

Hundred Acre Hollows, Inc update August 2022



HUNDRED ACRE HOLLOWES, INC.

We continue our mission to protect the wildlife, restore the habitat, and engage the public! In fact, our outreach was international this summer thanks to our youth advisory Board member, Yuliang Huang. He entered his story map entitled “Gopher Tortoise Burrow Inventory 2022” in the Environmental Systems Research Institute map competition at the International ESRI conference in San Diego in July. He won first place in his category of Spatial Analysis. According to his findings in Jan 2022, there were 467 active Gopher Tortoise burrows, up from 407 in Jan 2020. The size of the burrows has increased and there are more juvenile tortoise burrows, indicating a healthy tortoise population. The attendees asked him questions about his poster. The conference had over 14,000 people in person and another 17,000 people online from over 100 different countries. There was a feature article in Florida Today describing Yuliang’s work with ARC/GIS in Hundred Acre Hollows. We are very proud of him! Also, last summer, Yuliang applied for the Gannett grant which HAH was awarded! We were able to purchase recycled plastic benches and picnic tables.



Yuliang presenting his poster at the conference in San Diego



Ralph from Florida Today interviewing Yuliang while Lixin, Yuliang's father, and Tom Unrath, HAH President, look on.

Our other youth advisory member, Ana Maria Tea, received her Girl Scout Gold Award in June. She made 6 environmental educational signs, and she placed one outside each of the 6 basins. Her "Nature Enrichment" educational event last March engaged Girl Scouts from all over central Florida and many people in Brevard County. She trained 25 volunteers to help at her event which had 95 people. We are very proud of her!



Ana Maria, left, with volunteers at the recycling table



Ana Maria with two of her educational signs that she designed and made. In the second photo, she is pointing where the Hernandez Trail went in January 1838 during the Second Seminole War.

Just last week, Ana Maria and her friend Haley, moved the entrance sign they had made for their Girl Scout Silver Award 4 years ago in August 2018. They had placed the sign in front of the Brazilian Pepper trees by the small path that volunteers cleared in Feb 2017. The neighbor needs to put in a fence around her yard, and the sign wouldn't be visible. They dug out the sign and moved it about 25 feet.



Both Yuliang and Ana Maria, who have volunteered for HAH for 5 ½ years, are going to the University of Florida. Yuliang will study Computer Science and Ana Maria will study Environmental Engineering. Their work with HAH has prepared them for their future studies and has helped us meet our mandate of education and conservation. We thank the Brevard County Commission for recognizing them with resolutions.

On June 29 and July 20, two groups of Brevard Zoo Teen Explorers spent a morning in HAH. They walked around the perimeter and practiced their citizen science skills by taking photographs of flora and fauna and uploading them to the HAH I-Naturalist project. The explorers learned about the native plants growing in our gardens that they could plant in their yards.



Bert, HAH treasurer, taught the explorers about I-Naturalist on June 29. Ana Maria told them about her signs. Hugo, in the yellow t-shirt, helped the students with their questions about I-Naturalist.



Students taking photos in the Audubon Garden on July 20 for I-Naturalist

Only July 20, while the explorers were out walking in the south of HAH, a mother bobcat with her 3 kits walked out onto the path just south of the north entrance. Tom was able to take some amazing photos of the bobcat family. The teens were disappointed they didn't see the bobcats, but they saw the photos. The explorers saw a Corn snake, some Gopher Tortoises, and lots of butterflies. Every July in the past few years, we have seen a mother bobcat with 2 kits. This is the first time we have seen 3!



There is a new youth advisory member of our Board, Hugo, who is a junior in the IB program at Cocoa Beach Jr/Sr High School. It is extremely important to our Board to include young people on it. They will be the stewards of the environment into the future. One of our Board members reached out to the local middle and high schools to talk about our volunteer opportunities including our Junior Ranger program. There were 10 Junior Rangers this past year. They wear the yellow t-shirts and help with restoring the habitat and welcoming visitors when HAH is open. There are 8 adults on our Board who live in the Springs of Suntree, Mandarin Lakes, Devon's Glen, and Tralee Bay in Capron Ridge. These are the 4 communities surrounding HAH.

Our Board continues to restore the habitat by removing invasives and planting native plants. We had the invasive Cogon grass sprayed again this summer. Last February, we had a contractor grind back about 25 feet of invasive Brazilian Pepper trees around the 4 northern basins. They also pulled out many pepper trees from the basins. We need to do some fundraising this fall because we spent our \$5,000 reserve that was set aside for a big project.

Future plans include the week of October 16 when the Brevard Zoo has planned several days and afternoons of activities for families, homeschoolers, and teens. They are renting a port-a-potty that will be near the entrance for the week. We are grateful for this partnership with the Zoo.

We want to thank Commissioner Curt Smith for his support and trust in allowing us citizens to care for this beautiful county-owned land we call Hundred Acre Hollows! We look forward to a productive relationship with whomever is elected in District 4. We thank Virginia Barker for her support and encouragement as we endeavor to restore this land to a wonderful nature sanctuary.

Anita Unrath, HAH secretary