


Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve

September - October 2016



Fall Wildflower Festival
Saturday, October 15, 2016
9:00 am - 4:00 pm

FREE! FUN FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY!

Chairman's Message

by Cathie Foster

Each year at our Annual Meeting, The Friend's Board of Directors presents our members and volunteers with a summary of our activities for the year. Just a few weeks ago, we updated the list for an audit that The Friends underwent as part of our relationship with Pinellas County. (Good news!

We received an excellent report.) In reviewing that list, I was awe-struck by its length, and it didn't even include programs offered solely by County Staff!

Our Board is currently made up of 15 Directors and most of us hold full-time jobs. So how do we do it? Two words: **Volunteers** and **Partners.**

Our **volunteers** are worth their weight in gold and we thank them profusely before, during, after and between events. They are our partners, for sure. Without these dedicated and hard-working individuals we could never provide the wonderful events and activities that the public seems to flock to.

| Chairman's Message | Page |
|--------------------------------------|------|
| by Cathie Foster | 1 |
| Save the Dates | 2 |
| Ed Center opening Sundays | 3 |
| Wanted: Mulching Mower | 3 |
| Adopt an Acre. | 4 |
| Acre Adoptions | 5 |
| FOBP Jamboree 7/17 | 5 |
| Assault on FL State Parks 10/1 | 6 |
| Music Jamboree 10/9 | 7 |
| Fall Wildflower Festival 10/15 | 8 |
| Festival Sponsorship Form | 9 |
| Owl-O-Ween 10/22 | 10 |
| Owl-O-Ween Volunteers Needed .. | 10 |
| Merigiare String Quartet 11/13 ... | 11 |
| 2017 Off the Beaten Path Hikes ... | 12 |
| Bumble Bees by Craig Huegel | 13 |
| Return the Preserve Work Days. | 15 |
| Nature Store News | |
| by Kathleen Nichter | 16 |
| News from the Wildflower Garden | |
| by Pam Brown | 17 |
| Pam's Gardening Tip | 17 |
| Brooker Creek Book Club | |
| by Jon Burr | 19 |
| Volunteer News By Julia Myers. ... | 20 |
| Wildlife Wednesday Webinars | 21 |
| Calendar of Events | 22 |
| Mission Statements/Contacts | 23 |

But did you know that we also have **Community Partners** who support us behind-the-scenes? In addition to providing extra volunteers, these partners support The Friends in a variety of other ways: co-hosting events with The Friends; promoting and sponsoring our events; donating time, services and materials; and advising our Board of Directors. Our partners provide funds, human power, knowledge and general support that allows us to provide quality programs and activities for the public at very little or no cost. To quote the famous athlete Althea Gibson, *"No matter what accomplishments you make, somebody helped you."*

So a big **THANK YOU** to the following organizations that have helped us accomplish as much as we have. (Website links included so you can learn more about what THEY do.)

Cathie

| Save the Dates | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Upcoming Preserve Events | |
| Sept. 3 | BCP Book Club |
| Sep.17 | Return the Preserve Work Day |
| Sep.21 | Wildlife Wednesday Webinar: Creating Backyard Habitat for Endangered Wildlife |
| Sep.24 | Wildflower Garden Club |
| Oct. 1 | Assault on Florida State Parks |
| Oct. 1 | BCP Book Club |
| Oct. 9 | FOBCP Music Jamboree |
| Oct. 15 | Fall Wildflower Festival |
| Oct. 19 | Wildlife Wednesday Webinar: Creatures of the Night |
| Oct. 22 | Owl-O-Ween |
| Oct. 29 | Wildflower Garden Club |
| Nov.13 | Music in the Woods Series: Merigiare String Quartet |

- Clearwater Audubon - <http://www.clearwateraudubonsociety.org/>
- Council of North County Neighborhoods - <http://www.cncnpc.org/>
- East Lake Library - <http://www.eastlakelibrary.org/>
- Flagship Community Bank - <http://flagshipcommunitybank.com/>
- Hoffman Architects - <http://www.hoffmanarchitects.net/>
- Keep Pinellas Beautiful - <http://www.mykpb.com/>
- League of Women Voters - <http://www.lwvnorthpinellas.org/>
- Nichter Photography - <http://www.nichterphotography.com/>
- Palm Harbor Garden Club - <https://thepalmharborgardenclub.shutterfly.com/>
- Pampered Gardeners - <http://pamperedgardeners.com/>
- Pinellas Chapter Florida Native Plant Society - <http://pinellas.fnpschapters.org/>
- Pinellas County Schools - <http://www.pcsb.org/>
- Rotary Club of East Lake Sunrise <http://www.eastlakerotary.org/info-ELSunrise.html>
- Rotary Club of Tarpon Springs <http://www.tarponspringsrotary.org/>
- Tarpon Springs Art Association <http://www.tarponspringsartassociation.com/>
- Tarpon Springs Garden Club <https://www.facebook.com/thegardencluboftarponsprings/>
- Waddell and Reed - <http://waddell.com/>

**The Education Center will be open on Sundays beginning October 1!
Many thanks to the Pinellas County Commission for approving this
action!**

Summary By Carla Garbin

At their August 22 meeting, the Pinellas Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) approved the Sunday re-opening of the Weedon Island and Brooker Creek Centers. We expect that this will take effect October 1 with the start of the 2017 fiscal year.

