

St. James Creek Preserve Dedication

On June 19, about 45 Calusa Land Trust members and friends braved the heat and bugs to celebrate the dedication of the St. James Creek Preserve. Attorney Mark Ebelini from St. Jude Harbor Inc. presented Calusa Land Trust President Alison Ackerman with the formal Satisfaction of Mortgage for the property, and certificates of appreciation were distributed to all those who purchased an acre or more. Winn-Dixie donated some champagne and everyone toasted to the future of the nature trail we will create in this preserve. Lisa Dodd's beautiful design that illustrates proposed plantings, benches and observation deck was on hand to enjoy. Then the group moved down the trail to a cleared area to plant the first trees. It was truly a momentous day.

Eagle Preserve Update

The completion of the Calusa Land Trust's purchase just described increased the size of the St. James Creek Preserve to 300 acres. And beginning only 1100 feet to the north is the proposed joint Calusa Land Trust/Lee County/State of Florida project to preserve a large tract that has been the home for many years to a pair of bald eagles. As described in previous newsletters, this 118-acre parcel includes pine flatwoods as well as mangrove swamp, with frontage on both sides of St. James Creek. The Calusa Land Trust's option to purchase this land expired on May 30 but through extensive negotiations it has been extended to September 30 to allow the final purchase by Lee County and the State of Florida (through the Florida Communities Trust). The new option has now been assigned to the county and the state, and the Governor and Cabinet gave its final approval to the purchase in Tallahassee on August 24. Final closing on the property may take 20 to 30 more days. Title in this land will ultimately rest with Lee County, which will have

final management authority of the tract, with substantial assistance from the Calusa Land Trust. A proposed site plan for this preserve which also shows its location relative to the existing St. James Creek is reprinted in this newsletter. This plan shows the proposed improvements to the eagle preserve including an uplands nature trail. Future editions of this newsletter will contain much more about this important project.

Castile Property

A single tract of land just west of Castile Acres separates the new eagle preserve from the St. James Creek Preserve. The Calusa Land Trust's acquisitions committee has been in negotiations with the Castile estate for some time to acquire this approximately 55-acre tract. The Board of Directors recently gave the go-ahead, and the Calusa Land Trust has just closed on this significant purchase. Since this land joins the eagle preserve with the rest of the St. James Creek Preserve, the Board is referring to it as the Castile Corridor.

This purchase cost \$6150. Since there was not time for a fund-raising campaign, especially during the summer season, the Board of Directors authorized the use of our emergency fund to make this purchase. It is very important for members to know that only because we had this special fund could we take advantage of this opportunity. We hope to raise the full \$6150 to replenish the emergency fund so that, should a similar opportunity present itself, it can be taken advantage of. Therefore, acres of the Castile Corridor can be "purchased" for \$100 (close enough!), just like for the St. James Creek Preserve. Certificates of Appreciation will be awarded to all of those who can help to pay for this important acquisition.

You can see on the map in this newsletter how the Castile Corridor links the St. James Creek Preserve with the new eagle preserve, and what a difference it will make. One day, when the trails are built, people will be able to wander a long way enjoying the wonderful natural lands right here in our backyard. The mangrove forests and pine uplands can both be appreciated along with the plants and animals who live there. If you know of anyone who would like to be a contributor to the biggest (so far!) preserve on Pine Island, please share this newsletter with them. And of course all additional contributions from our dedicated members will be greatly appreciated.

Land Holdings Chart

For your information, here is a chart which gives a detailed account of Calusa Land Trust's holdings to date. Included are the approximate size in acres, and the assessed land values, both according to Lee County records. Our actual costs were, in many cases, less than shown here, and in some cases zero when land was donated!

Report from Ed Chapin, Land Management Committee Chairman

Dear Members and Friends of Calusa Land Trust,

As a board member and working member of the Land Management Committee, I want to give my heart-felt thanks and appreciation to all of you who have donated time and money to make Calusa Land Trust one of the most successful land trust in the state. Due to your generosity we have managed to preserve over 700 acres of land for resource protection and recreational purposes. And off of this has been done without any paid staff!

