



The Limpkin Call

The newsletter of the Oklawaha Valley Audubon Society, a chapter of Audubon Florida and the National Audubon Society and a not-for-profit organization.

Published a minimum of four times a year.

PO Box 268, Eustis, FL 32727-0268

<https://oklawaha-valley-audubon.org/>

OklawahaAudubon@gmail.com

VOLUME XXXVI

January - February 2020

Number 4

Conservationists of the Year

Each year the Lake County chapter of the Florida Audubon Society (Oklawaha Valley Audubon Society or OVAS) recognizes individuals who have made significant contributions to protecting Lake County and Florida natural resources. This year both Trina Raether and Greg Gensheimer were recognized for their many contributions.

Trina Raether, one of Lake County's unsung environmental educators, has spent more than 15 years educating children and community about Florida's natural resources. A retired teacher from South Florida, Raether moved to Lake County and shortly began to use her teaching expertise to help at the Trout Lake Nature Center (TLNC).

She was instrumental in developing grade-level appropriate lessons, recruiting and training TLNC education volunteers, served on the TLNC Board and currently is the Education Chair. Raether also provides professional development training for teachers. In addition to her efforts locally, Raether was recognized by the St. Johns River Water Management District with the Bob Owens Volunteer Award for her efforts with both volunteering and education about water resources in the early 2000.

Raether has had a county-wide and state-wide impact through the many students (approximately 75,000 over 15 years) she has taught and the adults she developed and conducted dynamic learning programs for.

Also, receiving recognition from OVAS was Greg Gensheimer. You can ask what does it take to create a multi-purpose trail circling Lake Apopka with connections to nearby communities and parks? To create a Florida Scenic Byway with observation tower? It takes a person of vision such as Gensheimer who spent 20 years putting the puzzle pieces together. He met with government agencies, elected officials, private property owners and wrote grants to fund the endeavor. His commitment to the community and environment is not over, he is working to provide another viewing tower overlook on Lake Apopka.

Thank you to both these individuals that dedicated their efforts and time to the community and future generations.

Photos to right:

Top: Eileen Tramontana presents Trina Raether a certificate for Conservationist of the Year and a lifetime membership in OVAS.

Bottom: Peg Lindsay presents Greg Gensheimer a certificate for Conservationist of the Year and a lifetime membership in OVAS.

At A Glance: Jan. – Mar. 2020

January

- 5 – Program: Living with Florida Black Bears
- 11 – Field Trip: Black Bear Wilderness Hike
- 15 – Lunch on the Lawn: Ellis Acres Preserve
- 16-20 – North Shore Birding Festival
- 22-27 – Space Coast Birding & Wildlife Festival

February

- 2 - Program: Coyotes in Florida
- 12-14 - Field Trip: Overnight to the Everglades
- 22 - Field Trip: Florida Museum of Natural History
- 26 - Lunch on the Lawn: Leesburg

March

- 1 - Annual Meeting and Program: *Ditch of Dreams*
- 10 - Lunch on the Lawn



COMING EVENTS - Programs

All Programs are at 2:00 pm on the first Sunday of the month, September through June, at Trout Lake Nature Center (520 East Country Road 44), Eustis, unless otherwise noted. Arrive at 1:30 pm for socializing and snacks (you are welcome to bring something to share) and for a preview of upcoming fieldtrips and programs. We suggest a \$2 donation when you attend.

Living with Florida Black Bears Sunday, January 5, 2020 at 2:00 p.m.

We all love nature, but not necessarily when it weighs about 200 pounds and wants to clean your BBQ grill for you. Bear Response Contractor, Kathy Connolly, will join OVAS for a program on Florida Black Bear. She will tell us how we can help keep bears out of trouble by removing any food source, like that grill, that might attract them to our property; how to react if you meet one in the forest while birding, hiking, etc. And, what Florida Fish and Wildlife is doing to manage bear habitat so they can meet their needs in the wild, most of the time.



Coyotes in Florida: The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly Sunday, February 2, 2020 at 2:00 p.m.

Oklawaha Valley Audubon Society, OVAS, is an organization with a focus on birds, so why a program about coyotes? Love them or hate them, whether you live in the city or the country, coyotes likely visit your neighborhood. Some residents are thrilled to see this wild animal saunter through their yard, others panic and post warnings afraid for people and their pets.

