



Osprey Observer Spring 2020

EDUCATING . CONSERVING . RESTORING

Message from the President

by Jim Peterson

Happy Spring everyone. What a crazy spring we've had with the COVID-19 virus. I hope everyone is keeping safe and healthy. Let's hope that this will pass soon, and we can continue with our normal lives. This surely is a time for reflection and appreciation for the people and things we care about.

An important environmental date is occurring April 22, 2020. It is the fiftieth anniversary of Earth Day! On this date in 1970 it is estimated that twenty million Americans (ten percent of the U.S. population of that time) participated in demonstrations for a healthy and sustainable environment. Did the first Earth Day make a difference? Well, by the end of 1970, the Clean Air, Clean Water, and Endangered Species Acts were all passed by the U.S. Congress. Quite remarkable!

I always try to do something at work or at home to celebrate Earth Day. Nearly every year, our team at the St. Johns River Water Management District participates in a planting project. We have planted trees for many Earth Day events and several years ago, we planted hundreds of wetland plants at the shoreline of the Oakland Nature Preserve. It is always rewarding to see the plants or trees that you planted years later. A live oak tree typically lives fifty to one hundred years. A Bald Cypress tree can live for hundreds of years with some of the oldest living to around one thousand years old. It is so amazing that a tree you plant can be around long after our lifetimes.

Planting native butterfly gardens with both nectar and food plants are great projects for Earth Day. One year I worked with the science club at my daughters' school to plant a small butterfly garden on their campus. Planting projects are a great way to get a group or your entire family involved.

I saw a list of suggested activities for Earth Day online a few weeks ago. A few of these ideas:

- Hold a beach, park, or lake shoreline cleanup
- Plant a tree or butterfly garden using native plants
- Buy reusable grocery bags (and remember to take them with you the next time you shop!)
- Go micro bead plastic free
- Buy reusable water bottles
- Stop using plastic straws

Maybe you can start your own family tradition for Earth Day. Please Check the website at the Oakland Nature Preserve to see if we will be able to hold our special activities for Earth Day 2020.

With all of the disruption and uncertainty with the current COVID-19 crises, many charities and non-profit organizations are facing economic hardships. If you are able to financially assist these groups, please do what you can. The Oakland Nature Preserve has canceled several fundraising events due to the crises. If you wish to help us out at the preserve, please check our website for upcoming events and fundraisers. Any donation is graciously accepted large or small. We plan to do a different type of fundraiser soon that is completely new and fun during this time of distancing ourselves. Please stay tuned.

Thanks, and please take care!

WE NEED YOUR HELP!

Like everyone, we are struggling with the virus threat and have lost some major fundraisers. We are in need of funding to keep our programs, boardwalk and buildings open. We don't charge an admission but are open every day of the year for all. 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

Thank you,

Oakland Nature Preserve



OAKLAND NATURE
PRESERVE



In response to the state wide Stay-at-home order issued by Gov. Ron DeSantis Oakland Nature Preserve is closed to the public through April 30th. There is no access to the boardwalk or upland trails during this time.

We appreciate the public's cooperation and understanding as we work with local and national agencies to prioritize the welfare of our community.

We look forward to welcoming everyone back again as soon as possible, thank you!

Check www.OaklandNaturePreserve.org or the ONP Facebook page for the most up to date information regarding closure.

Picture from the Boardwalk

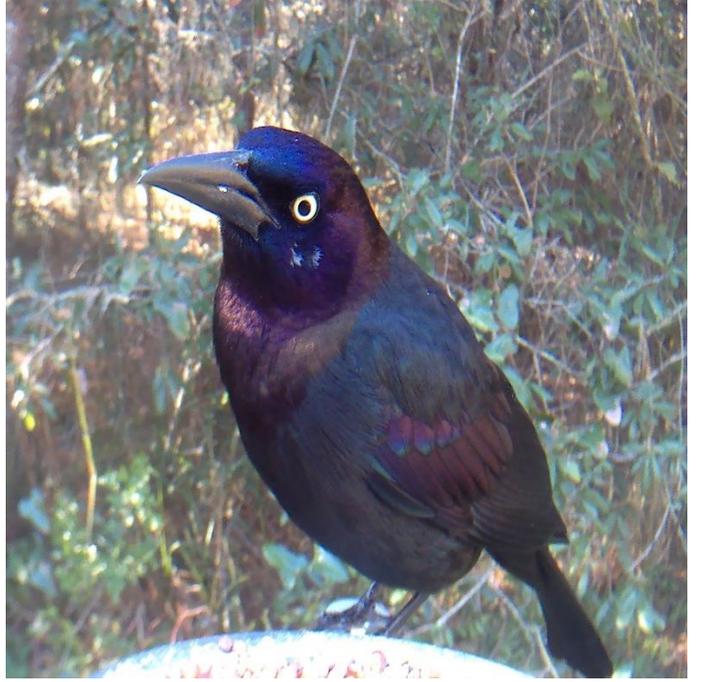


Who is on the Prowl at Oakland Nature Preserve?

by Denise Byrne

Our Trail Cameras are staying very active photographing resident bobcats, coyotes, raccoons, opossums, and rabbits in the uplands. They snapped a mother and baby bobcat recently, and an inquisitive Grey Fox! Our bird cameras are still photographing visiting and migrant songbirds. Check out ONP's website or Facebook page for the most recent photos.





Join us for an elegant evening at the Preserve!

- Hors d'oeuvre
- Great Music
- Opportunity Drawings
- Sunset Toast
- And More

Fifth Annual

Night at the Preserve



OAKLAND NATURE PRESERVE

~~Saturday, April 18th 6:00pm~~

Oakland Nature Preserve 747 Machete Trail Oakland, FL 34760

SAVE THE DATE
Rescheduled for 10/10/2020!

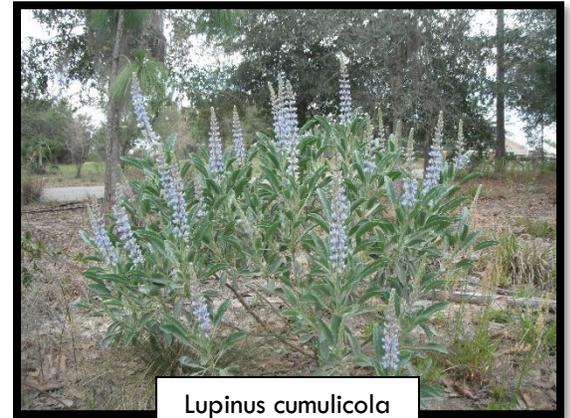
OaklandNaturePreserve.org/natp • Advance Ticket Required • Online or In-Person • Adults Only Please

What's in Bloom?

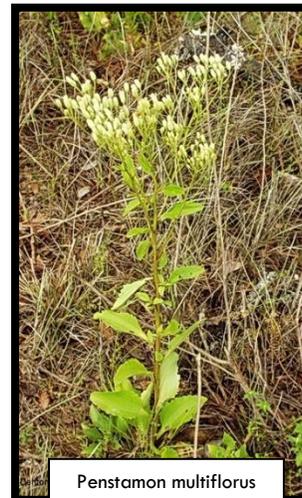
By Jackie Rolly

In this time of sheltering in place nature continues to amaze us. I recently walked through our Sandhill restoration areas, which are dry and crunchy in our current high temperatures and lack of rain. As in millennia before, our native plants are poking up through the sand. You may have noticed in the past weeks a multitude of pink flags by the Fishing Cabin and at the Preserve entrance. The flags identify where over 300 young Sky Blue Lupines have recently emerged from seeds sown last fall. The photo below is of an adult Sky Blue Lupine (*Lupinus cumulicola*) in view along the Orange Trail. There are several on the Red Trail as well. Not all the young Lupines will make it to full size in two years, but even if 10% make it, their bloom will be spectacular.

Other plants emerging are the Stylisma, Beardtongue (*Penstamon multiflorus*), Pawpaw (*Asimina obovatum*), and Coral Bean (*Erythrina herbacea*), and Tickseed (*Coreopsis lanceolata*) in the driest areas. Even more amazing is the Indian Plantain (*Arnoglossum floridanum*) bloom is about to open. Of course a little rain will make the blooms even better. But the real message, is that, even in the darkest time and driest, our wonderful native plants continue to show us, better times are ahead.



Lupinus cumulicola



Penstamon multiflorus
(Photo Shirley Denton)



Arnoglossum floridanum
(Photo by Shirley Denton)

ONP Kids!



Story Time at the Preserve *Virtual Edition*

Join us at the ONP Facebook page, for a special Facebook Live Virtual Story Time on Wednesday, April 8th at 10am. This month we will be reading an ONP favorite "Epossumondas Plays Possum" by Coleen Salley and illustrated by Janet Stevens. Can't wait to "see" you on Facebook.

Squirrels and raccoons and bears!? Oh my!

By Rachael Cravens

With Oakland Nature Preserve currently closed to visitors, there are still creative ways to view wildlife! Spend some time observing the backyard animals that we normally take for granted. Squirrels use their tail as well as vocalizations to communicate and actually have several different types of calls. Squirrels are easily seen during the day which is a great opportunity to study their behavior. A raccoon is another example of an animal frequently found in our backyards. Raccoons are often nocturnal, and since they are out and about while we are asleep there are clues to know if one has been in your backyard. If people have not secured their garbage cans, raccoons are notorious for looking through them for an easy meal, scattering garbage in the process. You may see tracks in the sand, dirt, or even dust. A raccoon's track, with an opposable thumb, looks very much like a human handprint. Another sign of wildlife is what all animals leave behind.... scat, a fancy word for poop! Animals may be identified based on scat, an herbivore (like a rabbit) has very different scat than a carnivore (like a coyote)! Since we don't often see a raccoon, tracks and scat may be the best way to know that one has been visiting. Don't forget about the tiny wildlife in your community, use a magnifying glass to scout for ants and follow their trail. Look for other bugs and lizards waiting to eat them!

If you have had enough of living animals, some communities have hosted a "bear hunt" inspired by the beloved children's book "We're Going on a Bear Hunt" by author Michael Rosen. This is a fun activity for adults as well as children. Take a drive or a walk around your neighborhood and count how many



teddy bears you can see peeking out from windows. Don't forget to put a bear in your own window!

When all else fails and you are missing ONP's spring flowers, create your own colorful masterpieces with "chalk your walk"! Use sidewalk chalk to leave artwork, hopscotch, or inspirational messages for your neighbors to enjoy. Spread positivity and brighten someone's day, then take a walk to delight in the fresh air and your community's creativity! We look forward to seeing you back at the Preserve soon!

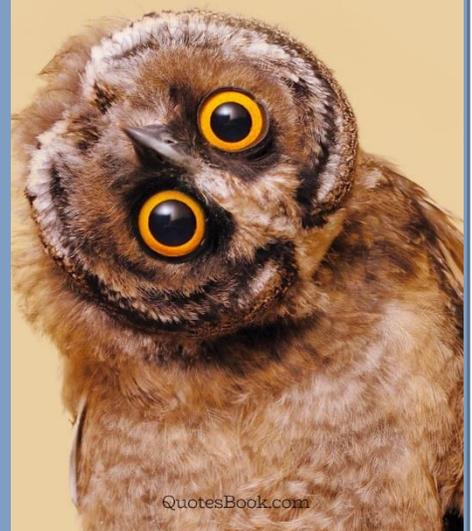


Are you going on outdoor adventures, creating art work, or other special things during this time of social distancing? We would love to see what you are up to at home!

Share on the Preserve's Facebook.

www.facebook.com/EducateConserveRestore/

HEY
WHAT ARE YOU
DOING?



We Dig our Volunteers by Nicole O'Brien



Volunteer Spotlight: Holly Bievenour

Holly Began volunteering with us in November 2019 and has become a Restoration Monday regular. She is a fast learner and now feels comfortable leading groups of volunteers. Holly says, “Volunteering at the Oakland Nature Preserve has given me the opportunity to discover the diversity of my newly adopted state. I truly believe that we are lifelong learners and the staff and knowledgeable volunteers have been patient mentors. I am truly happy outdoors and enjoy each day I volunteer. The preserve is a true gem that needs to be maintained and loved for future generations.”

We’re so glad you joined us, Holly!

Ambassador Animal Update

We’d like to welcome our newest Ambassador snake, Milo, to our crew! Milo is a Yellow Rat Snake, and while still small and young, he is already very long and will continue to grow for several years. He currently resides in our classroom and we’re handling him frequently to get him ready to meet people. He made his debut at our Open House in January. Yellow Rat Snakes are excellent climbers – often found high in trees in search of prey and his enclosures will include various ways for him to explore using his natural abilities.



Due to the Covid 19 outbreak, Senior Strides has been suspended. Please watch our Facebook and website for additional info. We hope to be up and walking again soon!

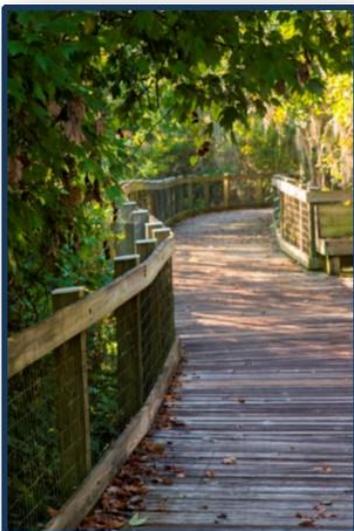
Senior Strides Walking Club Age 50+

Walking is a great way to improve overall health, make new friends, and strengthen our community. Join us at Oakland Nature Preserve for this **free**, informal walking group and walk your way to better health!

When: Every Friday Morning 9:00 a.m.

**Where: Oakland Nature Preserve (log cabin porch)
747 Machete Trail, Oakland, FL**

Visit www.OaklandNaturePreserve.org/visit or call 407-905-0054 for more information.



Our walk will take place on the beautiful boardwalk at the Oakland Nature Preserve. All participants are encourage to move at their own pace and ability level.

Caregiver and friends are welcome!