
Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve

May - June 2016

Chairman's Message

By Cathie Foster

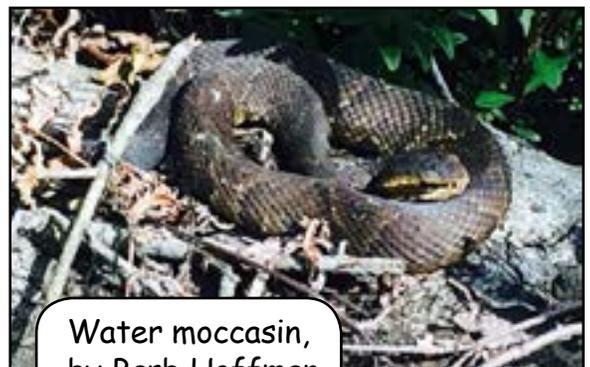
A couple of years ago, the Friends Board of Directors, with input from Friends members, Brooker Creek Preserve volunteers and staff, developed an extensive wish list of needs; the idea being that if money was no object, what would we like to see happen at Brooker Creek Preserve. The 58 items on the final list fall into these categories: Ecological Health, Outreach, Research, Education, Public Use, Nature Store and Friends Support. Of those 58 items 33 are concentrated in just two of the categories; Ecological Health (14) and Education (19).

One of our Education "wishes", that the Education Center be open at least five days a week, looks as if it will come true in the next fiscal year. We met last month with Commissioners Dave Eggers and Janet Long, who are both very supportive of this.

Several of our Ecological Health "wishes" have, or are about to come true, as well. At our March Board of Directors meeting we learned from Land Manager, Lisa Baltus, that an area formerly known as Mount Brooker has been been has been restored to its native elevation and soils. This area had been filled with clay by the previous landowner prior to its acquisition by the Southwest Florida Water Management District for the Preserve and the clay severely impacted its ability to foster native vegetation and affected hydrology. Removing the many feet of clay overburden was critical for the area's eventual restoration.

At that meeting we also voted unanimously to provide \$15,000 to land management for equipment and labor to remove dirt already onsite to the hiking trails to bring them up to grade. Many of

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Water moccasin,
by Barb Hoffman

our hiking trails hold water because they have been worn down by past use below their natural grade. These rutted trails capture water and prevent it from moving across the landscape to adjacent wetlands and eventually to Brooker Creek itself. Restoring the natural grade will alleviate this. Note to you hikers: Some of our trails actually go through wetlands and so bringing them to grade will not make them dry all the time, but will help to restore a more natural, and ecologically healthy, flow of water across the land.

The Board also voted to provide \$6,000 to land management for eradication of invasive plants within the preserve - another boost to the Preserve's ecological health. Some of ours, and your, "wishes" will take more effort and dollars to achieve, but I am so glad that we are able to check these very important ones off.

Cathie

In Memorium: Ken Rowe

By: Craig Huegel (with significant help from Dan Rowe)

Long-time Preserve volunteer and supporter, Ken Rowe, passed away on April 12 following a fall in his new assisted living home in Mentor Ohio. His death creates a void that can never be properly filled and a sadness that I cannot properly put into words. He was a treasured friend and a tireless advocate for both Brooker Creek Preserve and the natural world in general.

Ken was born in Watertown, New York, in 1928 and spent his childhood in Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio. He married Aletha Mae Pearson Rowe in 1929 and their marriage lasted 52 years before her passing in 2000. Their marriage also produced two sons: Daniel (Ohio) and Duane (Arizona). Most of the first 25 years of their marriage was spent living in Brimfield, Ohio, where Ken worked as a machinist and supervisor, and Aletha

worked as a school teacher. Ken and Aletha moved to Florida in 1971 and loved every minute of it. Together they enjoyed extensive traveling, ballroom dancing, and sailing. I knew Ken as a devoted father and husband and a man proud of his professional accomplishments. He never hesitated to talk about his family or past professional life and it was easy to see how much those things meant to him.

After retirement, Ken developed another passion that consumed a significant portion of his life - birding. Though he would travel to several major international birding locations, including Costa Rica and the Galapagos Islands, much of his time was devoted to Florida and he became active with the Clearwater Chapter of the Audubon Society, taking on numerous roles with them including being President of the Chapter. Ken also understood that birds required well-managed wild lands and it was because of this that we first met and began the friendship that lasted for well more than two decades.

