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# Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve

July - August 2021

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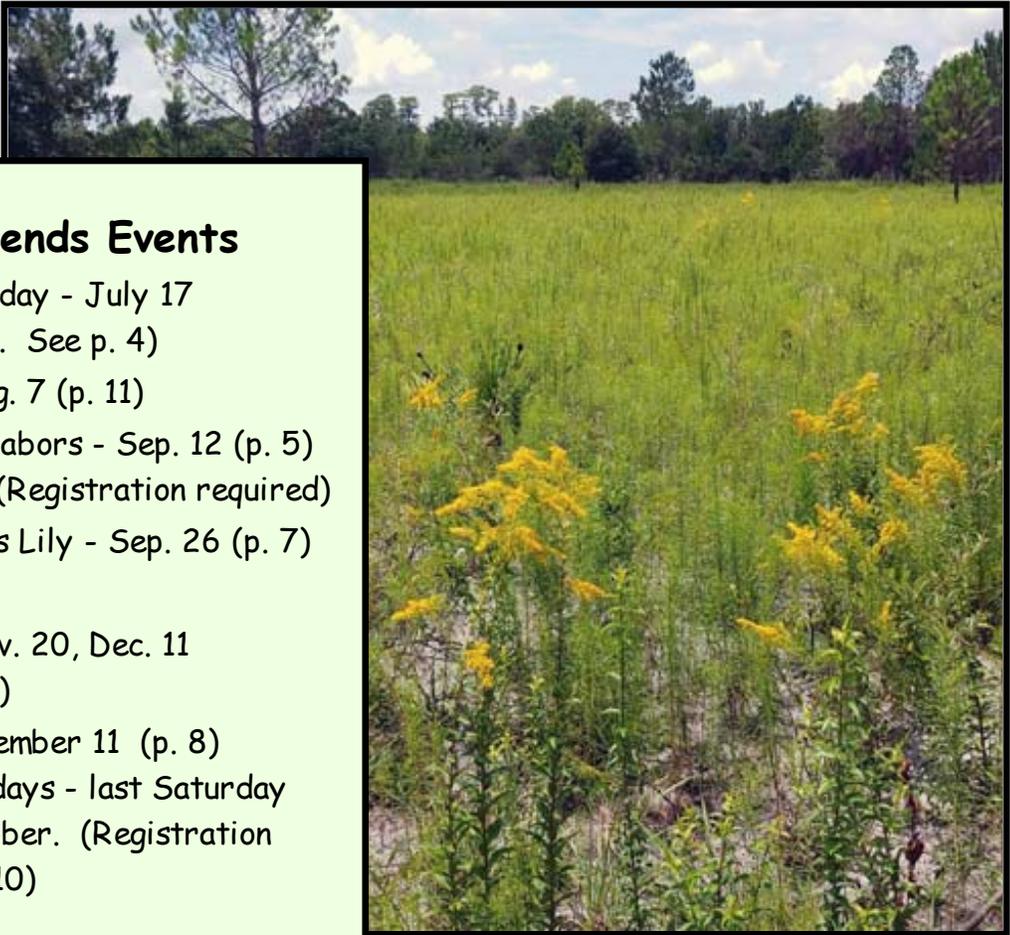
## Dear Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve!

I hope this newsletter finds you and your loved ones well. It has been so wonderful to see some of you at the Education Center since the reopening in April. The Friends is so very thrilled to be gearing up for some activities at the Preserve after the long Covid hiatus! See the list below for those we have scheduled so far. Our three big festivals, Spring Wildlife Safari, Fall Wildflower Festival, and Owl-o-Ween, will return in 2022, as will the Summer Birdathon. As we move forward into the rest of 2021 and 2022 we will keep you updated with further activities and events as we add them to our schedule. On behalf of the FOBCP leadership team, I wish you all the best!

Cathie

As always, I am open to your thoughts and ideas. Feel free to contact me.