Florida Fish and Wildlife biologists: Catherine Kennedy and Lauren Barth, will provide research-based information and statistics on coyotes: their life history, how they arrived in Florida, breeding, their impact on people, pets, and other wildlife including our bird populations. As well as, how, to avoid interactions between coyotes and humans and what to do if one occurs. Love them or hate them coyotes are one of nature's success stories and this program will be fascinating and informative.

Coyotes in Florida

Coyotes live in urban, suburban and rural areas throughout Florida.
Follow these tips to avoid conflicts.

FEEDING
COYOTES is
ILLEGAL.
THEY WILL
LOSE
THEIR FEAR
of HUMANS.



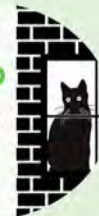
**SECURE
GARBAGE CANS.**
CLEAN UP
PET FOOD
and
FALLEN
FRUIT.



**SECURE
LIVESTOCK** in
PREDATOR-
RESISTANT
Enclosures.



**KEEP PETS
IN
ENCLOSED
AREAS.**
WALK DOGS
ON A
**SHORT
LEASH.**



Coyotes are an important part of the landscape in Florida.
They help maintain healthy ecosystems by managing
populations of rodents, insects and other small animals.
By preventing conflicts, we can better coexist with
coyotes and other wildlife.

Coyote Tracks



Foot track: 2.5" long



Head track: 2" long

Tracks will show considerable
variation depending upon the
condition of the ground (dry,
frost, dirt, sand, etc.) and
movements of the coyote.



Average
Florida
COYOTE
WEIGHS
28 lbs.



COMING EVENTS - Programs

COMING EVENTS - Field Trips

Annual Meeting/Potluck at 12:30 p.m. and
A Ditch of Dreams at 2:00 p.m.
Sunday, March 1, 2020

Annual Business Meeting & Potluck @ 12:30 p.m.

We will gather at 12:30 pm for a potluck dinner, during which we will conduct our business meeting including an election of officers and directors-at-large. Our special speaker will follow.

Dr. Steve Noll, A Ditch of Dreams @ 2:00 p.m.

Dr. Steve Noll, a co-author of *A Ditch of Dreams* will be our speaker for this OVAS event at Trout Lake Nature Center. Dr. Noll is a professor at University of Florida and a previous Florida Humanities Council speaker. Testifying even more persuasively to his ability to inform and entertain, his students rate him as a thumbs up, and say he is passionate about history, makes a ton of jokes, and is extremely informative. Dr. Noll will tell us the backstory story of the *Ditch of Dreams*, also known as the Cross Florida Barge Canal. He will recount the political intrigue, the economic interests, and the indomitable spirit of Marjorie Harris Carr, the woman who led the fight to stop the canal and the environmental damage it would have caused.

Cynthia Barnett, author of *Mirage*, wrote about *Ditch of Dreams*: "Offers timeless lessons about pork-barrel politics and the power of citizen-environmentalism. Most important, it reminds us that today's economic coup may well be tomorrow's environmental crisis."

Dr Noll's subject is particularly relevant now; those voices from the past echo some of the same arguments we hear today for the proposed toll road connector to go from Tampa to Jacksonville and impacting through some of Florida's remaining natural areas. This Audubon Chapter's name, Oklawaha Valley Audubon Society, was selected in part because those early members were intensely involved in the battle to "Save the Oklawaha River". Audubon still speaks up to remind governments and citizens of the importance of natural areas, wetland and upland, for their environmental services today.

A \$10.00 donation is requested. This entertaining and informative program is also a fund-raiser to support OVAS' operating costs (including speaker fees), The Festival of Flight and Flowers, and our support of other non-profits such as Avian Reconditioning Center, Trout Lake Nature Center, and others.

OVAS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

vacant, President
Lavon Silvernell, 1st Vice President
Stacey Kelly, 2nd Vice President
vacant, Treasurer
vacant, Secretary
Sherry Chester, Director-at-Large
Judy Knizner, Director-at-Large
Peg Lindsay, Director-at-Large
vacant, Director-at-Large
vacant, Director-at-Large

Field Trips are subject to change due to weather or other circumstances. Please contact the trip leader to confirm a space and for more information, including carpooling instructions. For most trips you will need outdoor shoes, insect repellent, sunscreen, a hat, raingear or jacket, binoculars (of course), water, and a snack or lunch. We suggest a donation of \$10/adult for each field trip for OVAS members and \$15/adult for non-members; children are free. Actual costs, such as entry fees, etc., are separate, and are noted in each write-up. Check our [website](#) for updated information and to register, and to view photos from recent field trips.

