



# Osprey Observer Summer 2020

EDUCATING . CONSERVING . RESTORING

## Message from the President

by Jim Peterson

Hopefully we are mostly past the COVID-19 pandemic of 2020 although the data suggests a concerning upward trend in cases as our state allows more businesses and services to reopen. I hope everyone will be able to safely return to their jobs and to their normal routines soon. Our condolences to those who had family members that caught this terrible virus.

We all hope that this will be the only pandemic in our lifetimes. As a scientist, I always want to ask: Why did this happen, how did it happen, and will it happen again?

There are still ongoing investigations on how the pandemic started, but it is believed to have begun in a market in Wuhan, China, where many animals were held together in confined, unsanitary spaces. It is believed that the virus spread from bats, to other mammals such as the civet or pangolin, then to humans. Several other viruses have spread from bats to humans in the past, including Ebola and SARS. Why? Scientists have discovered that bats have a very robust and fast responding immune system that causes viruses to become very virulent in the bat community. When one of these viruses spreads to another animal lacking that same fast responding immune system, the other animal can quickly become overwhelmed by the virus.

Due to the recent COVID-19 coronavirus, should we fear bats? No, bats are important to our ecosystem. As they forage, bats pollinate over 500 plant species world-wide. Insect eating bats consume their body weight in insects every night. Remember that some insects like mosquitos carry diseases that harm humans including Zika, Dengue, and Malaria. Some estimates are that bats save U.S. agriculture billions of dollars in pest control every year. If we respect the bats and leave them in their natural environment, bats should not pose a risk to humans. In fact, bats should fear us. Due to loss of habitat, extermination by humans, wind turbine collisions, disease, and animal / guano harvesting, at least 24 bat species are critically endangered world-wide.

I am sure that the COVID-19 pandemic will change the way we do many things in our lives as we go forward. At Oakland Nature Preserve we have made some difficult decisions regarding our traditional camps this summer due to safety concerns. Instead, we have decided to hold smaller groups in one-day adventure camps so we can social distance and keep students and instructors safe. We will be following numerous steps and procedures to ensure the safety of everyone at the Preserve.

The Oakland Nature Preserve received some fantastic news recently. The West Orange Healthcare District just awarded us a grant to replace the decking boards on our boardwalk. We are in the process of replacing the current pressure treated boards with longer-lasting plastic deck boards. Thank you Healthy West Orange!

The trails and the boardwalk at the preserve are now open. Please come out and visit but do keep a safe social distance between yourself and other visitors. As construction begins on the boardwalk, sections may be closed during the week but not the weekend. Please check our website for announcements, upcoming events, and fundraisers.

Thank you for your support and stay safe everyone!



**OAKLAND  
HERITAGE  
& WILDLIFE FESTIVAL**

**November 14, 2020**

10am – 4pm

Speer Park, Oakland

**Sponsorship and Vendor/Exhibitor opportunities now available!**

For more information visit:

[oaklandnaturepreserve.org/Oakland-Heritage-&-Wildlife-Festival](http://oaklandnaturepreserve.org/Oakland-Heritage-&-Wildlife-Festival)

## **WE NEED YOUR HELP!**

Like many, the Preserve has lost income due to the cancellation of many programs, camps, and our large fundraiser *Night at the Preserve*. We are in need of funding to help keep our programs, boardwalk, and buildings open. We don't charge an admission but are open every day of the year for all to enjoy. We are asking you to please donate to the Preserve or become a member to help keep this local gem thriving.

For membership information or to donate to ONP visit:

[OaklandNaturePreserve.org](http://OaklandNaturePreserve.org)

# BOARDWALK RENOVATION AT OAKLAND NATURE PRESERVE AWARDED \$365,393 GRANT

Local senior-living facilities eager to use new boardwalk for monthly resident walks.

WINTER GARDEN, Fla. (June 9, 2020) — A \$365,393 grant from the West Orange Healthcare District will help Oakland Nature Preserve replace an iconic boardwalk that will soon be known as the “Healthy West Orange Boardwalk at Oakland Nature Preserve.”

Originally built in 2002, the wooden boardwalk will be completely renovated with new, more durable composite decking along all 3,100 feet. The boardwalk, which crosses over uplands and wetlands and is home to a wide variety of flora, fauna and Florida wildlife, has become a fitness staple among local hikers, walkers and runners of all ages—especially active and aging seniors.

