



# CONNECTIONS



**ONLY SIX SLOTS LEFT!**

We wait all year for this!

Wet Walk Season is here...

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# Wet Walks 2023



Picture: Charles O'Connor

Hosted by The Friends of Six Mile Cypress Slough Preserve

### Saturday Morning

Aug. 12th & 26th  
Sept. 9th, 16th, 23th & 30th  
Oct. 14th, 21st & 28th

### Wednesday Morning

Aug. 16th  
Sept. 20th  
Oct. 18th

### Saturday Afternoon

Aug. 26th  
Oct. 14th

## Special THEMED wet walks

*"Hurricanes and Forests"*  
presented by Dr. Win Everham  
**Saturday, Sep. 2nd**

*"Aquatic Critters"*  
presented by Brian Murphy  
**Saturday, Oct 7th**

Friends Members	\$20
Non-Friends Members	\$35 (regular walks) \$45 (special walks)
Students (12+)	\$20 (regular walks) \$25 (special walks)



For additional information and reservations  
[www.sloughpreserve.org](http://www.sloughpreserve.org)



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## PRESIDENT'S NOTES



Dear Friends,

More than ever, the sun blazes high in the sky. As with every hot summer, we notice a decrease in wildlife activity. However, we know that our beloved critters will resume their active lives, and many migrators will return to the Slough when the hot summer months fade. Summer at the Slough is a synonym for Summer Camp and Wet Walk Season. The Friends are proud to support the four weeklong Slough summer camp sessions every year. There is nothing more rewarding than to see the joy on children's faces when exploring the wonders of nature. This year is no exception.

With temperatures soaring, what better way to stay cool than to indulge in a refreshing Wet Walk program? Our team has meticulously curated a series of guided walks in the tranquil waters of the Slough. In addition to our regular wet walks, we are offering two specialty walks. During the first one, Dr. Win Everham focused on "Hurricanes and Forests", and during the second one, we will learn from Brian Murphy about the "Aquatic Critters" that inhabit the Slough. If a wet walk does not interest you, remember that our book club and field trips offer engaging environmental education options over the summer.

Thank you for your continued support and commitment to protecting the Slough, a unique natural sanctuary. We look forward to seeing you soon.

Meanwhile, stay safe in the Florida heat.

*Sabine*

"Nature itself is the best physician" - Hippocrates

# FRIENDS TOUR EMERGENCY OPERATIONS

By David Minnick

On June 22, the Friends of the Slough field trip led us to the Emergency Operations Center (EOC), just a few miles north of the Slough on Ortiz Avenue. On that day, 18 Friends of the Slough and guests gathered to see the most important building, in times of crisis, in Lee County.

Constructed on a large parcel of elevated land, which is now the highest point in Lee County, the EOC is the place where all emergency services are coordinated. Most recently, this facility was put to the test in late September/October 2022 when Hurricane Ian, a Category 5 hurricane, battered the barrier islands and mainland of Lee County before heading north and east across Florida. The 24/7, 365-days-a-year center provided services to Lee County residents, in coordination with the state of Florida and federal centers.

We were greeted and led on a tour of the center by our old friend, Kathy Cahill. Prior to her position at the EOC, Kathy served for many years as the Volunteer Coordinator for Lee County Parks and Recreation, where many of us got to know her. Kathy told us about the important work done at the center in terms of crisis, offering a number of examples from Hurricane Ian. We met in the room where all the phone calls for help at that time were first received. One of the Friends on the tour, Bob Beville, was helping out during Hurricane Ian and he offered some stories and memories from that challenging time.

Kathy then led us on a tour of the facility. The highlights included the command center, where all the critical staff are in place and able to coordinate efforts; the generators and fuel tanks, which are prepared to run independently of external power for an extended period of time; and the kitchen, where meals are prepared and served to those on duty for the duration. The tour concluded with a walk around the building where we viewed the communications tower and the site for future buildings.



Mobile Command Center



Kathy demonstrates the amount of coffee it takes to keep everyone going.



Photos by Sabine Vandenhende

# HAPPY CAMPERS

Summer Camp at the Slough

By Adrienne Martin



Each summer Slough staff, and a few brave volunteers, host some amazing summer camps for our younger visitors. Our summer camps are curriculum-based and operate using lesson plans centered around biology, environmentalism, connecting with nature, and fun. Best of all, each week ends with a wet walk for the kids! Slough Secrets (ages 8-9) focuses on introducing campers to the Slough. Children learn how to fox walk, practice nature awareness, and learn about the plants and animals of the Slough.

