

Calusa Land Trust

and Nature Preserve of Pine Island, Inc.



Newsletter

www.calusalandtrust.org

Summer 2003

Sister Keys: Newest CLT Preserve

by Harold Bruner

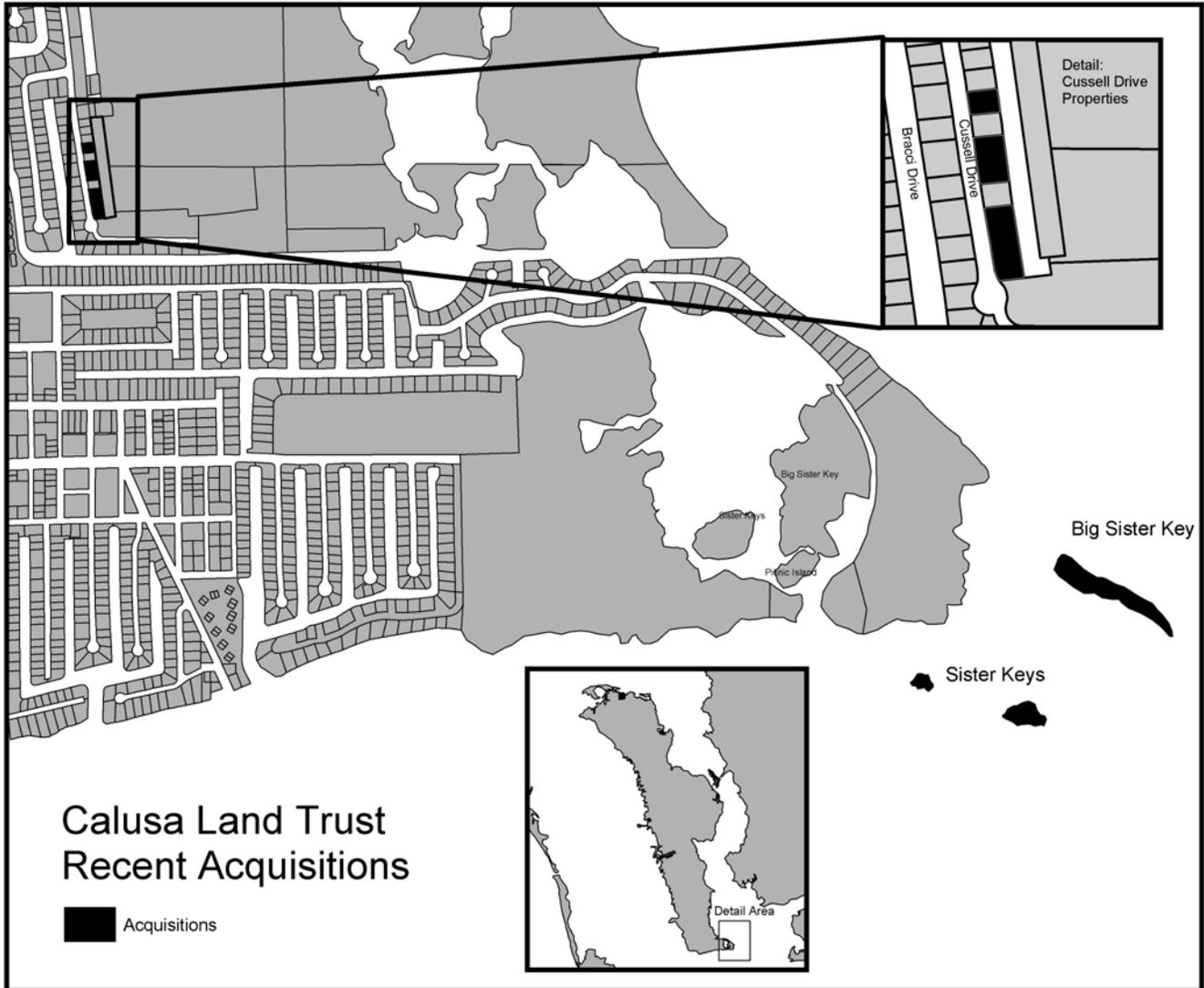
I am happy to announce that Calusa Land Trust has just acquired the Sister Keys, a group of three mangrove islands located off St. James City between Picnic Island and the southeast corner of Pine Island. They are about 7½ acres in all, with the largest island, Big Sister Key, being about six acres.

