



Connections

Newsletter for Friends of Six Mile Cypress Slough Preserve

FALL 2008

Programs for this Season Save These Dates!!!

The Friends of the Six Mile Cypress Slough Preserve will hold a Gathering of Friends on the following dates at the Interpretive Center at the Slough.

Monday, Dec 15th at 7:00 PM

The guest speaker will be Cindy Bear. Cindy is a Resource Teacher with the Environmental Education program in Lee County. She has completed a comprehensive five year study of Burrowing Owls in Cape Coral using radio telemetry data and intensive site investigations. This fascinating lecture explores the origin of the city and the pace of rapid development on the owls' survival.

Monday, January 26th at 7:00 PM

The guest speaker will be Michael Wylde, the archaeologist in residence at the Randell Research Center, Pine Island, the site of the great Calusa Indian civilization.

Monday, Feb 23rd at 7:00 PM

The guest speaker will be Scott Gregory from the Calusa Nature Center and Planetarium. Scott has been with the Calusa Nature Center and Planetarium since November, 2004 as a Resource Naturalist, leading its animal management programs.

Monday March 23rd at 7:00 PM THIS IS THE 2009 ANNUAL MEETING OF THE FRIENDS.

The guest speaker will be from the Friends of the Florida Panther Refuge, the official support organization created to promote a better understanding and appreciation of the National Wildlife System and the Florida Panther Refuge in particular.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Once again it's time to celebrate all the wonders of Six Mile Cypress Slough as we welcome back those of you who have been away. This summer has been a good one for the slough bringing the needed rain without the hurricanes! Charles O'Connor offered the opportunity for "wet walks" to a number of adventuresome souls! I had the privilege of going on one such walk and Charles noted the water was higher than he had experienced! It rained that day making the experience even more magical! Thank you, Charles!

This summer I enjoyed, along with other slough volunteers, the opportunity to spend time in the Interpretive Center, introducing the new green building to many first time visitors. The temporary displays served a very good purpose as we shared green information and discussed plans for the permanent displays. Wilma Kiedel's large photographs were met with much praise and excitement as to what could be viewed from the boardwalk.

We are very grateful to Mary Rude and Heather Gienapp who have worked diligently with the design team in order to have the displays and exhibits ready and installed this month! There are many others of you who have worked with Mary, Heather, Bob and Andy to make this dream become a reality. It has been such a privilege for me to represent Friends of Six Mile Cypress Slough Preserve as I speak of the tremendous partnerships formed!

The South Florida Water Management District has presented a sizeable donation to Friends of Six Mile Cypress Slough to be used for a display and exhibit depicting the District's role with Lee County to educate visitors to the importance of Six Mile Cypress Slough Preserve. A special thanks to Sally McPherson for all her work to make it all possible!

Friends Corner is the name of our little corner of the building, opening November 1st. All proceeds from these sales will be returned to the Interpretive Center to continue our mission to make this *Preserve* a destination to all who visit Florida! Please come visit the Interpretive Center and shop at Friends Corner! The Holidays are coming!

Joyce Sanders, President



DECEMBER 15th Bring your Dessert Specialties!!

The first Friends Meeting at the new Interpretive Center at the Slough is scheduled for Monday, December 15, 2008 from 7:00—8:30 PM. All Friends, family and guests are invited to attend. Our guest speaker is Cindy Bear.

Instead of a potluck this year, we will have a dessert festival. (This will give everyone involved a chance to see how to manage the facility for more involved festivities like a potluck!)

Bring your specialty dessert. Bring the one you are famous for at family gatherings. There will be a fantastic prize for the best as determined by a vote of those in attendance.

RSVP—Carolyn Babb 239-728-4707 or babb88@centuryfla.com or Joyce Sanders 239-275-7790 or sandersj01@comcast.net.

