

Connections

Newsletter for Friends of Six Mile Cypress Slough Preserve

October 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.



August happenings in the garden included many butterflies.



2014 FRIENDS PHOTO CONTEST GETS UNDERWAY NOVEMBER 1ST

The Friends of the Six Mile Cypress Slough Preserve fifth annual photo contest submittal begins November 1, 2013. Photographers may submit three photos until January 31, 2014, at 3:30 pm with prizes awarded at a reception at the Interpretive Center in February.

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 provided by Lee County Parks and Recreation 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, Friends Vice-President 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 14, 2014. Winning photos will be displayed at the Slough Interpretive Center. Photos are also used for postcards for purchase by visitors in Friends Corner and for advertising for Slough and Friends events.

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

2012 First Place Animal Category by Richard Burwell



DECEMBER 11th POTLUCK WELCOMES RETURNING FRIENDS

Join the Friends for the annual Friends of the Six Mile Cypress Slough holiday/ welcome back to Paradise, POTLUCK on Wednesday, December 11, 2013 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 nonmember friends as well. Space is limited so 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.



Partiers at the 2012 potluck

Friends Board Member, Jeff Key, entertains at the 2012 potluck



FIELD TRIPPING WITH THE FRIENDS 2013-2014 Friends of Six Mile Excursions

By Janet Bunch

We have an extraordinary line-up of adventures for this year, with a little something for everybody. Detailed information on each trip will be provided at the time of registration, which is a month in advance of departure. We have two trips for which a donation is requested of participants. We like to support our fellow organizations and the work that they do on our behalf, and feel sure that our members agree. There is a maximum of 12 people for each trip. This article constitutes the only announcement of the schedule. People who want to be on the email list for the individual field trips MUST contact me via email at janetbunch@yahoo.com. Registration starts over each season, so just because you were on the list last year, doesn't mean I know that you are still interested.

This way we avoid sending unnecessary notifications to folks who have no interest or aren't around for the trips. Any questions? Contact me at the above email, phone 239-567-7919 or cell at 239-691-3251.

Saturday, Oct. 26, 8 am - noon Alva Scrub Preserve (Moderate difficulty.)

This is a rare opportunity to visit this Conservation 2020 preserve, as it is a limited access, resource protection preserve. Join Stewardship Coordinator Laura Greeno for a glimpse at the sorts of land management decisions resource managers confront when acquiring new parcels. There are no trails and little shade, so sturdy shoes, hats, sunscreen and water are strongly recommended. Binoculars, cameras and anything else you like to have with you in the field are welcome. Carpooling from the Slough.



Photo Alva Scrub

Tuesday, November 19, 11 am – 5:30 pm Conservancy of SW Florida (Easy)

The Conservancy has been undergoing some major remodeling the last couple years, so we are very excited to be able to finally get to see the results of their hard work. Our day will include a visit to the wildlife hospital, their new filter marsh, the new Discovery Center and a boat trip. Participants are being asked for a \$5 donation to help support the advocacy programs that the Conservancy provides for many of our local environmental organizations. We'll take lunches with us to eat there before our adventure begins. Hats, sunscreen, water and comfy shoes recommended. Carpooling from the Slough.

Tuesday, December 10, 8:15 am – 11 am Prairie Creek Preserve (Charlotte Co.) (Moderate difficulty)

Conservation Charlotte volunteers John Phillips and Jamie Reynolds will be our guides around this beautiful 1600 acre preserve. Prairie Creek is a tributary to Shell Creek Reservoir, and the Preserve includes scrub, flatwoods, prairies and marshes. Sturdy shoes, hats, sunscreen, water recommended. Carpooling from the Slough.

Tuesday, January 18, 2014, 9:30 am-noon Randell Research Center (Easy)

The center is a program of the Florida Museum of Natural History and has existed since 1996, when Donald and Patricia Randell donated more than 53 acres of the Pineland Archeological Site to the University of Florida Foundation. It is now state-owned and contains significant environmentally and archeological resources, as well as the Pineland Post Office and the RRC headquarters. Our tour takes 2 hours, so if participants would like to do so, we can bring lunch and eat there afterwards. Comfortable walking shoes, hats, water, sunscreen etc. recommended. Participants are being asked for a \$5 donation for this outing. Carpooling from the Slough.



on shell midden
Dr. Charles O'Connor

Tuesday, February 4, 2014, 8:30-11 am Bunche Beach (Moderate)

Elaine Swank will be our guide to San Carlos Bay-Bunche Beach Preserve, one of the premier birding sites in Lee County. Spread over 719 acres, the Preserve provides protection for tidal swamps, an extensive tidal creek system, coastal grasslands, and extremely productive sea grass beds and mudflats. Participants should wear shoes and pants that might get wet, as well as sun protection, hats and water. There are picnic tables and restroom facilities available, so we have a picnic lunch opportunity if participants choose to do so. Carpooling from the Slough.

