



# Connections

Newsletter for Friends of Six Mile Cypress Slough Preserve

SUMMER 2009

## The New Displays Are In!

by Mary Rude

A great big **thank you** to the *Friends* for funding the replacement of the five large interpretive displays along our boardwalk trail. The new signage is fabricated by the company Fossil and will be much more durable than our old displays. They will not have a Plexiglas covering (which used to trap bugs and debris) and will be much easier to keep clean and looking nice.

The existing art was used for the trail panels to keep the cost down. This also saved time since to have new art produced would take up to a year. The overall cost of the panels...including the work noted below...was a little more than \$10,000.00.

Additionally as part of the project, the two map displays at the amphitheater will be replaced shortly. The maps and information have been updated and will be much more attractive than the old temporary displays. The other two panels at the amphitheater kiosk will be redone in another phase.

Lastly and included in this phase, the Friends have funded the self-guided Green Building Tour signage. Thank you to **Bill Sanders** for creating fabulous original art for each display. His drawings are so charming, I can't stop looking at them! I believe they will draw attention to important information about what features make our building "Green".

SEE PAGE TWO FOR MORE PICTURES

Photos Six Mile Cypress Slough Preserve



Andy Gurri installs one of the new display panels along the Boardwalk.

## ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION FUNDING CUT BY THE LEE COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD



Environmental Education teacher Cindy Bear explains the *Green Bus Recycling Experience* to participants in a wet walk at the Slough in support of the Environmental Education Program in the Lee County Schools. About 60 participants were led through the Slough by Drs. Charles O'Connor and Bill Hammond, and Rick Tully.

The Environmental Education Program funding has been cut so drastically for the 2009-2010 school year that all Resource Teacher positions have been eliminated, and only one helping teacher remains. In years past the EE Program had six Resource Teachers and six helping teachers serving one fourth the number of schools and students. Cindy Bear (20 years at EE) and Charles O'Connor (5 years at EE) were reassigned to teach in classroom settings.

Consequently, there will be very few Environmental Education Program field trips this school year. Two years ago the Program led or facilitated field trips for 35,000 students, teachers, and adult chaperones, each trip supported by a comprehensive and well written curriculum. Venues included the Slough, Ding Darling National Wildlife Refuge, Manatee Park, the Waste to Energy Facility, the Sanitary Landfill, the Recycling Facility, Koreshan State Historic Site, Randell (Calusa Indian) Research Center, Caloosahatchee Regional Park, and other sites.

Annually, 2,000 seventh grade students, parents, and teachers joyfully experienced the Six Mile Cypress Slough wet walk, many saying it was the highlight of their academic careers. Almost all left with a deeper appreciation and understanding of the Slough.

Also, the Monday Group high school environmental class may not meet for the first time in 40 years. Friends know how important the Monday Group was in preserving the Six Mile Cypress Slough, along with Manatee Park.

Wetlands protection begins with education. The Friends' role in the education process is now even more vitally important than at any time in the past. If you are a resident of Lee County, contact the Lee County School Board with comments and concerns about the Environmental Education Program. The citizens' voice needs to be loud and clear – **Support the EE Program!**

SEE PAGE FOUR FOR ADDRESSES FOR BOARD

## DIFFERENT ZONES OF THE SLOUGH

Pictured below are the old sign explaining the different zones of the Slough and the new sign with the information.



The Friends Logo will be included along with the logo from Lee Parks and Recreation on the new large signs in the lower right hand corner.

## Friends Contribute Towards Volunteer Resource Room and Trail

by Heather Gienapp

Recently funds from the Blake Cadkin Memorial Fund were used to augment our resource room. Great books were purchased in many different categories including wildlife identification (including a great guide for aquatic critters), journaling techniques and plant identification. Many educational DVDs were acquired which include Bugs of the Underworld, Butterfly, Insect, Weather and Amphibians. The Friends also purchased a brand new set of 30 binoculars for our trail tours. They have a lifetime warranty and are a wonderful contribution to our daily tours. Other resources included program materials for summer camp. Educational games, books and the DVD's provided a closer look at many of the topics covered in our summer camps. We truly could not provide the quality educational experiences we do without the help of these added resources from the Friends. Thank you so much for your continued support of the Slough as we work to educate our visitors and program participants about the importance of the Slough and nature!

