



Oakland Nature Preserve, Inc.

PO Box 841 Oakland Florida 34760 Phone 407.905.0054

Autumn 2007

Message from the President

Excitement continues to build as we draw closer to starting construction of our environmental education building. This has been a long time coming, with many ups and downs, as we worked toward our goal of providing a first class education program about the natural history of West Orange County as well as interpretive history of how our ancestors lived in this area. We have artifacts collected on the site that will show how the earliest people lived around the lake as well as some very interesting insights into the lives of the early settlers in the area. We can't wait to get started!

We have slowly evolved plans for the future of the Oakland Nature Preserve. The initial concept, developed by the Friends of Lake Apopka, was to provide a place where people could see Lake Apopka in a natural setting, to understand how this once vital natural resource became known as "the most polluted lake in Florida," and to understand the restoration process.

As we acquired the property and realized all the uplands had to be restored, from abandoned citrus groves to the natural plant communities that existed here at the turn of the century, we became aware we had a much bigger story to tell. Ecological restoration is a relatively new science and we are still learning a great deal about the most successful techniques. As we began the project we saw the results -- increased wildlife utilization and a more natural setting, we got more and more excited about the value of interpreting this. Now we can exhibit not only lake restoration but wetland and different types of upland restoration as well!

Starting in the mid- 1990's, we began planning the restoration and how we would interpret this to school groups as well as interested visitors. We hired a construction company to provide a design/build plan for our building and then put

together a design committee of about 12 people and began meeting with an architect. After nearly driving him crazy, we finally agreed on our plans, only to discover the costs were far beyond our possibilities. Since that time, we have worked really hard, raising funds. Money is particularly tight this year but, overall, we are pleased with the support we have had. We need about \$100,000 more and we are counting on donated time and materials to help cover this. We are grateful for the community support we have had and ask everyone to help us find these remaining items.

We urge you to volunteer for at least one job at the Oakland Heritage Festival and to come on out and help us make the event a success. This is an important fundraiser that will help us meet our future goals. Keep up the good work!

Jim Thomas

Let's Plan a Major Fund Raiser!

Our last-minute needs to produce the environmental center we want will require more funds, so we need everyone's help at this point. I am preparing a written plea and a list of naming opportunities with a broad range of possibilities. If each member agrees to mail them along with a personal note, we can reach a lot of people. Please begin preparing a personal mailing list, including your garden club membership, church groups, personal friends, etc. and let us know by October 1 how many you are willing to do, donating the postage. We will plan it for the first week in November. We will get the forms to you and ask you to follow up on the plea. Please agree to help with this program. Call Tom Rodriguez (407) 905 0054 and place your order.

Educating • Conserving • Restoring

10th Annual Oakland Heritage Festival



From Darla Miller, Festival Project Manager

The **Oakland Nature Preserve**, with cooperation and assistance from the **Town of Oakland**, is proud to present the 10th annual **Oakland Heritage Festival on October 27, 2007 from 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.** at Speer Park in Oakland. The festival will be a fun-filled event for the entire family! Activities include Model "A" car rides, hay rides, local history tours, live music, dessert and chili cook-off contests, children's activities, craft and plant vendors and displays by various community organizations and businesses, and great food! A highlight of the event will be narrated eco-boat tours of Lake Apopka. There will also be a silent auction with lots of wonderful items.

All proceeds of the boat tours, silent auction and canoe raffle will go to benefit the Oakland Nature Preserve, a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization, whose mission is to promote understanding of the fragile balances among land, water, mankind, and the environment by **EDUCATING** present and future generations about the natural ecosystems of the Lake Apopka Basin and by **RESTORING** and **CONSERVING** the lands within the Preserve.

Festival Sponsorship Opportunities

Add your name to the list of 2007 Festival Sponsors

Lake Apopka Sponsor at \$5,000 - Taken
Castle & Cooke - Oakland Park 1844

Wetlands Sponsors at \$2,500
Progress Energy

Ecotone Sponsors at \$1,000
Town of Oakland (\$1500)

Brentwood Custom Home Builders
Health Central

Uplands Sponsors at \$500
Bray Ace Hardware
Friends of Lake Apopka

Oak Hammock Sponsors at \$250
Biosphere Consulting

For more information about the Oakland Nature Preserve or the Oakland Heritage Festival visit the ONP website at <http://www.oaklandnaturepreserve.org/> or call 407-905-0054.