[info@FriendsOfBrookerCreekPreserve.org](mailto:info@FriendsOfBrookerCreekPreserve.org) or 727-934-2680



### Upcoming Friends Events

- Return the Preserve Workday - July 17  
(Registration required. See p. 4)
- FOBCP Readers Club - Aug. 7 (p. 11)
- Gallery Reception: Jeff Nabors - Sep. 12 (p. 5)
- Off the Beaten Path Hike (Registration required)  
In Search of Catesby's Lily - Sep. 26 (p. 7)
- Native Plant Sale - Oct. 2
- Night Hikes - Oct. 30, Nov. 20, Dec. 11  
(Registration required)
- Music in the Woods - November 11 (p. 8)
- Wildflower Garden Workdays - last Saturday  
each month, July - October. (Registration  
required. See flyer p. 10)

Goldenrod in bloom

# What Exactly is "Land Management"?

By: Craig Huegel

It might seem that a preserve as large as Brooker Creek could be left alone to let nature take care of it. After all, that was the way things went before it was purchased and set aside. The reality is, however, that nature wasn't doing that good of a job when we assumed responsibility for it and it isn't doing that good of a job now when left alone.

Before humans changed the overall landscape with our activities, natural forces shaped the landscape and the living world adapted to them; forces such as fire and hydrology.

There were no nonnative invasive species to contend with.

Predators worked to regulate the populations of their prey.

Things were in balance. The forces that shaped the land were sufficient to provide management to it. It's not true anymore.



Because our activities have altered the natural forces in places like Brooker Creek Preserve, it has become our responsibility to ameliorate the negativity that ensues. Most of the Preserve's uplands rely on frequent fire. That has been the case for hundreds of thousands of years. Fire reduces overgrowth, allows sunlight into the understory, and fertilizes the soil. Urban development has reduced the probability of lightning starting a fire in the natural fragments that remain and modern regulations require us to put those fires out as soon as possible to reduce the risk of property damage. Natural areas that likely burned about every 3-5 years never burn now naturally. Should they do so, the fires are extinguished as quickly as possible. During the hiatus we had since the last newsletter, a wildfire occurred in the pinelands north of Keystone Road. It was a very beneficial fire, but it had to be put out as it wasn't a prescribed fire. That is a frustrating fact of life. For the Preserve's uplands to maintain their health, we need to purposely burn them. It is difficult to do that now given the fact that we are surrounded on all sides by residential development.

Development also brings nonnative plants and animals that compete with our native flora and fauna. Plants from the areas surrounding us produce seed that gets carried inside. Plants like Brazilian pepper and cogongrass are showing up in areas deep inside - not just along the edges. As they spread, they take over and change the ecology of areas that were once "pristine" - if such a condition ever truly existed. They must be eradicated by human intervention and that will be necessary forever. Wild hogs have shown up in the area north of Keystone Road. They root up native vegetation. As they reproduce quickly and because they have no natural predators, they must be captured and killed. Feral cats kill birds - especially those that nest on the ground. They are not innocent pets if left alone to roam our wild lands.

The hydrology of Florida is the natural force that feeds water to our wetlands and moves it across the pine flatwoods during the rainy season. Anything that disrupts this natural water flow causes permanent damage to these water-sensitive systems. Changes in elevation, caused by trails below the natural grade, collect this water and divert it from where it historically went. Housing development and hard-surfaced roadways surrounding the Preserve do even more damage. It is an issue that must constantly be addressed. Restoring natural water flow means fixing these elevational changes and this has to be done with human effort.

Taking care of natural areas in modern times means intervening on their behalf. We must mimic and restore nature to let nature take care of places like Brooker Creek Preserve. The Friends, through your memberships and donations, plays a vital role in assisting Preserve staff in their land management efforts. We put your dollars to such uses. Thank you for the support you have given to these efforts and we urge you to continue your membership into the future. It will always be necessary.

## Prescribed Burn



**Feb. 26, 2021**



**June 25, 2021**

In February of this year, a prescribed burn was conducted between the entrance and exit roads to the Preserve. Since this particular area rarely burns, this prescribed burn reduced the fuel load that had accumulated over time and opened up the area for flowers and other low-growing plants to thrive.

Friends  of Brooker Creek Preserve  
**Return the Preserve Work Day**

The Return the Preserve Work Days focus on areas of the Preserve where exotic invasive vegetation and unnatural overgrowth exist. It is our goal to help *return the Preserve* to its natural beauty. Working with FOBCP leadership and Preserve staff, volunteers provide the much needed hands-on support necessary to remove nuisance plants, providing a more healthy environment for native wildlife.