Lunch on the Lawn events are short, easy birding hikes led by Peg Lindsay and Bob Putman. Bring a brown bag lunch. If you are willing to volunteer your house and lawn, contact Peg at pegcondor@embarqmail.com. If you don't have email, you can call 352-326-2045.

Hike the Black Bear Wilderness Area Saturday, January 11, 2020 8:00 a.m. - noon

The Black Bear Wilderness Area is about 1600 acres of natural wonder in northwest Seminole County. It features a variety of wetland habitats—wet prairie, hydric hammock and cypress swamp—within the St. John's River floodplain. These habitats form a mosaic of diversity which host white-tailed deer and Florida black bear and an impressive number of bird species. Its large size and proximity to other public lands make this an important piece in a puzzle connecting natural areas between the Wekiva/St. John's basins and the Ocala National Forest.

Our trip leader is Patti Smith. The group will have a couple of options: we can take the boardwalk and trail to the St. John's River. The trail is shaded with a canal/pond alongside to the river; or we can be more adventurous and explore the 7.1-mile loop trail along the St. John's River. This option takes about two hours.

QUESTIONS: email us at OklawahaAudubon@gmail.com or contact Stacey Kelly at (352) 408-2901.

MEET: 8 a.m. at 5301 Michigan Avenue in Sanford. Carpooling may be available for this trip. Please meet at 7 a.m. (for a 7:10 departure) at the Winn-Dixie parking lot in Eustis, located at intersection of 44 and 19.

RESERVATIONS: Reservations are required. Register and pay online at <https://oklawaha-valley-audubon.org/events/> or by contacting Stacey (see contact info above).

COST: We suggest a donation to OVAS (\$10 for members and \$15 for non-members).

COMING EVENTS - Field Trips

Check our [website](#) for updated information and to register, and to view photos from recent field trips.

Lunch on the Lawn: Ellis Acres Preserve - A former cattle ranch to a promising natural area... Wednesday, January 15, 2020, noon

January mornings in Florida are often too cold for comfort. So this adventure will begin at noon with a BYO lunch on the porch of the museum (former Ellis home) at Ellis Acres Preserve in Paisley. Peg will supply the dessert. While we enjoy our lunch, naturalist and wildflower enthusiast Wendy Poag will tell us about the history of the property. The birding and wildflower gardens around the former homestead are awesome. Following lunch, we can walk the property at our leisure. Depending on her time availability, Wendy may lead those interested on a short hike around the property to educate us on the challenges and rewards of converting a former cattle ranch into a natural area.

RESERVATIONS: Register and pay online at <https://oklawaha-valley-audubon.org/events/> If you have questions contact Peg Lindsay at pegcondor@embarqmail.com

Cost: We suggest a donation to OVAS (\$10 for members and \$15 for non-members).

Call for Missing History

We are compiling OVAS's history and digitizing it for safekeeping. Remarkably, we have archived nearly all the annual brochures (since 1970) and newsletters (since 1984), but we are missing a few. If you still possess any of the following, please allow us to borrow them to be scanned. Contact Sherry Chester (epperlychester@gmail.com) to arrange the loan.

OVAS Program/Field Trip brochures
1997-1998
2016-2017

Limpkin Call newsletters
Vol. VII, No. 3 Oct 1990
Vol. XXI No. 1, 2, 3, & 4 fall 2005 - spring 2006
Vol. XXV, No. Jan/Feb 2010
Vol. XXV, No. 4 Mar/Apr 2010

In addition, we have scanned all our scrapbooks, but there were none after 2000. We've received some photos from 2008-present. If you have any photos of OVAS members doing anything OVAS-related 2001-present, or newspaper clippings about OVAS for 2001-present, please send them to Sherry.

OVAS Overnight Trip to the Everglades February 12, 13, 14, 2020

The annual overnight trip long has been the highlight of the Oklawaha Valley Audubon Society's field trips program. Clyde Stephens, who over the years has taken us to some of Florida's most scenic, educational and adventurous spots, has assembled a three-day, two-night excursion that will preserve that tradition.