Save the Dates Friends Events for 2016

Apr. 30	Intro to Beekeeping
May 21	Intro to Beekeeping
May 21	Return the Preserve Work Day
May 28	Wildflower Garden Club
June 4	BC Preserve Book Club
June 18	Return the Preserve Work Day
June 11	Ken Rowe Birdathon
June 12	Off the Beaten Path -Wildlands Walkabout
June 25	Wildflower Garden Club



Ken was one of the first people I met after Pinellas County hired me to serve as Manager of the newly created Brooker Creek Preserve in 1992. I began a series of public meetings throughout the County to explain our goals for the property, to answer questions, and to seek volunteers. Ken was there at one of my first public meetings and he was one of the very first to volunteer to assist me. Over the next few years, Ken did just about everything that needed doing. Together (and with a great many others) we set about removing tons of trash and debris that had been discarded throughout the Preserve; sites close to major access points and locations so remote that it boggled the mind to realize that someone would work that hard to take that much junk that far away. We hauled out tons (literally) of tires and carpeting, bottles and cans, car and truck chassis, and just about everything else you could imagine. This was hard work and it took us several years working twice a month to complete it. Ken was there each and every work day. He also volunteered to serve as one of my first trail guides for our new public hiking program. In the first days of the Preserve there were no boardwalks or trail signage. We waded across Brooker Creek when it was needed. The public was interested in seeing this new Preserve, but it wasn't open to them. It was critical that we connect people to our program and it had to be done with volunteer hike guides. They served as our first real ambassadors and their role went far and above that of making sure folks did not get lost or sprain their ankle. I relied on my guides for a great many things and they took on these responsibilities in a way that made my job easy. Ken served as a regular hike guide for a great many years, even after I left the program in 2004 and he took on the role of special hike guide when we did hikes focused on the birdlife of Brooker Creek Preserve. Ken also worked with me as a camp counselor during all the years we ran the Toad-ally Terrific Kids Camp during the summer for recently graduated 5th graders. I will always believe that this camp was one of our greatest accomplishments as we took kids into all kinds of wild places and gave them experiences that likely changed their attitudes about wilderness for life. Kids camp was only possible because of my volunteers and Ken's presence, at his somewhat advanced age (especially so to our 5th graders), was an example to each of them that I also feel was invaluable.

As the various programs at the Preserve took on more definition, Ken's roles became more focused and I relied on him for most of the things related to birds. Besides leading bird hikes for the public, he directed the monthly censuses we performed to catalog and monitor bird populations within the Preserve's boundaries. He had a keen ear and eye as well as a personality that engaged others to assist him.

Over the 25+ years that Ken remained active with Brooker Creek Preserve, he did far more things than I can begin to list. He was always one of the Preserve's greatest advocates and he served in a great many roles with the Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve since its inception, including serving as President and newsletter editor. His hand was in just about everything we see about us today.

I will miss Ken more for who he was to me, however, than for who he was for our program. He was one of the kindest and most thoughtful people I have had the opportunity to know. He exuded empathy for those less fortunate, for the Preserve's flora and fauna that needed an advocate, and an optimism that was contagious for each task and challenge that lay ahead of us. I valued his counsel and I often sought it out. I had the opportunity to thank Ken one last time just before his move to Ohio, and it was several of the best hours I have ever spent, but I will always feel that no matter how many chances I've had to tell him how much his friendship and efforts have meant to me, they have been inadequate at best.

Ken was an amazing person and he leaves behind a legacy we could all hope to emulate. We have named our annual Birdathon after him and it would be wonderful if you all could participate in one capacity or another.

Memories of Ken Rowe

Ken Rowe was responsible for Karl and I increasing our volunteering at BCP by becoming active with the Friends, and for encouraging and helping us go from casual birders to serious birders. RIP.

-- Kathleen Nichter



Swamp dogwood, photos by Barb Hoffman.



I have so many memories of Ken - birding together, attending multitudes of meetings together, and visits to his home as he got older. One thing sticks out, something that we teased each other about right to the end. Many times, when we would be discussing an issue at a Friends board meeting, Ken would say, "Well, the way we do it at Clearwater Audubon..." and proceed to tell us how the great and wonderful Clearwater Audubon would do everything perfectly. For some reason, this always made me so mad! But as we were good friends and I didn't want to harm that relationship, I started teasing him. No matter the situation, I would ask him what Clearwater Audubon would do. We would be at a restaurant and he would say, "Hmmm, I wonder what I should have." And I would say, "Maybe you better ask Clearwater Audubon." of course with a twinkle in my eye. We would laugh and it just got to be such a cute joke between us that lasted many years. --Barbara Hoffman

My involvement with the Friends Of Brooker Creek Preserve is due to Ken Rowe. Years ago, Marion and I read about a cleanup along Keystone Road in front of the entrance to Brooker Creek Preserve. We thought this was a wonderful activity and a nice way to spend a Saturday morning. We participated in several of these clean ups and got to know Ken. We also met Barbara Hoffman here. As you can imagine, we started talking and learning about the FOBCP. Today I'm on the board and leading our Return The Preserve Work Days. Additionally, I have started a new career at Keep Pinellas Beautiful, the organization that manages the Adopt-A-Mile program. I can't help but feel admiration and appreciation for Ken, his hard work, and his love for Brooker Creek Preserve. --Evan Earle Jr.

I knew Ken as a kind, gentle soul with a youthful spirit, a birder par excellence, a mentor to all, and a man who so appreciated the natural world around him. I will always see Ken, at 70-something years old, hopping right into the back of a pick-up truck with 4-5 kids during our summer camp adventures. He set the bar high for the rest of us.

