

Connections

Newsletter for Friends of Six Mile Cypress Slough Preserve

October 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.

2012-13 FRIENDS PHOTO CONTEST GETS UNDERWAY NOVEMBER 1ST



2011 First Place Animals, Charles Pavlick

The Friends of the Six Mile Cypress Slough Preserve fourth annual photo contest submittal begins November 1, 2012. Photographers may submit three photos until the end of January 2013, with prizes awarded at a reception at the Interpretive Center at 10:30 am on Saturday, February 16, 2013.

As in previous years there are five categories, including Animals, Plants, Open (photos other than animals and plants), Altered and a Youth category (Ages 17 and under). Each photographer may submit three photos.

Top prize in each category is provided by Lee County Parks and Recreation and is a one year Lee County Parking Sticker good at 18 parks and boat ramps in Lee County. Second and third place winners will receive gift certificates good for purchases in the Friends

Corner Shop at the Interpretive Center at the Slough.

Winners will be selected by a panel of judges including Geoff Coe, professional photographer, Dr. Charles O'Connor, Golden Apple Award finalist and James Mathisen, US Fish and Wildlife Service Ranger and photography specialist.

Please submit your three favorite pictures of the Slough to the contest. This event is an opportunity for you to share your beautiful views of this very special natural area and its *native* wildlife. Pictures may have been taken at any time at the Slough.

Award winners will be notified by February 10, 2013. Winning photos will be displayed at the Slough Interpretive Center.

If there are any questions, please contact the Friends at (239) 533-7557.



Yellow Fever Creek Preserve
Destination for a Field Trip
Photo Carolyn Babb

WELCOME BACK POTLUCK DECEMBER 12th

Join the Friends for the annual Friends of the Six Mile Cypress Slough holiday/ welcome back to Paradise, POTLUCK on Wednesday, December 12, 2012 at 6:00 pm at the Interpretive Center at the Slough at 7791 Penzance Blvd. in Fort Myers. Please bring your favorite dish to share with all of the folks. There will be door prizes!

The Friends Corner store will be open for business for Christmas gifts for all ages. The party is open to all Friends members and other nonmember friends as well. But since space is limited please RSVP to carolyn_babb08@comcast.net or to the Friends at the Slough (239) 533-7557.

We look forward to a great turn out and seeing everyone there!



Potluck Crowd
Photo Carolyn Babb

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FRIENDS 2012-2013 EXCURSION SCHEDULE

Carolyn Babb, Janet Bunch and Mary Murray have scheduled excursions for the coming season that promise to be fun, diverse and interesting. The trips start in October and conclude in May. In response to suggestions, we have varied the day of the week, added more C2020 parcels, scheduled one long distance trip and even added a kayak trip. We are providing more information about the difficulty and length of each excursion. Registration will begin 90 days in advance of each trip, and once again Janet Bunch will be the registrar.

To register for an excursion and to get on the excursions email list contact Janet at janetbunch@yahoo.com or call the Friends phone 239-533-7557.

So here they are – **Friends Excursions 2012-2013!**

October 16, 2012 (Tuesday) Billy's Creek Preserve in Fort Myers—easy walk, wheel chair accessible, one mile walk

Billy's Creek Preserve is an inner city surprise — a 50 acre wonderland of a filter marsh, designed to clean water and offer flood protection along the headwaters of this urban waterway. The preserve has more than a mile of wide, blacktopped trails wrapping around a freshwater marsh studded with cypress hammocks. Lots of wading birds, ducks and anhinga enjoy this very unusual C2020 parcel. Bring your cameras!

November 17, 2012 (Saturday) Yellow Fever Creek Preserve in Cape Coral—moderate difficulty, dirt trails, two mile walk

Yellow Fever Creek Preserve is part of a partnership between Cape Coral and Lee County 20/20 project. The Cape Coral portion of the property which we will visit is not yet open to the public. The only way to get a sneak peek at this area is to sign up for a guided walk with city staff. The two mile trail winds through a cypress dome, past ephemeral ponds and pine scrub. The terrain is often rough and may be wet. The walk will be led by Honey Archey, Environmental Recreation Specialist Cape Coral Parks & Recreation

December 15, 2012 (Saturday) Six Mile Cypress Slough Preserve —moderate difficulty, no trails.

Land Steward Bob Reppenning will take us on an off-board walk experience in areas of the Slough not open to the public.

January 16, 2013 (Wednesday) Bat Kayak Tour—moderate difficulty

This GAEA Guides tour with Connie Langmann will explore a lovely creek in North Fort Myers, part of the coastal estuary system, with many plants and animals. At dusk we will see the bats come from their roosting spots, and head off for work. All equipment will be provided. **There will be a charge for this excursion. Details will be forthcoming.**

January 22, 2013 (Tuesday) Telegraph Creek Preserve—moderate difficulty, dirt/ grass trails, two mile walk

Telegraph Creek Preserve property is located in Alva on the north side of North River Road. The creek itself separates the two parts of the preserve. The preserve is unusual for the Conservation 20/20 Program because it has a fairly large area of scrub as well as an almost 500 acre palmetto prairie that was maintained with fire by the previous land owner.

February 16, 2013 (Saturday) Wild Slough with Bob Reppenning—moderate difficulty This is another great opportunity to go off the boardwalk and visit a part of the Slough not open to the public.

March 2013 Archbold Biological Station—moderate difficulty, dirt paths

This world famous research facility, founded in 1941, is the primary division of Archbold Expeditions, a non-profit organization established by Richard Archbold. The station protects a 5,193-acre globally significant Florida scrub preserve located on the southern end of the Lake Wales Ridge, an ancient sandy ecosystem of south-central Florida. Details will be forthcoming.

April 9, 2013 (Tuesday) CREW—Wildflower walk—moderate difficulty, dirt/ grass paths. We will walk one of the trails that is used for the annual CREW Wildflower Festival (scheduled this year for April 5 and 6, 2013) - Details will be forthcoming.

May 14, 2013 (Tuesday) Bowditch Point, Estero Island, Fort Myers Beach—moderate difficulty (sand)

Nathaniel Bowditch was responsible for the perfection of celestial navigation that is still utilized to this day. He was an astronomer, navigator and scientist. The property includes beach, tropical hardwoods, coastal scrub and wetland hardwood forest plant communities. Details will be forthcoming.

BLUE RIBBON COMMITTEE REVIEWS CONSERVATION 2020

by Janet Bunch

A series of internal audits by Lee County Clerk of Courts Charlie Green critical of the acquisition practices of the Division of County Lands and a subsequent not-totally-correct article in the News-Press has left some taxpayers feeling that a.) their tax dollars are not being well spent, and b.) that Conservation 2020 money should be diverted to the county's general fund. Here's some background information on this complex issue.

The criticism leveled by Mr. Green's audits was actually NOT at C2020 but rather the Division of County Lands' handling of all county purchases (office buildings, road rights-of-way, etc.) There were three audits and the focus was on the appraisal process and on the disparity between the field appraisals and those on record with the Lee County Property Appraiser. Only the third audit dealt solely with C2020 purchases. County Lands is the group of real estate professionals who do the actual negotiating of purchase price on county property acquisitions, including C2020. Mr. Green admitted to the Conservation Land Acquisition and Stewardship Advisory Committee (CLASAC) at its August 9 meeting that he was not critical of the C2020 program's procedures, and claimed to be unaware that as part of the original referendum terms the Conservation 2020 Trust Fund cannot be used for any other purpose than conservation land acquisition and management. He also has done nothing to refute the impression given by the newspaper article that the audits were critical of Conservation 2020.

However, the Board of County Commissioners recognized that, in spite of overwhelming public testimonies of support for the program at the Board's June 19 public hearing, some negative perceptions remained. To this end, each commissioner appointed a person to a Blue Ribbon Committee, charged with reviewing C2020's program and recommending possible changes to increase efficiency of the purchase process, if any. CLASAC also appointed two of its members to the BRC. All members have broad experience in conservation, government, business, real estate and civic interests. In addition, the BRC **may** also make recommendations concerning 1.) the acquisition of conservation lands, 2.) land stewardship management activities, and 3.) future funding of the program.

The group meets every two weeks, on Wednesday mornings 9:30-11:30 in the 4th floor conference room of the Public Works/Community Development Building, 1500 Monroe St. The first meeting was Wednesday, Aug. 8 and the scheduled final meeting will be Nov. 7. The meetings are open to the public, and additional information on the BRC, CLASAC and the Conservation 2020 program itself can be found at www.conservation2020.org.

It's important to note that the Slough has acquired 46% of its 3761 acres through the Conservation 2020 program.



UPDATED SLOUGH WEBSITE OFFERS MORE

by Mary Rude

The Lee County Parks & Recreation department has been tasked with reducing paper usage. The preferred method of communication is through the Parks & Recreation website. Aside from being 'green', it forced Heather and me to really look at our two pages on the Parks and Recreation website and upgrade the information. There is one page for the Interpretive Center and another for the Boardwalk Trail facility. In order to get to our pages, you need to log on to www.leeparks.org.

To get to the Center information go to www.leeparks.org, to Facilities, then Centers, then Six Mile Cypress Slough Interpretive Center. Once there, you can view a presentation on, "What Makes the Building Green?" as well as a video from WGPU featuring architect Jeff Mudgett and Friends past-president Joyce Sanders. There are also some photos of the interpretive displays as well as comments from visitors accompanied by photos taken by volunteers of the Slough. You can access the information about the trail by clicking on the link, Boardwalk Trail.

There is a separate page on the Parks and Recreation website for the Boardwalk trail. Go to www.leeparks.org, then Facilities, then Parks, then P-Z, then Six Mile Cypress Slough. Some subjects included on this page are: a plant and wildlife list, Tips & Tricks for viewing wildlife, a Seasons power point, Ecosystems power point, Explorer's Companion trail guide, Announcements about upcoming programs and our Educational Programs Brochure.

Hope you get the chance to check out the information and learn more about our precious Slough. You can also share our site with a friend so they will find out why you love this place so much. We will continue to update the site and hopefully add more photos in the future.

STARBUCKS HELPS OUT AT THE SLOUGH

By Robert Repenning

The Starbucks store at the corner of Daniels Boulevard and US 41 has adopted the Slough. On August 11, 2012 nine Starbucks employees, Janet Bunch and Annisa Karim from Hickey's Creek helped clear the woods next to the entrance road. We loaded and hauled off 1350 lbs of vegetation in 4 hours of work. The Starbucks Corporation is aiming to have employees contribute over 1 million hours of volunteer service to the community nationwide during this year. Our local store has chosen to work one day a month at the Slough to help meet this goal.



Bob Repenning, at right, and the enthusiastic Starbucks employees

220 LEXINGTON MIDDLE SCHOOL 8TH GRADERS VISIT THE SLOUGH

By Carolyn Babb

Lexington Middle School in Fort Myers received an unprecedented opportunity to bring every 8th grader (220 students) at the school to the Slough via the Environmental Education Program. The EE program provided buses and teachers for the all day trip culminating in wet walks. Dr. Charles O'Connor, Friends Vice-President and Lee County school district teacher and Mr. Rick Tully, Professional Development Resource Teacher for the Environmental Education Program for Lee County Schools, brought two buses a day over five days. All of the students visited the Interpretive Center and were also treated to a wet walk in beautiful weather. The curriculum also included online researching about the Slough and participation in an instructional game about pollutants. The Friends Board of Directors approved funding needed for substitutes for Dr. O'Connor and another teacher for the five days (approximately \$1,000) to ensure that Dr. O'Connor and Mr. Tully were able to bring the students to the Slough.

Rick Tully explains the importance of the Monday Group to the Lexington eighth graders and how that group was instrumental in preserving the Slough. The Monday Group is still included as part of the education opportunities in the Lee County School District today.

Photo Carolyn Babb



FALL AND WINTER SLOUGH PROGRAMS



Tracking Club Saturdays, October 20, 2012 through January 12, 2013, 10:00 am to 2:00 pm

Drawing Inspirations Fridays, November 9, 2012 and November 30, 2012 and December 14, 2012 through January 25, 2013, 12:30 pm to 3:30 pm



Basket Making Class Saturday, November 10, 2012, 9:00 am to 12:00 pm

Alligator Detectives Saturday, December 1, 2012, 11:00 am to 12:00 pm



Skull ID 101 Tuesdays, January 8, 2013 through March 26, 2013, 1:30 pm to 2:30 pm

Yoga Tuesdays January 8, 2013 through January 29, 2013, 9:00 am to 10:15 am



Friends Welcome Back Potluck, Wednesday, December 12, 2012, 6:00 pm

Friends Gatherings, Wednesday January 23, February 27, March 27, April 24, 2013, 7:00 pm
Watch for speaker announcements!



THE SLOUGH BY THE LIGHT OF THE FULL MOON

Experience the Slough in the light of the full moon on this guided sensory walk. You may hear sounds that you will not hear in the day, smells that come and go and feel changes in the air temperature as you walk along the boardwalk.

A volunteer naturalist will lead you through the Slough on the boardwalk as the moon rises. Wear comfortable walking shoes. No flashlights or cameras with flashes allowed.

Tuesday, November 27, 2012	5:30 pm
Thursday, December 27, 2012	5:45 pm
Saturday, January 26, 2013	6:00 pm



Photo Carolyn Babb

Reservations are required for all programs. Register for programs online at leeparks.org or by calling Lee County Parks and Recreation at (239) 533-7275.

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Renewing Members: Thank you for your continued support!

Dr. and Mrs. William Akerly
 Nancy Lou Bright
 Brenda Brooks
 Richard Burwell
 Caloosahatchee Bromeliad Society
 Mr. and Mrs. George Cooper
 Tim Denger
 Theresa Fields
 Garn Mennell
 Phoebe Obdyke
 Elizabeth Schallenberg
 Randolph Tully
 Mr. and Mrs. Steven F. Ulrich

C
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 C

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

Welcome New Members

Kim Coopridger
 Glen and Amy Klaas

ROAD IMPROVEMENT ON SIX MILE CYPRESS PARKWAY

The construction project slowly continues on Six Mile Cypress Parkway. The report as of October 1st is that the contractor will be moving southbound traffic to the two southbound lanes and there will be one lane of northbound traffic in the northbound lanes. Still to be done is resurfacing in the northbound lanes to complete the project. Completion date for the improvement is estimated to be Thanksgiving.

Be safe!



Friends Help At Summer Camp

By Heather Gienapp

Friends members volunteered many hours and taught many skills to help make summer camp at the Slough a success for 60 camp attendees.

Members Janet Bunch and Mary Murray were there daily. Janet assisted in the Summer Naturalists camps (Ages 10-12) where she shared leaf printing with the campers. She also led guided walks and joined in the fun of exploring, especially during the wet walks. Her favorite part was looking at all of the critters the campers collected in the ephemeral pond behind the Interpretive Center.

Mary helped with the Wilderness Explorers (Ages 13-16) leading wet walks and guiding the campers through various survival activities. She showed them the throwing stick, laid a trail for them to follow with their compasses and facilitated many other activities. She also filled in for Marlee Henninge, the volunteer intern counselor, when she left to go with the University of Florida band to the summer Olympics in England.

Friends member Norm DeWolfe led a guided walk and Arnie Rosen carved spindles for fire making kits.

Many of the summer activities and the purchase of supplies were sponsored by the Friends. The Friends funded 12 scholarships for campers. Also funded was a guest speaker who did a tanning demonstration. The Friends also presented a scholarship to Marlee who volunteered 166 hours with the campers.



Summer camp tanning demonstration and campers in the butterfly garden at the Slough with intern Marlee Henninge
 Photos Carolyn Babb



Along the Boardwalk... Full and Flowing by Dotty Brown

As we cross the autumnal equinox into the period of shortening daylight hours, enjoy the maturing of fledglings and fruit. Marvel at nature's fall color palette in the leaves of the foliage, especially the depth of reds in the red maple leaves and the bronzy orange of the cypress needles. The opening canopy coaxes the understory ferns to new growth of colorful fiddlehead fronds. Birds sport plumage changes. The migrating birds feast on the berries and seeds. Short tailed hawks and yellow billed cuckoos add spice to the bird watcher's sightings. Kingfishers click across the ponds. Dragon flies patrol their territories and feast on mosquitoes and other flying insects. The flowing current of the full Slough channels carries nutrients to serve the vegetation. Fallen leaves float like little boats. Let your imagination flow and enjoy the fullness of this wonderful place!

PRESIDENT'S NOTES

Happy Fall Everyone!

The bald cypress trees are rapidly losing their greenery in anticipation of winter. The maples are red and we eagerly await the migrating birds. I love this time of year.



It is time to start looking at your photos to pick out the ones that you will submit for the photo contest. I have to tell you that the competition last year was fierce. In one category the judges narrowed it down to five that they considered "perfect." Then they had to decide which was the most perfect. You can tell by looking at the photos that the Slough has some talented photographers out there at all times. There were photos from every season.

The line up for the Friends field trip excursions is fantastic. Mary, Janet and I had to go exploring this summer to inspect some of the new destinations for the trips. It was really a hard task, but someone had to do it. I am certainly glad that we are going to some Conservation 20/20 parcels. We steadfastly maintain our support of this program.

The Friends Corner store has some great new merchandise for this season. There are clever puppets and puzzles for the kids which are entertaining and educational. Great Christmas gifts for those snow bird Grammas to send up north. Don't forget to check out our online store at friendscorner.qbstores.com

Please try to join me for a moon walk this year. The schedule is set for November through January and you can sign up on line. It is one of my favorite walks, by the light of the moon with a chill in the air.

I'm off to walk in the water.
See you in the Slough. CB

Advisory Board

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Cadkin Foundation

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Six Mile Cypress Slough
Preserve

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Carolyn Babb, Editor
Bruce Bunch, Copy Editor
Printed at Terry Park

Six Mile Charter Academy Partners With the Slough

By Heather Gienapp

The Six Mile Charter Academy in Fort Myers is bringing six of the schools eight grades to the Slough for field trips this year. The students will participate in activities ranging from artifact programs, tracking and shelter building programs to guided tours and wet walks. The age range of the students will encompass kindergartners up to the eighth graders. The plan is to turn these outings into annual field trips. Each student will see a different side of the Slough almost every year.

Since the school will bring an entire grade for each activity they will be staggering their visits over the course of a few days and a few months. **The total number of students benefiting from this educational opportunity will be close to 1000.**

Slough volunteers/ Friends members will be assisting with all of these programs.



Friends members who are also Slough volunteer naturalists Barbara Catineau, Flo Kornman and Janet Bunch lead the first groups of kindergartners through the Slough.



Photos Carolyn Babb

FRIENDS GATHERINGS SCHEDULE 2013

Wednesday, January 23, 2013 7:00 pm
Wednesday, February 27, 2013 7:00 pm
Wednesday, March 27, 2013 7:00 pm
Annual Meeting
Wednesday, April 24, 2013 7:00 pm

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

SHOP AT FRIENDS CORNER

Now you can shop at the Interpretive Center or on line at
www.friendscorner.qbstores.com



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 18 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:**

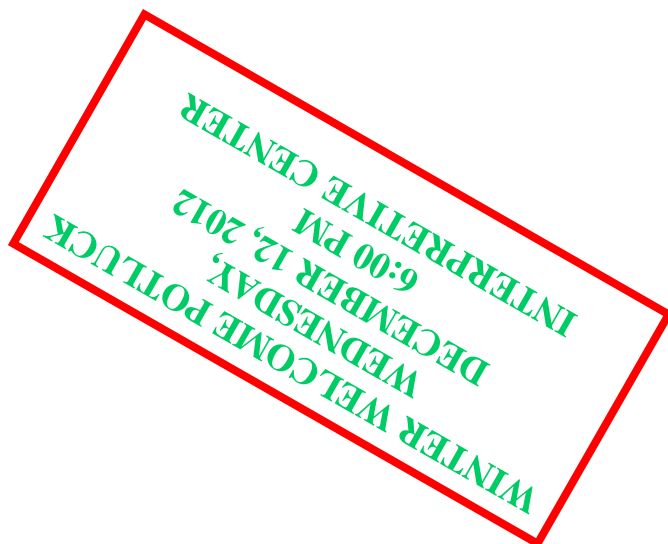
Mail to Friends of the Six Mile Cypress Slough, 7791 Penzance Blvd, Fort Myers. FL 33966

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 Phone 239-533-7557

Online store: 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