On Day One, the group will carpool to Fisheating Creek Outpost for a picnic lunch, birdwatching, a visit to the former wilderness home of Naturalist Tom Gaskins, and a look at Lake Okeechobee from atop the levee.

The trip then will continue through wild lands with ponds, marshes and almost no human habitation to the Big Cypress Seminole Indian Reservation in the Everglades. The group will spend two nights in cabins on the Reservation.

Day Two: Big Cypress Seminole Indian Reservation is the home of Native Americans whose ancestors were hunted like wild animals by the white man in the 1800s. A few Seminole survivors barely escaped to the swamps of the Everglades and learned to live off the land. They ate native plants and animals and grew pumpkins, bananas and corn on hidden hammocks just above water levels. Their survival is a remarkable example of how man can be compatible in a harsh environment by respecting and conserving nature.

To understand the historic Seminole community, the group will visit one of the most outstanding, modern museums of its kind. Birdwatching and nature watching will continue on a mile-long boardwalk through a cypress dome and wetlands. Following lunch in the Seminole Indian Village Restaurant, the group will go on a guided safari in the Everglades.

On Day Three, the group will travel to Moore Haven, then through the Brighton Seminole Indian Reservation for a brief visit. Crested Caracaras are a common sighting along SR 721 from Brighton to Fort Basinger. At historic Fort Basinger, the group can see where the Kissimmee River was channelized into a drainage canal. At Riverwoods Field Lab, the group will see programs on the restoration of the river, which resulted in the return of many bird species to the area, including Snail Kites. Pontoon boat tours can be arranged at Riverwoods.

COST: About \$250 per person plus the cost of food.

RESERVATIONS FOR THIS TRIP ARE REQUIRED. Those seeking reservations should contact Clyde Stephens at 352-343-6468 or at bananabyte@aol.com.

For those attending, additional trip details will be issued later.

*This trip has **SOLD OUT**. Contact Clyde to get placed on a waiting list.*

COMING EVENTS - Field Trips

Check our [website](#) for updated information and to register, and to view photos from recent field trips.

Lunch on the Lawn: A multi-stop trip around Leesburg with a variety of birds in the offing

Wednesday, February 26, 2020
8:30 a.m. to early afternoon

On this trip we begin at Ski Beach (201 E. Lake Harris Drive) in Leesburg at 8:30 a.m. with coffee and donuts. Peg Lindsay will supply the donuts, but because of the location coffee is BYO.

At about 9 a.m., we'll take a leisurely stroll along the northern shore of Lake Harris, walking from Ski Beach to Venetian Gardens and back to our cars. The City of Leesburg has upgraded both parks, making them even more attractive and interesting. There are lots of bird species to be seen. If you don't have Purple Gallinule on your life list, we can almost guarantee you'll see one there.

At 11 a.m. we will caravan south for a quick stop at Singletary Park (boat launch on the east side of U.S. 27) to look for wading birds as well as overwintering Bonaparte's Gulls. Then we'll continue south on U.S. 27 to the community of Hawthorne, where Peg Urban has reserved the picnic pavilion for us. Perhaps Peg will take us—a few at a time—to view her backyard birders, which attract a surprising number of overwintering passerines.

RESERVATIONS: Register and pay online at <https://oklawaha-valley-audubon.org/events/> If you have questions contact Peg Lindsay at pegcondor@embarqmail.com

Cost: We suggest a donation to OVAS (\$10 for members and \$15 for non-members).

Christmas Bird Count in Emerald Marsh on December 20, 2019. Pictured are Captain Clyde Stephens, Phyllis Stephens, and Alex Chester. Not pictured are Lori Patterson and Sherry Chester. This group counted 35 species on the south side of the Haines Creek Canal and southeast Lake Griffin.



Florida Museum of Natural History Saturday, February 22, 2020 10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Located on the University of Florida campus in Gainesville, the Museum of Natural History will help adults and children alike gain a deeper understanding of the history of Florida through outstanding exhibits of animals, plants and cultural artifacts. The one-hour tour highlights selected sections of the museum's world-renowned permanent exhibitions and includes hands-on learning activities for kids.

Additionally, the group will visit the Butterfly Rainforest, getting up close and personal with an amazing collection of butterflies on a tour led by the Exhibit Manager of the Rainforest. Learn about butterfly identification, lifecycle, nectar plants, and end the one-hour tour with a behind-the-scenes look at the Butterfly Rearing Lab.

