



# Oakland Nature Preserve, Inc.

PO Box 841 Oakland Florida 34760 Phone 407.905.0054

## Spring 2009

### *Message from the President*

Things are progressing well at the Oakland Nature Preserve! Our new building is beautiful and functional. The restoration of the site to more natural native plant communities is progressing and data on Lake Apopka shows a steady trend toward restoration of the former fishery that was enjoyed for years by many people.

We must now focus our attention toward the programs we want to offer. In addition to the recreational aspects of hiking and birding, we want to present educational programs for adults and students and our goal is to interpret cultural as well as natural history of West Orange County. We have an educational committee planning programs for student groups and we urge you to give us your ideas about programs you would enjoy.

We also have a library with collections of natural history books and magazines and a "kiddie corner" of activities and a touch table with all sorts of interesting objects. We hope to collaborate with the Winter Garden History Foundation on some good joint programs.

We have already scheduled some interpretive hikes for Sunday afternoons beginning at 2:00 PM. Future dates are already scheduled for May 3, June 7 and July 12. Plan to join us for a leisurely walk to different parts of the preserve to learn about the natural history of the area.

Our research about the cultural history of the area is really getting interesting. We learned there were at least six Indian tribes around the lake when the first settlers arrived around the middle 1800's. We are trying to learn as much as possible about this era and the years following as west Orange County developed into an important agricultural area. Anyone who can help us with family stories or artifacts is urged to communicate with us. We already have donations of many artifacts we can use to tell the story of early life here.

In addition to all these activities, we sincerely hope people will come here to just "hang out". Spend some time in one of our rocking chairs on the "Serenity Porch" or in a comfortable chair in the museum library looking over some of our collections. This wonderful project has been developed by hard-working volunteers and we want everyone to enjoy it. Better yet, sign up to join this interesting group of people and donate a few hours to this great effort. Those of us who have been involved find it extremely rewarding and we hope each of you will consider joining us.

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: **Volunteers have invested over** :  
: **17,500 hours to create and sustain** :  
: **the Oakland Nature Preserve.** :  
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### **ONP Educational Booth**

ONP volunteers are urged to help with our educational booths at two spring flower festivals: "Spring Fever in the Garden" in Winter Garden, April 18 and 19 and the Apopka Foliage Festival in Apopka on April 25 and 26. These festivals are lots of fun and we can meet many new people to tell them about ONP so please volunteer some time for each. Call Tom at (407) 905-0054 or email the volunteer committee at [volunteers@oaklandnaturepreserve.org](mailto:volunteers@oaklandnaturepreserve.org).

Educating • Conserving • Restoring

# The “Eagle Lady” Teaches Students and Adults About Conservation

by Mackenzie Filson

Being an inhabitant of Dr. Phillips tends to not allow a whole lot of contact with caracaras, owls, and other birds of prey. That is, if you don't count the owls I've watched in “Harry Potter” movies and Big Bird on Sesame Street.

When the Science Honor Society of Dr. Phillips High School and Mrs. Grable approached a few of us about volunteering at the Oakland Nature Preserve and going to listen to the Eagle Lady (a.k.a. Doris Mager) and her work with the eagles and other birds of prey, we definitely didn't expect the amazing afternoon we were about to have.



Cara the caracara and Mackenzie

Photo by Darla Miller

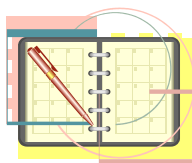
Like I said before, the extent of my experience with birds was observing the fleeting pigeons that seem to outnumber people at times and common parakeets at a friend's house, at best.

But it was really after hearing of the Eagle Lady's devotion to her birds, how she drove all night to pick up an injured screech owl in order to rehabilitate it, and actually meeting Cara the caracara hand-to-talon, so to speak, that really changed my perspective.

It almost seemed like when the Eagle Lady handled the birds, placed them on her arm, and spoke about their near-human personalities of E.T. the owl and Cara, that she didn't actually consider them just birds, but rather an extension of herself. You could tell by the way she described those birds that she loved her work.

Being a senior in high school about to go on to the big, daunting world that is college, I'm confronted with a question many other seniors are confronted with. We all question what we think we might love to do, career-wise, will make us happy and ultimately, allow us to feel that what we're doing doesn't feel like “work”. I know that for me, I will always hold the memory of the day we all shared with the Eagle Lady close to me, as she was a true example of someone who is so passionate for her work that it doesn't feel like “work” at all.

