

July 2012

### MISSION STATEMENT

*Friends of Six Mile Cypress Slough Preserve is a not-for-profit advocacy and support organization committed to preserving, protecting and promoting Six Mile Cypress Slough Preserve for future generations through education and community partnerships, working together with Lee County and South Florida Water Management District. The Six Mile Cypress Slough Preserve is a critical wetland system having positive value in inspiring and educating its visitors about wetlands and their roles in preserving the environment and local quality of life. Friends' vision is to maintain the Preserve's positive community influence in perpetuity.*



Friends Field Trip to Matanzas Pass Preserve  
Guide Jim Rodwell of the Friends of Matanzas Pass Preserve  
Photo Carolyn Babb

## WET WALKING IN THE SLOUGH THIS SUMMER



Wet walk conditions last year were perfect.

waist in the clean, fresh rain water.

Join Friends Vice President Dr. Charles O'Connor for a fabulous and cooling learning experience walking through the Six Mile Cypress Slough Preserve. This is a chance to learn about the importance of the work that the Slough does for the water as it passes through on the way to Estero Bay. Children must be 10 years or older, wear secure shoes, bring a change of clothing, waterproof camera. Expect to get wet to the

A donation of \$10 to the Friends Education Fund is suggested. Group size is limited to 16. Registration is required by email to Dr. O'Connor at [rcoc77@embarqmail.com](mailto:rcoc77@embarqmail.com).

Saturday, August 11	10:00 am and 12:00 pm
Sunday, August 12	10:00 am
Saturday, August 25	10:00 am and 12:00 pm
Sunday, August 26	10:00 am and 12:00 pm
Saturday, September 8	10:00 am and 12:00 pm
Saturday, September 22	10:00 am and 12:00 pm
Sunday, September 23	10:00 am and 12:00 pm

Please note that the schedule is subject to change due to weather conditions.

JOIN US!

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## FRIENDS CORNER MERCHANDISE AVAILABLE ON LINE

Now you can support the Friends and the Slough with your purchases on line at the Friends Corner store at [friendscorner.qbstores.com](http://friendscorner.qbstores.com). Shirts and hats with the Friends logo previously only available at Friends Corner in the Interpretive Center are now available for purchase online. All of the proceeds from sales will be for programs, equipment and support of the Lee County Parks and Recreation slough staff.

**SUPPORT THE SLOUGH—GO SHOPPING!**

## Friends Excursions: to be continued by Mary Murray

Two years ago, Friends members Janet Bunch and I were tromping around a new (to us) 20/20 parcel and thought “wouldn’t it be great to offer outings like this to our Slough Friends”. We ran the idea by Carolyn Babb who agreed that these adventures under the auspices of the Friends group sounded wonderful. We started with just a couple of excursions the first year and the response was enthusiastic. This past season we had seven excursions from October through May. Each year we have learned more about what makes for a good excursion and feedback from participants is really helpful to us. For instance, this year we went further afield with a trip to Sarasota and that worked well. We introduced guides into our excursions and they were well received. Combining excursions and lunches was a big hit as were carpools.

Many thanks to all of you who attended and joined in the fun. Special thanks go to Janet Bunch who always has her ears open for new adventures and for her terrific organization of the logistics of the walks. Also big thanks to Carolyn Babb for her enthusiastic support, assistance and for publicizing the excursions.

Carolyn, Janet and I are planning next year’s trips now. The trips will start in October and run through May. Based on feedback from this year’s participants, we are looking at 20/20 parcels, another longer field trip, a beach walk and more. When possible, excursions will be offered on days other than Tuesdays, and include more participants. We will continue carpools and offer a lunch or picnic when feasible. The length, duration and difficulty of the excursion will be outlined in detail to help you decide which ones are for you. There will be pre-registration for participants and a standby list.

Watch for publication of the new list of trips in the fall issue of *Connections*.

