



CONNECTIONS

Newsletter for Friends of Six Mile Cypress Slough Preserve

Winter 2007

President's Message



We have much to celebrate as we enter this New Year of 2007! The vision of building an Interpretive Center at Six Mile Cypress Slough Preserve is about to be realized with the approval for the *Construction Management Agreement* by The Board of County Commissioners on January 9, 2007.

A number of years ago Friends of Six Mile Cypress Slough Preserve appeared before this Commission asking for their blessings and approval to begin a fundraising effort to involve Lee County Citizens in this worthwhile venture to build an Interpretive Center at the preserve. After receiving the green light to move forward, our efforts have shown that more people are aware of the importance of Six Mile Cypress Slough Preserve than ever before.

Friends chose to call this building an Interpretive Center because we feel the slough is a very special place and this building will better serve the public as it functions as a "gateway" into the preserve. We also feel the LEED Certifi-

cated Green Building will be a model for others to follow. Our visitors will leave with a better understanding of the importance of these environmental lands that all of us are working so hard to preserve, protect and promote for future generations through education and community partnerships.

On this day *Friends of Six Mile Cypress Slough Preserve* presented a check to the Board of County Commissioners in the amount of *\$50,000* for the *Green Building Certification* naming opportunity. This joins with the \$85,000 presented in 2006!

We are proud to announce our most recent partnership with **Stock Development, Paseo Village of Fort Myers**, for their contribution of **\$35,000** for the naming opportunity of the *Staging Area*.

We also have pledges for more as the public and private community joins us for this initiative. Our membership has grown to over 300 and this money represents small donations from individuals as well as large contributions from corporations, grants received, and fundraising projects.

By the show of support from you, our members, Friends of Six Mile Cypress Slough Preserve was instrumental in securing the **\$200,000** contribution from **South Florida Water Management District to Lee County** for the construction of the Interpretive Center.

I certainly felt your presence as I thanked the County Board of Commissioners for their encouragement and belief in this organization as well as reminding them

that great things can happen when partnerships are formed between the government and its citizens. We will begin construction on the Interpretive Center very soon and you may expect to receive an invitation to the groundbreaking ceremony!

Friends of Six Mile Cypress Slough Preserve join with Lee County Parks and Recreation to thank each and every one of you for your help in making the Interpretive Center become a reality.

Joyce Sanders

**GROUND BREAKING
FOR THE
INTERPRETIVE
CENTER**

**PLEASE JOIN US
FOR THE CEREMONY
ON
TUESDAY, MARCH 20
2:00 P.M**



New Members

Since Oct. 2006

Dr. William B. Akerly

Tina Hamm

Rebecca Harris

Shirley Hilligoss

Richard Houle

Denese Sanders Leonard

Gretchen Monti

Mary Murray

Kris Nelson

Nicole LePape

Carolyn Sears

James P. Turner

Renewing Members

Matt Bixler

Ellie Boyd

Beverly H. Brazill ©

Anita Buff ©

Janet and Bruce Bunch

Barbara Catineau

Frankie A. Crain ©

Clyde Dabbs

Ann and Randy Deming

Gayle and Paul Edwards

Rosemary Fleming ©

Shirley Fox ©

Doris Giuseffi

Peter Hawkins

Richard & Debra Huxley

Randy & Vicky Jungers

Flo Kornman ©

Ricki M. Laird ©

Rudy & Irmgard Lampron ©

Lee Marks ©

Conrad and Ann Massa ©

Sally McPherson

Mickey Miller ©

Dale & Eileen Mitchell

Dr. R Charles O'Connor

Linda Patton ©

Deanna Pipher

Poinciana Garden Club ©

Dr & Mrs. T. P. Pruss

Wendy Rex

Dorothy Saffarewich

Joyce and Bill Sanders ©

Bob Scharlau

Cathy Sedlacek ©

Mark A. Smith

Connie & Mile Spradlin

Alouise Skehan ©

Carolyn Delizia Swift ©

Arnold and Joan VanRossem ©

Jeff Zasadny

© **Charter Member**

Along the Boardwalk ... Wisps of Winter

by Dotty Brown

Winters are fickle. Winter wisps blow warm and humid through the slough with patches of sun poking through the open canopy. Or, winter winds can nip your nose and bite your toes in early morning hours... and we bundle up. While sun streams onto the tree tops birds light and fluff their feathers to warm their bodies and retain the heat...their way of bundling up. Many visitors have had the joy of watching otters cavort in the ample water in and surrounding the ponds. Have you seen them play in the hollow log at Pop Ash? Cautious curiosity brings them to spy upon a sunning alligator and then go rest on a log in the sun themselves. The lengthening days are coaxing growth of vegetative life and Iris bloom brings welcome hope of coming spring.



