



Osprey Observer Spring 2022

EDUCATING . CONSERVING . RESTORING

Message from the President

by Jim Peterson

I recently stumbled upon the topic of books about the sounds of nature. There are several out there and some contain actual recordings from nature, others talk about the sounds relating to nature photography. There are birding books and websites. There are background nature recordings to relax you, and there are recordings of animals like whales that are truly mesmerizing. This topic really struck home for me.

My wife and I have a goal, when we go for a walk or when are out on the water, that we will have a destination to stop along our trip, where we can't hear traffic or man-made sounds. Part of the whole benefit of getting out in nature must be when you get to that location where you only hear the natural sounds around you. It might range from a single bird calling, or maybe as complex as a group of animals. It could be as simple as the wind blowing in some trees or water lapping on a shoreline. Those sounds provide an escape from the sounds experienced from our daily hectic urban lives.

A few years ago, Ellen, an environmental scientist, working on our team at the water management district, was planning to move away to Utah. We were out in a marsh sampling when she asked if we could stop talking for a few minutes so she could record the marsh sounds on her phone. There were frogs croaking, wading birds scolding, and Gallinules squawking around us. Ellen moved away, hopefully taking that recording with her, but I still get to work in Florida marshes almost daily. I often think about Ellen and try to stop and appreciate the sounds, as well as the sites, when I am out there. I am slowly losing my hearing now and I hope that if I lost it completely, I would still remember these sounds. I thank Ellen and my wife for helping me remember to always listen as well as observe nature.

We really need to fight hard for more nature-inspiring areas of this state, and I hope we will continue to protect and preserve our natural lands for plants and wildlife corridors, water recharge and protection, and for our own wellbeing. Please remember to stop and listen when you are out enjoying nature.

Earth Day is April 22 and also our event, Bubbly on the Boardwalk! Please check our website for other upcoming events.

Thanks for your support.

Upcoming Events

- Senior Strides – Thursdays at 9:30
 - Yoga at the Lake – Sat. at 9:30
 - Chair Yoga on the Porch – Sat. at 10:30
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- April 22 – Bubbly on the Boardwalk
 - April 24 – FOLA40
 - April 27 – FMNP Wildlife Monitoring Class Begins
 - April 30 – Youth Climate Project Celebration
 - May 7 – Mindful Hike and Yoga
 - May 14 – Blue Hike Alexander Springs
 - June 5 – Audubon Bird Survey
 - June 11 – Blue Hike Lake Norris
 - June 13 – ONP Summer Camps Begin
 - July 6 – Story Time in the Museum



**Be sure to follow us on Facebook
for Preserve news and events!**



Nature Fest at Oakland Nature Preserve



**SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 24
10AM-3PM**

Wildlife Encounters

Guided Hikes

Food

Lake Apopka Boat Tours



Children's Activities

Merchants & Vendors

Presentations

...and much more!



All proceeds support the
Oakland Nature Preserve
www.OaklandNaturePreserve.org



Sponsorship Opportunities Nature Fest at Oakland Nature Preserve

	Lake Apopka \$5,000	Gopher Tortoise \$2,500	Longleaf \$1,000	Bobcat \$500
Available	1	3	5	10
	Preserve Benefits	Preserve Benefits	Preserve Benefits	Preserve Benefits
Family Memberships	5	4	3	2
T-Shirts	5	4	3	2
	Event Benefits	Event Benefits	Event Benefits	Event Benefits
Exhibitor Space	2	1	1	1
Speaking Opportunity	1			
	Event Recognition	Event Recognition	Event Recognition	Event Recognition
Sponsor Board	Most Prominent Logo Most Prominent Logo Most Prominent Logo	Prominent Logo Prominent Logo Prominent Logo	Logo Logo Logo	Logo Logo Logo
	Additional Recognition	Additional Recognition	Additional Recognition	Additional Recognition
Preserve Website	Most Prominent Logo -w- Link	Prominent Logo -w- Link	Logo -w- Link	Logo -w- Link
Social Media	Acknowledgment	Acknowledgment	Acknowledgment	Acknowledgment
Digital Newsletter (Fall Edition)	Most Prominent Logo	Prominent Logo	Logo	Logo

Visit www.OaklandNaturePreserve.org/naturefest

Email jhunt@OaklandNaturePreserve.org

Call 407-905-0054

“Do good, people.”