-- Cathie Foster

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. 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!

Friends  of Brooker Creek Preserve

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: _____

Honoree Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: (_____) _____

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

Total Due: _____

Make check payable to: FOBCP

Mail to: 3940 Keystone Road
Tarpon Springs, FL 34688

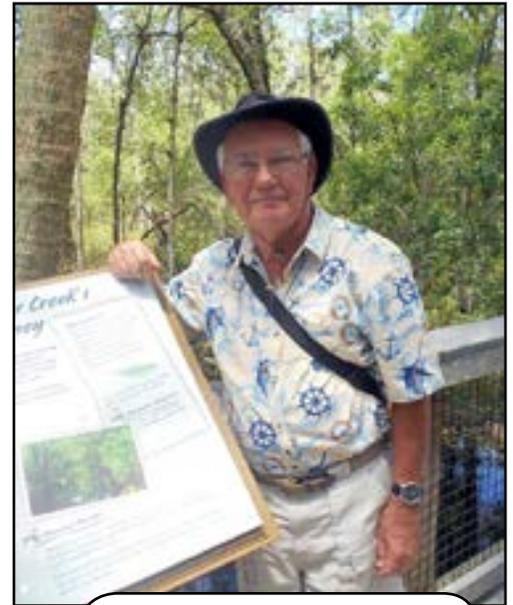
Questions? fobcp@tampabay.rr.com

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Excerpts from THE TRAIL TRACKER, 4/26/16

Published by: Florida Greenways & Trails Foundation



Brian Smith at the Brooker Creek Preserve

Connecting Communities

By Brian Smith, Vice President, Florida Greenways & Trails Foundation

We love trails. Short trails, long trails, trails that wind through forests, and trails that take you straight through a vibrant city. The Coast to Coast Connector trail has it all: 250 continuous miles of natural landscapes, urban environments, and unique experiences between the Canaveral National Seashore and the Gulf of Mexico. The best part is that the C2C is just the beginning. . . . The Florida Greenways and Trails Foundation is championing regional, multi-use trails all over the state. . . . The East Coast Greenway, Florida Keys Overseas Heritage Trail and the Southwest Coastal Regional Trail are just a few of the long-distance, paved trails coming to life around the Sunshine State. This means the future of Florida transportation will include thousands of miles of opportunity to travel safely between destinations without a plane, train, or automobile. . . . If you share our vision and want to move around Florida on two wheels or two feet, forward this newsletter, share it on social media, and tell your friends to sign up at info@fgtf.org

If you build it, they will come." But, first you need dedicated funding. That's why the 2015 legislation that appropriated \$25 million annually for the Shared-Use Nonmotorized Trail (SUN Trail) program is more than momentous. It's a seismic paradigm shift on how our state and communities view biking, walking, recreation, and safety.

What is the top funding priority? The Coast to Coast Connector. But how do trails become eligible for SUN Trail funding? First, they must be part of the Florida Greenways & Trails Priority System. Then, the regional trails must meet eligibility criteria developed by FDOT and the Office of Greenways and Trails (OGT), which is reviewed via a public input process. This list is then presented to the Florida Greenways and Trails Council (FGTC), a 21-member appointed advisory board to OGT. FGTC is charged with recommending their top funding priorities to FDOT.

Off the Beaten Path Sandhill Scramble -- 3/20



The *Off the Beaten Path* hikers enjoyed a beautiful morning exploring the only true sandhill community of Brooker Creek Preserve. Led by the awesome, Dr. Craig Huegel (behind the camera), the group found numerous spring flowers in bloom along with a host of birds and butterflies including bluebirds and Zebra Swallowtails.



Zebra swallowtail,
by Ty Miramonti.



Leader, Dr. Craig Huegel, grabbing a photo op of a gorgeous lupine. Photo by Barb Hoffman.

Bluebird, from
BCP staff files



Wildlife Safari -- 4/16

By Cathie Foster

The predicted rain stayed away and the Safari-goers came, nearly 1,000 of them! The Education Center, trails and Nature Store were bustling with activity all day. This year's Safari featured bats (Tampa Bay Bats), raptors (Boyd Hill Nature Preserve), turtles (Betty Rossie), snakes (Suncoast Herpetological Society), a baby alligator (FWC) and baby raccoons and opossums (Wildlife Haven). Children lead their parents along the trail, listening, looking and learning about the kinds of critters who make Brooker Creek Preserve their home. At one last station, they learned about some critters that we'd rather not have at Brooker or anywhere in Florida.

Many thanks to our sponsors and to the more than 50 volunteers who came together to make this event happen. We had a record turnout and in the end we cleared just over \$2000! But the greatest satisfaction came from seeing so many families spending time being outside, learning about Brooker Creek Preserve's animals, and just enjoying themselves.

Thanks to our Volunteers . . .



Volunteer greeters hard at work. 894 people were counted from this spot.



The registration volunteers hard at work. They registered a record 482 children!



