

Calusa Land Trust

and Nature Preserve of Pine Island, Inc.



Newsletter

November 1998

YORK ISLAND CELEBRATION!

by Rick Moore

After some delay in solving legal problems, the title closing on York and Coconut Islands is set for Saturday December 5 at 3:30 P.M. We encourage you to attend the closing and celebration to follow at the Waterfront Restaurant in St. James City. The closing itself will be held at York Island, with boats of all sorts rafting up and anchoring just off York Island where the little beach is visible.

As you may recall from our last newsletter, this acquisition is a joint project with the Sanibel-Captiva Conservation Foundation (SCCF), which is taking the lead in handling the many details it took to make this a reality (not to mention raising 90 percent of the funds!). York Island encompasses about 200 acres of mostly wetlands, with a coastal ridge of sub-tropical hammock consisting of some of the most endangered native plants in our area. Many Pine Islanders have been concerned with the fate of York Island for years. Having the 20-acre Coconut Island included in the deal is icing on the cake!

Needless to say, we are grateful to SCCF for their involvement, and would like to encourage our members and friends to join us for this event and help show our gratitude by welcoming our neighbors across Pine Island Sound. Join us at York Island, north of red marker #20 (consult your charts or just head for all the boats – there is good water all the way in), or just come to the celebration afterward at the Waterfront Restaurant, where we hope to have a fish fry at a nominal cost.

ANNUAL MEETING

by Alison Ackerman

Our annual meeting has been set for Sunday, January 10, 1999, 1:00 P.M. at the Elks Lodge at Pine Island Center (in the Greater Pine Island Civic Association building next to the fire station). As usual there will be many notable events and activities to discuss. Come and help us celebrate what Calusa Land Trust has accomplished this year and begin our planning for 1999.

Election of board members will also be held. The following board members have been chosen by the nominating committee to serve another two-year term: Ed Chapin, Norm Gowan, Peter Ordway, and Bud House. Two other members have also been nominated: Cathy Valenti and Bill Workman. Additional nominations will be taken from the floor. Rich Larkin, our Land Acquisition Committee Chairman and past president, has decided that for now he would like to step down from the board. He has promised, however, to continue serving on our Land Acquisition Committee, and we hope he can return to our board soon. Board members continuing to serve out their two-year terms are Alison Ackerman, Phil Buchanan, Chic Kennedy, Richard Little, Rick Moore, Bill Spikowski, and Rubye Woodhead.

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

by Ed Chapin

I recently had the privilege of attending the National Land Trust Rally, which was held at Madison, Wisconsin from October 17- 20. Fellow board member Peter Ordway joined me there and shared what was a fantastic four days, meeting many land conservationists from around the country and sharing experiences and ideas.

The rally is sponsored annually by the Land Trust Alliance, a national organization dedicated to voluntary land conservation and strengthening the land trust movement. Calusa Land Trust has belonged to this group since the 1980s. During the past ten years, land trusts in the country have grown from 750 to more than 1,200, with over 1 million members nationwide. These trusts currently protect over 4.7 million acres of land, up from 2 million acres in 1988. In Florida alone, there are 29 land trusts which own about 10,000 acres (1,200 of which belong to Calusa Land Trust).

As we were reminded at the rally, land trusts truly embody America's spirit of volunteerism, with 40% of all land trusts staffed solely by unpaid members. We are one of those and can be very proud of our volunteer efforts. I urge all of you to stay involved, either financially or by volunteering your time, so that we can continue to succeed.

After comparing notes with other organizations at the rally, I know I have been invigorated and inspired by what we have done and by what is possible. Thank you all.

RANGER-STEWARD PROGRAM

by Richard Little

As we reevaluate our intentions in the management and maintenance of our preserves around Pine Island, the concept of stewardship seems to best describe what we want to be doing. As land stewards, we want to bring the intention of nurturing, a kind of “loving caring” into our management actions. For example, as we remove exotic vegetation, we acknowledge their value in the tapestry of life...they’re just in the wrong place. The trails we clear will seldom be broad paths, rather they will have the minimum impact of a footpath. Wherever possible, we’ll encourage nesting and food-gathering habitat for wildlife. At every opportunity, we will encourage the visiting to embrace the concept of stewardship, of “loving caring” while in these wilds.

In keeping with the concept of land stewardship, we have begun to develop a ranger-steward program and now have at least 16 volunteers to monitor and help manage the 1,200 acres in 10 different preserves. All rangers will be provided with uniform shirts for public visibility. This is a serious commitment, requiring an average of 4 hours per month in activities such as exotic removal work parties and trash/misuse monitoring. Ranger training has begun with monthly work parties. We are working with several professional naturalists to give short tutorials on the bio-environment. The ranks of ranger-stewards are still open to any CLT members who want to participate. Call me at 283-4974 for details.

DECEMBER BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

On December 8, at 6:30 P.M., the board of directors will hold its last meeting of the year at the Elks Lodge at Pine Island Center. Everyone is welcome to attend all meetings of the board.

NATURE LOVER’S GUIDE TO PINE ISLAND

by Phil Buchanan

We are happy to announce that the book “The Nature Lover’s Guide to Pine Island” has gone to the printer and is expected to go on sale by Thanksgiving (just in time for Christmas presents). It will sell for \$20.

