


Newsletter of the
Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve

March - April 2011

Chairman's Message

By: Barb Hoffman

Wow. Only one year ago the county was considering mothballing the Education Center at Brooker Creek Preserve. A lot of water has passed under the bridge since then. There were some growing pains, and there still are, but the new management structure under Parks and Conservation Resource's Director, Paul Cozzie, seems to be working, and working well. Many people were fearful of possible mismanagement with our preserves being placed within the Parks purview, but Paul Cozzie certainly understands the difference between parks and preserves and promises to maintain that distinction. He gave us his word on this.

I hope you will join us for our nature-based fundraising hike series, *Off the Beaten Path*. I have been to several of the destinations and, wow, they are amazing! We are lucky to have as our guide, Dr. Craig Huegel, who can identify everything - from the tiniest moss to the tallest tree and everything in between including animal prints, bird calls, lichens, and more. He is full of stories and very patient in answering questions. Every time I hike with Dr. Huegel, I come away with lots of good information and a time well enjoyed. I know I will be signing up for these adventures off the beaten path!

The ANCA consult is a go for spring, and I'm so excited to have here at Brooker with us three to four nature center administrators who, after an in-depth study of the way we do things, will provide us (and the county) with ideas and ways to do it all even better. Stay tuned!

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Also in the planning stages is the revival of the Adult Ecology Workshops. These half to three-quarter day classes will be conducted by experts of their fields and will have associated fees. Stay tuned - we may be ready for these prior to the next newsletter, so look for an email you about them.

As always, we welcome and encourage suggestions, comments, and questions, so please feel free to contact me anytime!

Barb

Preserve News

By: Steven J. Harper, PhD
Director, Environmental Lands Division

In the not-too-distant past, there were trained research personnel working with volunteers to study the plants and animals of Brooker Creek Preserve. Budget challenges have reduced staffing levels, but not the interest and enthusiasm of volunteers who are curious about the ecology of this wonderful preserve. The recently-formed Citizen Conservation Corps provides one mechanism for volunteers to contribute. But what about the many visitors who would like to report observations made while hiking the trails or simply resting on a bench? We're pleased to announce that there is now another venue that can be used to report information about the birds you have spotted at the preserve — we have embraced the web-based platform provided by eBird.

Founded by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and National Audubon Society, this group's website (ebird.org) maintains a real-time, online checklist of birds for individual contributors, while simultaneously compiling fundamental informa-

tion about the distribution and abundance of birds. It is an excellent example of "citizen science" in action. It is fairly easy to familiarize yourself with the site using the clear directions that are provided, and once you've completed the free registration, you may contribute your observations at any time.

Working with our dedicated volunteer Ric Hoover, we have established a "hotspot" for Brooker Creek Preserve. This allows you to share your observations made at the preserve with others, as well as to summarize quickly all the information provided by other visitors to the preserve. We have kicked-off the process by importing the historical data collected by volunteers and staff during 14 years of regular bird monitoring. With this as a solid foundation, we look forward to seeing how the contributions of others in the community can help extend our knowledge about this diverse group of organisms. Ultimately, such information will help support our ongoing conservation and resource management efforts. Please enjoy the trails, and be sure to report your bird observations!

Friends Adopt-A-Mile, Keep Pinellas Beautiful

We will be doing a trash pickup along Keystone Road Saturday, March 12, at 8:00 am. **Please reply if you can help.** Orange juice and donuts will be available before we start. The work takes about 2 hours -- a great way to start your day! Contact Ken Rowe at 727-781-0745 ksr28@verizon.net.

Remember! **Never throw any trash onto the highway**, even if it is biodegradable, like apple cores or the last bit of hamburger you don't want. Discarded food items attract wildlife near and onto the road, making them vulnerable to being hit and killed or maimed. We will be holding more pick ups in the future and will announce dates.





Youth Conservation Centers Network to Focus on Creating the Next Generation that Cares

After more than a year of research and partnership development, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission (FWC) voted to launch the next phase of the Florida Youth Conservation Centers Network (FYCCN). Once complete, the Network will provide facilities where Florida children can gain experiences that help develop conservation values and ethics and learn traditional outdoor activities. The FYCCN was created by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) and is supported by the Wildlife Foundation of Florida (WFF) and its partners.