**July 17, 2021**



We will meet in the parking lot at 7:45, start at 8:00, and work until 11:00. Long sleeve shirts, long pants, a hat, and sunscreen are recommended; closed toe shoes are required. Bring yard tools if you have them.

**Registration is required, this event caps at 25 volunteers.**

**Register at: [returnthepreserveworkday.eventbrite.com](https://returnthepreserveworkday.eventbrite.com)**

For questions, contact the project leader: Evan Earle at [earlejr@gmail.com](mailto:earlejr@gmail.com)

# AUDITORIUM GALLERY

by Lynn Whitelaw

Now more than ever, we need to return the beauty of nature and the creativity of art back into our lives.

The Brooker Creek Education Center Auditorium Gallery has now reopened and the exhibition **Victoria Block: *Tree Inspirations*** is on view through Sept. 5. This exhibit was originally installed in January 2020 but has not been accessible to viewers since the Center was closed by COVID-19 in March 2020.

## ON VIEW IN THE GALLERY, Through Sept. 5, 2021

### VICTORIA BLOCK: *TREE INSPIRATIONS*

Drawings + Prints + Paintings



*Trunk*, 2019

Print, oil pastel on canvas

4 x 3 ft.

*"my view of nature is an emotional interpretation ...  
I evoke places that people love in their memories."*

- Victoria Block

Victoria Block is an American-born artist from Montreal, Canada who has wintered in Pinellas County for many years, until COVID-19 prevented her from returning last year. As a multi-media artist, Victoria's large paintings are bright in color with loose renderings of trees, thickets, and grasses in textural layers of oil paint mixed with gesso and sand. Her detailed drawings in pen and ink are meditative and often include subtle inscriptions such as poems and inspirational writings hidden within the overall patterns. And her prints are created through a simple printmaking process

combined with ink drawing. Victoria misses seeing her works, but hopes that Brooker Creek patrons will be inspired by her art.

# UPCOMING EXHIBITION, Sept. 12, 2021 - Jan. 5, 2022

Opening Reception: Sunday, Sept. 12, 1-3 PM

## JEFF NABORS: *OUR UNCOMMON GROUND*

Paintings and Drawings



*Brooker Creek Fallen Trees*, June 2021

Oil on canvas

48 in. x 48 in.

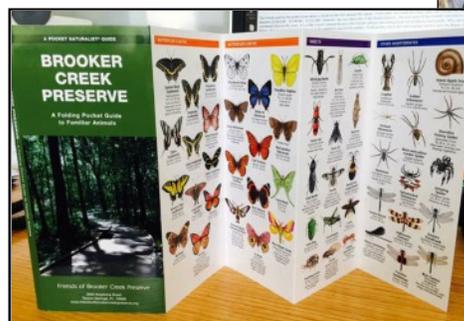
*"My work has evolved from a passion for great design, a love of color and texture, and a Belief that successful artwork will ultimately connect on an emotional level."*

- Jeff Nabors

wife Cyndi have visited Brooker Creek Preserve many times, through their family friendship with FOBCP Board Member, Evan Earle, Jr., and Jeff has created paintings and drawing in the Preserve. Jeff will be exhibiting those works along with other examples of his signature narrative expressionist style which incorporates historical art references to post-impressionism, pointillism, and Fauvism.

Visit the Nature Store.

See page 11.



# 2020 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 in answering questions. The hikes will be educational, and 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 of four hikes or \$25 donation per hike with a 10% discount for members of Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve

## Sites Off the Beaten Path:

### Sept. 26, 2021 – In Search of 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. 12, 2021 - Cypress Swamp Stomp** – Located in the central part of the Preserve, this site features orchids, ferns, and epiphytes. Plan to get wet, or maybe not get wet, as we plunge into the depths of the swamp!

**March 20, 2022 – 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 17, 2022 – Interior Wildlands** – We will be in parts of the Preserve so remote that cell phones won’t work, areas so pretty you won’t believe you are in Pinellas County!

