



Calusa Land Trust and Nature Preserve of Pine Island

P.O. Box 216, Bokeelia, FL 33922

A nonprofit organization dedicated to the preservation of natural lands.

Newsletter

Winter/Spring 1991

Membership Alert

--PLEASE SEE THE IMPORTANT NOTICE ABOUT MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS ON PAGE 4--

An Open Letter from the President

In the past year, the Calusa Land Trust and Nature Preserve of Pine Island has accomplished much. In January of 1990, we had our annual meeting, adopted by-laws and elected our new Board of Directors. We passed a resolution supporting the acquisition of Bocilla Island Point (the Stewart property) by Lee County as an environmental preserve. Lee County is in the process of purchasing Bocilla Island from their fund to buy environmentally significant lands. (This parcel had been a proposed condominium development.)

The new Board elected officers and acquired an option to buy, through a bargain sale agreement, about 324 acres of wetlands around Big Jim Creek. The Calusa Land Trust obtained the option on three adjoining parcels for about \$70 an acre (including closing costs and back taxes), thanks to the generosity of the owners, Patricia Brownstone, trustee. Mike Shevlin of Islands Realty handled the transaction and donated his commission to the Calusa Land Trust. In July, 1990, we closed on the first parcel and in December on the second. These purchases were possible because of you. This leaves 108 acres that we must pay for no later than August of 1991 or the opportunity will be lost forever.

In December of 1990, the Board accepted the donation of McCardle Island. We are responsible only for the back taxes of about \$3,500. Not only will the owners be eligible for tax benefits for the value of the donation, but this 50-acre mangrove island in Matlacha Pass will become a permanent nature preserve. Many thanks to the former owners, Laura Crawford Evans and Edward Evans, Jr. Thanks also goes to the National Bank of Lee County for handling the transaction through the efforts of Donna Roach (Pine Island Branch Manager) and Ted Evans (Senior Chairman of the Board).

President's Letter (continued)

There is hope that through these types of agreements, which can benefit the owners as well as the fish and wildlife, that more wetlands and mangrove forest can be put into permanent preservation.

All is not rosy though. Unfortunately, Pine Island is in danger of losing much of its mature pine and palmetto habitat. The pine forest is home to threatened and endangered wildlife that depends on these uplands to survive. Gopher tortoises cannot dig burrows in wetlands; and bald eagles do not nest in the mangroves (although most nests are close to the mangroves). In order to save some of the pine flatwoods from the farmers' bulldozer, we would have to quadruple our efforts and work in concert with other community groups and government programs.

This may be possible. Among the community organizations that have helped our efforts in one way or another are the American Legion Post #136, the Greater Pine Island Chamber of Commerce, the Greater Pine Island Civic Association, the St. James Civic Association, the St. James City Kiwanis Club, the Museum of the Islands, the Pine Island Boat Club, the Cherry Estates Property Owners Association, the Coccoloba Chapter of the Native Plant Society, the Pine Island Chapter of the Organized Fishermen of Florida, the Sierra Club, the Audubon Society, and the Marine Biology Club and the National Honor Society from Mariner High School.

I believe that the Calusa Land Trust should reflect the open space and conservation needs and wishes of our members and of the general community.

As far as government programs are concerned, 1990 was a landmark year for the state of Florida. With the support of Governor Martinez and our local representatives Tim Ireland and Keith Arnold, the Preservation 2000 program was enacted, authorizing \$300 million per year for the rest of the decade for land acquisition. Part of the program is the Florida Communities Trust which recognizes local land trusts and local governments as important participants in the statewide preservation efforts. With support from the entire community and from Lee County, we may be able to establish a Pine Island Preserve as a Florida Communities Trust project. This would require more effort, more volunteers, more fundraising projects. If we try, we might be able to keep pine flatwoods on Pine Island. We may fail, but if we don't try, we will fail.

When we first started talking about saving land in this coastal area, there were those who said, "It can't be done, don't waste your time, people won't contribute." Well, many of you said, "It can be done, we will do it!" and people did contribute!

In closing, I would like to thank every one of you who have contributed time, talent and funds necessary to make all this work. I've learned a lot, and it has been a pleasure working with you - everything from selling T-shirts and raffle tickets to working with the outstanding members of committees and the Board. You represent such a diverse wealth of knowledge, skills and enthusiasm, all of which has made our success possible!

Sincerely,

Rick Moore, President

Report on the 1991 Annual Meeting

Calusa Land Trust and Nature Preserve of Pine Island held its 1991 annual meeting on Saturday, January 26, 1991. About 50 members attended the Saturday afternoon meeting at the Matlacha Community Building on the shores of Matlacha Pass.