## WET WALKS IN AUGUST

Join the Friends on August 29th or August 30th for an off-boardwalk trip in the Slough when it's WET. Dr. Charles O'Connor, Friends Vice President, will lead the trips through the Slough.

Saturday, August 29th at 10:00 am

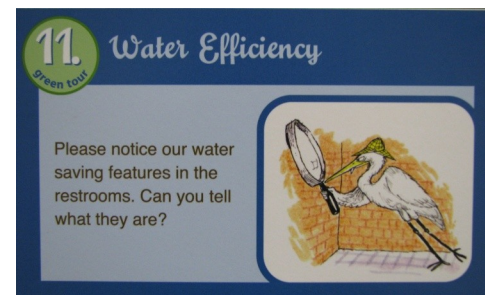
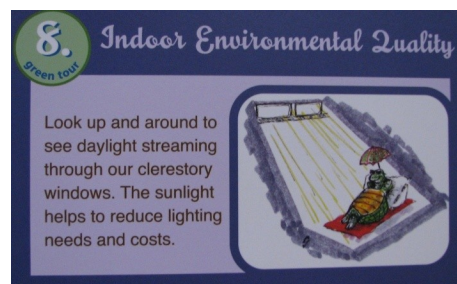
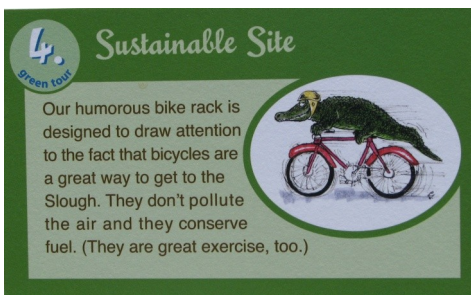
Sunday, August 30th at 1:00 pm

Pre-registration is required with Dr. O'Connor at [rcoc@comcast.net](mailto:rcoc@comcast.net) or 239-246-5526.

A donation to the Friends is requested of participants. Limit is 20.

## PLEASE JOIN US!

## SELF GUIDED TOUR SIGNS



These self-guided tour signs can be found through out the building to explain some of the LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) program items that were required for the Interpretive Center to become a silver certified "green" building. The Friends owe Bill Sanders a great big thank you for his creative designs for all to enjoy and make the education opportunity so enjoyable and entertaining as well as informative.



Pictured right—The Great Blue Heron Wing pavilion shelter.  
 Pictured left—The head of the Great Blue Heron across the parking lot.  
 Pictured below—Second wing



## GREAT BLUE HERON PICNIC PAVILION IS COMPLETED



A View of the entire Great Blue Heron Picnic Pavilion Area



As part of the construction of the Interpretive Center at the Slough a piece of functional art has been constructed to replace the condemned picnic shelter at the parking lot of the Slough. It is a 100 foot long architectural interpretation of a Great Blue Heron translated into a pavilion. One of the wings of the bird is the actual pavilion, the second wing shows the tips of the feathers sculpted in concrete; and the head is a stand alone sculpture 16 feet tall. This is the first functional art in Lee County and serves as giant example of sustainable construction. The overhead structure of the project is recycled steel. The top of the structure of the wing is made of *guadua agustifolia* (Bamboo), a rapidly renewable resource that is light, flexible, has amazing endurance and is adaptable to our Florida climate. It acts as a natural insulator, bringing down the ambient temperature by 5-7 degrees. The designers and artists are Fort Myers residents Marcella and Renzos Avila. The Friends helped finance construction of this wonderful piece of art.