A big congratulations to our longtime friend & Board Member Peggy Lantz who received the Florida Botanical Excellence Award at the 11th annual Florida Herbal Conference this weekend!

Peggy has been an amazing influence on so many visitors, volunteers, and staff at the Preserve. She is an amazing author and mentor, we are truly honored to know her, and look forward to our continued friendship together.

In the words of Peggy: "do good, people."

Blue Hike Paddle Tours

ONP is delighted to announce upcoming Spring dates of our Blue Hike Paddle Tours. This special program is made possible by generous support from Duke Energy. ONP's Blue Hikes show paddlers the natural beauty, history, plants, and animals of Lake Apopka, along with an interpretative telling of the restoration progress of the lake. They have since diversified to include several other locations, highlighting features and importance of many other central Florida's waterways. Upcoming Blue Hikes include:

- May 12 – Alexander Springs
- June 11 – Lake Norris



Biodiversity through Pyromania by Jackie Rolly



On Tuesday, 12 April, 2022, Oakland Nature Preserve (ONP) had another successful controlled burn. This time the two-acre area off the Purple Trail and near Amon Pavilion was burned for the first time since undergoing restoration; although the two areas on either side of Amon Pavilion had been restored several years ago, they had never been burned. ONP was concerned that those two little parcels were too close to Oakland Avenue, but it needed it, so we did it.

It took over a year in the two-acre parcel to remove the nonnative trees and plants and three years to grow the appropriate plants to be able to burn this area. So restoration does not happen overnight.

The winds cooperated for the burn, coming out of the southeast and blowing the smoke away from Oakland Avenue, SR 50, and the Turnpike. We think the bikers on the trail didn't even notice that the Preserve was burning! If they did, no one got excited, and that's good. We want the homeowners and visitors to know we are very careful with these burns, we only burn small areas, and weather patterns have to be just right. Someone must have called a news channel, however, because the helicopter sure stayed awhile.

As planned, it was a very low fire, burning just the grasses and pine needles and a lot of the small fallen woody debris. In less than two hours we were in mop up phase, that is, putting out the small wood debris flames. The fire did not burn the whole area but actually ended with a mosaic pattern, which is most desirable. This allows insects and animals to remain in the area with some habitat and food.

Controlled burns remove old dead grass and plant material, allowing seeds to sprout and reducing the threat of wildfire. Lightning season will soon be upon us, and without controlled burns, lightning could start wildfires.

Now the fun part begins –seeing the grasses bounce back, giving the gopher tortoises and rabbits fresh new growth to eat. It is amazing to watch how fast not only the grasses, but the saw palmettoes and wildflowers grow right back. Please do not walk through what looks like a moonscape, though; you might be crushing the new wildflowers. Enjoy from the trails.

Bubbly on the Boardwalk



**Friday, April 22
6:00pm-9:00pm
Oakland Nature Preserve**

Join us for an evening stroll at the Preserve!

Enjoy an evening stroll down the Healthy West Orange Boardwalk and enjoy bubbly, selection of other wines, beer, and sweet treats at the lake.

www.OaklandNaturePreserve.org/bubbly

Reservations Required Adults Only Please

New Restrooms / New Art at ONP!

3 local artists have shared their talents by adding door murals representing different aspects of the Preserve including plants, animals, and beautiful Lake Apopka to the inside of the new restroom doors. Thank you for your amazing work!

