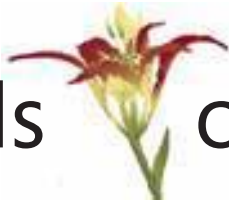


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Newsletter of the  
**Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve**



January - February 2013

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**Chairman's Message**, By Barb Hoffman

**"Elevator Speech"**

During a recent meeting I attended with our new board members, one of them, Brad Wilkins, suggested the idea of an "elevator speech" explaining why Brooker Creek Preserve is important. He felt he needed to be ready to answer this if asked by someone unfamiliar with Brooker Creek. We all agreed with him. And, as we continued talking, we thought there may be many of us who could use an elevator speech about the Preserve.

You may be asking, what is an elevator speech? An elevator speech is a short, concise dialogue that a person practices and has ready whenever anyone asks about a certain subject. It is called elevator speech because it is concise enough to last the same length of time as a short elevator ride. So for all of us who need it (and feel free to use it), here is my personal elevator speech on --

**Why Brooker Creek Preserve is Important:**

*Did you know that we live in the most densely populated county in the state of Florida? There are more people in Pinellas County per square mile than anywhere else in our state. That's why I am so grateful that our county government did something so right in the 1980's. They put aside about 4,800 acres of land strictly for wildlife by creating Brooker Creek Preserve. Since then, more and more land has been added so now the Preserve is up to nearly 9,000 acres! The Preserve supports large populations of deer, turkey, bobcat, otters, alligators, raccoons, eagles, hawks, and more. It is listed as an important site for migratory birds, and has several endangered plants. I like to think of it as a living museum of natural history - it exists as Pinellas County used to be prior to development. Anyone can hike the Preserve seven days a week and the Education Center is open Thursday-Saturday! What an awesome place!*

**Barb**

Chairman's Message

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Male cardinal  
photo by Mike Young.

## New Year's Resolutions

The staff at Brooker Creek Preserve has set some goals for 2013, some of which need your assistance to accomplish! Help us help the Preserve and Environmental Education Center to reach more people than ever before!

- 1) Get to 500 "Likes" on Facebook:** Social media is the ticket to success these days. Just search for [Brooker Creek Preserve Environmental Education Center](#) and click the "Like" button.
- 2) Increase Reported Volunteer Hours:** If you contribute any time to the Preserve, we need to know about it! Contact Julie Vogel, [jvogel@pinellascounty.org](mailto:jvogel@pinellascounty.org) to get entered into the volunteer system and show the county all of your hard work.
- 3) Increase Visitor Numbers:** Spread the word about this amazing place, bring your friends and families, consider becoming a community outreach volunteer, post our flyers and brochures around town, [sign up for our newsletter!](#)

### Planned Friends Events for 2013 (subject to change)

Wildflower Garden Club (the last Saturday of each month)

Dec-Mar: 9:00 am -11:00 am

April-Nov: 8:00 am-10:00 am

Friends Book Club - the first Saturday of each month, 9:30-11:00

Family Campout at the Preserve

- Jan. 19 (for Friends members only)

Pot Luck Dinner Fundraiser - Feb

Walk for Wildlife Fundraiser - March

Wildlife Safari - April 20

Music on the Green - May

Anclote Key North Bar Boat Ride and Barbeque

- June 21 (the summer solstice!)

Anclote River Canoe Adventure - July

Wine-Making Class - August

Fall Plant Sale - September

Fall Wildflower Festival - October

Annual Meeting - November 2

Holiday Decorating with Natural Materials - December

TBD - *Off the Beaten Path* Hike Series

Night Hikes for Adults

### From FOBCP member, Evan Earle:

Here is a picture of our "Living Christmas Tree" that we purchased from FOBC on Saturday, 12/8/12. As you can see, it passes the test with our cat, Stewie.

We love our little tree, but we would love it if FOBC will help us find a home for our tree.

We will gladly deliver it and even plant it if the new owner isn't able to do so on their own. If FOBC would like the tree for the preserve, we'll be happy to donate it to the preserve.