### *Along the Boardwalk...Quiet Tranquility...by Dotty Brown*

Early morning dew on webs and needles turns the Slough into a crystalline wonderland in the shafts of the rising sun. Visitors whisper in the quiet tranquility of the summer Slough. The frenzy of the spring's nesting and nurturing season has given way to a calm on the ponds and in the woodlands. The immature white Little Blue Herons are showing blotches of blue feathers; the immature brown Ibis are beginning to sport their new white adult plumage. On a low-ceiling rainy day a Yellow crowned Night Heron perches on the boardwalk rail to inspect a school of fish. Raindrops punctuate the quiet waters as Pig frogs shatter the silence with their deep oinky-croak! A Cuban frog rests on the blade of an Alligator Flag and a Tree frog clings to a nearby stem. A peaceful... restful...renewing summer Slough awaits your visitation.



# MEMBERSHIP NEWS

## *Renewing Members: Thank you for your continued support!!*

Brenda Brooks  
Caloosahatchee Bromeliad Society  
Gail G. Dye C  
Daniel Eagan  
Samantha Eagan  
Peggy Egan  
Gail Evirs  
Teresa & William Fields  
Ted & Gerry Geboski C  
Doris Giuseffi  
Green Thumb Garden Club  
Lucy Jacoby C  
Jasmine Garden Club  
Jo Ellen Kessler  
Wiley & Betty Parker C  
Elizabeth Schallenberg C  
Rick Tully C  
Steven & Margaret Ulrich  
Mary Webber

“C” denotes Charter Member

## *Welcome New Members*

College of Life Foundation  
Matt McNeil

## *Additional Donations Gratefully Received From:*

Joseph & Joan Cassin  
Gail G. Dye  
Doris Giuseffi  
Elizabeth Schallenberg

## Remembering Friends

Honor/memorial cards are available through Flo Kornman at [lkornman@aol.com](mailto:lkornman@aol.com) or 481-0452 or 4289 Mariner way, #110, Fort Myers FL, 33919. These cards are perfect for birthdays and thank you thoughts. They also make wonderful memorials. This is another way to contribute to Friends while honoring friends and loved ones.

## Connections

The original plan was that this issue of *Connections* would be the last issue that will be available through the United States Postal Service. Our goal is to distribute the newsletter via a computer link to the Friends web site, [Sloughpreserve.org](http://Sloughpreserve.org). Membership coordinator, Mary Murray, is feverishly working to accomplish this goal, but it is indeed a task. We will take a close look prior to the time our non-profit mailing permit should be renewed to make a decision in time for the Fall issue of *Connections*.

If you are a Friends member who lives in the Slough area and are getting email reminders about local activities, then you will automatically be included in the *Connections* notification. If you do not receive any notices, or live out of the area, please get your email address on file today or as soon as possible. The easiest way is to send a note to the Editor. The email address is [carolyn\\_babb08@comcast.net](mailto:carolyn_babb08@comcast.net).

This will ensure that the Fall Issue of *Connections* will be available to you as soon as it is ready!

If your Friends membership is up for renewal or you are recruiting a new member, please make sure to include the email address at that time. Thanks for your help.



**EMAIL ADDRESSES FOR FRIENDS MEMBERS. PLEASE MAKE SURE THAT YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS IS ON FILE. Send to [carolyn\\_babb08@comcast.net](mailto:carolyn_babb08@comcast.net)**

## EXTRA, EXTRA FRIENDS NEW MEMBERSHIP BENEFIT!!!

**Beginning in 2009, memberships of \$50, and more will receive a 10% discount at FRIENDS CORNER. All of the books related to the Slough, hats, shirts, puzzles and other goodies are available to you at this discount. What a great opportunity for all of us! Support the Slough and do some extra shopping as well. There are many great gift ideas for children as well as for adults. All of the profits go directly back for programs and items for the Slough.**

*Thanks to the Friends Corner Gang for this wonderful idea!!!*

## SPECIAL THANKS

A special thank you to Friends Members Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Cassin for their generous repeat donation and the matching grant from the GlaxoSmithKline Foundation. The Cassin's generosity enabled the Friends organization to apply and receive a matching grant of \$500 from the Foundation, which is affiliated with Mr. Cassin's former employer.