When Weedon Island's Center was completed in 2002, it was open to the public from Wednesday through Sunday. Following the fiscal collapse that occurred in 2008 that led to reduced County revenue, Center hours were reduced to Thursday, Friday, and Saturday.

With the economy on the upswing, The Friends of Weedon Island passed a resolution requesting the County to re-open its Center on Sundays. St. Petersburg Councilman Jim Kennedy, a Friend's Board Member, took the resolution to County Administrator Mark Woodard for his consideration. In the preliminary budget to the BOCC, Mr. Woodard added \$80K to both Weedon Island and Brooker Creek Preserves' annual operating budgets to return the Centers to their previous Wednesday-Sunday open hours.

Initially, the BOCC did not approve the additional expense, electing instead to continue the Thursday-Saturday hours. Following continued advocacy via letters, emails, and personal contact from the Friends of both Preserves, Councilman Kennedy, and Mayor Rick Kriseman, the BOCC agreed to reconsider the additional budget request. Ultimately, they agreed to an additional \$50K that will allow both centers to be open Thursday through Sunday.

Thanks to all who lent their support to this important achievement, and special thanks to the BOCC for their willingness to reconsider their original decision!

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



Friends  of
Brooker Creek Preserve

ADOPT AN ACRE



A program to enhance restoration and land management programs in
Brooker Creek Preserve

The **ADOPT AN ACRE** program was established by the Friends in 2016 to give individuals the opportunity to help keep intact the ecological integrity of the Preserve.

100% of funding will be used for:

- Removing exotic and invasive plants
- Restoring the natural flow of water
- Fire management
- Restoring natural plant communities

Acres make great gifts for birthdays, anniversaries, memorials and more!

Upon receipt of the donation, the donor or honoree's name will be placed on the **ADOPT AN ACRE** display inside the Environmental Education Center for one year. A certificate will be sent to the honoree acknowledging the adoption.

Donor
Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: (_____) _____

Email: _____

___in honor of ___in memory of ___for myself

Honoree
Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: (_____) _____

I wish to adopt _____ acres @ \$100/acre

Total Due: _____

Make check payable to: FOBCP

Mail to: 3940 Keystone Road
Tarpon Springs, FL 34688

Questions? fobcp@tampabay.rr.com

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

Friends  of Brooker Creek Preserve

ACRE ADOPTIONS FOR BROOKER CREEK PRESERVE

Thank you to those listed below who care
about the restoration and ecological health of
Brooker Creek Preserve
through the *Adopt an Acre* program!

In Honor of Evan Earle & Marion Yongue
Barbara Genthner-Moritz
Barb & Eddie Hoffman
Jackie Labus
Louis T. Petersen
In Memory of Ken Rowe
In Memory of Liz Burr
In Memory of Martha Jane Williams

Music in the Woods Series: Merigiare String Quartet Nov. 13

The Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve are very excited to host the Merigiare String Quartet this November 13 thanks to a very generous gift by one of our members! The quartet will perform classical music selections in the beautiful Auditorium.

If you are available to volunteer at this event we will need help with greeting guests, parking, serving refreshments as well as set up and clean-up. Please call the number on the flier and leave a message for Jane Myers if you can help out! See the flier, page 11.

Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve Jamboree!

This past July 17, on a beautiful, hot Sunday afternoon, a group of folks led by local musician, Brad Myers, joined up to jam in the lovely, air conditioned Auditorium at the Preserve. Many thanks to Brad for taking the time and bringing various acoustic instruments, music and sound equipment so that everyone can thoroughly enjoy the experience!

Jamborees are usually held every three months at the Preserve and anyone is most welcome to bring an acoustic instrument and join in the fun or sit and enjoy the music.

Our next Jamboree will be held on Sunday, October 9th, from 3:30 - 5:00 at the outdoor music pavilion (weather permitting.) Otherwise, we will meet in the auditorium. Hope to see you there!



Assault on Florida's State Parks

**Saturday, Oct.1 1pm to 3pm
Brooker Creek Preserve**



Jono Miller



Guest speaker, Jono Miller, noted environmentalist, will join us to explore the multi-pronged assault on our state parks.

He will touch upon some of the threats our parks are facing: Cattle grazing, hunting, timbering, and legislative underfunding of the entire park system.