Katie Parrulli is a local artist and teacher. She has taught and done numerous art projects for Oakland Nature Preserve. Her artistry also extends into the world of cakes. When she's not baking or painting, she teaches at The Lighthouse School of Winter Garden. She loves helping children find their creativity!

Contact information: kparrulli@gmail.com

Katie's door mural takes a close look at some of the beautiful flora found at the Preserve in a fun pop art inspired style.



Karen McGowen has been creating community artwork for over 20 years. Her work has been featured as a festival poster, two Cub Scout badges, countless t-shirt designs through Amazon, and murals decorating establishments in Houma Louisiana and Auburn Alabama. Her charity work includes painting rain barrels and decoy ducks, to commission paintings for the wetlands. She owned an art education studio, Creative U, for almost 10 years. Karen is now currently the art instructor at The Lighthouse School of Winter Garden. If you are interested in contacting her for mural work or freelance commission work, please email at Karen.art@yahoo.com.

Karen's folk art door mural celebrates the diversity of life found on Lake Apopka.



Laura VonMutius began painting murals at age twelve when her parents allowed her to create underwater, African safari and beach murals around their family home. Laura eventually attended Florida

State University for Art Education and Art History. Now aside from her job as a filmmaker, Laura also creates art in many forms from sewing and embroidery to ceramics and, of course, she still paints.

Laura's door mural, "We Are All Connected", was inspired by both retro mid-century shapes and modern minimalist line art. Combining the two, Laura wanted to show how with one continuous line all the native animals and people who touch the door handle are indeed all connected.

This project was made possible by grants from 2 local foundations and the Town of Oakland. Along with the additional facilities the Preserve will be able to hook into the town's sewer system.



We Dig Our Volunteers! by Nicole O'Brien

We had some wonderful groups help with a variety of projects this winter. West Orange Junior Service League members and their families helped prepare Pioneer Hill and gave a refresh to Nature Play and members also served food and beverages at our 2nd Annual Pours at the Preserve in February. Garney Construction, Inc built the new wooden boxes on Pioneer Hill – an interactive area will be completed in the coming weeks with a pioneer garden, medicinal plant garden, an archaeological dig area, and a working water pump. We also had a group of international students from the Valencia College Community College Initiative assist with removal of downed trees and limbs.



Every hour volunteers invest here helps the Preserve provide more opportunities for our community to explore, learn about, and develop an appreciation for the environment. We are extremely grateful for all the hard work! To learn more about volunteering, visit www.oaklandnaturepreserve.org/volunteer.

Spring Fun in Oakland

A huge thank you to the Town of Oakland for hosting another great Celebration Among the Oaks! All your hard work and planning showed as the families enjoyed the day.



Take a (Mindful) Hike!

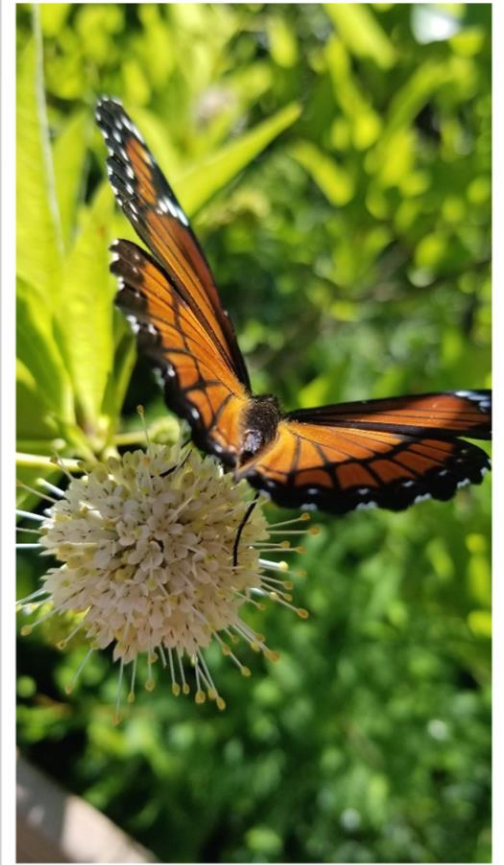
by Christina Hunt (The Barefoot Gnome)