One of the seven wildlife stations set up along the trail, always busy.



Jane Myers making lunch. Jane was responsible for organizing the amazing lunch for all the volunteers and presenters.



Cathie Foster and Barry Andress in a loaded golf cart on Friday before the event.



Isobel Sapp enjoying her work at the prize table



Jan Lindstrom greeting everyone with a smile.

Jerry Frensley and Tom Trimmier hauling tables. Set up was completed in 1.5 hours, another record breaker for this event!



Greg Reich and Pete Stanisavljevich ready for action in the parking lot. The parking lot was at capacity for parts of the day and Greg resorted to "creative parking" for the event.

Thank you, Burr Family, sponsor of the bats



and Thanks to our Sponsors



Thank you, Pampered Gardeners and Prudential Advisors, sponsors of the baby alligator



Thank you, Jane & Jeff Myers, sponsors of the native snakes



Thank you, Lois Barth and Julie Wade, sponsors of the native turtles



Thank you Dr. Doug Eiland, sponsor of the baby raccoon and opossums



Thank you, Clearwater Audubon Society, sponsor of the hawks and owls



Thank you, Louis T. Petersen, sponsor of the exotic animals

Thank you to Karl Nichter for taking the Wildlife Safari photos.



Thank you, Hoffman Architects, sponsor of the port-o-let

Thank you, CNCN and Waddell & Reed, sponsors of the prize table, the favorite "wildlife station"



Return the Preserve Work Day (4/23) by Evan Earle Jr.



Return the Preserve Work Day



What a wonderful way to celebrate Earth Day! Saturday, April 23, was our Return The Preserve Work Day and we rocked it! With over 30 volunteers from the Hillsborough Academy of Math and Science (HAMS) in addition to the other great volunteers who participated, we had plenty of man- and woman-power! The Friends Of Brooker Creek Preserve (FOBCP) were well represented with Cathie Foster, Barry Andress, Barbara Hoffman, Jane Myers, Ruth Earle, Marion Yongue, and yours truly. We even had members of Pinellas County's Urban Forestry Department with us! It was a GREAT RTP Work Day!

As always, the students, teachers, and parents from HAMS were outstanding. I have to say that I believe we had THE hardest working PARENTS for this RTP Work Day. The moms and dads especially were a force to be reckoned with! I've never seen anyone tear into the grapevines like these moms. And the dads were right there in the thick of it too. When it came to hauling off the debris, they were a human conveyor belt! Thanks to these parents that showed up to help us. Help us? They were leading us! So, I'd take this as a challenge HAMS students. Now I'm not saying the students didn't work hard. On the contrary, the students were awesome. But the moms and dads? They brought vine removal to a whole new level! So there you have it, a throw down to be answered at an upcoming RTP Work Day!

A few special shout outs from Saturday. As always, WAY TO GO Mr. Long! Thank you for being such a supporter and for always rolling up your sleeves, even if you are wearing a t-shirt, and jumping right into the thick of it. I hope you will view your cleaned up saw palmetto with pride! Thanks to Ms. Szczepanski for being there with your students and for working side by side with us! Cody, once you recover from all of your hard work, give yourself a pat on the back for leading the charge in cleaning out the oak tree. You were focused and unstoppable! To all the students from HAMS, thank you. Be proud of your hard work! You weren't messing around! Pinellas County's Urban Forestry - Steve, Matt, and company, you made our RTP Work Day extra special with your presentation teaching us about your mission to make Pinellas County an even better place to live and work. Thank you for the long leaf pine and bald cypress seedlings. They'll go to good homes! To Mark and Laura Wilhelm, thank you for your support to our RTP Work Days. You keep returning and doing such a good job. You can consider yourself real RTP veterans! To my FOBCP friends, thank you for your sweat equity and hands on help. Thank you to Ruth

Earle for the very much appreciated pizza delivery! The clean roadway award goes to Marion Yongue who will not leave until the roadways on which we have worked are cleaner than when we started! To every person who participated, thank you. Each one of you contributed and worked together so that in the end, TOGETHER, we made a difference. Just look at the pile of trash to see just how big a difference you made!

>> I cannot tell you how happy I am to have the privilege of volunteering with people like you. Young, not so young, men, women, girls, and boys, people from different backgrounds and cultures. All working together, having fun (it was fun wasn't it?), creating results that are tangible, visible, and lasting! By removing the overgrowth, you allow the trees to reach upward and the understory of bushes and grasses to recover and thrive. You have restored the health to this "little" piece of the environment so that the natural inhabitants, the tortoises, the deer, the birds, the snakes, the frogs, the insects, and more have their natural homes back. They thank you. I thank you. Saturday, April 23rd, our Earth Day RTP Work Day was a very real example of how caring people like each of you help us in our mission to return the preserve to its natural beauty.

Introduction to
BEEKEEPING
A Hobby with Sweet Rewards
3 Part Series!