FIELD TRIPPING WITH THE FRIENDS

(Continued)

March 2014 (date to be determined) 8:30 am - noon Flint Pen Strand (Strenuous)

Our own Stewardship Coordinator Bob Repenning will be our guide through this Lee County portion of the Corkscrew Regional Ecological Watershed (CREW.) Contiguous to Bird Rookery Swamp in Naples and The Nature Place in Bonita Springs, this is an area with no public access without prior special arrangement. The Preserve provides habitat for white-tailed deer, wild turkeys, black bears and the Florida panther, all of which are seen there on a regular basis. Trails are limited so study shoes, long pants, long sleeved shirts, sun protection and water are strongly advised. No facilities available. Carpooling from the Slough.

April 2014 (date to be determined) Little Pine Island Mitigation Preserve (Moderate)

The schedule of tours of the Preserve are not available as of this printing. Little Pine Island lies between Matlacha and Pine Island and the 4806 acres are managed by the Charlotte Harbor Aquatic and State Buffer Preserves, a field office of the Florida DEP. This trip will give participants an appreciation of the local ecology on the 2-mile hike through the high marsh and salt flats. Wear sturdy shoes that can get wet or muddy. Hats, sunscreen and water strongly advised. Carpooling from the Slough

Tuesday, May 6, 2014 8:30 am -noon Estero Marsh Preserve (Moderate to strenuous)

of the Slough

Estero Marsh Preserve's 243 acres are located adjacent to Estero Bay Preserve State Park. Conservation 2020 Stewardship Coordinator Sherry Furnari will be our guide to the site's eight plant communities, estuarine tidal swamps and marshes, flatwoods and hammocks. This is a Category 4 Resource Protection and Restoration preserve, and so no recreational facilities are planned for the site. We are fortunate to get this rare opportunity to explore this beautiful preserve. Carpooling from the Slough



Friends members Mary Murray and Jeff Montgomery prepare for a Friends field trip in 2012.







The first trip of the 2013-14 Friends field trip excursions was led by Bob Repenning and occurred in September. Seven Friends members attended and were treated to a walk through the upper portion of the Slough that is currently wet with about six inches to a foot of water.

Along the Boardwalk...Fall struts its stuff by Dotty Brown

From the parking circle native plant garden to Wood Duck pond, the view at the Slough offers a bountiful harmony of flora and fauna. The deep purple fruit of the Beautyberry (callicarpa americana) and the red fruit of the Dahoon Holly (ilex cassine) feed resident and migrating birds and squirrels. The surface of Ibis Marsh is blanketed with a water fern making it look like a manicured golf course. With wings dried, butterflies and moths emerge from their leaf umbrella shelters...Swallowtails, Queen and Viceroy among others. The winter plumage of the bird migrators challenge the birdwatchers. Warblers, gold finch and hummingbirds are among our passing visitors along with the Monarch butterfly.

A red-bellied turtle treads water with its back feet while it feeds on the aquatic life on a limb and its leaf. It departs with all four legs in high gear! A colorful adult Lubber grasshopper climbs on a turgid stem near the railing. A naked eye sees a stick bent over a cypress knee; the binoculars show it to be a molting anole! All activity is accompanied by the young blue jays squawking. A visible water current of water is so clear that you feel as though you are riding a glass bottom boat! COME...ENJOY!



