

Calusa Land Trust

and Nature Preserve of Pine Island, Inc.



New Poker Run and
Duck Race Chairs
Needed

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Founded 1976

July 2012
www.calusalandtrust.org

The Unlikely Affair Between The Calusa Land Trust and A Property Owners Association

by John A. Kendall



In the late 1960s a Boston family of entrepreneurs platted "St. Jude Harbors" (purportedly named to entice investment by Danny Thomas) as an envisioned mega-subdivision, being over a mile long and extending from Stringfellow Rd. eastward to the mangrove shores of Saint James Creek. Complete with intersecting canals and self-named streets, the main artery was palm-lined St. Jude Blvd. which commenced with a commercial shopping center (including today's Froggy's and Pine Island Hardware), bridging the Dawson canal and extending into the residential development. However, St. Jude Blvd. never portaged the canal and its 1/2 mile remnant remains today as the Calusa Land Trust's nature trail in the 386 acres St. Jude Preserve.

Land conservancies tend to experience a negative relationship with homeowners' associations. Not so with the St. Jude Harbors Property Owners' Association. With over 100 families, this group of volunteers (annual dues only \$20!) recognizes the

blessing of the Preserve on the neighborhood. This POA contributes labor in the form of work parties for cooperative stewardship and also financially (over \$2000 gifted to the CLT in just the past few years.)

This is a classic example of two benevolent organizations finding a common interest and then bonding to reach their goal. Somehow both entities view these wetlands and their wildlife settlers as better neighbors than residential sprawl.

(John is a new CLT Board Member and resident of St. Jude Harbors.)



St. Jude Trail from the air. Under the wing the red line is the Trail. Road at bottom is Laratonda.

Rain Gods Smile on Calusa Land Trust

A tree planting scheduled for Saturday the 9th was postponed because the ground was dry and no rain was in sight. On Saturday June 16 our Ranger took a chance and moved ahead with the planting of a couple of hundred Slash Pine seedlings. Assisted by the Boy Scouts of Pine Island Troop 20, the Pine Island Lions, St. Jude Harbor Homeowners, Pine Island Garden Club members and CLT volunteers the seedlings were set out around the entrance to St. Jude Trail and along the Norm Gowan Trailhead Vista.

It was a nice day for planting and with 30 or so volunteers it did not take long to plant and water the seedlings that had been cared for by many Pine Islanders since the beginning of the year. Lions Club volunteers provided eats including grilled hot dogs and chilled chunks of watermelon. Ice chests full of water and soda kept all cool and hydrated.

Best of all, a couple of days later the rains came. Rain and rain and more rain. Just what the Slash Pine seedlings need to get a good start.



A Slash Pine seedling with a marker flag to keep it from getting mowed. It is less than 12 inches tall.

Five years later this is what it will look like. This tree was also planted as a seedling on a hot July day in 2007 or 2008.



Looking for Fund Raising Help

by Ron Wesorick 239-283-7249

After many years of running the Poker Run and Great Calusa Rubber Duck Race, Pink Wesorick has decided to step down and provide an opportunity for others to take leadership.

These functions are major sources of fund raising income for The Calusa Land Trust. Consequently, we are looking for someone to lead each of these activities. The Duck Race has a well established committee to help in all aspects, and the Poker Run, in cooperation with Pine Island Boat Club has a well developed set of procedures to follow.

Preliminary efforts should start in the fall. To continue these successful programs, new leaders must be identified soon. Anyone with interest or would like more information, can call Pink or Ron Wesorick at 239-283-7249, or any other CLT Board member.

Looking Back 20 Years from the Winter – Spring 1992 Newsletter

Here are two references to the donation and purchase of the St. James Creek Preserve.

1992 Land Acquisition Committee Report from Rich Larkin: about the purchase of St. Jude Trail. Rich showed everyone the maps outlining our new project, recently approved by the Board of Directors. It encompasses about 270 acres around St. James Creek that is now owned by the St. Jude Harbor Corporation. This land will be added to the 50 acres turned over to CLT last year in return for payment of back taxes. The total cost for this new parcel will be \$23,000. It includes land on both sides of St. James Creek (located on southeast Pine Island) and runs to Matlacha Pass. About 130 acres are currently protected by a conservation easement, but 140 acres are not. Rich explained that the cost of one acre in the "St. James Creek Preserve" is \$100. People who buy an acre or more will receive a copy of the deed.