Rogue River Canoe Raffle

Sponsored by the Friends of Lake Apopka

In support of the Preserve, the Friends of Lake Apopka will be raffling off a canoe package at the Oakland Heritage Festival. Tickets are on sale for \$1.00 each or six for \$5.00 and can be purchased from FOLA board members, the Preserve or from the town hall in Oakland. They will also be available all day at the FOLA booth dur-



ing the festival. The winning name will be drawn at 3:45 PM. The winner does not need to be present to win.

The **Old-Town-Rogue River 14TK** is a great recreational canoe. A rugged, impact-resistant polyethylene hull and a solid wood thwart ensures the Rogue River will hold its shape through many years of paddling and the tough PVC gunwale will not permanently dent. A wide 42 inch beam provides greater stability than narrower canoes and a shallow V hull tracks well yet turns easily for river trips. Molded contoured seats provide comfort for those long paddling trips and easy-grasp carry handles make portage easier. Two year deck and hull warranty.

Included is a **Bonus Package** with paddles, inflatable seats and a few 'necessary' items for a day on the water. Call **407 905-0054** or **407 656 8277** for more information.

Support The Oakland Nature Preserve

Help Us Build Our Education Center

Visit our website

www.oaklandnaturepreserve.org

Updates on Oakland Heritage Festival Activities

Latest listings and links to information about
Sponsors - Vendors - Silent Auction - Raffle - Events

The Silent Auction

The Silent Auction booth again offers an impressive selection of vacation excursions, golf, entertainment, dining, luxury gifts and services. ONP Board member Elizabeth Clark will be manning the booth this year with Mona Phipps helping to gather the goodies. Come to the Festival, visit the Silent Auction tent and place your bid for your choice of gifts. All proceeds go to the Oakland Nature Preserve for their ongoing programs. Take a look at what is lined up so far and check the Preserve website for continual updates.



Keene's Point County Club - Two rounds of golf for two at one of West Orange Counties best golf courses plus a couple of beautiful golf shirts to commemorate the day (\$600 value) www.cc-keenespointe.com

Mayor Stark's Basket - with 4 Day Passes for Disney and Oakland goodies (\$400 value) www.oaktownusa.com

Biosphere Consulting - nursery basket full of fun stuff plus a \$50.00 gift certificate (\$100 value) www.BiosphereNursery.com



Jacob Davis Productions in Oakland - offers a 1-week stay at a 3/2 beach house on Anna Maria Island. What could be nicer after the long hot summer. This 3 bedroom/2 bath condo is one block from the beach with access to heated pool (\$1,200 value) www.anamariaislandchamber.org www.JacobDavisProductions.com

Aardvark Kayak of Florida - guided kayak tour for 2 to view the manatees (\$80 value) www.floridakayakcompany.com

West Orange Times - 1/4 page ad (\$225 value) www.wotimes.com

Orange County National Golf and Lodge - Three separate golf packages: #1 Golf for 2 on the Crooked Cat Course (\$70 value) #2 Golf for 2 on the Panther Lake Course (\$80 value) and #3 Golf for 4 on the 9 hole Executive Course (\$100 value)

Jack's Bar-B-Q on Hwy 27 in Mineola - A whole smoked turkey and 2 gift certificates worth \$25.00/each (\$100 value)

Michael Brinkley - Red Maple – one of Mike's wonderful pictures from the Preserve on Lake Apopka (\$140 value) www.mikebrinkleyphotography.com

Sue and Fred Shepherd - Family Night Basket filled with lots of family fun all wrapped up in a popcorn bowl (\$50 value)

Traywicks Garage in Winter Garden - Regular Oil Change/Lube/New oil filter/Top off fluids (\$24.00-30.95 value)



See updated Silent Auction list on the ONP Website

Rotary Club of Windermere to Sponsor Lake Apopka Boat Tours

To help raise money and awareness of their on going support of the Oakland Nature Preserve, the **Rotary Club of Windermere** has agreed to sponsor the annual boat tours on Lake Apopka for the Oakland Heritage Festival. The effort will be headed by **Tom Johnson and George Poelker**, who serve on both the Rotary and Friends of Lake Apopka boards.