Up to 100 Pine Islanders and friends of Pine Island have been involved in various aspects of producing the book—as writers, artists, proofreaders, consultants, mapmakers, graphic technicians, and printers, as well as laborers who collate pages and run the binding machine. Except for the actual printing, the production process is being conducted by volunteers. Each book will net a \$10 profit which will go towards the purchase of more environmentally sensitive habitat.

The best features of the book are the maps and charts, and the drawings and descriptions of plants and animals. Published, for the first time, are maps and descriptions of not only all Calusa Land Trust properties, but also all other environmentally sensitive preserved areas on and around Pine Island. The Trust property maps and canoe trail charts were specially drawn using the our geographic information system, made available to us through a grant from the Conservation Technology Support Program, a private consortium. Every private, federal, state, and county conservation preserve, aquatic and buffer preserve, wildlife refuge, nature trail, hiking trail, and designated canoe trail on and around Pine Island is covered. We also included listings of things like campgrounds, picnic areas, parks, boat ramps, nature-related businesses, and other stuff you need to know to enjoy the Pine Island outdoors. The history of the Calusa Land Trust and the tools it uses to acquire and preserve habitats are thoroughly covered.

The book includes about 150 detailed drawings of the birds, mammals, reptiles, insects, trees, mangroves, ferns, grasses, finfish, crustaceans, and shellfish commonly found on Pine Island. We decided to go with drawings instead of photographs because most critters and plants are too hard to identify from photographs.

Back in September, the *Pine Island Eagle* carried an article calling for more artists to step forth and help fill what was then gaps in our drawings of plants and animals. The results were incredible. We ended up with many artists and they all did fantastic jobs. This island has a lot of really talented people who care deeply about their environment.

The plan is for copies to be delivered on about November 24 to the Island Hardware/Marina and the Double Nichol Pub in St James City; the Museum of the Islands at Pine Island Center; and Dobby's Place Bait and Tackle, Gillian's Market, and Island Shells and Gift in Matlacha. Copies can also be obtained by sending a check for \$23 (which includes \$3 for postage) payable to Calusa Land Trust, to Phil Buchanan, 3861 Galt Island Avenue, St. James City, FL 33956. Or use the order form on the pack page of this newsletter.

The program to create this book was launched in late 1997 in the hope that we could instill in Pine Islanders a greater awareness and appreciation of our incredible subtropical environment, thus supporting our grass-roots effort to preserve sensitive island habitats. We set out to teach, but we also learned. We learned, through the vast outpouring of volunteers that Pine Islanders are already very environmentally conscious. As you know, we are presently experiencing a fast-growing membership as well as successful campaigns to raise funds to purchase properties at both ends of the island. These indicators all point the same direction — **Pine Islanders are working hard to take care of their island.**

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

by Norm Gowan (283-8203)

Calusa Land Trust membership has risen to 681, a net gain of 10 members since our last newsletter and 95 members so far this year. We lost a few but gained even more. Most importantly, 461 (61%) are current contributors!! This is the highest percentage in my five years as membership chairman. I know there are many worthy organizations out there looking for your help, and even more so during this holiday season. So thank you all who have continued to keep up with us and show us your support. Please, if you are no longer interested, drop us a line and let us know as this will really help to minimize our mailing expenses and keep us from adding to the load in your mailbox. The asterisk by your name tells you if a year has gone by since your last donation.

PLUNK-A-PLANK CAMPAIGN

by Norm Gowan

Names continue to be added to the boardwalk on our St. Jude Nature Trail. To date, we have 413 names representing donations totaling \$20,350. If space becomes a problem, we plan on adding a second handrail, so don't hold back for that reason. If you are renewing your membership, think about also getting a plank for yourself, a family member, or a friend. A named plank would make a great holiday gift.

WINTER CANOE TRIPS

by Peter Ordway

This winter, a series of canoe trips will be organized and led by Land Trust volunteers. An attempt will be made to explore all six of our preserves that are accessible by water. Particulars for each trip will be announced in the Pine Island Eagle so keep a lookout. Anyone wishing to be informed by telephone about planned trips should call me at 283-5918 to be placed on the call list. Although participants are encouraged to locate their own canoe or kayak, the Land Trust often can borrow extra canoes.

ANNUAL POKER RUN

The 6th Annual Poker Run will be held on December 6 this year. Details are published in the Pine Island Eagle so you can get all the particulars there. Or call Norm Gowan at 283-8203 who can fill you in. Be sure to come out for a fun time!

CANOE RAFFLE

Donald Jorgensen, a Trust member who lives within sight of York Island, has donated a beautiful handmade strip wooden canoe to us and we are raffling it off at the annual meeting as a fundraiser. Raffle tickets are still available for \$2 each, or \$5 for three, and are currently available at SunTrust Bank at 10290 Stringfellow Road. Or you may contact Norm Gowan at 283-8203.

CALUSA LAND TRUST MEMBERSHIPS AND DONATIONS:

_____ \$15 Individual Member	_____ \$100 Kreie land purchase
_____ \$25 Family Member	_____ \$ 23 Nature Lover's Guide to P.I.
_____ \$50 Donor or Organization	_____ \$ _____ for _____
_____ \$100 Contributor	_____ \$50 Plunk—a—Plank (fill in lettering below)

Sponsor's Name (optional): _____

Your Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Second Address? _____

Second City, State, Zip? _____

Phone _____ Today's Date _____

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