Sponsored by



Hosted by



**Brooker Creek Preserve
Environmental Education Center
3940 Keystone Rd.
Tarpon Springs, FL 34688**

For more information call: 727-453-6800

Friends  of Brooker Creek Preserve



Music Jamboree!

Sunday, October 9, 2016

3:30 – 5 p.m.

All Ages Welcome!

Brooker Creek Preserve

3940 Keystone Road, Tarpon Springs, FL 34688

Dust off that guitar, fiddle, banjo or other acoustic instrument and bring it down to the outdoor pavilion near the auditorium for a jam session. Meet other musicians and learn some new songs. Music lovers of all ages are encouraged to attend, listen and enjoy. The jam session will be lead by a local musician.

Park in the main parking lot which is about one-mile from the Keystone Road entrance. Then follow the boardwalk to the Outdoor Music Pavilion.

Questions?

Call 727-934-2680

Email fobcp@tampabay.rr.com

Fall Wildflower Festival

at Brooker Creek Preserve
Saturday, October 15, 2016
9:00 am - 4:00 pm

FREE!
FUN FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY!



EXHIBITS - open all day

- Butterfly Experience — Be surrounded by butterflies! Enjoy a walkthrough tent with over 250 live butterflies! Learn about their life cycle and enjoy their beauty up close and personal!
- Honeybee Observation Hive - on the classroom porch
- Exhibit Hall & Nature Store

PRESENTATIONS in the Auditorium

- 9:30 and 1:30: Wildflower Photography - Karl & Kathleen Nichter
- 10:30 and 12:30: Landscaping with Wildflowers - Pam Brown
- 11:30: Edible Plants - What You Can Eat, What to Avoid - Katy Roberts

PRESENTATIONS in the Classroom

- 10:30 and 1:00: Life Cycle of the Butterfly (for kids) - Cindy Peacock

Wildflowers for Sale!

Wildflower Quest! (last hunt out at 3:00 pm)

Naturalists on the Trails to Answer Questions!

Food Available! Come Rain or Shine!

Friends  of Brooker Creek Preserve

This event is sponsored by Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve.

3940 Keystone Road, Tarpon Springs, 34688

Questions? Call 727-934-2680

Email fobcp@tampabay.rr.com



Fall Wildflower Festival

Brooker Creek Preserve

Saturday, October 15, 2016

9:00 am - 4:00 pm

FREE! FUN FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY!

Sponsorship Form

Sponsorships—\$100 each

Sponsorships due by Oct. 12, 2016

Name _____

Address _____

Phone Number: _____

Email: _____

Name as you would like it to appear on advertising and the event signage:

Make checks payable to: *Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve*

Mail to: 3940 Keystone Road, Tarpon Springs, FL 34688

For information or questions: 727-934-2680 or fobcp@tampabay.rr.com



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

HAPPY Owl-Oween

Saturday, October 22, 2016
Brooker Creek Preserve

Live owls on display all day 9:00 - 3:00
 Program "Owls, Owls, Owls" 10:00, 12:00, & 2:00
 Owl Storytime for Children 9:00, 11:00, & 1:00
 Owl Facepainting 10:00-2:00
 Owl Pancake Breakfast (\$5/person) 8:00-10:00
 Owl Pellet Dissection for teens 9:00 - 3:00 (\$6/person)
 Owl Nest Box Building 9:00 - 3:00 (\$15/person)
 Owl Prowl Night Hike 7:00 pm (\$5/person)



3940 Keystone Road, Tarpon Springs, 34688
 Questions? Call 727-934-2680 | Email fobcp@tampabay.rr.com

Hosted by
 Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve and the Clearwater Audubon Society



OWL-O-WEEN 2016

Volunteers Needed!

If you would like to volunteer for anything below, please contact Barb at fobcp@tampabay.rr.com. Thank you!

| Event | Number of Volunteers am | Number of Volunteers pm |
|------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Welcome Table | 2 | 2 |
| Traffic** | 1 | 1 |
| Owl Programs* | 2 | 2 |
| Pancake Breakfast | 1 | 0 |
| Face Painting | 3 | 3 |
| Nest Box Building | 3 | 3 |
| Pellet Dissection | 2 | 2 |
| Storytime/Craft | 4 | 4 |
| Volunteer Lunch | 1 | 1 |
| Owls on Display* | 2 | 2 |
| Owl Prowl Night Hike** | 5 | 5 |
| Total | 26 | 25 |

*Must be from Audubon

**Must be from Friends

Friends  of Brooker Creek Preserve
presents

MUSIC IN THE WOODS SERIES

with

Meriggiare String Quartet

Italian for: "To escape the heat of the midday sun by resting in the shade"



Nina Kim

Lindsey Jones

Josh Dampier

Edevaldo Mulla

Sunday, November 13, 2016 2:00—4:00 pm

Brooker Creek Preserve Environmental Education Center

This concert will be held inside the auditorium

Register at: www.eventbrite.com

search for Music in the Woods Meriggiare String Quartet

\$5/person donation requested

Questions: fobcp@tampabay.rr.com

or

727-934-2680



Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve
OFF THE BEATEN PATH

A nature-based fundraising hike series!

