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Editor : Theresa Roake

PRESIDENT'S NOTES

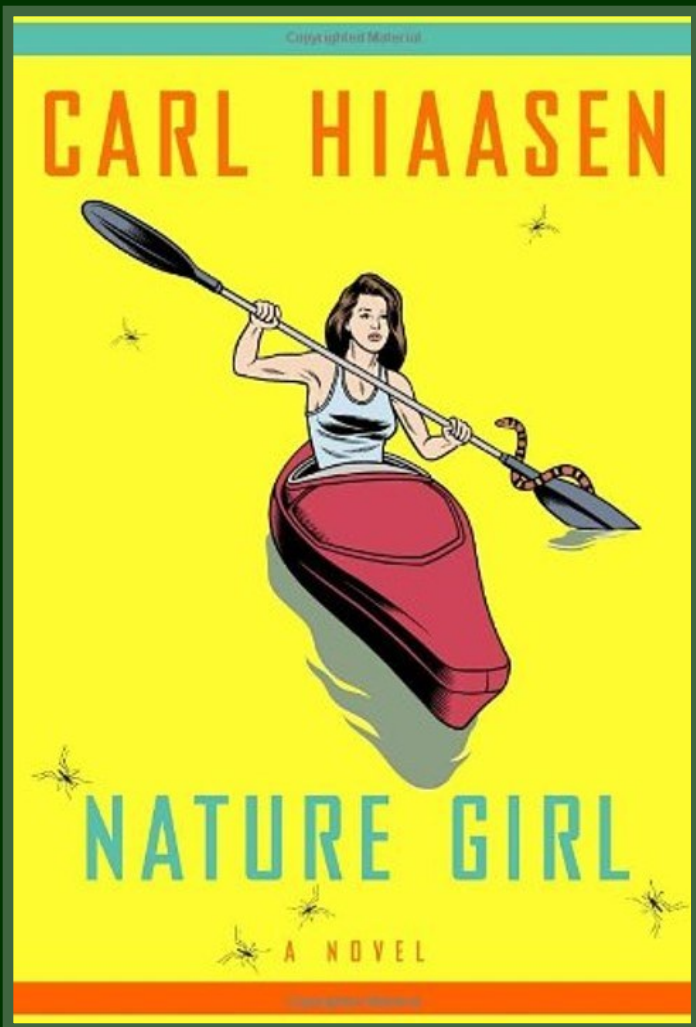


When I was living in Belgium, I didn't spend much time in nature and wasn't interested in learning much about it. But moving to Fort Myers and discovering this little jewel called Six Mile Cypress Slough Preserve, where I started volunteering six years ago, turned that completely around. It ignited in me a newfound love and fascination for all things in nature. So, being part of the Friends of the Slough and sharing a common passion with you, our members, is an honor.

That's why, while thinking of Eurythmics singer Annie Lennox's words "Here comes the rain again...", I am delighted to announce that the cherished Wet Walk program will be back in September and October. If you have never been on one of our walks, I invite you to come and experience the magic of the Slough off the boardwalk. If you have previously participated in a wet walk, you remember how breathtakingly beautiful it is and most likely wish to join us again. Friends members will benefit from a member rate and get priority registration before the program is advertised to the public. So keep an eye out for the official Wet Walk registration email.

I hope to see you at one of our walks, and I wish you a safe rainy season .

Friends of Six Mile Cypress
Slough Preserve
7791 Penzance Blvd
Fort Myers, FL 33966
www.sloughpreserve.org



August Book Club Selection

BOOK WORMS

MOVE INTO THE SLOUGH

By Carolyn Babb

The “Slough Book Worms” inaugural meeting was held via Zoom on June 7, 2021, with nine enthusiastic folks in attendance from Florida, Indiana, and New Hampshire. More book lovers are expected and will be welcomed to join the “Slough Book Worms” at our second meeting scheduled for Monday, August 2, 2021, 2:00 PM, via Zoom.

The book club will meet the first Monday of the even numbered months of the year. It is anticipated that during “season” the group will meet at the slough Interpretive Center. Each meeting will have a different moderator to lead the discussion. There will be a variety of books selected by the group, including non-fiction and fiction.

Participants were invited to share a favorite book for consideration for future reading by the group. Titles included:

Gator Bait by Jeanne Meeks

Nature Girl by Carl Hiaasen

The Elephant Whisperer by Lawrence Anthony

The Yearling by Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings

The Nature of Florida by John Perry and Jane Greverus Perry

What It's Like to Be a Bird by David Allen Sibley

Wild Sex: The Science Behind Mating in the Animal Kingdom by Dr. Carin Bondar

Where the Crawdads Sing by Delia Owens

The Tracker by Tom Brown Jr.