The Area Not Paved, (AKA PHOEBE'S PLAYGROUND)

When a visitor drives into the parking lot at the Six Mile Cypress Slough Preserve he is welcomed by the Native Plant Island at the center. In this issue we honor our special Friend member, Phoebe Obdyke, who has been instrumental in the development and maintenance of this beautiful Florida garden. Phoebe shares this garden information with the Friends:

The Native Plant Island continues to be a work in progress. It is in the center of the parking lot, established on a drain field. This affects the quality of the soil and makes growing a challenge. Recently new paths have been created to make the area more accessible to the Interpretive Center. Someone referred to this as "Pathways in the Garden of Hope." (Everyone hopes that something will grow there!) Animals like the garden. There is an armadillo burrow and a gopher turtle hole. Squirrels, raccoons, anoles, bees and butterflies frequent the place. In addition to seeds, berries and the usual fare, some animals think the new plantings are their personal salad bar. New plants just disappear or are lifted out of the ground and laid aside.

Presently there are over 30 different native plants in the garden. What, if and where something will grow is a mystery. Plants die and several years later reappear in another area where they choose. (Example—tropical sage and mist flowers) What is a "native plant" also can be a mystery. What one person claims to be "native" is declared not to be by another expert who is more of a purist.

Bob Repenning says "The term native is loosely used." He explains that there is a problem with interbreeding between true native and genetically engineered and nursery cultivated species. Some pure native plants can no longer be found in the wild.

Nursery produced Florida Friendly Plants are often easier to grow and provide quicker and more colorful gratification. However, there is an important reason for trying to stay pure native.

The reason is defined by Stephen Brown of Lee County Extension Services. He explained in one of his weekly columns in the News Press. "It's called conservation. It's about a native habitat that is not duplicated anywhere on Earth. If overrun by exotics, it can never be truly reclaimed. Consequently, paradise lost." So the challenge of a native plant island is worthwhile and in keeping with the spirit of Six Mile Cypress Slough.



The Native Plant Island

According to Phoebe she tends to the garden on a regular basis because she finds the work therapeutic and because she likes getting down and dirty! She would like to acknowledge Mary Rude whose official support and personal encouragement is essential, Bob Repenning for his knowledge and physical assistance, Andy Gurri whose caring, work and guidance continue to be essential to the maintenance and progress of the native Plant Island and Belinda Clemons who recently gave the garden a boost by obtaining extra rocks, plants and mulch.

THANK YOU, PHOEBE, FOR YOUR HARD WORK AND DEVOTION TO THE SLOUGH AND ITS SPIRIT.

WE ARE PROUD THAT YOU ARE ONE OF US!



*Along the Boardwalk....
Color It Fall by Dotty Brown*

Bring on the palette! The amber needles of the Cypress, the mahogany Sweet Gum leaves and the deep greens of the pines and understory ferns paint the background for the Fall migration of our expected birds. Appropriately, the Redstart initiated the seasonal show with its unique tail pattern, red in male and yellow in female. Check out that patch of yellow at the top of the Yellow Rumped's tail and on the under tail coverts of the ever pumped tail of the Palm Warbler. The Palm will also give you a flicker of white on its tail in flight! The purple of the Beauty Berry, the Red of the Dahoon Holly provide a feast of color; the berries provide feast for our wildlife.



**RESEARCH IN
THE SIX MILE
CYPRESS
SLOUGH
BY JEFF KEY**



The Lee County Florida Land Stewardship Plan of 2003 included the tasks to quantify and document water levels and their subsequent impacts on the flora and fauna of the Six Mile Cypress Slough Preserve in Fort Myers. In the first study in 2004, Dr. John Murray showed that “Six Mile Cypress Slough Preserve is ecologically impacted over the majority of the wetland landscape. Average wet season water depths and hydro periods exist that are suboptimal for cypress.” In 2006, Kevin Irwin and Associates (KLECE) and Florida Gulf Coast University (FGCU) established a long term monitoring program to monitor water quantity and vegetation in the slough. To accomplish this, ten transects (sections of land) were established that cross the slough. Surface ground water measurements were taken along these transects to determine hydrology and provide detail information for accurate modeling. In addition, KLECE established 123, 10x10 meter, vegetation plots. For each, they developed a species list and estimate of percent cover for each species. From there, the Inland Ecology Research Group (IERG) of FGCU has continued and expanded the research. In the first year, 2006-2007, the objectives for monitoring were to:

1. Continue the monitoring of wells on all ten transects, biweekly during the dry season and weekly during the rainy season.
2. Expand the data in the vegetation plots on the *western* side of the slough, to include identification, measurement and mapping of all trees and counts of saplings.
3. Establishment of seedling plots within each vegetation plot and monitoring them for seedlings before and during the rainy season.