“Research suggests that having access to the outdoors motivates seniors to be active physically, spiritually and socially, which can offset chronic illness, disability and isolation,” said Oakland Nature Preserve Managing Director Jennifer Hunt. A 2015 scientific study in Vancouver found that green and “blue” spaces with running or still water promote feelings of renewal, restoration and spiritual connectedness, and provide places for multi-generational social interactions and engagement.

Hunt said the preserve already has commitments from three senior-living facilities in the area to make the new boardwalk part of their resident walking programs, including Sonata West and Golden Pond in Winter Garden, and Madison at Ocoee.

“We’re excited that these improvements will enhance and expand programming for seniors and ensure residents of west orange have access to this beautiful resource for years to come,” said West Orange Healthcare District CEO Tracy Swanson.

## About the West Orange Healthcare District

The West Orange Healthcare District (WOHD) is an independent special healthcare district created in 1949 by the Florida Legislature and governed by a 16-member, volunteer board appointed by the Governor of Florida. Now in its 71st year, the District has awarded more than \$180 million in local community grants to enhance residents’ health and wellness. For more, visit [www.wohd1949.org](http://www.wohd1949.org).





# Birds at Oakland Nature Preserve

---

by Jim Helmers

This spring, volunteer bird watching experts visited the Preserve to document what birds are using the Red Trail area. This area is being restored to what it was in the 1800s. It has been in citrus for over eighty years until the freezes of the 1980s moved the citrus belt south. Then in the early 1990s the area was planted as a sand pine plantation. The area was added to the Preserve during this last phase and the sand pines were logged off in 2013. That logging was a major disturbance for the area but change is part of nature. We have been restoring it to a longleaf, wiregrass sandhill community which is what it was naturally and is one of the most diverse ecosystems in the world. The Red Trail is now in early succession which means it is early in its' return to a mature forest. Through our work and the energy from the sun the area is teeming with life. The plants bring the insects which bring the birds. Birds eat the plant seeds and the insects during their nesting and migration.



The bird watchers saw 43 different species of birds on the Red Trail in a couple of hours the morning of February 29th. These included ground nesting doves and turkeys, cavity nesting woodpeckers and bluebirds and tree nesting birds. Also, birds (brown-headed cowbirds) that don't actually nest but lay their eggs in the nests of other birds that incubate and feed them. They saw migrants on their long journey north, wading birds, water birds and raptors (eagles, hawks etc.). Bird scavengers (vultures) that eat dead animals, birds who catch insects in the air like swallows and martins, and birds that feed on the ground. Beautiful birds like Eastern bluebirds, goldfinches and painted buntings, and not so pretty birds like the black and turkey vultures.

All of these birds have a place in our world and the ecosystem we are working to restore and preserve. To all of our members, donors and volunteers, thanks for supporting ONP and making this work possible.

# A DAY OF COMMUNITY FUN AND GREAT MUSIC

## Jazz legend Ron Carter will headline at this year's Oakland Heritage & Wildlife Festival

In November, we will celebrate our community's natural and cultural history at a day of free family fun that supports our non-profit Oakland Nature Preserve. At this year's Oakland Heritage & Wildlife Festival, activities will include historical, cultural, and wildlife presentations, a silent auction, musical entertainment, children's activities, food, numerous vendors, and much more.



Our musical entertainment headliner is the Ron Carter Trio. Ron Carter is a legendary jazz bassist who has performed all over the world and recorded over 2,500 albums. He began his career in the early 1960s, honing his signature style of harmonic and rhythmic bass lines that are rich in detail, pure in sound and technically impressive.

HAPCO Music Foundation is hosting the jazz trio's performance, which is presented in collaboration with Pappy Martin Legacy Jazz Collective and Tennessee Valley Jazz Society and supported by Presenter Consortium for Jazz, a program of Chamber Music America, funded through the generosity of the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation.

"We are so honored to share the music of Ron Carter at this year's Festival," said HAPCO Founder and Oakland Town Commissioner Joseph McMullen. "Mr. Carter is a world-class jazz artist who has broken ground in jazz bass technique and performance. We look forward to hearing this influential jazz great perform," he said.

Ron Carter is an innovator in jazz style – as he puts it, "A good bassist determines the direction of any band." Often, he uses gonglike tones and glissandos in his work. Once his exclusive trademark, these sounds have now become part of every modern bassist's vocabulary. He was among the few bassists who continued to play acoustic bass when many turned to electric bass. "It was a conscious choice," he said. "I felt a responsibility to present a viable alternative to the popular electric sound."