Brian Bodiford with Mid Florida Boat Center has agreed to donate the use of two boats for the event. ONP board member **Jim Peterson**, who works for **St. Johns River Water Management District**, has arranged for SJRWMD to provide the tour guides.

The last few years the informative boat-tour on Lake Apopka has been a very popular event at the festival and selling out each year.

Headed by Past-President Richard Irwin, Rotary Club of Windermere is one of ten local Rotary clubs that provided the initial money to Oakland Nature Preserve for the Environmental Center as part of their Centennial Project. The Education Center has passed all permitting and construction is planned to start this year. The classroom will be named 'The Rotary Classroom' in their honor.

Rotary Club of Windermere has supported other projects that benefit the town of Oakland including Habitat for Humanity Homes and Health Central School nurses for the Oakland Avenue Charter School.

Executive Spotlight

Tom Rodriguez, Executive Director

Volunteer Appreciation

In this issue, I wish to recognize all the generous people who have donated their time and efforts: VOLUNTEERS! You are the lifeblood of our organization and deserve credit for all of our accomplishments. Thank you.

To the volunteers who have been helping for nearly a decade I am especially grateful. You have remained with us during the entire life of our organization and should be proud. Today, we reap the rewards of your steadfast dedication. Our beautiful boardwalk is one of your greatest accomplishments.



Volunteers from Disney pose after a busy day of removing non-native Lantana.



Above: Representatives from Windermere Preparatory School helped with restoration by removing non-native "air-potatoes".

Past president and co-founder, Jack Amon, is a great example of dedication. Jack continues to help the Preserve by contributing valuable knowledge and donating much needed funding even though he lives in California. He moved there to be closer to family, but remains active with the Preserve. It is most appropriate that the large pavilion adjacent to the West Orange Trail bears his name.

To the others who are just getting started, I

welcome and encourage you to get involved and stay active. Soon, construction will begin on the environmental education center bringing us closer to fulfilling our mission. This is an exciting time to be involved and I look forward to working with you.

Officially, the Oakland Nature Preserve, Inc. is a 501 (C)(3) not-for-profit organization, but it feels like a big family. Everyone shows a passion that is contagious and makes the work enjoyable. Volunteers donate their time for many different reasons, but having fun is one thing we all share. Please consider being a part of our family.

What do volunteers do? They serve on the board of directors, help maintain the grounds, raise much needed funds, lead educational hikes, assist with the restoration process and much, much more. The removal of non-native plant species continues to be a major part of our restoration process and we can always use your help. Since the ONP was formed, more than **14,000** volunteer hours have been recorded.



Students from the Math/Science Club and Science Honor Society of Dr. Phillips High School remove non-native "Johnson Grass". The group, under the leadership of Mary Louise Grable has maintained an "Adopt-a-Plot" since 2000. They have over 1000 volunteer hours invested in the Preserve.

Thanks again to all volunteers. Any group or individual interested in volunteering should call (407) 905-0054 or visit me in person.

Eagle Scout Project benefits the Preserve

Brandon Boros from Troop 223 is the latest Boy Scout to contribute a project to the ONP. Brandon and his crew designed and built six receptacles for trash and recycla-

bles. These have been placed in various locations throughout the Preserve and will serve the needs of many visitors.



Members from Boy Scout Troop 223 show off one of the six trash/recycle receptacles that they installed along the boardwalk and trails in September.

The completion of this service project brings Brandon closer to becoming an Eagle Scout. Brandon excelled at proving his leadership skills and has given ONP staff, volunteers, and visitors a valuable asset that will provide lasting benefits.