Description: This series of four hikes will take place in beautiful areas tucked away within Brooker Creek Preserve in sites that are closed to the public. Our guide, Dr. Craig Huegel, a Wildlife Ecologist with St. Petersburg College, can identify everything, from the tiniest moss to the tallest tree including animal prints, bird calls, lichens, and more. He is full of stories and very patient in answering questions. The hikes will be not only educational, but a lot of fun as well! The hikes will begin at 9:00 a.m. and be about 3-4 hours long. Bring water and lunch.

Cost: \$80 donation for the series or \$25 donation per hike with a 10% discount for members of Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve

Sites Off the Beaten Path:

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

April 9, 2017 - Sandhill Scramble - The only true sandhills of Brooker Creek Preserve. This site is in the northern end of the preserve and will feature an abundance of spring wildflowers.

July 9, 2017 - Interior Wildlands - We will be in parts of the Preserve so remote that cell phones won't work, areas so pretty you won't believe you are in Pinellas County!

Oct. 8, 2017 - In Search of Catesby's Lily - Located in the eastern part of the preserve, we will search for the endangered Catesby's Lily. In so doing, we will see a profusion of beautiful fall wildflowers in full bloom.

Reservations Required: Reserve your spot by emailing fobcp@tampabay.rr.com. 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.

Bumble Bees

By: Craig Huegel

brownbelted bumble
bee, *Bombus griseocollis*



It is wonderful that so much attention is currently being given to the importance of pollinators, but much of it has focused on honey bees and the issues faced with the collapse of their hives. It has impacted agriculture in a great many ways, stirred passions regarding the use of pesticides, and most definitely increased the price of honey. As a mead maker, that, by itself, has captured my attention. It is reported that pollination by managed honey bee colonies adds at least \$15 billion to the value of U.S. agriculture annually through increased yields and superior-quality harvests. Though honey bees are certainly an important part of our nation's economy, they are not native to North America. It seems warranted that some of our national attention also be focused on native bees.

The bees of Florida include members of six families, the Colletidae (26 taxa), Melittidae (2 taxa), Andrenidae (63 taxa), Halictidae (66 taxa), Megachilidae (72 taxa), and Apidae (87 taxa) for a total of 316 taxa. Bumble bees, like honey bees, are members of the Apidae. Bees are the most important pollinators of native plants in Florida, although many other organisms (e.g., butterflies, moths, beetles, bats, and birds) contribute to pollination services. In addition to ensuring the reproductive success of native plants, many of our crop plants depend on bees for fruit set.

If you really pay attention, you will notice that any significant patch of fall wildflowers, including the Wildflower Garden outside the Auditorium at Brooker Creek Preserve, will be alive with a great diversity of native bees. Many are challenging to identify with any certainty, but one group that isn't difficult is the bumble bees.

Most of us as children learn to distinguish a bumble bee from the others. They are large in size, "wooly" in appearance, and clothed in a distinctive pattern of yellow and black. As they work their way through a flower patch, their buzzing is audible, and they seem to always be at work. Only large carpenter bees might be mistaken for a bumble bee, but they are readily distinguished from bumble bees primarily by the fact that their abdomens are glossy and not "fuzzy."

Like honey bees, bumble bees are social; they just don't make the kind of hive honey bees do. Bumble bees actually make a new hive each year. Queens produced during the current year are mated in the fall and then leave their hive to overwinter in the soil some distance away. The old hive dies, but the queens emerge from their over-winter hibernation in the spring and set about forming a new colony.

For this reason, it is often difficult to see bumble bees in the early spring. The females are widely scattered and relatively few in number. During this time they feed on the nectar of spring-

blooming flowers and search for places to lay their fertilized eggs and start a new colony. Bumble bees don't excavate their burrows as some bees do, but they take advantage of the burrows of others or nest beneath composted vegetation. When I was growing up, a colony once used a tattered toboggan pad that was in our garage.

Once the queens find a site that meets their needs, they lay their eggs and tend them until their larvae have hatched and matured into sexless workers. These new workers take over the duties of pollen and nectar collection as well as colony defense. The queen will produce several clutches of eggs over the summer. The size of the workers increases with each new brood. Male bumble bees are usually produced in midsummer, in time to father a new set of queens before winter sets in. Eventually, a bumble bee colony can contain dozens to hundreds of sterile workers.