She is an amazing woman, who not only taught us a thing or two about what to look for in the real world of work and jobs we are about to approach, but also taught us not to look at Big Bird or parakeets the same way again.



## EVENTS TO NOTE

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**April 18-19:** Bloom and Grow Spring Fever in the Garden. Need volunteers to help set up a booth on Saturday morning, man it for both days and take down the booth on Sunday

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**April 20 - May 26:** Florida Master Naturalist Course. Details on next page.

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**April 25-26:** Apopka Foliage Festival. Again we need help with set-up, manning the booth and breakdown.

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**May 2:** We must begin the application of the exterior finish on the building and we cannot afford to hire someone to do it. Please reserve the date and help.

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**May 3, June 7 & July 12:** Educational tours of the Preserve lead by Jim Thomas. Meet at the Environmental Education Building at 2:00 pm.

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**May 9:** Regular Board Meeting 8:30 a.m. Entomology Group 10:00a.m.

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**June 20:** 2nd Annual Lake Apopka Cleanup.

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## Calling all Volunteers!

by Diane Bradley

Individuals enthusiastic about furthering the mission of Oakland Nature Preserve consider it fun and rewarding to spend time volunteering in the midst of impromptu bird concerts and wildflower explosions. Spring is a busy time of year at the Preserve, and there are plenty of projects where we could use additional assistance.

- Welcoming visitors to the new Environmental Education Center
  - Your cheerful smile and willingness to chat with visitors is what we are looking for. Our handy “cheat sheet” gives you the facts you need to know. Show people around the Ginn Museum and Rotary Classroom. Invite them to enjoy the Serenity Porch with its view of the uplands restoration area and bird watching possibilities.
- Providing guided trail and boardwalk tours
  - We welcome school and community groups to arrange guided tours of the Preserve. Your job is to interpret the progress of the restoration and aid in identification of plants and animals in the preserve. The Volunteer Committee provides training and materials for these activities.
- Assisting with horticultural maintenance
  - Tasks include planting, weeding, watering, and general landscape maintenance. This is not your average residential landscaping activity. Special rules apply, but never fear, our experts provide the guidance you need. You could even have the opportunity to participate in a plant rescue led by the Tarflower Chapter of Florida Native Plant Society.

All of this can be yours, and you don't even have to pay. We are looking for “sweat equity” from folks who want to share their enjoyment of the beauty of central Florida with others. If you have a few free hours, consider joining our team of dedicated volunteers. For more information, contact **Diane Bradley at Volunteers@OaklandNaturePreserve.org** or (407) 905 0054.

# Restoration Update

by Jackie Rolly

The newly founded "Gardening" volunteer program at Oakland Nature Preserve has been very busy and results are showing. We use the term "gardening" lightly, because it is more a case of extreme labor with the tedious removal of exotics (a continuing battle) and the planting of sandhill native plants. The hill in the middle of the parking lot has been the latest hard fought battle. Winter was a good time to tackle this project as most of the exotic grasses and vines were knocked back from the freezes, and it was easier doing hard labor in the cooler weather. In case anyone doubted the survival ability of native plants in the right community, you only had to see how our wire grass (*Aristida stricta*) survived being buried for years under various exotics such as johnson, natal, bahia, and cogon grasses, not to mention some very noxious vines.

For awhile the wire grass and the trees were all that were visible but in February approximately 100 Adams Needles (*Yucca filamentosa*) were planted on top of the hill and around the Preserve, and on 1 April about 180 rescued native grasses, flowering plants and vines were planted. You can already see the Rock Rose (*Helianthemum corymbosum*) in bloom, as well as Camphorweed (*Heterotheca subaxillaris*) and the primroses; hopefully the Greeneyes (*Berlandiera subacaulis*) and Roselings (*Cuthbertia ornata*) will perk up from being transplanted and start blooming. The majority of the plants are grasses needed to mitigate erosion on the hill. They are Pineland Dropseed (*Sporobolus junceus*), Blackseed Needlegrass (*Piptochaetium avenaceum*), Lopsided Indiangrass (*Sorghastrum secundum*), and of course, more wire grass.