The Museum has an excellent gift shop and, near the entrance, sells butterfly-friendly plants for visitors who want to attract butterflies to their gardens.

QUESTIONS: email us at OklawahaAudubon@gmail.com

TIME: Meet trip leader Sherry Chester at the Winn-Dixie parking lot at routes 19 and 44 in Eustis at 8 a.m. for the 90-minute trip to Gainesville. The tour of the Museum and Butterfly Rainforest will begin at 10 a.m. and last till approximately 3 p.m. Bring a lunch or buy lunch at the Museum's Camelia Court Café.

RESERVATIONS: Advance reservations are required.

Register and pay online at <https://oklawaha-valley-audubon.org/events/> If you have questions, contact Sherry at epperlychester@gmail.com or 352-409-7444. Let her know if you are interested in carpooling.

COST: \$30 per person includes the tour of the Museum and the Butterfly Rainforest.* We also suggest a donation to OVAS (\$10 for members and \$15 for non-members).

*For those who may be interested, an optional tour of the CROC—Ancient Predators in the Modern World exhibit is available at a additional cost of \$6.50 (self-guided) or \$8.50 (guided).



Monarch Butterflies overwintering on Oyamel Fir trees in the mountains of Mexico, Feb 2019 (photo by Kristen Grace/Florida Museum)

COMING EVENTS - Field Trips

Check our [website](#) for updated information and to register, and to view photos from recent field trips.

Lunch on the Lawn Save the Date Tuesday, March 10, 2020

There is a Lunch on the Lawn event in the plans. More information will follow.

RESERVATIONS: Register and pay online at <https://oklawaha-valley-audubon.org/events/> If you have questions contact Peg Lindsay at pegcondor@embarqmail.com

Cost: We suggest a donation to OVAS (\$10 for members and \$15 for non-members).



Holiday Luncheon with our Environmental Friends, December 8, 2019, at Trout Lake Nature Center.

amazon smile
Prime

Your Account Today's Deals All Departments

Welcome to AmazonSmile!

Thank you for supporting
Oklawaha Valley Audubon Society Inc.

Remember, always start at smile.amazon.com
and Amazon will donate 0.5% of the price of your
eligible AmazonSmile purchases.

smile.amazon.com

COMING EVENTS - Festivals Galore!

Ready to Bird New Hotspots?
JANUARY 16-20, 2020

Discover Central Florida's 20,000-Acre
Lake Apopka North Shore
370+ Bird Species Recorded
Affordable Birding & Photo Field Trips
No Added Registration Fee

NORTH SHORE BIRDING FESTIVAL

LEARN MORE AT
www.orangeaudubonfl.org/festival



January 22-27, 2020

The 23rd Annual Space Coast Birding and Wildlife Festival has Something for Everyone

<https://scbwf.org>

PLANTS FOR BIRDS

Simpson's Stopper – or Twinberry

By John Benton,
President, Lake Beautyberry Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society

It's like a swiss army knife of shrubs. There is not much that this humble evergreen native shrub can't do. Simpson's Stopper (*Myricanthes fragrans*) can be a specimen planting, or a part of a nice, dense hedge. Stagger plantings along with some other shrubs (like Walter's viburnum) and you'll have a first-class wildlife refuge for a property edge. It can be a large tree in south Florida. The national champion tree is a 51 by 40 -foot diameter specimen in Okeechobee County. It can also be kept small by choosing a compact cultivar, or by pruning. Leaves are small, deep green, and fragrant. The beautiful and fragrant white blossoms draw bees and butterflies in the spring. The showy, red fruits (about the size of a large raisin) are favorites for cardinals and mockingbirds. The fruit is edible, maybe not great, but edible, by humans (NOT the seeds!). As a hedge, or dense specimen, it is an excellent nesting shrub for birds. Or, one can prune it back to the central trunks and show off the bark (think some of the varieties of crepe myrtle – but native!)