President Rick Moore thanked all who contributed their time and effort to make this such a successful year. A moment of silence was observed in memory of Melvin Atkin, Stan Kreber, Charles Kilgore and Nancy Gilmore.

The reports and announcements made at the meeting showed the great strides CLT has made in the last year. Membership Chairman Alison Ackerman announced that CLT now has 177 members. Treasurer Bill Spikowski reported our bank account balance to be \$12,780.31 on Dec. 31, 1990. This healthy figure is due in part to a generous \$10,000 contribution by an anonymous donor. The donor asked that this money be used as an emergency fund, to enable CLT to act quickly if the opportunity to purchase land arises without time to raise the necessary funds.

Membership dues and donations provided about 88% of the trust's income, with land acquisition costs accounting for 78% of expenses. Only about 8% was spent on insurance, printing, postage, filing fees, etc. There have been no salaries or professional fees, thanks to the donation of services by members and friends of CLT. (The full treasurer's report is available upon request.)

The most exciting news emerged in the reports of land acquired for preservation - which is what CLT is all about. The "Buy an Acre for an Eagle" campaign raised funds sufficient to complete the purchase of two of the three Big Jim Creek parcels. (Although assessed at \$500 per acre, the land, including closing costs and back taxes, cost us only about \$70 an acre.) Shevlin was applauded as he donated a \$450 check toward the purchase of the third and final piece.

The trust also announced the acceptance of donation of McCardle Island, a 50-acre island in Matlacha Pass. The only cost will be the back taxes of about \$3500.

Land Acquisition Chairman Rich Larkin also reported the donation of more than 50 acres of wetlands between St. James Creek and St. Jude Harbor at the southeastern end of Pine Island. The only cost to us for this tract were \$850 in back taxes. Thanks go to St. Jude Harbor Corporation for donating the land, and to Mark Ebelini of the law firm of Humphrey & Knott for assisting in this transaction.

The nominating committee, represented by Ellie Boyd, made recommendations for the election of the 1991 Board of Directors. Since there were no nominations from the floor, the committee's slate was accepted and unanimously voted in. Board members Ellie Boyd, Ed Chapin, Dick Holmes, Rich Larkin and Bobbi Shanks were re-elected to the Board for 2-year terms. Alison Ackerman, Jim Beever, Kate Fitzgerald, Rick Moore and Bill Spikowski, originally elected to a 2-year terms will serve one more year. Gloria Sajgo was elected to replace outgoing board member Virginia Miller.

Following the business meeting, many members stayed to enjoy the potluck picnic and share more ideas for the upcoming year.

Outing Planned

Due to the favorable responses we got from the canoe excursions we had on Big Jim Creek last year, we are planning another one, to be held before the mosquitoes arrive in force. The date is April 13. Our outings chairmen, Ed Chapin and Debi Holden, would like anyone who wants to go to call them at 283-1167. They will get your number and let you know the exact time later. There will be some extra canoes available, but you will need to let them know if you need one.

Earthstock 91

On Saturday, April 20, the Earth Day Coalition will be having its annual celebration, to be held at Lakes Park from 11:30 to 7:00 p.m. The Calusa Land Trust will have a booth set up to promote our cause and of course sell a few T-shirts along the way. There will be many things to do and see, and if we have enough members helping out that day, everyone can have a chance to roam around and take in the sights. If you can come and give a hand, call Rick at 283-1206. The more the better.

Membership Corner

Since we reactivated in late 1989, about 180 individual and family memberships and about 13 business/organization memberships have been taken in.

In order to keep the bookwork as simple as possible, the Board of Directors has adopted the following policy: Memberships that are paid during January through October will satisfy that year's dues. Any donation given in November or December of any year will count as satisfying the next year's membership. (All of the membership cards given out after this decision reflect this by having December 31, 1991 as the expiration date.)

Using this new formula, we have only 50 active members now and 3 active business/organization memberships for 1991. As you can see, renewals are quite a bit below our numbers for 1990. We hope you will take this chance and use the renewal form to keep your membership active. If your name has a star, our records indicate that your membership is due. On the last mailing, a few mistakes were made with the stars and your editor apologizes for this confusion. Now that we have a policy to go by, this shouldn't happen again. Please feel free to call Alison Ackerman at 997-5442 (days) if you believe we have made a mistake or you have any questions. The Board is open to any other ideas in this matter.

Remember, our ability to take advantage of land purchase opportunities greatly depends on your support. We do not have sufficient funds to purchase the final parcel at Big Jim Creek without seriously depleting our emergency fund. That fund must also be used to pay the back taxes on McCardle Island and the St. Jude Harbor parcels (unless special donations are received for that purpose). So please consider a larger donation to help us complete the acquisition at Big Jim Creek and to restore our emergency fund!

