikes *off the beaten path!* Questions? Email fobcp@tampabay.rr.com or call 727-934-2680.

Hello from the Brooker Bookers! by Laurie Angyn **2014 Book List:**

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



News from the Wildflower Garden

by Pam Brown

We are currently in maintenance mode in the Wildflower Garden - deadheading spent flowers and pulling weeds. Several of our members have sprouted seeds of native wildflowers that we have potted up to be sold in the Nature Store. We have also planted some in the area outside the back windows of the Ed Center to add some color. Hopefully we will see some of them blooming this summer and fall. We also planted some red salvia (*Salvia coccinea*) seedlings that were provided by our butterfly lady, Lois Weber.

We meet on the last Saturday of each month and everyone is welcome to join us. The work hours for April through October are 8:00 am to 10:00 am. Please bring your own gloves and gardening tools. We will provide breakfast snacks. I hope you can join us.



Picture from University of Florida/IFAS/flrec

Pam's Gardening Tip

The Florida Association of Native Nurseries has a program to educate about improper pruning of our Sabal palms and the wildlife benefit that these palms provide called "Save our State Tree." Information about this educational program can be found on their "Plant Real Florida" web site at: <http://www.plantrealflorida.org/info/your-real-florida-yard/save-our-state-tree-stop-the-sabal-palm-massacre/>. If you look around you are likely to see landscapes where these palms are planted and pruned with only a few of the fronds left at the very top of the tree. This is a very damaging practice that robs the palm of nutrients that are needed for normal growth and leaves the growing bud unprotected by hardened older fronds in a high wind event. This practice also removes dead fronds that can serve as natural habitat for tree frogs and bats, as well as removing the blooms that feed pollinators and the berries that feed other wildlife. These palms do not need to be pruned at all unless the fronds are interfering with pedestrians, power lines or buildings.

The Sabal palm picture shows how the palm should look with a round, full canopy that includes the brown fronds and blooms. This one has boots (frond bases) retained along the trunk. Some Sabals lose the boots. When boots remain on the trunk, they can host a number of fern species and other small plants.

Nature Store News By: Kathleen Nichter

Second Nature, our used nature gear section, is up and running. Please consider donating any used hiking, camping, birding, etc. items that you no longer need to the Nature Store for resale. We already have had donations, and sold some of the items!

The selection of new books will be slowly expanding this summer to include more nature guides, adult and children's titles. If you have any suggestions for titles we should carry, please let me know. We will also be selling some new games, including the *Into the Forest* game that is in the lobby. Thank you for your continued support of The Nature Store!

Volunteer News and More!

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

Welcome Julia!

My name is Julia and I am the new education support specialist. I'm so excited to be a part of the Brooker Creek Preserve team! My strong interest in preserving wildlife comes from my desire to work with nature in a sustainable manner. I have been involved in multiple permaculture design courses with my greatest curiosity in wild edibles. I am also a mom to an amazing 3 year old girl and a long term vegan. I really look forward to meeting everyone and working with you! I'll be fulfilling the role as volunteer coordinator at the site, so please let me know any questions or comments you may have! Thank you everyone I have met so far for such a warm welcome, I'm so happy to be here!



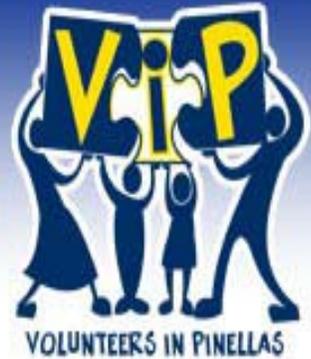
Teacher Training Summer Camp

It's not too late to register! If you are a current or aspiring elementary or ESE teacher, register today for a free, week-long workshop on how to incorporate environmental education in the classroom. This year's training will feature new curriculum including: Fire in Southern Ecosystems, Ag in the Classroom, and Florida Black Bear curriculum. Don't delay and register today while spots are still available. The program will run from July 28-August 1 at Brooker Creek Preserve. Registration is available online: www.brookercreekpreserve.org

Chasing Ice: Film Event

Cool off with a viewing of *Chasing Ice*, the story of one man's mission to change the tide of history

Expect to
Make a
Difference!



by gathering undeniable evidence of our changing planet. His hauntingly beautiful videos compress years into seconds and capture ancient mountains of ice in motion as they disappear at a breathtaking rate. This film event will be hosted on **Saturday August 16th** from 1-3pm by your local UF/IFAS Extension office and sponsored by the Friend of Brooker Creek Preserve. Register online at www.brookercreekpreserve.org

Interning at Brooker

by Jasmine Fisher

"I am Jasmine Fisher and I have been Lara Miller's intern, here at the Brooker Creek Preserve, for almost a month now. I greatly enjoy the serenity and amicable attitudes found here at the preserve. My experience here has been memorable and I, without a doubt, have fallen in love with this place. The love for nature that I have seen here is admirable and has inspired me to accept all aspects of nature rather than focusing solely on the species I find appealing."



