

Calusa Land Trust

and Nature Preserve of Pine Island, Inc.



Newsletter

June 1999

TRUST NOMINATES PINE ISLAND CENTER PROPERTY FOR CONSERVATION 2020 PURCHASE by Phil Buchanan

Former Calusa Land Trust president Rich Larkin is spearheading our effort to have Lee County use taxpayer-approved "Conservation 2020" funds to purchase a huge tract of land just south of Pine Island Center.

The parcel being nominated constitutes the largest contiguous undeveloped uplands on Pine Island. It starts a few hundred feet north of (and just opposite) Winn Dixie, and runs over a mile south to Maria Drive; it also connects up to the state-owned aquatic buffer preserves along Pine Island Sound. See the map on page 2. The long-time owners are willing to sell, and the property would be co-managed by Lee County and the Calusa Land Trust.

Our estimates show that this parcel contains 172 acres of pine flatwoods, 65 acres of upland hardwoods, 30 acres of mangroves, and 10 acres of mixed wetland hardwoods. The pine flatwoods are along Stringfellow Road and consist mostly of slash pine and palmetto, mixed with tarflower and other wildflowers. An old farm road runs the entire length of the flatwoods and would make a great trail.

The upland hardwood area is oak hammock (mostly scrub oak, with palmetto and fern understory). Numerous bromeliads, among other attractions, make a visit worthwhile. The overly-thick palmetto plus serious melaleuca infestation cause travel through the

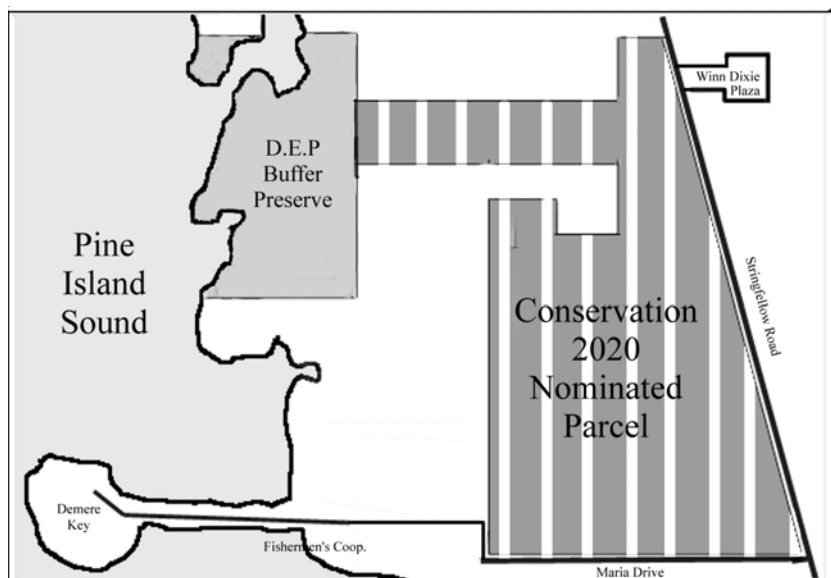
hardwood area to be extremely difficult. Peter Ordway, Rich Little, and I have nonetheless managed to cut a crude trail through a portion of the thicket to the most interesting feature of all—a brackish pond which, because of its remote location, serves not only Pine Island native critters but also numerous migrating species as well. When I first discovered the pond, I accidentally scattered at least 100 blue-winged teal, a species I never knew visited Pine Island.

This would be by far the largest undertaking in the history of the Calusa Land Trust (estimates of market value run as high as \$3.5 million). The land trust has pledged \$25,000 in matching funds for the project. The nomination has a long administrative way to go, but we believe it has a good chance of approval because of its size and environmental variety and sensitivity. We have already identified eleven protected animal species and two protected plant species as residents on the property.

On May 27, a county staff team consisting of Lynda Riley (2020 Coordinator), Anik Wagner (staff biologist), and 2020 Advisory Board Member George Wheaton visited the property for three hours. They appeared very pleased at what they saw. The tarflower was in full bloom and various wildflowers such as a huge alligator lily made their appearance at just the right times. A gopher tortoise obligingly blocked our path (I did not put him there), and evidence of armadillo, bobcats, and other critters seemed to be everywhere.

The exotic trees, mainly melaleuca and Australian pine, did not please anybody and would be expensive to eradicate. The extensive trash piles also created a lot of discussion with wide variances in estimated removal prices. The main irritant, however, remains the high value proposed by the sellers.

Nonetheless, the visit was a success and the nomination gained support from the people who were there. In fact, the next day the 2020 Advisory Committee finalized their initial review of our nomination and it was moved forward unanimously. It now goes to the staff for scoring relative to other nominations and then to the Criteria and Ranking Subcommittee for secondary review on June 8. If approved, the County Commission will eventually rule on the nomination, and formal negotiation could begin at that time. Stay tuned!