Over the last decade, children are increasingly more engaged in television, computers and other forms of entertainment media. This lifestyle has resulted in higher rates of obesity, depression and other physical, psychological and emotional problems. A growing body of evidence suggests that all these areas of a child's life can improve by exposing a child to nature.

The FYCCN proposal identified an initial seven "Primary" sites to act as hubs or focal points for the Network, with additional secondary or satellite sites providing enhancement and support to be added to the initial network later. The sites were chosen, according to Chris Chaffin, FWC's development consultant for FYCCN, "... because they give us a good mix of existing facilities and programs, well-established working relationships with other partners and sponsors, and the opportunity to make

reasonable investments that will have big impacts on getting more kids outdoors quickly." Brooker Creek Environmental Education Center and Weedon Island Preserve Cultural and Natural History Center were selected for the primary sites.

The FYCCN team, including the FWC and WFF, is creating marketing tools that will help with fundraising efforts. The team is ready to launch a series of money-raising ideas and is investigating additional ideas and opportunities - some relating to a statewide fund and others focusing on individual sites and programs.

<http://fyccn.org/news/2010/04/welcome-to-the-fyccn-website.aspx>

Contact Mary Campbell, Extension Director, Pinellas County/Univ. of Florida Extension 727-582-2101, mcampbell@pinellascounty.org

Pam's Gardening Tip of the Month

By: Pam Brown

Plants that were damaged by the harsh winter should be sprouting new growth now. Prune these plants back to healthy sprouting buds by making pruning cuts at a slight angle about $\frac{1}{4}$ inch above the bud. Some plants (like Firebush) might not show any new growth from existing stems. You should wait to see if these plants sprout from the base or roots. You might need to prune the entire plant back to this growth area.

Toniwoods flooding problem

For anyone who lives in the Toniwoods area of East Lake, or for anyone else who may be interested, a very good summary of the problem and how the county intends to fix it is summarized during the 12/14/2010 Pinellas County BOCC meeting as a podcast.

Jack-in-the-Pulpit

By: Craig Huegel

For many of us who once lived "up north", the appearance of jack-in-the-pulpits (*Arisaema triphyllum*) is an annual event that signals spring. Few of us, however, seem to realize that they play the same role here in Florida. Jack-in-the-pulpits occur throughout Florida, nearly all the way to the Keys - and they occur at Brooker Creek Preserve. In fact, the alignment of the boardwalk between the parking lot and the Education Center was designed to avoid impacting the small population of this wonderful wildflower that occurs on the forest floor in this region. If you look closely on either side of the boardwalk near the metal sculpture that arches over the walkway, you may well see the jack-in-the-pulpits.

Jack-in-the-pulpit is a member of the aroid family. Most aroids produce tiny flowers on a thumb-like "spadix" that is partially enclosed

by a showy sheath known as the "spathe". This arrangement is common to a great many aroids used in flower arrangements, especially those we associate as Hawaiian. In Florida, a great many aroids are serious invasive pest plants. These include wild taro (*Colocasia* spp.), pothos (*Epipremnum* spp.), cut-leaf philodendron (*Monstera* spp.), and arrowhead vine (*Syngonium* spp.). Some of these have become established in portions of the Preserve and have proven very difficult to eradicate despite more than 20 years of effort. Two native species, besides jack-in-the-pulpit, also occur within Brooker Creek. Both of these are relatively common along the Creek channel and are strictly aquatic in nature. Spoonflower (*Peltandra virginica*) can be seen on both sides of the boardwalk trail after it crosses Brooker Creek from the Education Center. Golden club (*Orontium aquaticum*) is a bit more rare. I have found it when I have canoed down the Creek from the Education Center - a feat that is only possible during high water.

But, we are discussing jack-in-the-pulpit, the one aroid most of us are familiar with. Jack-in-the-pulpit in Florida occurs in rich woodland understories in soils that often flood during periods of high water. At Brooker Creek, this species occurs in only three places that I am aware of; the trail to the Education Center being the only one even remotely accessible to the public.

This wildflower dies completely back to the ground each winter and re-emerges in late spring (late for Florida), from around the third week of February until very early March, depending on the severity of the winter. As it emerges, the solitary leaf is wrapped tightly along the stem - much like a closed umbrella. Once it reaches its mature height of 6-18 inches, the leaf unfolds. As its Latin name suggests, these leaves have three lobes.

