



# The Buzzard Bulletin

Notes & Information for CREW Trust Volunteers

April-May, 2022

Volume 6, Issue 4

## Notepad

### Welcome

Welcome to new CREW Trust volunteers Sarah and Merrill Frank.

### Final programs

A few sweep positions still need to be filled for the end-of-season April programs.

These include Hike the Loop, Bike the Loop, and one weekly walk at BRS. Sign up in Track-it-Forward.

### New milestone

George Luther has become the first CREW Trust volunteer to surpass 4,000 hours of volunteer service.

### A touch of class

Volunteers can have the CREW Land & Water Trust logo embroidered on their favorite hiking shirts and jackets. Take the apparel to Renegades, 17051 Jean Street #10, off of Alico Road in Lee County. Your cost is \$10 per item.

Clip the form on page 3 and take it with your shirt or jacket. Turn around time is typically around 10-14 days.



### New species added

Eight new insect species and two new spider species were added to the SFWMD/CREW wildlife list. All wildlife lists are available at [www.dickbrewer.org/CREWguides.html](http://www.dickbrewer.org/CREWguides.html)

## Opportunities arise as season winds down

As the 2021-2022 season begins to wind down, volunteers can shift attention from walks, programs and greeting visitors on the trails to keeping themselves and the trails up-to-date.

Volunteers who enjoy walking a favorite trail and who are willing to do it on a weekly basis can check with Allison about which days are most convenient. Then while walking the trail, take notes and email a brief report to Allison including any maintenance issues that are found, interactions with visitors, and wonderful wildlife sightings. If that sounds appealing, contact Allison.

Or join other volunteers maintaining CREW trails and working on other special projects. The Tuesdays in FPS with Tom and Charlie group clears trails of fallen trees and limbs and removes stumps and other obstacles; tools are provided. The Rusty Hinges group tackles general maintenance projects on the trails and in the office. Both groups welcome additional volunteers.

Or think of a special project and create a new meet-up/fix-it-up group whose goal is to enhance CREW trails and programs.

If staying inside in the air-conditioning is more appealing as the heat and humidity increase, consider becoming a “guest writer” by researching and writing short articles for publication on the CREW Trust blog and social media. Submit suggestions for story ideas to Allison.

Planning for other summer projects is beginning. Ideas for projects that would be interesting or beneficial should be shared with Allison and Julie.

Volunteers also have opportunities to learn new things or review slightly forgotten information with upcoming summer learning sessions. Watch for emails from Allison and Julie, and check regularly for events that will be listed in Track-it-Forward.

The ending of the season doesn't mean there still aren't needs and opportunities for volunteers.

### ID Tip...

## Identifying CREW's two species of rabbits

**Cottontail Rabbits** are found in drier areas. Their ears are long and pointed at the tip, and there is white on the belly, face, and tail.



**Marsh Rabbits** are found in wetter areas and are good swimmers. Their ears are short and rounded at the tip, and they are almost uniformly brown.



## Things with thorns: Hog Plum (*Ximenia americana*)

Hog Plum is a Florida native and is also native to the Caribbean, Mexico, Central America, South America, and parts of Africa. It has many common names.

In Southwest Florida, it's a shrub that can grow to 12 feet tall, but it's usually much shorter.

It's multi-stemmed and thorny (really thorny!) and it is deciduous, dropping its leaves in the winter.

One strange feature is that it can be semi-parasitic. Its roots have appendages (haustoria) that can tap into roots of its neighbors to steal a few nutrients or two although it does no harm to the host plant.

In spring, it produces small yellow and white flowers that are quite fragrant, with a lilac-like aroma.

In late summer, it will have bright yellow, ping-pong-ball-sized waxy fruit. The fruit may turn reddish when it is ready to fall off of the tree.

While the fruit is edible, raw or cooked, its taste can range from sour to sweet. The fruit has been used to make jams, jellies, and juices, and it is

an important food source for birds and other wildlife.

The seeds in the fruit do contain cyanide, so it's best not to chew them (apple and cherry seeds also contain cyanide).

Besides cyanide – technically a chemical called amygdalin that the body converts to cyanide – the seeds also contain an oil that is rich in polyunsaturated fats making the seeds useful in making soaps, shampoos, and a variety of cosmetics.



Other parts of the plant are equally useful. The leaves are edible if well boiled (don't eat them raw – cyanide) and have been used to treat conditions including toothaches and headaches.

A poultice of the roots has been used to treat leprosy and hemorrhoids. The bark is used to treat skin ulcers, fevers, and kidney and heart problems. Both the bark and roots are used to tan leathers. The bark is used in dye-making, and the wood is used to make charcoal.