Brandon's contribution is the 12th service project to be completed by a Boy Scout at the ONP. Many thanks to Brandon Boros, his family, Boy Scout Troop 223 and everyone else who made this project a success.

Scout Troop 8 Volunteers



Members from Boy Scout Troop 8 take a break after removing a large section of non-native "Johnson Grass" Greg Batty, Scoutmaster (far left) deserves recognition for coordinating this volunteer effort.

Donor Appreciation

As a not-for-profit organization, the ONP relies on financial support from members like you. Your donations help pay the bills, advance our mission and keep us alive. In addition to our volunteers that make it happen, donors provide the resources that keep us in business. I am grateful for every dollar that comes through our door because it



Janet Woodcock, past President of Bloom and Grow Garden Club presents Tom Rodriguez with a donation. Also pictured, Betty Ann Griffin, President of Bloom and Grow Garden Club and Jim Thomas, President of ONP.

helps pay my salary. Thank you.

I believe it is important to recognize our financial friends. Does it have to be cash? Of course not.



Mona Phipps, President of Friends of Lake Apopka presents representatives from ONP a Civil War era map of Florida. From left to right: Jim Thomas, Mike Brinkley, Mona Phipps, Tom Rodriguez.



Jim Riffle receives an Osprey photo from ONP representatives; Jim's company, The Sign Farm in Apopka, donated many signs and has been a longtime supporter.

Michael and Jackie Osburn of Clermont donated a Xerox printer which improved office operations. Thank you. Oakland resident, Don Duncan donated a riding mower which has become priceless. Thank you. Don Hickman of Oakland, with the help of Missionary Computer Fellowship

donated lots of computer equipment.

Thank you. These are just a few examples that made a difference. Please show your support.

Last year, Ginn Clubs & Resorts donated \$100,000 which will be used for the future environmental education center. This has been our largest private donation during the past few years. The Sadler Estate donated \$175,000 several years ago which helped us acquire land and fund our beautiful boardwalk. Other major donors include The Bond Foundation, Inc., DeWitt Excavating, Inc., Castle & Cooke Florida, Ltd., and Bloom and Grow Garden Club. Many thanks to all of you.

The Windermere Rotary Club, Winter Garden Rotary Club, and several other Rotary clubs also deserve recognition. They donated time and money which will be used for the future environmental education center. The support came in the form of cash, professional services, and many volunteer hours. Joe Pozo from the Boat Tree in Orlando deserves special recognition for his role in donating a boat that was raffled and raised lots of money.

Many other companies have played a major role with our education center including June Engineering Consultants, Inc. Other companies such as Universal Engineering Sciences in Orlando and Arthur C. Nix, P.E. of Montverde Engineering, Inc. performed services for free or at a discount.

How about becoming a member? The fee is small and although we don't offer a tangible return, you become a part of the ONP family. We will ensure that you receive the latest information and are invited to special events. Donations to the Oakland Nature Preserve, Inc. are tax deductible and you will get the satisfaction of knowing that you are helping a great cause.

Thanks again for all of your donations. Those of you who have not helped and would like to contribute, please call (407) 905-0054 or visit me in person.

Florida Native Plant Society Donates Plants to ONP

The following article was written by Jackie Rolly of the Tarflower Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society. Thanks to everyone who helped with the plant rescue including Jim Peterson, Jim Thomas from Biosphere Consulting, Inc. for giving us space to store the plants, and David from Biosphere for taking care of the plants.

Tarflower Chapter Plant Rescue

What a great day at the plant rescue site in Osceola County. Thanks to Maesbury Homes, Inc., who provided us access to their development site, the Oakland Nature Preserve has an incredible amount and variety of sandhill/scrub plants for their restoration. Over 120 plants were salvaged in just over 2 hours of hot and sweaty effort by 13 people from both the Pinelilly and Tarflower chapters. Larry Rosen of the Tarflower and Pinelilly Chapters was our hero of the day. Check out the photo of his success in getting the entire 5 foot root of the Asclepias humistrata.

