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Did you say field trip?
See pages two and three



Why are they cutting down trees in the
Slough?
See page four

2015 FRIENDS PHOTO CONTEST GETS UNDERWAY NOVEMBER 1ST

The Friends of the Six Mile Cypress Slough Preserve fifth annual photo contest submittal begins November 1, 2014. Submittals will be accepted until January 31, 2015 at 3:30 pm. Award winners will be notified by February 14, 2015 and prizes awarded at a reception at the Interpretive Center on February 28, 2015.

There are five categories including Animals, Plants, Open (photos other than animals and plants), Altered and Youth (Ages 17 and under). Each photographer may submit three photos for the entry fee of \$10.00. 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.



First Place 2014 Youth Category
Katy Matter

Please submit your favorite photos 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 of non-native and exotic plants and wildlife are not considered for the judging. Pictures may have been taken at any time at the Slough.

Winning photos will be displayed at the Slough Interpretive Center. Winning photos are also used for post-cards for purchase by visitors in Friends Corner and for advertising for Slough and Friends events.

Entry forms and information are available at the Interpretive Center and online at www.sloughpreserve.org

DECEMBER 10th 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 10, 2014 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.

Board member Jeff Key will again provide entertainment for our listening pleasure.

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 turnout and seeing members and guests.



FRIENDS SLATE SIX FIELD EXCURSIONS 2014-15

By Janet Bunch

For all those who have been waiting with bated breath for this season's field trip offerings, the long dark night is over! Here is the schedule, although specific dates are still missing on a couple, pending staff availability. Specifics will be provided at the time of sign-up, which as usual will be one month prior to each trip. Maximum number of participants remains 12, and it's first come, first served on each one. When sign-up is opened, information on degree of difficulty, length of trip, requested attire and any other pertinent information needed by participants, will be provided.

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.



Friends members Mary Murray and Janet Bunch prepare for the Friends field trip to Estero Marsh Preserve

Tuesday, October 14—Estero Bay

THIS TRIP IS OPEN FOR IMMEDIATE SIGN-UP! Joy Hazell,

Lee County Sea Grant agent and Florida Master Naturalist instructor, will be leading our group on a boat tour and wading trip in Estero Bay. During the trip we will see the direct downstream consequences of the preservation and stewardship of Six Mile Cypress Slough Preserve. We will talk about the plants and animals in the estuary and the value of a healthy estuary to our community. This will be followed by the seining trip in the sea grass beds to get an up close view of the diversity and importance of this habitat within the larger bay.

Please bring snacks, water, sunscreen, binoculars, cameras and dress for outdoor adventures, including sun-appropriate clothing and closed-toed shoes that can get wet.

Tuesday, November 18—Lee County Mosquito Control

Our outing this month will be to the Lee County Mosquito Control/Hyacinth Control facility at the former Buckingham Army Airfield in Lehigh Acres. The trip includes a video, we will get to meet with the Director, visit their lab, and check out the aircraft.

December, date to be determined—Buckingham Trails Preserve

Another site from the Buckingham Army Airfield from WWII is at Buckingham Trails Preserve, another of the Conservation 2020 sites. Hopefully, the Land Manager for this Preserve, Lee Waller, will be available to take us around. More information will be forthcoming as it becomes available.

Monday, January 19—Babcock Webb Wildlife Management Area

Our own fabulous Bob Repenning has graciously agreed to lead us on a walking tour of a section of the Babcock Webb Wildlife Management Area in Charlotte County. This is a textbook illustration of a completely restored pine flatwoods ecosystem, and if we're REALLY lucky, we might even get a sighting of the red cockaded woodpeckers that make their home there.

February, date to be determined—Wild Turkey Strand

Wild Turkey Strand Preserve is another of the WWII sites that have artifacts left from that period. It also is located within the Lee County Density Reduction/Groundwater Resource area. Land Steward Laura Greeno will be able to talk to us about one of the Preserves where our drinking water actually comes from. This is one of C2020's most beautiful preserves, so this will be a great outing.