Intern Jasmine

Volunteer News, continued:
Recent Sightings
at Brooker



Downy woodpecker, tiger swallowtail and cottonmouth. Photos by Gail Parsons



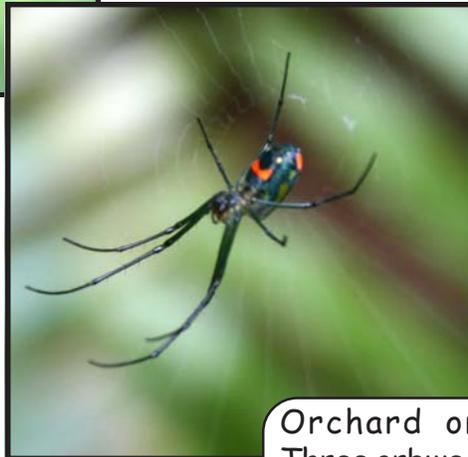
Cottonmouth in defensive posture. Photo by Eric Z. Beard.



Golden orbweaver with prey



Triangle orbweaver



Orchard orbweaver. Three orbweaver photos by Lara Miller.

Volunteer News, continued:

Commission Honors Presidential Lifetime Achievement Award Volunteers

At the June 3 Board of County Commissioners Meeting, Chair Karen Williams Seel and human Resources Director Peggy Rowe presented the prestigious **Presidential Lifetime Achievement Award** to two of the five recipients for 2013. **Emma Mason** (Weedon Island Preserve) and **Susan "Jay" Jones** (Lake Seminole Park) have each contributed over 4,000 volunteer hours, equivalent to 500 full time work days.

The certificates from the White House read in part "*in recognition and appreciation of your commitment to strengthening our Nation and for making a difference through volunteer service.*"

The other recipients are **James Goodburn** (Weedon Island), **Barbara Hoffman** (Friends of Brooker Creek), and **Ric Hoover** (Brooker Creek Preserve). Great job guys!

Just Added! NEW Snake Program in August

On **Saturday, August 30**, snake expert, Jim Medenhall will present on reptile identification and safety. Jim's seminar focuses around environmental protection & endangered species. He will also discuss invasive species, the python problem, & venom extraction! All ages welcome!

Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve New Members:

Lois Barth
Jane Helms

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

Award recipients Ric Hoover and Barbara Hoffman of Brooker Creek Preserve.



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



Click beetle and green anole.
Photos by Lara Miller.





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

All classes at Brooker Creek unless otherwise noted. Upcoming Programs now includes relevant UF/IFAS Extension program offered throughout Pinellas County...

July 2014 Programs

Wed., July 2, 9, 16, 23, 30

Master Gardener Clinic: Residents looking for solutions for all types of questions concerning garden, lawn, and landscape care can consult with **Master Gardener volunteers from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.** Free. Palm Harbor Library, 2330 Nebraska Ave, Palm Harbor.

Wed., July 2, 10:30 - noon

Bugs and Butterflies: What is that bug? Does it bite? This class will introduce families to the wonderful world of bugs and butterflies. July is a great time to explore all the insects buzzing about! Free. Brought to you by experts from UF/IFAS Pinellas County Extension Services. Safety Harbor Public Library, 101 2nd St N, Safety Harbor.

Thurs., July 3, 10, 17, 24, 31, 10:30 - 11:14 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. Free; registration required.

Sat., July 5, 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. Registration required.

Sat., July 5, 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 July is 20,000 Leagues Under the Sea. Advance registration is required as seating is limited. Free.

Sat., July 12, 8:00 - 10:30 am

Birds of Brooker Hike: Participants can join this beginning bird hike and learn how to identify the county's common birds while meandering along a one-mile trail. Participants should bring water and binoculars. Free; registration required.

Sat., July 12, 10:30 am - noon

Bugs and Butterflies of Brooker Creek: What is that bug? Does it bite? This class will introduce families to the wonderful world of bugs and butterflies found at Brooker Creek Preserve. July is a great time to explore all the insects buzzing about. Both classroom and outdoor activities included. Outdoor appropriate attire recommended. Free. Brooker Creek Preserve Environmental Education Center.

Sat., July 19, 9:00 - 10:30 am

Footprints on the Land Hike: Certified hike guides will lead a hike along the Education Center Trail. Participants can 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; registration required.

Sat., July 26, 9:00 - 10:30 am

Our Wildest Place Guided Hike: Brooker Creek Preserve certified hike guides lead along the Education Center Trail. Participants can learn why the preserve has been called "Our Wildest Place" during this 0.75-mile walk. Sturdy closed-toe shoes are a must, and water and a hat are recommended. All ages are welcome although children younger than 6 may find the hike challenging. Children younger than 16 must be accompanied by an adult. Free. Brooker Creek Preserve Environmental Education Center.