## Reservations Required:

Sign up early! Only 20 spots are open for these fabulous hikes *off the beaten path!* Questions? To register, email [info@friendsofbrookercreekpreserve.org](mailto:info@friendsofbrookercreekpreserve.org) or call 727-934-2680.

## Music in the Woods Series

Music in the Woods is back! Our first event will be outdoors at the music pavilion on Saturday, Nov. 13, at 3:00 pm.

The **2PM Band** will be performing. Please bring a chair and sit and enjoy music in the woods!

## The 2PM Band

"The 2PM Band" is Pete Price, Pete Hennings, and Mike Jurgensen, a trio of talented musicians who blend their varied musical talents into an eclectic mix of material, from original songs, to obscure covers, to well-known standards. With Price on guitar and

bass, Hennings on guitar, bass, mandolin, and violin, and Jurgensen on guitar and harmonica, these three performers combine tight instrumentation with pristine vocal harmonies to delight audiences of all musical tastes. "2PM" has released three CDs: "Keepin' Time", "Let's Just Play One More", and their most recent, "Writing on the Wall", released in 2017. The band will be releasing its fourth recording project in 2021.



Florida false sunflower  
(*Phoebanthus grandiflorus*)



Fairy hats (*Clematis crispa*)  
in the Wildflower Garden

## News from the Wildflower Garden

By: Pam Brown

On two Saturdays in June a couple of the regular garden volunteers and I worked to bring the garden back from over a year of no maintenance. We removed many broom sedge and seedling muhly grass plants along with new oak trees. We also did some routine maintenance. We are resuming the regular workdays on the last Saturday of each month (January through October). We meet from 8:00 to 10:00 am April through October, and 9:00 - 11:00 am January through March. Registration is required and space is limited to five volunteers (adults, and children aged 10 and over) due to the size and fragility of the garden. Please bring your hat, gloves, sunscreen, insect spray, tools and wear closed toed shoes and join us for some gardening fun. We will provide light snacks. We would love to see you there! Contact Pam for questions and to register at: [pamperedgardeners@gmail.com](mailto:pamperedgardeners@gmail.com).



Butterfly weed (*Asclepias tuberosa*) and Coral honeysuckle (*Lonicera sempervirens*)

## Pam's Thoughts

Is it just me, or is it hotter than usual? Maybe I am just growing more intolerant with age. I find that I must get out very early to do work in my landscape. I do have a lot of native plants in my yard that do not require much tending and we also have no grass to speak of. So, Bill does not have to do a lot of mowing. But once the rains started, there was rampant growth of weeds and since I do not use much in the way of chemical control, hand weeding is needed.

Following my own advice from before the pandemic shut down, I was trying to establish wildflowers in a couple of areas in my landscape. All was going well and I had nice growth and blooms in 2020. Then this spring a little rabbit moved in and ate nearly all of the wildflower plants and new seedlings in the front yard area. It also ate the blooms of my ground orchid and geraniums. I still have one area by the garage with nice wildflower growth that the rabbit has not discovered, along with a three ft. tall raised bed that should be off limits. I have been diligently rotating three wildlife repellents in these other two areas that seem to be protective: Repels-All, Liquid Fence, and human hair. They must be reapplied often to be effective. I did not know about the rabbit until too late at the front wildflower area. Perhaps I could have discouraged the rabbit with these repellents before it consumed all of the plants if I had been more observant.

As I have written before, planting native wildflowers is one of the best things we can do to support all of our native pollinators. So, I will not give up. I have planted seeds in pots and have some small seedlings that I will use to replace those that the rabbit destroyed. And, I will be sure to keep the area treated with the wildlife repellents that do not harm the pollinators.

Friends  of Brooker Creek Preserve

# WILDFLOWER GARDEN WORK DAY



The Wildflower Garden is maintained by the Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve. Come help make it the best it can be. Pam Brown, horticulturist, is the leader and teaches us the best practices of garden maintenance. There is always plenty to do! Please wear closed toed shoes and bring gardening tools, gloves, hat, sunscreen and bug spray. Light breakfast snacks will be provided.

