


Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve
November - December 2018

You Are Invited!

Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve Annual Meeting

Sunday, November 11, 2018 9:00 - 10:30 am

Brooker Creek Preserve Auditorium

9:00 Breakfast provided by the Friends Board of Directors

9:30 Business Meeting

- Bylaws revision vote
- Election of Directors
- Presentation of 2019 Budget
- Highlights of 2018 (brief)
- Questions/Comments/Suggestions

~Ed Center Trail walk following the business meeting~

RSVP by email: fobcp@tampabay.rr.com or by phone: 727-934-2680

Chairman's Message by Cathie Foster

Our meeting wraps up a busy year for the Friends and our many, many wonderful volunteers! And it wraps up a very busy month of October. Our two big October events, the Fall Wildflower Festival and Owl-O-Ween, brought in over 2000 visitors to Brooker Creek Preserve.

A heartfelt thanks to the volunteers (about 100 of them!) who brought these festivals to life! Most of these volunteers take on other regular responsibilities at the Preserve, so we truly appreciate the extra hours. This year we were thrilled to also have a huge turn-out of student volunteers from local high schools: **East Lake, Palm Harbor University, Sickles, and Leto High Schools**. We thank ALL of our volunteers so very much for your time and especially your *enthusiasm!*

**ACRE ADOPTIONS FOR
BROOKER CREEK PRESERVE**

Many thanks for the following Acre Adoptions for Aug. — Oct., 2018:

In memory of...

Frances Parsons — from Cathie Foster and Barb Hoffman (1 acre)

Jack Stites — from Barb Hoffman and Craig Huegel (1 acre)

Lorraine Wilcox — From Barb & Eddie Hoffman (1 acre)

In honor of his 90th birthday...

Vinnie Langere — from Barb & Eddie Hoffman (1 acre)

Other adoptions:

Laurie Angyn (1 acre)

Barb & Eddie Hoffman (1 acre)

Barbara Genthner Moritz (1 acre)

Lou Petersen (2 acres)

Please consider adopting an acre as a birthday gift, memorial or to honor a special person. See p. 28 for Adopt an Acre Form and additional information.

*Welcome to our new
Friends members:*

*Tanya Ensell
Margo Haeussner
Deborah Hill*



**Save the Dates
Upcoming Friends Events**

- Nov. 3 Brooker Book Club 9:30-10:30 am
- Nov. 4 Beekeepers Club 9 am
- Nov. 10 Night Hike 6-8:00 pm
- Nov. 11 Friends of BCP Annual Meeting
9-10:30 am
- Dec. 1 FNPS and FOBCP Holiday
Celebration 9 am - 4 pm
- Dec. 1 Brooker Book Club 9:30-10:30 am
- Dec. 2 Beekeepers Club 9 am
- Dec. 8 Night Hike 6-8:00 pm
- Dec. 9 Music in the Woods Series:
Merigiare String Quartet 2 pm
- Jan. 13 Off the Beaten Path:
Cypress Swamp Stomp
- Jan. 19 Return the Preserve Work Day
- Jan. 26 Wildflower Garden Work Day

**Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve
Approved Budget 2018-2019**

Total Income from Operations	66,650
Total Expenses	59,235
Net Income/(Loss)	7,415

INCOME	
Operating Income	
Memberships	10,000
Nature Store	32,000
Iron Ranger	1,200
Donation Boxes	1,200
Other Donations	6,500
Subtotal Operating	50,900
Major Events	
Fall Wildflower Festival	3,700
Spring Wildlife Safari	5,000
Owl-O-Ween	1,500
Music in the Woods	2,500
Subtotal Major Events	12,700
Activities	
Off the Beaten Path Hikes	1,000
Adult Ecology Workshops	100
Art Classes	500
Guided Hike Donations	200
Night Hike Donations	300
Birdathon	300
Beekeeping	250
Subtotal Activities	3,050
Total Income from Operations	66,650

EXPENSE	
Major Events	
Fall Wildflower Festival	3,100
Spring Wildlife Safari	3,200
Owl-O-Ween	2,000
Music in the Woods	3,500
Subtotal Major Events	11,850
Activities	
Night Hikes	500
Adult Ecology Workshops	400
Art Classes	300
Off the Beaten Path Hikes	100
Birdathon	400
Beekeeping	1,000
Other	500
Subtotal Activities	3,200
Brooker Creek Preserve Support	
Volunteer Support	1,000
Education Programs	4,000
Wildflower Garden	200
Return the Preserve	500
ANCA Summit	600
ANCA Membership	130
Repairs/Maint./Signage	2,750
Outreach	250
Educ. Materials - IFAS	1,000
Gallery	400
Subtotal BCP Support	10,830

Nature Store	
Cost of Sales	19,000
Expenses	4,000
Subtotal Nature Store	23,000
Membership	
Annual Meeting	1,000
Publications	100
Family Campout	200
Outreach	250
Administration	100
Subtotal Membership	2,480
Public Relations	
Tarpon Spr. Chamber of Comm	150
Iron Ranger	200
Website	200
Other	1,000
Subtotal Public Relations	1,550
Administration	
Telephone	250
Bank Fees	250
Office Expenses	100
Postage	75
Filing Fees/Permits	200
Insurance	5,000
Professional Fees	300
Other	200
Total Administration	6,375
Total Expenses	59,235



Passion vine (*Passiflora incarnata*), photo by Julia Myers.