All three islands were owned by Charles E. McKenzie, a former resident, builder, and developer who lived on Pine Island for many years. You may remember that in 1996, he sold us over 180 acres that became our Back Bay Preserve. Several weeks ago, we contacted him about the islands and after some brief negotiations, he agreed to sell them to us at the bargain price of \$15,000. We are very excited to add these beautiful islands to our other holdings in the immediate area (see map on the next page).

After exploring the islands on two occasions, I was unable to find any high ground on the larger mangrove island, but when venturing onto the smaller islands was surprised to find several different plant species other than red mangroves. With the help of board members Brian Cotterill and Judy Ott, we identified black and white mangroves, buttonwood, strangler fig, seagrape, among several other natives. Three common exotic trees were also found — Australian pine, Brazilian pepper, and schefflera. Our volunteer rangers will be working very soon to remove these to give the native vegetation a chance to thrive in those areas once again.

Surrounding the keys are diverse habitats including sea grass flats, mangrove fringes, an oyster bar, and a long sandbar that together support a rich marine population. The birds are especially appreciative. A pair of opeys is nesting right now on one of the smaller islands, with numerous fish skeletons scattered below their eating perch. Bald eagles and frigate birds can be seen soaring overhead in search of a tasty meal. If you are lucky, you might also spot a dolphin or even a manatee. All three keys are within the year-round slow speed zone for the protection of manatees and tour boats visit daily to search them out.

While the islands will give us another beautiful preserve to explore and enjoy, it is clear that they also reflect the dynamic nature of a fragile island ecosystem. Tides and storms have naturally shifted their boundaries over time, but the huge waves caused by boats in the Intercostal Waterway are probably responsible for the erosion which can be seen on the two smaller islands.



Calusa Canal, Phase III Completed!

As previously reported, the Calusa Canal-Phase III has been in progress since June of 2002, when the Archeological Conservancy purchased a canal parcel located at 6360 Meadow Lane. Through a contract with that organization, Calusa Land Trust agreed to raise the funds to purchase this parcel and add it to the two nearby segments of the ancient Calusa Canal that we have already preserved.

The special fund-raising campaign came down to the wire but we are happy to announce that it was successful and the Calusa Land Trust now owns this third parcel. Like the other two, it faces Meadow Lane, which is the second street to the right off of Harbor Drive, after traveling north on Stringfellow Road.

St. James Creek Preserve Expanded

by Harold Bruner

Adding new preserves is always exciting, but smaller acquisitions can be very important too. St. Jude Harbors is a subdivision in the southeast corner of St. James City. In 1992, the Calusa Land Trust purchased a large block of mangrove wetlands and high marsh just east of this subdivision. As you probably know, this large block of more than 300 acres is the heart of our St. James Creek Preserve, which includes the St. Jude Nature Trail heading east off of Stabile Road through the preserve all the way to the open waters of St. James Creek.

Just south of the Nature Trail is Cussell Drive. This is the street between the subdivision canal homes and the wetlands preserve (see map on page 2). A single row of residential lots on the east side of Cussell separates the street from the wetlands. Since the elevation falls quickly from the street to the marsh, Lee County has designated these lots as unbuildable.

An opportunity arose for the Calusa Land Trust to buy six of the lots near the south end of Cussell Drive. The seller was Beatrice O'Shea of Massachusetts. Ms. O'Shea is the daughter of Elmo Bracci, now deceased, who was one of the original investors in St. Jude Harbors. Bracci Drive, one of the streets in the subdivision, was in fact named after Mr. Bracci. Realizing that these lots were not buildable, Ms. O'Shea sold them to the Land Trust at a very favorable price, \$1,000 for all six lots.

Although small in size, we are quite excited about this purchase. Since the lots slope quickly from Cussell Drive to the wetlands, this narrow strip of land is prime habitat for Australian pine trees, which are not only hard to contain but are also blocking the view of the marsh and wetlands. In the coming year we hope to remove these exotics and create a beautiful vista of the preserve along nearly 500 feet of Cussell Drive. This small acquisition will allow residents and visitors a better opportunity to view and appreciate a significantly larger tract of pristine marsh and wetlands.

President's Report

James "Alex" Alexander

At its first monthly meeting after January's annual membership meeting, the Board of Directors re-elected these board members to continue serving as officers for the coming year: President, Phil Buchanan; Vice-President, James "Alex" Alexander; Secretary, Rubye Woodhead; Treasurer, Bill Spikowski. Since that meeting Phil Buchanan has decided to resign his position and I have been elected to step in and serve as president for the remainder of this year.