The current year of monitoring includes:

1. Continue the monitoring of wells on all ten transects, biweekly during the dry season and weekly during the rainy season.
2. Expand the data in the vegetation plots on the *eastern* side of the slough, to include identification, measurement and mapping of all trees and counts of saplings.
3. Monitoring of the seedling plots for the survival of the previous year's seedlings plots and resetting for the next year.

Additional projects are to follow collecting hydrological data from each of the 123 vegetation plots at the height of wet season and to do tree coring to determine ages. We also hope to conduct hydrological measurements on a daily basis after a large storm event to show the movement of water in the system. Finally, analysis of historic aerials of the slough dating back to 1944 may be utilized in showing change. Kevin Erwin has suggested expansion of monitoring up into the watershed and an exact delineation of its boundaries.

The overview of the study is to detect ecological succession away from the dominate cypress structure of the slough toward other wetland hardwoods such as laurel oak, elm and red maple. While changes in hydrology do not kill the present cypress trees, it does interfere with their ability to reproduce. The change in the structure of the forest is due not only to changes in hydrology, but also to exotic plant invasions, fire suppression and past logging of cypress. We hope to publish our results in a peer reviewed scientific journal possibly providing a foundation for further research and engineering projects that could bring more water to the preserve.

One important component of the research is the effort of slough volunteers without which this work would be impossible. If you are interested in volunteering, we meet every Friday from June through September and then every other Friday October through mid May for hydrological monitoring. Please call Jeff Key at 239-822-6087 or email jeffgkey@comcast.net if interested.



Connections Editor, Carolyn Babb, volunteers for the hydrological monitoring in the slough. Photograph by Friends Secretary, Nancy Johnson, who also enjoys volunteering for this project!

JOIN US!

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Renewing Members: Thank you for your continued support!!

Jill Augustine C
Gretchen Barsness
Brenda Brooks
Diane Buckley
Joseph F. Campbell D.P.M
Carolyn Deliza Swift C
Peggy Egan
Doris Giuseffi
Barbara L. Hayes C
Jeff & Wendy Key
Alan McTeague
Corinne Murphy C
Kris Nelson
R. Charles O'Connor
Macy Rainer
Donald & Susan Robertson C
Jeffrey Zasadny

"C" denotes Charter Member

Welcome New Members

Susan Crawford
Janet Miller
Yvonne L. Rogers
Jeff Rosemann
Arnold Rosen

Interpretive Center Donations Gratefully Received From:

Joyce Sanders
Gretchen Barsness
Doris Giuseffi
Nancy C. Johnson
Arnold Rosen

HOPPY SAYS.....



HEY FRIENDS—FRIENDS CORNER NEEDS YOUR HELP!!! Friends Corner needs devoted friends to man the store in order to keep up our fund raising efforts. Without your help the store can't be open and that means LESS FUND RAISING FOR THE CENTER!!!! Visitors ask the Front Desk Volunteers constantly, "When is the shop going to be open?" CALL CAROLYN AT 239-728-4707 OR JOYCE AT 239-275-7790 to Volunteer!!!!



Share the Gift of the Slough!

Looking for something special as a gift or for recognition??? Give a gift membership in the Friends. The new member will receive a special card informing them of your gift and what membership in Friends means. They will then receive *Connections* and all announcements of special events and programs for Friends. Best of all it will encourage them to learn more about the preserve and share your love of this special place. And don't forget....all contributions to the Friends are tax deductible. What a unique gift!! Just fill out a membership form and send it along with your contribution and any special information you'd like included in the card to:

Friends of Six Mile Cypress Preserve
Attention: Mary Murray
Membership Chair
7791 Penzance Blvd
Ft Myers, FL 33966

Nominations for Honorary Membership in Friends

Did you know - The Board of Directors can grant an Honorary Membership in Friends? This would be given as Special Recognition to someone who does an unexpected good deed for the preserve or goes out of his or her way to demonstrate interest in the Slough or a Friends project. For instance, Jeanie Nipper stopped in to report a bear sighting on her way to work. An Honorary Membership lasts for one year. Any Friends member can nominate such a person. Nominations are approved by the Friends Board. Honorary Members will receive a letter thanking them for what they did and informing them of their honorary membership. After a year they will be invited to renew as a regular member.

