

# ∞ CONNECTIONS ∞

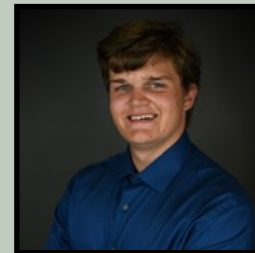


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Editor: Theresa Roake	

## JANUARY GATHERING HIGHLIGHTS CITIZEN SCIENCE

BY THERESA ROAKE



Our first gathering of 2023 featured Dr. Edwin Everham and Sam Walch Jr. with their presentation ***Wildlife and Hurricanes: The Good, The Bad & The Ugly***

Dr. Edwin "Win" Everham is a professor at Florida Gulf Coast University (FGCU) in the Department of Ecology and Environmental Studies. His research interest is unraveling how ecosystems respond to disturbance events. Sam Walch, Jr. has a Bachelor of Arts in Environmental Studies from FGCU.

Win and Sam started by explaining a little bit about disturbance ecology. Our natural systems need some "disturbance" to thrive. There's a sweet spot for just the right amount of change. It's relatively easy to measure how too little change affects our systems but much more difficult to determine how much is too much with a major storm like Hurricane Ian.

This program was interactive and asked for audience participation with their experiences during hurricanes. Sam and Win are collecting observations with a goal of publishing ***Citizen Reflections on the Impact of Hurricane Ian***. It was very interesting to hear participants' observations on changes in wildlife numbers and behavior before, during and after Hurricane Ian or previous hurricanes. We heard stories about osprey, snakes, frogs, eagles, manatees, sea turtles and even what panthers do during a hurricane.

This was a hybrid in-person and Zoom presentation so there will be a recording available later in February. In case you missed it, or would like to see it again, please look for the recording on our website.

Friends of Six Mile Cypress  
Slough Preserve  
7791 Penzance Blvd  
Fort Myers, FL 33966  
[www.sloughpreserve.org](http://www.sloughpreserve.org)

# PRESIDENT'S NOTES



Dear Friends,

New Year's is a time to reflect on the things that made our year special. The Friends were delighted to end 2022 in your company during a fun Holiday Gathering and a cold but joyful Christmas Walk. We are also incredibly thankful that our beloved Slough is recovering wonderfully from Ian.

We are excited to see what 2023 has to offer us!

There's nothing like ringing in the new year at the Slough with the best people around. The Friends have some engaging presentations and exciting field trips for you. We hope you are ready to learn more about hurricane impact, mushrooms, the State of the Slough, and prescribed fires from our upcoming guest speakers. We also look forward to seeing you on our field trips. We will take you to two less traveled sections of the Slough, i.e., Six Mile Cypress North and Morgan Hill. Our field trips will help you expand your knowledge of snakes, invasive plants, swallow-tailed kites, and more. Plus, we will go on a kayak outing in Big Cypress Preserve.

What is better than learning about nature with other nature lovers? Learning about nature with environmentally caring Slough Friends members!!!

We can't thank you enough for your support and love for the Slough. We are happy to have you as a member of the Slough Friends Family, and we hope to see you soon for some new adventures.

**Sabine**

*"To walk in nature is to witness a thousand miracles"* – Mary Davis

## UPCOMING FIELD TRIPS

### Save The Date!

Tuesday, February 21<sup>st</sup> 2023, 8:30 am to 11:00 am  
Hickey's Creek Mitigation Park, Alva  
Theme: Discover Hickey's Creek with Ranger Mickey  
Guide: Mickey Miller, Supervisor,  
Hickey's Creek Preserve

Monday, February 27<sup>th</sup>, 10:00 am to 11:00 am  
FGCU Water School, Fort Myers  
Theme: Tour and Overview of new Water School

Thursday, March 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2023 am, Time TBD  
Kayaking Big Cypress Preserve, Everglades City

Monday, March 20<sup>th</sup>, 2023, 9:00 am to 12:00 pm  
Morgan Hill, Fort Myers  
Theme: Invasive Species  
Guide: Rick Bauer, Supervisor of the Slough –  
Conservation Biologist

Monday, April 10<sup>th</sup>, 2023, 8:30 am to 11:30 am  
Caloosahatchee Regional Park, Alva  
Theme: Mushroom Identification, Biology and Uses  
Guide: David Outerbridge, UF/IFAS Extension Lee  
County in Sustainable Food Systems and  
Natural Resources

Monday, May 8<sup>th</sup>, 2023, 9:00 am to 12:30 pm  
CREW Cypress Dome Trails, Immokalee  
Theme: Swallow-tailed Kites Nesting  
Guide: Angel Kelley, Environmental Educator and  
bird enthusiast

Additional Photography Workshops have also been scheduled at the Slough on Tuesday, Feb. 21<sup>st</sup> and Tuesday, March 7<sup>th</sup> from 1:00 pm to 5:00 pm. Photographer Carol Matthai will share tips and tricks in the classroom and on the boardwalk.

Please keep an eye on your email regarding registration details for field trips and workshops. Please note that field trips are for Friends members only.