For more information about *Ximenia americana*, visit

Florida Native Plant Society: <https://www.fnps.org/plant/ximenia-americana>

Eat the Weeds: <http://www.eattheweeds.com/ximenia-americana-known-by-many-names-2/>

### Staying connected

#### People

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#### Web sites

[www.crewtrust.org](http://www.crewtrust.org)

[www.trackitforward.com](http://www.trackitforward.com) (hours)

[www.crewtrust.org/crew-trust-volunteers](http://www.crewtrust.org/crew-trust-volunteers) (volunteer library – the password is **crew17**)

The Buzzard Bulletin contains notes and information for CREW volunteers and is emailed six times a year (September, November, January, March, May, July). Dick Brewer, editor.

## Things with thorns: Smilax species

Different Smilax species are often called catbrier, greenbrier, bamboo vine, hogbrier, and sarsaparilla.

In Florida, 12 species are native.

Smilax climbs by means of tendrils. Technically it's a climbing bush, not a vine. It has tuberous whitish roots and most species have thorns. Even the leaves of one species have prickles along the edges.

The white or yellow-green male and female flowers are borne on separate plants. The fruit are round, starting green and turning black when ripe. Ripe fruit looks like clusters of small grapes.

Smilax provide protection and food for over forty different species of birds

and are an important part of the diet for deer, bears, and rabbits.

Smilax gets its name from the Greek myth of Krokus and the wood nymph Smilax.

Their love affair was tragic and unfulfilled because mortals and nymphs weren't allowed to love each other. For their indiscretion, the man Krokus was turned into a crocus by the goddess Artemis (she was also having an affair with Krokus but since she was a goddess, that was okay). Smilax was so heartbroken over Krokus' reduction to a flower that Artemis took pity on her and turned Smilax into a brambly vine so she and Krokus could forever entwine. That's the sanitized version.

Guide to Florida Smilax: <https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/publication/FR375>

# Reference material available in past volunteer newsletters

Previous *The Buzzard Bulletin* editions are available on the CREW Trust web page in the Volunteer Resource Library.

## SAFETY ON THE TRAILS

Biting Flies (2021 Aug.)  
Fire Ants (2020-Apr.)  
Heat & dehydration (2020-June)  
Heat index (2021-June)  
Lightning (2019-June)  
Poison Ivy (2019-Oct.)  
Stinging caterpillars (2021 Aug.)  
Sunscreens (2020-Aug.)

## INFORMATION TO ANSWER VISITOR QUESTIONS

Alligator questions (2019-Apr.)  
Barred Owl & Great Horned Owl (2022 Feb.)  
Bird trivia (2020-Feb.)  
Coastal Plain Willow (2021-Apr.)  
Common black snakes (2020-Oct.)  
Dry-downs & wildlife (2019-Dec.)  
Hunting on CREW lands (2020-Dec.)  
Insects: • Horse's Paper Wasp (2021 Oct.)  
    • Pine bark beetles (2021-June)  
    • Thread-waisted Wasp (2021 Dec.)  
Leaf galls: cypress-oak-bay-poison ivy (2021 Oct.)  
Natural plant succession (2021 Dec.)  
Pollen, especially yellow pine pollen (2021-Apr.)  
River Otters (2019-Aug.)  
Things w/thorns: Hog Plum & Smilax (2022-Apr.)  
Zipper web spiders (2021-Apr.)

## MISCELLANEOUS (\* in Aug./Sept. 2022 edition)

Book review: *Mirage* (2021-Feb.)  
Lessons learned from an experienced guide (2020-Dec.)  
Mortenson trail cam photos (2021 Oct.)  
Trail gear (2018-Aug./Oct./Dec.)  
\* Using & pronouncing scientific names (2022-Aug.)  
Volunteer jobs (2016-Oct./Dec., 2017-Feb./Apr./June/  
Aug./Oct.)

## IDENTIFICATION TIPS (\* in June/July 2022 edition)

### BIRDS

Bald Eagles: how to age juveniles (2021-Feb.)  
Downy & Hairy Woodpecker (2020-Dec.)  
Juvenile night-herons (2020-Aug.)  
Small white wading birds (2021-Apr.)  
\* Anhinga & Double-crested Cormorant  
\* Mourning Dove & Common Ground Dove  
\* Osprey & white phase Short-tailed Hawk

### INSECTS

Ant Lion & Fire Ant holes in ground (2020-June)  
Monarch & Viceroy butterflies (2021-Oct.)

### MAMMALS

Cottontail Rabbit & Marsh Rabbit (2022 Apr.)

### REPTILES

Green Treefrog & Squirrel Treefrog (2021 Aug.)  
Large black snakes (2020-Apr. & 2020-Oct.)  
Red-bellied Turtle & Peninsula Cooter (2021-June)

clip here



## EMBROIDERED SHIRT ORDER FORM

Interested in adding the CREW Land & Water Trust logo to your favorite hiking shirt or jacket?

Take this order form to Renegades, 17051 Jean Street Unit #10, Fort Myers, FL 33967, along with the item(s) you would like to have embroidered. There is a \$10 embroidery fee for each item.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Position with the CREW Trust \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone number \_\_\_\_\_