Part 1: *March 12~ 10am-12pm*
INTRO TO HONEYBEES: This program will introduce you to the basics of honey bees, their biology and the guiding principles of beekeeping.

Part 2: *April 30~ 10am-12pm*
GETTING STARTED: We will cover what it takes to get started with a focus on the equipment and tools necessary for beekeeping. We will review the components of the "modern" bee hive and explain Florida's rules & guidelines.

Part 3: *May 21~ 10am to 12pm*
HEALTHY HIVES: We will review how to maintain healthy honeybee colonies, discuss how to recognize pests and diseases, and have an in-depth discussion on what you can do to support your bees, with a focus on organic beekeeping practices.

UF IFAS Extension UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA
Healthy Community
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Music Jamboree (4/10)

A wonderful Jamboree was held on April 10th outside at the Music Pavilion. We had 10 musicians which includes maraca players, tambourine, guitars, harmonica, cajon and even a bouzouki!! Thanks to all who participated and special thanks to our jam leader, Brad Myers. Maybe you have seen Brad at other venues - he's awesome!

We had a gorgeous day and we enjoyed seeing families with kids! The bubbles floating through the pavilion was extra special!

Watch for notice of the next jam - sometime this Summer in the Auditorium.

Why dogs are Not Allowed in Brooker Creek Preserve

We love our dogs, too, and wish they could join us on the trails. However, Brooker Creek Preserve is a natural environment set aside for native plants and animals, a sanctuary for wildlife to live and thrive away from human activity. Dogs are not native to Florida and can disturb wildlife in a number of ways:

- Dogs can disturb wildlife, scaring birds and other animals away from nesting, feeding, and resting sites.
- The scent left behind by a dog can signal the presence of a predator, disrupting or altering the behavior of wildlife.
- Small animals may hide in their burrows the entire day after smelling a dog and may not venture out to feed.
- Dogs bark and disturb the quiet of the wilderness. Unfamiliar sights, sounds, and smells can disturb even the calmest, friendliest, and best-trained dog, causing them to behave unpredictably or bark excessively.
- Dogs may become prey for larger predators such as coyotes and alligators.
- Many people, especially children, are frightened by dogs, even small ones.
- Uncontrolled dogs can present a danger to wildlife and other visitors.
- Dogs can carry diseases into the Preserve's wildlife populations.

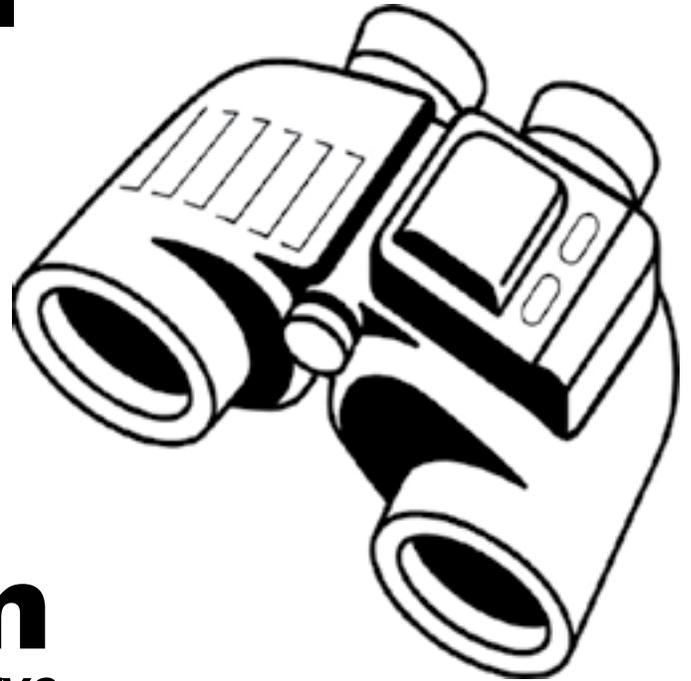
Thank you for leaving your pet at home and understanding the safety issues involved, for the sake of your pet and the protection of the wild animals that make this place their home.

Since your dog can't come to Brooker, bring some Brooker home to your dog!

Consider bringing your pet a memento of Brooker Creek Preserve from the Friends Nature Store, a tasty homemade treat or bandana made with love by Brooker Creek Preserve volunteers. You can love your pet and respect the Preserve with a little gift of goodness. 100% of pet item sales go directly to public education and land restoration programs at Brooker Creek Preserve!