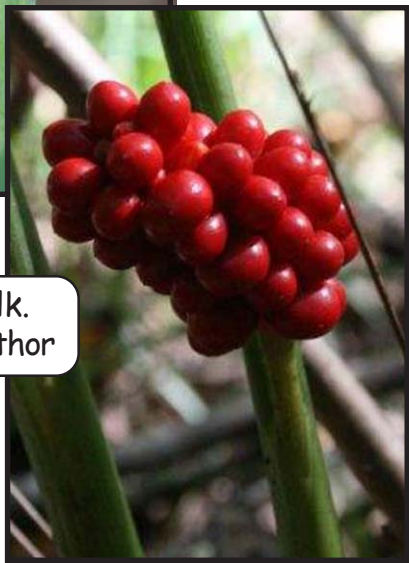
Flowering occurs soon after the leaves are fully formed. A separate flower stalk is produced immediately adjacent to the leaf. These are nearly as tall as the leaf, but are quite distinct. Tiny greenish white flowers occur along the upper half of the spadix - the pulpit part of



(Jack-in-the-Pulpit, continued)



Flower stalk - tiny flowers on spadix, enclosed by the spathe



Fruit on stalk. Photos by author

the flower. These are pollinated by small bees and certain pollinating flies. Though not overpowering, the fragrance of the blooms is a bit similar to the scent of rotting meat. Pollinated flowers eventually ripen into small "berry-like" fruit that are bright red in color. In the early winter, this stalk of crimson fruit may be all that remains of the plant. Other authors report that these are edible, but extremely "hot" to the taste. I do not recommend eating jack-in-the-pulpit fruit, and of course it is not allowed within Preserve boundaries.

If you visit Brooker Creek Preserve in late February and early March, look for this wonderful wildflower along the edges of the boardwalk as you near the metal sculpture. They will be partially hidden in the forest understory, but if you look closely you should see them.

Breakfast with Butterflies

By: Pam Brown

January 29th was one of the first sunny warm days of this winter season and a perfect day for sprucing up the Butterfly Garden. Seven volunteers met at 9 a.m. to remove the dead remnants of the last season from the perennials in the garden and to plant some seedling blazing star plants. We decided to start a compost pile at the edge of the meadow with the debris. This pile will soon provide some rich organic matter that we can add to the garden. At our midmorning break we enjoyed coffee, OJ, bagels and a yummy pastry. As we continued clipping away we uncovered many violets already in bloom. It was certainly gratifying to see the positive results of our hard morning's work.

We will be continuing work on the Butterfly Garden, as well as developing a demonstration native shrub garden, on the last Saturday of each month. Everyone is welcome to join us. Please bring your own gloves and gardening tools! Call 934-2680 for questions or to join our work crew.



Breakfast with Butterflies gardeners on 1/29/11. Pictured from the left are Barbara Hoffman, Cathie Foster (kneeling), Brenda Klindt, Debbie Reker, Pam Brown, and Dixie Mills.



Sustainable Floridians - A Pinellas County Extension Volunteer Program

Pinellas County Extension is launching a new University of Florida-led program to help develop green and sustainable practices. This intensive training program will develop knowledgeable and motivated volunteers ready to support sustainable education programs at Extension.

Volunteers will share the latest, research-based green living information with the community through school programs, events, and fun outreach activities. After working with the UF Extension Agents, participants earn a certificate and become Master Volunteers! The program will provide information to motivated individuals to connect personal decisions with information about sustainable practices.

The seven week course combines group discussions, weekly action exercises and resource materials for an interactive and informative program. Participants will be provided with course materials, books, energy conservation devices for the home, and other products that relate to sustainable living.

Program Dates

April 7 - May 26, 2011 Weedon Island Preserve Cultural and Natural History Center
September 15 - October 27, 2011 Pinellas County Extension, Largo

For more information or to sign up, call Pinellas County Extension, (727) 582-2100.

Pine flatwoods at
Brooker Creek Preserve



New Members

D&K Allen, Gerald and Colleen Kissner,
Mr. and Mrs. Frederic W. Haeussler,
Tom and Gayle Pilson, Angela
Schindler, Gregory Gerdeman

Volunteer Opportunities - Brooker Creek Preserve Needs You!