Summer Naturalists (ages 10-12) has campers doing a deep dive into some of the science of the Slough. They learn about animal adaptations, specific species found here at the Slough, and enjoy fun experiments and crafts. This year, the kids grew their own slime molds!

Wilderness Explorers (ages 13-16) teaches teenagers important wilderness survival skills. Campers learn how to build their own shelter using sticks and leaves, start a fire using a bow drill, build their own bow and arrow, and learn how to use a compass. This year our campers learned water safety techniques!

Art in Nature (ages vary) uses the natural world within the Slough to inspire imagination and foster creativity. Campers learn many different types of art to help them find a medium about which they are passionate. This includes painting, sculpting, weaving, building, zentangles, poetry, origami, and collage.

All of our camps are made possible by the Friends of Six Mile Cypress Slough Preserve. Each year, the Friends purchase supplies, pay for guest speakers, and provide up to 12 scholarships for campers. A huge thank you to Friends members for their generous donations!

Photos courtesy of Lee County Parks & Recreation

# DID YOU KNOW?

## Building the Boardwalk

By Theresa Roake

As the boardwalk received some updates along Gator Lake this summer, we thought you might be interested in hearing about the original construction. Roger Clark shared the following information with Carolyn Babb and me. Roger was a key player in this project and a treasured local conservationist. He spent almost three decades with Lee County, where he helped conceive and champion Conservation 20/20.



Outdoor Facilities under construction



Building the "dock" along Gator Lake

The project team designed the boardwalk in a loose figure eight style. Placement was mostly by "feel" to cause as little disturbance as possible to the Slough. The Amphitheater was built on a former well-known party site along Gator Lake. The Amphitheater was built as an outdoor classroom to educate the public. Additional observation areas were also built at the ponds to give visitors an opportunity to see the wildlife of the Slough.

The Boardwalk construction started in the fall of 1990. It took 10 months to complete. There were 10 workers working 10 hour days, 7 days a week. Kelly Brothers Marine Construction was the contractor for the project. The Boardwalk was built as a boat dock using marine grade pressure-treated pine. The entire project was built by hand using gasoline powered pile drivers to set the posts. Kelly Brothers is still in business today!



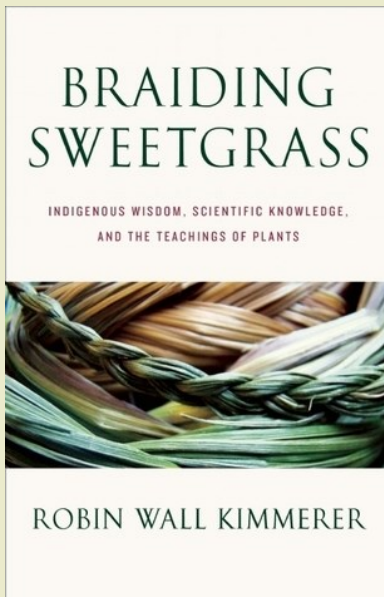
Amphitheater at Gator Lake



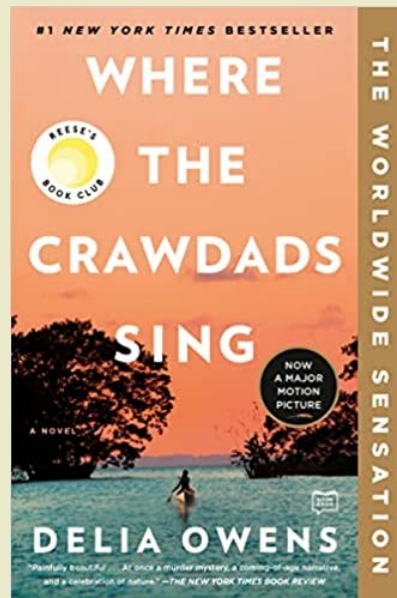
Boardwalk continues to welcome visitors

The Boardwalk has really stood the test of time. Repairs and minor improvements have occurred, but it's 32 years old now and still going strong. How many feet have walked along those boards over all the years? How many visitors, young and old, have been inspired to care about all our wild places by experiencing the timeless beauty of the Slough? Here's to many more years of exploring this special place. See you on the Boardwalk!