The 2nd Annual



Ken Rowe Birdathon

At Brooker Creek Preserve

June 11, 2016

5:30 am - 11:00 am Birding, 11:30 am - 12:30 pm Lunch & Prizes

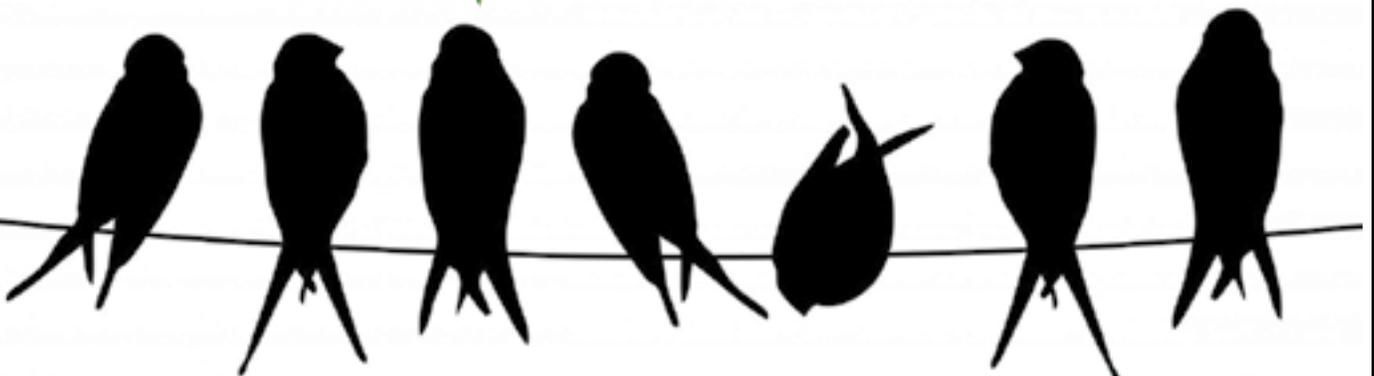
Birders of all levels are welcome and encouraged to attend! Teams of 2-4 people, \$10/person, includes lunch. Prizes will be awarded in a variety of categories including most species per team and many more... Birding will take place by teams at their own pace at a choice of several areas within the Brooker Creek Preserve boundary, most not open to the public. Maps indicating entry/parking sites, including "hot spot" locations, will be provided to participants. Data collected will be used to help monitor breeding bird populations. Team leaders must RSVP by June 5.

This event is sponsored by Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve.

3940 Keystone Road, Tarpon Springs, 34688

For questions or to sign up: Call 727-934-2680 * Email fobcp@tampabay.rr.com

Friends  of Brooker Creek Preserve





Friends 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.

OFF THE BEATEN PATH
A nature-based fundraising hike series!
(One hike left in the series)

Description:

This is the last in a series of four hikes that 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 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

Final Hike:

June 12, 2016 - Wildlands Walkabout - We will be in the absolute center of the Preserve, an area so remote that cell phones won't work and so pretty you won't believe you are in Pinellas County!

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.



Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve

NIGHT HIKES!

Night hikes are done for the season and will resume in October. We are giving up our night hikes to allow the mosquitos their full opportunity of Preserve space!

**Friends of
Brooker Creek
Preserve
New Member**

Priscilla Bollinger

Nature Store News by Kathleen Nichter

The Friends' Nature Store added a new item this past month: Florida Five: Fighting for the Sunshine State comic book. At first glance, this may not seem to be something for a nature store, but this one is different. Aimed at Florida residents or those interested in Florida aged 10 - 14, this environmental comic features young heroes for five of Florida's ecosystems. The writer, Erich Decker-Hoppen of Islamorada, FL hopes to inspire young people and educate them on conservation issues like habitat destruction, pollution, and invasive species.

The premier issue is now in the store and sells for \$4 (which includes the 7% Florida sales tax). In addition to the adventures of the superheroes, sidebars give information throughout the 28 page book on the environmental issues each story addresses. The author plans to publish quarterly initially, and also provides an interactive website at floridafive.org with more information and some interactive features. According to an interview with the author, plans exist for at least five more issues.



Many thanks to Nature's Food Patch for their generous donation of \$368 from their SAVE A BAG campaign!

The graphic is a promotional poster for the 'Bring Your Bag' campaign. It features a central logo of a shopping bag with the text 'BRING YOUR BAG' inside. To the left, it says 'Since Earth Day 2008, we no longer use plastic bags in our store. We offer a \$5 donation per bag to a different charitable organization each month. Please help us raise these donations by bringing your own bags for your groceries.' Below this, it lists 'March donation went to Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve' and 'April donation going to Surfrider Foundation (SAVY EARTH MONTH)'. A central box states '7,360 Bags For a total of \$368.00'. To the right, it says 'Donate local sustainable organizations to help save the Earth by bringing your own bags'. At the bottom, there are social media icons for Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube, and a website URL: www.bringyourbag.com.

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.



News from the Wildflower Garden

by Pam Brown

Have you visited the Wildflower Garden recently? The Lyre-leaf sage (*Salvia lyrata*) has been putting on a spectacular show! I have not seen them with such lush blooms in the five or six years that I have been working in this garden. Also in bloom are a few rosinweed (*Silphium integrifolium*), Carolina wild petunia (*Ruellia caroliniensis*), and tickseed (*Coreopsis lanceolata*). On April 16th I also saw a rain lily (*Zephyranthes* spp) that I don't think that we planted. One lovely bloom was nodding in the breeze. It is such fun to see the progression of blooms as the year goes by. This spring has been particularly lush most likely due to the extra rain that fell this past winter and has continued into spring. If you would like to help care for this lovely garden, we meet on the last Saturday of each month. We have moved to our summer hours, so we will be starting at 8:00 a.m. and gardening until 10 a.m. Bring hand gardening tools, gloves, a hat, sun screen and bug repellent. We will provide some breakfast snacks and coffee. I would love to see you there!