By late summer, bumble bees are often noticeable members of the pollinator fauna. They are effective pollinators, very active and large enough to be visible. There are ways to try to entice bumble bees to nest in your landscape, and they are fun to watch, but care should be taken to not have them too close to where you might routinely work or socialize. Bumble bees are not aggressive, but their sting is substantial.

The easiest approach to supporting bumble bees in a landscape is to look for potential nesting areas and then protect them as best as possible. Specifically, retain rotting logs and some areas of open ground. Protect grassy thickets, or other areas of dense, low cover from mowing or other disturbance. Create a compost pile in a little-used corner of your property. These are the sites where bumble bees might find the nest cavities they need. Then supply the necessary nectar sources.

There are five species of bumble bees in Florida. They differ some in size, but they can be fairly easily distinguished from one another by the pattern of black and yellow on their bodies. All five species can be found at Brooker Creek Preserve; none are found as far south as the Florida Keys and only two make it as far south as Collier and Miami-Dade Counties.

If you wish to learn to identify the various Florida species, there is an excellent online publication produced by IFAS/University of Florida Entomology and Nematology Department. Use this link and either save it or print it out for future reference:

http://entnemdept.ufl.edu/creatures/misc/bees/bumble_bees.htm



American bumble bee,
Bombus pennsylvanicus

Return the Preserve Work Days (7/16 and 8/20)

by Evan Earle Jr.

Return The Preserve Work Days Are Heating Up! Soooooo, Summer is the season I expect our Friends Of Brooker Creek Preserve (FOBCP) Return The Preserve Work (RTP) Work Days to slow down a little. It's H-O-T out there. But the FOBCP and volunteers proved me wrong in July and August. And it doesn't get much hotter than July and August.

On **July 16th** we had eleven hard working people show up: George and Nancy Pratt, Pam, Allan, and Danny Urbonas, Bob and Crystal Grimes, Scott Russel, Lou Petersen, Marion Yongue, and Evan Earle Jr.

What a fantastic job! The "islands" in the parking lot are looking better than ever! Our old arch enemies, greenbrier and grapevines, once again took it on the chin. Miles and piles of vines were removed and hauled away. In the islands where we worked, the trees and under story are once again open to sunlight. Great job.

And a special shout out to Danny Urbonas. This was Danny's first RTP Work Day, but I sure hope he returns. When Danny saw how the greenbrier forms a large root tuber, he was ON A MISSION! He dug up some monstrous greenbrier roots that day and he should be very proud of his hard work and contribution! Thank you Danny!



Danny Urbonas with the huge greenbrier tuber he dug up.

Saturday, **August 20th**, saw another band of brave people show up. This was a special RTP Work Day as we were joined by the staff of Keep Pinellas Beautiful. Thank you Pat DePlasco, Stephanie Ellington and her husband John, and Megan Jackson. And thank you KPB for getting us started with donuts, apples, and bananas. We had no excuse for a slow start! They also provided garbage bags, bug spray which sure came in handy, sunscreen (ditto on coming in handy), reusable water bottles, and two coolers of ice water to fill those reusable water bottles. Thank you Team KPB for partnering with us!

The KPB team joined forces with George and Nancy Pratt, Jennifer Myxter-Tino and Erik Myxter, Chris Edwards, Jocelyn Frenetic, Lou Petersen, Barbara Hoffman, and Marion Yongue. Everyone jumped in and starting clearing out and cleaning up invasives like caesarweed, and skunkvine from around the Education Classroom. As always, there was plenty of greenbrier and grape vine to work on as well. We bagged up the caesarweed and skunkvine, depositing them in the dumpster to avoid helping it spread. The vines were hauled out to the vine graveyard, aka that big pile of



debris you will see as you exit the parking lot. That pile is a pile of pride, a testament to the hard work put in by great people at our RTP Work Days. Thank you to this August 16th team! Even the rain didn't slow us down (it felt good to be honest). After we were done "weeding", KPB treated us to a delicious pizza lunch from Keystone Corner. Pizza, it's what's for lunch. Thank you KPB. Let's partner again.

It is very rewarding to see the work that has been accomplished by all of the great volunteers who have participated in our RTP Work Days. To all of those volunteers, when you visit Brooker Creek Preserve, I hope you will take the time to admire your contribution and give yourself a pat on the back. And we're not stopping. We even take requests. Fortunately, I'm not referring to singing. But if you see an area on the preserve that you feel could use some of our hands on attention, let us know. Our RTP Work Days are the third Saturday of every month. We welcome everyone who would like to join us as we endeavor to return the preserve to its natural beauty.



Nature Store News

By Kathleen Nichter

August has always been a slower month at the store, but a lot of people still stop in for a cold drink or snack in addition to browsing. The store carries cold water and drinks, and a wider variety of snacks. We have been increasing this area due to the removal of the vending machines from the auditorium area.

