

Connections

Newsletter for Friends of Six Mile Cypress Slough Preserve

June 2010



Summer Wet Walks

Two of the wet walks sponsored by Friends have already occurred at the Slough this summer. The Saturday walk in June proved to be one of the best on record with sightings including two otters and a night heron. Sightings like that are special. All of the participants were thrilled. Two more are planned for Sunday, August 22nd at Noon and Saturday, August 28th at 10:00 am. **(Please note this is a change in date from previously advertised date of Saturday, August 21st)** There is still room to sign up for the August walks. Reservations can be made by emailing Dr. Charles O'Connor at rcoc77@embarqmail.com Walks are limited to 15 per walk for ages eight and up. A \$10 per person donation is requested.

Any questions please call the Friends at 239-533-7557.

Kids and adults alike enjoy the Cathedral area of the wet walk path.



Don't forget about pictures for the Photo Contest!

Photos Gary and Nancy Johnson

Camp Scholarships at the Slough

Scholarships have been awarded to students who entered an essay in the Friends first "Why I want to go to camp at the Slough" contest. Board members of the Friends evaluated the essays. Although there were more entries than the original number of tuition scholarships, the Friends Board of Directors decided that all of the entrants were deserving of having their tuition paid for summer camp at the Slough.

One of Friends main goals and objectives is the education of the children who will be living in this environment, in whatever shape the adults may leave it! This is a great way to demonstrate to these students the importance of nature and human impact. We hope that the camp experience will stay with them always.

See Page Two for excerpts from the camp essays.

FRIENDS 2010-2011 PROGRAM SCHEDULE

Plans are already in the works for 2010-2011 Season for Friends Gatherings!

Mark Your Calendars for these dates.

Holiday Potluck

Tuesday, December 14, 2010

January Program

Tuesday, January 25, 2011

February Program

Tuesday February 22, 2011

March Program

Tuesday, March 22, 2011

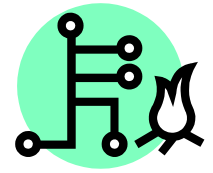
April Program

Tuesday, April 26, 2011

Watch for announcements of the speakers.



Winning Essays for Summer Camp



I love sports and being outdoors. I like fishing. I hope to see alligators, hogs, snakes and other wild-life. I like to be outside like fishing, riding bikes, skateboarding, and hanging out with friends. I will be prepared to do activities and challenges that are put in front of me. Matthew, Age 12

During the beginning of summer you think you're going to have the time of your life. You think you're going to amusement parks and the pool and sleeping late. But in the middle of the summer you start to get bored and wait for school to start again. That is why camps like this are good for kids it makes them realize that outdoors is better than indoors. You would think that most kids hate nature but almost all the kids in the world love it you just got to make it fun. So that is why I want to go to this camp and if I go I will enjoy every second of it. Andrew, Age 11

The reason why I want to go to the Slough is that it can teach much more about nature. They may teach me more about hummingbirds, blue jays, robins and woodpeckers...I could learn more about different types of trees and where they're located. I can learn about underground animals. I could even learn about what type of weather some animals like. Jenna (Age 10-12 Group)

Usually camp is boring, but the Slough has all the fun things like all the interesting animals, wilderness survival tips and gorgeous plants. Walking quietly through the woods like a bear hunting for food brings me a step closer to nature. Nature often soothes me and gives me a relaxing feel that everything is stress free. That is why I love the animals. When you're on a hike and get lost using your intelligence will come in handy. The Slough can teach me variety of life survival skills. Learning tips can be fun. Testing them out on your own to experience it yourself brings a lot of bliss instead of just listening to the teacher talk. Nalani, Age 12

I saw someone working on their boat that was dripping oil OVER A CANAL! So I invented an oil removal system that cleans up oil from canals or any water resource. But, I still don't know much about Florida. So I would like to go to The Six Mile Cypress camp so I can learn more about it. I love animals and the environment so that is why I want to go to the Six Mile Cypress Slough. Zach, Age 13

I love nature, but I have very little chance to learn about nature. I want to learn everything you have to teach. Ashleigh, Age 12

Sitting outside and looking at nature is one of my many favorite things to do on the weekends. Also I went on a walk through the Slough...I thought it was fun because we were up to our chests in water and still could walk! As I have been growing older I have seen the importance of trees and nature. As a kid and now as a teen I have enjoyed this kind of activity. Danielle, Age 13

My favorite subject has always been science. There are so many reasons why I love science....I have always been an outside kind of girl. I love the feeling of the sun on the back of my neck and listening to the chirping of the grasshoppers or birds. I really don't belong anywhere else but outside. I really like lying on the grass and gazing at the world around me and just relaxing. I always ponder the world around me and how it came to be. Sophia

I want to go because I would like to experience the nature in the woods, and I like seeing insects and reptiles...It is going to be outside and I like seeing cypress. Jose