As president and a board member, Phil did so much for the Land Trust that it is difficult to know where to begin in recognizing his accomplishments. Phil was the primary author of the popular *Nature Lover's Guide to Pine Island*, which was republished several times and is now in wide circulation. Following up on the land acquisition recommendations in the *Guide*, Phil served as the chairman of the CLT land acquisition committee, tracking land parcels the length of Pine Island, and negotiating to buy many significant properties. He has given knowledgeable talks promoting natural preservation to many groups. Perhaps most noteworthy has been his involvement in Lee County's Conservation 20/20 program, which largely through Phil's efforts has acquired a previously unimaginable amount of native habitat on Pine Island.

In 2001, Phil was recognized by his peers in the Florida Land Trust Network, which designated him their statewide "Outstanding Land Trust Volunteer" for the year 2001.

I am sure everyone involved with the Calusa Land Trust joins me in thanking Phil for all his tireless and productive work over the last several years on behalf of environmental preservation on Pine Island!

Upcoming Board of Director's Meetings

The next three board meetings will be held on July 15, August 19, and September 16 at the Elks Lodge at Pine Island Center. These meetings, scheduled for the third Tuesday of each month, begin at 6:30 and usually run no longer than 8:00. All are welcome to attend and listen as well as share ideas.

Ranger/Stewardship Report

by Ed Chapin (392-0090)

On April 7, the Ranger Council met at Fritts Park and put together the work schedule for the rest of 2003. In addition to the monthly Saturday work parties, we will continue to meet for Sunday brunch work parties from 11:00 AM until 1:00 PM at Fritts Park (weather permitting). Look in the table below for all the specifics.

In April, our volunteers worked on the Long Cut and York/Coconut Island Preserves and in May we visited Calusa Island and the Calusa Canal where we removed exotic plants and trash. By the time this newsletter gets out we will have also worked at the St. James Creek Preserve and the St. Jude Trail.

Spring is our time for leading students on field trips, so on April 24 and 25, CLT Rangers took the Pine Island 5th graders to the St. Jude Trail, the Baxley Preserve, and also to the Randell Research Center. We had forty students each day along with some parents and we all had a great time. The students not only learned a lot about Pine Island's beautiful native habitats but also something about the importance of preserving it for future generations. I want to thank our Rangers who helped make it all possible: Bud and Shirley House, Bob and Jackie Kish, Bill Lester, and Bill Mantis.

On May 15, I spoke to the Pine Island Garden Club about the native plants and animals of Pine Island. There was a very good turn out and they asked many questions. In support of our efforts to preserve Pine Island, the club voted to make a \$500 donation to the Calusa Land Trust. We plan to put a memorial bench at Fritts Park in the near future for the Pine Island Garden Club.

We are desperately looking for more site leaders to help us oversee our ever-increasing number of preserves. The Trust has almost twenty in all and it would be nice to have someone in charge of each one. The main responsibility is to visit each site on a regular basis and monitor what the most pressing needs might be like trail building, invasive plant control, or trash clean-up. A site leader can also do plant and animal inventories and make other recommendations that would enhance the preserve. Two or three friends might want to share this job and take turns or work together. Please give me a call if you can help.

My last piece of news is very exciting. We have volunteered to help with a new juvenile fish study being conducted by MOTE Marine at Pineland. On May 10, nine CLT volunteers met with Dr. Aaron Adams who taught us how to catch and count juvenile fish. The data we collect will supplement ongoing research about juvenile fish populations around Pine Island. We hope to get started in June and will be looking first at snook until October when we will switch our studies to the red drum. We need about four more volunteers to make this more manageable for everyone. Let me know if you would like to help.

WORK PARTIES

Saturday, July 12	8 to 12	Picnic Island and the Sister Keys
Saturday, September 6	9 to 12	Fritts Park and Big Jim Creek Preserve
Saturday, October 4	9 to 12	Dobbs Preserve and the Eagle Preserve
Saturday, November 1	9 to 12	Back Bay Preserve and Picnic Island
Every Sunday	11 to 1	Meet at Fritts Park for brunch first

PETER ORDWAY MANGROVE WATER TOURS

In our fall newsletter, we will have the schedule for these canoe trips. They will run from November until April. I will also put them on our web site, as soon as the dates and times are set.

RANGER COUNCIL MEETING

Monday, October 13	6:30	Ranger Council meeting at Fritts Park
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Membership Report

by Norm Gowan (283-8203)

Our membership level continues to remain steady at slightly over 800 with about 58% current in their paid dues. Membership donations are what keep us strong. Please take a look the address label on your newsletter and if you find a bug “*” after your name, please consider renewing. Or, just send a donation anyway! As you can see from the acquisition reports in this newsletter, we are starting to spend quite a bit of money again.