# Engaging Speakers, Exciting Topics

Friends Gatherings 2023

By Carolyn Babb

We're thrilled to share our remaining lineup of speakers for this season. It's so much fun to learn something new with our Friends. All presentations will be hybrid with in-person and Zoom attendees. In-person attendance will be limited. Registration information will be sent to members via email before each presentation.



**February 22, 2023, David Outerbridge, *Mushroom Identification, Biology and Uses*** David Outerbridge has a Bachelor's Degree in Anthropology specializing in Ethnobotany and a Master's Degree in Geography specializing in Environmental Hazard Risk Management. He has experience as a soil conservation planner and managing conservation lands. He currently works for UF/IFAS Extension Lee County in Sustainable Food Systems and Natural Resources. His programs educate on food production, business development, community resource development, natural resources, and localized food systems.



**March 22, 2023, Rick Bauer, *State of the Slough*** Rick Bauer is the 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's of Science Degree in Biology from Davidson College and a Master's of Science Degree 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 varied education opportunities with snakes, turtles, lizards, mammals, and birds.



**April 26, 2023, Laura Greeno, Lee County Parks and Recreation, *Prescribed Burns Management*** Laura Greeno has worked on conservation lands for 20 years with Lee County and is a Florida certified prescribed burn manager. Laura graduated from the College of Environmental Science and Forestry at Syracuse, NY.

The topic for this program will be prescribed burn planning and implementation as well as why it is imperative fire be utilized as a management tool.

We hope you can join us and look forward to seeing your "Friendly" faces!



# HOW DOES YOUR GARDEN GROW?

By Donna Cressman

## Butterfly Garden Improvement

There is a garden in the middle of the parking lot at the Slough that is devoted to encouraging butterfly life. Like the Slough, it has native plants that provide plants that butterflies lay eggs on and plants that they use as a food source. There are beautiful signs to explain the butterfly life cycle and show the many species of butterflies we have here in Lee County.

The garden has been here for many years and we have noticed that the smaller nectar plants do not do well and do not last very long. We realized that the soil has never been amended and that has probably led to the struggles of the smaller plants. So the Friends' Board decided to add a bedding mixture to improve the soil.

We were very fortunate in partnering with MW Horticulture Recycling Facility in Fort Myers, who gave us an excellent price and free delivery in recognition of our status as a 501(c)(3) (charitable) organization. We greatly appreciate their recognition of the importance of our mission of protecting, preserving, and teaching about nature.

After the soil was installed thanks to our Lee County Staff, a group of Slough volunteers added salvias, mist flowers, gaillardia, coreopsis, and other native plants. Soon butterflies were observed flying about nectaring and laying eggs! Remember to take a few minutes when you visit the Slough to enjoy the butterfly garden!



Garden before improvements  
Photo By Sabine Vandenhende

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Garden after the soil remediation: Are the plants smiling?  
Photo By Sabine Vandenhende

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Butterflies get an upgrade with beautiful nectar plants.  
Photo By Sabine Vandenhende

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# TAKING THE SHOW ON THE ROAD

By Nancy Olson



Adrienne Martin at Naples Zoo

Friends has been on the move recently to serve our mission of preserving, protecting and promoting the Slough:

## Florida Panther Awareness

The Naples Zoo hosted their annual Florida Panther Festival in November. Adrienne Martin, Slough Program Specialist, and I had a table providing information about The Slough with several animal pelts for the kids to identify. The kids were amazing and surprised me with how many of the animals they could identify. We had a model of an alligator head and a turtle shell which they also enjoyed.

The event was well attended and we had several hundred people stop at our table with questions about The Slough. We provided information about visiting as well as the importance of the Slough to the community.

## Recruiting events

I attended Volunteer Recruitment events at Heritage Palms and Pelican Preserve in November. Thank you to Lyn Brown for inviting us to Heritage Palms and to Ian Comly for assisting me at Pelican Preserve.

We heard so many positive comments and concern for the Slough after the hurricane.

Both events were well attended. We had a lot of people stopping to ask what kind of volunteer opportunities we had available. I'm looking forward to seeing some of those we talked to come on board as volunteers at The Slough. For any Friends members who may be interested in volunteering, please contact Adrienne Martin at (239) 533-7555.



Nancy Olson and Ian Comly at Pelican Preserve



# Christmas at the Slough

By Carolyn Babb

The Friends hosted the first members Christmas Day walk at the Slough this year. Upon arrival at the Slough, walkers were treated to hot chocolate prepared by Friends President Sabine Vandenhende and husband, Lee Rosenbaum. This was a welcome treat since Christmas morning temperatures were in the low 40s, the coldest Christmas in forty years according to the meteorologists. Average high in Fort Myers on Christmas Day is 77 degrees. Average low is 59 degrees.

Twenty-eight people attended the scavenger hunt walk that lasted about two hours. A list of 16 items was distributed for people to find – such as cypress knees with Christmas gnome vibes, something red, something shiny, or something white, mistletoe, holly and pine cones. It was hard to decide on the best looking cypress knees. Once you begin to give them faces, you see so many more. And many walkers were surprised to learn that mistletoe is a native Florida plant that lives in the Slough. Although it is parasitic to the host tree, it has many benefits for the habitat there.