See you on the trail next year - Mary



Crew Marsh Trippers



Celery Field Trippers



Caloosahatchee Regional Park Trippers



Hickory Swamp Trippers

## Along the Boardwalk...Renewing, breathing and praising the Slough by Dotty Brown

Summertime along the boardwalk expands the senses. Take time to stop, look and listen as you let nature come to you at the benches and shelters. In the refreshing shade of a shelter savor the scents of blooming flora. Listen for the croaking of the frogs, the cacophony of cicada, pecking of the woodpecker and the chirpings of the Carolina Wren and Titmouse. At benches and shelters reflect on the meaning of the posted quotations. Give praise for those who preserve this sanctuary and renew your own soul. Enjoy the serenity of this place!



# Summer Camp 2012 - Essay Excerpts

from Jean Scholz

## Younger set (4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> graders) Campers

I would like to go to this nature camp because I like to explore nature first hand in its natural habitat. I would like to see the food chain in action, such as when a grasshopper eats grass, then a frog eats the grasshopper, then a snake eats the frog, then the snake gets eaten by a hawk.— R.K.

Meeting friends is also so much important as well. You never know when your gonna meet someone as nice as you incredible are! First, you introduce yourself, just be you nothings gonna hurt. Second, say well wanna talk or sit by me. Third, Wanna be my friend, and tell them why! And their you go, you got ur very own best friend! - J.N.



Blindfolded in the Slough

I want to go to summer camp because I want to know what you do there. I like to be outside with others. (Jean’s note – I’m not sure if the student wrote “otters” or “others” !) - C.T.

There’s a lot to learn about nature and a lot of it being cut down and a lot to be saved. That would take a lot of people to do and maybe one of those people would be me. So that’s why I want to go to the Six Mile Cypress Summer Camp.- R.W.

The Six Mile Cypress Slough is one of southwest Florida’s treasures. It is full of plants like bladder wort, resurrection fern, and cypress. It is also home to some of the coolest animals. Owls, snakes, and alligators are a small list.

In addition to learning, I am also interested in nature photography. I have been in a few contests and even the Six Mile Cypress photo contest. I hope to practice photography at camp.— R.G.



Camp Counselor Rudy Lampron leading the way.

I also want to go because while I’m at the summer camp I probably will learn stuff every 10 minutes. The last reason I want to go is because ..... **IT ALL SOUNDS SO FUN!!!** - S.K.

I am an outdoors person and I want to see and learn about the wildlife in Florida.—J.W.

## Teenager Campers

To begin with, I want to go to the Six Mile Cypress Summer Camp because there’s a lot of nature and wildlife. There are woodpeckers, alligators, raccoons, frogs, lizards, otters, all kinds of other birds, plants, trees, snakes, fish, and turtles. Even wild hogs and deer live there too. So do squirrels. The snakes hiss, the fish swim around and the wild hogs snort. The squirrels scamper around, woodpeckers peck at the trees, and alligators snap their jaws. All the animals are really cool and I can’t get over how pretty it is.—S.W.

I have been to this summer camp twice before and it has been an enlightening experience each time.... I personally love the Slough, and especially love the calm, quiet, majestic beauty of nature that is present in the Slough.— R.N.

There are plenty of reasons why I would like to go to the Six Mile Cypress Slough Camp.... It will “free me from the couch” and get me outside during this summer experience. As Einstein said: “Our task must be to free ourselves... by widening our circle of compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole of nature and its beauty.” I will explore the magnificent preserve and free myself to revel in its beauty.— A.D.



Campers learn to build shelter.

# GREAT FLORIDA BIRDING AND WILDLIFE TRAIL

The Great Florida Birding and Wildlife Trail (GFBWT) is a program of the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, supported in part by the Florida Department of Transportation and the Wildlife Foundation of Florida. The Six Mile Cypress Slough Preserve is one of the sites in the South Florida section of the GFBWT. Recently the sign marking the Slough section of this trail was installed at the front entrance of the Slough. (Note: The logo on the trail marker is the swallow-tailed kite.)

This 2,000-mile, self-guided highway trail connects nearly 500 birding and wildlife viewing sites throughout Florida. It is designed to conserve and enhance Florida's wildlife habitats by promoting birding and wildlife viewing activities, conservation education and economic opportunity.

The Great Florida Birding and Wildlife Trail is divided into four sections.