Being in nature has always been a huge part of my life. As a child I spent my days up trees or riding my bike or catching lizards. Now, as an adult, you'll just as likely find me out on a hiking trail or stomping through the woods in search of edible plants to forage. But one of my favorite ways to connect with nature (because connecting with nature is always my ultimate goal) is to take a mindful hike through the Oakland Nature Preserve.

A mindful hike is a very simple thing. It is the practice of becoming aware of your surroundings and how your body and mind feel while moving through nature. Consciously engaging our senses when hiking not only calms and grounds us, it allows us to recognize the intricacies of how we are all connected; the trees with their roots winding through the soil, where worms and insects make their homes in the dirt, the birds in the branches, and us amongst the undergrowth. We can see the tiny spider spin its web or the squirrel search diligently for last year's hoard of acorns and know that we are one and the same.

If you ever find yourself lost (metaphorically speaking) or lonely, you can go into the woods and be held by Mother Earth, her arms around you, the sun to warm you. And when we embrace that unconditional love that nature provides and offer gratitude by acknowledging it all, we become happier and healthier human beings. And it is by simply opening our senses and allowing ourselves to be fully present that we can do this. So, I encourage you, whether it's for hours on the trail, or just a few moments amongst the flowers, to get into nature and take a mindful hike of your own.

Christina, aka the Barefoot Gnome, is a yoga teacher, mindful art facilitator and outdoor educator. Join her each Saturday for yoga at the Preserve.



What's In Bloom

With longer days, many plants are blooming earlier than usual, so there is more to see at the Preserve!

Here are some of what are in bloom right now:

As the Coral Honeysuckle in the Honor Forest blooms, it attracts many pollinators including Ruby-throated Hummingbirds, native bees, and butterflies. The fruits attract Purple Finches, Goldfinches, and American Robins. It is also a larval host for both the Spring Azure butterfly, *Celastrina ladon*, and the Snowberry Clearwing butterfly, *Hemaris diffinis*.



Coralbean is a butterfly and hummingbird attractant. The seeds are poisonous to humans if eaten. Sensitivity to a toxin varies with a person's age, weight, physical condition, and individual susceptibility. Children are most vulnerable because of their curiosity and small size. Toxicity can vary in a plant according to season, the plant's different parts, and its stage of growth. Be sure your children are aware of this danger. The seeds are attractive, so point them out to your children and warn them not to eat anything wild without checking it with you first.



Spiderworts are in bloom around the parking lots and education center at the Preserve. Each flower lasts less than a day, but the plants put out new flowers early very morning for six to eight weeks.

Spiderwort's blooms are also dictated by the daily weather patterns. Commonly, blooms open during the cool morning hours. As the day wears on, the bloom closes up before the onslaught of the afternoon sun.

That one bloom will not open again; it only has a few

short hours to attract butterflies and other insects for pollination! The next day, however, prompts another bloom opening from the same cluster so that pollination possibilities increase. The leaves and stems have juice with some medicinal qualities similar to aloe vera, providing comfort when rubbed on scratches and bug bites such as spider bites, which is probably where it got its name. "Wort" is an Old English word for plant.



Who is on the Prowl at Oakland Nature Preserve?

Our Trail Cameras are staying very active photographing resident bobcats, coyotes, raccoons, opossums, and rabbits in the uplands. They snapped a bobcat family recently, along with owls, and a Whip-poor-will (a first on the cameras at ONPI!). Check out the album in the museum or our Facebook page for the most recent photos. A big thank you to our wonderful volunteer Gloria, who keeps the kiosk on the Orange Trail updated with recent photos too!