Mr. Carter has been a guiding influence in the world of music since he began his career in the early 1960s. He was a member of Miles Davis' now classic quintet from 1963-68, along with Herbie Hancock, Tony Williams and Wayne Shorter.

He won a Grammy Award in 1988 for the instrumental composition, Call Sheet Blues, from the film 'Round Midnight.' He scored and arranged music for a number of other films including The Passion of Beatrice, Haraka, Exit Ten and A Gathering of Old Men. His solo bass recording of the Bach Cello Suites on compact disc was certified Gold in 1988.

"HAPCO is committed to helping the young people in our community improve their lives through arts and music education," said McMullen. "We help them use their talents to pursue careers in the arts or as a means to fund their higher education. Mr. Carter's long-term commitment to music education aligns with our mission of mentoring our future generations of musicians and artists," he said.

Mr. Carter has lectured, conducted and performed at clinics and master classes, instructing jazz ensembles and teaching the business of music at numerous colleges. He was Artistic Director of the Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz Studies while it was located in Boston and, after 18 years on the faculty of the Music Department of The City College of New York, he is now Distinguished Professor Emeritus.

“Education has always served to increase my awareness,” said Carter. “Teaching helps me better understand what it is that I do. The students walk away with the history of string bass; and they become more cognizant of jazz history. Also, their questions – about jazz publishing, copyright laws, and recording contracts – are answered firsthand.”

Mr. Carter’s many awards include being named Most Valuable Player, Acoustic Bass, by the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences as well as citations by the Jaoan All-Star Jazz Poll and the Swing Journal Readers Poll. He was voted Outstanding Bassist of the Decade by the Detroit News and Jazz Bassist of the Year by Downbeat magazine.

He has recorded with many of the greatest names in music: Oliver Nelson, Tommy Flanagan, Gil Scott-Heron, Gil Evans, Lena Horn, James Brown, Coleman Hawkins, Bill Evans, Carlos Santana, Aretha Franklin, Sonny Rollins, Paul Simon, Janis Ian, Bette Midler, Benny Goodman, George Benson, B.B. King, Eric Gale, Johnny Hodges, Antonio Carlos Jobim, The Kronos Quartet, Dexter Gordon, Helen Merrill, J.J. Johnson, Benny Golson, Sir Roland Hanna, Stan Getz, and Jessye Norman.

Mr. Carter is the author of *Building Jazz Bass Lines*, a series of books on playing jazz; a *Comprehensive Bass Method*, for classical bass studies; *Ron Carter, Bass Lines*; and *The Music of Ron Carter*, which contains 130 of his published and recorded compositions.

He earned a bachelor’s degree in music from the Eastman School of Music and a master’s degree in double bass from the Manhattan School of Music. He has received two honorary doctorates, from the New England Conservatory of Music and the Manhattan School of Music.



## Save the Date

Saturday, November 14 –  
for a day of community  
fun and great music,  
benefiting our Oakland  
Nature Preserve.





# Who is on the Prowl at Oakland Nature Preserve?

by Denise Byrne

ONP is excited to highlight a very special critter that has been photographed by our Trail Cameras in recent weeks (and a first time in our trail camera history): A Black Bear!



While there has NEVER been a fatal predatory bear attack on a human in Florida, we would like to take this opportunity to remind people to be “bear aware” when enjoying the trails at the Preserve, especially in the early morning and as sunset approaches.

Studies show black bears avoid confrontations more than 90% of the time. They are naturally shy animals that will generally give plenty of warnings (e.g. jaw popping, huffing, bluff charging) before charging. In all cases of conflict, the bear was acting in a defensive manner to protect itself, its young, or a food source.

People must manage “unnatural” food sources when bears are in the area. ONP has taken this opportunity to become “bear aware” at the Preserve by removing the regular trash cans from around the Preserve, instead storing our trash in a new bear-proof trash can on the porch of the Educational Center, and we encourage picnickers to do the same. We have also removed the bird feeders from the Preserve for the time being.

It is very important to not let Bears have access and become conditioned to easy food sources such as garbage, barbecue grills, pet food, and bird seed. As bears become “food-conditioned”, they are more likely to frequent residential areas and cause property damage to get these unnatural food sources.



Bears roam great distances at night in search of food. ONP reminds its neighbors to secure all trash in garages or sheds and to put out trash the morning of pickup rather than the night before.