We hope this is the start of a new Christmas tradition for us. Marion and I both sincerely appreciate Brooker Creek Preserve and do our best to support it.

[Note from the Editor: the tree is now residing at the Nature Store. If you can provide a home for this young slash pine, please contact Barbara at [fobcp@tampabay.rr.com](mailto:fobcp@tampabay.rr.com)]

# Giving Thanks for Brooker Creek Preserve

By Craig Huegel

As this is the season for reflecting and looking ahead, it seemed fitting that we do so for the natural area that we have gladly chosen to be involved in. Brooker Creek Preserve is a very special place that well deserves our involvement. There is no place like it in Pinellas County. At more than 8,000 acres, it is the only natural land left in our county large enough to preserve a wealth of species and experiences. It is representative of the rich natural heritage once widespread in west-central Florida, but it is the only one left standing following the wholesale development pressure that we have experienced. While Pinellas has wisely set aside other parks and preserves, they are not large or diverse enough to do more than protect remnants of the natural tapestry that was once



Pine lily by Debbie Chayet.  
Meadowlark by Christina Evans

ours to explore. It takes nearly two Brooker Creek Preserves to provide enough space for one Florida black bear and nearly 50 of them to provide space for a population that might remain stable over time. For Florida panthers, it might take twice as much. We will never have enough space for these mega-species, but we have room for nearly everything else that once roamed this region or comprised its habitat.

It took foresight to cobble together all the parcels that now comprise the Preserve, and it took some hard decisions to maintain it. There will always be pressure to use this land for something else. Vacant land will always be at a premium here and always looked at longingly by everyone looking for space to enable a function they wish to perform. Over the years, we have fought back efforts to use the Preserve for fox-hunting training, ATV racing, mud-bogging recreation, and other such relatively easy-to-deny activities. We have curtailed recreation expansion within the Preserve proper that caused political repercussions and we have done battle opposing the expansion of water withdrawals from the shallow and deeper aquifers below land. As I learned in elementary school science; for every action there is an opposite and equal reaction.....

Some reactions would simply cause habitat degradation. The Friends have been there from the start of the Preserve and our voice has helped protect the ecological integrity of this special place.

Brooker Creek Preserve is the only place in the region for a great many species, plant and wildlife. It is the last refuge for species common to the rest of Florida - white-tailed deer and wild turkey, for example. Each and every year, it stands out as the only meaningful refuge for dozens of birds rarely spotted elsewhere on Audubon bird counts. The Preserve still maintains significant populations of eastern bluebirds, eastern meadowlarks, bobwhite quail, brown-headed nuthatches and blue grosbeaks to name just a few of the many breeding birds. In winter, a great many other species reside within the Preserve that are found only rarely elsewhere. Brooker Creek Preserve is the only place left in Pinellas for various reptiles and amphibians, especially those

that need high and dry habitats. The Threatened gopher frog occurs in a small area north of Keystone Road. The population is small, but it exists and it should continue to over time with wise management.

Plants also find refuge in Brooker Creek Preserve. Though they may not conjure up as many warm images in our minds as the wildlife does, they deserve our protection nonetheless. The Preserve's vast expanse of wilderness and its complex matrix of habitats ensure that the habitat needs of a great many native plants can be met. Rare orchids, such as the terrestrial snowy orchid and several species of grasspinks reside in isolated regions of the Preserve. So does the blue butterwort and the large-flowered milkweed. To the best of my knowledge, the only population of pine lily (our logo) still resident to Pinellas resides in some numbers within Brooker Creek. Each year, I use the Preserve to teach my St. Petersburg College biology students about botany and plant ecology. It is invaluable.

We have also preserved the concept of wilderness and I find that aspect the most valuable. We are the only place in the region

where you can feel lost, the only place you can find real solitude, and the only place to see some semblance of a night sky. When I am in the Preserve, I am always reminded of an early experience of mine. I was standing deep inside the property when I heard a noise in the distance, sort of like a train approaching but far more subtle and natural. As it approached me, it grew louder but remained elusive and when it finally met and engulfed me I realized it was the sound of wind. It had been calm when I arrived, but the wind had come to meet me through the pines. At that time, I understood what I had lost by living in the rest of Pinellas, divorced from wild lands. The experience of solitude and the belief that one is alone in nature is priceless, and the one aspect of Brooker Creek that we must always fight to maintain. Brooker Creek is for people as much as it is for its other creatures. We, as a species, are part of nature and the Preserve allows us to reconnect to that.