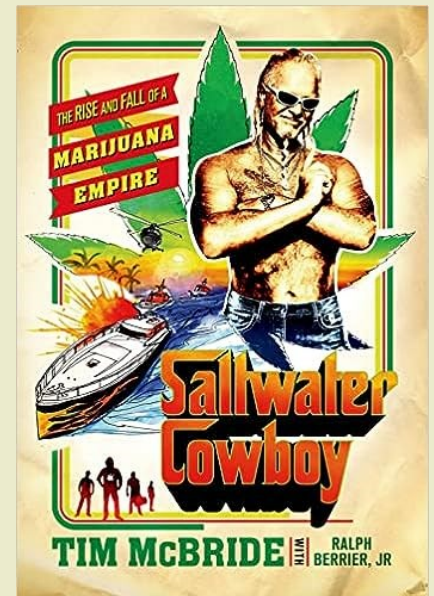
# SLOUGH BOOKWORMS UPDATE



August's book



October's book



December's book

On Monday, August 7, we discussed *Braiding Sweetgrass* by Robin Wall Kimmerer. Drawing on her life as an indigenous scientist, and as a woman, Kimmerer shows how other living beings—asters and goldenrod, strawberries and squash, salamanders, algae, and sweetgrass—offer us gifts and lessons, even if we've forgotten how to hear their voices. Margaret Walker led a lively discussion on the ideals of gratitude and reciprocity when relating with the natural world.

On Monday, October 2, it's time for *Where the Crawdads Sing* by Delia Owens. Owens juxtaposes an exquisite ode to the natural world against a profound coming of age story and haunting mystery. Thought-provoking, wise, and deeply moving, Owens's debut novel reminds us that we are forever shaped by the child within us, while also subject to the beautiful and violent secrets that nature keeps.

Monday, December 4 brings a fun Florida read in *The Saltwater Cowboy* by Tim McBride with Ralph Berrier, Jr. Saltwater Cowboy is the memoir of Tim McBride describing his life as a South Florida marijuana smuggler and as a 'guest' of the American federal prison system. The book reads like a novel, told in the first person.

## Upcoming Field Trips

September 19—Butterfly Gardening with Donna Cressman, Florida Master Gardener

October 16—Fall Bird Migration at Lakes Park with Dr. Jose Padilla Lopez, Lee County Bird Patrol

November 4—Echo Global Farm Tour featuring creative farming with unique demonstrations (\$10.50 Fee for Echo Global Farm field trip)

December 7—Wet Walk at Fakahatchee Strand for Slough Bookworms (\$75 fee for Wet Walk)

Online registration for field trips will be available on our website **two weeks** prior to each trip date.

## MEMBERSHIP

For more information on joining or renewing go to our website at  
[www.sloughpreserve.org](http://www.sloughpreserve.org).

### Renewing Members. Thank you for your continued support.

David Agin  
Karen Bledsoe  
Lyn Brown  
Jayne Davis  
Tim Denger  
Sharon & Avery Dimmig  
Peggy Erickson & John Residori  
Eileen Fonferko  
Virginia & Charles Heuther  
Hope & Billy Holleran  
Matt McNeil  
Christy Miller  
Eliane & Parker Moore  
Andrea Perisho  
Jean & Bill Scholz  
Robin Serne  
Paul Weiss

### Welcome New Members.

Louis Albrecht  
Keith Benson  
Jamey Binneveld  
Kathy Cahill  
Tim Davis  
Cindy Decker & Jeff Frontz  
Donald DePew & Barbara Wilson  
Laura Dermody  
Win Everham  
Michon Floreani  
Suzanne Frechette  
Gerry Geboski  
Laura Greeno  
Brenda Hage  
Joanne Johnson  
Angel Kelly  
Stacy Marshall-Kern & William Kern  
Ronald Lake  
Brenda & Donald Lewis  
Carol Matthai  
Emma McClung  
Mickey Miller

Kristina Mintz  
Sandy Moszer  
David Outerbridge  
Rhonda & Robert Rabin  
Jacqui Roch  
Debra & Richard Rowe  
Lindsay Schnyder  
Julia Sesse  
Karen Suzor  
Lynda Villanova  
Sam Walch  
Shannon Young

### Board of Directors

Sabine Vandenhende, President  
Nancy Olson, Vice President  
Theresa Roake, Secretary  
Sara Maliva, Treasurer  
Carolyn Babb  
Donna Cressman  
David Minnick  
Steve Parker  
Dot Voorhees

### Advisory Board

Jacquelin Cadkin  
Dr. William Hammond  
Jeff Key  
Dr. Terri Krass  
Dr. Charles O'Connor  
Jean Labriola-Scholz Phd.

We are happy to announce that you can now join the Friends or renew your membership online, please [click here](#). Congratulations to new members Debra & Richard Rowe for being the first!