Trash Bash

Ed Chapin is coordinating a Calusa Land Trust contingent to participate in the statewide Clean-Up day on Saturday, April 20. He hopes to have several groups go out to different locations. If you want to help out, give him a call at the Harbor Hideaway, 283-1167. The best time is in the afternoon. For those of us who went out the last time, it was fun to compare the strange things we found and very satisfying to do something so worthwhile.

Committee Reports

Fundraising - Ron and Mary Shontz have taken over the Calusa Land Trust T-Shirt project. Not only have they organized all the shirts so we can keep careful track of what we need, but they have handled all the sales and sent the treasurer several itemized lists. What a big job and much appreciated. At events such as the Pine Island Seafood Festival and the upcoming Earthstock 1991 day, these T-shirt sales not only promote our ideas but generate funds (about \$4.00 per shirt).

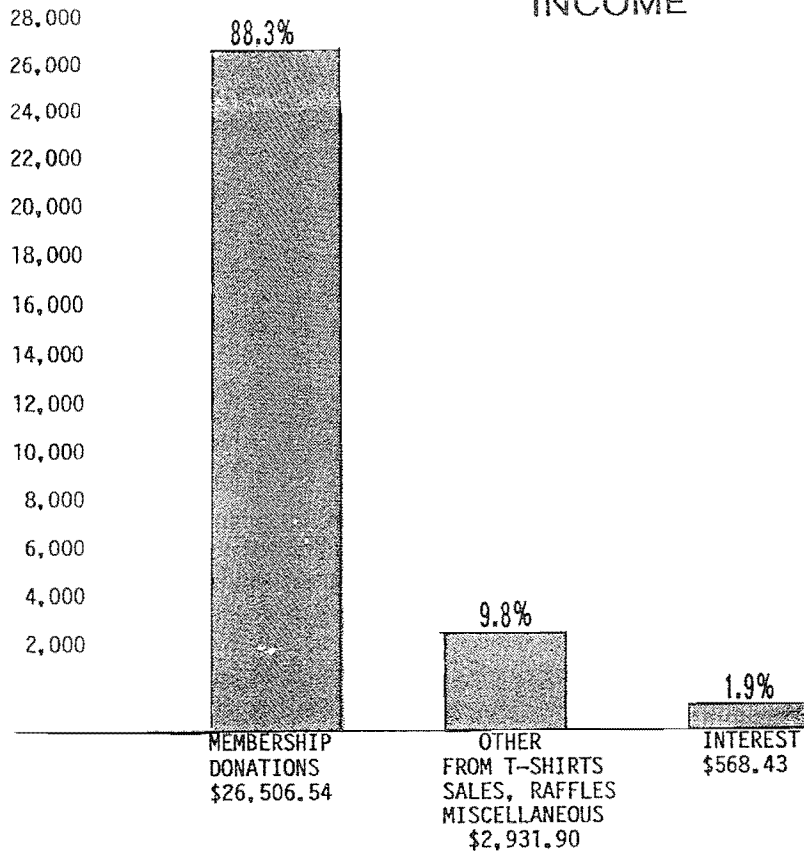
Newsletter - The editor, Alison Ackerman, would like to know if anyone would like to help out, either by writing or by coming to the Museum of the Islands to help fold, stamp, staple and label the newsletters. Pizza delivery can always be arranged. (For this edition, a quick meeting of the Board has been called so we will see how this goes.) Please give me a call at 997-5442 if you might be interested for the future. Special thanks goes out to Linda Ballou, who wrote the report on the annual meeting and also to Betty Katz and Laurie Boswell who created the terrific graph detailing Calusa Land Trust's income and expenses for 1990.

Environmental and Land Management Committee - Ed Chapin and Jim Beever are looking for people who would be willing to do either one or both of the following:

