



Oakland Nature Preserve, Inc.

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Summer 2010 - Web Edition

ONP Plans the Biggest Sale of Treasures Ever Attempted in Oakland

Thanks to the donation of a huge collection of old and antique pieces by the Voss family, we are planning a sale that will feature some valuable antiques as well as collectible junkie. We are in the process of cataloging, cleaning, and pricing a huge storage building full of interesting things. We will set a date as soon as we see when we can finish getting things ready. If space permits, we may also rent spaces to ONP members who may want to have their own sale, so be prepared to sign up for this as soon as we set a date!



Don Duncan, Shari Wardlaw and Jim Thomas "wash dishes" to reveal hidden treasures.

We need volunteer help in preparing for this sale, involving hauling, cleaning, stacking, pricing, and re-packing hundreds of pieces. Our next work party (we call it our Antique Extravaganza Work Party) will be held 9:00 am Saturday, July 24, at the Preserve. Wear work clothes or an apron and bring cleaning rags - maybe you will find a gem in disguise!

Voss and ONP Raising Bob Whites

ONP has started an experimental program to establish a breeding colony of Bobwhite quail. Food plots have been started, using plants that produce seven different grains, in an out-of-the-way area in the Preserve.

Jeff Voss, a supporter of the Preserve, has donated a "Surrogator" and 300 day-old Bobwhite chicks. The "Surrogator" is under a bush near the grain plots.

The Surrogator is designed to protect the chicks from harm and from any contact with people. The chicks are fed and watered with no human intervention in a small caged enclosure. Birds that hatch without a parent bird and are handled by humans become "imprinted" on humans, and no longer realize they are birds and cannot survive in the wild. The hope is that these chicks will grow up safely, stay, and multiply within the Preserve.

Maybe the delightful "bob-white" call will be heard again this summer in Oakland Nature Preserve.

By Peggy Lantz. She writes articles about the happenings at ONP for the West Orange Times. They appear on the Oakland page. Read all of this article and others in the series on the ONP website.

Oakland Heritage Festival October 30th

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 30, 2010, from 10:00am - 4:00pm at Speer Park in Oakland. The festival will be a fun-filled event for the entire family! Activities include hayrides, 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, and music by the Lakeview Middle School Jazz Band. There will also be a silent auction with lots of wonderful items.

All proceeds will 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.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR.
COME JOIN IN THE FUN.

Educating • Conserving • Restoring

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Summer Activities at the Preserve

In the summer, sunny Florida puts to rest any suspicions that we do not live in a sultry, tropical climate. It is hot, rainy, and humid, and the wild places of Florida like the Oakland Nature Preserve are blooming with life and bustling with activity. Any plant die-off in the winter has been erased from the forest, and growing plants send out new shoots and fruits stretching toward the sky and roots digging into the ground for water and nutrients. Animal life is everywhere and the cool Florida afternoons are perfect for spotting lone bobcats or one of the many raccoon families that live around our building. Even the remnants of the slash pine plantation that once grew here are filled with the nests of woodpeckers, and, down by Lake Apopka, the air is filled with the deep vibrato of bellowing male alligators fighting for territory and vying for the love of lengthy, armored females.

In nature, growth and summer are inseparable, and I am overjoyed to find that the same goes for little 128-acre Oakland Nature Preserve. This summer is already one of the busiest and most exciting seasons for ONP in recent memory. We are rapidly expanding our restoration and educational plans. This summer, keep your eyes open for our new outdoor classroom, outdoor picnic area, tree climbing exhibit, reptiles of Florida exhibit, interactive archaeology dig pits, and new trail signs.

We kicked off June as a reptile-themed month, holding two reptile lectures and an open-to-the-public workday to build a new turtle and alligator habitat. June also marked the launch of ONP's FaceBook page and twitter streams to provide a place for our visitors to post photos and stay in the loop with our many activities. The summer is the perfect time to visit the Preserve, and visits from students looking to relax outside while they enjoy their summer break are more frequent than last year.