UPDATE ON THE CALUSA INDIAN CANAL

by Bud House

As announced in our last newsletter, the Calusa Land Trust has purchased an option to buy a one-acre parcel through which the Calusa Canal traveled. This parcel is located at 6450 Meadow Lane near Pineland. This incredible canal, dug five to six feet deep and thirty feet wide by the Calusa Indians, extended all the way from the Pineland village complex across the island through Indian Field Island. Unfortunately, almost all of the canal's evidence has been obliterated by development, agriculture, and land clearing.

Our option to buy this piece of history expires at the end of 1999. We need only \$12,000. So far the donations for this project have totaled \$3,975; we have a long way to go and not much time. I would like to thank the Lee Trust for Historic Preservation for their generous contribution and also make a special appeal here to other members of the land trust to assist in this purchase.

EARTH DAY '99

We celebrated Earth Day '99 on March 27. The day began with a Trash Bash at various sites around Pine Island, followed by activities at the Elks Lodge and the Methodist Church Hall at Pine Island Center, including displays and booths featuring many fine products. All funds raised through these events were dedicated toward the purchase of the Calusa Canal. Our thanks to Cathy Valenti for again heading up this event.

NOTES FROM THE PRESIDENT

by Ed Chapin

I attended the second annual Florida Land Trust Conference at the Tampa Convention Center on May 22 and 23. Staff from the national Land Trust Alliance and other land trust leaders from around the country offered seminars in key subjects – including fundraising, membership development, the economic benefits of preserving land, and much more. Over 30 land trusts from around the country were represented, with a total of about 160 participants.

Let me share some of what I learned. Looking at the big picture, the state of Florida has purchased over 1 million acres of land under the "Preservation 2000" program in the last 10 years, but we are now clearing 1/4 million acres per year! There are about 18 million acres of natural lands left in private hands with potential for development. The clock is ticking.

The good news is that the legislature overwhelmingly approved the new "Florida Forever" program, which will replace the expiring "Preservation 2000" program. This endeavor will generate about \$3 billion over the next 10 years. The speakers at the

conference were optimistic that this will be a more flexible program, enabling the state to purchase more land and use conservation easements to spread the dollars further.

At the local level, I was able to share some of what we have learned through our GIS mapping program. Board member Peter Ordway has compared two Pine Island vegetation surveys, one done by Lee County in 1981 and a more recent survey by the South Florida Water Management District. He determined that during the last 15-20 years, we have lost 2,500 acres of upland forests, mostly pine flatwoods! So we really have our work cut out for us.

From our newsletters over the last year, you know that the Calusa Land Trust is currently working with other groups such as the Sanibel-Captiva Conservation Foundation, the Conservancy of Southwest Florida, Lee County, and other government agencies to target prime properties for purchase. When we can join efforts, we are able to stretch our very limited resources. In the past we have been able to purchase many large mangrove tracts because the cost was not prohibitive. But our concern is now turning toward trying to save our disappearing pine flatwoods. Needless to say, the cost is much higher, seemingly out of reach. But we are committed to trying.

Thanks to all of you who have helped our organization succeed!

CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS		
<u>DATE:</u>	<u>TIME:</u>	<u>EVENT:</u>
July 3	<i>see below</i>	Work day at St. Jude Trail
September 4	<i>see below</i>	Work day at Back Bay
October 2	<i>see below</i>	Work day at Fritts Park

Note: For all work days, call Richard Little at 283-4974 or page Ed Chapin at 277-6807 for times and exact locations to meet.

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

by Norm Gowan (283-8203)

The Calusa Land Trust continues to grow. We are now 774 members strong, with 438 (57%) current in their dues. That is an increase of 70 members since our last newsletter in February. Thank you everyone for your support. If that little bug (*) appears after your name on the label, that means you are not yet one of the current paid-up members. Please take a moment to rejoin Calusa Land Trust, or drop us a line to let us know you are no longer interested as that would help minimize our mailing expenses.

FUND RAISING EVENTS

by Norm Gowan (283-8203)

PLUNK-A-PLANK CAMPAIGN

We are continuing to add names to the St. Jude Nature Trail Boardwalk. If space becomes a problem, we plan to add a second lower handrail which will provide more carving space as well as added safety. Let our master carver Jan Bailey immortalize you or a loved one in wood. A \$50 donation will cover names up to about 16 characters while \$100 will get almost any name. To date, 456 planks have been sold for an income to the land trust of \$22,660. Memorial space is nearly used up but we plan to build another Memorial Bench along the trail.