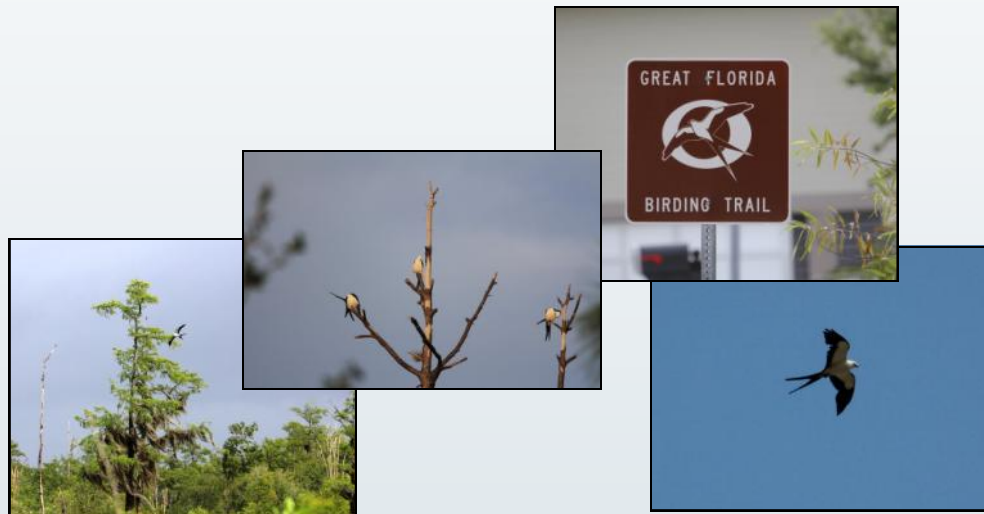
The East Florida Section opened in November 2000.

The West Florida Section followed in November 2002.

The Panhandle Florida Section opened in May 2004.

The South Florida Section opened January 2006, completing the statewide trail.

Free guide booklets contain site descriptions, directions, and maps for each of the four sections. Complete information and downloadable PDF files of guides are available at <http://floridabirdingtrail.com>



Photos Carolyn Babb

## CALUSA BLUEWAY PHOTO CONTEST

Lee County Parks and Recreation has launched its fifth annual Calusa Blueway Photo Contest for boaters, kayakers and nature enthusiasts. Entries can be submitted from now until October 5th, with prizes awarded at the annual Calusa Blueway Festival in November.

Categories include: People on the trail (people enjoying the waterways, trails and outdoors), wildlife on the Blueway trail (flora, fauna and landscapes) and signs along the Blueway trail (Calusa Blueway markers, etc.)

Prizes for top category winners will come from sponsors Harmon Photographers and ABC Framing. First place winners will receive an enlarged, matted and framed version of their photos. Winning entries also may be published in magazines, newspapers and online products.

Selected entries may be featured on websites, including [www.calusablueway.com](http://www.calusablueway.com), [www.calusabluewaypaddingfestival.com](http://www.calusabluewaypaddingfestival.com) and on the festival's Facebook site.

There is no entry fee. Submissions must be taken along a Lee County waterway and include a photographer's name, address, phone number, e-mail address, and title and location. One entry is permitted per photographer per category: amateur photographers only, please. A model release form is available and necessary if a person in a submitted photo is identifiable. Visit [www.CalusaBluewayPaddingFestival.com](http://www.CalusaBluewayPaddingFestival.com), click on 'activities' and then 'photo contest' to upload pictures and complete an entry form.

# CONSERVATION 2020 PROTECTS OUR NATURAL WORLD

by Janet Bunch  
Special Events Coordinator

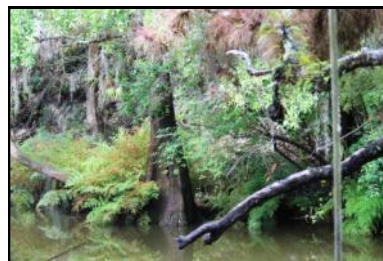
After a very enjoyable guided walk have your visitors ever asked you where else they could go for more hiking and bird watching? Did you know that we have a brochure at the front desk that gives you some suggestions? It's in the folder labeled "Programs" and there are recommendations for other guided walks, boardwalks, dog parks, and hiking and bird watching sites.

