



Osprey Observer Winter 2019

EDUCATING . CONSERVING . RESTORING

Message from the President

by Jim Peterson

It has been a great 2019 at the Oakland Nature Preserve. It is the time of year to look back and say thank you everyone who helped us to accomplish our mission this year. First, I want to say thanks to:

- Our members and supporters who renewed or became members for the first time.
- The groups and individuals who sponsored our fundraising events this year.
- Our talented board of directors and officers who volunteered their time.
- The individuals and groups who provided volunteer restoration labor, repair labor, and helped us with our events this year.
- The Town of Oakland for partnering with us and providing staff assistance, project help, and financial support.
- Local foundations that have supported us since the Preserve began to whom we owe a huge amount of gratitude for their financial assistance.
- The support we receive from Orange County. Is also greatly appreciated.
- A huge thank you must go to our great staff. The preserve has the most talented, caring, and energetic staff that put their energy into teaching students and families about the environment and Lake Apopka every single day. They are truly a fantastic and dedicated group. They are teaching our future leaders who will have a better understanding and appreciation of nature from what they have learned.

We still have several large projects to fund and complete at the Preserve, including: decking replacement of our boardwalk, additional bathrooms, refurbishing our historic fish camp cabin, additional trail work, and installation of a pole barn. We are also looking for summer camp sponsorship and still have a lot of upland restoration work to complete. We are always looking for ways to fund these projects, so if you have ideas or if you can help, please let us know. Any assistance or donations are always welcome and appreciated. Donations and membership funds go straight into our operating fund to keep the preserve going unless the donor requests the funds go to a specific project.

We have some fantastic events coming to the Preserve early next year. We will have our annual Open House on January 25; our annual Night at the Preserve will be held March 28, and our first “virtual” run this Spring. Please mark your calendars and come out and support us for these fun events. Please check our web site for additional weekly and monthly events like our insect safaris, upland hikes, special presentations, and our blue hike kayak trips. I wish you all a peaceful and restful Holiday! I hope you will get out in nature and enjoy the cooler weather that we have been waiting for all summer!

Thank you for your continued support!

Upcoming Events

- Jan 4 – Insect Safari
- Jan 11 – Blue Hike, Dora Canal
- Jan 18 – Project Learning Tree Workshop
- Jan 25 – ONP Community Open House
- Feb 1 – Insect Safari
- Feb 7 – FMNP Freshwater Systems Series Begins
- Feb 12 – Story Time at the Preserve
- Feb 14 – Mr. Pickle's Birthday (opossum)
- Feb 17 – Presidents' Day Archery Camp
- Feb 22 – Blue Hike, Lake Norris
- March 7 – Insect Safari
- March 16-20 – Spring Break Art in Nature Camp
- March 21 – Blue Hike, Alexander Springs
- March 28 – Night at the Preserve



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

OAKLAND NATURE PRESERVE **Presidents' Day Archery Camp**



Open to children ages 9-15
Monday February 17th, 9a - 4p

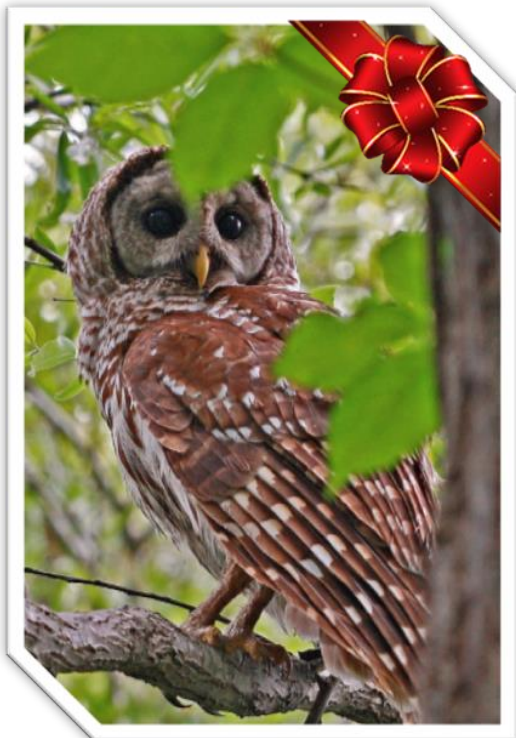
Members: \$75
Non-Members: \$85

Class is limited to the first 10 students, so REGISTER NOW!