The Bird Way by Jennifer Ackerman

Nature Girl by Florida author Carl Hiaasen is the first selection for the club. The story takes place in the mangroves of Florida’s Ten Thousand Islands. A book with the author’s usual setting in the Everglades seemed a fitting way to start a book club formed in the slough. Please find a copy and join us for a lively discussion of this book and other slough related activities. October 4th’s selection is *The Yearling* by Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings via Zoom. December 6th will bring us to the back deck of the Interpretive Center and feature *The Bird Way* by Jennifer Ackerman.

Please join us Monday, August 2nd for the next meeting of the “Sough Book Worms.”

Register in advance for this meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/join/register/tZEtcuGsqjoiEtcHwflA4sh3clWEbDxEUblG>

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.



Screenshot of Inaugural Meeting



Photo by Carolyn Babb

SUMMER BIRD-IN-RESIDENCE

BY THERESA ROAKE

The snowbirds are gone. They have all flown north for the summer. Who sticks around at the Slough during the summer? You've heard of an artist-in-residence? Well, the Slough has a summer bird-in residence. You may know it better by its common name. It's the tufted titmouse (*Baeolophus bicolor*). The first time you hear about our little friend in residence, you may picture a small rodent. However, that is not the case at all. Its common name comes from jolly Olde English. 'Tit' is any small object or animal and 'mase' is bird, so the literal translation is small bird. It's fun just saying the name out loud. I like the alliteration and you can almost always make a child giggle when you name the bird.

The tufted titmouse is a perky little gray bird with bright black eyes. A gentle wash like a Georgia peach on its sides and a bushy crest help further identify the bird. Favorite foods include insects and seeds. A yummy caterpillar is a special treat. It is a vocal little songbird whose voice has an echoing quality. The first time I heard one at the Slough, its call was reminiscent of the lingering call of bobwhites during childhood evenings watching fireflies. Don't think that long slow call is the only sound they make though. They also appear to chatter and communicate distress and alarm to other birds. Try and watch them for awhile and see how many different sounds they make.

When you see or hear one tufted titmouse, you will likely see or hear quite a few. This is a great way to look for other bird species as many like to feed with the titmice. In the summer, you may see our small quiet blue gray gnatcatchers keeping company with them. When our winter migrants return, this is a good way to find them. Look or listen for the tufted titmouse and you're sure to spot some of our snowbirds. Perhaps the tufted titmouse is acting as a tour guide with local knowledge for our winter visitors.

Let's hear it for our summer bird-in-residence! Three cheers for the tufted titmouse!

Sources: The American Bird Conservancy and Cornell Lab of Ornithology

FRIENDS EXPANDING SOCIAL MEDIA PRESENCE

By Carolyn Babb

The Friends of Six Mile Cypress Slough Preserve organization has a Facebook page with over 1,500 followers. There are daily posts of flora and fauna and activity that is viewable from the boardwalk. Many of these posts are from regular visitors. It is a wonderful way to get a daily dose of the spirit of the Slough. There are also announcements and information about upcoming activities on the Facebook page. Visitors just finished a photo postcard challenge (there have been three so far.) Facebook members can submit a photo to be considered for use on a postcard for sale in the Friends' nature store. If you would like to join the page, please answer the three questions when you send in a request to join, and you will be approved to join the page.



Facebook Photo

Our newest social media endeavors include monthly slough-related activities via email blasts, Instagram, and Twitter.

The first "Six Reasons Why We Love..." was northern cardinals. Members received it via email. We plan on a monthly distribution for this feature on the sixth day of each month. If you would like to submit a "Six Reasons Why We Love..." item, please contact Carolyn at carolyn_babb08@comcast.net



Instagram Photo

The Friends Instagram account is **sloughfriends**.

Please post pictures that are Slough related on Instagram to share with other Slough supporters. There is a monthly **#sloughclue** item that is posted midmonth. We ask you to identify what or where the clue is in or related to the slough. If you would like to submit an item for **#sloughclue**, please contact Carolyn.

The Friends Twitter account is **@FriendsofSixMil**. Tweet any slough related information that members might find interesting. Some of the accounts currently followed by **@FriendsofSixMil** are MyFWC, Calusa Nature Center, and SWFL CISMA.

We encourage all members to join us on the Friends' social media platforms. Your participation helps us in our mission to protect, preserve and promote the Six Mile Cypress Slough Preserve.



Twitter Photo





NEW SUPERVISOR EXCITED FOR FUTURE AT THE SLOUGH

By Carolyn Babb

Rick Bauer is the new supervisor at the Six Mile Cypress Slough Preserve. He comes to the Slough from his position of two years as a land stewardship coordinator for Conservation 2020 in Lee County.

Rick has a Bachelor of Science in Biology from Davidson College and a Master of Science in Conservation Ecology and Sustainable Development from the University of Georgia.