Native Plant Society & Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve Holiday Celebration!



At Brooker Creek Preserve

3940 Keystone Road
Tarpon Springs, FL 34688

Saturday, December 1, 2018, 9 am to 4 pm

Please register at eventbrite

<https://npscelebration.eventbrite.com>

Free Admission, Public Invited!

9:00 am: Meet, sign-in, and drop off your dish in the auditorium

9:45 am: Announcements in the auditorium

10:00 to 10:45 am: **Ferns of Brooker** with James Stevenson, UF/IFAS Pinellas County Extension Specialist

11:00 to 12:00 pm: Your choice!

Gazebo: Palm weaving with The Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve

Porch: Leaf ID with Katie MacMillen

Networking and stroll

12:00 to 1:30 pm: Lunch- bring a dish to share

1:45 to 3:00 pm: Hike with James Stevenson

3:00 to 4:00 pm: Clean up

Pinellas, Suncoast, and Pasco FNPS chapters: Friends of the Brooker Creek Preserve, Pinellas/UF IFAS Extension
Map & Info: <http://goo.gl/maps/zr7fg> <http://www.fnps.org/chapters/chapters>

NOTICE: A copy of the official registration and financial information may be obtained from the Florida Division of Consumer Services by calling toll-free within the state (800-435-7352, reg. no. CH4271). Registration does not imply endorsement, approval, or recommendation by the state



What's New with the Coast 2 Coast Connector Trailway?

Story & Photos by Barb Hoffman



In July 2017, the Friends helped celebrate the grand opening of the Pinellas County portion of the **Coast 2 Coast Connector (C2C)**, a paved bikeway/walkway that will extend from the Gulf of Mexico to the Atlantic Ocean across the state of Florida. In Pinellas County, the trailway begins at the East Lake Road/Keystone Road intersection (hooking up with the Pinellas Trail), travels east on Keystone Road passing the entrance into Brooker Creek Preserve, then turns north along the Pinellas/Hillsborough County line. It maintains this north heading until it reaches the Pasco County line.



Ever since the opening of the Pinellas portion of the C2C, the trailway ended at the Pinellas/Pasco line. Even though Pasco County had the funding in place to construct their portion, they needed to conduct engineering work and pull permits first.



Beyond the "Road Closed" signs is the recently paved Pasco County portion. It is not complete yet as sites far beyond this point have wet areas that require construction of trailway bridges. The trailway should be complete in the summer of 2019, linking the Pinellas Trail and Brooker Creek Preserve with Starkey Park and beyond!



Map courtesy of Pasco County Project Management Staff.

Yummy, owl pancakes! (Page 17)

Fall Wildflower Festival — Oct. 6

A day of plants, butterflies, bees, and FUN!

Over 1300 nature-lovers enjoyed this annual family event, with a little something for everyone!



Bob Lindstrom and Susan Marino greet our visitors with big smiles.



Native Wildflower Sale



Dixie Mills, Janet McNew and Mona Gardner - Plant Sale volunteers.



Beekeepers Bob Burkard and Liz Lindsay at the demonstration beehive.



Lynn Whitelaw selling honey from our Nature Store.

All Things Bees



Volunteer David Lindsay at the beekeeping exhibit.



Candlemaking! JM



Wildflower Quest



Tom Trimmier and Ryan Childress get folks started on the Wildflower Quest.



Len Gravitz and Paul Mellican at the Quest finish.



Nature lovers of all ages searched for wildflowers along the nature trail.

Education



Craig Huegel's Landscaping with Wildflowers presentation. Katy Roberts, and Karl & Kathleen Nichter, also gave talks. JM



Elise Schuchman from the Florida Dept. of Agriculture and Consumer Services teaches about Air Potato Leaf Beetles. JM



Cindy Peacock, Nature crafts coordinator and butterfly expert, gave presentations about the butterfly life cycle.



Volunteers Bob and Jan Lindstrom at the Education Center desk. JM



Chuck Parsons and Allyn Childress at the \$1 table. JM



Nancy Mellican and Kathleen Nichter in the Nature Store.

Nature Crafts for Kids



Wildflower crafts galore!



Painting rocks was very popular.



4-H Club members and Festival volunteers Michelle and Emily.



A caterpillar petting zoo!



BUTTERFLIES!



The butterfly tent was a popular attraction throughout the day.

Michael Sojo shows a caterpillar to young butterfly enthusiasts.