That took patience, skill and fortitude to not lose even the lateral secondary roots. The majority of the plants salvaged



Larry Rosen with Asclepias humistrata

included *Liatris*, *Carphephorus corymbosus*, *Polygonella robusta* (not too sure on the species), *Cuthbertia ornata*, *Penstemon multiflorus*, and day flower. Not to worry that there's nothing left, we haven't touched the endangered plants such as the *Eriogonum longifolium* and *Polygonella myriophylla*. We are saving them until they have completed blooming and have put out seeds. Only about one third of the property was worked on, so we need just as many people to come out in the following months to this wonderful, rare, site.

Our thanks to the many volunteers who came out so early on a Saturday.

Lake Apopka Update Autumn 2007

Article by Jim Peterson

Phosphorus levels are higher this year than last in Lake Apopka, but fluctuations are expected from year to year. Recent mean total phosphorus levels in Lake Apopka have increased to 129 micrograms per liter (ug/l). The current drought may be adversely affecting nutrient levels.

The water level in **Lake Apopka** is still very low. Much of Florida is currently experiencing drought weather conditions. We did not get the rains that were originally predicted last winter, and our spring season was typically dry. As of June 20,

Lake Apopka was at 64.48 feet above mean sea level. This water level is a little more than 2 feet below the minimum desirable level of 66.5 feet above sea level, and it is more than 2.25 feet below the seasonal regulation level of 66.75 feet above mean sea level. The St. Johns

River Water Management District has received many calls from residents living around the lake asking why Lake Apopka is currently so low.

The water flow that discharges to **Lake Beauclair**, through the lock and dam located in the Apopka-Beauclair Canal, is currently flowing at 10 cubic feet per second (cfs). This flow is below the official base flow of 23 cfs due to the drought. A minimum flow of water is necessary to maintain the downstream canals.

The **Gourd Neck Spring** flow averages approximately 30 cfs during normal rainfall. It drops even lower during periods of low rainfall. Even at average flow, the spring cannot keep the lake at its regulation schedule level, because evaporation over the huge surface area of Lake Apopka is too great. The lake also needs to receive average rainfall for it to stay near the seasonal regulation water level.

District scientists and engineers have completed a conceptual plan for the future management of the **North Shore Restoration Area** (NSRA). Goals that were given the highest priority in this process were preventing phosphorus-laden discharges into the lake and the restoration of wetland habitat. Also listed in the priorities were flood control and public access. The District and the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) are preparing to spend a substantial amount of money (current estimates are at \$7 million) to improve the levees and water control structures in the NSRA. The improved infrastructure will allow water levels in the NSRA to be controlled separately in 11 different parcels. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with the District on a remediation plan that calls for shallow flooding of the parcels once safe soil levels of residual pesticides have been determined. Due to many decades of agricultural pesticide applications, remediation will be required in some of the parcels to bring the soil pesticide levels down to safe levels. . The plan will

also require sampling and monitoring to ensure that wildlife using the wetlands are not adversely affected.

The NSRA remediation plan also will require sufficient water so the parcels can be flooded. The current work to reflood 1,100 acres of the NSRA, called Unit 2 West, has been delayed for a year due to insufficient water because of the drought.

The structures that allow water into the **Lake Apopka Marsh Flow-Way** treatment marsh have been recently closed so that two of the four treatment cells can be drawn down to consolidate accumulated sediment. The accumulated material was filtered out of the lake water and was deposited into the cells and internal ditches, as

expected, over the last three years of operation. Once the accumulated sediments are mechanically removed from the internal ditches, the water structures will be opened just enough to allow shallow flooding of the cells. Gradually, water levels and flow will be increased until the Flow-Way is back online.

Bird watching and wildlife viewing are allowed at Clay Island. From Orlando, take U.S. 441 north to Zellwood; go west on Jones Road, then south on State Road 448A to County Road (CR) 48 and west on Ranch Road. If traveling from the town of Astatula, take CR 48 east to Ranch Road. Take Ranch Road south, then turn west on Peoples Road, then south on Carolyn Road to the parking area.