Leaders of the walk were Friends Secretary, Theresa Roake and President, Sabine Vandenhende. The Slough provided all the entertainment with appearances by many wading birds, warblers, an alligator and an otter. It was a beautiful day for a delightful walk in the Slough.

The Friends plan to host this special walk again on Christmas Day 2023.





Friends celebrated the holiday season on the back deck at the Slough in style with a photo booth, live music, good food, and the grand finale of The Slough 12 Days of Christmas.

2023  
Holiday Gathering







**Horns  
Marsh**



**Field  
Trip**





# FAKAHATCHEE FIELD TRIP



# Introducing Dot Voorhees

By Theresa Roake



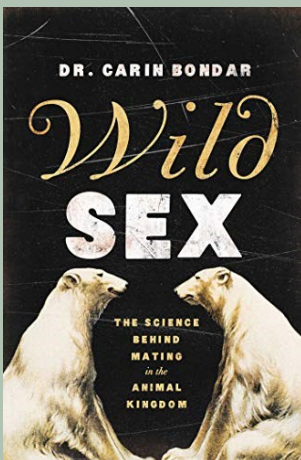
Dot Voorhees recently joined the Friends' Board of Directors. She was gracious enough to answer some questions for me so that you would have the opportunity to get to know her.

**Can you tell us a little about your background?** I grew up in Rye, New York, and attended the University of Miami in Florida, graduating with a degree in Biology. Following that training, I worked for the National Audubon Society and Everglades National Park in Florida as a wildlife research biologist, focusing on birds and alligators. After raising our children back in New York, my husband and I returned to Florida where I worked at the "Ding" Darling Wildlife Society.

**What do you love about the Slough?** I love the Slough where I can relax, enjoy the wildlife and, as my kids tease me, "take a nature bath".

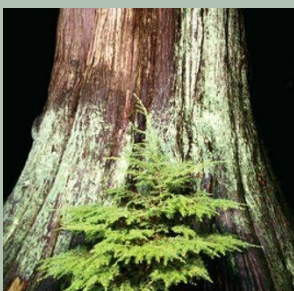
**How did you discover the opportunity to serve on the Friends' Board?** I met Sabine on the boardwalk one day and we got to talking about how I could get involved. We discovered that my past experience was something I could offer to the Friends.

Welcome to the Slough family, Dot!



## Slough Bookworms News

Our next book club meeting is Monday, February 6th at 2 pm on the back deck of the Interpretive Center at the Slough. We will be discussing *Wild Sex* by Dr. Carin Bondar. It's about the mating habits of all kinds of creatures in the animal kingdom. Even if you didn't get a chance to read it, please join us for what's sure to be a lively discussion.



Next up is *Finding the Mother Tree* by Suzanne Simard who shares that trees are not simply the source of timber or pulp, but are a complex, interdependent circle of life; that forests are social, cooperative creatures connected through underground networks by which trees communicate their vitality and vulnerabilities with communal lives not that different from our own. The discussion will take place at the Slough on Monday, April 3rd.

We hope you can join us.



## 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  
Kelly & Ben Bishop  
Pete Cangialosi  
Sue Christensen  
Jan & Dave Cornell  
Arlene Creeden  
Joann Davis  
Barbara & Gary Desrosiers  
Bill Doolin  
Karen & Jim Duff  
Linda & Doug Garde  
Mary Beth Gentleman & Donald Grant  
Jan Grier  
Bonnie & Brian Hogan  
Andrea & Richard Houle  
Carole Kerns  
Shirley & Tom Koester  
Marilyn & Julian Korn  
Linda & Edward Kutney  
Lynda Leach  
Sara & Bob Maliva  
CC Mattingly  
Michael Moran  
Mary Murray  
Robert Nelson  
Alice Oldford  
Jose Padilla-Lopez  
Stacy Prater  
Natalie Rosamund  
Marie Shaffer  
Barbara & Ben Shearer  
Mark Smith  
Irene Sullivan & Bill Chambers  
Mary Ann & Rod Swenson  
Rose Vitale  
Vi Weis

### **Welcome New Members.**

Katie Bartkowiak  
Tom Bauer  
Joanna & Tom Bierma

Bob Beville  
Carol Bombuca  
Dawn-Marie Driscoll & James Harshbarger  
Marion Evans  
Kathy Greenberg  
Debra & Brad Holley  
Jeffrey Hurcomb  
Kat Imler  
Will Leland  
Ronald Lindensmith  
Karen MacMillan  
David Marvin  
Matthew Matter  
Susan & Steven Maynard  
Matthew McWatters  
Mark Rosenstein  
Denise Runyon & Tom Malcolm  
Deborah Shannon  
Susie Volunteer

### **Board of Directors**

Sabine Vandenhende, President  
Nancy Olson, Vice President  
Theresa Roake, Secretary  
Sara Maliva, Treasurer  
Directors:  
Carolyn Babb  
Lyn Brown  
Donna Cressman  
David Minnick  
Dot Voorhees

### **Advisory Board**

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