Several of the recommended sites are Conservation 2020 preserves, some of which we have visited on the Friends of Six Mile field trips. Conservation 2020 is part of Lee County Parks and Recreation, and the program's mission is to acquire properties of environmental significance, restore them to their natural state and condition, manage them in an environmentally acceptable manner, and provide public recreational access that is compatible with protecting the natural resource.

If you visit [www.conservation2020.org](http://www.conservation2020.org), and click on preserves, you will get a list of each of the 43 preserves currently in the program. Visiting the individual web pages can provide you with descriptions of the parcel, maps, management plans and staff contact information.

Currently, there are more than 24,000 acres acquired under the program. Funding, which comes from an assessment of .05 mills on assessed property in Lee County, is limited. Nominations from willing sellers that comply with program goals will be placed on a list for purchase consideration pending availability of funds.

There probably is a C2020 property somewhere near you. They are great spots for photography and nature study, and several provide opportunities for walking with your dog and riding your horse. I have been on most of the ones with public access, and they are all different. Check them out. You'll be glad you did.



Telegraph Creek Preserve  
On the list for next year's Friends Field Trips  
Photos Carolyn Babb



## CALUSA BLUEWAY FESTIVAL SET FOR NOVEMBER

by Terri Krass

If you have ever wanted to try out kayaking or a stand up paddle board (SUP) then the Calusa Blueway Festival will provide a great opportunity to do both. The dates are November 1 – 4 , 2012 – most of the day activities will be located on the Sanibel Causeway with evening events at the Residence Inn by Marriott Fort Myers-Sanibel. If you already own a kayak or SUP, there will be free local trips organized by various paddling clubs and groups. For everyone there will vendors, demonstrations, speakers, instruction and several social events planned. In addition, there will be a fishing tournament, photo contest, film festival and music events. O-Sea-D Aquatic Adventures will raffle off a grand prize kayak valued at more than \$4,500, to benefit CROW (Clinic for Rehabilitation of Wildlife).

To keep informed, check out the website that lists all the activities [www.CalusaBluewayPaddlingFestival.com](http://www.CalusaBluewayPaddlingFestival.com) - Hope to see there! - Terri

# MEMBERSHIP NEWS

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

Gretchen Barsness  
Lyn Brown  
Elizabeth Carter  
Jerry & Joni Curcuru  
Hugh & Mary Ross Denison  
Gail Dye  
Ted & Gerry Geboski  
Neal & Evie Hartman C  
Charles & Virginia Huether  
Jasmine Garden Club  
Lucy Jacoby  
Wilma Keidel C  
Clayton & Charlotte Lance  
MJ Major C  
Matt McNeil  
Pete & Cindy Ochsner  
Doris Orff  
Bob Repenning  
Harriet Warner  
Jeff Zasadny

*"C" denotes Charter Member, persons who were first year members of the Friends.*

## *Welcome New Members*

Marcie Barbaro  
Bill Dabroski  
Fort Myers Airport Hotel  
Michael Morris  
Patricia Snyder

## *Additional Donations Gratefully Received From:*

Barbara & Jim Abraham  
Bruce & Janet Bunch  
Dale & Lynn Garman  
Krekel Green  
Brian Hogan & Pelican Preserve Visitors  
Pete & Cindy Ochsner  
Alice Oldford-Keimel  
Thaddeus & Jyl Pruss II  
Janice & Richard Scheler  
Andrea Williams

## FRIENDS MEMBER, VOLUNTEER CONNIE LANGMANN FIRST CERTIFIED ECOTOUR OPERATOR

by Theresa Roake

Our very own Connie Langmann, owner/operator of Gaea Guides, has received special certification from The Florida Society for Ethical Ecotourism (Florida SEE). Gaea Guides was the **FIRST** Ecotour Operator to be certified by the new Florida SEE certification program and received Gold designation for meeting up to 89% of the BONUS criteria on the Certification Checklist. Gaea Guides is recognized as a sustainable tour provider for its actions on tour and in the community. The goal of the Florida SEE Certification Program is to certify responsible Ecotour Providers who contribute to the environmental, social and economic sustainability of Florida. Certified Florida SEE Associate Members are recognized as preferred service providers who are committed to using best practices for ecological sustainability, natural area management, and quality ecotourism experiences.