FRIENDS SLATE SIX FIELD EXCURSIONS 2014-15

(Continued)

Tuesday, March 10-Fort Myers downtown walking tour

We'll be taking advantage of a downtown walking tour, provided by TrueTours, of the history of Fort Myers. This will be good information, some of which might be new to some of us and will be fun to boot. There will be a \$12 fee for this one, but we are each being given a paper fan (to keep us cool) that has coupons for discounts to some of the downtown restaurants. This tour is about an hour and a half, from 10:30 – noon.



Estero Marsh Preserve



Field trip participant Janet Bunch getting the right angle for her shot on a trip to Hickory Swamp Preserve in 2011.

Bunch Beach
Preserver field trip
February 2014



Meander Musings

By Jeff Montgomery

On our August meander, we discovered a Saddleback caterpillar. This strikingly beautiful caterpillar is one of a number of urticating (stinging) caterpillars found in the Slough. The spines on the brown tubercles could be likened to tiny hypodermic needles linked to poison sacs. Unless you are sensitized, the venom is not deadly, but it is extremely irritating and you will regret contacting this fellow.

In addition to the Saddleback, I have seen the IO caterpillar, the Puss and Hag moths in the Slough. All of them have stinging hairs, so it is best to be careful when approaching these guys.

Interestingly, there are several organisms that possess urticating characteristics. Jellyfish, tarantulas, and even plants like nettles have these defenses. In the case of the caterpillars, the stinging cells are derived from the setae, or bristles on the body. The nettles derive their stings from hairs on the stems and jellyfish derive them from epithelial cells. When different organisms evolve similar structures via different methods, the process is known as convergent evolution. We see examples of this in bird, bat and insect wings, which do the same things but use different anatomical methods to do so. When there is a need, Nature finds a way to fulfill it.



Saddleback Caterpillar



IO Moth Caterpillar



Puss Caterpillar



Hag Moth Caterpillar

UPCOMING SLOUGH PROGRAMS



All About Alligators Saturdays, November 1, December 6, 2014, January 3, 2015, 11:00 am to 12:00 pm



Amazing Bladderwort Tuesdays, January 6 and 20, 2015, 10:30 am to 12:30 pm



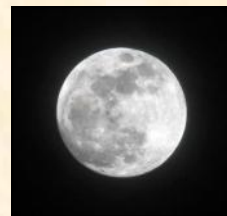
Basket Making Class Saturday, November 15, 2014, 9:00 am to 12:00 pm

Drawing Inspiration Fridays, November 7-21, 2014 January 9-23, 2015, 12:30 pm to 3:30 pm



Friends Gathering Wednesdays, January 28, February 25, March 25 and April 22, 2015 at 7:00 pm
Speakers to be announced.

Full Moon Walk Thursday, November 6, 2014 at 5:30 pm and Saturday, January 3, 2015 at 5:45 pm



Primitive Fire Saturday, November 8, 2014, 10:00 am to 2:00 pm



Primitive Shelter Saturday, January 10, 2015, 10:00 am to 2:00 pm



Skull ID 101 Tuesday, January 13-27, 2015, 1:30 pm to 2:30 pm



Slough Yoga Session Tuesdays November 18-December 16, 2014 and January 6-27, 2015, 9:00 am to 10:15 am

Tuning to Nature Friday, October 17, 2014, 9:00 am to 3:30 pm



Youth Bird Walk Saturday, January 3, 2015, 8:00 am to 10:30 am

Reservations are required for most programs. There are also fees for some of the programs. Register online at leeparks.org or by calling Lee County Parks and Recreation at (239) 533-7275.

New Guided Walk Procedures

Visitors planning to join the daily and twice daily guided walks will need to arrive early. To enhance the visitors' experience, guided walks are limited to the first 20 people to check in, first come, first served (no groups of six or more). Check in for guided walk begins 30 minutes prior to the start at the entrance to the boardwalk. The entire party must be present at the Trail Host Station to sign up. Each guided walk lasts about 90 minutes and will cover three-quarters of a mile on a raised, fully-accessible boardwalk trail.