UPCOMING SLOUGH PROGRAMS

All About Alligators Saturdays, November 2, December 7, 2013, January 4, 2012, 11:00 am





Basket Making Class Saturday, November 9, 2013, 9:00 am to 12:00 pm

Drawing Inspiration Fridays, November 1-15, December 6-20, 2013, January 3-17, 2014, 12:30 pm to 3:30 pm



Full Moon Walk Saturday, November 16 and December 14, 2013 at 5:30 pm and Wednesday, January 15, 2014 at 6:00 pm

Hide Tanning Demonstration Saturday, December 7, 2013, 10:00 am to 3:00 pm





Photography Exposed Saturdays, October 12, 2013 through November 16, 2013, 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm

Pond Explorations Saturday, October 5, 2013, 10:00 am to 12:00 pm

Puppet Show Saturday, October 26, 2013, 10:00 am and 11:00 am



Slough Fun Day



Friday, October 11 and Wednesday, November 27, 2013, 8:00 am to 4:30 pm

Slough Yoga Session Tuesdays November 5-December 10, 2013 and January 7-28, 2014, 9:00 am to 10:15 am





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!

Dr. William and Mary Akerly Nancy Bright Brenda Brooks Caloosahatchee Bromeliad Society George and Jackie Cooper Dick Burwell William and Theresa Fields Joseph Galipeo Ted and Gerry Geboski \mathbf{C} Garn Mennell Rebecca Mitchell Michael Morris Pete and Cindy Ochsner Elizabeth Schallenberg C Patricia Snyder Steve and Marge Ulrich

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

Welcome New Members

Karen Bledsoe Jodi Deane Nancy Olson

Additional Donations Gratefully Received From:

Nancy Baker in memory of Walter Baker
Dick Burwell
Jodi Deane
Alan and Jackie Cadkin in honor of Joyce and
Bill Sanders
Rebecca Mitchell
Pete and Cindy Ochsner
Vivian Seelie
Kathleen and Marvin Spalti

Greening the Membership

"The medium is not the message." (with apologies to M. McLuhan) To save money and paper, the Friends would like to conduct routine membership activities by email. Starting this fall, annual membership renewal reminders and renewal receipts will be transmitted to you by email (if you have provided an email address). If you don't have an active email account, or if you'd still like to receive these materials on paper, call the Friends at (239) 533-7557 and let us know. If you receive materials on paper but would like to move to email contact Friends membership at carolyn babb08@comcast.net. Your support is critical to our mission, so don't hesitate to tell us your preference!

ROCK STARS IN THE SLOUGH

By Terri Krass

When the Rock and Stroll Garden Project was started in the Spring of 2013 the Committee envisioned the tranquil garden setting as the perfect place for those who love the Six Mile Cypress Slough to express their support and sentiments. In addition to the many improvements in the garden we have added nine engraved stones. And there is room for more.

"Steve and Susan Tutko" left their names so they could have their very own piece of the Slough. Steve has been a long serving volunteer who has served as a naturalist, Interpretive Center host, Board Member and a true Friend of the Slough! He and Susan have made several gener-



ous equipment donations to the Slough and often participate in the monthly clean up of the Six Mile Cypress Parkway. The Garden is a better place thanks to the Tutkos.



"Vi and Jerry Weis 50th" - encased in a heartis a recognition of their 50th Wedding Anniversary that was celebrated this year. They are residents of Cross Creek Estates and enjoy bringing their children, grandchildren and house guests to visit the park. When Terri K. was practicing inter-

pretive walks Vi accompanied her so many times that she knows just what to point out to her visitors! Their stone will remain in the garden for many years for friends and family to remember their visits.

Stay tuned for more "behind the scenes" stories. Order forms for personalized garden stones are available in the Interpretive Center!

LEXINGTON MIDDLE SCHOOL EIGHTH GRADERS VISIT SLOUGH

Sixty 8th grade Lexington Middle School of Fort Myers science students will be participating in field trips where they will walk through the Mile Cypress Slough Preserve. Dr. Charles O'Connor, a Lexington Middle School science teacher and Vice-President and Education Chair of the Friends of Six Mile Cypress Slough Preserve will be leading the students on a trail closed to the general public and used for this purpose for over 40 years. Dr. O'Connor has led over 160 of these trips.

Students are learning about the importance of Florida's wetlands, native plants and animals, water conservation, and will enjoy a wetwalk through the watery heart of a beautiful cypress forest. To be eligible for this field trip students studied the slough ecosystem on line, and submitted a completed worksheet and a short essay.

The Friends organization is providing the funding for the buses and substitute teachers.

This trail is also used in August and September for wet walks for the general public that are also led by Dr. O'Connor. Donations from these wet walks are used for activities such as funding field trips for local schools. Educating young visitors about wetlands and their role in preserving the environment and quality of life is the number one goal in the Friends mission to preserve, protect and promote the Six Mile Cypress Slough.