Class taught by certified instructor

Enroll & pay by mail, in person, or online at www.OaklandNaturePreserve.org.

Give the Gift of Membership



When you give a gift membership your friend or family member will be welcomed into the Oakland Nature Preserve family of dedicated individuals committed to protecting our natural world.

Your loved ones will adore receiving this fun and personalized gift that helps to protect and restore local habitats.

Your gift recipient will receive:

- Free admission to many programs, hikes and tours at ONP, plus...
- Reciprocal Program with 180+ nature centers (ANCA)
 - <https://www.natctr.org/services/reciprocal-program>
- Family membership includes discounts for holiday and summer camps
- The Osprey Observer (electronic quarterly newsletter)
- Welcome to attend board meetings or join a working committee

For more information visit:

www.OaklandNaturePreserve.org/Membership

Visiting Winter Birds by Denise Byrne

The snowbirds are back in Florida! It's not only humans who flock to the state to enjoy the warm weather, but also our feathered friends! More than 150 resident birds are spotted regularly at Oakland Nature Preserve, but counts are higher this time of year as the Winter visitors return. Often traveling thousands of miles, many birds trek here to nest in the milder climate where food sources are abundant. Some recent sightings at ONP include Bald Eagles, Belted Kingfishers, Gray Catbirds, Northern Waterthrushes, Louisiana Waterthrushes, and Eastern Phoebe.

Many sparrows and warblers have also recently been seen at the Preserve, especially on the restored upland trails, including Field Sparrows, Vesper Sparrows, Swamp Sparrows, Black-throated Green Warblers, Worm-eating Warblers, Nashville Warblers and Hooded Warblers.

ONP now uses specific bird cameras to photograph birds at some of the feeders around the Preserve. This small, unobtrusive camera allows discreet recording of bird's activities and behaviors.

These cameras have captured photos of Rose-breasted Grosbeaks at the ONP Bird feeders recently. These birds are long-distance migrants, flying from North American breeding grounds to Central and northern South America. Most of them fly across the Gulf of Mexico in a single night, although some migrate over land around the Gulf.

Belted Kingfishers, *Megasceryle alcyon*, have returned to Lake Apopka, having moved from northern regions to secure access to waters that don't freeze in the Winter.

Bald Eagles have also been spotted from the lake side pavilion. The Bald Eagle, *Haliaeetus leucocephalus*, America's national bird, make nests and rear their offspring between October through May in Florida. Individual pairs of bald eagles often return to the same nesting territory year after year.

The best times to see and photograph birds are generally just after sunrise and an hour or so leading up to sunset. ONP is open sunrise to sunset, perfect for planning bird trips.



Rose-breasted Grosbeak



Red Bellied Woodpecker



Cardinal (F)



Cardinal (M)



Ruby Throated Hummingbird

**Save
the Date!**

Fifth Annual

Night at the Preserve



Saturday, March 28th 6:00pm-9:00pm

Oakland Nature Preserve 747 Machete Trail Oakland, FL 34760

Join us for an elegant evening at the Preserve!
Hors d'oeuvre · Great Music · Opportunity Drawings
Sunset Toast · and More

www.OaklandNaturePreserve.org/natp

Advance Ticket Required · Online or In-Person · Adults Only Please

ONP Kids!



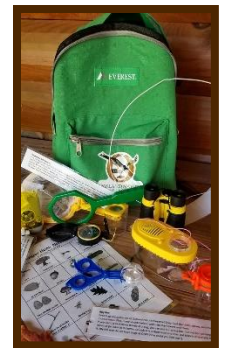
NaturePlay

Join Ollie the Owl, new mascot of the ONP Kids Program, at NaturePlay located on the Green Trail. Created using repurposed and salvaged materials found at ONP and properties being developed nearby, NaturePlay is a space to allow children to imagine, explore and have fun at the Preserve. Bring the kids and imagine, explore, and play in nature.



Exploration Packs

ONP Kids Exploration Packs are now available on the porch of our Education Center. Packs include binoculars, bug catchers, scavenger hunt, color matching cards and more; the perfect companion pack for your trail exploration here at the Preserve!



Story Time at the Preserve

Our next Story Time is Feb 12th from 10-10:30 in the ONP museum. Each Story Time focuses on a theme, and will allow children, with a parent or caregiver, to enjoy a wonderful story, activity or animal interaction, and time at the Preserve. Story Time activities are targeted for ages 2-5, but all are welcome to attend and enjoy. (There is no program fee, but donations are gratefully accepted.)



A big thank you goes to the West Orange Foundation for their support of the new ONP Kids Program and NaturePlay.

We Dig our Volunteers by Nicole O'Brien

Volunteers assist with many tasks here at the Preserve. If you have been on our Purple Trail over the past year, you may have noticed some large-scale changes. We have been clearing a section for restoration. We have affectionately named it “Area 51” because it was completely covered in alien species. After 11 months, and at least 1500 hours of work, our volunteers have successfully prepared the land for planting. We’ve been adding some of the desired trees and shrubs. A larger planting of the understory wiregrass occurred on December 7. Take a look at the pictures for the transformation. By this time next year, the native wiregrass should be growing in thick.



Before



Planting



After

Donor Highlight

ONP is very thankful to have very generous supporters and would like to highlight some very special ones!

- Duke Energy plans to sponsor ONP's Blue Hike Paddle Tours for 2020, and is funding an upland restoration project
- We received a grant from the FWC for our ongoing Gopher Tortoise Habitat Management, this will allow us to plant more native plants, run a prescribed burn next year, and assist with non-native plant removal.
- The West Orange Foundation is generously sponsoring the new ONP Kids Program and NaturePlay.



Registration Now Open ~ Limited Space

Florida Master Naturalist Programs

Freshwater Systems
February 7 – March 13

Join us for this exciting class!

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.

The FMNP consists of 3 core modules, each module is 40 contact hours, and 5 special topics course with 24 contact hours each. Activities include fieldtrips, hands-on activities, practical experience, and classroom learning.

For more information on class schedule, instructors, field trip locations, and to register please go to 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
407-905-0054



OAKLAND NATURE
PRESERVE

What's In Bloom

by Denise Byrne

There is a lot in bloom right now in the Uplands at the Preserve:

It's that time of year when grasses are beginning to turn brown, trees are shedding some leaves, and oaks are dropping their acorns. Most of ONP's Fall bloom is heading toward dormancy, but despite the shorter days and less sunlight, there is still lots to see at the Preserve!

- Most of the flowers on our Firebush, *Hamelia patens*, in our Bird and Butterfly gardens have been replaced with berries that change color as they ripen. Fruit-eating birds such as Mockingbirds, Catbirds, and Blue-headed Vireos feed throughout the Winter on delicious, ripe black berries.
- Similarly, throughout the Preserve, many of our Beautyberry bushes, *Callicarpa americana*, are still laden down with purple colored berries. These berries hang on throughout the Winter to keep on feeding the birds when other fruits are gone.
- ONP's Wild Coffee plants, *Psychotria nervosa*, provide food and cover for wildlife. It is a nectar source for numerous butterflies, including *Atala Eumaeus atala*, and the Great Southern White, *Ascia monuste*. The fruit feeds many species of birds including the Northern Mockingbird.
- Blue Porterweed, *Stacytarpheta jamaicensis*, and Scorpion Tail, *Heliotropium angiospermum* are also still in bloom, providing a valuable source of nectar to pollinators at this time of year.

We also have several year-round bloomers to keep an eye out for on your next visit:

Spanish Needles, *Bidens alba*

Coral Honeysuckle, *Lonicera sempervirens*

Beach Dune Sunflower, *Helianthus debilis*

Firebush, *Hamelia patens*



Beautyberry, *Callicarpa americana*



Wild Coffee, *Psychotria nervosa*



Blue Porterweed, *Stacytarpheta jamaicensis*



Scorpion Tail, *Heliotropium angiospermum*



Trail Camera Update

The Critter Cameras are staying very active photographing resident bobcats, coyotes, raccoons, armadillos, opossums, and rabbits in the Uplands. The bird feeder camera regularly photographs adult and juvenile songbirds, along with visiting Winter migrants! Our favorite capture was a beautiful Rose-breasted Grosbeak last month! Check out ONP's website or Facebook pages for the most recent photos.



Upcoming Programs

Connecting Educators with the Environment: Project Learning Tree PreK-8 Professional Development Training – January 18, 2020

Project Learning Tree is an award-winning environmental education program designed for teachers and other educators, parents, and community leaders working with youth from preschool through grade 12. The program is focused on getting youth excited about learning with highly engaging activities correlated to Florida Standards. This curriculum can be used to enhance the classroom or outside learning experiences with well-designed lessons and extension activities. Participants receive the PLT PreK-8 Environmental Education Activity Guide which includes 96 lesson plans!