Guided Walk Schedule

January-March: Daily - 9:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m.
May-October: Wednesdays only - 9:30 a.m.
April, November and December: Daily - 9:30 a.m.

Trees Removed Along the Boardwalk

by Bob Repenning

I was on the boardwalk marking trees to be removed when the summer camp field trip came up to me and asked, "Why would you cut down trees in a natural area?" My short answer was "Lawyers." In our society someone has to be blamed for anything that happens; even a tree falling in the woods. If Lee County has rotten trees over the boardwalk and one falls on someone then some would consider it to be the County's fault. We should have known it would fall. Also a great deal of taxpayer money was spent to build the boardwalk; a large tree falling could significantly damage the boardwalk costing a great deal to fix and an extended closure until it is fixed.

Now for the long answer, Six Mile Cypress is a young forest. The old growth forest was cut in the 1930's and 40's. With an open canopy, the faster growing oaks and chestnuts grew up with the cypress catching up but growing slower under the canopy of the other trees. Because Laurel oaks can grow in wet sites, those are the oaks we see the most in the Slough. Laurel oaks live from 60 to 80 years and then decline and die. We are in that period now where the oaks and elms are dying and falling apart. To protect visitors and the boardwalk this year we hired an arborist to do a comprehensive hazard risk assessment and recommend what trees were a threat. With this information in hand, we first took care of the smaller trees in-house and then hired a tree service to do the larger ones. We only worked on the severe risk trees. These were rotten and close to or over the boardwalk. Several of these have dropped branches on the boardwalk in the last few years resulting in damage to the boardwalk. All the trees rated as "severe risk" proved to be rotten. Several showed twisting signs that weakened them and opened points for infection. These were likely caused by high winds associated with Hurricanes Charlie and Wilma ten years ago.

One thing the summer campers can look forward to is that when they retire and volunteer at the Slough, they will have more of a cypress swamp to interpret to people rather than a mixed species forest we have today.



Oak Tree that was removed along Gator Lake.
Photo Bob Repenning



Along the Autumnal Boardwalk, Propagation Practices

by Dotty Brown

HARVEST MOON. Seasonal determination of species to scatter their seed to sustain their identity is in full swing.

FOCUS your wanderings on the diversity of ways each species, animal and plant, is designed to accomplish its unique function of survival.

Find the tiny butterfly egg laid on its host plant, watch the dragon fly lay her egg in the water after copulation, pull the stick tights and the needle plant seeds from your socks, watch the parachuted seeds float on the breeze to new growing grounds.

Watch the squirrels help spread the pines by burying the seed they harvest from the cones.

Enjoy the rainbows formed by the dissolving of the resins of the cypress cones.

Marvel at the spores of ferns and mushroom.

Mammals produce live young; our alligators demonstrated the use of incubated eggs.

This is a season of promise wrapped in many packages. Take time to marvel at the intricacies of creation!



MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Renewing Members: Thank you for your continued support!

Karen Bledsoe
Janet and Bruce Bunch
Jill Crocker
Mary Ross and Hugh Denison
Krekel Green
Patti Heath
Charles and Virginia Heuther
Char and Clay Lance
Rebecca Mitchell
Pete and Cindy Ochsner
Alice Oldford
Betty Ann Prevatt
Pete Roche
James Rodwell

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

Welcome New Members

Chris Lowden
Carolee Drotos Swales

Additional Donations Gratefully Received From:

Janet and Bruce Bunch
GE Foundation
Mark Horvath, in memory of
Andrew Horvath
Rebecca Mitchell
Pete and Cindy Ochsner

The Houles Retire from the Friends Adopt A Road Program

Richard and Andrea Houle have been picking up garbage along Six Mile Parkway for the Friends for seven years. They are hanging up their pickers and turning in their bags.