Sat., July 26, 8:00 - 11:00 am

Wildflower Garden Club: The Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve will be out getting their gardening hands dirty in the preserve's wildflower garden. Participants should bring garden gloves and hat. Morning snacks are usually provided. Free; registration required. Brooker Creek Preserve Environmental Education Center.

August 2014 Programs

Sat., Aug. 2, 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. Registration required.

Sat., Aug. 2, 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 July is 20,000 Leagues Under the Sea. Advance

registration is required as seating is limited. Free.

Thurs., Aug. 7, 14, 21, 28, 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. Free; registration required.

Sat., Aug. 9, 8:00 - 10:30 am

Birds of Brooker Hike: Participants can join this beginning bird hike and learn how to identify the county's common birds while meandering along a one-mile trail. Participants should bring water and binoculars. Free; registration required.

Sat., Aug. 9, 10:00 - 11:30 am

Introduction to Plant Identification: A local UF/IFAS Extension specialist will lead an examination of the basics of plant identification, from using simple keys to identifying critical characteristics that will help any would-be botanist in the field. An emphasis will be placed on flowering plants, but ferns will be included as well. All materials will be provided. Recommended for adults. Free.

Mon., Aug. 11

Herpetology Camp: Back for its ninth year, this popular, hands-on, science-based nature day camp is designed for children with a strong interest in nature. Campers will explore the fascinating world of amphibians and reptiles side-by-side with herpetologist George L. Heinrich. Through up-close encounters with a variety of animals, such as gopher tortoises, frogs, lizards, and snakes, campers will learn about the ecology and conservation of amphibians and reptiles. **The camp goes from Aug. 11 to 15 from 9 am to 4 pm.** For children ages 7 to 11., registration is \$150 and limited to 30 campers. Contact George L. Heinrich Heinrich Ecological Services 1213 Alhambra Way S., St. Petersburg. Brooker Creek Preserve Environmental Education Center.

Wed, Aug. 13, 10:30 am - noon

Wetland Wildflowers: Florida's freshwater wetlands are home to some amazing wildflowers. Let one of our specialists introduce you to these denizens of the swamp! We promise you won't get your feet wet while meeting these beautiful and interesting plants. Brought to you by experts from UF/IFAS Pinellas County Extension Services. Free. St. Petersburg Main Public Library, 3745 9th Ave. North, St. Petersburg.

Thurs., Aug. 14, 10:00 - 11:30 am

Attracting Backyard Wildlife: Florida has a diverse wildlife population, but rapid growth throughout Florida is destroying native wildlife habitat. By making some basic changes to a landscaping plan, participants can create a yard that will provide habitat for a variety of birds, butterflies and beneficial insects. Free. Palm Harbor Library, 2330 Nebraska Ave, Palm Harbor.

Fri., Aug. 15, 9:00 - 11:00 am

Wildlife Hike: Participants can join an experienced naturalist on a hike along boardwalks and natural trails at Brooker Creek Preserve. This will be a learning experience for everyone! Participants are encouraged to be ready with questions. Free; registration required.

Sat., Aug. 16, 9:00 - 10:30 am

Footprints on the Land Hike: Certified hike guides will lead a hike along the Education Center Trail. Participants can 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; registration required.

Sat., Aug. 16

Featured Creature: The coyote - Join UF/IFAS Natural Resources Extension Agent, Lara Miller as she discusses a relatively new resident to Pinellas County, the coyote. Lara will explore the life history of the coyote as well as its

ability to adapt and survive in urban environments. If you have seen a coyote in Pinellas County, you are not alone. Come and learn about this nocturnal creature and its presence in our area. Free; registration required. Brooker Creek Preserve.

Sat., Aug. 23, 30, 9:00 - 10:30 am

Our Wildest Place Guided Hike: Brooker Creek Preserve certified hike guides lead along the Education Center Trail. Participants can learn why the preserve has been called "Our Wildest Place" during this 0.75-mile walk. Sturdy closed-toe shoes are a must, and water and a hat are recommended. All ages are welcome although children younger than 6 may find the hike challenging. Children younger than 16 must be accompanied by an adult. Free. Brooker Creek Preserve Environmental Education Center.

Sat., Aug. 30, 8:00 - 11:00 am

Wildflower Garden Club: The Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve will be out getting their gardening hands dirty in the preserve's wildflower garden. Participants should bring garden gloves and hat. Morning snacks are usually provided. Free; registration required. Brooker Creek Preserve Environmental Education Center.

Sat., Aug. 30

snake expert, Jim Medenhall will present on reptile identification and safety. Jim's seminar focuses around environmental protection & endangered species. He will also discuss invasive species, the python problem, & venom extraction! All ages welcome! Call for additional information.

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.

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

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