Thank you for helping us keep our resident black bear, and the other critters that call the Preserve home, safe and welcome!

# Fire Flowers

by Jackie Rolly

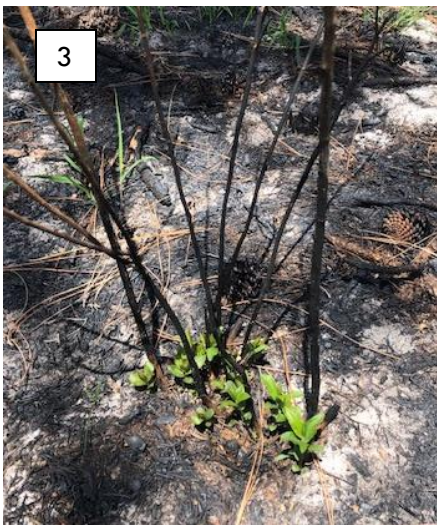
On 29 April, 2020, the Oakland Nature Preserve conducted another prescribed burn on several acres in the front area. The burn went like clockwork: the winds cooperated, the fuels burned like they were supposed to, and the smoke stayed away from major roads and houses.

The reason for prescribed burns, and this article, is about how our native plants and wildlife react to fire. Since they have evolved with fire through the millennium, they have amazing adaptations. For those Preserve visitors who came to walk the trails during the pandemic time and after the fire, you will have noticed how quickly the grasses re-sprouted. Within days, the burned areas were green. Photo 1 taken 29 April on back acre. Photo 2 taken on 4 May, same area.

Although the grasses grew quickly – giving the Gopher Tortoises a

wonderful salad bar within 2-3 days – the flowering plants were just as amazing. During a field trip some time ago to Withlacoochee State Park, Vince Morris, Park Ranger, mentioned that he could determine the date of a burn by the blooming of various flowers. So I was inspired to record that at ONP. I started keeping a journal of when flowers sprouted and/or bloomed after a burn. I was amazed to note that the Passionvine (*Passiflora incarnata*), Goldenrod (*Solidago* sp.), Silkgrass (*Pityopsis graminifolia*), Skullcap (*Scutellaria integrifolia*), Elephant's Foot (*Elephantopus elatus*), and others were sprouting within 10 days. Within less than three weeks, Greeneyes (*Berlandiera subacaulis*) was even blooming. This photo shows a Goldenrod (*Solidago* sp.) burned to a crisp on 29 April, and on 13 May, it already has green shoots (photo 3). Photo 4 shows a Greeneyes (*Berlandiera subacaulis*) burned on 29 April, now in bloom on 20 May – probably sooner but I couldn't take the photo until then.

As for wildlife, in particular birds, you would think that by May there would be fewer birds at the Preserve, since the winter birds would have migrated and the burned areas would not support much bird life. Quite the opposite. Audubon volunteers counted 21 species of birds on 29 February 2020, and 32 species on 16 May 2020, with the majority seen around the burned areas. One special bird was the Sharp Shinned Hawk, not previously recorded. Maybe the birds were just more visible, or maybe the insects had no place to hide; whatever the reason, it is obvious that prescribed burns benefit the natural Sandhill community, both flora and fauna.





# Fire at ONP

by:

**David Hogrefe**, President of Sandpine Alliance,  
Certified Prescribed Burn Manager

**Brent Saulsbury**, Biologist 1, Certified Prescribed Burn Manager,  
Natural Resources Programs, University of Central Florida



On May 5th, Oakland Nature Preserve held a prescribed burn on the Red Trail. This ten-acre unit is bounded by urban interface on three sides. The fourth side is an overgrown oak hammock and wetlands by Lake Apopka that will soon be developed. Restoration back to Sandhill habitat from citrus and a sand pine farm started in 2013 and has been planted in wiregrass, wildflowers, and longleaf pines over several years.

Sandhill ecosystems are highly diverse forests with rolling hills with many longleaf pines and hardwoods such as turkey oaks and blue jack oaks. The understory includes mainly grasses and perennials native only to this central Florida region. Many animals depend upon the threatened Sandhill ecosystems that remain in Clermont, Oakland, Winter Garden, and Ocoee communities. The open canopy of this habitat makes Oakland Nature Preserve suitable for black bears, wild turkey, bobcats, gopher tortoises, fox squirrels, and indigo snakes, and more that call this home.