PARCEL "X" FUND RAISING DINNER — February 27

Since we had nearly depleted our unrestricted funds with the recent purchases of York Island and the Kreie, Underhill Creek, and Dobbs parcels, it was time to start building our treasury for our next, as yet undefined project, "Parcel X." As a kickoff, the land trust sponsored a delicious roast beef dinner at Jimmie and Joe Eisenberg's lovely tropical gardens. Boat tours to Back Bay and York Island were provided and many guests enjoyed these cruises.

At the dinner, members Al and Connie Eleinko and Dave and Nichole Nichols, of the Double Nichol Pub, contributed all of the food and beverage expenses. The guests enjoyed the bounty while contributing \$1,340 toward our next land purchase. The cruises were donated by Chic Kennedy, Del Mergen, and Frank Taugner of the Pine Island Boat Club. Since this event, the total donations for "Parcel X" have reached \$22,975!

WHITE ELEPHANT SALE — March 13

A "White Elephant" rummage sale was held on Saturday, March 13 and was a great success. Numerous treasures were donated and our volunteers spent much time cleaning, marking, arranging, and dragging stuff around. In the end, many participants commented on how nice everything looked. Thanks to the efforts of Gloria Andrews, Phyllis Andrews, Lee Tracy and Chris Trost, the Calusa Land Trust raised additional funds that have been dedicated to purchasing the Calusa Canal.

ST. PATRICK'S DAY DINNER — March 17

The Calusa Land Trust held its third annual St. Patrick's Day dinner at the Greater Pine Island Elks Lodge at Pine Island Center. A wonderful corned beef dinner was prepared under the direction of Marie Gowan, with many land trust members cooking and serving. 260 pounds of corned beef, 100 pounds of potatoes, 60 pounds of carrots, and we lost track of how much cabbage were served up in 208 dinners and 100 sandwiches. Great music was donated by Jimmie Eisenberg, Rene Doran, and Hank Wojdak. The land trust made \$1,250 from this fun affair. What a way to spend the day!

THE GREAT PINE ISLAND RUBBER DUCK RACE — March 20

The Calusa Land Trust, in conjunction with the Greater Pine Island Elks Lodge Youth Programs, hosted the Island's first rubber duck race on an outgoing tide at Monroe Canal. It was an incredible event few will forget.

The party went on all day long, with a car show starting in the morning, live music playing all afternoon, and the Double Nichol Pub roasting two pigs and selling seventeen kegs of beer by the day's end. Attendance was the biggest I have ever seen in St. James City for any event, and I have been here for a while. Every single little rubber duck was sold and the crowd went wild as all 1,000 of them "swam" speedily down to the finish line, which was provided by Honc Marine Construction. The first prize, three days and two nights donated by South Seas Plantation Resort, was awarded to duck #700. This famous duck may now be seen on display at the Pub. The second prize, a 27" color TV, was donated by our local Circuit City store. Many other prizes were awarded, too numerous to list here. In the end, the land trust and the Elks split a profit of \$4,500. Many thanks are due to Dave and Nichole Nichols for making this all possible.

FIELD TRIP FOR PINE ISLAND ELEMENTARY STUDENTS

In April, board members Rick Moore and Ed Chapin took a class of fifth grade students from Pine Island Elementary School on a field trip to Galt Island and other sites to teach them the value of preserving our natural environment. More trips are planned for the future. What better way to ensure that our lands will be cared for? The class wrote wonderful letters of thanks; here are two which exemplify the general sentiment:

Dear Mr. Moore,

Thank you for taking the time to show us around. It was a whole lot of fun seeing everything like flowers, bushes and mangroves. I think I like Galt Island the most. The bridge was cool, you know, with all those names carved in it. It sure was hot though. We were lucky there weren't any mosquitoes there then. It was lots of fun seeing the mounds. That was a lot of fun.

I can't wait until we go to the Baxley Preserve, the Pine Island mudflats, and the Indian mounds. The Baxley Preserve is gonna be a lot of fun because all of the high hills. The mudflats are going to be a lot of fun catching all the stuff. Last, it's gonna be fun to see the Indian mounds. I can't wait.

*Sincerely,
Ashley Garris*

P.S. Thank you. Bye.

Dear Mr. Moore,

I'd like to thank you for using your time on us. I'd also like to thank you for giving us information on plants, trees, and exotic things. I would like to thank you also for walking all that way for us. And for describing all sorts of plants to us. Thanks to you and Mr. Chapin I had a great field trip.

I am looking forward to going on all of the other great field trips, the Baxley Preserve, the Indian mounds and the Pineland mudflats. I am looking forward to learning a lot of different things.