Lyre-leaf sage,
photo by Pam Brown



Sweet acacia, photo
by Craig Huegel



Did You Know?

The Friends donated 4,717 hours during fiscal year 2014/2015 for Friends events! Wow!

Pam's Gardening Tip

If you have been looking for a large shrub or small tree to plant as a specimen tree, Sweet Acacia (*Acacia farnesiana*) could be a good choice. This is one of my favorite natives. It is a semi-evergreen, native shrub or small tree that grows eight to twenty feet tall and six to ten feet wide. The leaflets have a feathery look and are a soft, medium green color. This plant is highly salt tolerant, and prefers full sun and well drained alkaline soil. Be cautious with irrigation as the roots will rot if kept too wet. The slightly rough stems are a rich chocolate brown or grey, possessing long, sharp, multiple thorns. The small, yellow, puff-like flowers are very fragrant and appear in clusters in late winter then occasionally after each new flush of growth, providing nearly year-round bloom. The thorns are sharp, so this plant needs a place where people will not bump into it. The thorns make this plant a good choice as a barrier when planted close together and kept as a shrub. Birds and other wildlife will eat the seeds. Leaves can drop in severe drought conditions. This drought avoidance mechanism allows the plant to grow well with no irrigation once established.

Brooker Creek Preserve Book Club

by Jon Burr



At the April Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve Book Club we discussed Cynthia Barnett's book *Rain*. Ms Barnett, who teaches at U of F Gainesville, gave a talk several months ago at the Preserve about her book *Blue Revolution*. Barnett is a water geek and a very nice lady. Her first "water" book, *Mirage*, has part of a chapter on the Pinellas County water wars. I think the general consensus was that there were enough different topics about rain that everyone got something from the book.

In further discussion we discovered that many of the members were not able to come to the May meeting. We then decided to reschedule discussing *The Everglades River of Grass* by Marjory Stoneman Douglas to the September 2016 meeting. We really want to do this book and since a significant number of members could not be at the May meeting we decided to reschedule it. There will be no Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve Book Club on May Saturday May 7, and *The Everglades River of Grass* by Marjory Stoneman Douglas will be the book discussed at the Saturday, September 3, 2016 book club.

Saturday, June 4, we will discuss Craig Pittman's book, *Scent of Scandal*. It has a very local connection. All will be revealed at the book club meeting.

July 2, *Team Rodent*, by Carl Hiaasen, will be discussed: An interesting tale about a mouse and how the real world works.

August is a little different: any book by or about Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings can be read and we'll let each member tell about their experience with their book of choice. We have room for some more at the table. Please consider coming: First Saturday of the month at 9:30 at the Preserve Ed Center.

Photo by Karl Nichter

Book Club Reads for 2016:

- May 7: Cancelled
- June 4: Craig Pittman and Ray Arsenault's book "Scent of Scandal" is a local account of CITES law concerning endangered species. Some of the names in the book may ring a bell.
- July 2: We stay with a tad more controversial an issue with Carl Hiaasen, author of "Team Rodent."
- Aug. 2: We're doing something a little differently. For the August meeting please read any book about, or by, Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings.
- Sept.3: "The Everglades River of Grass" by Marjory Stoneman Douglas. This stands with "Silent Spring" and "Sand County Almanac" as one of the monuments of environmental writing.

Volunteer News and More!

By Julia Myers, Education Support Specialist, Brooker Creek Preserve



All of our wonderful volunteers do a great job keeping track of their hours. I appreciate your patience as we have all adjusted to the new volunteer sign-in program. With this new program there is also an option to log your hours from home. This may be helpful for those of you that do some "after hours" volunteering. Of course, you can always just send me your hours and that is fine! There is also a volunteer sign in sheet in the auditorium porch area if you are here doing some outside/after hours volunteering. I check this clipboard monthly. If you are interested in logging your hours from home, I can send you the instructions. Please let me know if you have any questions!

Sierra update: Many of you know Sierra McKay, a regular visitor and friend to Brooker Creek. Sierra has a deep love of the preserve and regularly hikes ALL of the trails year round. Regardless of the time of year or the weather she is out there in her waders hiking the whole thing, often weekly. She even drives from St. Pete because she loves Brooker so much. Unfortunately, she fell off the boardwalk on her last visit and broke her leg. Our amazing volunteers, specifically Greg Reich, Brian Croteau and Ric Hoover were here to comfort and help her as we waited for an ambulance. She will not be able to walk for a while. We put together a care package for her (Thank you FOBCP for donating to it!) and Ric Hoover personally delivered it. She said that there were no words to express how thankful she was for our thoughtfulness. Our volunteers truly go above and beyond and this was just one of many examples. We continue to wish Sierra a speedy recovery and look forward to her return to the trails!

