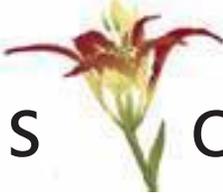


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Newsletter of the  
**Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve**

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January - February 2015

### **Chairman's Message**

By Barb Hoffman

We recently completed an in-depth Needs Assessment and the resulting list was reported in our previous newsletter. The people who participated were volunteers, Friends, and staff - people who intimately understand the current needs of the Preserve. The needs are many, especially critical following the extensive budget cuts made to land management and staff several years back. This financial support has not been restored and it has fallen on the Friends to try to make up for some of the most significant shortfall. The Preserve cannot remain healthy without active management and it cannot continue to meet the needs of our citizens by having the Education Center open only three days per week. The projects and programs we've identified in our Needs Assessment will correct some of the biggest issues facing the Preserve, but it will take financial support as well as volunteer effort.

The major thrust for this fundraising will be accomplished through the formation of a Foundation, and we will keep you advised as we progress, but there is a lot to do to make that happen. We require more members and increased income to meet our basic costs. Currently, basic costs total about \$8,200 to run the organization and current membership dues net only \$5,500 of that (see list of Basic Costs, page 2). In addition, we need to upgrade various educational brochures and other promotional material as we move forward to create this Foundation and increase Friends membership.

#### Chairman's Message

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As a first step in meeting our basic organizational needs, the Board voted to increase dues and bring our rate structure in line with other Friends groups that also are involved in the active management of their parks and preserves. This rate structure may be

(Chairman's Message, continued)

changed slightly before being formally adopted and we'd like to hear your thoughts before we do. The proposed membership rates are:

Preserve Pal	\$ 4/month	(\$48/yr)
Preserve Partner	\$ 10/month	(\$120/yr)
Preserve Patron	\$ 40/month	(\$480/yr)
Preserve Guardian	\$100/month	\$1,200/yr)

As we move forward, we will need your help. Please consider:

- \* Joining one of our committees.
- \* Volunteer at our events.
- \* Sponsor our events
- \* Make a financial gift to the Friends
- \* Follow the progress and help where you can

We understand that this increase in dues may constitute a financial hardship for some, but we hope that you love the Preserve as much as we do and understand the very real need for this increase. With your help, both financially and with volunteer time, we can ensure that the Preserve and its programs will remain healthy and vibrant into the future.

**Barb**



<u>Basic Costs to Run the Friends (per year):</u>	
Annual Audit	\$3,000
Liability Insurance	\$3,000
Directors & Officers Insurance	\$1,000
Telephone	\$ 460
Website	\$ 120
Filing Fees & Permits	\$ 100
Newsletter	\$ 130
Membership Dues	\$ 300
Postage	\$ 120



Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve

## Music in the Woods Series

presents the harmonic folk/blues music of

# 2PM



**Sunday, January 18, 2015**

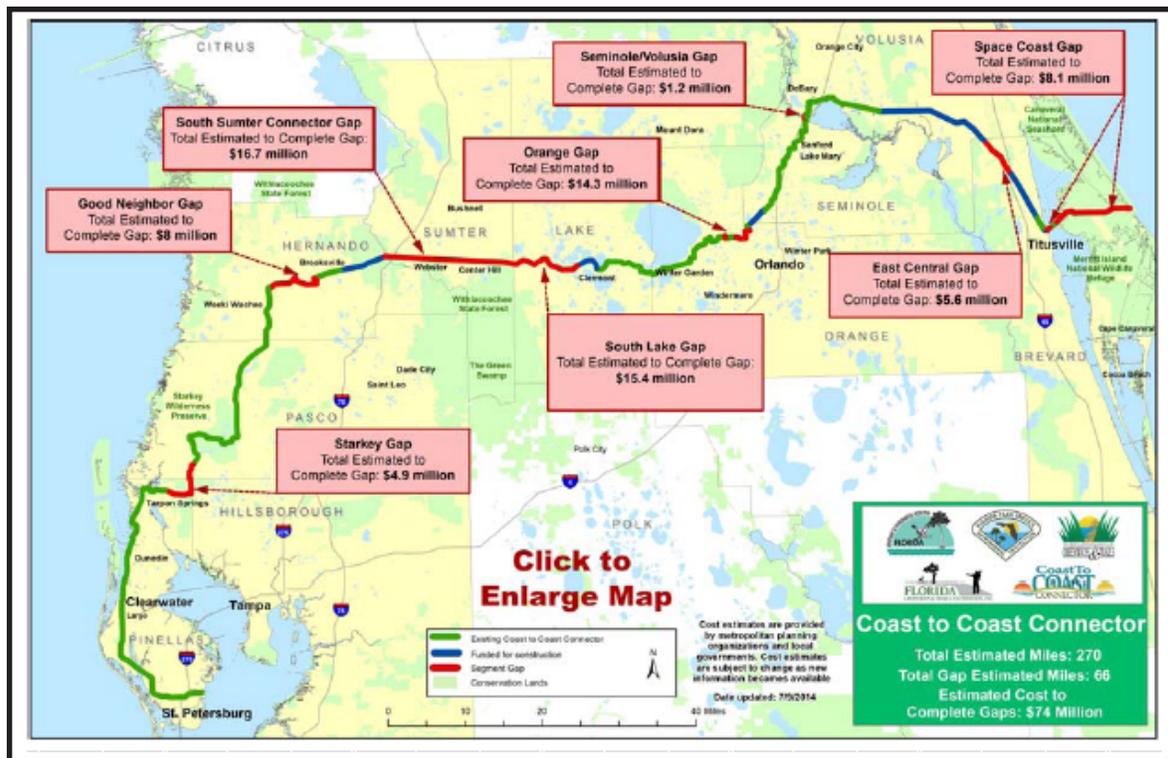
**4:30–7:00 pm**

**Brooker Creek Preserve Environmental Education Center**  
**Outdoor Music Pavillion**

**\$5 per person donation requested, children free.**

Bring drinks, picnic dinner, and lawn chairs or a blanket.  
 (If raining, concert will take place inside the auditorium.)  
 Sorry, no pets or alcoholic beverages.

