



Connections

Newsletter for Friends of Six Mile Cypress Slough Preserve

January 2013

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 SPEAKERS FOR 2013

Wednesday, January 23, 2013 7:00 pm—**Neil Wilkinson**, *In Defense of Knowledge*, about the importance of knowing about place and who you share it with. The presentation will relate ideas presented by Richard Louv in his book, *Last Child in the Woods* and the presenter's 32 years of experience as an environmental educator in Lee County.

Wednesday, February 27, 2013 7:00 pm—**Roger Clark**, *Ecosystem Services and the Economic Value of Conservation Lands*

Wednesday, March 27, 2013 7:00 pm—**Bob Repenning**, Six Mile Cypress Slough and Lakes Park, Land Stewardship Coordinator, *Annual State of the Slough Address*

This gathering is also the Friends annual meeting and election of officers.

Wednesday, April 24, 2013 7:00 pm—To Be Announced.

The Friends Gatherings are free and open to the public. However, seating is limited. To reserve a seat please contact the Friends at (239) 533-7557 or via email at carolyn_babb08@comcast.net



Two of the new benches available for naming with a \$1,000 Patron Membership.

PHOTO CONTEST PRIZES

HAVE YOU SUBMITTED YOUR PHOTOS FOR THE FOURTH ANNUAL FRIENDS OF THE SIX MILE CYPRESS SLOUGH PRESERVE PHOTO CONTEST?

First prize photos in all categories will be awarded a one year parking sticker at the Lee County Parks and Boat Ramps. (Locations can be found at www.leeparks.org.) Second and third place photos will receive a certificate for merchandise in the Friends Corner Store at the Interpretive Center.

The rules and entry information are available at the Interpretive Center at the Slough and on line at www.sloughpreserve.org.

Award winners will be notified by February 9, 2013 and awards will be presented at a Photo Contest Celebration to be held at the Slough Interpretive Center at 10:30 am on February 16, 2013. Winning photos will be displayed for 2013 at the Slough Interpretive Center.

Entries will be accepted until 3:00 pm Thursday, January 31, 2013 at the Interpretive Center at the Slough, 7791 Penzance Blvd. in Fort Myers. If there are any questions, please call the Friends at 239-533-7557.

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Friends Offer Six New Excursions

by Mary Murray



Field Trippers at Yellow Fever Creek Preserve

We are off to a great start with excursions for this year. Billy's Creek was a nice urban surprise. We then visited places not open to the general public in the Yellow Fever Creek preserve with Cape Coral Parks and Recreation guides and the Wild Slough with our own Bob Repenning. Each excursion is unique and we learn all sorts of new things. There is more to come in the new year including our first kayak excursion. So be sure to sign up and join us. Registration for each excursion will begin 90 days in advance of the excursion. To register for an excursion or to get on the excursions mailing list email Janet Bunch at janet-bunch@yahoo.com or call the Friends phone 239-533-7557.

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

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. You must call Connie to register for this tour at (239) 694-5513.**

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 Repenning—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 19, 2013 (Tuesday) 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 held April 5 and 6, 2013.

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.



Bob Repenning and Mary Murray inspect a Florida Box Turtle during the December Slough Trip



Billy's Creek Limpkins



The northern Slough in December

Conservation 2020 Update

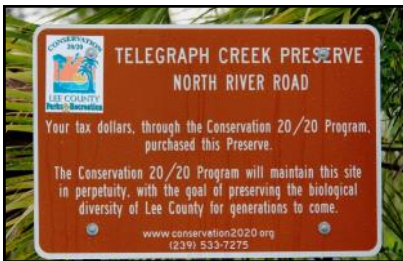
by Janet Bunch

In the last issue, I reported on the activities of the Blue Ribbon Committee, a group appointed by the Board of County Commissioners and the Conservation Lands Acquisition and Stewardship Advisory Committee (CLASAC) to review the practices and procedures of the Conservation 2020 program and to make recommendations to increase the efficiency of the Program. Additionally, the Committee made recommendations on the acquisition process, land stewardship management activities, and the future funding of the program. They had their final meeting on Nov. 7 and submitted their report to the BOCC members who had appointed them.

There were 16 findings, and 16 recommendations to the Board, many of which were procedures already followed by CLASAC and County Lands but which were not in the original ordinance creating the Conservation 2020 program. Other recommendations in regard to a Transfer of Development Rights program are contingent on the County developing a program which actually works. Any proceeds from the TDR would be directed to the C2020 management fund. The committee did propose a freeze on any new acquisitions not currently in the pipeline until a financial analyst can recommend an adjustment in the percentage allocated to purchases vs. management over a 100 year period. The Committee further recommended the Program be put forward on a new referendum in 2016, asking voters if they want to continue the program.

The full meeting minutes and the final report can be found at www.conservation2020.org/BlueRibbonCommittee. The minutes are excellent and make for some interesting reading!

The Committee has discharged its mandate and has disbanded. A lot of time was spent by a lot of good people on this review, all based on a distorted newspaper article. But there you have it!



Telegraph Creek Preserve, purchased through the Conservation 2020 Program. This is the destination for the January Friends Field Trippers.



Along the Boardwalk... Open for Winter by Dotty Brown

During the shortest days giving cover of darkness, the screech owls returned to their box at the edge of the parking lot. Little sticks poking out the window disappeared. Is nest building underway? The OPEN canopy brings the limpkin into view. Will I find the eggs of its fondest food, the apple snail, on a sturdy plant stem or a boardwalk post? Is that ball of feathers an American bittern? What is in that blizzard of white that descends upon the bank of Gator Lake at sundown? Could it be a combination of our nesting residents? As you wander, wonder this way: Walk quietly, sit expectantly (on our new benches!) listen intently, observe contemplatively. Happy wandering as you wonder through our precious jewel!

Taking Our Slough Story On the Road

By Janet Bunch



Janet Bunch sells the Slough at the Charlotte Harbor Nature Festival in November
Photo Geoff Coe

So far this year, the crack Special Events team has represented the Slough at a couple of exciting events. The Ding Darling Days Festival on Sunday, October 14 started off the season. This was the first time in quite awhile that the Slough had a presence at this high-energy event, but it was well-run, the organizers took very good care of the exhibitors (providing a very nice luncheon for both Alan Cadkin and Janet Bunch) and lots of interesting activities for everybody. The highlight of the event was the participation of IBEX Puppetry, founded by Heather Henson, daughter of Muppet Master Jim Henson. SE plans on continuing to participate in this great event next year as well. Thanks very much to Alan Cadkin for providing reinforcement, allowing the first shift to have a break! Between the two of us, we talked to over 125 people.

The Charlotte Harbor Nature Festival at the Charlotte Sports Park on Saturday, November 17, was also a huge event. Both DDD and the CHNF are major family events, with lots of kids of all ages and many interesting vendors with all sorts of activities for kids and grownups. I've starting taking lots of touch bags, which really attracts a lot of interest. I talked to over 100 people, and could have handled even more with another person. People were standing in line to put their hands in felt bags with who-knows-what-inside. Who knew? The stats for this event were that the majority of attendees were first-timers, mostly from Charlotte County and mostly from either Port Charlotte or Punta Gorda. Look for some of them will appear in our neighborhood sometime soon!

Future events include the Burrowing Owl Festival sponsored by the Cape Coral Friends of Wildlife, at Rotary Park on February 23. Kate Streng helped out on this event last year and has graciously volunteered to do so again this year! The last event of the year is the CREW Wildflower Fest on Saturday, April 6. This is completely revamped from last year to be more family friendly and is always a wonderful way to spend the day.

It really makes the day a lot easier if another person is available for a 2-hour shift over the lunch hour to give me a break. If anybody thinks they can spare some time for one event once a year, I'd really be happy to talk to you. My phone is 567-7919 or janetbunch@yahoo.com.

Georgia Students Help the Slough

By Carolyn Babb

Nineteen students from the University of Georgia in Athens, Georgia spent a long and productive day with Bob Repenning, the land stewardship coordinator for the Six Mile Cypress Slough Preserve. The students are involved in a university program called Impact. The mission of the program is to engage University of Georgia students in an affordable week long, substance free service learning project doing meaningful projects that benefit the community while also making a beneficial impact on the students. The students have worked in Lee County for two years, spending their break from school working at various Lee County Parks and Preserves. The Friends provided the lunch for the students on their workday at the Slough.



SLOUGH WINTER PROGRAMS



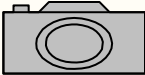
Tracking Club Saturdays, February 9, March 9, May 4, and June 1, 2013, 10:00 am to 2:00 pm

Drawing Inspirations Fridays, January 1, 2013 through January 25, 2013 and
Thursdays, February 7, 2013 through April 18, 2013, 12:30 pm to 3:30 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 April 23, 2013, 9:00 am to 10:15 am



Digital Photography Tuesdays, February 19, 2013 through March 5, 2013, and March 12, 2013
through March 26, 2013, 10:00 am to 5:00 pm

Outstanding Otters Tuesdays January 15, 2013 through March 19, 2013, 10:30 am to 1:00 pm



Alligator Detectives Saturday, February 2, 2013 and March 2, 2013, 11:00 am to 12:00 pm

Slough Fun Day Tuesday, February 19, 2013, 8:00 am to 4:30 pm (10-12 Years)



Wilderness Survival Thursday, February 28, 2013 and Saturday, March 23, 2013, 10:00 am to 4:00 pm
(18 Years and up)

Awareness—Nature Thursday, March 7, 2013, 10:00 am to 12:00 pm
(18 Years and up)



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.



Saturday, January 26, 2013	6:00 pm
Saturday, February 23, 2013	6:30 pm
Tuesday, March 26, 2013	7:45 pm
Thursday, April 25, 2013	8:00 pm

Reservations are required for most 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!

Bill Black C
Tom and Bev Brown
Gail Campbell
Gail Evors
Richard and Lois Fein
Michael and Nancy Frazier
Robin Gardner
Jack and Joanne Gifford
Doris Guiseffi
Ira Geshelin
Barbara Hayes C
Jo Ellen Kessler
Alice and Marty Krebs
Jeff and Nancy Montgomery C
Corinne Murphy C
Kris and Bob Nelson
Pete and Cindy Ochsner
Kathy and Chuck Pavlick
Marilynne Ponto
Theresa and Steve Roake
Jeff Rosemann and Susan Crawford
Elizabeth Schallenberg C
Walter and Cathy Sedlacek
Mark Smith

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

Welcome New Members

Beth Ceilley
Elielen Fonferko
Erin White

Additional Donations Gratefully Received From:

Cadkin Foundation
Jo Ellen Kessler
Kathy and Chuck Pavlick
Mark Smith

Serenity of the Slough Evident From New Benches

by Mary Rude

At long last, two seating areas were installed along Gator Lake. The platforms and railings were funded by Lee County Facilities and the Friends of Six Mile Cypress Slough provided the comfortable recycled plastic benches. Now we have additional nice, relaxing spots to sit and watch the herons and egrets fly in to roost for the evening. Stumpy (one of our larger alligators who has a missing right foot) likes to float around the water's edge near the first bench. I guess it is a soothing place for all.

The Friends have also provided two new six-foot benches at the entrance to our boardwalk trail. While repair work was being done on the boardwalk, it seemed a perfect time to replace the splintery old benches with comfortable new recycled plastic benches – with backs so we can keep our good posture.

All four of the benches have a naming opportunity for a \$1,000.00 membership/donation to the Friends. Please visit our Center Isle Garden to see sample plaques of others who have donated in this way. Just last week I saw a young father with his daughter visit all the benches and read aloud each plaque.

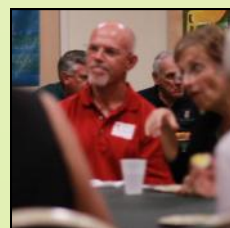
Thank you to the Friends who not only help with many aspects of education at the Slough, but also for enhancing the amenities we can offer to the visitors. I hope you will come out and not only stroll through the Slough, but take an extra minute for yourself to slow down, *sit* and absorb the beauty and serenity of the Slough.



POT LUCK HIGHLIGHTS



More than 50 Friends and friends of Friends attended our fourth annual potluck at the Slough Interpretive Center. The food was excellent and the company was great. This year we were also entertained by Friends Board member Jeff Key. As is evident by all of the smiling faces in the photos a great time was had by all. Please try to attend next year if you missed this year. CB



PRESIDENT'S NOTES

Hi all—another winter is upon us and the “season” has started with a vengeance. The visitors are already swarming the Slough. But the Friends and the volunteers are ready for them. Friends member and volunteer scheduler Mary Murray tells us that all slots for guided walks are filled and there will be a volunteer with a scope at Otter Pond every morning and afternoon of the week. Also Friends member Dotty Brown is doing a new program on Otters every Tuesday morning beginning at 10:30 am from mid January to mid March. Other programs by Friends members include an alligator talk by Rudy Lampron and a drawing class by Suzanne Frechette. See Page Five for more. As usual the Friends are thoroughly immersed in the activities at the Slough.



The Friends have been trying to help Andy Gurri and volunteer Jack Hyatt by making sure they have all needed to do the job outside the Interpretive Center, including the purchase of a bagger for the mower, lots and lots of bales of pine needles for mulch, and plants, plenty of plants for the parking lot center garden. Andy always makes sure the Friends has anything we need that is in his power to do, like set up chairs and tables and pick up after us. We do appreciate all he does.

Friends Board member Donna Cressman has been also bringing some of her own supply of plants as well. Donna is a Florida Master Gardener.

The Friends have been asked to help in the planning for the Five Year Anniversary of the Interpretive Center. I still cannot believe that it has been five years since the building was opened. The party is Saturday, April 6th from 9:00 am until 3:00 pm. The Friends will have a display as well as a surprise program, never seen before. Make sure to mark your calendars.

See you in the Slough. CB



Andy Gurri in the Slough, TRASH PICKUP, every day.

**TRASH PICKUP 9 AM
3RD SATURDAY
EVERY MONTH
JOIN US
Contact thehoules75@yahoo.com**

Advisory Board

Jacquelin Cadkin
Cadkin Foundation

Carolyn Delizia Swift

Dr. William Hammond
Florida Gulf Coast University

Carol Newcomb-Jones

Wiley M Parker, A.I.A.
Parker, Mudgett/Smith
Architects, Inc.

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Steve Tutko

Parks and Recreation Liaison

Mary Rude, Supervisor
Six Mile Cypress Slough
Preserve

Connections Staff

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



Lee County traffic enforcement at the entrance of the Slough

TRAFFIC SIGNAL OPERATIONAL AT SLOUGH ENTRANCE

Four lanes of traffic are open and moving on Six Mile Cypress Parkway. The traffic signal is operational at the Slough entrance on Penzance Boulevard. Please be careful using the entrance to the Slough. The learning curve for drivers seems to be very steep at the location as there have been several accidents in the few short weeks of operation. This despite signs in both directions advising of a change in the traffic operations at the intersection.

The Lee County Sheriff's office has frequent traffic enforcement along Six Mile and at our entrance. Please be careful.



NEVER KISS AN ALLIGATOR

Friends member and volunteer naturalist Rudy Lampron shows off the new alligator skull (replica) purchased by Friends for use in his program, *Alligator Detectives*. The program is scheduled for 11:00 am on Saturdays, February 2 and March 2, 2013 at the Interpretive Center.



Friends Board Member Jeff Key provided the entertainment for the Potluck.

SHOP AT FRIENDS CORNER

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 bench or 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 newsletter. Thanks to Lee County also for providing meeting space at the Six Mile Cypress Slough Preserve Interpretive Center.

GATHERING OF FRIENDS
 FOURTH WEDNESDAY
 JAN, FEB, MAR and APR
 7:00 PM
 INTERPRETIVE CENTER

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

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