Rich also outlined how the Trust will be responsible for making 3 payments over the course of eighteen months. In order to assure that we make these payments, he proposed the creation of the Calusa Land Trust Guardian Angels. If sufficient funds are not raised to

make any of the required payments, these angels would agree to loan us money (if they are able to at that time) for a maximum of six months; interest would be paid at the highest CD rate available. Seven people immediately signed up to be in the "Golden Halo" club, offering to loan up to \$3,000 each. Eleven others signed up to be in the "Bronze Halo" club, offering to loan up to \$1,000.

It is so gratifying to know that there are so many who will help Calusa Land Trust if such an emergency arrives.

MORE FROM 1992

-----ST. JAMES CREEK UPDATE-----

Following the announcement of our contract to buy the remaining land held by the St. Jude Harbor Corporation, many donations have already come in. Of the 129 paid members for 1992, 40 people have already bought an acre or more of what we are calling the St. James Creek Preserve. This is a terrific beginning. Please do what you can to spread the word about what Calusa Land Trust is trying to do so that we can be as successful with the St. James Creek project as we were with the Big Jim Creek tracts. Thanks for your help.

Ranger Report for June

by Ed Chapin 239-218-7531

Since the last Newsletter, our Volunteers have been hard at work helping to keep our Preserves in good condition improving trails and removing invasive exotic plants.

On Saturday May 12th, we had ten volunteers working on the Island of Cayo Pelau which is on the North side of Charlotte Harbor near Boca Grande. This is a Lee County 20/20 Preserve that the CLT co-manages. We worked on very large Brazilian Peppers that have invaded this Preserve. More follow up will be needed at this site.

Then on Saturday, June 16th we had 35 volunteers planting about 175 Slash Pines on the Norm Gowan Trailhead Vista. This is part of the St. James Creek Preserve, in St. James City. This was a great community effort. We had the Pine Island Boy Scouts - Troop 20, the Pine Island Garden Club, the Pine Island Lions Club, the St. Jude Harbors Homeowner Association and the CLT Volunteer Rangers all working together on this planting. We had to postpone the first scheduled planting because

of a lack of rain. Hopefully the rainy season has begun so we won't have to keep watering these new trees. The trees we planted were grown in pots since February by the Boy Scouts, the Garden Club and CLT Volunteers. Thank you to everybody for this great effort.

Next work party will be on Saturday July 14th at our Dobbs Preserve near Tropical Point. August will be vacation time !!!!

Saturday, September 8th we'll be back at the St. James Creek Preserve sprucing it up for this coming season. Saturday October 13th we will be working at the Pine Island Flatwoods Preserve.

The dates for the rest of the year's Work Parties will be in the next Newsletter and reminders will be sent out in emails to the Volunteer email list closer to the exact date.

All Volunteers are welcome. If you want to be on the Volunteer email list or you have any questions call me at 239-218-7531 or email me at ecalusaed@calusalandtrust.org.

I prefer phone calls if possible.

Peter Ordway Mangrove Paddle

Adventures- a monthly series of guided, paddling tours of our Preserves will begin on Sunday, October 21st - This first paddle of this season will be off island to Fish Eating Creek, which is a freshwater paddle through a beautiful old cypress-lined creek near Palmdale.

In November, date to be announced, the paddle will go out to our Calusa Island Preserve in Bokeelia. After that, there will be four more paddles in the Peter Ordway Mangrove Paddle Adventures this coming season. Dates and places will be in the next Newsletter and will be sent out in emails to those on the Paddle email list. If you want to be on the Paddle email list or you have any questions call me at 239-218-7531 or email me at ecalusaed@calusalandtrust.org. I prefer phone calls if possible. I look forward to seeing you all at the Work Parties and the Paddles.



Treasures of the Trails for June 2012: Ibis at Fritts Park - by Judy Ott



Photo by Judy Ott

Tropical storm Debby brought enough water into Fritts Park to attract a flock of White Ibis for a blustery afternoon snack. White Ibis (*Eudocimus albus*) forage among standing water and wet ground for small crabs, insects and fishes. They feed more by touch than sight, wading slowly through shallow water, poking their long, down curved bill into the soil, sweeping it back and forth to pick up food. White Ibis are medium sized birds (about 2 feet long) with white plumage, black wingtips and bright red-orange down curved beaks, faces and long legs. The males and females look alike except that the male is slightly larger with a stouter bill and the juveniles (up to 2 years old) are brown.

