



Wekiva Wilderness Trust Newsletter

January, 2024

Happy New Year

News

Junior Rangers Club

Great news. The Junior Rangers Club is back in full swing, and programs have been arranged for the next six months.

Park Services Specialist (PSS) Brent Saulsbury gave a great presentation called 'Friendly Flames' at the November meeting. Those Junior Rangers attending got a Natural Resources stamp in their passports. And, as usual, there was a trash-clean up activity.



The Junior Ranger Club program for the next six months

January	Friday, January 12, 2024	6:00pm-8:00pm	<u>Searching with the Senses</u>
February	Monday, February 12, 2024	6:00pm-8:00pm	<u>Camp Fire Cooking</u>
March	Friday, March 8, 2024	5:00pm-6:00pm	<u>Identifying Invasives</u>
April	Monday, April 8, 2024	5:00pm-6:00pm	<u>Quest for a Cashe</u>
May	Friday, May 10, 2024	5:00pm-6:00pm	<u>The Park's Past</u>
June	Monday, June 10, 2024	5:00pm-6:00pm	<u>Friendly Fire</u>

Ethel

The Orlando Sentinel did a great article on Ethel in their December 10 edition, and it has generated a lot of responses. We have heard from people whose relatives lived in Ethel or Wekiva 100 and more years ago and several are sending in old photographs and documents.



We did know that Edward “Ed” Olszewski von Herbulis, homesteaded at Wekiva, and in 1918 he married 19-year-old Theresa Dawson, who was born at Wekiva and was the Ethel schoolteacher at the time.

Now, thanks to Virginia Buras, Ed’s granddaughter, who now lives in Henderson, Texas, we have a photograph of their home. It is the only photograph we have seen that shows a two-story building at Ethel. A caption on the back of the picture, tells us that the car belonged to Mr. John Vanderhock, who according to the 1920 U.S. Census, is listed as residing in Ethel.



E O Von Herbulis house

Edward and his wife Theresa later moved about five miles west to Mount Plymouth to open a jelly store – the Lake County Preserving Company - on the northwest corner of State Road 46 and County Road 435.

Unfortunately, their story does not have a happy ending. Just after midnight on June 13, 1968, an intruder broke into their home and stabbed the couple multiple times.

Edward died from his injuries and Theresa, who was stabbed a dozen times, was critically injured but survived. The intruder was never caught, and the unsolved murder remains a Lake County cold case.



Edward, Theresa and their daughter Eveline c. 1923

Volunteer Appreciation Awards and Party

PSS Brent hosted a volunteer appreciation awards ceremony and Christmas party at his Rock Springs home which was well attended. Volunteers went on a tram ride to learn about Rock Springs and Ethel, and then returned to his house for a cook-out and presentation of the awards.

Award winners were Elaine Fisher for 1000 hours and she also received the statewide Volunteer Public Safety Award for her medical experience as a Paramedic, Medical Unit Leader and Firefighter for park service's burns and training programs. Steve Revelli received an award for 2000 hours, Carol Spelzhausen for 2000 hours, Judith Spies for 1000 hours, Brenden Beard for 1000 hours, Jeff Kincade for 1000 hours, and James Dylewski for 1000 hours of service.



Brent with Elaine Fisher



Brent and Brenden Beard

5K-10K Race

The 37th annual 5K-10K race takes place on Saturday, February 24 and, as usual, we need help setting up on the Friday afternoon before and on race day. We already have 44 runners signed up which is better than previous years, and the race t-shirt is already the printers.

Wekiva Paint Out

This year's Wekiva Paint Out, now in its 18th year, takes place from February 25 to March 2. It will follow the format of previous years with the auction on Wednesday night and the Gala dinner on Saturday. As usual, all the paintings will be displayed at Wekiva Island – and all will be available for sale. This week-long event entails a lot of work but is our biggest fundraiser of the year. We always need as many volunteers as possible to staff the gallery at Wekiva Island which is open daily from 10 am to 10 pm. If you can help with this year's Paint Out, please contact us at info@wwt-cso.com.

Nature News

Common Green Darner (*Anax junius*)

Winter is not prime time for observing dragonflies, but this large and beautiful species flies year-round here in Florida. They can be found almost anywhere, including uplands, but are most often seen near still water, so in Wekiwa Springs State Park, little Sand Lake would be an excellent place to look, and they are frequently seen above the lawn near the swimming area at the spring, sometimes in large numbers.

Both sexes have a green thorax, and the male has a brilliant blue abdomen; the female's abdomen is mostly brown.



Male Common Green Darner

They prey on small flying insects, in flight. When they perch, which anyone who enjoys photographing dragonflies can tell you is not often, they perch vertically.



Female Common Green Darner

Much is not known about the natural history of the Common Green Darner. It is thought that there are usually resident populations in most areas, but large groups of these dragonflies migrate, throughout North America. They may mate and deposit eggs along the way. In Florida, eggs are laid in late summer and fall, larvae mature over winter and emerge and head north in the spring. In northern areas of the continent, they breed in spring, the larvae develop



A pair ovi-positing on a spatterdock leaf

over summer, then emerge and go south in the autumn. Very large swarms can be seen often along the coast.

They frequently fly tandem, and remain together while the female lays her eggs, often on spatterdock or other vegetation floating in the water. The male stays attached so other males can't take his place, and they do try.

Flower of the Month

Woodland Lettuce (*Lactuca floridana*)

Woodland or Florida Lettuce is a common wildflower found throughout eastern United States. There are many species of wild lettuce of which four are native to Florida. *Lactuca floridana* is an annual or biennial plant which reproduces by self-seeding. The stem can reach six feet but more often is two to three feet tall.

The leaves are toothed, unevenly lobed or not lobed and often powdery gray. Leaves are larger and more numerous toward the base of the stem. The end lobe on old leaves is arrow-shaped.

Dandelion-like bluish-red to pink or nearly white ray florets are borne in open, branched clusters of 10 to 20 individual flowers. There are no disk florets. The flowers attract bees.



The plant has milky sap. (The genus name *Lactuca* is a Latin form of lac, meaning milk and is an illusion to the milky sap.) According to Green Deane of eatttheweeds.com, this is one of only a few plants with milky sap that are edible.

Woodland Lettuce can be found throughout the parks of the Wekiva River Basin. Habitats include sun and part shade in lawns and fields where it is labeled a weed. It prefers moist well drained soil; however, it can also be found in dry sandy sites.



Happy New Year! Happy New Year!, Happy New Year!