The next time you visit, check out the children's books. We have added some new ones and are always on the lookout for interesting adult and children titles that relate to Brooker Creek Preserve and the wonderful plants, wildlife, and nature in general that we enjoy here.

The Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve Nature Store starts its sixth year of operation October 1. Thanks to all of you it continues to grow, providing reminders of a fun visit and educational items related to the Preserve to our visitors, and donations and funding to Brooker Creek Preserve. We are already planning ways to improve and enhance the store over this next year, so if you have ideas you would like to see the store pursue, please send them along to us.

News from the Wildflower Garden

by Pam Brown

The plants in the wildflower garden have really enjoyed the rain the last couple of months. Growth has been rampant. The volunteers did not meet in July, so we should have plenty to do at the August (27th) and September (24th) work days. If you have the last Saturday morning of the month free and would like to spend some time tending the wildflowers, come join us from 8 - 10 am. Bring gardening tools, hat, gloves, sunscreen and mosquito repellent and we will provide coffee and snacks. The annual Wildflower Festival is coming up on October 15th so the September work day will be extra important for priming the garden.

Pam's Tip - Living with Alligators

Many of us live near Brooker Creek Preserve, other conservation areas or any of the numerous lakes, ponds and canals. These provide the habitat necessary for alligators to thrive. Since they are an important part of these ecosystems, it is important for us to understand how to live with them. Alligators are protected as a 'Species of Special Concern' in Florida, however, they can be harvested legally under proper licenses and permits issued by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC).



Do Not Feed Alligators! It is illegal to feed, harass, or handle alligators in Florida.

Normally, alligators avoid humans but alligators that have been fed by humans will move toward humans when they see them and can become aggressive. Feeding them causes them to become acclimated to humans which can create a very dangerous animal. When this happens, these alligators have to be removed and killed. If you are a fisherman, do not throw the waste from cleaning fish into the water or wetlands as this is an indirect way of feeding alligators. If you are caught feeding an alligator, you face up to \$500 in fines and/or 60 days in jail.

Keep children and pets away from the water's edge wherever alligators are likely to be present. Do not allow dogs or children to swim or explore along the bank of waters that are known to have alligators because they can look like prey. Alligators seem to choose

prey by the size of the animal. There are far more alligator attacks on pets than on humans. Alligators feed primarily at dusk and during the night. They lie motionless and wait for prey to come close and then strike. They are remarkably fast in the water as well as on land.

FWC defines a **nuisance alligator** as one that is at least four feet long and is believed to pose a threat to people, pets or property. They receive an average of nearly 16,000 alligator-related complaints per year. Most of these complaints deal with alligators occurring in places such as backyard ponds, canals, ditches and streams but alligators also wander into garages, swimming pools and golf course ponds. Sometimes, alligators come out of the water to bask in the sun or move between wetlands. In many cases, if left alone, these alligators will eventually move on to areas away from people. However, if you encounter any alligator that you believe poses a threat to people, pets or property, call the **FWC Nuisance Alligator Hotline at 866-392-4286**. FWC will assign one of the licensed wildlife trappers to remove it. Please be aware, nuisance alligators are killed, not relocated.

Alligators of less than four feet in length are not large enough to be dangerous unless handled. Their diet consists of fish, frogs and other small animals. They are typically not large enough to be a threat even to small pets. The mere presence of a small alligator is not cause for concern unless humans have been feeding it.

Mating season for alligators is from mid April through May. Once mating occurs the female will build a nest and lay eggs. The nest is constructed by mounding up vegetation, sticks, leaves, and mud in a sheltered spot in or near water. Stay clear of any area that appears to have a nest. The eggs incubate for 65 days. Once the hatchlings emerge from the eggs in August or September, they stay around the mother gator and often stay near the nest site for a couple of years.

If you see baby alligators, you can be sure that the mother is close by. If you see an alligator and/or hatchlings and want to take pictures, keep a good distance away. Mother gators are very protective of their young.

For more detailed information about living with alligators. Please see these two Internet sites:
Living with Alligators: a Florida Reality - <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/pdffiles/UW/UW23000.pdf>
A Guide to Living with Alligators - <http://myfwc.com/media/152524/alligator-brochure.pdf>



Photos from the University of Florida

Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve Book Club

by Jon Burr

There was no meeting in June. Turnout was very light for the July discussion of Carl Hiassen's *Team Rodent* as several of the regulars had unexpected exigencies. The discussion was good, though. I was one of the absentees. The August meeting was outstanding! Every chair was filled (although there is still some room at the table) and the discussion was informative. The topic was any book by or about Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings. One of the dominant topics of discussion was how different today's world is from the late thirties and the forties when most of the books read were published or had their contents from that time period. Probably the best meeting ever - but I always seem to think that. Nothing beats a book club.