Green anole, photo by Lara Milligan.



Color of Pinellas Art Show Registration Deadline is May 20th: Open to all Pinellas County volunteers and their immediate family members. Winners are eligible for cash prizes totaling \$2,400 and free art lessons, provided by grants from The National Arts Program. All skills levels are welcome. Artwork will be displayed at the downtown Clearwater Courthouse. There is no entry fee, and you may offer your artwork for sale. More information at: <http://www.pinellascounty.org/hr/emp-communications/artshow.htm>

We are looking for a couple extra back-up hike guides that know and love the preserve and would like to share that love with the public!

Photos by
Julia Myers

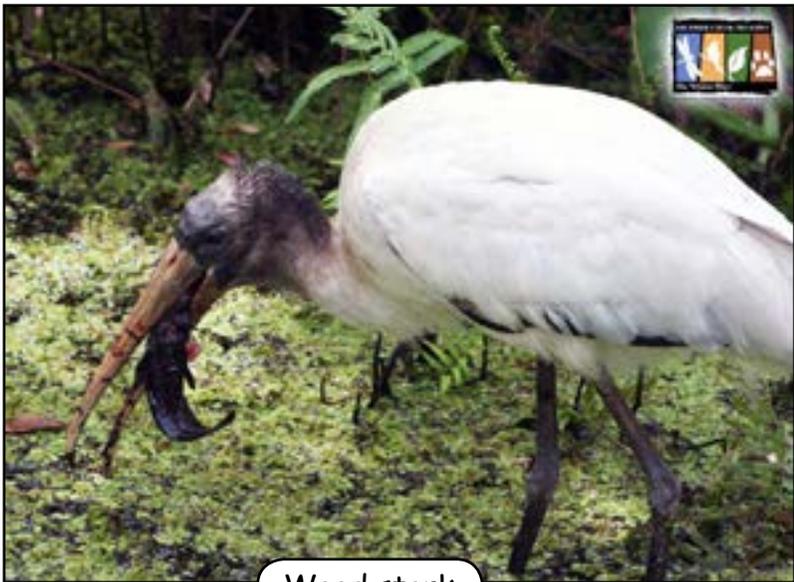
Advanced Plant ID
graduages



Iris hexagonia



Pinewoods milkweed
(*Asclepias humistrata*)



Wood stork

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

Cool calendar for your refrigerator!

**BROOKER CREEK PRESERVE
MAY 2016**

**Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve events*

THURSDAY		FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
5 Pre-School Book Time 10:30-11:15		6	7 Guided Hike 9-10:30 (Ecosystems) <i>*Book Club -CANCELLED THIS MONTH</i> Invasive Plants in Pinellas 10:30-noon	8
12 Pre-School Book Time 10:30-11:15		13	14 Beginning Bird Hike 8-10 Florida Microplastics Awareness Project 10:30-12:00	15
Wed 18 <i>*Friends of BCP Board Meeting 6:30-8:30 pm Auditorium</i>	19 Pre-School Book Time 10.30-11.15	20 Family Fun Friday 10-12 (It's OK to Bug Me!)	21 <i>*Return the Preserve Work Day 8-11 am</i> Guided Hike 9-10:30 (Footprints on the Land) Intro to Beekeeping #3 10-noon	22
26 Pre-School Book Time 10.30-11.15		27 Max A/C. Settings and Savings 11-noon	28 <i>*Wildflower Garden Club 8-10</i> Photographing Nature 8:30-10:30 Guided Hike 9-12 (Our Wildest Place)	29

JUNE 2016

THURSDAY		FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
2 Pre-School Book Time 10.30-11.15		3	4 Guided Hike 9-10:30 (Ecosystems) <i>*Book Club 9:30-10:30</i> Orchids & Epiphytes 10:30-12	5
9 Pre-School Book Time 10:30-11:15		10	11 <i>*2nd Annual Ken Rowe Birdathon 5:30 am-12:30 pm (Team leaders reserve by June 5)</i>	12 <i>*Off the Beaten Path Hike: Wildlands Walk-About 9am-1pm (\$25/person - must reserve)</i>
16 Pre-School Book Time 10.30-11.15		17 Family Fun Friday 10-12 (Dip Netting)	18 <i>*Return the Preserve Work Day 8-11 am</i> Guided Hike 9-10:30 (Footprints on the Land)	19
23 Pre-School Book Time 10.30-11.15		24	25 <i>*Wildflower Garden Club 8-10</i> Guided Hike 9-10:30 Florida-Friendly Landscaping 10:30-noon	26
30 Pre-School Book Time 10:30-11:15				

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:

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Treasurer: Jane Myers

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Publicity Chair: Barbara Schultz
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Evan Earle, Jr.
Wildflower Garden: Pam Brown

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Membership: Jeff Myers
Newsletter Publisher: Cathy Vogelsong
Website Master: Cathy Ordiway

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

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