The certification review highlighted two of Florida Master Naturalist Connie Langmann's guided kayak adventures. The first is her one-of-a-kind bat tour. You haven't lived until you've paddled with the bats as they rise from their roost by the hundreds. The biologist reviewer was very impressed with Connie's knowledge of the history of bats and the important role they play in our environment. The second tour evaluated was the Estuary Tour. Once again, Connie was very adept in locating an abundance of wildlife to interest her clients while explaining the vital nature of estuaries and our need to preserve them.

Kudos to Connie! Keep up the good work. For more information, please check out Gaea Guides at [www.gaeaguides.com](http://www.gaeaguides.com) and Florida SEE at [www.floridasee.com](http://www.floridasee.com)

One of Connie's kayak adventures. Photo Connie Langmann



## 2012 SLOUGH ATTENDANCE GROWS

by Steve Tutko

It's hard to believe another season has come and gone at the Six Mile Cypress Slough Preserve. "Time does fly when you are having fun". It is gratifying to read and hear the comments of our residents and visitors who do in fact have fun at the slough.

Lee County visitation was down 7.4% from January - April 2012, but interestingly, the length of stay was longer than last year. The total expenditures however increased 2.5 %. Attendance at the slough from January-April, 2011 was 66,125; January-April 2012 was 69,169, an increase of 4.6%.

All the plants and animals that live in the slough hope everyone has a wonderful summer.

*"ONE TOUCH OF NATURE MAKES THE WHOLE WORLD KIN"*

*William Shakespeare*

**TRASH PICKUP THIRD SATURDAY OF EVERY MONTH JOIN US 9:00 am FUN AND FRIENDS**

## PRESIDENT'S NOTES

I have been doing some wandering around Lee County with Mary Murray and Janet Bunch. We are visiting some of the Conservation 20/20 properties as we plan next years Friends field trip excursions. We have found some beautiful, new places to visit and I hope that some of you will decide to join us. The next issue of the newsletter will have the schedule and how and when to sign up for the trips.



Pop Ash Preserve  
Friends Field Trip

The Conservation 20/20 program has taken some heat from Clerk of Courts Charlie Green. There was an internal audit that concluded the county has been over-paying for land purchases and recommends several modifications to the way the Conservation 20/20 program is conducted. However, Lee County staff has successfully defended each and every purchase, in my mind, and I support the program 100%. That is one item in my tax bill that I do not mind paying.

I am looking forward to the wet walks that Dr. Charles O'Connor (our Golden Apple winner:) has planned for August and September. If you have never been on one, please try to join him (and me!) in the Slough. Charles adds so much to it that you don't even realize that you are learning a bunch of stuff! I believe that is a scientific phrase for education.

The 10-12 year olds have already started camp. The teenagers start in the middle of July. I hope to learn how to make fire this year. That is one of my objectives for the year. You never know when Survivor's Jeff Probst might call for an old lady on the show. She always gets voted off first, but you never know!

See you in the Slough. CB

Asphalt trucks lined up along Six Mile Cypress Parkway, in front of the entrance to the Slough  
Photo Carolyn Babb

## CONFIRMED SIGHTING OF CROC IN SLOUGH

by Mary Rude

Many people visit the Slough to specifically see an alligator. Some have come halfway around the world just to have this privilege. One man told me that he got chills just seeing one of the larger nine to ten foot gators.

We have some visitors who get confused by "details" and aren't sure if they are seeing an alligator or a crocodile. We explain the difference in their physique and that the Slough is a fresh water wetland. Crocodiles prefer brackish or salt water. They are also highly endangered and it is rare to see a croc in southwest Florida at all. The only one in the area that is well known is the crocodile at Ding Darling Wildlife Refuge.

Imagine my surprise when walking with friends around the boardwalk at the Slough, we indeed did spot a croc! It was lurking on the outskirts of Otter Pond in the ferns. I took some photos to confirm the sighting. My only concern is that not being a shoe devotee, I am not positive that it is actually a Croc © and not a Croc mimic.

