



# Osprey Observer Spring 2023

EDUCATING . CONSERVING . RESTORING

## Message from the President

by Rick Polland

Hello Fellow Nature Lovers!

I have the honor of taking on the position of President of Oakland Nature Preserve this year.

There are some BIG shoes for me to fill, by following in the footsteps of Jim Thomas and Jim Peterson. I'm supported by a hardworking and knowledgeable staff and volunteers to guide me.

Let me start by telling you a little about myself. I'm a Florida boy, born and raised in Lakeland.

My dad, originally from NYC taught me respect for our environment and wildlife. At around the age of 8, my dad cut down some melaleuca trees, he explained to me the invasive properties of the trees and that we should landscape with native plants and trees that are more beneficial to our earth.

At the age of 14, my parents sent me to a survivorship school, National Outdoor Leadership School, in Wyoming. The program consisted of a 5-week training program with us teaming up into groups, in the last week, to survive without food or water. We successfully set up camp each night, leaving in the morning with no signs of our presence. We fished and foraged and found our way to the target destination at the road 60 miles away. Yes, my parents literally dropped me off in the middle of the mountains and woods to find my way out! (At least, that's the way my wife likes to tell the story! LOL)

In 1996 my path crossed with Jim Thomas and Jack Amon, the founders of FOLA and ONP. My involvement started then, to lay out the land for Oakland Nature Preserve with a machete in my hand. I live with my wife, Tammy, in Oakland and am so fortunate to be able to live on the lakefront. We never take any of the beauty of our environment for granted, even the alligators.

In 2012, I became a Commissioner for the Town of Oakland. I have been representing ONP to the commission while serving on the Board of Directors, Executive and Finance Committee. We are fortunate to have the support of the town. The preserve truly functions with the hard work and perseverance of the staff and volunteers of ONP.

Another passion of mine is the health of our lakes and rivers. Of course, Lake Apopka is close to my heart, and I have been a member of FOLA for 20+ years and served on the board.

With Earth Day coming up, I want to remind you all to enjoy all the earth offers us and to nurture the earth as part of your everyday life. You can celebrate Earth Day with your friends, family, or community by planting a tree, or native plants, possibly a butterfly garden. Maybe do a park, shoreline, or neighborhood cleanup.

I would like to invite you to join us Saturday, April 22 from 6-9 pm to enjoy the boardwalk, watch the sunset and look for fireflies and other creatures of the preserve. Wine, beer, and bubbly along with sweets will be served at the lake. This event is limited to 100 guests, so buy your tickets early at [oaklandnaturepreserve.wildapricot.org/bubbly](https://oaklandnaturepreserve.wildapricot.org/bubbly)

Keep an eye on our website for future activities and events!

# Upcoming Events

- Senior Strides – Thursdays at 9:30

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- **April 22 – Earth Day**
  - Family activities
  - Bubbly on the Boardwalk
- May 19 – FMNP Environmental Interpretation Begins
- May 20 – Blue Hike – Crooked River
- June 4 – Audubon Bird Survey
- June 13 – ONP Summer Camps Begin
- June 17 – Blue Hike – Lake Norris
- July 5 – Story Time in the Museum

## Nature Fest at Oakland Nature Preserve



Save  
the  
date

**SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 23**

**10AM-2PM**

Wildlife Encounters  
Guided Hikes  
Food  
Lake Apopka Boat Tours



Children's Activities  
Merchants & Vendors  
Presentations  
...and much more!



OAKLAND NATURE  
PRESERVE

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



Oakland  
TOWN OF  
FLORIDA



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



## 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 Acknowledgment	Prominent Logo -w- Link Acknowledgment	Logo -w- Link Acknowledgment	Logo -w- Link Acknowledgment
Social Media	Most Prominent Logo	Prominent Logo	Logo	Logo
Digital Newsletter (Fall Edition)				

Visit [www. OaklandNaturePreserve.org/naturefest](http://www.OaklandNaturePreserve.org/naturefest)

Email [jhunt@OaklandNaturePreserve.org](mailto:jhunt@OaklandNaturePreserve.org)

Call 407-905-0054

# Bubbly on the Boardwalk



**Saturday, 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](http://www.OaklandNaturePreserve.org/bubbly)**

**Reservations Required   Adults Only Please**

## “ONP on fire!”

On March 29<sup>th</sup> ONP conducted a prescribed burn on the Red Trail located on the west side of the property. We do our best to get the word out but sometimes it does not make it to all the neighbors. Some of our new neighbors and friends were a bit surprised when they looked out their windows to see flames!

Prescribed burns are essential for keeping our restored sand hill habitats healthy. These burns are conducted by licensed professionals under ideal weather conditions. This burn went great thanks to the professionals and volunteers. Here are a few pictures, take a look at all the new plant growth.

March 29, burn day!



April 5, grasses starting to grow,  
Blue Bird on the birdbox.

April 19, look at all the green!



# 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 20 – Crooked River
- June 17 – Lake Norris



Did you know that ONP has an Amazon Wishlist? Go shopping with a purpose all while supporting the mission of the Oakland Nature Preserve! Click on the Amazon logo above and start shopping.

# We Dig Our Volunteers!

by Nicole O'Brien

## We Dig Our Volunteers!

We had some wonderful groups help with a variety of projects this winter. Community Legal Services and BSA Troop 786 assisted with invasive weed removal. Cub Scout Pack 978 helped with trail maintenance and created brush piles for wildlife to use as cover. Volunteers also assisted with trail and property maintenance, as museum docents and at events such as Oakland Heritage Day, Pours at the Preserve, Spring Fever in the Garden.

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



## Spring Fun in Oakland and Winter Garden

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





## Family Activities at the Log Cabin

**10:00am—2:00pm**

Crafts, animal interactions, and more!

Plus - Hot Dog Therapy and Izzy's Ice will be in the parking lot.

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## Family GPS Scavenger Hunt

**All Day!**

Start on the porch of the Jim Thomas Environmental Center (log cabin, smart phone and Action Bound app download required)

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## Bubbly on the Boardwalk

**6:00pm—9:00pm**

Enjoy bubbly and dessert at the lake pavilion. Limited to 100 participants, pre-registration required, age 21 and over.

Visit [www.OaklandNaturePreserve.org](http://www.OaklandNaturePreserve.org) for additional information and registration

# 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 bobcats, coyotes, raccoons, and opossums regularly, along with rabbits and birds. 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!



# Registration Open

## Florida Master Naturalist Program

### Environmental Interpretation

Join us at ONP for 3 consecutive Fridays May 19 – June 2  
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.

**Registration is open and limited to 16 students.**

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  
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