*Your student,
Billy Hartman*

HELP STILL NEEDED:

1. **Souvenir Sales Coordinators** — We are still seeking a member (or two) to take charge of selling T-shirts, prints, etc. at local events, and also to distribute Calusa Land Trust literature. Don and Mary Shontz handled this in great style for many years, but have now moved from the area. Since this is mainly a seasonal job, “snowbirds” are certainly welcome. For more information, or to volunteer to help out on fund-raising events, call fund-raising chairman Norm Gowan at 283-8203.

2. **Friends of Charlotte Harbor Aquatic Preserves** — This worthwhile organization is looking for volunteers to help the Department of Environmental Protection in managing its land and waters. Call Carla Kappmeyer-Sherwin at the local DEP office for information (283-2424).

1999 RUMMAGE SALE

Plans are proceeding for the land trust's 1999 Rummage Sale to be held at Fritts Park on Saturday, November 27, 1999. The sale will be between 8:00 A.M. and 2:00 P.M. and this time we are going to sell hamburgers. Members should start to identify and save their unwanted treasures to make this another successful sale. You can deliver your items to the park the night before the sale—or call the sale's organizer, Shirley House, if you need someone to pick up your things. Her number is 283-3493. Folks can shop and have a bite to eat while enjoying the beauty of the park. Fritts Park is located on Beach Daisy Lane just south of the Pink Citrus Trailer Park near Bokeelia.

MEMORIALS

Few tributes are so lasting as a memorial that helps preserve our island's natural heritage for future generations. We in the Calusa Land Trust are privileged to carry on our work in the memory of individuals 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.

Johan C. F. Andersen *	Alfred Woodhull Guibord *	Fred Patterson *
Josephine Anderson	Betty Gutowski *	Donald R. Peterson
Melvin Atkin *	Robert Hallen *	Mabel Phillipson *
Vesta Bailey *	Ash Hallett *	Frank Polaski *
Lyall Beving *	Joe Hanson *	Pete Polverari *
Frank Bopp	Charles J. Heimann II *	Yolanda Mae Reppa *
Marge Borton *	Wyatt Hooks *	Gertie Rudd *
Betty B. Bouwes *	Minnie & A.B. Hoover *	Reese Sarda *
Ralph Brimacombe *	Earl Hord *	Chevy Schutz *
Margaret L. Burman *	Allen Houglan *	Dorothy Seeling
Don Burr *	Jack Houis *	Phil Shaw *
Jack Campbell	E.S. (Red) Ingram *	William Sherwood
John M Campbell *	Lezlee Jean Ingram *	Dan Shockley *
Terez "Terri" Carver *	Hinda & J.B. Johnson *	Agnes Jane Snyder
Arnold S. Celmalnieks *	Walt Karkut *	Raymond W. Stober *
Ben Counselman *	Walter R. Kaune *	Don Szuminski *
George Darnell	Jack Kirmer *	Frank Taugner, Sr. *
Doyle Davison *	Edward J. & Amanda Lever	Kay Taugner *
Jon Davison *	Russell Little *	Jim Thomas *
Louis Del Signore *	Hector Magnuson *	Robert Tutza *
Woodie Dillon *	James W. Mahaffey *	Leonore M. Vondorov *
C. Frank Estelle	Marie Maraviglia *	William Webster *
Dr. Ambrose C. Estes *	Lewis W. McAllister *	Wayne Weeks *
Margaret Foster	Ethel McDonough *	Dorothy Welch
Phil Freeman *	M. Kathleen Mellon *	Bert & Mildred Wildman *
Nellwyn de Funiak	Donald Meng *	Edith Williams *
Joyce Gasow *	John Moran	"Fishin" Bud Williams *
Jack Gates *	Thelma Mufich *	Bernard Willoughby *
Nancy Gilmore	Arthur & Ida Newberg	Margaret L. Wilson, M.D.
Loren "POP" Gowan *	Edward Newton	Walt Woodhead *
Anne Grace *	Mildred V. O'Brien *	Bruno & Theresa *
Robert "Bob" Greist *	Earl Ott *	"Grandma Dot" *
Kate Guthrie *		

** Indicates name on the St. Jude Trail Memorial Observation Deck.*

CALUSA LAND TRUST MEMBERSHIPS AND DONATIONS:

_____ \$15 Individual Member _____ \$ _____ Calusa canal purchase

_____ \$25	Family Member	_____ \$ 23	Nature Lover's Guide to P.I.
_____ \$50	Donor or Organization	_____ \$ _____	for _____
_____ \$100	Contributor	_____ \$50	Plunk-a-Plank
_____ \$250	Angel		(fill in lettering below)

Sponsor's Name (optional): _____

Your Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Second Address? _____

Second City, State, Zip? _____

Phone _____

Today's Date _____

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). 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 941-334-8866 DURING WORKING HOURS.

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