Our educational programs have become more popular and have diversified more rapidly than I ever expected them to. Monthly programs and lectures are receiving the best attendance they have ever had, and we have a new group of interns and youth volunteers helping to keep ONP running in these hard financial times. The first After-School Science Club this past spring filled up over capacity within three days of announcing the program, and I am happy to say that this July 1st we will be accepting reservations to enroll in the 2010 fall program, now to be offered twice a week. Each day more and more public school, home school, and church groups contact the Preserve to plan visits and events as far as a year in advance.

In the last eleven months over 150 groups of people have made reservations and visited the Preserve for a private tour, lecture, event, or seminar. This hidden gem, Oakland Nature Preserve, is well on its way to cementing its place in the community as a meeting place for clubs, businesses, weddings, team building exercises, birthday parties, and reunions – all with little publicity and not much more than the excited word-of-mouth accounts of our visitors. If you have not been to the Oakland Nature Preserve lately, I hope you can find the time to do so. You owe it to yourself to unplug from the stresses of modern life to enjoy nature again, if even for just an hour a day. ONP is not just a preserve for the plants and animals that live here; we are also a place to read a book, to go on a hike with a loved one, to spend an evening at a lecture before dinner, to enjoy a picnic lunch or photograph some wildlife. We hope to see you soon and look forward to sharing our little piece of paradise here in Oakland.

Clayton Louis Ferrara, ONP Director of Education

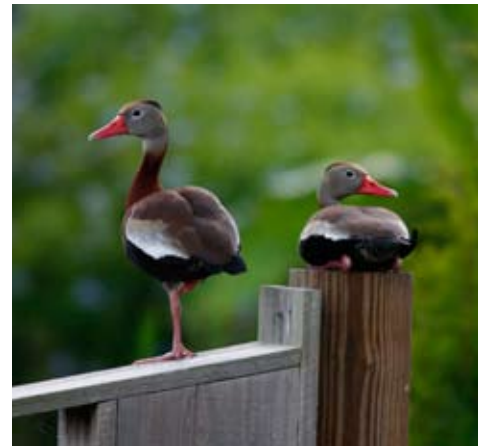
Results from the ONP Duck Box Program



Rick and Tammy had some unexpected guests over the Memorial Day weekend and they decided to stay. These Black Bellied Whistling Ducks moved into the box we put in place last year to provide a home for Wood Ducks at our home in Oakland on

Lake Apopka. Our tenants show up in the morning and early evening. They make a sweet low whistle and seem to be very affectionate toward each other. We continue our stake-out of the box and hope to see ducklings!

*Article and Photo
by Rick and Tammy
Pollard*



ONP Has a New Resident!

A fawn was born to the deer family in Jeff Voss' deer habitat. We saw it last weekend. It probably was born around June 17 or 18. In typical behavior, the mother hid the fawn in a protected area and left it there, returning only to feed it.

Now there are five deer in this great habitat. We're glad to have these Florida natives visible at the Preserve. At one time the white-tailed deer was one of the most plentiful mammals in west Orange County, but no natural populations remain in the immediate area.

Get Up-Dated!

So many things are happening at ONP these days, I have decided to change what was previously my quarterly e-mail update to a monthly one. We urge you to sign up for this if you don't already receive it. It will include seasonal changes in the natural features of the Preserve and list all the activities planned for the month.

To add your name email to Postmaster@OaklandNaturePreserve.org and ask to be added to the list. Be sure to include your name!

By Jim Thomas

Visit our website at
www.OaklandNaturePreserve.org.
Up-to-date information on activities at the preserve.
Expanded, printable color version of the newsletter.

Letter from the President

Volunteers are the grease that keeps the wheels turning at Oakland Nature Preserve. So, once again, I want to thank all who have given of your time and talents to keep the Preserve running smoothly. But we want no one to get burned out, so I appeal to more of you – board members, Preserve members, and anyone reading this who spends some time enjoying the trails and boardwalk at the Preserve – to join in the work of caring for this beautiful place.