Send nominations to:

Friends of Six Mile Cypress Slough Preserve
Attention: Mary Murray, Membership Chair
7791 Penzance Boulevard
Ft. Myers, Florida 33966

FRIENDS—HELP KEEP SIX MILE CYPRESS PARKWAY, ALONG THE SLOUGH, FREE OF TRASH—EVERY THIRD SATURDAY OF THE MONTH AT 9:00 AM.

MEET AT THE BOARDWALK. FUN, FELLOWSHIP WITH FRIENDS!!!

PLEASE COME AND JOIN US.

Advisory Board

Jacquelin Cadkin
Cadkin Foundation

Carolyn Delizia Swift
Henderson, Franklin,
Starnes & Holt, P.A.

Dr. William Hammond
Florida Gulf Coast Uni-
versity

Wiley M Parker, A.I.A.
Parker./Mudgett/Smith
Architects, Inc.

Stephen D. Tutko
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Jeff Key

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Mary Murray

Charles O'Connor

**Parks and Recreation
Liaison**

Mary Rude, Supervisor
Six Mile Cypress Slough
Preserve

Boardwalk at Otter Pond -
January, April, June,
August and October



Friends,

I am trying to find some things that may help us strengthen our summer camp's educational programs. I read about the DVD's from the "Randell Research Center" and wonder if they might be appropriate. I/we would like to review these DVDs prior to buying them (and then finding out that they are not helpful).

My question: Is there anyone out there who has these and would be willing to loan them to us to review? Once we have determined that they are appropriate ,we will go out and buy copies for the Six Mile Library.

Thanks. Your support will be appreciated.

Rudy Lampron

The Two Randell Research Center Programs are:

1) The Domain of the Calusa: Archaeology and Adventure in the Discovery of South Florida's Past

2) Expedition Florida: A Three Program Set (From Explorations to Exhibit; The Wild Heart of Florida; Wild Alachua)

PS: I suppose that while I am at it I should ask - Are there any other DVD based environmental educational programs out there that you might recommend for use at summer camp?

Connections – ON LINE ONLY?

Would you like to receive your copy of *Connections* on line? **This is another way to show your commitment to preserve natural resources, consume less as well as save money.** This funding can be devoted to the interior of our Interpretive Center. You can do your part by receiving our newsletter on line. If you would like to receive your future copies of *Connections* via email only, please send your request via email to Carolyn Babb at babb88@centuryfla.com

Connections STAFF

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Sign Up Today!

Check Area of Interest

- Education Preserve Advocacy
 Projects Publicity
 Fund Raising Special Events
 Friends Corner

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State ____ Zip _____

E-Mail _____

Phone _____

Check Type of Membership

- Student \$10
 Individual \$20
 Contributing \$50
 Supporting \$100
 Associate \$500
 Corporate Sponsor \$500
 Patron \$1000

In addition I would like to contribute

\$ _____ for exhibits and displays for the Interpretive Center.

TOTAL\$ _____

Mail to Friends of the Six Mile Cypress Slough, 7791 Penzance Blvd, Fort Myers. FL 33966

Friends web site: Sloughpreserve.org Phone 239-533-7557

Special thanks go to the Lee County Department of Parks and Recreations for its generous support in producing this newsletter. Thanks to Lee County also for providing meeting space at the Six Mile Cypress Slough Preserve Interpretive Center.

SAVE THESE DATES!!!
DECEMBER 15—JUST DESSERTS WITH
CANDY BEAR
JANUARY 26—MICHAEL WYLDE, RAN-
DELL RESEARCH CENTER
FEBRUARY 23—SCOTT GREGORY,
CALUSA NATURE CENTER
MARCH 23—FRIENDS OF THE FLORIDA
PANTHER WILDLIFE REFUGE

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