**When:** The last Saturday of each month (January-October only)

**Where:** The Wildflower Garden by the Auditorium

**Time:** April - October 8:00-10:00 am  
January - March 9:00-11:00 am

**Registration required. Space is limited to 5 volunteers (adults and children aged 10 or over) Please contact Pam for questions and to register at [pamperedgardeners@gmail.com](mailto:pamperedgardeners@gmail.com)**

## Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve Readers Club

By: Jon Burr



Welcome Back! Saturday morning, Aug. 7 we will restart the Readers Club. We will meet in the Ed Center in the conference room at 9:30. The book to be discussed is *Olustee America's Unfinished Civil War Battle*, by Greg Ahlgren. Some of the events since we last met, March 2020, make this book perhaps a tad more topical.

*The Three Marjories, Marjorie Stoneman Douglas, Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings, Marjorie Harris Carr and Their Contributions to Florida*, by Sandra Wallus Sammons. (published by the Pineapple Press) is planned for the Saturday, Sep. 4th meeting. Brief aside: The Pineapple Press, a stalwart 'local' (Sarasota) publishing house, was sold in 2018 but continues to publish. I'm a bit late in picking up on this and will put it on a to-do list to keep track of this outstanding Florida press.

Please join in the fun. It's an inestimable pleasure to be saying "See you in August."

## Nature Store News

Our Nature Store is open again thanks to our dedicated Nature Store Volunteers! It is so good to have them back, and we welcome two new volunteers to the store; **Nydia Viana** and **Patty Owen**, both of whom come to us with enthusiasm and smiles! Welcome to the Nature Store Team!

Also new to the store is our Square system, which is now up and running. What a wonderful addition! It has made sales transactions, tracking inventory and running monthly reports a breeze!



Other good news: Even though the store was closed to the public for over a year, we were able to start up our School Sales program last November, filling orders for the 4<sup>th</sup> grade classes who came to Brooker for field trips. School Sales for November 2020-May 2021 totaled approximately \$5700, which is a big part of our Year-to-Date total sales revenue of \$10,680. Very nice, I think, considering the situation!

## Volunteer News

### Education Center Updates & More

By Julia Myers, Education Support Specialist, Brooker Creek Preserve



**Exciting News:** Lara has officially launched a NEW nature podcast in collaboration with her counterpart in Polk County. If you want to learn about Florida's natural areas and the wild things that live here, "Naturally Florida" is for you! Be sure to check it out, subscribe, and share with any family, friends, or community groups who might be interested. The episodes are only 15-20 minutes long, so great for your commutes. Learn more at [www.naturallyfloridapodcast.com](http://www.naturallyfloridapodcast.com)

**Webinars on Demand:** We have a YouTube playlist! All of our webinars are recorded and can be viewed on our playlist. You can find them here: <https://bit.ly/bcpwebinarsplaylist>

**Hikes:** Guided hikes are back and will continue to be scheduled based on the availability of our hike guides. Our first two hikes so far have been fabulous! We are going to continue to emphasize that registration is required for guided hikes. Please help us let our visitors know that they must register in advance to attend.



Hiking Trails are open every day from 7:00 am until posted time, usually one hour before sunset.

Brooker Creek Preserve Environmental Education Center full [calendar of classes](#) at the BCP Environmental Education Center.

**Summer Camps:** Sensing Nature will host their Wetland Adventure Camp July 19<sup>th</sup> through 23<sup>rd</sup> for children ages 7 to 12. The cost is \$225. (See flier next page)

Registration is available on their website: [Sensing Nature's Wetland Adventure Camp](#)



## Sensing Nature's 2021 Wetland Adventure Camp July 19 - 23, 2021

\$225



Lead by Sensing Nature's professional biologists, educators, and certified Florida Master Naturalists



- Hosted at Brooker Creek Preserve, Tarpon Springs
- Daytime Monday - Friday, 9:00 AM - 4:00 PM
- *Before/After Care is Available 8:00 - 5:00; add \$45*
- Ages 7 - 12



In-person camp



Masks required indoors; no masks required outdoors unless social distancing is not maintained



**Register at [www.SensingNature.com](http://www.SensingNature.com)**

Registration closes July 5 or when full



**Questions to answers not found on our website?**

Email Jeanne at [jmurphy@sensingnature.com](mailto:jmurphy@sensingnature.com),  
or call (727) 397-2306



  
 Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve  
**ADOPT AN ANIMAL - \$35/adoption**



*A program to enhance restoration and land management programs to help provide improved habitat for wildlife in **Brooker Creek Preserve***

The **ADOPT AN ANIMAL** program was established by the Friends in 2020 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 natural water flow
- Fire management
- Restoring natural plant communities

Animal adoptions make perfect gifts for birthdays, anniversaries, memorials, and more!