**Questions: [fobcp@tampabay.rr.com](mailto:fobcp@tampabay.rr.com) or 727-934-2680**



## \$15.9 million in C2C Funding -- Where does the money go?

With his signature on the state budget, Florida Governor Rick Scott approved \$15.9 million in funding for the Coast to Coast Connector project in the 2014-15 fiscal year. The money has been allocated to 11 trail segments in nine counties in various phases of development:

### Feasibility Study or Right-of-Way acquisition Phase

- Sumter County: South Sumter Connector Gap (\$350,000)
- Lake County: South Lake Gap (\$1.5 million)

### Project Development and Environmental Study (PD&E) / Design Phase

- Pasco County: Starkey Gap (\$460,000)
- Hernando County: Good Neighbor Gap (\$1 million)
- Lake/Sumter Counties: South Lake Gap (\$1.3 million)
- Orange County: Orange Gap, segment 1 (\$530,000)
- Orange County: Orange Gap, segment 2 (\$1.1 million)
- Seminole & Volusia Counties: Seminole/Volusia Gap (\$100,000)
- Brevard County: Space Coast Gap, local segment (\$100,000)

### Design/Build and Construction Phase

- Pinellas County: Starkey Gap (\$3.9 million)
- Brevard County: East Central Gap (\$5.6 million)

Now that the funding is allocated, the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) is working with those Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) and other agencies directly responsible in defining each project tasks. Once completed, FDOT will seek bids and select the project consultants as the FDOT is responsible for ensuring all tasks are completed, on time and within budget.

(Excerpted from a Florida Greenways & Trails Foundation email.)



## WATERCOLOR ART LESSONS By Carol Loiacono

**\$15 / class**

**Saturdays, 9:30-noon**

**January 10**

**January 24**

**February 7**

**February 21**

**March 7**

**March 21**

Class begins at 9:30. Students should be at the Preserve by 9:00 to get ready. Students may take as many classes as they wish. These are plein air sessions, outside, in a beautiful Preserve location. Payment can be made on class day.

### **Supply List**

#### **Paints - transparent watercolors**

Cadmium Yellow Light	Cobalt Blue
Alizarin Crimson	Phthalo Green
French Ultramarine Blue	Sap Green
Phthalo Blue	Yellow Ochre
Cerulean Blue	Burnt Sienna

**Paper** - 140 lb. weight or thicker-block, pad, or individual sheets (foam core or other board to clip individual sheets onto).

**Pallet** - plastic pallet with lid in a large size is best

#### **Paper towels**

**Brushes** - assorted sizes & shapes (pointed, square, & rigger) suitable for watercolor (short handled )

**Easel & Chair** - if you wish to sit while painting

#### **Water Container**

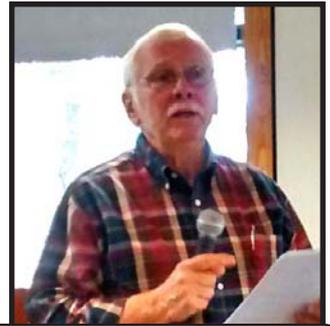
**Pencil** - #2b eraser

**Small Pen Knife** - or a cut up credit card

**RSVP** by emailing [fobcp@tampabay.rr.com](mailto:fobcp@tampabay.rr.com)

Questions and more information Carol Loiacono (artist) (727) 934-1482

**Birthday Bash  
(11/8/14)**



Speakers, above, left to right. Commissioner **Susan Latvala** welcoming everyone. Dr. **Craig Huegel** spoke about the importance of the Preserve. Architect **Eddie Hoffman** describing how the Ed Center design was formed. Retired Assistant County Administrator **Jake Stowers** explaining how the Preserve was born. And Co-host **Lara Miller** (left) giving a summary of the year for the volunteers.



Barb Hoffman giving Lois Weber her Lifetime Achievement Award for her work educating children about butterflies.



Alison Shepard displaying one of the 75 handmade tile bowls she created as party gifts for everyone at the Birthday Bash.



Enjoying the Crystal Beach String Band during the yummy barbecue lunch.

Check out this youtube video for a nice summary of our Birthday Bash!  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zgEID-BjUqM>

## Wreath & Ornament-Making Workshop a Big Success! (12/6/14)

Many thanks to wreath-making teachers, Chuck Parsons and Sandra Miraglia, and to palm frond decoration teacher, Ruth Earle. This was a sweet little fundraiser that was fun and productive!



## Off the Beaten Path Interior Wildlands Hike (12/7/14)

This 4.3 mile hike took place in the central part of Brooker Creek Preserve. Led by Dr. Craig Huegel, some of it was more of a wade than a hike, at least for a good two miles, a testament to the overabundance of rain this fall. Though sometimes knee deep, the water was a beautiful tannic-red and clear. Nobody fell in and everyone made it out alive...and it was a gorgeous morning. We even found two late-blooming Catesby Lilies, along with many other wildflowers and Red Maples in full fall color.



As always for this hike series, Craig walks someone's shoe off. For this hike, it was Tennessee visitor, Dr. Renee Hyatt, who lost the sole of her shoe!