← **CLASSROOM BUILDING**
Honey Bee Exhibit
BeeSwax Candle-Making
Hourly Presentations
Rest Rooms
↑ **TRAIL HEAD**
Wildflower Quest

Another beautiful day at the Preserve.



Blooming right now in the Wildflower Garden. It's worth a trip to the Preserve to see it!

JM = photos by Julia Myers.
Other photos by Cathy Vogelsong.



Friends  of Brooker Creek Preserve

Fall Wildflower Festival
Brooker Creek Preserve
Saturday, October 6, 2018

MANY THANKS TO OUR SPONSORS!



Laurie Angyn
The Burr Family
“Delaware Friend”

Garden Club of Tarpon Springs

Hoffman Architects, PA

Jane, Jeff and Sherry



Nichter Photography

Pampered Gardeners

Louis T. Petersen

Radiology Associates of Tarpon Springs

Doug Eiland, M.D.

The Reker Family

Julie Wade



Honoring Lois Weber

If you use Amazon for any purchase, please use smile.amazon.com/ch/59-3302182 and Amazon will donate to Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve Inc.

**Support us when you shop
this holiday season**



Buy your gifts and holiday essentials at
smile.amazon.com. You shop. Amazon donates.



amazonsmile

"Expressions of Nature" Gallery Exhibit Opening Reception — Oct. 7



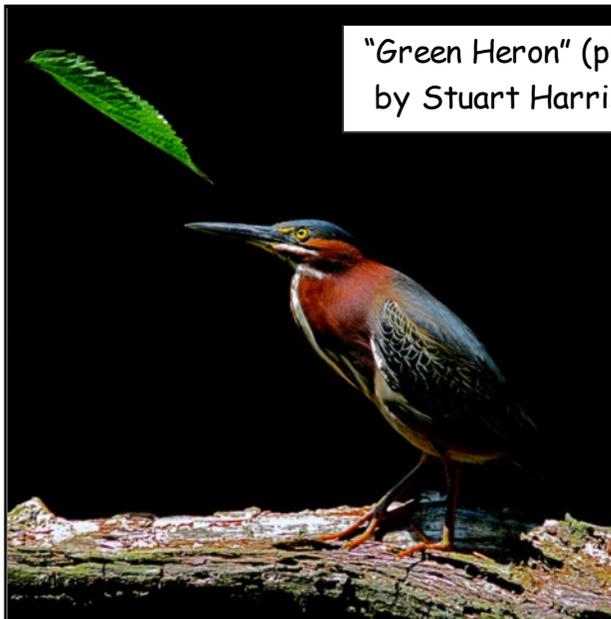
Members of the Tarpon Springs Art Association, with their art on exhibit.



Lynn Whitelaw, Heather Risley (president of the Tarpon Springs Art Association) and Cathie Foster surround Heather's oil painting, "Preserve Path."



"Brooker Creek Trail" (watercolor) by Carole Loiacono.



"Green Heron" (photograph) by Stuart Harrison.



Cathy Vogelsong and Barbara Anders Hodge discussing Barbara's painting "Waveplay II" (watercolor on clayboard). Photo by Barb Hoffman.

FOBCP Return the Preserve

By: Evan Earle, Jr

At the beginning of this year, I made the decision to go to a quarterly schedule for our Friends Of Brooker Creek Preserve (FOBCP) Return The Preserve (RTP) Work Days. I was concerned that we might lose momentum and interest. Um, WRONG! Our RTP Work Days are more popular than ever with great volunteer participation! In fact, I am getting requests from civic groups and area schools to schedule RTP Work Days just for them! Woo hoo! It is beyond rewarding to work with people who want to help and experience Brooker Creek Preserve.

In September, I scheduled one of those "special" RTP Work Days with the Rotary Club of Seven Springs and we had a great turnout of over a dozen volunteers from this organization. Let me tell you, they did Rotary proud! We tackled vines and overgrowth along the delivery loop road. It was HOT. Fall may have officially started on Sept, 21, but unofficially Summer was still in effect! That didn't faze this group! They tackled grape vines and smilax with enthusiasm, never slowing down. At the end of the morning, there was a huge pile of debris on the side of the parking lot waiting for the County to come pick it up! When we were done, we enjoyed a pizza lunch before everyone left for some well-deserved rest! To Luke Walker and the Rotary Club of Seven Springs, a sincere thank you for your time and hard work. I hope we can do this again (maybe when it's not so hot regardless of what time of year the calendar reflects).

Our October 20th RTP Work Day was our LARGEST turnout ever! Over fifty volunteers joined us. We had students with SPLASH (Students Protecting Land And Sea Habitats) from River Ridge High School, students with the National Junior Honor Society from Seven Springs Middle School, students from Hillsborough Academy Of Math and Science, volunteers with the Sierra Club, and volunteers who just wanted participate with us. It was an amazing morning. We accomplished so much with all of these super people. I have never seen our debris pile go from nothing to monumental so quickly! The next time you are at the Preserve, take a look at the delivery loop turnoff. It is looking better than ever. Thanks to all of the hard work these folks contributed, we can see palmettos and trees where before there was just a wall of vines. We also accomplished a lot of necessary maintenance. i.e. we went back to



And yes, that is your FOBCP Chairman, Cathie Foster, hard at work loading up grape vines!



areas where we've worked previously to remove new vine growth. And what would an RTP Work Day be without a Marion Yongue led attack on caesarweed? This time the haul was seven giant garbage bags of caesarweed removed from around the classroom and Education Center buildings! Thank you Marion for leading this effort with such enthusiasm!