One benefit of the drought has been that birds (especially shore birds) visiting the properties have been numerous this year, making Lake Apopka and the surrounding areas thrilling for bird-watchers.

Conserving for Future Generations

What do we choose to leave to our children?

Assist in conserving and preserving one of central Florida's natural treasures by including Oakland Nature Preserve in your will or trust.

Create a legacy that lasts into the future and benefits your children and their children by making a bequest to the Preserve. The process is simple and the rewards are great. **To find out more call 407-905-0054.**

At Oakland Nature Preserve the mission is to promote understanding of our place in the environ-

ment by EDUCATING present and future generations about the natural ecosystems of the Lake Apopka Basin and by RESTORING and CONSERVING the lands within the Preserve.

The vision is to inspire children and adults to become stewards of their natural environment and to explore and understand the ecology and natural history of central Florida.



Photographer's Notebook

Photos and text by Mike Brinkley

Some birds that you may see passing through the Preserve this fall feeding in trees and bushes along the boardwalk are the Black-throated Blue Warbler, Prothonotary Warbler and Indigo Bunting. Fall migration usually peaks in mid October and is a great time to walk the Preserve.

Wildlife Report

keeping an eye on the goal



Photo and text by Mike Brinkley



The Black-throated Blue Warbler

The Belted Kingfisher is often seen hovering before it plunges headfirst into water to catch a fish. It frequently announces its presence by its loud rattling cry. They can be seen from the lake side pavilion perched on the floating dock guide posts or in a nearby tree.



Prothonotary Warbler

The least Bittern is smaller than a Little Green Heron and much more elusive. When alarmed, the Least Bittern freezes in place with its bill pointing up, turns its front and both eyes toward the source of alarm, and sometimes sways to resemble wind-blown marsh vegetation.



Indigo Bunting

The Tufted Titmouse is a regular visitor to the feeding stations at the Preserve. They are very bold and announce their arrival to the bird feeders. The word titmouse descends from the Old English terms, tit (any small animal or object) and mase (small bird), essentially meaning one small, small bird.



Added Security at ONP

Story and photo by Tom Rodriguez

The ONP has taken measures to increase security. Longtime Oakland residents, Willie Hodges and Doug Walker have begun patrolling the Preserve and have already proven to be effective. During a



Doug Walker and Willie Hodges (right) help secure the ONP by locking the entrance gate each night

recent burglary attempt at the ONP office, both played key roles in contacting police officials in a timely manner which led to the arrest of a suspect.

In addition to patrolling the Preserve, Hodges and Walker are available each evening and morning to assist staff

with locking and unlocking the gates. In the past, gates were closed, but not locked. Recent vandalism and forthcoming construction of the future environmental education center has prompted us to take this action.

New hours for visiting the Preserve are 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Oakland Nature Preserve, Inc.

PO Box 841

Oakland, FL 34760-0841

Membership Application for Oakland Nature Preserve

Name (Personal/Business/Organization): _____

Contact Name: _____

Address (C S Z): _____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____ Email: _____

Select Your Membership

_____ Student or Youth (under 18) - \$5.00

_____ Individual - \$25.00

_____ Family - \$35.00 (List family names on form.
Newsletter sent to first name on the list.)

_____ Sponsor, Business or Organization \$50.00
(List a contact name on form)

_____ Patron - \$100.00 or more (If a business or
organization, list a contact name on form)

Activity and Volunteer Interests

___ Hiking /Walking ___ Bird Watching ___ Nature Photography ___ Ecology

Other _____

Volunteer Opportunity Interests:

___ Restoration ___ Trails and Grounds ___ Ecology Studies

___ Education ___ Docent ___ Fund Raising ___ Oakland Heritage Festival

___ Project Management ___ Office Support ___ Building Maintenance

Other _____

Make check payable to ONP and Mail along with this form to:

Oakland Nature Preserve
PO Box 841
Oakland, FL 34760-0841

Your interest in **Oakland Nature Preserve** is vital to restoring and conserving the natural beauty of the Preserve, and educating visitors about the ecology of the Preserve, Lake Apopka and Central Florida