If you would like to volunteer for any of the following positions that are in the preserve but outside of the Education Center, please call **Grant Craig**, the North County Volunteer Coordinator at (727) 549-6137.

Fenceline Monitor - clear fenceline, especially small trees between fenceline and firebreaks

Firebreak Monitor - pull brush off firebreaks and trim brush adjacent to firebreaks

Trail Monitor - trim vegetation along trail, widen the trail in some areas, paint and stain trail identification markers

Exotic Plant Busters - remove exotic invasive plants

Plant Surveyor - conduct plant surveys at restoration sites

Barbed Wire Fence Busters - remove old barbwire fence in remote areas

Bluebird Nesting Surveyors

Gardener - help maintain butterfly garden at Field Station

Gardener - weed and mulch landscaped areas near picnic shelter

Geoweb Monitor - periodically rake gravel onto geoweb at channel crossings

If you would like to volunteer to be an Education Center Assistant, there are many assignments available to choose from. If you are interested, please the Ed Center Volunteer Coordinator, **Vestina F. Crayton**, Extension Specialist, (727) 453-6967 | vcrayton@pinellascounty.org

1. Assignment: Outreach

Duties: Promote Brooker Creek Preserve, one of our county's treasures. Assist with creating and updating presentations that give an overview of the history and highlights of the Preserve and Education Center. Identify outreach opportunities. Present off-site programs at schools and civic organizations at a minimum once per month. Available days and times are Tuesday-Saturday; 8:30 am - 4:00pm.

2. Assignment: Special Events

Duties: Assist with creating and staffing information booths at environmental events. Volunteers will be notified on an as needed basis. Events are generally one to three day events. Volunteers will be notified as soon as opportunities become available. Duties are shared and rotated with other volunteers.

3. Assignment: Front Desk

Duties: Greet visitors, answer visitor questions by phone or walk-in about the building and construction of the Center, the exhibits, the surrounding Preserve, exhibit gallery and programs. Register program participants in the online registration program Outbound. Maintain applicable inventory. Training will be provided. Times available: Thursday, Friday, Saturday; 8:15 am - 12:15 pm or 12:15 pm - 4:15 pm (Two shifts are available each day listed above).

4. Assignment: Training

Duties: Assist with creating presentations and applicable materials to train new volunteers and current volunteers on new programs and procedures. Maintain applicable inventory. Day and times are determined by need. Available days and times are Tuesday and Wednesday; 8:30 am - 4:00pm.

(Volunteer Opportunities: Education Center Assistant, continued)

5. Assignment: Clerical

Duties: Data entry, making copies for programs and filing. Day and times are determined by need. Maintain applicable inventory. Available days and times are Tuesday-Saturday; 8:30 am - 4:00pm.

6. Assignment: Building Maintenance

Duties: Basic maintenance on equipment and appliances located in the Education Center such as changing batteries, light bulbs and cleaning interpretive signs. Day and times are determined by need. Maintain applicable inventory. Available days and times are Tuesday-Saturday; 8:30 am - 4:00pm.

7. Assignment: School Groups

Assist school groups with completing paperwork and answering questions about the Preserve, the Exhibit gallery and/or accompany a group on a hike. Maintain applicable inventory. Day and times are determined by need. Training will be provided. Available days and times are Tuesday-Friday; 8:30 am - 4:00pm.

8. Assignment: Newsletter

Duties: Write articles on Preserve topics such as wildlife, flora & fauna, upcoming events, and volunteer spotlight. Deadlines and writing specifications will be provided.

9. Assignment Resource Room

Duties: Maintain, identify, order appropriate materials and maintain applicable inventory. Update the internal resource database. Two times per month, volunteer will staff the Resource Room, answer any visitor questions about resource materials, how to use the room, computer resources and other Preserve related questions. Duties can be shared by volunteers. Available days and times are Tuesday-Saturday; 8:30 am - 4:00pm.

10. Assignment: Marketing

Duties: Update quarterly program calendar in PowerPoint. Print calendar in the appropriate format, send out press releases and update signage along the boardwalk and in the designated rooms in the Education Center. Available days and times are Tuesday-Saturday; 8:30 am - 4:00pm.

11. Assignment: Youth Center

Duties: In coordination with the 4-H Youth Development Agent, create, update and maintain the youth corner. Identify brochures, activity sheets, educational materials, and maintain applicable inventory. Available days and times are Tuesday-Saturday; 8:30 am - 4:00pm.

12. Assignment: Education Displays

Duties: In coordination with the appropriate Extension Agent, identify, research, create, update, educational displays and maintain applicable inventory. Available days and times are Tuesday-Saturday; 8:30 am - 4:00pm. Saturday; 8:15 am - 12:15 pm or 12:15 pm - 4:15 pm (Two shifts are available each day listed above)

Help Wanted

Wanted! Member to manage the Friends Gift Shop at the Ed Center. About 2-3 hours per week at most. We really, really need someone! Please help! Contact the Friends via phone or email if you are interested or if you have questions.

Brooker Creek From a 4th-Grader's Perspective

The Best Field Trip Ever

By: Emily S.

Curtis Fundamental Elementary School

Yesterday, 11-17-10, Mrs. DeWese, my fourth grade teacher and our class were going on a field trip to Brooker Creek Preserve in Tarpon Springs. The only thing that I brought was a camera to take beautiful pictures of nature! We rode in a big yellow school bus. I had not been on one since first grade! When we got there, this really pretty lady stood up and said, "Hi, I am Ms. Regan and I will be with you while you are on your hike today" she proudly announced. I felt so excited! No school work, no tests, no math or reading I thought. Ms. Regan told us we would be taking 2 tests today. Oh no, I thought. When we took the pre-test, I missed about 2 or 3. Then we started out for the hike. When we were on the hike, Ms. Regan told us about so many cool things, like where water comes from. Water comes from rain. The rain in your driveway goes into the sewer, the sewer empties into the swamps around Brooker Creek. She also told us about hills and an 80 year old tree! After our hike, we went to a center with bathrooms, water, dress up, movies, and games. After 20 minutes of fun, we watched a movie about the history of the land. It was cool. It was 3D. We ate lunch (be aware you will be hungry) and then took a test. I only got one wrong this time! Then we got to hold, touch and look at animals like lizards, bearded dragons, mice, rats, and snakes. We also got to look, touch, hold, or put the snake around your neck. (I touched it). Finally, it was time to leave. I can tell you that I did not want to leave! On our way out, my class saw an armadillo!!! I took 3 pictures and headed for the big yellow school bus! "Bye" I said stepping on the first step of the bus. "Thank you for coming today" Ms. Regan announced to the class as I was on the last step to get on the bus. After the bus took off, I said one last goodbye and Brooker Creek Preserve disappeared! That was the best field trip ever I thought to myself.

Many thanks to Progress Energy for the \$2,500 grant to be used for education programs during 2011!

Something New!

Off the Beaten Path Hike Series

\$80/series, \$25/each

(10% discount for Friends members)

These hikes will take us to areas closed to the public, but feature interesting and beautiful sites within the Preserve. Hikes will be 3-4 hours and led by Dr. Craig Huegel, wildlife ecologist and author of several books on landscaping for wildlife. Hikes begin at 9:00 a.m. - bring water and lunch. Reserve your spot by emailing fobcp@tampbabay.rr.com followed with payment by check. Sign up early! Only 20 spots are open for these fabulous hikes off the beaten path!

March 27 - Sandhills - The only true sandhills of Brooker Creek. This site is in the northern end of the preserve and features an abundance of spring wildflowers.

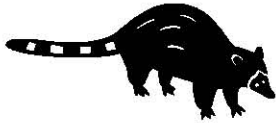
June 26 - Cypress Swamp - Located in the central part of the preserve, this site features orchids, ferns, and epiphytes. Plan to get wet, really wet, as we plunge into the depths of the swamp!

Sept. 25 - Pine Flatwoods Catesby's Lily Site - Located in the eastern part of the preserve, this site features the endangered Catesby's Lily in full bloom along with a profusion of other fall wildflowers.

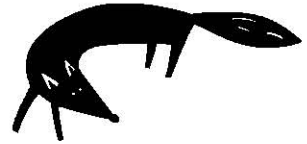
Jan. 22, 2012 - Anclote Spur - this site was once part of the preserve but is now a preserve in itself. We will start in Brooker Creek Preserve, then traverse from woodlands into saltmarsh to a secluded spot along the beautiful Anclote River.

Hey Kids!