As we look ahead, reflect, and make resolutions, please resolve to explore this wild land more, extend the invitation to others, and continue our legacy of involvement. We are significant. Brooker Creek Preserve is even more so.

### **Let's Go Camping!**

Saturday, Jan. 19, check in starting at 3:00 pm, check out the next day by 3:00 pm. This is a Friends-only event. Family of Friends are welcome.

Four Lakes Hammock Campground, part of Brooker Creek Preserve, is a beautiful oak hammock perfect for camping. It is very near the intersection of Trinity Blvd and East Lake Road. The campground can only be used by groups who volunteer for the Preserve. The campsites are about a 2-minute walk from where we park our cars, and we will have wagons to help move equipment.

Bring your own camping gear, camp chairs, and food. There are picnic tables and we will set up some portable tables. There is a campfire ring and a portable restroom, but no shower facilities and no running water. We plan to do all the usually camping things - sing, tell stories, listen to the night sounds, hike in the morning, and play some outdoor games.

If the weather is awful (rainy, really cold, snowing), we will reschedule. You must RSVP for this event! Contact [fobcp@tampabay.rr.com](mailto:fobcp@tampabay.rr.com) to RSVP or if you have any questions.

## Field Trips and Guided Hikes at Brooker Creek Preserve

Anyone is welcome to enjoy the hiking trails and the Education Center on their own. For those people who would like a guided experience, please see below.

### **Free Guided Hikes**

Free guided hikes are offered for all ages every Saturday morning at the Preserve. These hikes are led by knowledgeable county volunteers. For more information, please go to the county's website: <http://brookercreekpreserve.eventbrite.com/> or call 727-453-6800.

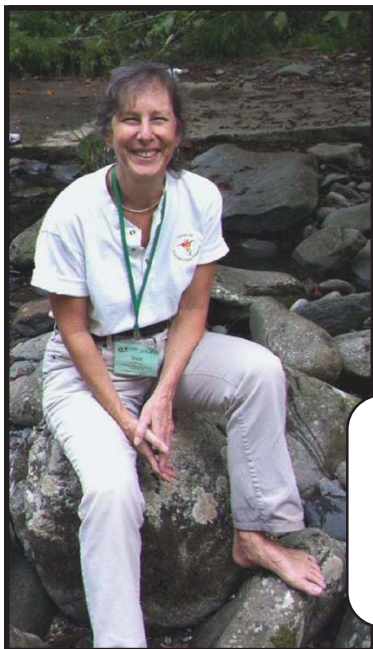
### **Guided Hikes and Field Trips for Youth**

Guided hikes and field trips for children, including public and private school groups, home schoolers, mixed adult/youth groups of 10 or more people, and scout groups, are provided by Sensing Nature. For more information, please contact Jeanne Murphy of Sensing Nature at [jmurphy@sensingnature.com](mailto:jmurphy@sensingnature.com) or go to <http://www.brookercreekpreserve.org/pagesHTML/education/school-programs.htm>

### **Guided Hikes and Field Trips for Adults**

Guided hikes and field trips for adults, adult groups, and mixed youth/adult groups, for a fee of \$50 per group. These trips are provided by one of our expert biologists in the fields of natural history. They can be scheduled any day of the week depending on the availability of the guides. Field trips can be a general overall Preserve experience or can be modified for specific goals, for example, wildflowers, birds, flatwoods ecology, reptiles, etc. All proceeds from these field trips support the Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve. If you are interested in a guided field trip/hike for adults, adult groups, or mixed youth/adult groups up to 9 people, please email [fobcp@tampabay.rr.com](mailto:fobcp@tampabay.rr.com) or call 727-934-2680.