Archery Day Camp - February 17, 2020



Archery is an exciting sport that takes strength, focus, good form, and practice. It is an activity that grows with your child and one they can enjoy at any age... some archers still compete into their 80's! It can be both competitive and recreational, indoor or outdoor, for exercise or just for fun! Archery is a great sport for building confidence and self-esteem in kids. Oakland Nature Preserve's day camp is a full day introduction to archery where students will learn the basics of safety, range rules, steps of shooting, scoring, and have plenty of time to practice shooting! Students will challenge

themselves as they build their confidence and skills shooting outside, and compete against each other with fun games at the end of the day!

Spring Break Art Camp – March 16-20, 2020

In this popular, week-long camp, students will have the opportunity to create art inspired by nature. Various mediums and techniques will be explored using the natural world as motivation... including live animal models! Campers will hike daily and learn about the environment while having fun being creative! At the end of the week campers will have the opportunity to showcase their work in a gallery for families!



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 waterways. Upcoming Blue Hikes include:

- 11 January, Dora Canal
- 22 February, Lake Norris
- 21 March, Alexander Springs
- 11 April, Helena Run

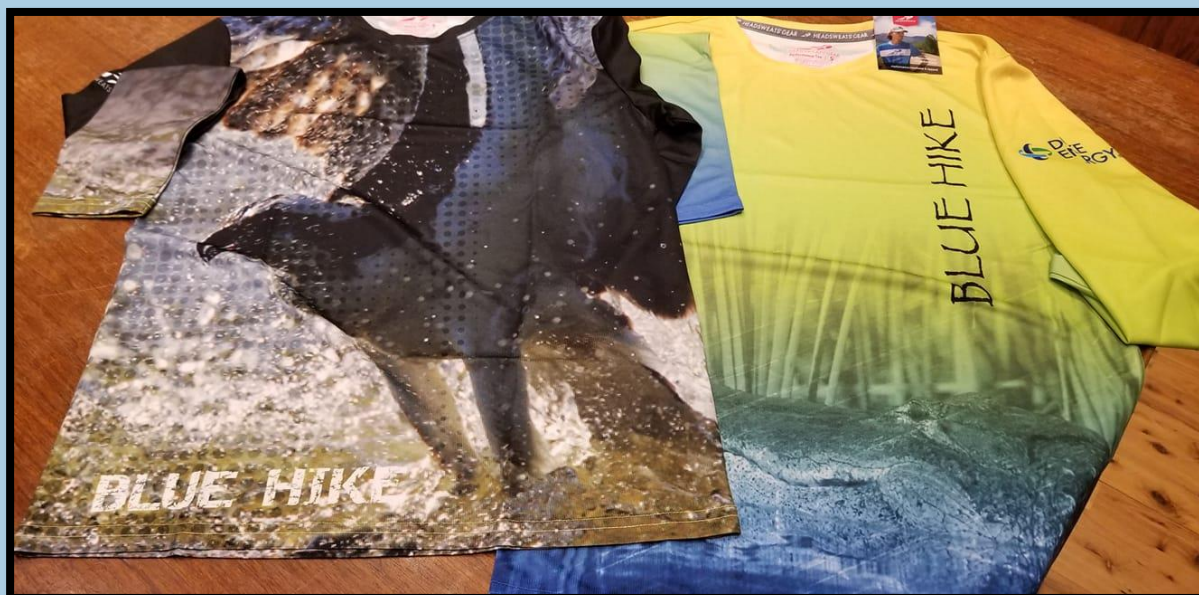


For more information and registration visit www.OaklandNaturePreserve.org/blue-hike

Stay safe from the sun and support the ONP mission with our new long sleeve Blue Hike tech shirt! We have two amazing styles available: Alligator and Osprey. Each feature photographs taken at the Preserve.

Visit soon to get your shirt!

\$25 each





Oakland Nature Preserve **OPEN HOUSE**

FREE ADMISSION

MARK YOUR CALENDAR
Saturday, Jan 25th 10am-2pm

GUIDED TOURS • LEGO BUILD
CRAFTS • ANIMAL INTERACTIONS
PRESENTATIONS AND MORE!

A PORTION OF DONATIONS WILL GO TOWARDS
SCHOLARSHIPS FOR EDUCATION PROGRAMS