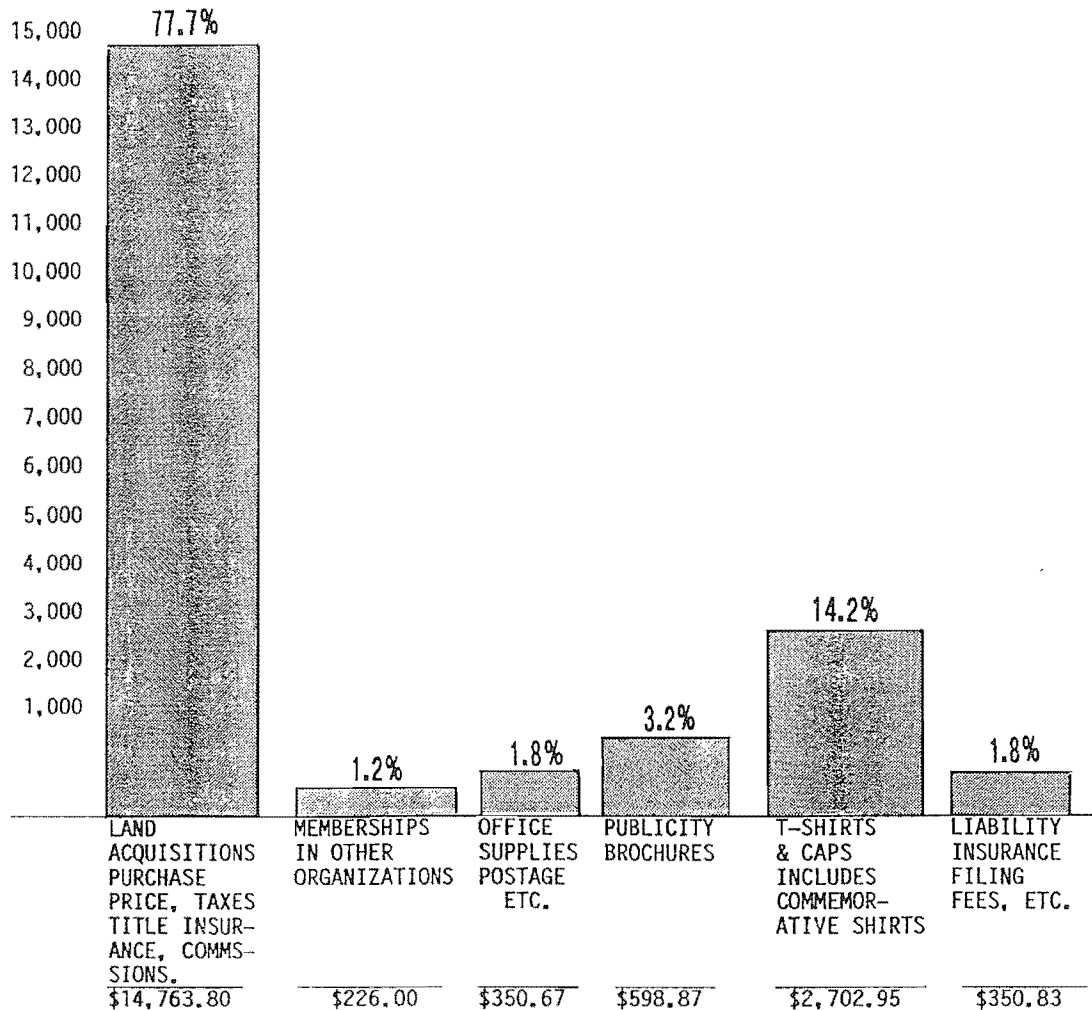
(1) Formulate Calusa Land Trust's position/philosophy on managing our land preserves - e.g.: Do we need to get someone to assess the archeological status of a piece of property? Who could do it for us? What about the exotic vegetation problem? What's the best way to handle Brazilian pepper and melaleuca invasion? Should there be a plan for keeping our preserves clean? Should we put up signs that Calusa Land Trust owns the land? Do we advertise where our lands are? Obviously, there is much to think about.

(2) Participate in the actual management of the lands, by helping to clear out exotic plants and perhaps plant native trees and shrubs. Ed and Jim are hoping that several people could volunteer for this work so that the responsibility will not fall to just a few. Please call Ed at 283-1167 or Rick at 283-1206. This committee is very important.

INCOME



EXPENSES



MEMBERSHIPS

_____ \$15 Individual	_____ \$70	Donor: "I want to buy an acre for an eagle!"
_____ \$25 Family	_____ \$86	Donor: "I want to buy an acre for an eagle & receive a T-shirt!"
_____ \$50 Donor		
_____ \$50 Business/ Organization	_____ \$100	Contributor
	_____ \$500	Patron or Business Patron
_____ Other	_____ \$1000	Benefactor

Anyone donating \$86 or more, please indicate your preferences below:

_____ I would very much like a hand-painted T-shirt. My size is _____ (small, medium, large, x-large) (Please give a phone number and local address, if possible, so we can contact you when the shirt is ready.)

_____ I do not wish a T-shirt and would like the funds placed back into the land acquisition program.

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Phone _____ Date _____

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

Donations are tax-deductible (except \$16.00 if a T-shirt is ordered).



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