Buys By The Board Keep Summer Busy by Carolyn Babb

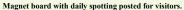
A quiet and wet summer at the Slough doesn't mean that everyone can have down time for the season. The Friends Board of Directors approved funding for several projects that have been accomplished by staff and volunteers during the summer.

A new daily spotting listing magnet board has been installed at the entrance of the board walk. The sighting listing has been replaced with magnets of pictures of the animals, birds, ferns, trees and other items of interest to our visitors. (An alligator on the raft at Gator Lake or in the mud at Otter pond for example)

Staff is working on replacing signage to reflect the current acreage and length of the Slough, 3500 acres and 11 mile long. Protective railing has been added to the viewing platforms along side Gator Lake and at Otter Pond. The beautiful center garden has a new trellis on one of the paths that is being lined with rocks from the Friends Rock On Garden project.

All of these projects are being funded by the Friends through the membership and donations of the visitors to the Slough.







New Signage



Protective Railing



Videographer Arnie Rosen Makes New Friends for the Slough

Some events in life, initially appearing insignificant, later reveal unexpected results that evolve, grow and multiply.

One cold, rainy January morning as a newly enrolled student in the Six Mile Slough Volunteer Naturalist Training Program, I decided to try out my brand- new camera, a miniature Nikon Coolpix. While reading the instruction manual early that morning, I was surprised to discover that this tiny marvel did NOT require film and included an added benefit, the capability to record "moving pictures".

The Slough was virtually deserted that morning until I rounded a corner in the vicinity of the "Grandmother Tree". There was movement ahead from some kind of animal with brown fur. My first thought: "Bear". About to skedaddle I saw three young River Otters having fun wrestling in a big ball of fur. They cautiously approached this prospective guide to within five feet, unafraid, (the otters), curious and making birdlike chirping sounds. Finally remembering the camera I tentatively began to record this rambunctious trio. With that I was "hooked", never again to walk the Slough without my camera, which in time, was replaced with a more appropriate model.



Arnie and Dr. Chalfin

Soon there were dozens of scenes stored on the camera and this caught the eye of my son Dan. Dan questioned the purpose of all that effort and assisted with some editing to produce a composite DVD. The DVD "Inhabitants" came to fruition. Word soon got out to family and friends who enjoyed "Inhabitants of the Six Mile Slough". I presented the DVD to the Friends to be purchased by visitors to the Interpretive Center Gift Store with all proceeds from the sales donated for the Friends purposes at the Slough.

In June of 2013 I made the acquaintance of Dr. Harry Chalfin and friend Edythe from the Cypress Cove Retirement Community in south Fort Myers. Dr. Chalfin is a retired dentist, who at ninety is very energetic, personable and spoke of his many interests. It was almost too much to believe when Dr. Chalfin spoke about his extensive experience in videography and was also very active producing video for the Cypress Cove community as well as his alma mater, Temple University. I mentioned my involvement as a Six Mile Cypress Slough Volunteer and the "Inhabitants" video I had produced. Dr. Chalfin offered excellent advice and useful tips to assist me with my future productions and was very enthusiastic about viewing the "Inhabitants" video. I mailed a copy of the DVD to the Doctor and within a day or two received an email from him, praising the "Inhabitants" and appreciating the effort necessary in locating the subjects, recording, editing, editing and more editing. Dr. Chalfin then asked permission to create a custom introduction suited for showing the video on the Cypress Cove Community TV network. I agreed and Dr. Chalfin undertook a great amount of work before he was satisfied with the results. Dr. Harry is a "pathological perfectionist" and accepted nothing less.

Dr. Chalfin next extended an invitation to myself and Jan to join him and friends for dinner at Cypress Cove, followed by his "Inhabitants" presentation to their audience, followed by question and answers. I was overwhelmed with the warm reception from everyone I met that evening. Dr. Chalfin had invested tremendous effort with mailings, flyers and personal promotion informing the residents about the scheduled program. His efforts were obvious when the turnout numbered over one hundred, many times the expected turnout. Dr. Chalfin reported the feedback after the presentation was immensely positive and enthusiastic. He cited my personality, relaxed delivery and the obvious dedication to the Six Mile Cypress Slough. We are enjoying an ongoing friendship and plans are underway to include the Six Mile Slough as a future destination for the Cypress Cove field trips.