Photo by Karl Nichter

The next meeting is Saturday, September 3. The book: Marjory Stoneman Douglas, *The Everglades River of Grass*. For the remainder of the year we will discuss books by local authors. In October (Saturday the 1st) we will discuss *Yesterday I lived in Paradise* by Myrtle Scharrer Betz. In the inside of my copy is a list of those friends of Myrtle Betz who made this book possible. I noticed many of my friends and neighbors on that list. This book is delightful.

In November we will discuss *Shells, Gator Bones and the Church of Everlasting Liability* by Susan Adger. Ms Adger is a local author. Look up her web page. If the book is as funny as some of the sayings of her kin: LOL. Saturday November 5. December: I'm workin on it. Hopefully it'll be a very local boy who was a friend of my brothers who has just published a memoir. Hint, he had at least two careers that I know of.

All meetings are in the Brooker Creek Preserve education building conference room at 9:30 am. If you are a new comer leave extra time to drive slowly into the Preserve and walk the boardwalk to the meeting.

An Invitation from Barry

Barry Andress, our Golf Cart Guy, invites you to take a tour with him in the golf cart along the paved 2-mile driveway loop at Brooker Creek Preserve. The golf cart provides a quiet ride and a new way to see the beautiful landscape and possibly some wildlife. Barry knows some natural history and Preserve history, and is happy to share his knowledge with you. Please email Barry to set up a date and time: alfabarry3@gmail.com.



Volunteer News and More!

By Julia Myers, Education Support Specialist, Brooker Creek Preserve



We had a successful summer run of our "Family Fun Friday Mornings" program this summer! The program continued to sell out in advance and has helped boost our Friday center visitation numbers. We added in a couple impromptu Kid's Hikes as well this summer that had a huge turnout! We look forward to increasing our youth programming efforts this year.



Thank you to the FOBCP for sponsoring our summer snake program again this year! George Heinrich's "Why Snakes are Cool" program was our biggest of the year so far with 143 guests attending. A big thank you to Julie Wade for her help with signing in all 143 guests and for helping all of the kids hold snakes. What a great program!

Volunteer reminder: If you are not logging your hours from home, please send me your volunteer hours monthly. I turn in the monthly volunteer hours to the county on the 5th of the following month, so I need your hours by then at the latest!



Juvenile gopher tortoise.
Photos by Julia Myers.

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

(Volunteer News, continued)

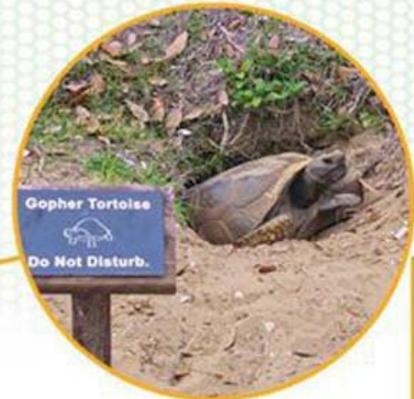
If you would like to join our active volunteer group at Brooker Creek Preserve, please call us at (727) 453-6800.



UF/IFAS EXTENSION
Invites You to attend the 2016

WILDLIFE WEDNESDAY

WEBINAR SERIES



WHEN: EVERY 3RD WEDNESDAY
June through November 2016

TIME: 12:15-1:00 PM EST

Dates and topics:

- June 15: Backyard Habitat: Ten Tips for Success
- July 20: Creating Wildlife Habitat Near Water
- Aug. 17: Why Invasive Species Matter
- Sept. 21: Creating Backyard Habitat for Endangered Wildlife
- Oct. 19: Creatures of the Night: Recognizing Backyard Visitors
- Nov. 16: Backyard Bird Habitat

Wildlife Wednesday webinars will provide tips and tools on how to improve home yards to better support local wildlife with an emphasis on habitat needs. They will showcase relevant information and examine how we can learn to coexist with wildlife.

REGISTER HERE
www.Polknr.eventbrite.com

More Information:
Shannon Carnevale
UF/IFAS Polk County Extension
scarnevale@ufl.edu • 863-519-1051



@POLKNR
@PINELLAS_EXT_NR
#WILDLIFEWEDNESDAY

An Equal Opportunity Institution.

FREE EVENT
OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

BROOKER CREEK PRESERVE

Cool calendar for your refrigerator!