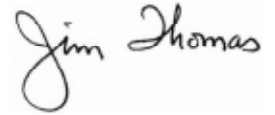
The excitement of developing the infrastructure, building the boardwalk and the beautiful education building, and starting the restoration of the historic upland habitat is past. Now we move on to bigger and better things. Under Education Director Clay Ferrara's leadership, school groups and clubs are using the Preserve in ever-increasing numbers.

Under Jackie Rolly's weekly care, non-native species are being weeded out and native species, some rescued from developments, are planted. Birds, butterflies and other insects, reptiles, and mammals common to the Preserve habitat in years past are returning and raising their families. Phyllis Hickman manages the volunteer list, and Don Hickman serves as

secretary for the board of directors and organizes the Oakland Festival. John Deam oversees the membership, and Nancy Deam and Peggy Lantz put together this newsletter. Mona Phipps and Theresa Joiner manage the finances. A number of others participate in important committee work.

Thanks is too mild a term for these people. Will you help them out? We want people to visit our museum and classroom, but someone needs to be there to keep it open for visitors. Learn a little about the Cracker-style house we built for our education center and spend an hour or two one weekend day a month talking to people who are curious about it. Accompany Clay as he leads a group of young students through the trails. Offer to help Jackie any Wednesday morning watering plants. Just look at the things described in this newsletter and review our plans for projects we want to pursue, and you will see we really have something special here that people may not be able to find anywhere else in this area. Get involved and become a part of it!

If you can't do anything else, send in your membership, and drop a donation in one of the donation boxes each time you visit.



Volunteer News • 19,610 Volunteer Hours to Date

Huge Volunteer Work Day Scheduled for July 17

ONP has been notified that we have been selected to receive a huge force of 100 to 200 hard-working volunteers on Saturday, July 17, starting at 8:00am. This event, scheduled by the Orlando firm "Hands on Orlando", will enlist volunteers recruited by the firm that markets Copenhagen tobacco. They also fund the project costs. Plans call for several major projects to be completed, including the clearing of a large area where non-native plants will be removed and native plants installed, the preparation of two picnic areas, the repair of the boardwalk, and other smaller projects. They have also funded a beautiful gazebo, which has already been installed near the deer habitat.

We need volunteers to support the project! Call 407.905.0054 and talk to Clay for details and to sign up.

Volunteers Opportunities

Due to the recent loss of our Preserve manager, the management and operations of the preserve is dependent on our volunteers. We are now in the process of reorganizing our committee structure to more effectively manage and operate the Preserve.

If you have a few hours a week or month to spare, please consider helping out at the Preserve by volunteering to serve on one of our committees. The committees that have openings are listed below. If you are interested or want more information, you can contact Phyllis Hickman at 407-656-2392 or e-mail her at phickman7@cfl.rr.com.

- Finance Committee
- Facilities Committee
- Volunteer Committee
- Membership Committee
- Trails and Boardwalk Committee
- Event Committee
- Restoration Committee
- By-Laws and Policy Committee
- Education Committee
- Nominating Committee
- Publicity Committee
- Endowment Committee
- Grants Committee

DPHS Students are Valued Volunteers

In the fall of 2002, the Math/Science Honor Society at Dr. Phillips High School began volunteering at the Oakland Nature Preserve.

Over 1,000 Hours Volunteered

Students are required by the organization to do community service hours, and some scholarships require these hours also. The students have served in a variety of roles, including helping with the Oakland Heritage Festival, the Preserve's open house, mailings, rummage sales, and the removal of exotic plants from the Preserve.

Several years ago the group adopted a spot to maintain at the Preserve. It has taken several years to remove exotics, such as Johnson grass, citrus, lantana, Caesar weed, and ragweed. The students have had the opportunity to plant natives – longleaf pine, yucca, turkey oak, and native grasses and flowers. Some of the students were involved in a plant rescue mission to remove native plants from an area that was to be cleared by developers. They were able to successfully transplant some to their plot.