### **Meet the Guides for Adult Field Trips:**



#### **Barbara Hoffman, MS, Botany**

Barbara currently is the Chairman of the Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve and has been a research biologist for several government entities. Barbara volunteers her time in many capacities at the Preserve and has volunteered there since 1994.



#### **Cynthia W. Grizzle, MS, Environmental Management**

Cynthia works as environmental consultant doing everything from wetland restoration, to gopher tortoise relocation, to vegetative assessments. She is chairperson of the four-county, Suncoast Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area and has volunteered her time at the Preserve since 2000.

## Meet the Guides for Adult Field Trips, continued:



### **Craig Huegel, Ph.D., Wildlife Ecology**

Craig is a biology professor at St. Petersburg College and an author of many books on landscaping for wildlife and countless natural history articles. He worked at the Preserve from 1992 to 2004 and now volunteers there.

### **Friends of Brooker Creek**

**New Members:** Katy Roberts, Philip Miller, Mary Sanders, Vonda Woods

**Huegel's Eagles:** Garry and Sheree Scheuer, Gregory Reich, Jerry Frensley, Tom and Joyce Hansell \*

\*Huegel's Eagles are volunteers awarded complimentary one-year memberships funded by a restricted donation.

### **News from the Wildflower Garden** By Pam Brown

Our last workday in the Wildflower Garden was on December 8 and there were three of us (Laurie Angyn, Bill Brown and Pam Brown) planting some leftover plants from the plant sale at the Wildflower Festival and deadheading the spent wildflowers. There was one lonely blanketflower still open and a lyre-leaved sage blooming out of season. We collected some seed from the blazing star, rosinweed and narrow-leaf sunflower to sell in the gift shop. A Florida anise was added to the native shrub demonstration area - much thanks to Bill for helping to get the plant to the Preserve and planting it. I noticed a leaf on the anise that contained green lacewing eggs. Lacewings are beneficial insects and the eggs look like little hat pins on the leaf (see picture). Mark your calendars for our next workday on January 26, 2013 from 9 to 11 a.m. This will be the inaugural meeting of the Wildflower Garden Club - come join us. Remember to bring gloves and tools. We will provide the snacks.



Green lacewing eggs

### **Pam's Gardening Tip**

Even though many of the plants in our Florida landscapes remain green all winter (they are evergreen), they are really dormant and not growing. For this reason you can reduce the amount of irrigation that you provide to every two weeks. You will find that you do not need to mow your grass every week either. There is also no reason to fertilize lawn grass or ornamental landscape plants during the winter. Since they are dormant, they do not utilize fertilizer. This is not true of vegetable gardens. Vegetables grow fast during fall, winter and spring and will need plenty of compost or fertilizer to fuel this growth.

## Brooker Book Club News By Laurie Angyn

To date, we have enjoyed the four books we have read in our Florida-themed collection and have had interesting and thought-provoking discussions about them. Starting in September, we came to understand the challenges facing a friendship that ignored social norms of the time. "Crossing The Creek: the Literary Friendship of Zora Neale Hurston and Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings, a great book to launch the Book Club.

In October we reviewed the story of the Golden Age of Florida Politics and the impact of Governor Reubin O'Donohue Askew, the first re-elected governor in a great many decades. A timely read. As hurricane season wound down and the days got a little shorter in November, we enjoyed the adventures of Loren G. "Totch" Brown in his autobiography, "A Life in The Everglades". Imagine being raised in the Ten Thousand Islands where you recognize a place by its mound of shells.

On December 1 we revisited one of the authors discussed in September. "Their Eyes Were Watching God", by Zora Neal Hurston, is included in the Library of Congress's list of the 88 books that made America. We discussed repression of the outspoken, of the unpopular stance, of the different voice. A few comments: "creatively amazing." "exquisite writing." A few favorite passages: "the envious heart is a treacherous ear", "ships at a distance have every man's wish on board", "the porch couldn't talk for looking."

On January 5, our topic of discussion will be "Vanishing Florida: A Personal Guide To Sights Rarely Seen", by David T. Warner. David surfed off Jacksonville and has some great stories about Florida legends.