### Save the Dates Friends Events for 2014

- Jan.3 Book Club
- Jan.3 & 17 Night Hikes
- Jan.10 & 24 Watercolor Classes
- Jan. 18 Music in the Woods
- Jan.31 Wildflower Garden Club
- Jan. 31 Return the Preserve Work Day
- Feb.7 Book Club
- Feb.7 & 21 Night Hikes
- Feb.7 & 21 Watercolor Classes
- Feb.28 Wildflower Garden Club
- Feb.28 Return the Preserve Work Day
- Mar.8 Off the Beaten Path Hike
- Apr.11 Wildlife Safari

### Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve New Members:

- Jose & Alina Abelleira
- Pat Gerard
- Dave Eggers
- Tim Lima
- Catherine Vogelsong
- John & Elizabeth Montesi
- Thomas & Kelly Phillips
- Jill Dutton
- Pete Hennings
- Pete Price
- Mike Jurgensen

## Return the Preserve Work Day By Evan Earle Jr.

### Brooker Five-O (11/15/14)

In November, five of us were there to do battle with the next round of grape vines. We also tackled more smilax, and whatever other exotics we came across. Lisa, Mona, Scott, Lou and I made up the Brooker Five-O team on this gloriously cool and clear Saturday morning (it sure didn't feel like Hawaii when we started).

Our target was one of the oak "islands" or hammocks on the north side of the parking lot. While this area wasn't completely blanketed with vine overgrowth, there was more than met the eye and certainly more than enough to keep us busy the entire morning. Lisa, Lou, and Scott went to work cutting and pulling and pulling and cutting. Mona was a vine transporting machine. No sooner would a pile of vines appear and off they went to the trash pile. She kept us moving! By the time we were done, the trash pile had grown five fold. One fold for each of us. As usual, we were tag teaming on the vine removal. Sometimes it took two of us, sometimes it took three of us, and occasionally we had four of us tugging, pulling and grunting. In the end, we won almost every battle.

I can tell you that after ten months of our Return The Preserve Work Days, I have a new found respect (aka loathing) for overgrown grape vines and smilax. These vines branch out in multiple directions and wrap around this branch, that branch, and that branch way over there. They mean business. But so do our Return The Preserve Work Day teams. And in the end, the RTP Work Day teams win. That was the case on 11/15/14. When we were done, the five of us could say, with all the confidence of Steve Garret, "Book 'em Dano" at the end of another job well done. Another case "solved" if you will as we continue to Return The Preserve to it's naturally beauty.

### Kicking Grass (12/13/14)

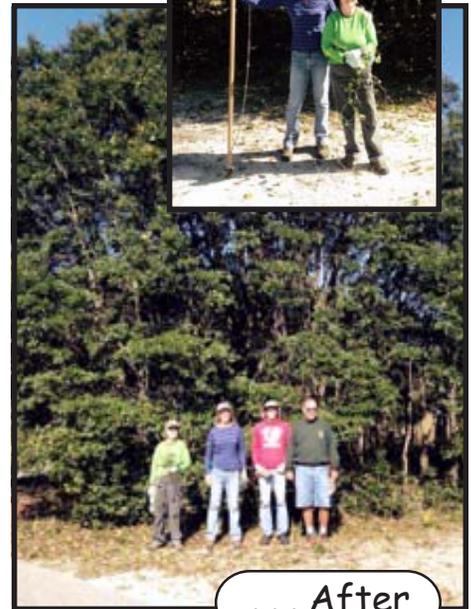
The December 2014 Return The Preserve Work Day took a new direction. Literally. Instead of looking up to the vines, we turned our focus downward. Down to the ground. Down to the St. Augustine grass to be exact. The next time you happen to be walking on the sidewalk from the Delivery Drop Off loop to the Ed Center, take a look at the area with the Muhly Grass. Where there once was a thick carpet of St. Augustine grass fighting against the natives, it is open and clear. Hopefully, with room to breathe, the Muhly Grass will fill in to become even more attractive. Yes, there's more St. Augustine grass to be removed. But its days are numbered!

Special shout out to the Friends Of Brooker Creek Preserve who showed up to do a little hard core mowing. Thank you Phil, Ellen, Scott, and Marion. Each of you made a huge contribution and just like the Tampa Bay Rowdies, you "kicked some grass!" Just look at the pile of St. Augustine grass on the right side of the road as you leave the parking area if you don't believe me. Thank you as we continue, vine by vine and blade of grass by blade of grass, to return the preserve to it's natural beauty.

Our next Return The Preserve Work Days are:

**Saturday 1/31**  
**Saturday 2/28**

Before . . .



. . . After

## Hello from the Brooker Bookers!

by Laurie Angyn

Hello Brooker Bookers! On deck for January 3 is the first in the 2015 series of Florida reading selections. The booklist can be found under the calendar of events at [brookercreekpreserve.org/eventbrite](http://brookercreekpreserve.org/eventbrite). Seating is limited, please use the event registration page at [brookercreekpreserve.org](http://brookercreekpreserve.org). Please note the April and July dates are shifted out by one week due to Easter and July 4.



Wishing you the very best reading for the holidays and the New Year!

### Book Club Reads for 2015 Co-leaders: Jon Burr & Kathleen Nichter

- Jan 3: "A Trip to Florida for Health and Sport" by Cyrus Parkhurst  
Feb 7: "Weeki Wachee Mermaids: Thirty Years of Underwater Photography" by Lu Vickers & Bonnie Georgiadis  
Mar 7: "Walkin Lawton" by John Dos Passos Coggin  
Apr 11\*: "Tales of Old Florida" by Frank Oppel & Tony Miesel (Chapters 1-13)  
\*Note April 11th: First Saturday is Easter weekend  
May 2: "The Trouble with Panthers" by William Cuyler Hall  
Jun 6: "Florida's Big Dig: The Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway" by William Crawford  
Jul 11\*: "Tales of Old Florida" by Frank Oppel & Tony Miesel (Chapters 14-27)  
\*Note July 11th: The Fourth is on the first Saturday.  
Aug 1: "Deep Shadow" by Randy Wayne White  
Sep 5: "Alligators in B Flat" by Jeff Klinkenburg  
Oct 3: "Tales of Old Florida" by Frank Oppel & Tony Miesel (Chapters 28-40)  
Nov 7: "Back Country Lawmen" by Bob H. Lee  
Dec 5: "Home Grown in Florida" by William Mcheen, ed.

The Brooker Creek Preserve Book Club will be directed by Kathleen Nichter and Jon Burr in the year ahead. We thank Laurie Angyn for the wonderful work she did to make this club so vibrant in the past and look forward to the capable leadership we will have in 2015.



Photos from the Fall Wildflower Festival (10/18/14)

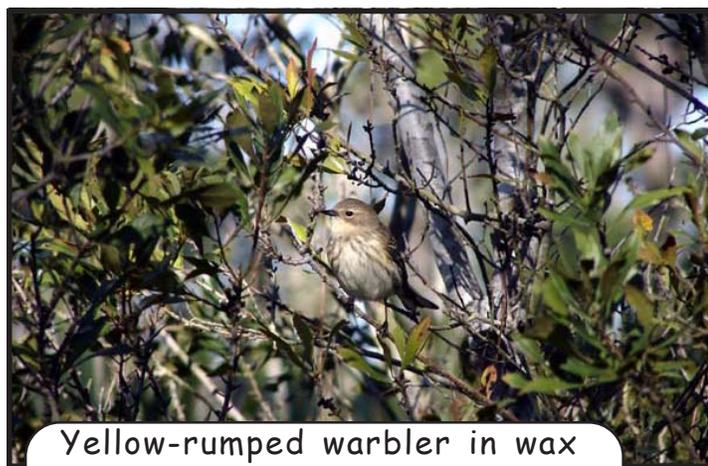


## Winter Fruit for Birds

By: Craig Huegel

Winter can be a difficult time for many birds. While most have a diet that relies heavily on insects during the spring, summer and fall, insects become a difficult meal from November through March. Even though Florida stays relatively warm during this time, most insects "disappear." The great many caterpillars that once provided critical protein for growing nestlings (and their parents) are not available during the winter. Butterflies and moths are not laying eggs when many plants are leafless, or at least are not actively growing. Most other flying insects hibernate or, at a minimum, greatly slow down their reproductive rates. Some insects overwinter beneath the bark of rough-barked trees, while others do so beneath the layer of mulch on the ground. What makes winter so nice for us makes life hard for birds.

Most insect-eating birds switch to a diet that consists largely of fruit or seeds during the winter. A few specialists continue to search for invertebrates beneath the scaly bark of pines and certain oaks, or pick through the leaf litter scattered beneath the forest floor, but even many of these supplement their diet with fruit. Woodpeckers, for example, will consume ripened fruit of marlberry and other shrubs. Bluebirds switch to a diet that may be 50% fruit, while yellow-rumped warblers and tree swallows rely almost exclusively on the fruit of wax myrtle while they are here in Florida.



Yellow-rumped warbler in wax myrtle. Photo by David Williamson

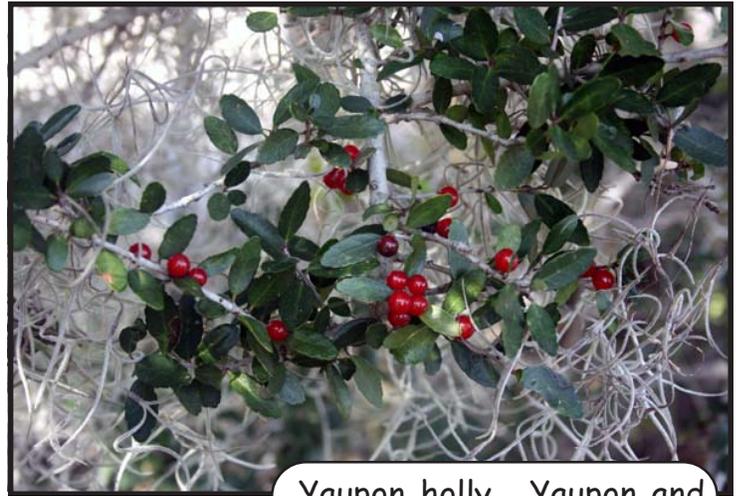
While having fruit in the landscape is important to most birds which overwinter here, not all fruit are created equal. The first consideration is simple availability. Most of our native trees and shrubs produce fruit that ripen in summer and fall. The most-tasty kind, like blueberries and blackberries, are eaten almost immediately. While species such as these are excellent wildlife food, they are not available in the critical months of winter. Many others, like beautyberry, last for some time in the fall, but the uneaten fruit soon shrivel up and fall to the ground. The once-laden branches of beautyberry at Brooker Creek Preserve are generally bare by mid-December.



Little hip haw

For fruit to be available in winter, it either has to ripen during these months or it has to hang on the branches from fall until spring - when the insects reappear. At our latitude, very few plants flower and set fruit during the winter. This is something tropical plants do, not temperate plants - and Brooker Creek Preserve is temperate Florida. Some south Florida plants venture as far north as Pinellas County. Marlberry, myrsine, and white stopper are examples, but these are quite rare (or absent) in the Preserve. The small subset of plants that hold their ripened fruit through the winter includes those most important at Brooker Creek. Hollies are good examples. Dahoon, Carolina, yaupon, and gallberry all flourish and provide critical bird food. Wax myrtles are also critically important.

The second consideration is fruit size. Since the age of archaopteryx, birds have been toothless; they can only eat fruit small enough for them to swallow whole. While crows can eat relatively large fruit, warblers and swallows require fruit that is not much larger than  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch in diameter. My neighbor's Chinaberry tree (a most-loathsome exotic) provides food for the neighborhood squirrels, the neighborhood carrotwood (another foul invasive tree) is fed on by crows and they spread the seed in the droppings beneath their roost trees. Small fruit, such as holly berries and wax myrtle, can be eaten by everyone.



Yaupon holly. Yaupon and haw photos by Craig Huegel.

The tendency when hiking the woodlands of Brooker Creek Preserve in winter is to assume that the fruit visible on trees and shrubs is somehow inferior to wildlife because it has not been eaten. The opposite is actually true. The

fruit that remains is the fuel critical to most birds in late winter as they stockpile energy to make their migratory trip back north. If you want to feed birds in your own landscape, plant some of these and see what happens.

Friends  of Brooker Creek Preserve  
*Back by popular demand...*  
**OFF THE BEATEN PATH**  
 A nature-based fundraising hike series!

**Description:** This is the last of a series of four hikes to 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 are not only educational, but a lot of fun as well! The hike will begin at 9:00 a.m. and be about 3-4 hours long. Bring water and lunch.

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

**March 8, 2015 - 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.

**Reservations Required:** Reserve your spot by emailing [fobcp@tampabay.rr.com](mailto: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](mailto:fobcp@tampabay.rr.com) or call 727-934-2680.

## Nature Store News

By: Kathleen Nichter

Our *Second Nature* section of the store, where we sell lightly used hiking, camping and other nature related items received a steady donation of items since it started, and a steady number of sales. If you have lightly used items you no longer use and wish to donate, just bring them to the store. Some out there is looking for them.

Our new line of stuffed animals really took off. The most popular so far is the opossum! The cute little furry guy nearly sold out the first order and is now restocked. We also have a new stuffed alligator, tortoise, deer with antlers, and gray squirrel. For the new year we will be looking for new children's book titles to compliment the new stuffed animals. The book and related stuffed animal combination is a popular children's gift, and from experience I can tell you it is really enjoyed by both parents and children.



Muhley grass with blazing star (left) and narrow-leaved sunflower (right).  
Photos by Craig Huegel.

## News from the Wildflower Garden

by Pam Brown

Thank you so much to everyone who helped in the garden in 2014. Your help is so very appreciated and important! I trust that everyone enjoyed the Holidays and is ready for a productive New Year. The garden is back to sleep for a while after such a fabulous show this fall. However, it won't be long before the early blooming sage will be showing its blue flowers. It was nice to see a couple of new faces for our November meeting. We did not have a workday in December due to the holidays, but the schedule will resume with the last Saturday in January (31<sup>st</sup>) from 9:00 - 11:00 am. We would love to see you then. Remember to bring your gloves and gardening tools. We will provide coffee and breakfast snacks.

### Pam's Gardening Tip

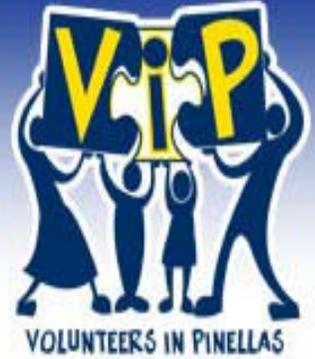
We have a lot of evergreen plants in Florida, but even though they are still green, they are dormant during the winter. Pruning these evergreen plants or trees is not recommended during the winter season. Pruning can encourage these plants to break dormancy and sprout new growth. This growth is very sensitive to frost or freezing temperatures. This might cause damage to the plant should we experience freezing temperatures. The best time to prune evergreens is about mid March in our area. Plants that lose their leaves during the winter (deciduous plants) can be pruned during winter and January and February are the recommended months.



# Volunteer News and More!

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

*Expect to  
Make a  
Difference!*



## Trail Camera in Action

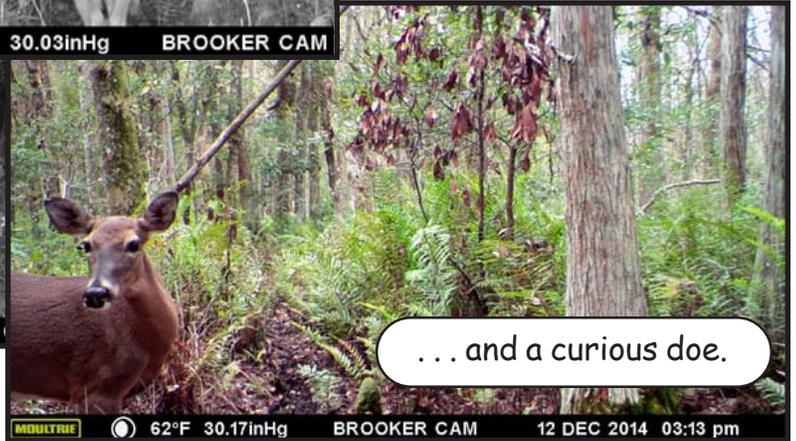
The Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve have also sponsored the purchase of a trail camera to capture images of wildlife in the Preserve when visitors, staff and volunteers aren't around. So far we have captured a ton of great deer shots, but still anxiously await some of our other wildlife friends! I'm really hoping for a bobcat and coyote in 2015, so keep your fingers crossed. We will post occasional photos on the Brooker Facebook Page. Here are some we have captured so far. Some of the time stamps are wrong, but that has all been fixed now.



Photo of young buck, showing full camera view.



More bucks . . .



. . . and a curious doe.

(Volunteer News, continued)

### Upcoming Programs

Make sure to take a look at all of the programs we have scheduled for 2015. We are offering two programs every Saturday from January through April! This is our prime season and there is no better way to increase our numbers than to offer more programs. And, if you haven't already, remember to "Like" us on facebook at [www.facebook.com/BrookerCreekPreserve](http://www.facebook.com/BrookerCreekPreserve) and help us reach our goal of 1000 "Likes"!

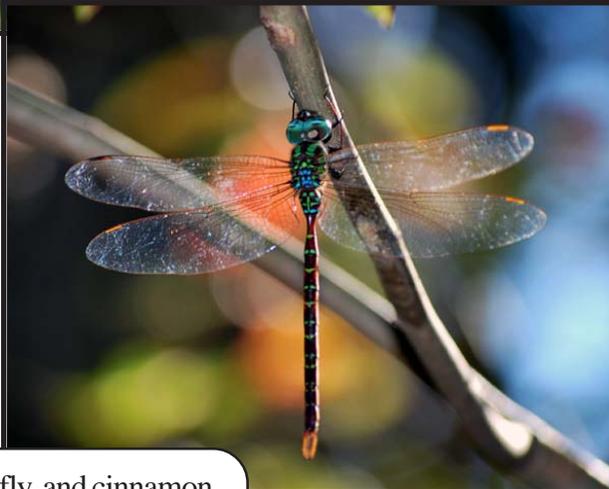
### A Learning Opportunity for You!

The Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve have graciously provided funding for two of our Brooker Creek Volunteers to attend a Florida Master Naturalist course. This is a fantastic opportunity and a great way to learn about many of the plants and animals we have here at Brooker. Please take advantage of this chance for FREE continuing education. If you are interested, explore what classes are coming up on their website and then next time you are here, ask Julia for an application. HAPPY LEARNING!

Florida Master Naturalist Program website: <http://conference.ifas.ufl.edu/fmnp/>

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

Don't forget to "like" the BCP Environmental Education Center on Facebook - [Brooker Creek Preserve Environmental Education Center](#)



Gulf fritillary, dragonfly, and cinnamon fern. Photos by Mike and Patti Young

**BROOKER CREEK PRESERVE  
JANUARY 2015**

THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
<b>1</b> Education Center closed	<b>2</b> Education Center closed	<b>3</b> Guided Hike 9-10:30 Book Club 9:30-10:30 Night Hike 6-8 (\$3/person)	<b>4</b>
<b>8</b> Pre-School Book Time 10:30-11:15	<b>9</b> Botany Hike 9-11	<b>10</b> Beginning Bird Hike 8-10:30 Watercolor Art Lessons 9:30-12 (\$15/person) Intro to Plant Identification 10:30-12	<b>11</b>
<b>15</b> Pre-School Book Time 10:30-11:15	<b>16</b> Wildlife Hike 9-11	<b>17</b> Guided Hike 9-10:30 The Benefit of Trees to Me 10:30-12 Grass Identification 1:30-3 Night Hike 6-8 (\$3/person)	<b>18</b> Music in the Woods 4:30-7:00 \$5/person, kids free
<b>22</b> Pre-School Book Time 10:30-11:15	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b> Extended Guided Hike 9-12 Watercolor Art Lessons 9:30-12 (\$15/person) Bats of the World 10:30-12	<b>25</b>
<b>29</b> Pre-School Book Time 10:30-11:15	<b>30</b> Woods Walk 9-11	<b>31</b> Return the Preserve Work Day 8-11 Guided Photography Hike 8:30-10:30 Wildflower Garden Club 9-11 Guided Hike 9-10:30 Amazing Ospreys 1:30-3	

Hiking Trails are open every day from 7:00 am until one hour before sunset

**BROOKER CREEK PRESERVE  
FEBRUARY 2015**

THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
			<b>1</b>
<b>5</b> Pre-School Book Time 10:30-11:15	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b> Guided Hike 9-10:30 Book Club 9:30-10:30 Watercolor Art Lessons 9:30-12 (\$15/person) Wetland Wildflowers 10:30-12 Adopt-A-Pond Program 1:30-3 Night Hike 6:30-8:30 (\$3/person)	<b>8</b>
<b>12</b> Pre-School Book Time 10:30-11:15	<b>13</b> Botany Hike 9-11	<b>14</b> Beginning Bird Hike 8-10:30	<b>15</b>
<b>19</b> Pre-School Book Time 10:30-11:15	<b>20</b> Wildlife Hike 9-11	<b>21</b> Guided Hike 9-10:30 Watercolor Art Lessons 9:30-12 (\$15/person) Frogs 10:30-12 Dragonflies 1:30-3 Night Hike 6:30-8:30 (\$3/person)	<b>22</b>
<b>26</b> Pre-School Book Time 10:30-11:15	<b>27</b> Woods Walk 9-11	<b>28</b> Return the Preserve Work Day 8-11 Guided Photography Hike 8:30-10:30 Wildflower Garden Club 9-11 Extended Guided Hike 9-12 Going Coastal-Sharky Science 1:30-3	

Hiking Trails are open every day from 7:00 am until one hour before sunset



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

**All classes are at Brooker Creek unless otherwise noted. Upcoming Programs now includes relevant UF/IFAS Extension programs offered throughout Pinellas County.**

### **January 2015 Programs**

**Sat., Jan. 3, 9:00 - 10:30 am**  
**Explore the Ecosystems:** Brooker Creek Preserve certified guides will lead the hike along the 0.75-mile Education Center Trail. Observe the forested wetland, oak hammock and pine flatwood ecosystems. Closed-toe shoes, water and a hat are recommended. Children under the age of 16 must be accompanied by an adult, those younger than 6 may find the hike challenging. Free; registration required.

**Sat., Jan. 3, 9:30 - 10:30 am**  
**Brooker Book Club:** Hosted by the Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve, the Brooker Book Club meets the first Saturday of each month. This club is geared toward adults. Registration is required due to a limited amount of seats. Meet in the conference room inside the Visitors Center. This month the book is [A Trip to Florida for Health and Sport](#) by Cyrus Parkhurst. Books are not provided. Free.

**Sat., Jan. 3 & 17, 6:00 - 8:00 pm**  
**Night Hike:** Hikers can join the Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve for a one-mile hiking

experience along the Education Center Trail at night. These special hikes are open to the public and limited to 20 people per hike. Experienced guides will lead the group. A \$3 per person donation is requested; registration required.

**Thurs., Jan. 8, 15, 22, 29, 10:30-11:15 am**  
**Book Time at Brooker:** 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. 10:30 to 11:15 a.m. Free; registration required.

**Fri., Jan. 9, 9:00 - 11:00 am**  
**Botany Hike:** Participants can join a Brooker Creek Preserve naturalist to explore the fascinating plants found on the preserve. The hike will include identifying wildflowers, ferns, epiphytes, trees and more. The ecology of various plant communities will also be examined. This program is best suited for adults. Free; registration required.

**Sat., Jan. 10, 8:00 - 10:30 am**  
**Birds of Brooker Hike:** Participants can join this bird hike and learn how to identify the county's common birds while meandering along a one-mile trail. Participants should bring water and binoculars. Free; registration required.

**Sat., Jan. 10, 10:30 am - noon**  
**Intro to Plant Identification:** Participants can join a local Extension specialist and examine the basics of plant identification. An emphasis will be placed on flowering plants, but ferns will be included as well. Registration is required and all materials will be provided. Participants should wear comfortable shoes, as part of the class will be outdoors. Free; registration required.

**Fri., Jan. 16, 9:00 - 11:00 am**  
**Wildlife Hike:** Participants can join an experienced naturalist on a hike along the boardwalks and natural trails at Brooker Creek Preserve. Participants are encouraged to be ready with questions. Free; registration required.

**Sat., Jan. 17, 9:00 - 10:30 am**

**Footprints on the Land Guided Hike:** Certified guides will lead a hike along the Education Center Trail. Participants can learn of the many "footprints" that can be found during this 0.75-mile walk. Sturdy closed-toe shoes are a must; water and a hat are recommended. Children under the age of 16 must be accompanied by an adult, those younger than 6 may find the hike challenging. Free; registration required. Brooker Creek Preserve, 3940 Keystone Road, Tarpon Springs. (727) 453-6800; [www.brookercreekpreserve.org](http://www.brookercreekpreserve.org).

**Sat., Jan. 17, 10:30 am - noon**

**The Benefit of Trees to Me:** FREE TREE for all participants. Residents will not want to miss this unique opportunity to celebrate Florida Arbor Day. Participants will find out all the benefits trees provide that they might not often consider. This program will have an in-class presentation, followed by a short hike to explore the "Traveling Tree Walk". Free; registration required.

**Sat., Jan. 17, 1:30 - 3:00 pm**

**Grass Identification:** Environmental scientist Cynthia Grizzle will present an overview of common grasses, sedges and rushes. Participants will learn the basic structures used for grass identification and become familiar with common native and invasive species. The presentation will be followed by a short hike where participants will get hands-on practice with grass identification. Free; registration required.

**Sat., Jan. 24, 9:00 am - noon**

**Extended Guided Hike:** Volunteer hike guides will lead participants on a 2.8 to 4-mile walk through Brooker Creek Preserve. Hike trails will be determined by trail condition. Sturdy closed-toe shoes are a must; water and a hat are recommended. Hike guides will meet participants in the lobby of the Exhibit Hall 10 minutes before the scheduled start time of 9 a.m. Pets are not permitted. All ages are welcome. Children under the ages of 16 must be

accompanied by an adult and those younger than 10 may find the hike challenging. Free; registration required.

**Sat., Jan. 24, 10:30 am - noon**

**Bats of the World:** Francine Prager of Tampa Bay Bats will present a lively and educational presentation on bats. This presentation will also include a discussion on echo-location and a showing of live bats. All ages are welcome. Free; registration required.

**Fri., Jan. 30, 9:00 - 11:00 am**

**Woods Walk:** Participants can join a local Natural Resources Agent on a hike along two miles of boardwalks and natural trails at Brooker Creek Preserve. Binoculars and camera are recommended. Any questions the hike guide cannot answer will be researched in the resource room upon return to the Education Center. Free; registration required.

**Sat., Jan. 31, 9:00 - 11:00 am**

**Wildflower Garden Club:** The Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve will be getting their gardening hands dirty in the Preserve's wildflower garden. Participants should bring garden gloves and hat. Morning snacks are usually provided. Free.

**Sat., Jan. 31, 8:30 - 10:30 am**

**Guided Photography Hike:** Participants will hike Brooker Creek 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 the preserve. Then, hike the boardwalk and trails looking for those shots that reflect the season. Recommended for adults and children 12 and older. Free; registration required.

**Sat., Jan. 31, 9:00 - 10:30 am**

**Our Wildest Place Guided Hike:** Brooker Creek Preserve certified guides lead the hike along

the Education Center Trail. Participants can learn why the preserve has been called "Our Wildest Place" during this 0.75-mile walk. Sturdy closed-toe shoes are a must; water and a hat are recommended. All ages are welcome although children younger than 6 may find the hike challenging. Children younger than 16 must be accompanied by an adult. Free; registration required.

**Sat., Jan. 31, 10:30 am - noon**

**Amazing Ospreys:** Barbara Walker from Clearwater Audubon will discuss the challenges of these "fish-hawks" that thrive on shallow coastal waters. She will also share the tale of a pair of these amazing ospreys that live at Weedon Island Preserve. Free; registration required.

**Sat., Jan. 31, 1:30 - 3:00 pm**

**Birds of Prey:** Live birds of prey will be used to illustrate aspects of predator-prey relationships, adaptations that ensure success as predators and their role in maintaining healthy, balanced ecosystems. The basic natural history of each species will also be discussed along with the impact of humans on these birds' habitats and populations. All ages welcome. Free; registration required.

### February 2015 Programs

**Thurs., Feb. 5, 12, 19, 26, 10:30-11:15 am**  
**Book Time at Brooker:** 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; registration required.

**Sat., Feb. 7, 9:00 - 10:30 am**

**Explore the Ecosystems:** Brooker Creek Preserve certified guides will lead the hike along the 0.75-mile Education Center Trail. Observe the forested wetland, oak hammock and pine flatwood ecosystems. Closed-toe shoes, water and a hat are recommended. Children under the age of 16 must be accompanied by an adult, those younger than 6 may find the hike challenging. Free; registration required.

**Sat., Feb. 7, 9:30 - 10:30 am**

**Brooker Book Club:** Hosted by the Friends of

Brooker Creek Preserve, the Brooker Book Club meets the first Saturday of each month. This club is geared toward adults. Registration is required due to a limited amount of seats. Meet in the conference room inside the Visitors Center. This month the book is [Weeki Wachee Mermaids: Thirty Years of Underwater Photography](#) by Lu Vickers and Bonnie Georgiadis. Books are not provided. Free.

**Sat., Feb. 7, 10:30 am - noon**

**Wetland Wildflowers:** Florida's freshwater wetlands are home to some amazing wildflowers. A Brooker Creek Preserve specialist will introduce participants to these denizens of the swamp. Participants will not get wet while meeting these beautiful and interesting plants. Recommended for adults. Free; registration required.

**Sat., Feb. 7, 1:30 - 3:00 pm**

**Adopt-A-Pond Program:** Citizens can learn more about being a part of Pinellas County's Adopt-A-Pond program and other tips for living next to lakes. Additional information is available at [www.pinellascounty.org/environment/watershed/adopt-a-pond.htm](http://www.pinellascounty.org/environment/watershed/adopt-a-pond.htm). Free; registration required.

**Sat., Feb. 7 & 21, 6:30 - 8:30 pm**

**Night Hike:** Hikers can join the Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve for a one-mile hiking experience along the Education Center Trail at night. These special hikes are open to the public and limited to 20 people per hike. Experienced guides will lead the group. A \$3 per person donation is requested; registration required.

**Fri., Feb. 13, 9:00 - 11:00 am**

**Botany Hike:** Participants can join a Brooker Creek Preserve naturalist to explore the fascinating plants found on the preserve. The hike will include identifying wildflowers, ferns, epiphytes and trees. The ecology of various plant communities will also be examined. This program is best suited for adults. Free; registration required.

**Sat., Feb. 14, 8:00 - 10:30 am**

**Birds of Brooker Hike:** Participants can join this bird hike and learn how to identify the county's common birds while meandering along a one-mile trail. Participants should bring water and binoculars. Free; registration required.

**Fri., Feb. 20, 9:00 - 11:00 am**

**Wildlife Hike:** Participants can join an experienced naturalist on a hike along the boardwalks and natural trails at Brooker Creek Preserve. Participants are encouraged to be ready with questions. Free; registration required.

**Sat., Feb. 21, 9:00 - 10:30 am**

**Footprints on the Land Guided Hike:** Certified guides will lead a hike along the Education Center Trail. Participants can learn of the many "footprints" that can be found during this 0.75-mile walk. Sturdy closed-toe shoes are a must; water and a hat are recommended. Children under the age of 16 must be accompanied by an adult, those younger than 6 may find the hike challenging. Free; registration required.

**Sat., Feb. 21, 10:30 am - noon**

**Frogs:** Participants can join Avalon Theisen, 12-year-old founder of Conserve It Forward, Inc., for Florida Frogs. The class will explore the everyday challenges frogs are facing, as well as some ways that people of all ages can help. Program suitable for all ages. Free; registration required.

**Sat., Feb. 21, 1:30 - 3:00 pm**

**Dragonflies:** Paul Trunk explains how to identify dragonflies, their life cycle as well as other neat facts about the insect. Participants will learn about the natural history of dragonflies and their importance to a healthy ecosystem. All ages. Free; registration required.

**Fri., Feb. 27, 9:00 - 11:00 am**

**Woods Walk:** Participants can join a local Natural Resources Agent on a hike along two miles of boardwalks and natural trails at Brooker Creek Preserve. Binoculars and camera are recommended. Any questions the hike guide cannot answer will be researched in the resource

room upon return to the Education Center. Free; registration required.

**Sat., Feb. 28, 8:30 - 10:30 am**

**Guided Photography Hike:** Participants will hike Brooker Creek 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 the preserve. Then, hike the boardwalk and trails looking for those shots that reflect the season. Recommended for adults and children 12 and older. Free; registration required.

**Sat., Feb. 28, 9:00 - 11:00 am**

**Wildflower Garden Club:** The Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve will be getting their gardening hands dirty in the Preserve's wildflower garden. Participants should bring garden gloves and hat. Morning snacks are usually provided. Free.

**Sat., Feb. 28, 9:00 am - noon**

**Extended Guided Hike:** Volunteer hike guides will lead participants on a 2.8 to 4-mile walk through Brooker Creek Preserve. Hike trails will be determined by trail condition. Sturdy closed-toe shoes are a must; water and a hat are recommended. Hike guides will meet participants in the lobby of the Exhibit Hall 10 minutes before the scheduled start time of 9 a.m. Pets are not permitted. All ages are welcome. Children under the ages of 16 must be accompanied by an adult, and those younger than 10 may find the hike challenging. Free; registration required.

**Sat., Feb. 28, 1:30 - 3:00 pm**

**Going Coastal - Sharky Science:** The dwarf shark is as small as a human hand, while the whale shark can be as large as a school bus. Participants will learn about the more than 350 types of sharks, where they live, what they eat and much more as they explore one of the ocean's most revered creatures. Recommended for all ages. Free; 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, conserva-

tion, restoration or protection of the land and resources of the Brooker Creek Preserve.

**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.

**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  
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.

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

**Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve Board of Directors:**

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Fall Wildflower Festival Chair: open  
Wildflower Garden: Pam Brown  
Wildlife Safari Chair: Brad Wilkins

**Further Leadership**

Book Club: Jon Burr & Kathleen Nichter  
Membership: Jeff Myers  
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