

TROUT LAKE



NATURE CENTER

Issue: March, 2025

Mark Your Calendars

March 15, 1:30 PM: Naturalist Program: Lost Springs of the Ocklawaha, by filmmaker and documentarian Matt Keene, is a documentary film about the 20 lost springs that were covered by the creation of the Rodman Dam. As the water is drawn down above the dam, the springs become visible again. The largest of these Lost Springs in terms of flow was the Marion Blue Springs. Historically, Blue Springs emptied into the Ocklawaha River via Indian Creek, a five-mile clear spring run, just upstream of the current location of the Rodman Dam.

Flooded by the artificial impoundment called the Rodman Pool, Blue and the other springs with names like Bright Angel, Catfish, Mullet Cove, Tobacco Patch, and more have been lost since the 1968 closing of the Rodman Dam as part of the ill-conceived and now decommissioned Cross-Florida Barge Canal. Intermittently, the State of Florida draws down the water level held in the Rodman Pool uncovering these springs.

Keene will tell his story about creating his documentary film about the seldom revealed springs and their significance. For more information, call 352-357-7536.

Photo credits: Cannon springs as it flows into the Ocklawaha River from the FI. Defenders of the Environment website.



Inspired by Nature Watercolor Painting Continues. Two classes remain until they resume in the Fall.

Learning to paint can bring inspiration into your life and allow you to appreciate the natural beauty that surrounds us. Ellen Westerholm, artist, teacher and painting mentor will be teaching a class on **Saturday, March 26 from 10 AM to Noon** featuring a potted flower and on **Saturday, April 26, 10 AM to Noon** featuring a portrait of the Florida panther. As **always**, each class includes a brief talk about the painting subject so you can learn while you paint.



In May and June, Children's painting classes will be offered for 6- to 14-year-olds. Painting subjects will include Bees, Bugs and Butterflies, the Florida Alligator and a Crab. Classes will be held on **May 3, June 5 and June 21**. Registration is not online yet but will be activated by the end of this month. Cost is \$35/child which includes all painting supplies and materials. For more information, call 352-357-7536. You must register to attend at the TLNC website. Just look for the Inspired by Nature tab at the top.

Ongoing until April 20: Egg Hunt. As the days warm and Spring begins, it is the time of year when many wild animals lay their eggs. Turtles, snakes, dragonflies, butterflies, fish, and more lay eggs and later (May and June) alligator do too. To celebrate this special time of year, TLNC is offering an egg hunt on its Little Armadillo and Armadillo trails. Fourteen large eggs with letters have been placed on these trails for you to find. You don't collect the eggs, just the letters. Then, you unscramble the letters for the secret message. It is loads of fun, gets you outdoors and you may spot a barred owl in a tree, stumble across a box turtle or hear the calls of an osprey as you hunt. Nothing special is needed for this hunt except sharp eyes and a willingness to have fun.





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April 13, 1 to 3 PM, Sunday Funday: Reptile Wonders. The next Sunday Funday is all about reptiles. Take part in interactive activities to learn about some awesome reptiles—how they benefit us, make the world a better place, and in some instance “scare” us. Special guests at this Funday will be educators and animals from Gatorland. The Gatorland presentation and interaction will begin at 1:30 PM and is part of your \$5/vehicle entry fee. This presentation is being brought to TLNC through the generosity of Trina and Bud Raether.

The next Sunday Funday will be on May 4 called Water World. For more information on either program, email tlnc.info@gmail.com or call 352-357-7536.

Only 2 Left: What’s left your ask? It’s our Pack Walks. Two remain. One on **March 30** and one on **April 27** both **starting at 1:30 PM**. This is a chance for your canine companion to socialize and an opportunity for you to share the love of your dog with other dog lovers. Dogs and people will stroll the trails at TLNC usually ending up at the Education Dock on the Lake. Pack Walks are discontinued once hot weather comes until the return of cool weather in the fall. TLNC trails remain open year-round for individuals and their dogs to enjoy.

Dogs must be well-mannered, on a six-foot non-retractable lead and handlers must pick up after their dogs. This pack walk is part of your \$5/vehicle entry fee to the property.

Coming Later This Year...Jungle Feast: TLNC’s annual fundraiser is scheduled for **October 9**. So, mark your calendars so you can attend this event that supports our Education Complex Expansion.

Sponsorship opportunities are available for this special event. Contact TLNC.director@gmail.com or call 352-357-7536 if you or your business is interested in sponsoring an activity at this event.

What's a Shamrock?

The three-leaf clover, a type of trefoil plant, has been considered the unofficial national flower of Ireland for centuries known as a shamrock. Irish legend says St. Patrick used the shamrock to explain the Holy Trinity to nonbelievers. This folklore was widely repeated in the years after the saint's death which is presumed to have happened on March 17. The first St. Patrick's Day parade was held in Boston in 1760. Hallmark began to use the symbol of the shamrock in 1920. This plant became established as a symbol of Ireland and is now used by many other Irish companies such as Aer Lingus.

In the early 18th century, the shamrock gained significance during Ireland's struggle for independence. Irish patriots started wearing the shamrock and the color green to show their support. British authorities banned the wearing of green or the shamrock under penalty of death.

Don't use 'shamrock' and 'clover' interchangeably. All shamrocks are clovers but not all clovers are shamrocks. Shamrock comes from the Gaelic word seamrog, which means little or young clover, but no one is sure which species of clover is the real shamrock. The shamrock is traditionally believed to be a species of clover with three leaves, such as *Trifolium dubium* or *Trifolium repens*. Wearing the shamrock is believed to be a protective charm and good luck. Enjoy your St. Patrick's Day with a little wearing of the green and getting outside to see the many shades of green that nature provides. See if you can find a three leaf clover in your area.



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