Rick's experience ranges from attaching GPS loggers to mature crocodiles in Costa Rica to surveying alligator nests in the Okefenokee Swamp in Georgia. Prior to that he pursued his alligator research work on Jekyll Island at the Georgia Sea Turtle Center. He has also had many varied education opportunities with snakes, turtles, lizards, mammals, and birds. One skill that stands out, and hopefully he never needs any of this knowledge, was monitoring invasive Burmese Pythons in the Everglades, by capturing pythons along roads and canals and assisting with the tracking program.

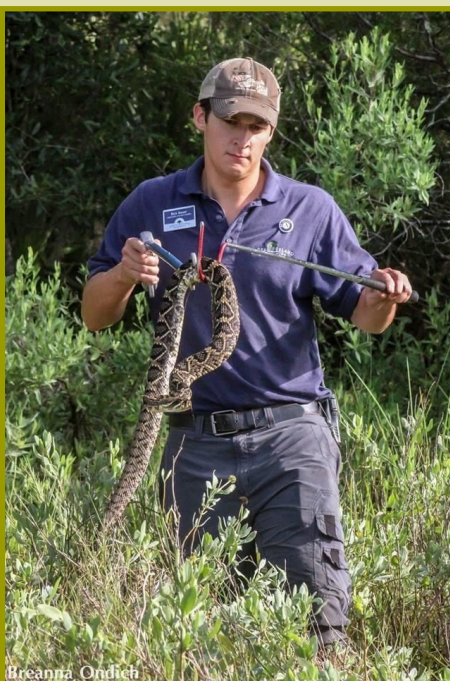
Rick comes to the Slough with a strong desire to continue his impact on the environment with positive changes he feels he can provide with his previous experiences in conservation and stewardship. His top priorities after his first two months at the Slough have a wide range from people to plants. He is working with the volunteers to get to know them and the jobs that they fill. This summer he has been taking his turn as the Interpretive Center front desk attendant. Rick wants the volunteers to know that he is anxious to meet and get to know them. "They are a special and dedicated group of people. I want to be a resource that they feel free to use."

Another top priority for Rick is four active exotic plant removal contracts throughout the Slough and Six Mile North. The Slough Supervisor responsibilities now include the Slough land stewardship activities that were previously done by other county personnel. This requires monitoring the work, and that it is being done correctly.

His third top priority is summer camp. He is confident that the two experienced Lee County Park and Recreation counselors, Laura Carr and Theresa Routsis, have the camps well organized and are ready to educate the campers. He is actively participating in camp with an alligator presentation and plant identification sessions. Rick is also looking forward to that final day wet walk experience with the campers.

The Friends welcome Rick to the Slough. He has been receptive to suggestions and ideas that have been presented to him by the Friends. And he always has a welcoming smile when we see him. We look forward to a great relationship with him.

Welcome to the Slough, Rick.



DID YOU KNOW?

By Theresa Roake

Did you know that July is Plastic Awareness Month? Have you ever walked the boardwalk and seen an errant plastic bottle floating on the water's surface? The photo on the right represents just one sweep of the Boardwalk by volunteer Billy Holleran on one of his Foreign Object Retrieval (FOR) runs. We know that most folks drop these objects by accident but take a look at the photo. What would we accidentally drop if we never bought the plastic in the first place? Just pondering...



Foreign Object Retrieval by Billy Holleran
Photo By Carolyn Babb



Friends Corner Sign
Photo by Donna Cressman

Did you know that Friends Corner has reopened?

Friends Corner is our nature store located in the Interpretive Center at the Slough. We carry a variety of books, shirts, toys, cards and environmentally friendly products related to our beautiful Slough. As Friends members you are entitled to a 10% discount. Please check ahead as we have limited hours during the summer months by calling (239) 533-7550.

MEMBERSHIP

For more information on joining or renewing go to our website at
www.sloughpreserve.org.

Renewing Members Summer 2021 to date. Thank you for your continued support.

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Barbara Catineau
Sue Christensen
Tim Denger
Peggi Erickson
Matt McNeil
Mary Lou Weddle

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Jeff Key
Dr. Charles O'Connor
Jean Labriola-Scholz Phd.
Steve Tutko



INTRODUCING...

By Lyn Brown

Let's give a HUGE welcome to our newest Friends board member, David Minnick. David has been coming to the Slough to enjoy its peace and quiet after moving here with his wife Maggie from Connecticut in 2016. He has an undergraduate degree from Temple and a masters of divinity as well as masters degree in family therapy. He worked 37 years in the ministry and served 13 churches as an interim minister while his wife was an Episcopal priest. He has agreed to work on environmental advocacy as well as working in the Interpretive Center for now. You will see him acting as a trail guide and doing whatever else is needed. He is so friendly and helpful!