## Connections STAFF

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OR  
The School District of Lee County  
Attn: School Board Members  
2855 Colonial Blvd.  
Fort Myers, FL 33966

## PRESIDENT'S NOTES

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Six Mile Cypress Slough  
Preserve



### **VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR FOR 2009 AT THE SLOUGH**

Friends Advisory Board Member and Past President Joyce Sanders was named 2009 Volunteer of the Year at the Volunteer Appreciation luncheon for the Six Mile Cypress Slough Preserve. Joyce was selected as Volunteer of the Year for her unwavering passion and support of the Slough. Her list of accomplishments is never ending.

From Mary Rude, Supervisor at the Slough, "Thank you Joyce for all you have done for the Slough, the community, for the staff and for me personally. For a "granny in tennis shoes", I think that you are Superwoman."



### **CALLING ALL FRIENDS IN THE FORT MYERS AREA!!!!**

Please join the handy trash team on **Saturday, August 15, 2009** for a fun filled 1 1/2 hours of hot and humid Florida weather and trash.

Then afterwards a little fellowship at the Big Blue Bird picnic pavilion with coffee, juice and donuts!

Catch up on the trash talking with the Friends in the neighborhood and just have a good, ole' dirty time, just for the heck of it! **RSVP** (so we have enough donuts!) 239-728-4707 or carolyn\_babb08@comcast.net



A great summer so far! Mother Nature started in May with a lot of rain – eight inches in two weeks. Otter Pond went up and down with the rain, and the wading birds certainly appreciated it! After that she has kind of held back on the normal rainy season! I am sure that she has a plan. I did notice today, July 28th, that some of the bald cypress trees have started to turn brown in anticipation of fall and winter!



The Friends have been busy at the Interpretive Center and in Friends Corner. Summer visitors enthusiasm is always evident! A boy and his mom from one of my guided walks during the dry season came back to see the Resurrection Fern after it rained. A visitor and Friends member, Laurel Kearns, pointed out herself in the exhibit about the Monday Group. She is pictured in the newspaper article about the efforts by the Monday Group in October of 1976.

The Environmental Education program at the Lee County Schools is having a hard time again this year. If only folks could remember 40 years ago when the Slough was not a county protected preserve. If it were not for Dr. Bill Hammond and the Monday Group, we would be sitting in the middle of concrete and empty condos, not this wondrous place, the Six Mile Cypress Slough Preserve. When the Big Green Bus with Cindy Bear and volunteers from the Lee County Schools Environmental Program were at the Slough at the end of May, I was there to show the Friends support.

The Friends have begun to fund the purchase of equipment and supplies for use by the volunteers and the Interpretive Center staff. New binoculars will be waiting for you the next time you are here for a guided walk. The new signage for the boardwalk is either ordered or installed. Keep an eye open for the new green tractor/mower!

In this trying economic time our support of the Slough, the staff and programs is even more important than at any time in recent years.

None of this would be possible without your continued membership and donations. The citizens' voice that built the Interpretive Center needs to continue to be heard. Our members are enthusiastic and dedicated. Please, please keep it up. The work never ends.

See you at the Slough. CB

## Sign Up Today!

Check Area of Interest

- Education  Preserve Advocacy  
 Projects  Publicity  
 Fund Raising  Special Events  
 Friends Corner

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Check Type of Membership

- Student \$10  
 Individual \$20  
 Contributing \$50  
 Supporting \$100  
 Associate \$500  
 Corporate Sponsor \$500  
 Patron \$1000

In addition I would like to contribute

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ for exhibits and displays for the Interpretive Center.

TOTAL\$ \_\_\_\_\_

Mail to Friends of the Six Mile Cypress Slough, 7791 Penzance Blvd, Fort Myers. FL 33966

Friends web site: [Sloughpreserve.org](http://Sloughpreserve.org) Phone 239-533-7557

Special thanks go to the Lee County Department of Parks and Recreations for its generous support in producing this newsletter. Thanks to Lee County also for providing meeting space at the Six Mile Cypress Slough Preserve Interpretive Center.

GET WET IN AUGUST!!!  
WALK WITH FRIENDS.  
SEE PAGE TWO FOR DETAILS



RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Friends of Six Mile Cypress Slough Preserve  
7791 Penzance Blvd.  
Fort Myers, Florida 33966