Upon receipt of your donation, the honoree will be sent by mail an adoption package with an adoption certificate, a fact sheet about the adopted animal, and a cuddly plush animal chosen for adoption. The donor will receive a thank you letter that can be used for tax purposes.

Donor Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

in honor of    
  in memory of    
  for myself

Honoree Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Send packet to this address. This is the donor or honoree address (circle one):

\_\_\_\_\_

I wish to adopt (\$35 each):

- |  |                                    |                                  |                                |                                 |                                    |                              |
|--|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gopher Tortoise | <input type="checkbox"/> Deer Buck | <input type="checkbox"/> Raccoon | <input type="checkbox"/> Eagle | <input type="checkbox"/> Otter  | <input type="checkbox"/> Alligator | <input type="checkbox"/> Owl |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gray Squirrel   | <input type="checkbox"/> Deer Fawn | <input type="checkbox"/> Opossum | <input type="checkbox"/> Bat   | <input type="checkbox"/> Coyote | <input type="checkbox"/> Bobcat    | <input type="checkbox"/> Fox |

Total Due: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Questions? [info@friendsofbrookercreekpreserve.org](mailto:info@friendsofbrookercreekpreserve.org) or 727-934-2680

Check endorsed to: **FOBCP**. Mail to: FOBCP, 3940 Keystone Road, Tarpon Springs, FL 34688

FEID #59-3302182 tax-exempt, non-profit corporation

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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](mailto:fobcp@tampabay.rr.com)

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**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](http://www.FriendsOfBrookerCreekPreserve.org)  
Email:  
[info@FriendsOfBrookerCreekPreserve.org](mailto:info@FriendsOfBrookerCreekPreserve.org)  
Voicemail: (727) 934-2680

**Brooker Creek Preserve:**  
Phone: (727) 453-6900  
Website: [www.brookercreekpreserve.org](http://www.brookercreekpreserve.org)  
**Brooker Creek Preserve Environmental Education Center** is located at 3940 Keystone Road, Tarpon Springs, Florida, 34688. Phone: (727) 453-6800  
Hours: Thurs. - Sat. 9am - 4pm, Sun., 11am - 4pm.

**Friends Nature Store** is located in the Education Center. Hours: Thurs. - Sat. 9am - 4pm, Sun., 11am - 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](mailto: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.

### **Board of Directors Officers**

Chair: Cathie Foster  
Vice Chair: Robert Burkard  
Secretary: Kathleen Nichter  
Treasurer: Jane Myers  
Business Director: Barb Hoffman

### **Directors:**

Pam Brown: Wildflower Garden  
Robert Burkard: Beekeeping  
Allyn Childress: Grants  
Evan Earle, Jr.: Return the Preserve Work Days  
Cathie Foster: Fall Wildflower Festival/  
Wildlife Safari  
Barbara Hoffman: Membership/  
Owl-O-Ween  
Walt Hoskins: Guiding Documents  
Dr. Craig Huegel: Land Use/Newsletter  
Editor/Off-the-Beaten-Path Hikes  
Jane Myers: Music Events  
Jeff Myers: Financial Manager  
Kathleen Nichter: Nature Store Book-  
keeper/ Readers Club  
Chuck Parsons: 4th Grade Coordination  
Ray Poynor: Craftsman  
Barbara Schultz: Publicity  
Cathy Vogel song: Newsletter Publisher  
Julie Wade: Communications/Outreach  
Mark Yeager: Night Hikes/Star Party

### **Further Leadership**

Jon Burr: Readers Club  
Sandra Miraglia: Nature Store Committee  
Cathy Ordiway: Website Master  
Lynn Whitelaw: Art Gallery Curator

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

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