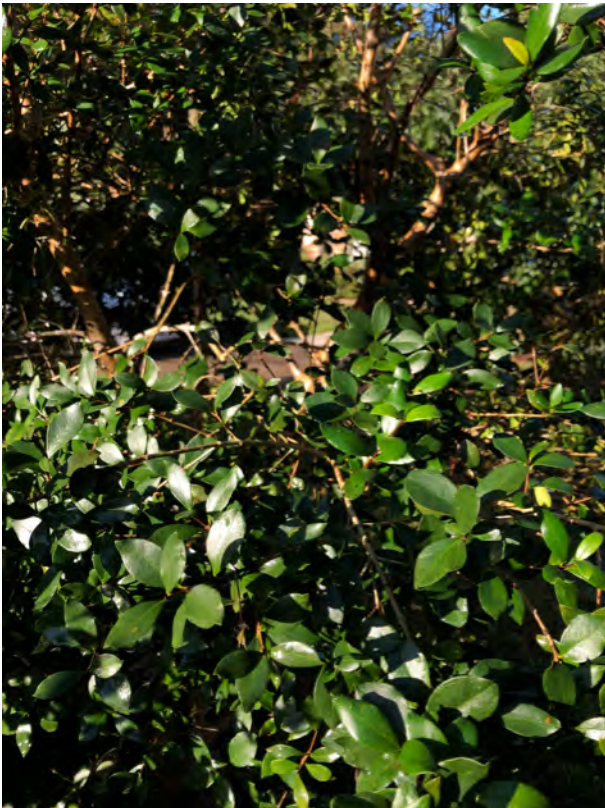
Simpson's Stopper is a member of the Eucalyptus family and can be cold hardy down to 25° F. It grows with little or no irrigation, once established. Full or part sun is preferred, but it can tolerate deeper shade too. Why a stopper? Many plants were called 'stoppers' because a product of their leaves or bark could stop diarrhea. We have more reliable and convenient products for that concern now, thankfully. But with so many other attributes, the twinberry should certainly get more frequent consideration in our landscape choices.

Sources:

<http://www.eattheweeds.com/myricanthes-fragrans-nakedwood-twinberry-2/>

<http://www.gardeningsolutions.ifas.ufl.edu/plants/trees-and-shrubs/shrubs/simpsons-stopper.html>

<https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/fp418>



OVAS - Join/Renew/Support

You are what hope looks like to a bird.

We're in a race against time to give birds and wildlife a fighting chance in a changing world. Show your love today by joining, renewing, or donating to Oklawaha Valley Audubon Society (OVAS).

Membership benefits include: Household membership; Timely, relevant news about birds, their habitats, and the issues that affect them; Planned birding, environmental, and community events happening near you; A powerful voice in the fight to protect birds and wildlife, plus advocacy opportunities; Receive Oklawaha Valley Audubon's bi-monthly newsletter and other communications; Helping support OVAS partner organizations; Special offers and discounts available only to members.

By joining or renewing your local Audubon chapter, you support Oklawaha Valley Audubon directly. All funds stay with our chapter and support the organization of educational programs, field trips, our conservation efforts, as well as allow us to help our partner organizations locally.

We appreciate your support annually at the beginning of each FY/program year, which is July 1. Membership is not a requirement to attend or participate in the OVAS programs or field trips. There are 3 ways to join/renew OVAS locally.

You can use the renewal form below. Mail your check to OVAS, PO Box 268, Eustis, FL 32727.

You can pay at a monthly program with cash or check.

You can go to <https://oklawaha-valley-audubon.org> and click on Join Audubon and pay with PayPal.

OVAS Membership Application

New _____ Renewal _____ Today's Date _____

Print Name _____

Mailing Address _____

E-mail Address(es) _____

Phone number(s) _____

Committee that you would be willing to volunteer assistance:

_____ Citizen Science Committee- help organize or participate in the annual Emeraldalda Christmas bird count, monthly bird counts, monitor local rookeries, and /or record field trip reports data

_____ Fundraising Committee – Assist with Donation box, boat rides, raffles, and special events

_____ Hospitality Committee – Help with refreshments for membership meetings and 2 potlucks

_____ Membership Committee – membership and e-mail list, new name tags, sign-in book

_____ Conservation Committee - attend public meetings, help write letters to legislators

_____ Outreach Committee - Set up display at events, maintain bulletin board at TLNC, advertise events in newspapers/internet

_____ Digital Communications Committee - website, e-mail blasts, Facebook and social media

_____ Newsletter Committee - bi-monthly electronic newsletter and OVAS brochures

OVAS is a Florida Not-for-Profit Corporation

<https://oklawaha-valley-audubon.org> (352) 432-8866

<https://www.facebook.com/Oklawaha-Valley-Audubon-Society>



Oklawaha Valley Audubon Society

PO Box 268

Eustis, FL

32727-0268

TO: