


Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve

November - December 2023



Upcoming Events

- Nov. 11 Night Hike
- Nov. 13 Keystone Rd. Cleanup with KPB
- Nov. 26 Beekeepers Club
- Dec. 2 Music in the Woods: Wildflower Honey
- Dec. 3 Deadline for entry submission - 3rd Annual Members' Photo Exhibit
- Dec. 9 Night Hike
- Dec. 11 Keystone Rd. Cleanup with KPB
- Dec. 17 Beekeepers Club

Catesby lilies at Brooker Creek Preserve, photo by Julia Myers.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

Friends  of Brooker Creek Preserve



Join the Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve for a hiking experience along the Education Center Trail...*at night!* These special hikes are open to the public and limited to 20 people per hike. **A \$3 per person donation is requested.** Hikes are led by Preserve volunteers who are knowledgeable about nocturnal wildlife. The hike is about one-mile in length and will take about 1.5 hours.

Pre-registration is required! Once you register, more information will come to you via email. Pre-register online by logging onto: <https://nighthikes.eventbrite.com>

These hikes are for adults and families only. Children must be accompanied by parents. Please leave your pets at home. Pets are not permitted in County Preserves.

Questions? Email info@FriendsOfBrookerCreekPreserve.org
Call 727-934-2680

Friends  of Brooker Creek Preserve
invites you to enjoy the silky smooth harmony of



Carl August & Lauren Bacon
“Wildflower Honey”

Saturday, December 2, 2023
5:00 pm—7:30 pm

Outdoor Music Pavilion
Brooker Creek Preserve
3940 Keystone Road, Tarpon Springs, FL 34688

An eclectic set of music will include classic favorites and deep cuts you haven't heard before! Ranging from rock to folk, indie to blues, **Wildflower Honey** has something for everyone!

Bring lawn chairs or a blanket and a picnic supper or snacks. Sorry, pets and alcoholic beverages are not allowed on any Pinellas County preserve properties.

~ Part of the **FOBCP Music in the Woods** Series ~
\$5 donation requested
More information:

info@FriendsOfBrookerCreekPreserve.org or 727-934-2680

AUDITORIUM GALLERY by Lynn Whitelaw

The Auditorium Gallery is open Saturdays 9 am - 3 pm, and Sundays 11 am - 3 pm, (except for scheduled events and/or upon special request).

Next Exhibition in the Gallery:

Attention FOBCP Photographers! Now is the time to submit those "special" images that we as volunteers are able to capture during our time at Brooker Creek Preserve. Consider participating in our

3rd ANNUAL MEMBERS' PHOTOGRAPHY EXHIBITION AND INVITATIONAL

Dec 9, 2023 - Feb 18, 2024

(Closing Reception: Sunday, Feb. 18, 1-3 PM)

RULES:

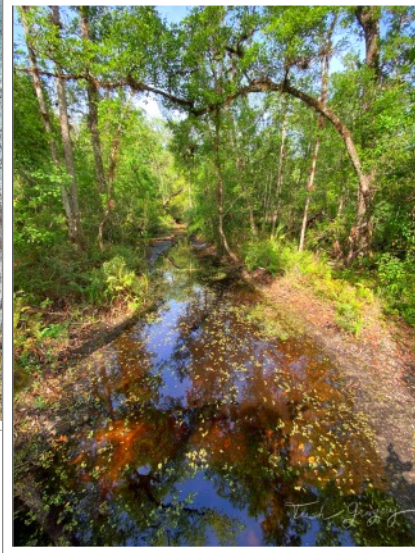
- **Photographer must be a member of FOBCP.**
- **Photos must have been taken within Brooker Creek Preserve.**
- **Photos must be framed, ready to hang, with a horizontal wire on the back.**
- **Up to 3 photos may be submitted and paperwork is to be attached to the back of the frame (forms are available in the Nature Store) to include: name, email address and telephone number, title of work, medium, image size (height by width), and sale price (or note Not for Sale).**
- **All photo techniques are acceptable: color, black & white, manipulated.**
- **Photographs can be delivered to the Friends Nature Store up through Sunday, Dec. 3rd (store hours 9-4 Thurs.-Sat., and 11-4 on Sundays)**
- **If a photograph is sold during the exhibit, FOBCP requests a donation of 10% of the sale price.**
- **Unsold photographs are to be removed at the end of the reception on Feb. 18 (or by special arrangement).**

SHOW US WHAT YOU GOT!

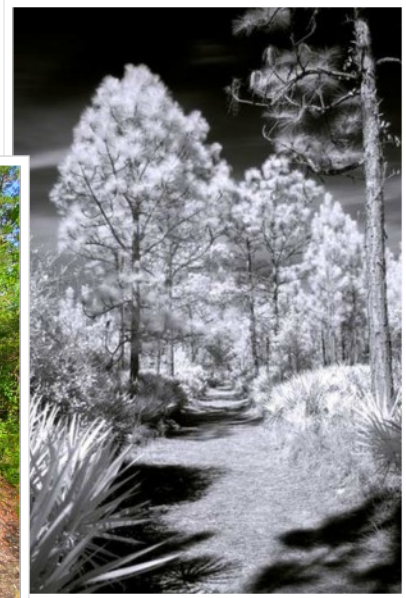
To enhance the *Members' Photography Exhibition* and to provide an opportunity for regional nature photographers to use Brooker Creek Preserve as inspiration, three award-winning photographers have been invited to participate. The selected photographers for this year's exhibition include:



Sally Riggs Fuller
(Dade City)



Trish Gregory
(Tarpon Springs)



Lisa Sibley
(Tarpon Springs)

Upcoming Exhibition in 2024:

Please help FOBCP promote its annual Plein Air Weekend, Exhibition, Reception and Awards Program by spreading the news. This event grows bigger each year and attracts plein air artists from throughout the Tampa Bay area. More information will be in the next FOBCP newsletter, but dates for the 2024 event are:

Fri., Feb. 23 - Sat., Feb. 24 **Brooker Creek Preserve Plein-Air Weekend** (Registration Required)

Mar. 2-17 **2024 BCP Plein-Air Exhibition**

Sun., Mar. 17 Reception & Awards Program, 1-3 pm



Participating artist Jana Withers at Plein Air 2023

For more information on the Auditorium Gallery exhibitions contact:
Lynn Whitelaw, Gallery Curator at rlwhitelaw7@msn.com, or cell: 813-784-4225

RECENT EVENTS:

Wildflower and Pollinator Festival, Oct. 7 by James Stevenson

We hope you were able to join us this year for the return of the very popular Wildflower Festival! There were a few changes that you may have noticed: we added "& Pollinator" to the title and to the theme of the festival to align with the County's new conservation initiative: Bee City USA. Through the Parks and Conservation Resources Department, Pinellas County is taking steps

to conserve and educate the public about the variety of native bee species found here, and to highlight the importance of their conservation. Native plant vendors were included this year to provide guests with a choice of native plants to buy and create pollinator-friendly habitats at home. One of the donation-based crafts was a bee-house workshop; each participant was able to craft a "bee hotel" to take home. Visitors that completed the Wildflower Quest were rewarded with a packet of mixed wildflower seeds to take home and sow. We handed out over 500 packets of seed, enough to create more than 1000 square feet of pollinator habitat!



Based on the automatic car-counter located at the main entrance, we estimated over 1,300 guests for the day. Of course, we could not have managed to host this event without the support and expertise provided by the Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve. The Butterfly Encounter, undoubtedly the biggest attraction, was produced entirely by the Friends and delighted all who came. Other changes this year included specially produced temporary tattoos using the artwork of Florida Nature Artist Kate Dolamore who kindly gave us permission to use her wonderful images of Catesby Lily, Zebra Longwing, Gulf Fritillary and Hummingbird Moth. Refreshments were another addition, thanks to MyCone Creamery food truck who kept the gourmet coffee and ice cream coming all day.



Our amazing team of volunteers made the day possible and were given a Friends' box lunch for their service. Cindy Peacock and her sweet mother Evelyn created a crafts room in the Auditorium with six different make-and-take crafts that each taught about bees, pollinators and a love for nature! Thanks to the Pinellas County Parks rangers; Tony, Kaitlyn, Lisa and Cindy kept the traffic in the parking lot flowing and peaceful. We look forward to holding this festival again next year, October 5, 2024. Mark your calendars!



The Friends Butterfly Encounter. The Butterfly Tent was stocked with native wildflowers and 250 butterflies!



Volunteers Chuck & Kim assisted visitors with tattoos.



The Wildflower Quest on the trails was a big hit, and volunteer Peter guided the way.

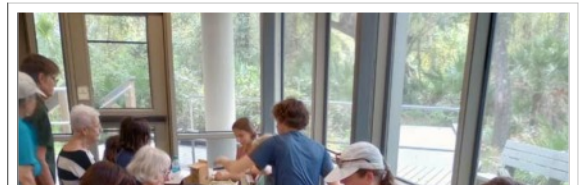




The craft area provided a variety of fun and educational activities for children.



Everyone enjoyed making beeswax candles (left) and "bee hotels."



Plant vendors added a new dimension to the festival. Each one provided a different variety of native plant types. They supplied not only plants for sale, but a lot of good landscape information as well. We thank them all for being there!



Wilcox Nursery



JPCharisma



Kenny Coogan (Critter Companions) specializes in carnivorous plants.



Living Roots Eco Design



Adam Connor (Wet and Green Native Things) native Florida orchids.

Artist Reception, Oct. 8 in the Auditorium Gallery

Leslie Neumann: *WETLANDS CONSERVATION*



While my artwork does fulfill one of my primary objectives - to create beauty, I also achieve my other objective - do good in the world - by being a citizen activist, focused on land preservation. I'm one of the founding members of a local land trust called The Gulf Coast Conservancy which facilitates the protection of environmentally sensitive lands by placing them into public ownership. Since 1992, we have helped save 15,000 precious coastal acres - the same acres that serve as my artistic inspiration. - Leslie Neumann

Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve was pleased with the attendance and sale of artwork at the reception Sunday, Oct. 8, for Florida-based artist Leslie Neumann. Leslie, who lives in the small coastal community of Aripeka, gave a fascinating talk about her involvement in wetlands conservation with a small group of residents who worked with property owners, county governments, and SWFMD (Southwest Florida Water Management District) to advocate for protection of coastal areas along the Gulf of Mexico in upper Pasco and southern Hernando Counties. Neumann also spoke about the inspiration in her artwork, and the process of creating her rich surfaces in the medium of oil paint and encaustic (hot beeswax).



Oil/encaustic, detail of surface.

The *Wetlands Series* will be on view until Dec. 3. Framed works in the exhibition are for sale through the artist and a group of matted prints are for sale in the Nature Store. Her works, close-up views of the lush tropical environment seen from her studio, are created in highly saturated colors and, as Neumann describes them, are "a hybrid between abstraction and representation and a dichotomy of seductive beauty coupled with a sense of danger."

Brooker Creek Outreach by Julie Wade

Brooker Creek Outreach has been busy "reaching out" and collaborating with local Friends, friends, church, County, and City partners.

Thank you to the City of Tarpon Springs for sponsoring the annual EcoFest at the Tarpon Springs Splash Park. This September event offers the chance to introduce many families to Brooker Creek Preserve. As you can see in the photo, we set up our "touch table" resources and informational materials. One of our goals is to encourage the curiosity of young folks and their families. Many Tarpon Springs city departments and other environmental groups participated.

Our regular Tarpon Springs First Friday outreach will conclude this year on November 3. Each month we highlight the importance of BCP and invite residents and visitors alike to experience "real Florida." If you haven't been to First Friday yet, the weather should be great in November for a stroll along a vehicle free Tarpon Avenue. About 200 vendors are there with music, food, and craft offerings from 6-10 pm on, obviously, the first Friday of the month. We will resume our participation in February of 2024. Our tent is located across from Mother Meres Park near Tarpon Avenue and Alt. 19. Stop by and say "hi" to me and my amazing friend and volunteer, Margaret.

The other new Outreach has been our partnership with Keep Pinellas Beautiful (KPB). A huge THANK YOU to Greg, Kelly, Laurie, Patty, Tony, Patricia, Susan, and Ellen. We have picked up almost 70 pounds of trash along Keystone Road, keeping our BCP front entry welcoming. As the photos show, we have a collaborative group. Greater L.I.F.E Church (across Keystone from Brooker where we meet), Unitarian Universalist Church in Tarpon, St. Pete College representatives, Friends of Brooker Creek, TS Democrats, and other friends have graciously joined together. We will meet again on the second Monday of November 13, at 9 am at 3770 Old Keystone Road. All materials are provided and the work takes about an hour. We would love to have you join us. If you have questions, call the Friends number 727-934-2680 and Julie Wade will call you back. Just think, you can get a little fresh air, exercise, and help the environment, all in one hour!



Return The Preserve Work Day, Oct. 14

by Evan Earle Jr.

Saturday, October 14th, was blessed with perfect weather. Cool, sunny, and no humidity. Mother Nature dialed up that perfect weather for our October 2023 Friends Of Brooker Creek Preserve (FOBCP) Return The Preserve (RTP) Work Day.

While there were only two of us, we accomplished a lot, removing 250 pounds of invasive St. Augustine grass. The next time you are on the sidewalk from the delivery loop to the auditorium, take a look at the happy muhly grass that is no longer being choked out.

Our next RTP Work Day will be in April 2024. There is still plenty of St. Augustine grass needing to be removed. You are invited to join us as we work to Return The Preserve to its natural beauty.



Evan & Joe

Acre Adoptions

With much appreciation for these honorary acre adoptions purchased during the last two months:

Barbara Genthner Moritz

(Thank you, Barbara, for your many years of adoptions!)

Rose & Ray Poynor, in honor of their 40th Anniversary
Given by Shanta, Riley & Ryan Talamantez and Chris Smith

Owl-O-Ween, Oct. 28 - A Fun Time Had by All



The front table volunteers greeted the 550 visitors.



Nearly 100 owls were displayed throughout the exhibit area, and visitors had fun trying to find them at the Owl Search.



All-day owl story time was provided by the Tarpon Springs Woman's Club.



Ray & Matt helped visitors construct 25 nest boxes.





The owl pancake breakfast was as popular as ever!



Thank you, Rotary Club of East Lake Sunrise (above) and Tarpon Springs Rotary Club (right) for making the owl pancakes! A whopping 275 pancake breakfasts were created and enjoyed!

The Tampa Bay Raptor Rescue brought the guests of honor.



Peggy is holding an Eastern Screech Owl.



Lulu, the Great Horned Owl, with Ray.



Maureen is holding Clem, the Barred Owl.



Sierra holds Spirit, the Peregrine Falcon and Mikell has Josie the Barn Owl.



Ivan, with Monica, the Black Vulture.



Taka, a Red Shouldered Hawk,,with Stephanie.

... And Pam, with our own Friends Owl (thanks Julie).

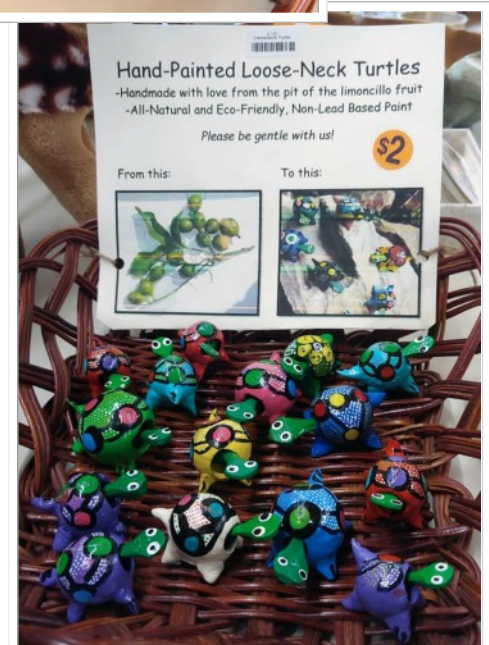


Nature Store News By Cathie Foster

The Friends fiscal year ended on September 30 of this year, and the year-end financials bring us happy news! Our little store showed a profit of over \$19,000 for the 2022-2023 fiscal year! Wow! That is a record for us! We owe it all to our customers who want to leave their time at the Preserve with a little memento of their visit, and to the dedicated volunteers who do everything . . . and I mean everything . . . related to store business!

So now, as we move into the next fiscal year, we are already off to a fantastic start with record sales at both of the big October events, *Fall Wildflower and Pollinator Festival* and *Owl-o-Ween*. The store was busier than ever on both of those days.

With the cooler weather and the winter holidays approaching, consider stopping by the Preserve for a program or a hike, then stop at the Nature Store. You just might find something for yourself or for your favorite nature lover!



Those beautiful plants from the Festival Butterfly Tent.

A Reflection On the Wonder and Utility of Snakes

Essay and photos by Brooker Creek Ranger Randy Goggin

They slide through the world in graceful, serpentine motions, their squamate, post-lizard forms inciting a range of human reactions. A lack of external ears and an absence of eyelids help define them, along with their extensive vertebral columns and forked, chemosensory tongues. Equipped with flexible jaws and partitioned skulls made to stretch and bend around prey, snakes can feed on creatures which exceed the circumference of their bodies. They shed worn skin in a process known as ecdysis, working themselves loose using friction and anchoring sites, rocks, tree bark, roots, chain-link fences; they emerge lustrous, smooth-scaled and externally unblemished.

Snakes live in forests, wetlands, and meadows, in tree hollows, yards, and in our plastic-filled oceans. Like other reptiles, they live in perpetual states of thermoregulation, ever utilizing strategies for keeping their internal temperatures in check. They shelter within the microclimates of gopher tortoise burrows, escaping seasonal temperature extremes. In winter they warm themselves on the Preserve's heat-absorbing, two-mile loop of road, while in summer they stick to the shady, rain-soaked earth, and cooler substrates of their respective habitats.

There are 46 native snake species found on the Florida peninsula, with more than 3,500 extant species inhabiting the Earth. About 76% of Florida's snake diversity can be found within central Florida alone (UF Wildlife - Johnson Lab 2023), and about 65% of the state's snake diversity is located within the Tampa Bay region (Heinrich 2023). Snakes have lived on Earth for at least 167 million years, with the oldest snake fossils found in England, Portugal, and the United States (Blaszczak-Boxe 2015). The majestic eastern indigo snake is the largest North American species; it can grow to as long as 9 feet in length. Although indigos are not found within Brooker Creek Preserve, their natural range extends across the state - as far south as the Keys and north into Georgia.

Snakes increase the beauty of the biosphere with their unique phenotypes and intricate patterns of scales, their many colors, and the aesthetics of limbless, tetrapod motions. Many snake species can be found within the boundaries of the Preserve. Here I highlight some of my favorite snakes of Brooker Creek.

The **eastern rat snakes (yellow rat snake)** have bright yellow scales and dark stripes down their bodies, while **corn snakes (red rat snake)** display mosaics of reds, yellows and orange - almost glowing in the low light just before sunset. Both rat snakes spend much of their time as arboreal hunters,



Juvenile eastern (or yellow) rat snake



Red rat (or corn) snake

their colubrid forms shaped to kill prey through the sheer force of their constriction.

Black racers explode in swift bursts of speed, periscoping in tall foliage to better observe their surroundings. Sometimes a large racer lays draped across the mucky grass in the wildflower garden, chasing down lizards and other prey beneath the boardwalk and between the flowering plants.

I saw my first **coral snakes** this year here at Brooker Creek, perhaps the most striking species of native snake to behold. The first one was crossing a desolate stretch of road in the afternoon heat, its hypnotic, full-banded body compelling me to follow - aposematic color patterns advertising its neurotoxic venom. I watched its small black head and thin yellow bands touching both red and black, its lateral undulations and bright colors contrasting with the asphalt it crossed. A second coral snake was lying in the road a week later, prostrate on the shadowed asphalt and rain-soaked leaf litter. Upon approach both snakes escaped beneath the cover of leaves, their flight responses reminding me which of us is the more dangerous creature.

The **ringneck snakes** have black bodies with necklace patterns of orange or yellow, their miniature reptilian frames only about 6-7 inches in length. They display their red and orange undersides when encountering predatory threats - mimicking venomous species to reduce

their chances of being eaten. The emerald hues of **rough green snakes** are perhaps the prettiest of all, one of the most elusive too since I've only heard of them described by hikers in passing.

The leather-like skin of adult **coachwhips** are seen only in flashes, and a five foot **diamondback rattler** often travels the flatwoods just south of the creek. This year the latter species rattled its warnings at me full force, after being startled by the rustling sounds of a brown anole lizard. I gave it space, and it retreated back into the forest.

Our native snakes function as both predator and prey in any given moment, helping keep our ecosystems and trophic webs in balance. As prey, snakes provide food for shorebirds, owls, hawks, and other birds of prey. Bobcats, gators, and coyotes will eat them too. Snakes face a slew of ground-based predatory threats. Coral snakes specialize in hunting other snakes, feeding on at least 12 genera of species (Heinrich 2023). As predators, snakes help keep rodent populations from increasing to hazardous levels, thereby reducing zoonotic disease transmission to humans and other animal species, e.g. Lyme disease, leptospirosis, bubonic plague, and rat bite fever. Rats can act as vectors for diseases carried by fleas, mites, and ticks, and they contaminate our food with their hair, feces, and urine. They chew through the wiring, walls, and insulation of our homes and

businesses too, leaving their wastes wherever they go. When invading island ecosystems, rats can decimate entire communities of native species. A world without snakes is a world where rat populations increase at exponential rates, bringing widespread destruction to homes, businesses, food supplies, and crops. Snakes also eat cockroaches, an insect many would agree would be better excluded from the tree of life.

Snakes feed on invasive species too. In fact, cottonmouths have now been found with juvenile Burmese pythons in their bellies (Reyes 2022), doing their part to help combat one of the worst invasive species in our state. Snakes can also act as secondary seed dispersers. When eating granivorous prey (i.e. species which carry caches of seeds tucked into their cheek pouches), they subsequently disperse cached seeds in their wastes, most often undamaged since they eat their prey whole (Reiserer, Schuett, & Greene. 2018.). One study looking at the secondary seed dispersal mechanisms of adult rattlesnakes found that "seeds can germinate in rattlesnake colons" (2018). The many niches snakes fill are still being discovered -- the ways they serve their fellow creatures in both death and life.

Most snake species we encounter are harmless under any circumstances, but there are four venomous species inhabiting this part of the state: eastern diamondback rattlesnakes cottonmouths, coral snakes, and pygmy rattlesnakes. The timber rattlers and copperheads are only found in the Florida panhandle far to our north.

Venomous snakes will always evoke the most terror, fear, and rage from our fellow humans, but negative encounters with venomous snakes can be avoided in the following ways:

paying attention to our surroundings, wearing the right clothing and footwear, and by having a basic knowledge of Florida snakes - their physical characteristics, behaviors, and preferred habitat types. According to George Heinrich, we can reduce our chances of being bitten by snakes by about 50 percent, by simply not attempting to handle, harass, or kill them (Heinrich 2023). And we can avoid bites as well by not picking objects up off the ground, or when we do, doing so with the awareness that something might be hiding underneath. The key to living peacefully with snakes and other animals is to know them, understand them, and respect them for what they are.

Snakes would rather not waste their energy and resources (i.e. venom) on anything other than their prey. Diamondback rattlers utilize loud, rattling tails to communicate their warnings, and even cottonmouths may open their jaws to display their venom-delivering fangs, compelling us to back off and give them a respectable distance. All snakes will flee if given the chance under most circumstances. We're giants from their perspective, towering bipedal threats; they'd rather avoid



Cottonmouth (Water Moccasin)

us at all costs if they can. Unlike many of our fellow humans, they'd rather avoid unnecessary conflict and drama.

In the U.S. five to six people die from snake bites every year, but it's rare. It can happen; sometimes a snake kills someone somewhere in the country. But it's rare, especially when considering snake bite deaths in comparison to other causes of death: Heart disease kills over 695,000 people every year in the U.S., and cancer kills 600,000 people in that same span of time (CDC... 2023). Over 265,000 people die from either diabetes or stroke in a year (2023); 4,000 drown, and about 32,000 are killed in vehicular crashes. In 2021, almost 21,000 people were murdered with guns, and domesticated dogs kill up to 50 people every year. There has yet to be one confirmed death from a pygmy rattler bite.

Like so many other species, snake populations have suffered devastating reductions, mainly through habitat loss, habitat fragmentation, and environmental degradation. Countless snakes die on our roadways every year due to vehicle strikes. And humans kill them with guns, shovels, rocks, and other weapons - often for simply existing or attempting to live out their lives in disturbed habitats. Human aggression is so often misplaced and misguided.

Our native Florida snakes are sources of natural wonder. May we experience that wonder through non-violent eyes. I think of snakes in zoos and nature centers all across the state, of the unveiled wonder they produce in the eyes of onlooking children. Education and empathy are keys to unlocking conservation-focused minds.

Literature Cited

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UF Wildlife - Johnson Lab. 2023. Central Florida's Snakes (online). [accessed 2023 Oct 21]; <https://ufwildlife.ifas.ufl.edu/snakes/central.shtml>



Pygmy rattlesnake in the nursery area of Nature Store. Photo by Tom Trimmier.



Water moccasin, photo by Lou Petersen.

News from the Wildflower Garden By Pam Brown

Our October workday brought to an end the maintenance of the garden for 2023. We do not meet in November or December due to the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays. We will resume our last Saturday of the month maintenance on January 27, 2024 at 9:00 am.

The garden has been spectacular this early and late fall bloom season. The new plants that we added after the rebuild of the boardwalk back in the summer established well and added greatly to the overall bloom. I also noticed that the blue curls really spread after last year. Blue curls (*Trichostema* sp.) is an annual and we spread the ripe seeds from last year's flowers. This year we have not deadheaded the plants as we have done in the past. Instead we are leaving the spent flower stalks so that we can spread as many seeds as possible back into the garden. And, allow any beneficial insect larvae that the stalks and stems might harbor time to mature.



We are always looking for new volunteers to help maintain the Wildflower Garden. If you would like to join us, please register by emailing Pam at pamperedgardeners@gmail.com. Due to the fragility of the plants in the garden, we limit the number to five volunteers, including any children 10 or more years old. Bring your gardening tools, gloves, hat, and bug repellent, and wear closed-toed shoes. We will provide a light snack.

Our Wildflower Garden was in full fall bloom for our October events.

Grasshopper on a frostweed.

Right, muhly grass and goldenrod



Pam's Thoughts

One of my favorite small native trees is sweet acacia (*Vachellia farnesiana*). It starts blooming in early November with small yellow "puff" flowers. The flowers emit a wonderful fragrance that is sometimes used in the perfume industry. One small tree can perfume a fairly large area of the landscape, especially on a breezy day. Several things to consider when choosing where to plant one of these trees:

- As a small tree, it reaches a maximum height and spread of 15-25 feet
- It is semi-evergreen, meaning that it keeps some of its leaves during mild winters
- It thrives in USDA hardiness zones 9a - 11
- It is highly drought tolerant but it may lose its leaves if the drought is severe
- It has few to no pest problems
- It likes full sun
- But, it does have sharp spines nearly one inch long, so plant it away from walkways and driveways where people will not be impacted by the spines.



Definitely a plant to consider in a Florida-Friendly landscape.

Volunteer News

Education Center Updates
November/December 2023

By Julia Myers, Education Support
Specialist, Brooker Creek Preserve




November Holiday Hours: The Environmental Education Center will be closed on Friday, November 10th in honor of Veterans Day, and on Thursday, November 23rd and Friday, November 24th for Thanksgiving. The entire Preserve will be closed on Friday, November 24th. All County Parks and Preserves are closed the day after Thanksgiving so that our rangers can enjoy a day off with their loved ones.

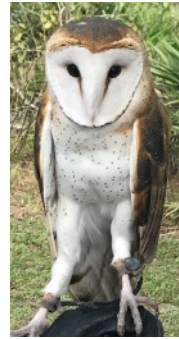
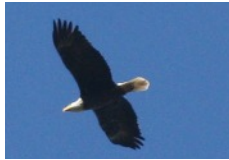
Boardwalk Project: It's COMPLETE! The final phase of the entire boardwalk rehabilitation project has finally been completed. All new boardwalk lights have been installed and they work wonderfully, just in time for night hike season!

Night Hike Volunteers: The Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve offer night hikes from October through April. The night hikes are very popular and provide a special chance for visitors to experience the Preserve at night. Ray Poynor is our fearless night hike leader, and he is hoping to find more night hikes guides so that we may offer 2 night hikes a month! Ray and his wife Rose currently lead one hike a month. If anyone is interested in spearheading a 2nd monthly night hike, Ray welcomes you to shadow his hikes and ask and answer any questions. If you are interested in joining the night hikes team, please let me know!

Climbing hempvine (*Mikania scandens*)
and swamp fern (*Telmatoblechnum
serrulatulum*) along the boardwalk.




 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, 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

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

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

info@FriendsOfBrookerCreekPreserve.org

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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
Email:
info@FriendsOfBrookerCreekPreserve.org
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
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

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.

FOBCP Leadership 2023

Board of Directors

Officers

Chair: Cathie Foster
Vice Chair: Robert Burkard
Secretary: Allyn Childress
Treasurer: Ed Helvenston
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: Nature Store Manager
Barbara Hoffman: Membership/
Owl-O-Ween
Walt Hoskins: Guiding Documents
Dr. Craig Huegel: Land Use/Newsletter
Editor/Off-the-Beaten-Path Hikes
Chuck Parsons: 4th Grade Coordination
Ray Poynor: Craftsman, Night Hikes
Barbara Schultz: Publicity
Cathy Vogelsong: Newsletter Publisher
Julie Wade: Communications/Outreach

Further Leadership

Mona Gardner & Dixie Mills: Nature Store
Bookkeepers
Cathy Ordiway: Website Master
Lynn Whitelaw: Art Gallery Curator

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

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