Photo: Sissel W. Robertson

Stock Development Presents \$35,000 to Friends for The Interpretive Center

Brian Stock of Stock Development presented this large \$35,000 check to Friends of Six Mile Cypress Slough Preserve toward the building of the Interpretive Center. This donation represents a partnership with Stock Development's new Paseo Village located directly Northeast of the slough. Friends look forward to working with the slough's new neighbors! Wendy Rex and Joyce Sanders are pictured standing in front of the so-to-be entrance of the walkway to the new building.



Wendy Rex and Joyce Sanders

Thank you new and renewing
members for your support



**Friends Honor
Flo Kornman
story and photo:
Sissel W. Robertson**

Have you seen the new greeting cards, featuring the Interpretive Center and inscribed with the words *In Honor or In Memory of...* on the inside? Friends gratefully credits this thoughtful idea for the benefit of the Interpretive Center to Flo Kornman, a long-time Friends member. She conceived the idea, saw it through to its completion, and she personally processes each request as they come in.

When the boardwalk opened seventeen years ago, Flo was one of the first people to put it to use. Around that time, she learned about volunteer opportunities at the Slough, thanks to a Volunteer Fair at Harborside. Flo thrives on interactions with County staff,

visitors, and other volunteers.

Flo still lives in the condominium by the Caloosahatchee River, which she and her late husband, Leonard, shared. They became year-round residents here in 1981. She met Leonard while she was a student at Vanderbilt University in Nashville. In 1939, during her senior year, just before his tour of duty overseas, she dropped out of college to marry him. It was a time of uncertainty. They wanted to make every moment count. Fortunately, Leonard returned unharmed from the war. Their second daughter was born during his absence. He passed away in 1996, after 54 years of marriage.

Birding was a lifelong hobby for Flo and Leonard, whether they were spending winter months in Isla Moralde, or cruising the Cumberland or Tennessee Rivers in their houseboat.

When they finally sold their last boat, they bought a computer, a trade which led to a new and exciting hobby. Their genealogy research caused cousins to come out of the woodwork, in the States and in Fordan, Germany, where they searched the detailed records of the Latter Day Saints to find Leonard's great great grandfathers in Prussia. Leonard may be gone, but through her genealogy research, Flo continues to learn about him and his history.

Flo is concerned about the future of the Slough. About the shrinking watershed, she hopes for an "equitable division in which ecology may prevail, because one side cannot have it all. People must stay informed and vote their convictions, like parental involvement in children's education."

Flo understands the Slough and is a shining example of someone living the Friends mission of promoting, preserving and protecting the Slough for future generations. Thank you, Flo!

For information about purchasing these beautiful cards for the special people in your life contact Flo at 481-0452 or lkornman@aol.com

Greeting Card Donations to the Interpretive Center Building Fund

In Memory of Gail Trusko
Ann Sheehy
Friends of Six Mile Cypress Slough
Garn Mennell
Alouise Skehan
Joyce and Bill Sanders
Phoebe Obdyke

In Memory of Charles Graney
Morrie Burke
Investment Realty Fund
Bob and Judy Stover

In Memory of John O'Connor
Friends of Six Mile Board Members

In Memory of Colonel Ray Nutter
Joyce and Bill Sanders

In Honor of Flo Kornman
Judy Abroms
Susan and Mike Morris
Bill, Katie, William and Sophie Morris
Sarah and Adam Sinoff

In Honor of Doris Giuseffi
Nancy Ellis

Advocacy Update

by Sharon J. Kuchinskas



Orchid Isles: The project will not be built! On December 4, 2006, the City of Fort Myers City Council voted 5-0 to deny the developer agreement for Orchid Isles, as D.R. Horton pulled its plans to develop the 105-acre site with 283 homes. More recently, Bob Repenning informed the advocacy committee and President Sanders that the developer has asked to cancel the proposed mitigation agreement and bond with the SFWMD in order to have the SFWMD permit rescinded. At the end of January, an acquisition agent was assigned to the case to appraise/negotiate for possible Conservation 2020 purchase. The BOCC will have to approve the purchase, so public input is still critical in this case!

Forest Ridge (formerly known as Cobblestone): The South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) Governing Board approved the Environmental Resource Permit (ERP) on October 12, 2006, and the Lee County permit (rezoning) was issued on October 26, 2006. Improvements have been made to the proposed 49.63-acre residential project on the northwest corner of Six Mile Cypress Parkway and Penzance, and the applicant has requested permission to mitigate in the Slough Preserve.