SEPTEMBER 2016

*Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve events

| THURSDAY | | FRIDAY | SATURDAY | SUNDAY |
|--|--|--|---|--------|
| 1 Pre-School Book Time 10:30-11:15 | | 2 | 3 Guided Hike 9-10:30 <i>(Ecosystems)</i> *Book Club 9:30-10:30 | 4 |
| 8 Pre-School Book Time 10:30-11:15 | | 9 | 10 Beginning Bird Hike 8-10 am Kitchen Botany 10:30-12 | 11 |
| 15 Pre-School Book Time 10:30-11:15 | | 16 | 17 *Return the Preserve Work Day 8-11 am Guided Hike 9-10:30 <i>(Footprints on the Land)</i> Amphibian Delcine 10:30-12 Youth Program: <i>Tracks & Scat</i> 1-2 pm | 18 |
| 21 *Friends of BCP Board Meeting 6:30-8:30 pm Auditorium | 22 Pre-School Book Time 10:30-11:15 | 23 Family Fun Friday <i>(Upstream from the Estuary)</i> 10:00-12:00 | 24 *Wildflower Garden Club 8-10 Photography Hike 8:30-10:30 Guided Hike 9-10:30 <i>(Our Wildest Place)</i> | 25 |
| 29 Pre-School Book Time 10:30-11:15 | | 30 | October 1 Guided Hike <i>(Ecosystems)</i> 9-10:30 *Book Club 9:30-10:30 Raptors and Man 10:30-12 *Assault on Florida's State Parks 1-3 pm sponsored by League of Women Voters | |

OCTOBER 2016

| THURSDAY | FRIDAY | SATURDAY | SUNDAY |
|--|--|---|---|
| 6 Pre-School Book Time 10:30-11:15 | 7 Guided Hike 9-10:30 <i>(Florida Forests)</i> | 8 Beginning Bird Hike 8-10 am Spiders 10:30-12 | 9 *Music Jamboree 3:30-5:00 Bring an instrument and jam with us. |
| 13 Pre-School Book Time 10:30-11:15 | 14 Guided Hike 9-10:30 <i>(Native Plants)</i> | 15 *Fall Wildflower Festival 9am-4pm Ongoing activities FREE! | 16 |
| 20 Pre-School Book Time 10:30-11:15 | 21 | 22 *Owl-O-Ween 8am-3pm Admission, display and presentation FREE Ongoing "owl" activities \$5-\$15 Co-hosted by Clearwater Audubon | 23 |
| 27 Pre-School Book Time 10:30-11:15 | 28 Family Fun Friday 10-12 <i>(Night-time Flyers)</i> | 29 *Wildflower Garden Club 8-10 Guided Hike <i>(Wildest Place)</i> 9-10:30 | 30 |
| November 3 Pre-School Book Time 10:30-11:15 | November 4 Guided Hike 9-10:30 <i>(Florida Forests)</i> | November 5 Guided Hike <i>(Ecosystems)</i> 9-10:30 *Book Club 9:30-10:30 What's That Wading Bird? 1-2 pm | November 6 |

Hiking Trails are open every day from 7:00 am until one hour before sunset

Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve - Mission Statement: The mission of the Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve is to provide public support for the Preserve through fund raising, volunteer programs, and education to ensure that the Preserve remains a natural wilderness for future generations.

Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve - Land Use Position Statement: The Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve support land uses within the boundaries of Brooker Creek Preserve which have a main purpose that furthers the preservation, conservation, restoration or protection of the land and resources of the Brooker Creek Preserve.

Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve:
www.FriendsOfBrookerCreekPreserve.org
Email: fobcp@tampabay.rr.com
Voicemail: (727) 934-2680

Brooker Creek Preserve:
Phone: (727) 453-6900
Website: www.brookercreekpreserve.org
Brooker Creek Preserve Environmental Education Center is located at 3940 Keystone Road, Tarpon Springs, Florida, 34688.

Phone: (727) 453-6800
Center Hours: Thurs. - Sat., 9am - 4pm
Friends Nature Store is located in the Education Center. 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

Pinellas County PCR Mission statement: The mission of the Parks and Conservation Resources Department is to maintain and protect the inherent value of the County's natural, cultural and recreational resources through sustainable access, education, and stewardship that enhance quality of life for our community and future generations.

Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve Board of Directors:

Officers

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

Directors

Art Director: Terri Gonzolez
Beekeeper: Robert Burkard
Business Director: Barbara Hoffman
Fall Wildflower Festival Chair:
Cathie Foster
Financial Advisor: Bob Host
Grants: Allyn Childress
Guiding Documents: Walt Hoskins
Land Use Chair: Dr. Craig Huegel
Music in the Woods: Jane Myers
Nature Store Manager: Kathleen Nichter
Newsletter Editor: Dr. Craig Huegel
Night Hikes: Mark Yeager
Owl-O-Ween: Barb Hoffman
Publicity Chair: Barbara Schultz
Return the Preserve Work Days:
Evan Earle, Jr.
Wildflower Garden: Pam Brown
Wildlife Safari - Cathie Foster

Further Leadership

Book Club: Jon Burr & Kathleen Nichter
Membership: Jeff Myers
Newsletter Publisher: Cathy Vogel song
Website Master: Cathy Ordiway

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