You may find it more convenient to make your contribution with a Visa or MasterCard. Our donation form has been modified so that you can enter all the necessary information. We are really getting on the cutting edge of technology, aren't we? You can also update information by e-mail by providing the same data as on the form and sending it directly to me at GoldenPond@CalusaLandTrust.org.

We have been collecting e-mail addresses from our members for some time now but have not made any use of them until recently when we sent out an announcement regarding our credit card capability and our new Endowment Fund. If you would like to keep up with us and our activities, please give us your current e-mail address. If you've sent us your e-mail address already but don't want any announcements, just let me know.

PURPOSE OF THE CALUSA LAND TRUST:

“... to acquire, hold, and manage environmentally sensitive lands, archaeological and historic sites, and other natural lands; to encourage education and research in the fields of conservation and preservation; to establish nature preserves or other protected areas to be used for scientific, educational, aesthetic, or passive recreational purposes; to cooperate with other entities having similar or related objectives; and to engage in any other activity relating to the furtherance of the foregoing objectives.”

— *From the articles of incorporation of the Calusa Land Trust (Article II)*

Fund Raising Projects

by Norm Gowan (283-8203)

ENDOWMENT FUND: Our new Endowment Fund was inaugurated at January's annual meeting. So far we have received \$1,475 with \$5,750 pledged. Details about this special fund are available in our last newsletter and also on our web site. Please take a moment to review them and consider making a special donation to this fund.

FUND-RAISING EVENTS: The 5th Annual Great Pine Island Rubber Duck Race was held on February 22 and was a huge success. Over \$5,000 was raised for CLT. Next year's race is already planned for March 13. Since we have no fund-raising events during the summer, all is quiet until December 7, when we will have the 11th Annual Poker Run on the Water sponsored by the Pine Island Boat Club. Have a great summer!

MEMORIALS: Few tributes are so lasting as a memorial gift that helps preserve our island's heritage for future generations. We in the Land Trust are privileged to carry on our work in the memory of individuals listed below who have been so honored. Memorials may consist of cash donations in the name of a departed loved one, a memorial carving on the St. Jude Trail in a rail or bench or even a memorial planting of a tree in one of our preserves.

Edward J. Abramoske	Jon Davison *	Bennie R. Hook *
Martin Adamaszek *	C. Frank Estelle *	Wyatt Hooks *
Johan C. F. Andersen *	Nellwyn de Funiak *	Minnie & A.B. Hoover *
Josephine Anderson *	Louis Del Signore *	Earl Hord *
Melvin Atkin *	Woodie Dillon *	Allen Houglan *
Vesta Bailey *	George M. Elliott *	Jack Houis *
"Tootsie" Barnes *	Dorothy R. English *	Ken Houpt *
John David Bawcom	W.L. English Sr. *	E.S. (Red) Ingram *
Ralph & Ruby Beabout *	Dr. Ambrose C. Estes *	Lezlee Jean Ingram *
Larry Behrens *	Linwood T. Ford III *	Dotty Jennings *
James G. Beriault	Linwood T. Ford IV *	Hinda & J.B. Johnson *
Lyall Beving *	Margaret Foster	Belmont Kappmeyer *
Frank Bopp	Michael David Fox	Walt Karkut *
Marge Borton *	Phil Freeman *	Walter R. Kaune *
Barbara Bosley *	Carl H. Frost *	Janette King *
Betty B. Bouwes *	Joyce Gasow *	Jack Kirmer *
Ralph Brimacombe *	Jack Gates *	Therese Kirmer *
Don Burr *	Nancy Gilmore	Fredda Lashley *
Margaret L. Burman *	Loren "POP" Gowan *	Edward J. & Amanda Lever
Richard R. & Ruth Callahan *	Anne Grace *	Roy F. Lippmann, Sr. *
Jack Campbell	Robert "Bob" Griest *	Russell Little *
John M Campbell *	Alfred Woodhull Guibord *	Hector Magnuson *
Ruth B. Campbell	Kate Guthrie *	Doug Mac Elroy *
Rev. Cam & Helen Carmichel *	Betty Gutowski *	Neil & Ruthie MacIntyre *
"Hanni" Carver *	Richard J. Haberle Sr. *	James W. Mahaffey *
Terez "Terri" Carver *	Robert Hallen *	Dorothy M. Maloney *
Arnold S. Celmalnieks *	Ash Hallett *	Earl J. Maloney, Sr. *
Antonette Cerny	Joe Hanson *	Lewis W. McAllister *
Tony Cerny *	Bill Harmon *	Marie Maraviglia *
Ray Cherry *	Steven Patrick Hart *	Stella Martin *
C. F. "Chuck" Clark *	Grace Heatherington	Ethel McDonough *
Jack Clyburn	Raymond W. Heidorn *	M. Kathleen Mellon *
John B. Cook *	Pamela Marie Heimann *	Donald Meng *
Ben Counselman *	Charles J. Heimann II *	Helene Mierendorf
Sylvia & William Cyzewski Sr	Mike Herbert *	Robert H. Miller *
George Darnell	R.E. "Pap-Pap" Hohing *	John Moran
Doyle Davison *	Jo Holmes *	Thelma Mufich *