My camcorder is now full and am soon to be hard at work producing "Inhabitants 2" editing, editing

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

Slough Receives Grant to Remove Melaleuca

By Robert Repenning

Bob Repenning, land stewardship coordinator at the Slough, recently learned that he has received a requested state of Florida grant to eradicate melaleuca from one of the Management Units in the Slough. The melaleuca to be removed is in the arm of the Slough in the eastern portion of the Slough near I-75 north of Penzance Blvd. This is one of the last strands of mature melaleuca in the Slough.

This grant will be matched with funds from the Friends for ten percent with a maximum of \$10,000. The actual amount of matching funds will be determined when bids are requested for the project later this year. This money comes from the Bureau of Invasive Plant Management in the Fish and Wildlife Commission. The Slough is fortunate to receive this grant as this program is slated for major cuts next year.

The bureau also has another program that supplies herbicide for maintenance of sites that have been cleared of exotics. Bob has also applied for and received \$3500 of herbicide to use with volunteer help to maintain control of the exotics in the treated areas.

Thank you to the Friends for making this possible.

PRESIDENT'S NOTES

Hi Friends—This has been a wonderful summer at the Slough, as usual. The steady rain brought the water



through early and has kept it 3 feet deep all summer. The blue measurement sign on the board walk has had water at 16 feet above sea level all summer.

It has been a busy summer in the center garden. The zebra longwings, gulf fritillaries, giant swallowtails, just to name the biggies, have laid eggs, hatched, pupated, and turned into the most beautiful creatures right before our eyes. I have spent many minutes watching wings on the lovelies dry in the morning air. Several of our regular visitors and members have spent hours doing the same thing. The photo ops have been great as well. The giant swallowtail caterpillars and chrysalis are brown and not very pretty considering the end product.

Board vice president Charles led the summer wet walks again. The water in some areas was chest deep and higher on those of us that are vertically challenged. It was cool and clear. People are absolutely amazed at the beauty of the Slough off of the boardwalk.

The Lee County Commissioners are messing with Conservation 20/20 funds.

See below. See you in the Slough. CB

Lee County Board of Commissioners Uses Conservation 20/20 Program Funding to Balance County Budget

by Carolyn Babb

Lee County Board of Commissioners voted to use \$26 million of funding collected for conservation property buying and management of already purchased conservation properties <u>for purposes</u> <u>other than originally approved by voters in Lee County</u>. Commissioner John Manning was the only no vote for the diversion of funds. He favored using Lee County reserve funds to cover the deficit.

Next year, commissioners will meet and decide how much money, if any, is added to Conservation 20/20 accounts for the Fiscal Year 2014-15. Conservation 20/20 accounts have \$98.6 million, including \$63 million available to buy land and \$35.6 million to maintain property purchased through the Conservation 20/20 program— a cost estimated at about \$1.7 million in the upcoming year.

Although the plan seems to be repayment of the funds in future years, once the practice of pilfering the preservation fund begins, it will be easier to do it next year.

The program was approved by Lee County voters to purchase, protect and maintain environmentally critical land. It is not to balance the Lee County budget shortfall.

TRASH PICKUP 9 AM 3RD SATURDAY EVERY MONTH

Contact: thehoules 75@yahoo.com

GOOD LUCK TO FRIENDS CHARTER MEMBERS JOYCE AND BILL SANDERS



Joyce and Bill have headed for the hills of Tennessee. We wish them well and wait for their return visits. The Slough will not be the same without them.



Name	Student (\$10) Individual (\$20) Contributing (\$50)
Address	Supporting (\$100) Associate (\$250) - 1 Sustaining (\$500) - 1, 2 Corporate Sponsor (\$500) - 1, 2
City State Zip	Patron (\$1,000) – 1, 2, 3
E-Mail	1- includes parking sticker for 18 Lee Co. Facilities. 2 - includes choice of wet walk or moon walk for
Phone	ten guests. 3 - includes bench or rocking chair naming opportunity
In addition I would like to contribute	
\$additional for the Friends use at the Slough.	HOW CAN YOU HELP WITH YOUR TIME? I AM INTERESTED IN HELPING WITH:

Membership Level (Please Check One)

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

TOTAL\$_

Online store: friendscorner.qbstores.com

JOIN FRIENDS TODAY!

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.



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