I have been to Six Mile Slough only twice but both times were wonderful experiences for me. My favorite thing that I saw at the Slough was the sight of teenage anhinga and great herons playing around in their nests. I also saw a lot of cool-looking trees including one that looked like a huge bonsai. Robert

Ever since I moved to Florida a few years ago, I've been interested in all the different and amazing plants and animals that live here. I especially like the variety of insects. Since I was little, my Mom tells me, I have like to watch small insects as they go about their lives. I really want to go to camp at the Six Mile Cypress Slough Preserve...it would be loads of fun and a chance to get to know other kids that like the outdoors too. Christine, Age 12



Along the Boardwalk.....Pattern of Renewal - by Dotty Brown

Flora and fauna have each renewed their species in the abundance of the water, food supply and daylight hours of our spring season. The patch of Pickerel Weed once demolished by feral pigs has grown from the dispersed rootlets. Now there is a meadow of purple flowers providing bees and butterflies abundant nectar. Cypress trees are bearing cones the size of brussel sprouts. The trees have grown like adolescent children. Their well groomed needle covered branches have curtained the Ibis Marsh stage. Bushes are sporting their specie blooms that are being pollinated by insects and butterflies. The Gator Lake Rookery has been a nursery for Anhinga and egrets. The Red-shouldered Hawk raised its young to fledge. All the nesting activities have delighted those who have visited the scene. It has been a most bountiful, beautiful and rewarding spring for the record number of visitors along the boardwalk.



Loving the Slough is a Special Treat – by Mary Rude, Supervisor, Six Mile Cypress Slough Preserve

My longtime friends, Marge and Steve Ulrich, have been coming to Florida every spring for about 20 years to stay for a few weeks on Sanibel. They visit their traditional favorite nature spots like Ding Darling, the Bailey tract and of course the Six Mile Cypress Slough Preserve.

The Ulrich's are not only friends of mine, but they are also Friends of the Six Mile Cypress Slough. Naturally they would tell others about our wonderful preserve. In fact, the day that Marge and Steve came to see me at the Slough, there were two people visiting that they had just met at the Bailey Tract on Sanibel the day before. Marge and Steve had suggested this fabulous place to them...and here they were the very next day. How fun to witness "word of mouth" act so quickly and with such a positive reaction.

An interesting little twist occurred while Marge and Steve were visiting Ding Darling. Being very friendly, they got to talking with some people in the lookout tower as they all watched a flock of lovely pink roseate spoonbills. The people turned to Marge and Steve and asked them, "Have you ever been to the Six Mile Cypress Slough Preserve? It's a delightful nature preserve in Fort Myers that is absolutely wonderful." My friends smiled knowingly and replied that they had and agreed that it was a great place to visit.



A few days later, they treated themselves to ice cream. The young man behind the counter noticed the t-shirts that they were wearing with the Friends logo on the front. He asked Marge and Steve if they had ever been to the Six Mile Cypress Slough Preserve. When they told him, "yes" he excitedly told them that he had been on a field trip to the Slough and loved it. Apparently on their subsequent trips to the ice cream parlor they got a little extra ice cream in their cups.

So in the end, being a Friend of the Six Mile Cypress Slough Preserve has a number of hidden benefits. You can make people happy by just recommending that they visit, you can make friends easily by sharing your love of this wonderful place...and you might even get an extra special treat just for being associated with the Slough. I can't guarantee that it will be ice cream, but I'm sure it will be "sweet".

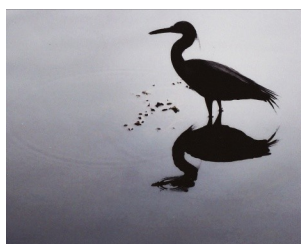
2010 PHOTOGRAPHY CONTEST

Plans are being made for the second Friends of Six Mile Cypress Slough Preserve Photography Contest. Photographs will be accepted between October 1 and December 31, 2010. Judging will take place in January with the announcement of winners and awards sometime in February 2010. Rules and entry information will be in the September issue of *Connections* and on line at www.sloughpreserve.org.



Some of last years winners

Janet Bunch
Open Category



Gretchen Barsness
Animal Category

Richard Burwell
Plant Category



MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Renewing Members: Thank you for your continued support!!

Ellie Boyd **C**
Elizabeth Carter
Mr. & Mrs. Joseph F. Cassin
Gail G. Dye
Jack & Joanne Gifford
Neal & Evie Hartman **C**
Lucy Jacoby
Charlotte Key
Matt McNeil
Poinciana Garden Club **C**
Bob Repenning
Rob & Katy Scharlau

"C" denotes Charter Member (persons who comprised the first year's membership of Friends)

Welcome New Members !!