One of the rewards of our RTP Work Days is when we get to see some of wildlife we are trying to help by restoring habitat. This time it was a ringneck snake. It was a treat to see this tiny resident of Brooker Creek Preserve.

After a very hot, but very productive morning, we gathered in the picnic shelter for a pizza lunch. The kids, and adults, earned it! Thank you Sans Pizza for handling our large order on such short notice. Everyone loved the pizzas!



I say this often, but I mean it every time. It is so rewarding to meet new volunteers and work with return volunteers (like Sandy, Jacob, and Jeremy who are long time supporters of our RTP Work Days). Introducing people to Brooker Creek Preserve is a privilege. It is my sincere hope that our first time visitors will return again and again and again to enjoy all there is to see and do at the Preserve. I extend an ongoing open invitation for anyone and everyone to join us the third Saturday in January, April, July, and October for a morning of hands on involvement (that's code for hard work) that always ends up being a lot of fun.

Photos by Evan Earle, Jr.

Thank you volunteers for your time, your hard work, and your support. You are helping us succeed as we work to Return The Preserve to its natural environment!.

Future Plein Air Art Event

The Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve will be sponsoring a plein air art event in the Preserve in the near future. Painting will occur all day, with a reception and juried awards at the end of the day in the Auditorium to celebrate the art that has been created. Participation in the plein air event will be open to everyone, from amateurs to professional artists. More details and a registration form will appear in future newsletters and on the Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve website. Please sign-up and encourage others to participate.

OWL-O-WEEN - A GORGEOUS DAY & SO MUCH FUN!

Over 800 people attended Owl-O-Ween on Saturday, Oct. 27. The whole event was based on owls, including real owls provided by Clearwater Audubon Society and many fun activities relating to owls.

Owl Photo Op

Brooker volunteer, Kathy Miller, escorts "Mr./Ms. Hoot". Our life-sized strolling owl was played all day by different people including Brooker volunteers Julie Wade, Clearwater Audubon Society member, Lani, and Palm Harbor University High School student, Sasha. Photos by Cathy Vogelsong, unless noted BH (Barb Hoffman).



Many thanks to Friends Board Member, Pam Brown, for heading up the very popular face painting portion of the event!



Ms. Hoot, dancing with 3-year olds.

Owl Face-Painting



Palm Harbor University High School Student Volunteer, Sasha, helped all day with owl face painting. BH

Lani, volunteer.

Emily Schollenberger of East Lake Sunrise Rotary Club had fun face painting for three hours! BH

Owl Nest Boxes

Friends Board Member, Ray Poyner, helps a youngster build his owl nest box. Ray purchased and cut the wood for 25 nest boxes in preparation for the event!



Photo BH



Volunteer Jon Wallek helping a child with the "owl" in the box.



Katy Roberts and Cathie Foster.



High school volunteer Thomas teaching owl pellet science.

Other Owl Activities



Isobel Sapp and Jim Collins at the Owl Scavenger Hunt.

Volunteer Jackie Labus read stories to children all day!



Many thanks to **Clearwater Audubon Society** for co-hosting our event and bringing four species of owls for display. You can visit these owls again at their home at Moccasin Lake Nature Preserve.

Alana has a Barred Owl.



Barbara Walker, with a Barn Owl.

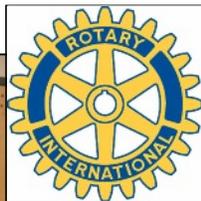


Real Owls

Chris, holding a Great Horned Owl.



Right, from the top, Chris, Penny and Caitlin each hold an Eastern Screech Owl.



Howard Rapham of East Lake Sunrise Rotary Club displays an owl pancake. Six members of this club volunteered for the event making owl pancakes in the morning. BH

And Owl Pancakes

Tarpon Springs Rotary Club provided five volunteers to make owl pancakes in the afternoon. We thank both clubs for their partnerships and support. From left: Sue Thomas, Patty Sendker, Ron Haddad, Dee Isguzar, and Ramona Pletcher. BH



Friends  of Brooker Creek Preserve
 **BEEKEEPERS CLUB NEWS 2018**

The Beekeepers Club is open to anyone who is interested in beekeeping. Those of us already in the club are very new to the hobby and are learning as we go.

Meetings are held the first Sunday of each month at 9:00 am. We meet at the Bee Shed at Brooker Creek Preserve Environmental Education Center, gather equipment, then head to the apiary located about two miles away. Everyone shares in all the work.



Bob Burkard (left) is our President and is very knowledgeable about beekeeping. We have 10 hives now with each supporting between 10,000-20,000 bees!

Annual dues for the club are \$25 per person. You must also be a member of Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve in order to join the Beekeepers Club; a variety of levels for Friends memberships are available. The Beekeepers Club is an affiliate of Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve.

If you would like to join the **Friends Beekeepers Club** or simply have questions, please send a request to fobcp@tampabay.rr.com.

Friends  of Brooker Creek Preserve

2018-2019 NIGHT HIKE!

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 Mark Yeager, a Preserve volunteer who is knowledgeable about nocturnal wildlife. The hike is about one-mile in length and will take about 1.5 hours.

Saturday, Oct. 27, 7:00-9:00 pm – Owl Prowl
Saturday, Nov. 10, 6:00-8:00 pm
Saturday, Dec. 8, 6:00-8:00 pm
Saturday, Jan. 19, 6:00-8:00 pm
Saturday, Feb. 9, 6:00-8:00 pm - Star Party!
Saturday, March 9, 6:30 pm

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.

Star Party! Join the Friends AND the St. Petersburg Astronomy Club to view planets, stars, and the moon with telescopes. Night Hikes will be conducted as well.

Questions? Email fobcp@tampabay.rr.com

Nature Store News — Doing Our Part! By Cathie Foster

As promised, our new **\$1 BCP-branded water bottles** have arrived and the Friend's campaign to help reduce consumption of single-use plastics has begun! Of course, the best way to do this is to BYOB. But for times when we forget, this newer version of our original water bottle now replaces prepackaged bottled water in our Nature Store. This handsome bottle can be conveniently filled with cold, filtered water at the Friends bottle-filling station just a few steps from the Nature Store. The **GREAT** news is that it can be filled and used repeatedly.

And wherever you take it, you carry with you a reminder of Brooker Creek Preserve, while doing **YOUR** part to reduce plastics consumption!



Paint for the Wild!

Our last 2 *Paint for the Wild* classes were a huge hit! If you want to be part of the fun, join our upcoming class on **Sunday, November 18 from 12-3 pm** as we bring a new critter to life!



Go from a blank canvas to a finished painting, and discover new things along the way!

- All materials provided
- Relaxing atmosphere
- No experience required
- Enjoy an assortment of snacks & refreshments
- Explore the exhibits during breaks
- Indoor classroom w/ natural lighting, air conditioning, and bathrooms

Cost: \$35 Register online at <https://paintforthewild.com/>

“Paint for the Wild” donates 20% of the profits directly to the Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve (non-profit) to support our mission: *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.*

Brooker Creek Preserve Environmental Education Center
3940 Keystone
Tarpon Springs, FL 34688

Friends  of Brooker Creek Preserve
presents

MUSIC IN THE WOODS SERIES
with

Meriggiare String Quartet

Italian for: To escape the heat of the midday sun by resting in the shade



Albert Magcalas

Nina Kim

Cheuk-Yan Leung

Pedro Maia

Sunday, December 9, 2018 2:00 4:00 pm

Brooker Creek Preserve Environmental Education Center

This concert will be held inside the auditorium

Register at: www.eventbrite.com

search for Music in the Woods Meriggiare String Quartet

\$5/person donation requested

Questions: fobcp@tampabay.rr.com

or

727-934-2680



Friends  of Brooker Creek Preserve

Back by popular demand...

OFF THE BEATEN PATH

A nature-based fundraising hike series

Description: This series of four hikes will take place in beautiful areas tucked away within Brooker Creek Preserve in sites that are closed to the public. Our guide, Dr. Craig Huegel (SPC Biology Professor), can identify everything, from the tiniest moss to the tallest tree including animal prints, bird calls, lichens, and more. He is full of stories and very patient in answering questions. The hikes will be not only educational, but a lot of fun as well! The hikes will begin at 9:00 a.m. and be about 3-4 hours long. Bring water and lunch.

Cost: \$80 donation for the series or \$25 donation per hike with a 10% discount for members of Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve

Sites Off the Beaten Path:

Jan. 13, 2019 - Cypress Swamp Stomp – Located in the central part of the preserve, this site features orchids, ferns, and epiphytes. Plan to get wet, or maybe not, as we plunge into the depths of the swamp!

March 24, 2019 – Sandhill Scramble – The only true sandhills of Brooker Creek Preserve. This site is in the northern end of the preserve and will feature an abundance of spring wildflowers.

June 23, 2019 – Interior Wildlands – We will be in parts of the Preserve so remote that cell phones won't work, areas so pretty you won't believe you are in Pinellas County!

Sep. 22, 2019 – In Search of Catesby's Lily – Located in the eastern part of the preserve, we will search for the threatened Catesby's Lily. In so doing, we will see a profusion of beautiful fall wildflowers in full bloom.

Reservations Required: Reserve your spot by emailing fobcp@tampabay.rr.com. Sign up early! Only 20 spots are open for these fabulous hikes *off the beaten path!* Questions? Email fobcp@tampabay.rr.com or call 727-934-2680.

Blazing Stars By: Craig Huegel

Florida has more species of blazing stars (17) than any other state or province in North America and since this species does not occur outside of this region we are the world leader. Four are endemic to Florida and three are listed as threatened or endangered. Also known as "gay feathers" owing to their slight resemblance to the feathers once worn in women's hats, blazing stars are in the genus *Liatris* and within the larger family of asters. As such, they are excellent nectar plants for pollinators and showy specimens for the home landscape. Since my formative years in Wisconsin, I have developed a special fondness for this genus.

Blazing stars develop from a bulb-like structure known as a corm. A new stalk is produced from this each spring and over the years, multiple stalks may be produced on each. Blazing stars die back to their corm each winter - the one exception is the narrow-leaved blazing star, *Liatris tenuifolia* var. *quadriflora*, which many taxonomists consider a separate species altogether, *L. laevigata*. First to arise in spring is a basal rosette of narrow strap-like leaves that tend to lie parallel to the ground. From this, a flower stalk emerges in late spring and it grows upward for the next several months.

Blazing stars are rather unique in that the flowers do not open until the stalk is fully formed and they open from the top down. Because of this, they are popular in floral bouquets. As the top flowers fade, they can be trimmed away to the open flowers below. Blazing star flowers are a rich purple/lavender in color. The one Florida exception is elegant blazing star, *Liatris elegans*, which has white bracts surrounding its light lavender inner flowers. Because of the general similarity of the blooms, it can be a bit tricky to tell all the rest of them apart from each other. This can be done by looking at other structures, such as "hairs" on the stem, whether the flower buds have stems attaching them to the flower stalk, the overall height of the plant, and the habitat it occurs in. Most blazing stars in Florida occur in well-drained sands in full sun. A few are more commonly found in pine flatwoods and very few are found in seasonally wet habitats such as the edge of marshes.

Unless new species have been discovered at Brooker Creek Preserve recently, there are three different blazing stars here. Graceful blazing star (*Liatris gracilis*) is scattered throughout various locations in well-drained habitats. You can see a small stand as you exit the main parking lot to your left or near the Ken Rowe bird blind in the open woods. Graceful blazing star has finished blooming for the year. It generally flowers in late September on 3-4 foot-tall stalks. It is easy to distinguish from the others because each tiny flower head along the main stem is attached by a noticeable stalk.

The most common species in the Preserve is narrow-leaved blazing star. It can be seen in nearly every xeric (droughty) pineland





including the area surrounding the shelter off the main trail just past the boardwalk. This species is the true *L. tenuifolia* and is the last of the blazing stars to bloom. Examples should still be visible by the time this newsletter is published.

The only other species present in our area is endemic to west-central Florida and it makes a very visible statement in the wildflower garden next to the auditorium. Savanna blazing star, *L. savannensis*, blooms at the same time as graceful blazing star, but produces a much taller main stalk and larger lavender flowers that are attached directly. Of the three species at Brooker Creek Preserve, this is the showiest.



I have always included as many species of blazing stars in my home wildflower garden as I can accommodate. Only a few are widely available from native plant nurseries, but luckily they include most of the best.

Photos by Craig Huegel.

News from the Wildflower Garden By Pam Brown

The Wildflower Garden put on a very nice display for the Wildflower Festival in October. It should continue look pretty for the next couple of months. By the time this issue of the newsletter is published the narrow leaf sunflowers and Gulf Muhly grass will be out in bloom.

We were able to obtain an educational sign for our gopher tortoise burrow from the Florida Wildlife Foundation. It was mounted in place by the burrow in time for the WF Festival. Hopefully the information will help people understand the importance of this threatened tortoise.



We will not have our regular monthly work day in November and December due to the proximity to the Holidays. Work days will resume on the last Saturday of each month starting in January 2019. If you would like to volunteer in the Wildflower Garden, join us on the last Saturday of each month from 9 to 11a.m. (winter hours). Bring your gardening tools, gloves, hat, sunscreen and bug repellent and wear closed toed shoes. We will provide coffee, juice and breakfast snacks. I hope to see you there!

Pam's Gardening Tip

There are a number of native grasses that bloom in the fall that make a nice addition to a landscape. Several of the varieties are large and can be used as specimen plantings or they make a great structural addition to a wildflower garden. You can see several of my favorites used in the Wildflower Garden that will do well in our landscapes along with a couple of others listed below.

Gulf muhly grass (*Muhlenbergia capillaris*) is usually available at local nurseries. It grows in a clump about three feet tall and two feet wide. The purplish-pink feathery flowers that cover each plant in the fall are held high above the leaves. This grass is salt-tolerant and very drought tolerant once established. I even like the beige seed heads that remain after the feathery blooms fade. Muhly grass can be pruned down to about twelve inches in February, or just the ragged seed heads can be removed.

Other native grasses may be a bit harder to find, but trying native plant nurseries or sales can be a good source. We might even have some in the plant nursery at the Nature Store located in the Education Center at Brooker Creek Preserve.

Florida Gamma grass (*Tripsacum floridanum*) is sometimes called dwarf Fakahatchee grass. It is evergreen, grows two to three feet high by about four feet wide, and has interesting seed heads that are eaten by birds. This grass likes full sun to part shade, likes some moisture but can survive dry sites, and is virtually free of pests.

Both Elliott's (*Eragrostis elliottii*) and Purple Love grass (*Eragrostis spectabilis*) are lower growing - one to two feet tall and wide, with soft feathery blooms covering the mounding plants. Purple Love grass prefers a hot, dry site, while Elliott's Love grass likes a more loamy soil with some moisture.

Lopsided Indian grass (*Sorghastrum secundum*) is a medium sized grass about 3 feet tall and one foot wide. It is perennial but goes dormant in winter when it can be cut back. The fall flower stalks stand about three feet above the grass so this grass is typically grown in the background of a wildflower garden. It can grow in dry or moist, well drained soil. Lopsided Indian grass is a larval plant for several skipper butterflies.

These grasses lend a graceful look to areas of the landscape and should be used more.



Lopsided Indian grass (top) and Gulf muhly grass. Photos by Craig Huegel.

Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve Readers Club

By: Jon Burr

The book for September was a dud. (That means, since I picked it, I'm supposed to bring cookies.) I enjoyed the book which was "Florida in Poetry". Shows what happens when you let an English major loose in a readers club. I won't make that mistake again. At least it was consistent with our theme of Florida related titles. Actually everyone there said it was better than a tarpon fishing story.



No one had a problem with our October choice, "For Sale, American Paradise, How Our Nation Was Sold an Impossible Dream in Florida" because the meeting was cancelled. We may consider rescheduling this book as it was written by Willie Drye who also wrote about the 1935 hurricane. That Willie Drye book was enjoyed by all. In November we will discuss "Everglades Lawmen" by James T. Huffstodt and in December "The Florida Reader, Visions of Paradise from 1530 to the Present" by O'Sullivan and Lane, eds.

There has been in the past an indication that not enough copies of the proposed book were available. Here is a list of proposed reading for the first half of 2019. The key to the availability of the books is Pa = Pasco Library System, Pi = Pinellas Library System and A = noted internet retailer who sells new and used books. The library retail and information was researched in August 2018. Both Library systems have catalogs and availability locations on line.

January 2019: "Flight Behavior" by Barbara Kingsolver: Pa, 7 copies; Pi, 11 copies (incl Large P and cds); A, lots and lots at \$6 used incl. shipping.

February 2019: "The Orchid Thief" by Susan Orlean: Pa, none; Pi, 13; A, tons at \$5 incl shipping.

March 2019: "River of Golden Ibis" by Gloria Jahoda: Pa, 1 copy; Pi, 12 copies; A, 3 pb at \$7 incl shipping; A has hb's for more \$\$.

April 2019: "A Sand County Almanac" by Aldo Leopold. (Note: this is considered the major book of the ecosystem understanding movement. If you could only have one book on the environment it would be this one): Pa, none but check their digital system; Pi, 3 copies; A, dozens at \$6 incl. shipping.

May 2019: "Land of Flowers" by Jeff Klinkenberg: Pa, 4 copies; Pi, 8 copies, A, 3 copies \$11 plus.

June 2019: "Tracking Desire" by Susan Cerulean: Pa, none; Pi, 1 plus one out; A, 4 at \$8 and more higher.

Note: There may be other popular internet book sellers and other internet ebooks. The ebooks I checked seemed to cost more than a lot of the used hard copies. Also your local library may offer more services than my cursory investigation showed. I did not check the Hillsborough library system. **HUGE CAVEAT:** Many things could change regarding the future availability of these books. In the recent past I have noticed quite a change in the Kindle book prices for instance. There is lots of room at the table for more readers. We meet at 9:30 in the conference room of the Ed Center at the Preserve on the first Saturday of the month.

Volunteer News and More!

By Julia Myers, Education Support Specialist, Brooker Creek Preserve

Front desk volunteers are the face of the Preserve and we so appreciate each of you. Thank you

for always making sure our visitors have a memorable experience while here! A visitor sent the following message to us on Facebook that I wanted to share. "Margaret from the visitor center did a great job making sure my daughter, Abby, had a great time today learning about the local wildlife. Definitely a lot for kids to see and learn about here. We will be back again soon!" Way to go Margaret!!



Thanksgiving Holiday Hours:

The Education Center will be closed on both Thursday, Nov. 22nd and Friday, Nov. 23rd.

The Preserve will be closed on only Friday November 23rd.

Christmas Holiday Hours:

The Preserve will be closed on Tuesday, Dec. 25.

We have an awesome NEW pull up banner now to help us promote Brooker Creek Preserve at outreach events, just in time for outreach season! A BIG thank you goes to the Friends of Brooker Creek for funding this great new marketing tool. We're excited to continue promoting our "hidden gem".

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



Friends  of
Brooker Creek Preserve

ADOPT AN ACRE



*A program to enhance restoration
and land management programs in
Brooker Creek Preserve*

The **ADOPT AN ACRE** program was established by the Friends in 2016 to give individuals the opportunity to help keep intact the ecological integrity of the Preserve.

100% of funding will be used for:

- Removing exotic and invasive plants
- Restoring the natural flow of water
- Fire management
- Restoring natural plant communities

Acres make great gifts for birthdays, anniversaries, memorials and more!

Upon receipt of the donation, the donor or honoree's name will be placed on the **ADOPT AN ACRE** display inside the Environmental Education Center for one year. A certificate will be sent to the honoree acknowledging the adoption.

Donor
Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: (_____) _____

Email: _____

___in honor of ___in memory of ___for myself

Honoree
Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: (_____) _____

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

Total Due: _____

Make check payable to: FOBCP

Mail to: 3940 Keystone Road
Tarpon Springs, FL 34688

Questions? fobcp@tampabay.rr.com

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

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BROOKER CREEK PRESERVE

Cool calendar for your refrigerator!

November 2018

**Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve events*

THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
1 Pre-School Book Time 10:30-11:30	2 Wild Things <i>Pre-K Stories and Songs</i> 10-10:45 am	3 Guided Hike 9-10:30 <i>(Habitats & Communities)</i> *Brooker Readers Club 9:30-10:30 Irrigation and Landscaping Mini Expo 10:00 am-1:00 pm	4 *FOBCP Beekeepers Club Work Day 9:00 AM
8 Pre-School Book Time 10:30-11:30	9 Guided Hike 9-10:30 <i>(Native Plants & Pollinators)</i> Wild Things <i>Pre-K Stories and Songs</i> 10-10:45 am	10 Beginning Bird Hike 8-10 am *Night Hike 6:00-9:00 pm \$3/person donation	11 *Friends of BCP Annual Meeting & Breakfast 9:00-10:30 am
15 Pre-School Book Time 10:30-11:30	16 Guided Hike 9-10:30 <i>(Wildlife in the Preserve)</i> Family Fun Friday 10-11 am	17 Guided Hike 9-10:30 <i>(Nature's Hidden Wonders)</i> Bugs and Butterflies of BCP 1-2 pm	18
22 THANKSGIVING DAY EDUCATION CENTER CLOSED HIKING TRAILS OPEN	23 EDUCATION CENTER AND HIKING TRAILS CLOSED	24 Four-Mile Hike 9 am - 12 pm	25
29 Pre-School Book Time 10:30-11:30	30 Wild Things(Pre-K) 10-10:45 am Guided Hike 9-10:30 <i>(Florida Forests)</i>	Dec 1 Guided Hike 9-10:30 <i>(Habitats & Communities)</i> *Brooker Readers Club 9:30-10:30 *FNPS/FOBCP Holiday Celebration 9am - 4pm	Dec 2 *FOBCP Beekeepers Club Work Day 9:00 AM

December 2018

THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
6 Pre-School Book Time 10:30-11:30	7	8 Beginning Bird Hike 8:00-10:00 Diversity by Design/Gardening Greener 10:30-12:00 *Night Hike 6:00-9:00 pm \$3/person donation	9
13 Pre-School Book Time 10:30-11:30	14 Guided Hike 9-10:30 <i>(Native Plants & Pollinators)</i>	15 Guided Hike 9-10:30 <i>(Nature's Hidden Wonders)</i>	16
20 Pre-School Book Time 10:30-11:30	21 Guided Hike 9-10:30 <i>(Wildlife in the Preserve)</i> Family Fun Friday 10-11 am	22 Four-Mile Hike 9am-12pm	23
27 Pre-School Book Time 10:30-11:30	28	29	30

For program details go to <http://www.brookercreekpreserve.org/programs-classes.htm> Click "Calendar of Classes/Programs/Hikes"
Hiking Trails are open every day from 7:00 am until one hour before sunset.

Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve - Mission Statement: The mission of the Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve is to provide public support for the Preserve through fund raising, volunteer programs, and education to ensure that the Preserve remains a natural wilderness for future generations.

Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve - Land Use Position Statement: The Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve support land uses within the boundaries of Brooker Creek Preserve which have a main purpose that furthers the preservation, conservation, restoration or protection of the land and resources of the Brooker Creek Preserve.

Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve:
www.FriendsOfBrookerCreekPreserve.org
Email: fobcp@tampabay.rr.com
Voicemail: (727) 934-2680

Brooker Creek Preserve:
Phone: (727) 453-6900
Website: www.brookercreekpreserve.org
Brooker Creek Preserve Environmental Education Center is located at 3940 Keystone Road, Tarpon Springs, Florida, 34688. Phone: (727) 453-6800
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.

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