Thank you so much to Dick and Andrea for your time and energy in this not so glamorous but important and visible program.

The Friends would like to continue the program and Richard and Andrea had some helpers. We need to have some one to try to fill their boots. It is a commitment of several hours once a month.

If you are interested please contact the Friends at (239) 533-7557.

You Will Always be in My Heart

Mary Rude

It is with a mixture of sadness and joy that I have decided to retire from Lee County Parks & Recreation and the Six Mile Cypress Slough Preserve. It has been a fantastic 20+ years. My last day will be Wednesday, October 29, 2014.

It has been my pleasure and honor to work with and be surrounded by such wonderful, professional, people. I am aware of my good fortune, and that I was given the opportunity, freedom and support to dream and create.

What a fantastic journey it has been for me to go from a volunteer to part-timer to programmer to supervisor...all the while building a volunteer program, establishing a Friends group and then constructing a "green" Interpretive Center.

Aside from the actual job, it has been a gift to me to work in such a beautiful setting. It became a passion of mine for people from everywhere and anywhere to learn about and appreciate my beloved Slough. It offered me the ability to exercise my background in and love of biology in a way that I hadn't imagined.

Thank you Friends of Six Mile Cypress Slough, Volunteers and staff for being such a huge part of my life. All of you have touched my heart and made my life so much richer. Your positive influences have shaped me personally and for that I am deeply grateful. I have truly enjoyed our experiences together.

And, since I am surrounded by retirees, I've gotten copious amounts of expert advice on the subject of retirement. I am looking forward to putting your suggestions into action. I hope that I will see you from time to time out on the trail, at a Friends' Gathering and of course at a delicious Friends potluck dinner. Thank you all for the wonderful adventure!

Lexington Middle School 8th Graders and the Slough



Photo Dr. Charles O'Connor

SHOP AT FRIENDS CORNER in the Interpretive Center or on line at

www.friendscorner.qbstores.com

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

PRESIDENT'S NOTES

Hi All—what a busy summer we have had at the Slough. Many visitors for our hot weather. And a little less rain than normal. And there are two new families of alligators.



If you aren't a member of the Facebook Friends group, go there now and ask to join. The members of the page are great at keeping current photos, especially of those babyigators. And now there is a Twitter account for the Friends as well. The newsletter is now being distributed via email from sloughconnections@gmail.com

I led several wet walks this summer, for camp, for some boy scouts, with Charles and the public groups. That is my favorite place to be, off of the boardwalk, But I am also looking forward to the moon walks that will start up again in November.

I am so happy for the new supervisor at the Slough, Heather Gienapp. She is a wonderful teacher and friend. But at the same time, so sad that Mary Rude is retiring. She has been such an important part of my Slough story. Again, a great teacher and friend.

What ever the spirit of the Slough has in store for us in this new chapter I am ready! And I know that Mary and Heather are as well.

I can assure you that Heather will do everything in her power to support the Friends and to help us in our efforts to preserve and protect the Slough. She has already proven that for the past twelve years.

I will miss you Mary. Hope to see you in the Slough often! CB

Slough wins 2014 Honors from Trip Advisor



Thoughts from a Friend

As I walk from place to glorious place at the Slough, I go with confidence that at my next stop I'll be presented a wonder to make the whole day worthwhile.

And should I be disappointed, no matter. That wonderful disappointment does nothing to deter my lofty expectations for the next stop!

My problem is that every step can be a destination, and before I know it four hours have vanished.

Thank you all.

Michael Moran

FOLLOW FRIENDS ON **FACEBOOK**

FRIENDS OF SIX MILE CYPRESS SLOUGH PRESERVE



TWEET WITH FRIENDS
@FriendsofSixMil



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 table 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

Newsletter email: sloughconnections@gmail.com

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 POTLUCK
WEDNESDAY DEC 10
6:00 PM**

QUESTIONS, COMMENTS, REQUESTS TO
sloughconnections@gmail.com

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