Edward & Jean Gillespie
Monica and John Gillespie
Kate Jones

Additional Donations Gratefully Received From:

Mr. & Mrs. Joseph F. Cassin

EMAIL ADDRESSES FOR FRIENDS MEMBERS. PLEASE MAKE SURE THAT YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS IS ON FILE. carolyn_babb08@comcast.net

**TRASH PICKUP AT THE SLOUGH
THIRD SATURDAY OF EVERY MONTH
JOIN US 9:00 a.m.**

**HELP ALWAYS NEEDED AT FRIENDS CORNER.
VOLUNTEER FOR FRIENDS FUND RAISING EFFORTS**

This is part of a flier received from Mr. Frank Gill, President of the National Audubon Society. The damage to any wetlands impacts everyone. (The juvenile Brown Pelican pictured visited the Slough at Otter Pond in 2009.) CB



Photo Carolyn Babb



CRISIS IN THE GULF

Oil from the largest environmental catastrophe in U.S. history is washing onto beaches and seeping into wetlands at some of the Gulf Coast's most vital and diverse habitats, with dire implications for people and wildlife. The impact on birds reflects the spill's huge environmental threat. And Audubon is there to help.

Millions of birds are nesting and breeding in the path of the deadly and growing slick. It has already reached Audubon-designated **Important Bird Areas** in from Louisiana to Florida and more may lie in its path. Hundreds of birds have already perished – and the long term outlook grows darker with every gallon of oil.

Sadly, the oil spill is only the latest of countless assaults on Gulf coast birds like the **Brown Pelican**, which only last year was removed from the U.S. Endangered Species list. But Audubon's fight to protect vulnerable coastal and wetland birds began over a century ago, when our first members rallied the nation to protect them from hunters eager to sell their feathers for fashion. Our commitment to the beauty and rich diversity of the Gulf region remains unchanged. Audubon's Gulf oil response and recovery effort will help birds and other wildlife weather this crisis – and our long-term restoration plans will enable Gulf communities to thrive in years to come.

**The effects of this tragedy will be serious and long-lasting.
But Audubon will be there to make a difference.... now and for the long haul.**

Visit www.audubon.org to learn how you can help.



Thank you, Thank you to Mary Murray who is currently our Membership Chairperson. Friends is looking for a the **next** Membership Chair. Please contact Carolyn Babb to **VOLUNTEER! TODAY!**

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Editor Carolyn Babb
Copy Editor Alouise Skehan Pyle
Lay-out/Design Carolyn Babb
Printing Lee County
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Six Mile Cypress Slough
Preserve

For summer camp questions, please contact Heather Gienapp at 239-533-7556. Register for camp (239) 533-7440 or online www.leeparks.org

Happy Summer! Don't you love this hot weather! Thought I'd never warm up from the winter. (Picture is of myself and Nancy, Friends Secretary and wonderful friend, this winter). I have just completed a second module, the Wetlands, for my Florida Master Naturalist designation. I was really proud to show off my "home" stomping grounds at the Slough on one of our field trips. Friends Corner folks are using this summer to get Friends Corner ready for the season. The book selection is as great as it has been in the past. Also going to add some new items including a hiking stick medallion with the Friends logo. We are always open to suggestions for items related to the Slough that would be of interest to our visitors. Friends Vice President Charles O'Connor led the first of our summer wet walks for some enthusiastic splasers. They saw otters and a big old snake, a water moccasin. How anyone can walk into the Slough and not come back out totally and thoroughly captivated by the spirit is beyond me! And I'm thankful that I can do it as often as I can. There are two more wet walks scheduled August 22 and 28. Thanks to Charles for sharing the Slough with old and new Friends. The Holiday Potluck in December is being reinstated this year. The great staff at the Slough, Mary, Heather, Andy, Bob and Jim, has had enough events to know about how many people and what kind of event can happen, and the potluck rules! Watch for announcements about those upcoming events. Start thinking about new photos that you might want to enter in our next Photo contest coming this Fall. Rules and dates will be announced in the next issue of *Connections* which will be published at the end of September. The judges will be accepting entries beginning in October. I've been encouraging our visitors since the last contest to think about entering their faves in the contest. Most folks visiting have a camera in their hands. I know I have learned to not step a foot out of my truck without my camera.



CB and Nancy in Winter!

See you at the Slough. CB

Summer Naturalists Camp

Hands-on learning occurs in every session & will include using **binoculars & artifacts**. The week will culminate in a walk off-boardwalk as we experience the natural beauty of a Cypress Slough.

Dates: July 19-23
 *July 26-30
Time: 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Cost: \$57
Age: 10-12
Limit: 15 *Same info
 each week.



Campers playing a game called Bird Beaks and Feet.

Wilderness Explorers Camp

This nature camp will provide campers with the opportunity to challenge themselves in the areas of survival, tracking, animal study, awareness games and nature skills.

Dates: Aug 9-13
 *Aug 16-20
Time: 8:00 a.m.—4:30 p.m.
Cost: \$57.00
Age: 12-16
Limit: 20 *Same Material
 covered each week



Campers making a wilderness shelter out of natural materials.

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: www.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.



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

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