If you are between the ages of 4 -12



Come join the...



WILDLIFE SAFARI

At Brooker Creek Preserve!



Saturday, April 16, 2011

Anytime between

9:00 a.m. and 2:00 pm

Bring your parents and families! A \$5 donation will issue you a passport to join the safari! The safari is a one-mile walk along a trail at Brooker Creek Preserve where wildlife stations will be set up. Each station will feature a live, native animal! Get your passport stamped at each station, then pick a prize at the Treasure Table at the end! Come join the fun!

Questions? Call 727-934-2680,

Email fobcp@tampabay.rr.com

Brooker Creek Preserve Environmental Education Center Upcoming Events

Register at least 24 hours prior by visiting www.pinellascountyextension.org, clicking on the "Online Class Registration" button, then clicking on "Brooker Creek" tab. For more information about upcoming events call (727) 453-6800. For registration information, call (727) 582-2100. All programs are presented by Education Services Volunteers, unless noted.

March - April Guided Hikes

Most Saturdays (Mar. 5, 12, 19, Apr. 2, 9, 16, 23), from 9:00 to 10:30 am, led by Education Services Volunteers, Environmental Lands Division. Take a walk through time each Saturday morning on a guided hike along the Education Center Trail. Join us for this 0.75-mile walk as we look at how the land has changed over time and discuss the ecological footprints left by those changes. Sturdy closed-toe shoes are a must; water and a hat are recommended. Please register by noon on the Friday before the hike by calling (727) 453-6800. Free. All ages welcome - **children younger than 6 may find this hike challenging.**

Extended Guided Hike: Winter Wonders

Sat., Mar. 26, 9:00 to 11:30 am
Join us for a brisk walk along one of the longer trails to experience winter in the Preserve. Hikers may walk 2.8 to 4 miles, depending on the trail conditions. Free. **Children younger than 12 may find this hike challenging.** Pre-registration required.

BCPEEC March Programs

Book Time at Brooker Creek

Thursdays, Mar. 10 and 24, 10:30 - 11:15 am.
This program is designed to introduce preschool children to the wonders of the natural world through stories and hands-on activities relating to the story that is read. Pre-registration is required. Free. Recommended **ages: 3 - 5.**

Best Management Practices

Wed., Mar. 2, 9:00 am to 5:00 pm

This program is designed to provide training in best management practices for anyone working in lawn, landscape, pest control or municipal ground areas. It provides the training and testing necessary to obtain a Limited Certification for Urban Landscape Commercial Fertilizer (LCULCF). The class is offered at no cost to employees of Pinellas County, Pinellas County School Board and Master Gardener volunteers; identification must be provided on the day of the class; a cost of \$15 to all others. A maximum of 4 CEUs can be earned by attending this class. Attendees will earn 2 CORE and may select their 2 additional CEUs from Pvt. App. Ag., O&T, LL&O, LCLM or Comm. L&O. Pre-registration to this activity is required. Online registration closes 24 hours before the program start time. Register at www.pinellascountyextension.org, clicking the "Registration" button then the "Commercial Horticulture CEU" tab.

Pinellas Energy Efficiency Project

Sat., Mar. 5, 11:00 am to noon

Thanks to a grant from the US Department of Energy, Pinellas County Extension is able to provide valuable information and equipment to help Pinellas citizens save money on their power bill and reduce our overall ecological footprint. This class will provide tips and incentives to making your home more energy efficient, while still maintaining the same level of comfort. Comprehensive energy saving kits will be provided to participants. Registration required.



Rain Harvesting

Sat., Mar. 12, 10:00 to 11:30 am

Have you ever thought "What a waste!" when you see the rain water pouring out of your gutter downspout and then down the street? By attending this workshop, you will learn how save that water in a recycled plastic barrel for later use. The collected water is safe for use on your

potted plants, vegetable and herb gardens, and special plant collections. All attendees will receive set-up instructions and a reference booklet for free. Advance registration for this free class and pre-payment for rain barrels required. Your rain barrel will be available for pick up on the day of the class if you choose "Participant with Rain Barrel" on step 4 of the registration process. You have a choice of one or two barrels. Rain barrel purchase is \$30 + tax. If you do not want to purchase a rain barrel, please select "Participant" by using the drop down. Pre-registration to this activity is required.

Brooker Open Classroom: *Discovering Nature with Your Child*

Sat., Mar. 12, noon to 3:00 pm

Who lives in that skin? What is the difference between a carnivore and an herbivore? Whose tracks are those? Stop by our classroom anytime between 12:00 pm and 3:00 pm to participate in a variety of self-guided nature games and activities. A Brooker Creek Education Center volunteer will be available to answer your questions. Pre-registration is not required for this open activity. **All ages.**

Teacher Training Workshop

Tues., Mar. 15, 4:00 to 7:00 pm

Brooker Creek Preserve is the perfect place to connect classroom concepts to the natural world. This workshop provides training and materials necessary to design and lead learning experiences tailored to classroom curriculum goals and are intended for teachers willing to lead their own field trips. **Great for teachers of all grade levels.** Registration is required.

Butterfly Gardening 101

Sat., Mar. 26, 1:00 to 2:00 pm

Butterflies bring color, life and beauty to your yard. Understanding their life cycle can help you attract these flying jewels to your home's landscape. Join us to learn about plants and other features you can use to create a backyard oasis for the butterflies commonly found in this area. **This activity is best for adults.** Pre-registration to this free activity is required.

BCPEEC April Programs

Book Time at Brooker Creek

Thursday, April 14 & 28, 10:30 - 11:15 am.

This program is designed to connect pre-school children to the wonders of the natural world through stories and hands-on activities relating to the story that is read. Pre-registration is required. Free. Recommended **ages: 3 - 5.**

Wildlife Woes - Solving Your Critter Concerns

Sat., April 9, 11:00 am to noon

Sometimes it seems that urban critters are chuckling behind our backs, slyly outwitting us in our every move. With fruit rats breaking into our attics, birdseed being devoured by squirrels, frogs belting out love songs all night, or clever raccoons tipping trash—the score is Wildlife 1; Us 0. Come learn a few tactical tricks from the Sensing Nature® biologist that should help keep your sanity and maybe even help you appreciate their wily ways. Registration required.

Brooker Open Classroom: *Discovering Nature with Your Child*

Sat., April 9, noon to 3:00 pm

Who lives in that skin? What is the difference between a carnivore and an herbivore? Whose tracks are those? Stop by our classroom anytime between 12:00 pm and 3:00 pm to participate in a variety of self-guided nature games and activities. A Brooker Creek Education Center volunteer will be available to answer questions. Pre-registration is not required for this open activity. **All ages.**

Wildlife Safari

Sat., April 16, 9:00 am to 3:00 pm

Join in the fun at the Wildlife Safari, an educational and fun adventure at Brooker Creek Preserve. For kids ages 4 through 12, a Wildlife Passport cost \$5 to go on a Safari Guided Hike on a one-mile loop of adventure with live owls, snakes, baby raccoons, and more. Your completed Wildlife Passport gets stamped and you receive a special Safari prize for completing the journey. This event is co-sponsored by the Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve. **Adults and children 3 and under are FREE!** No registration required.

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.

Current mission statement of the Parks Department - it is at least three years old and does not reflect the many changes in staffing and resources over that time. The newly formed Parks and Conservation Resources Department has not yet developed mission/vision statements.

The mission of the Pinellas County Park Department is to provide a continuing program of acquisition, development, maintenance, and protection of park areas for healthful outdoor activities.

Friends of Brooker Creek website:

www.FriendsOfBrookerCreekPreserve.org

To contact The Friends:

Email: fobcp@tampabay.rr.com

Phone: (727) 934-2680

(please leave a message and your phone number for a return call)

Brooker Creek Preserve:

Phone: (727) 453-6900

Website: www.brookercreekpreserve.org

The Brooker Creek Preserve Environmental Education Center is located at 3940 Keystone Road, Tarpon Springs, Florida, 34688. Phone: (727) 453-6800

Center Hours: Thurs. - Sat. 9 am - 4 pm

Preserve Hiking Trails open 7 days a week (except for day after Thanksgiving and Dec. 25), 7:00 am to sunset.

Horse Trails open 7 days a week, all year, sunrise to sunset.

Friends Trail closed for bridge repairs.

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Vice Chair: Allyn Childress

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This newsletter is published every other month. Please submit articles to Newsletter Editor Dr. Craig Huegel (727) 422-6583 or email Huegelc55@aol.com

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