Since January our volunteers have begun building the St. Jude Nature Trail in our St. James Creek Preserve. Here is a list (hopefully accurate) of the volunteers who have donated their time to this project:

Jimmy Green
Dean Dolback
Rick Moore
Bud House
Shirley House
John Chapin
Maxine Ingelse
Harvey Ingelse
Mike Herbert
Ida Herbert
Sheila Orrell
John Orrell

Kate Guthrie
Bear Hart
Sunny Rodgers
Dick Sopper
Linda Petrusha
Jim Beever
Lisa Dodd
Mary Shontz
Jan Linqvist
Chris Rez
John Zadel
Brenda Hurtado

Scott Klaysing
Joe (Chip) Schonder
John Little
Dale Norton
Mike Letourneau
Lynette Smith
Nick Smith
Chuck Miller,
Pinebreeze Nursery
Ted Watrous,
Watrous Plantation

We have recently taken on great additional responsibilities with the new eagle preserve. With this in mind, the Calusa Land Trust is now starting a volunteer ranger program to ensure that our lands are being managed properly. We are looking for individuals or groups who are willing to donate up to a few days each month to help monitor and manage our preserves. We have many things to do such as controlling exotic invasive vegetation, picking up trash, habitat monitoring and enhancement, educating people about the natural world and the Calusa Land Trust, etc.

As a private non-profit organization, we have an opportunity to do a better job of managing our land and doing it for less money than our state and local governments have been able to. As mentioned in previous newsletters, we have been working the first Saturday of every month on the nature trail at the St. James Creek Preserve. But we also need to work on our other major preserves at Big Jim Creek, Calusa Island, and McCardle Island. The rewards for this work certainly aren't monetary, but include a feeling of accomplishment and knowing we are truly enhancing our natural resources around the Pine Island area. Please join us, or contact me about becoming a volunteer ranger! I can be reached at 283-1167, or by writing to P.O Box 343, Bokeelia, Florida 33922.

—— Ed Chapin

Kayak Outing

As announced in our previous newsletter, Frank Stapleton and Cindy Bear of Gulf Coast Kayak in Matlacha organized a special outing for June 26 to benefit the Calusa Land Trust. About 15 people ventured out on that hot and sunny day. As they canoed up Matlacha Pass, many many ospreys were seen fishing and soaring over the mangroves. When it was all over, Frank and Cindy donated the entire proceeds of \$320 to the Calusa Land Trust which has been applied towards the purchase of 3 acres in the Castile Corridor. Many thanks to Frank and Cindy. A special Certificate of Appreciation has been created for them.

Florida Coastal Cleanup

Announcement: Another Florida Coastal Cleanup is planned for September 18! Since 1988 the Center of Marine Conservation (CMC) has coordinated this statewide event each September. More than just a cleanup, the Florida Coastal Cleanup is fun and educational for young and old alike. Participants are encouraged to catalogue the marine debris they find, helping CMC to identify where much of the debris came from, such as shipping industries, cruise lines, fishers, boaters, beach goers, or land-based sources. This cleanup is part of a larger international effort coordinated by CMC, which currently involves 36 U.S. states and territories and 49 countries.

Your help is needed! Marine debris kills thousands of marine animals annually, is unsightly on our coast, and is costly to coastal communities in cleanup costs and lost tourist dollars. It takes only 3 hours; all necessary materials are provided by CMC, and volunteers can participate at any one of over 500 coastal and underwater sites around the state. For more information about how to get involved, contact CMC at 1-800-CMC-FLORIDA (262-3567). Or just join Calusa Land Trust members in Bokeelia or St. James City. We are told that there will be dumpsters located at both places, plus at the Matlacha Park so that people will not have to transport the garbage great distances. Contact Ed Chapin at 283-1167 for the Bokeelia outing and Rick Moore at 283-1206 if you are closer to St. James City. Every person who comes makes a big difference!

CALUSA LAND TRUST MEMBERSHIPS AND DONATIONS:

_____ \$15	Individual Member	_____ \$100	Contributor
_____ \$25	Family Member	_____ \$500	Patron or Business Patron
_____ \$50	Donor	_____ \$1000	Benefactor
_____ \$50	Business/Organization	_____ \$_____	for _____ Acres in Castile Corridor

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Phone _____ Date _____

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