Maintaining the plot has become a tradition with the group. Each year they introduce new students to ecological restoration at the Preserve. Now there are alums who return to check on the restoration progress. The students have not only learned much about ecology, but they have enjoyed the opportunity to work with other volunteers in the community and with members of other organizations like the AmeriCorps, Rotary Clubs, and the Florida Native Plant Society.

Work is in progress to involve other students from Orange County Public Schools and the many private schools. The educational opportunities are numerous, and the ecological restoration of the Preserve will be an ongoing process. It is an exciting time at Oakland Nature Preserve and a golden opportunity for many to become involved in its present and future history.

Mary Louise Grable, ONP Education Committee Volunteer

ONP Endowment Policy

The Board of Directors gave final approval on our Endowment Fund Policy at its last meeting. This important document provides important policies for handling funds designated for a permanent endowment for ONP. The only way an organization like ONP can be completely functional for the long term is through an adequate fund that will generate monies for operating expenses, relieving members the constant need for raising funds and allowing them to devote full attention to restoration, programs, and environmental education.

ONP plans to develop an informational brochure about the value of including a bequeath in your will that will help guarantee the continued success of the Preserve. Any help or suggestions will be greatly appreciated. Contact Jim Thomas or Don Hickman at the ONP office, 407.905.0054

Project Leader Needed



Our sinkhole needs help. One of the unique geological features in the Preserve is its very old sinkhole, which has filled with organic debris and now features sizeable wetland trees. Our annual Sinkhole de Mayo party cleared some of the access to the sinkhole, but it needs a lot more attention. How would you like to be our Sinkhole Manager? If you are interested in this challenging project, email Volunteers@OaklandNaturePreserve.org.

Forest Planted in Memory of Jay Chicone



Jackie Rolly with newly planted longleaf pine.

Jay Chicone grew longleaf pines in his Gainesville nursery. When he died, his family donated 105 large, 15-gallon longleaf pine trees to ONP. They were planted by volunteers from the Sierra Club, the Tarflower Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society, and ONP.

This small forest is on the northeast side of the ONP parking lot, just before the curve begins. The trees are doing well, though they must be hand watered because of the paucity of rainfall.

Other plants appropriate to this upland habitat were also planted, donated by Biosphere Nursery. They include turkey oak, myrtle oak, bluejack oak, yucca, wiregrass, and love grass. ONP is grateful for this memorial to Jay, particularly because potted longleaf pines in this large size are hard to find.

Check Out the Habitat Garden!

The habitat garden at the Preserve features native plant species that have wildlife value, particularly for pollinator insects and birds. It was beautiful this spring and attracted many pollinator species and will now be spruced up with new wildflowers.

The purpose of the garden is to feature species the homeowner can use in a home landscape to improve wildlife value. Biosphere will be glad to assist homeowners in planning their own "bioscapes".

Clockwise from left: dog tongue, rudbeckie, piriqueta . Photos: Jackie Rolly



Florida Master Naturalist Program

The next offering of the Florida Master Naturalist Program in Orange County will held on Thursdays, 9am to 4pm, from August 5 to September 9. This module will be on wetland habitats. The meeting place will be at the Orange County Extension/Education Center on South Conway Road. Field trips to natural lands in the county are part of the program, and one of the field trips will be to Oakland Nature Preserve. Jennifer Ramos, Florida Yards and Neighborhoods, is the instructor, and Peggy Lantz, Oakland Nature Preserve volunteer, is assistant instructor.

The Florida Master Naturalist Program (FMNP) is an adult education program developed by the University of Florida. FMNP Modules are offered in three subject areas: Freshwater Wetlands, Coastal Systems, and Upland Habitats. Each module meets for forty hours, as scheduled by the instructors.

If you are serving as a volunteer or professional in any nature center or park, or are just interested in what you can learn about Florida's outdoors, you should consider signing up. The cost is \$225, which will include two manuals on wetland habitats, videos and classroom instruction, and field trips. Completing the three courses certifies you as a Florida Master Naturalist.

Deadline for registration is July 29, 2010. Visit the Florida Master Naturalist Program website for more information and to register: www.masternaturalist.ifas.ufl.edu.