Robert Musgrave
Donald N. Muske *
Arthur & Ida Newberg
Edward Newton
Frank Nine *
Mildred V. O'Brien *
Paul Olding *
Peter Ordway **
Earl Ott *
Richard Palmtag
Sally Parisi *
Fred Patterson *
Mary Grace Peloso *
Charlie Perry *
Charles & Anna Perry *
Donald R. Peterson *
Mabel Phillipson *
Barbara Plourde *
Frank Polaski *
Pete Polverari *
Yolanda Mae Reppa *
Roscoe Query *
Gertie Rudd *

Doc Salisbury
Mr & Mrs Sherwood Sampier *
Reese Sarda *
Larry & Nancy Savage *
Chevy Schutz *
Dorothy Seeling
Murray & Edith Seyler *
Phil Shaw *
William Sherwood
Dan Shockley *
Carl H. Shupert *
Ronald L. Shupert *
Agnes Jane Snyder
Florence Stark
David A. Stevig *
Raymond W. Stober *
Francis Sullivan
Barry Swanson *
Don Szuminski *
Frank Taugner, Sr. *
Kay Taugner *
Dave Thomas *
Jim Thomas *

Robert Tutza *
Glenn P. Twigg *
Doris C. Twigg *
Dan Tynan *
Leonore M. Vondervor *
Patricia Ann "Pat" Waite *
Hazel Ward *
Harriet L. Watson *
William Webster *
Wayne Weeks *
Dorothy Welch
Bert & Mildred Wildman *
Edith Williams *
"Fishin" Bud Williams *
Richard Williams *
George Williams *
Bernard Willoughby *
Margaret L. Wilson, M.D.
Walt Woodhead *
Bruno & Theresa *
"Grandma Dot" *

*Indicates name on the St. Jude Trail Memorial Observation Deck or Memorial Bench or in Fritts Park Memorial.

CALUSA LAND TRUST MEMBERSHIPS AND DONATIONS:

_____ \$ 15	Individual Member	_____ \$500	Angel
_____ \$ 25	Family Member	_____ \$ _____	Endowment Fund
_____ \$ 50	Donor or Organization	_____ \$ _____	_____
_____ \$100	Contributor	_____ \$ 50	Plunk-a-Plank <i>(fill in lettering below)</i>

CREDIT CARD #: _____ **EXPIRATION DATE:** _____
SIGNATURE (for credit card only): _____

Your Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____ Today's Date _____

Second Address? _____

Second City, State, Zip? _____

Phone _____ E-mail address _____

A COPY OF THE CALUSA LAND TRUST'S OFFICIAL REGISTRATION AND FINANCIAL INFORMATION MAY BE OBTAINED FROM THE STATE OF FLORIDA'S DIVISION OF CONSUMER SERVICES BY CALLING 1-800-435-7352 (TOLL-FREE FROM WITHIN FLORIDA). OUR REGISTRATION NUMBER IS SC-03439. REGISTRATION DOES NOT IMPLY ENDORSEMENT, APPROVAL, OR RECOMMENDATION BY THE STATE OF FLORIDA. FULL FINANCIAL DETAILS, INCLUDING FEDERAL TAX RETURNS, CAN BE OBTAINED BY CONTACTING THE LAND TRUST'S TREASURER AT 239-334-8866 DURING WORKING HOURS. THE CALUSA LAND TRUST NEVER EMPLOYS PROFESSIONAL FUNDRAISERS; 100% OF YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS ARE RETAINED BY THE CALUSA LAND TRUST.

**Calusa Land Trust & Nature Preserve
of Pine Island, Inc.
P.O. Box 216
Bokeelia, Florida 33922**