All are welcome. We have room for 11 and reserving a seat is easy - just go to the Brooker Creek Event sign up for the book club. <http://www.eventbrite.com/event/4035520350/eorg>. The book list is posted, provide your own book. Speaking of which - you do not have to read the book - if it looks like something you would like to hear discussed, please join us. But be advised - there will be spoilers! You may sign up for multiple or just one discussion. Feel free to bring your own coffee. We meet on the first Saturday of the month from 9:30 am to 10:30 or so.

Thank you for your continued support of the Brooker Book Club.  
Wishing you a good book for the New Year!



### Upcoming Books on our List:

- January: Vanishing Florida: A Personal Guide to Sights Rarely Seen  
by David T. Warner
- February: Digging Miami by Robert S. Carr (Archeology)
- March: From Yellow Dog Democrats to Red State Republicans:  
FL Politics from 1940 by David R. Colburn
- April: The Yearling by Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings
- May: Rose Cottage Chronicles - Civil War Letters of the Bryant-Stephens Families  
of Northern FL
- June: Sunshine Paradise: A History of Florida Tourism by Tracy J. Revels
- July: Star Island - by Carl Hiaasen
- August: Land of Sunshine, State of Dreams: A Social History of Modern Florida  
by Gar R. Mormino

## Volunteer News

By Lara Miller  
Natural Resource Agent  
Pinellas County Extension  
University of Florida/IFAS



### Mark Your Calendars!

March 9, 2013 marks the North County Volunteer Celebration from 12:00-2:00pm. Please RSVP to Julie Vogel, [jvogel@pinellascounty.org](mailto:jvogel@pinellascounty.org). Anyone who contributes to the preserve is welcome and highly encouraged to come.

### Call for Volunteers

Brooker Creek Preserve's Environmental Education Center is opening on Wednesdays from February through April in 2013 and we need help staffing the front desk. If you are interested, please

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

## Nature Store News

By Kathleen Nichter

The Nature Store continues to grow. Many people came here for their holiday shopping, both gifts and decorations. The living trees decorated several houses, and some will be donated back to BCP to be planted at the Preserve. Because of our selection of children's books, several people had commented that would be back in for Christmas shopping. Based on our sales of the books, plus the ceramics and stuffed toys, it appears they did come back.

November sales more than doubled from last year's November sales. Thanks to a busy day the Saturday before Christmas, December is on track to be one of our best months.

A big thank you goes to all of those who have donated used books and magazines. Both are popular. If you have Florida or nature related books you no longer want, we would appreciate the donation.

We are in need of volunteers to staff the store on Saturdays, usually our busiest day. If you can be there even one morning or afternoon shift a month, it would make a big difference. The store is closed if we don't have a volunteer. Please let Barbara Hoffman know if you can help.



**Brooker Creek Preserve  
Environmental Education Center  
Upcoming Events**  
3940 Keystone Road, Tarpon Springs.  
(727) 453-6800  
[www.brookercreekpreserve.org](http://www.brookercreekpreserve.org)

### **January 2013 Programs**

**Thurs., Jan. 3, 10, 17, 24 & 31**

**Book Time at Brooker, 10:30 - 11:15**

Children ages 3 to 5 connect to the wonders of the natural world through a story and a craft, game or other hands-on activity. Free; advance registration required.

**Sat., Jan. 5 & 19**

**Brooker Creek Guided Hike, 9:00 - 10:30 am**

See how the land has changed over time and the ecological footprints left by those changes. Closed-toe shoes, water and hat recommended. Best for ages 6 and older. Free; advance registration required.

**Sat., Jan. 5, 9:30 - 10:30 am**

**Brooker Creek Book Club:** Hosted by the Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve, the Brooker Book Club meets the first Saturday each month. Geared toward adults, the book list includes novels by Florida authors, past and present, with archeology, biography, politics and history storylines. January's book selected for discussion is *Vanishing Florida: A Personal Guide to Sights Rarely Seen* by David T. Warner. Free; advance registration is required as seating is limited. Brooker Creek Preserve Environmental Center.