For hundreds of years, fires started by lightning strikes swept across Florida's many types of natural communities. The plants and animals of this Sandhill ecosystem are well-adapted to fire, and, in fact, community structure and function are dependent on these events happening every two to four years. Burns like this are critical for ecological restoration. The purpose of this prescribed, or controlled burn, is to provide the benefits of a wildfire to the natural ecosystem, while minimizing the likelihood of an out-of-control wildfire occurring to the neighborhood that borders it. It is critical to conduct these controlled burns every two to four years to reduce the buildup of hazardous vegetation, which can cause disastrous wildfires if ignited by lightning or human causes. You only have to watch the news to see the destruction of a wildfire.

This was the first burn in this section of ONP since restoration started. A highlight of this burn is that the section has over 45 feet of elevation change from its eastern side to its peak near the southwest corner. It may not seem like a lot, but that is a significant hill around these parts, and the greater the slope, the faster a fire will move uphill.

The burn was started with a backing fire on the northeast corner, with the intention of starting the main fire on the southeast. But the winds changed, pushing the backing fire up the slope at such a good pace that little further ignition in the interior was needed, even with the winds blowing out of the southwest. We made it work by bringing the flanks, the right and left side of the fire, up with it.

It went so well that the burn was well completed before noon. Before the fun of mop-up began, there were several comments from crewmembers that this was the fastest backing fire they had ever been on!

# Registration Opening Soon

## Florida Master Naturalist Programs

Environmental Interpretation

Upland Systems

**Join us for these exciting classes!**

The Florida Master Naturalist Program (FMNP) is an adult education UF/IFAS Extension program developed by the University of Florida. FMNP training will benefit persons interested in learning more about Florida's environment or wishing to increase their knowledge for the use in education programs, volunteers, employees, ecotourism, and others.

Registration for these live online classes via Zoom will begin later this summer, course dates TDB. Follow us on Facebook or check our website for more information.

For more information on class schedule, instructors, field trip locations, and to register please go to [www.masternaturalist.ifas.ufl.edu](http://www.masternaturalist.ifas.ufl.edu). Select "Current Course Offerings", go to Uplands or Environmental Interpretation, and then Orange County.

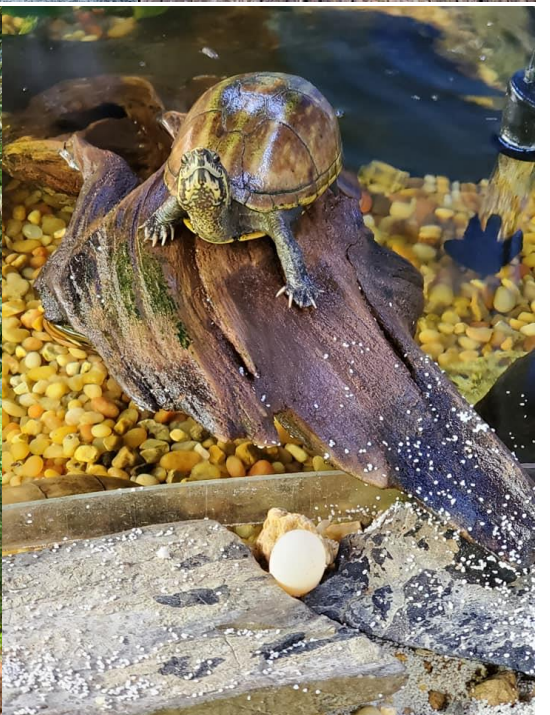


Oakland Nature Preserve, Oakland, FL  
[www.oaklandnaturepreserve.org](http://www.oaklandnaturepreserve.org)

407-905-0054











## 23rd Annual Heritage & Wildlife Festival

**SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 14TH**

**10AM-4PM**

**SPEER PARK, OAKLAND**



Special performance of the Ron Carter Trio will take place at 2:30, presented in collaboration with Pappy Martin Legacy Jazz Collective and Tennessee Valley Jazz Society, supported by Presenter Consortium for Jazz, a program of Chamber Music America, funded through the generosity of the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation.

**Heritage Presentations · Silent Auction**

**Food · Live Entertainment · Merchants & Vendors**

**Lake Apopka Boat Tours · Wildlife Up-close**

**Hay Rides · Kid's Activities**



OAKLAND NATURE  
PRESERVE

**HAPCO**  
MUSIC YOUTH ARTS

All proceeds support the Oakland Nature Preserve  
[www.OaklandNaturePreserve.org](http://www.OaklandNaturePreserve.org)