It just goes to show you that you never know what you are going to see at the Slough. It leaves me wondering, did anyone see a person hobbling along the boardwalk with only one shoe?

A Croc in the Slough  
Confirmed Sighting  
Photo Mary Rude



### Advisory Board

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Cadkin Foundation

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Dr. William Hammond  
Florida Gulf Coast University

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Six Mile Cypress Slough  
Preserve

### Connections Staff

Editor/ Layout/ Design Carolyn Babb  
Copy Editor Bruce Bunch  
Printing Facility Lee County  
Terry Park

## ROAD IMPROVEMENT UPDATE

by Carolyn Babb

The consultant engineer for the improvement of Six Mile Cypress Parkway from Daniels Road to Colonial Boulevard reports that the completion of the improvement is now estimated to be some time in the fall.

In mid July drivers will see a traffic shift with one lane in each direction using the outside two lanes. The contractor will be doing work in the median and the two inside lanes. The contractor is having difficulty obtaining the asphalt. There will be furious activity for two days with trucks and pavers, and then no action for a week.

The completion date is subject to the rainy season now. I will watch the progress.

## JOIN FRIENDS TODAY!

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

In addition I would like to contribute

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ additional for the Friends use at  
the Slough.

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

### Membership Level (Please Check One)

- Student (\$10)
- Individual (\$20)
- Contributing (\$50)
- Supporting (\$100)
- Associate (\$250) - 1
- Sustaining (\$500) - 1, 2
- Corporate Sponsor (\$500) - 1, 2
- Patron (\$1,000) - 1, 2, 3

- 1- includes parking sticker for 17 Lee Co. Facilities.
- 2 - includes choice of wet walk or moon walk for ten guests.
- 3 - includes rocking chair naming opportunity

**HOW CAN YOU HELP WITH YOUR TIME?  
I AM INTERESTED IN HELPING WITH:**

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

Friends of Six Mile Cypress Slough Preserve Corp. is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit public charity. Registration Number CH13822 Florida Dept of Agriculture and Consumer Services

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

Online store: [friendscorner.qbstores.com](http://friendscorner.qbstores.com)

Special thanks to the Lee County Department of Parks and Recreations for its generous support in producing this news-letter. 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







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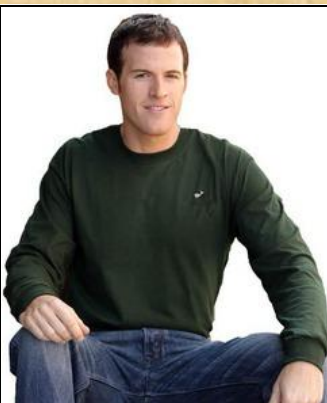


Now you can support the Six Mile Cypress Slough Preserve with purchases from the Friends Corner online store. All proceeds will be used to provide support for programs, equipment and for the Lee County Parks and Recreation Slough staff.

- Ladies and Mens Polo Shirts
- T Shirts
- Childrens Shirts
- Hats
- Visors



Shop [friendscorner.qbstores.com](http://friendscorner.qbstores.com)



## **FRIENDS ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

**Books, CDs, DVDs for Blake Cadkin Resource Library**

**Speakers for outside deck of Interpretive Center**

**New tripods for spotting scopes**

**New spotting scope**

**Binoculars for guided walks**

**Camp scholarships for 40 campers for 2010, 2011, 2012**

**Six new benches in butterfly garden**

**Summer Intern compensation for 2011 and 2012**

**Camp supplies**

**Photo contest awards**

**Wet walks supplies—nets, specimen jars**

**Special events materials**

**Garden tractor for maintenance**

**Plants in butterfly garden**

**Paint for parking lot**

**Boardwalk signs**

**Quarterly newsletter**

**Volunteer thank you gifts**

**Speakers for winter programs**

**Donor Wall**

**AND MUCH, MUCH MORE  
SUPPORT THE SLOUGH BY SHOPPING AT:**

**[www.friendscorner.qbstores.com](http://www.friendscorner.qbstores.com)**