Elsewhere other flowers are blooming, Indian Blanket flowers (*Gaillardia spp.*), Blue-eyed Grass (*Sisyrinchium atlanticum*), primroses, toad flax and others can be found around the Environmental Education Center. Since we've had a cold winter and cool spring, a lot of our native wildflowers are a little slow in coming up in the Restoration Area. The Piriqueta (*Piriqueta caroliniana*) is in bloom, but look for the



Diane Bradley and Jackie Rolly

Photo by Tom Rodriguez

Twin Flower (*Dyschoriste oblongifolia*), Prickly Pear Cactus (*Optunia humifusa*), and Penstemon (*Penstemon multiflorus*) to start blooming soon. The biggest news is the flowering of the blue lupine (*Lupinus difusus*) blooming in the restoration area. There are only two, but they are the first of this species to survive transplanting during a rescue. Take a look, but don't touch - we need the seeds so we can have more of these beautiful Spring-bloomers around the Preserve.

Another project in the Restoration area will be thinning out the Passion vine. It is coming back too abundantly and needs to be knocked back to allow our other natives to flourish and give the passion vine some competition. Thanks go to Diane Bradley, Nancy Mote, Andrea Burnap, Rick Wilson, Cara Hennen, Virginia Barton and Nancy Bauer, the "Gardening" volunteers who turn out regularly, for all their hard work. Continued thanks are extended to the Tarflower Chapter Salvage Committee for their hard work too.

*Jackie Rolly leads the restoration effort in the uplands surrounding the Environmental Education Center under the direction of Jim Thomas.*

## Florida Master Naturalist Course

Newly scheduled for April 20 - May 26, 2009

### Module: Uplands

Registration closes April 14, 2009 - Course Code: uh9-07

### Facility Information

Orange County Cooperative Extension Office: Magnolia Room  
6021 South Conway Road, Orlando, FL 32812

### Instructors Information

Jennifer Ramos, Extension Agent  
Assistant: Peggy Lantz, Oakland Nature Preserve volunteer  
Organization: UF/IFAS Orange County Extension  
Phone: 407-254-9224  
Fax: 407-850-5125  
Email: <mailto:jennifer.amos@ocfl.net>jennifer.amos@ocfl.net  
Web Site: <http://ocextension.ifas.ufl.edu/>http://ocextension.ifas.ufl.edu/

The FMNP is an environmental education curriculum offered by the University of Florida/IFAS, designed for adult audiences who wish to learn valuable information about Florida's natural history. The FMNP offers three modules: Coastal, Freshwater and Uplands. Each

module is 40 contact hours and includes workbooks, field trips, videos, presentations, and a final project. The FMNP provides information about Florida's plant and animal life, ecology, environmental ethics, and nature interpretation skills. In addition, teachers can be awarded in-service credits for FMNP modules, and professionals have been awarded CEUs for the program. Each module is \$225.

Certifications of achievement are provided for each of the FMNP modules and participants that complete all three modules are deemed Honor Roll Students and receive a framed Florida Master Naturalist diploma and are listed in an online database on our website. We hope you'll join us for this exciting class!

### Sandy K Mickey

Florida Master Naturalist Program Coordinator University of Florida, IFAS Southwest Florida Research & Education Center  
2686 State Road 29 North, Immokalee, FL 34142

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mailto:sandymickey@ufl.edu>sandymickey@ufl.edu

www.MasterNaturalist.org

## Membership Application

Name:

Organization:

Address:

C/S/Z:

Phone:

Fax:

Email:

**Membership Categories:** Please indicate your choice

- Student or Youth - \$5.00
- Individual - \$10.00
- Family - \$25.00
- Sponsor - \$50.00
- Patron - \$125.00

Make check payable to ONP and mail to Oakland Nature Preserve.



More photos from the restoration. Diane and Jackie working in the parking area island, above. The blue lupine in bloom below.

*Photos by Tom Rodriguez*



## Honor Roll of Festival Sponsors

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Greenbriar Landscape

Visit our website at

[www.oaklandnaturepreserve.org](http://www.oaklandnaturepreserve.org)

Up-to-date information on activities at the preserve

Printable color version of the newsletter.

## Dogs Banned from Oakland Nature Preserve

The Oakland Nature Preserve Board of Directors have voted to ban all pets from entry to the Preserve. This was a difficult decision since so many people have used the area for exercising their dogs.

The decision was necessary because the presence of a dog in a preserve is very disruptive to many native wildlife species, some of which will abandon their territories because of the dogs. The Board was reminded that this is a designated nature preserve, not a park, and one of the major goals there is restoration and creation of habitat for species native to the area. This is a very important process because of the major disruption of natural ecosystems in West Orange County, which has occurred in past years.

The Board was also notified that many visitors did not obey the rules about keeping dogs leashed at all times and that they did not clean up after their pets, creating more problems in the preserve.

The statement from the Board after this decision is that they hope everyone will understand the reasons and will continue to support this project that is so important to this area.