**Sat., Jan. 5, 10:30 am - noon**

**Orchids and Epiphytes of Brooker Creek Preserve:** Join Brooker Creek Preserve naturalist James Stevenson to explore the fascinating world of orchids and "air plants" found on the Preserve. This class will introduce participants to identification skills and will include a walk to discover these plants in their natural habitat. Free; advance registration required.

Photo by Mike Young



**Sat., Jan. 12, 8:00 - 10:30 am**

**Birds of Brooker Hike:** Join this special hike identifying common birds of Brooker Creek Preserve. Meander along the one-mile trail to gather information on the birds seen and heard. Binoculars will be helpful. Bring water.

**Sat., Jan. 12, 11:00 am - noon**

**Ecosystems Services, Trees and Me!** Learn about the benefits of trees especially in urban settings. Meet your local Pinellas County Natural Resource Extension Agent as she explains the many ecosystem services that trees provide and learn about the Traveling Tree Walk! Free; advance registration required.

**Sat., Jan. 19, 10:00 - 11:00 am**

**Florida Sandhill Crane Conservation:** Learn about Florida Sandhill Crane populations, their life cycles, their habitats and special organizations that help the cranes with all aspects of their health including prosthetics. The many threats to sandhill cranes and important things people can do to protect them in their habitat are covered in detail. Free; advance registration required.

**Sat., Jan. 26, 9:00 - 11:30 am**

**Brooker Creek Extended Guided Hike:** A trained volunteer guide will conduct a 2.8- to 4-mile walk to look at how the land has changed over time and discuss the ecological footprints

left by those changes. Insect repellent may be helpful. Water, a hat, sunglasses and sunscreen along with sturdy closed-toe shoes are recommended. All ages are welcome; children under the age of 16 must be accompanied by an adult; those younger than 10 may find this hike challenging. Free; advance registration required.

**Sat., Jan. 26, 10:30 - noon**

**Family Herpetology Series I - Snakes:** Join an expert herpetologist and learn about these ecologically important, but often misunderstood vertebrates. Brooker Creek Preserve is home to many of these incredible creatures. Find out the facts about their diversity, ecology and conservation. This live reptile presentation is one in which participants have the opportunity to learn about the natural history of these fascinating creatures. Recommended for all ages. 10:30 am to noon. Free; advance registration required.

### **February 2013 Programs**

**Sat., Feb. 2 & 16, 9:00 - 10:30 am**

**Brooker Creek Guided Hike, 9:00 - 10:30 am**  
See how the land has changed over time and the ecological footprints left by those changes. Closed-toe shoes, water and hat recommended. Best for ages 6 and older. Free; advance registration required.

**Sat., Feb. 2, 9:30 - 10:30**

**Brooker Creek Book Club:** Hosted by the Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve, the Brooker Book Club meets the first Saturday of each month. Geared toward adults, the book list includes novels by Florida authors, past and present, with archeology, biography, politics and history storylines. February's book selected for discussion is *Digging Miami* by Robert S. Carr. Advance registration is required as seating is limited.

**Sat., Feb. 2, 10:30 am - noon**

**Birding 101:** Clearwater Audubon's Lynn Sumerson will explore the basics of how to

identify the many birds surrounding us every day. Participants will learn what to look and listen for as well as gaining insight into some basic equipment you will need to take your birding skills to the next level. Free.

**Thurs., Feb. 7, 14, 21 & 28**

**Book Time at Brooker, 10:30 - 11:15 am**

Children ages 3 to 5 connect to the wonders of the natural world through a story and a craft, game or other hands-on activity. Free; advance registration required.

**Sat., Feb. 9, 8:00 - 10:30 am**

**Birds of Brooker Hike:** Join this special hike identifying common birds of Brooker Creek Preserve. Meander along the one-mile trail to gather information on the birds seen and heard. Binoculars will be helpful. Bring water.

**Sat, Feb. 9, 10:30 am - noon**

**Florida Scrub Jays:** Learn about this threatened species and where scrub jay exist in Florida. Free; advance registration required.

**Sat., Feb. 23, 9:00 - 11:30 am**

**Extended Brooker Creek Guided Hike:** Trained volunteer guides will conduct a 2.8- to 4-mile walk to look at how the land has changed over time and discuss the ecological footprints left by those changes. Insect repellent may be helpful. Water, a hat, sunglasses and sunscreen along with sturdy closed-toe shoes are recommended. All ages are welcome; children under the age of 16 must be accompanied by an adult; those younger than 10 may find this hike challenging. Free.

**Sat., Feb. 23, 10:30 am - noon**

**Family Herpetology Series II: Frogs!** Join Avalon, an 11-year-old herpetologist who founded Conserve it Forward, as she discusses frogs, their challenges and what you can do to help! Get up close and personal with live amphibians! Great for the whole family. Free

## Wednesdays!!

For a limited time only (February - April) Brooker Creek Preserve's Environmental Education Center will be open on Wednesdays. Come join us for some Wednesday fun and let's show the County how productive we can be by opening an extra day. If all goes well, we might be open an extra day all year long!

**Wed., Feb. 6, 8:30 - 10:00 am**

**Guided Photography Hike:** Hike the Preserve in search of that perfect shot. This program provides opportunities for photographers of all levels to hone their skills. In a brief classroom session, local photographers and master naturalists Karl and Kathleen Nichter highlight the seasonal features that help participants capture the natural beauty of Brooker Creek Preserve. Then hike the boardwalk and trails looking for those shots that reflect the season. Recommended for adults and children 12 and over. Free; advance registration required.

**Wed., Feb. 13, 10:00 - 11:30 am**

**Botany Hike:** Join a Brooker Creek Naturalist to explore the fascinating plants found on the Preserve. We will identify wildflowers, ferns, epiphytes, trees and more. The ecology of various plant communities will also be examined. Best suited for adult participants. Come prepared with your camera and questions! We look forward to seeing you on Wild Wednesday. Free; advance registration required.

**Wed., Feb. 20, 10:00 - 11:30 am**

**Fun-Time Forestry Hike:** Join your local Natural Resources Agent as you hike along two miles of boardwalks and natural trails at Brooker Creek Preserve. This will be a learning experience for everyone! Come prepared with your binoculars, cameras, and questions! Any questions your hike guide cannot answer will be researched in the resource room upon return to the Education Center. We look forward to seeing you on Wild Wednesday. Free; advance registration required.

**Wed., Feb. 27, 2:00 - 3:30 pm**

**After School Fun 4-H Activity:** Join us for fun, activity-based learning adventures! On the 4th Wednesday of February, March and April, an Extension specialist will lead you and your family through a fun activity specially designed by 4-H to help you understand the wonders of the Natural World. You can even sign-up to become a Brooker Creek Explorer and continue with fun, learning based activities throughout the year! Please register each member of the family, as space and supplies are limited. Free; advance registration required.

### BCP Environmental Education Center --Staying in the Loop

Don't forget to like us on facebook - [Brooker Creek Preserve Environmental Education Center](#)

Feel free to join [Timely Topics](#) and [Thinking Green](#) blogs written by various Pinellas County Extension agents on relative issues and topics related to our community

Have a question, but can't find the answer? Visit [www.AskExtension.org](http://www.AskExtension.org) or stop by the Education Center and drop your question into the "Ask an Agent" box.

Friends of Brooker Creek  
3940 Keystone Road, Tarpon Springs,  
FL 34688. Please use this address on  
any correspondence.

### Did you know?

The donations we receive in the donation boxes in the Education Center are earmarked for programs at the Preserve. Nearly all natural history programs at the Preserve are sponsored by the Friends using this funding.

**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](http://www.FriendsOfBrookerCreekPreserve.org)

**Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve:**  
Email: [fobcp@tampabay.rr.com](mailto:fobcp@tampabay.rr.com)  
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  
Center Hours: Thurs. - Sat., 9am - 4pm

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

**Preserve Hiking Trails** open 7 days a week, 7:00am to 30 minutes before sunset. Closed the day after Thanksgiving and Dec. 25.

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

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