Cambridge: The SFWMD and Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) are still reviewing the applications for the 28.2 acre proposed project, which will discharge into the Slough. The SFWMD requested additional information from the applicant in a December 18, 2006 letter.

Villas at Penzance: The revised application for a Residential Planned Development (RPD) on 13.02 acres at the northeast corner of Ranchette and Penzance, is not yet sufficient for a Hearing to be scheduled. An extension has been granted until March, 2007.

Conservation 2020 (New): Bob Repenning has advised the advocacy committee of several parcels within the Slough's watershed up for consideration for possible Conservation 2020 acquisition. Bob will continue to monitor the parcels and comment at the appropriate time.

SLOUGH BOOK UPDATE

This project is still incubating. We hope to have a beautiful book celebrating the Slough near the end of the year or early 2008. We still accept stories, artwork, and photos for consideration. Please submit two hard copies with a disk and complete contact information:

**Sissel W. Robertson
P.O. Box 1297
Estero FL 33928
239-947-2511**

ANNUAL MEETING

Speaker :

**Robert Repenning
Stewardship Of Six Mile
Cypress Slough - an
Overview
March 26th
7:00 p.m.
Rutenberg Center**

Welcome on Board: Nancy Johnson



Nancy Johnson is a second generation native of Lee County. As a daughter of a State of Florida Wildlife Officer, she spent free time in Palmdale exploring native wildlife in the cypress strands by Fish Eating Creek. In summer, she rode with her father through the Babcock ranch land.

Nancy is a full time Realtor with Prudential Florida WCI Realty for more than 25 years. She and her husband, Gary, were drawn to the Slough for a Wet Walk in 2005, which prompted her to walk out of the water and into volunteer services at the Slough.

In 1974, she became President of The Alva Fire Dept. Auxiliary. Since then, she has served many Condominium Associations. She has also been a Girl Scout Leader. Nancy looks forward supporting the mission of Friends of Six Mile Cypress Slough Preserve.

ADOPT-A-ROAD PROGRAM

Pick up trash right on the Slough's border! This is a Litter Control Project coordinated by the Lee County Department of Transportation. Volunteers must age 14 or older. Meet at the Slough's parking lot on the third Saturday of each month at 9:00a.m.

Questions?

**Call Deanna Pipher: 656-4066
deannap7@yahoo.com**

Holiday Pot Luck

by Sissel W. Robertson



About 80 Friends gathered for the Annual Holiday Potluck Dinner. Photo: Charles O'Connor

Friends held its annual Pot Luck Dinner on December 14. As luck would have it, our scheduled speaker, **Dr. Bill Hammond**, had to chair a Conservation 20-20 meeting. If anyone should be cloned, it is Bill Hammond! He is frequently and affectionately referred to as the Father of the Slough. We missed him, but the outcome of that meeting could have significant impact on the Slough. A lot was at stake (See Sharon Kuchinskis Advocacy Report regarding Orchid Isle on opposite page). His absence did not affect the delicious food or put a damper on the festive mood, however. In his place, Dr. Charles O'Connor made arrangements to show the unforgettable documentary, *Winged Migration.*, which was very well received. When Dr. Hammond finally appeared, it was like icing on the cake.

Charles O'Connor

Paleontology and Geological History of Florida

On January 29 *Gathering of Friends* meeting, Dr. Charles O'Connor filled in for Dr. Win Everham, out of town for a family illness. Charles' lively and informative presentation enthralled his audience. With contagious enthusiasm and visual aids, Charles brought the history of the Earth and Florida to life. He covered the processes of fossilization, extinction events, how and where to fossil, and the amazing animals that used to live here. Audience members received fossilized shark teeth and clearly delighted in the opportunity to see and touch real fossils.



Dr. Charles O'Connor with a fossilized saber tooth. Photo: Joyce Sanders



Friends members marvel at the size and weight of fossilized shark teeth. Photo: Joyce Sanders





7330 Gladiolus Drive
Ft. Myers, Florida 33908

CONTRIBUTE TODAY!

Enclosed is my tax deductible contribution to the Interpretive Center Building Fund

___\$25 ___\$50 ___\$100
___500 ___\$1,000 ___Other

Friends of Six Mile Cypress
7330 Gladiolus Drive
Ft. Myers 33908

275-7790

www.sloughpreserve.org

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The Club at Renaissance
Swing for the Slough
Fourth Annual Golf Event!