Ibis fly with their neck and legs out stretched in a loose "V" formation, alternating flapping and gliding. They make a honking sound (urnk, urnk) when they're flying, courting or disturbed, and a muted grunt (huu, huu) when they're foraging. White Ibis are monogamous and nest in the spring in large colonies near the water, often with other waterbirds. They nest in trees and shrubs and lay two or three small (2 inch) pale blue-green brown spotted eggs. Males care for the young during the day, then change shifts with the females at night, feeding the young during the shift changes.

White Ibis can live to be 15 to 20 years old. They belong to the Ibis and Spoonbill family, which includes Glossy Ibis (deep shiny purplish brown) and Scarlet Ibis (bright scarlet). During their spring breeding season, they are found from the Gulf and Atlantic Coasts, south to Mexico and Central America. Other times of the year, they expand their range further inland to Virginia and Texas, as well as the Caribbean.

White Ibis are listed as a Species of Special Concern in Florida because of the loss of wetland habitat and an increase in methylmercury in the environment, which alters their hormone levels and mating and nesting behavior. Recently the populations seem to be stabilized and increasing slightly. According to Native American folklore, White Ibis are the last birds to seek shelter before a hurricane and the first to return afterwards, symbolizing bravery and optimism.



Our very first property, Calusa Island seen from above. This is at the very North tip of Pine Island. Access only by water.

Fritts Park in Bokeelia site of our Annual Meetings. Beach Daisy Lane on the right provides access going West from Stringfellow Road. Always open to the public.



Invasive and undesirable plant!

**Have you seen this plant
on your property?**

This is **Earleaf acacia**
(*Acacia auriculiformis*) and
it has recently been
identified as becoming
invasive and unmanageable
on Pine Island!



If you see this plant, remove it! Call the Lee County Extension Service at 239-461-7514 for information on how to get involved in the Earleaf acacia control program on Pine Island.

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Full financial details, including federal tax returns, can be obtained by contacting the Land Trust's Treasurer at (239) 334-8866 during working hours. Federal Employer Identification Number: **59-1782265**. The Calusa Land Trust is an exempt Organization under section **501(c)(3)** of the IRS code. Florida Dept of Agriculture & Consumer Services registration number **CH3439**. No portion of donations received by the Trust is paid to any professional solicitor. 100% of all donations are received by the Trust.

July 2012

Work Parties – Everyone Welcome

They are on the second Saturday of each month except August.
 9:00am to Noon We need your help.

Saturday July 14	Dobbs Preserve	9 - Noon
August Vacation	August Vacation	August Vacation
Saturday September 8	St. James Creek Preserve	9-Noon
Saturday October 13	Pine Island Flatwoods	9-Noon



Corporate Gift Matching Programs

Many larger corporations have programs where they will match employee donations to eligible charities. The Calusa Land Trust qualifies for these matching contributions. If you are an employee or retiree of one of these corporations, remember to follow up and ask for the matching gifts for your recent and future donations. This is a great way to augment your charitable giving and make a significant impact on CLT funds.



Calusa Land Trust & Nature Preserve
of Pine Island, Inc.
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PINK
ADDRESS
LABEL? TIME
TO RENEW.

The Calusa Land Trust Mission Statement

The purpose of the Calusa Land Trust is to protect the natural diversity and beauty of the Pine Island region by acquiring, managing and preserving in perpetuity environmentally sensitive or historically important land and to foster appreciation for and understanding of the environment and our past.

The Land Trust is a broad coalition of individuals, families, and businesses who agree that the acquisition and protection of natural land is important if we are to retain the quality of life which makes the Pine Island region so attractive to people and to wildlife. The Land Trust is supported entirely by people who donate their time, talent, and financial support to protect irreplaceable natural resources. The Land Trust does not engage in political activity or lobbying and takes no position on zoning or regulatory matters. The Calusa Land Trust represents people's willingness to put their money and time where their hearts are to make a difference.

