

Calusa Land Trust

and Nature Preserve of Pine Island, Inc.



Newsletter

October 1999

CALUSA INDIAN CANAL LOT PURCHASED!

We are thrilled to announce that all the funds to buy the first portion of the Calusa Canal on Meadow Lane have been raised, and we were able to accept the deed on August 20.

The Lee Trust for Historic Preservation kicked off the fund-raising campaign with a \$1,000 donation. Two fund-raising events were held, and 45 individuals and groups made contributions. Joseph Brinton, 3rd, of Gulfport brought this campaign to a swift and successful end with an \$8,000 donation. Many thanks to everyone who made this important archeological acquisition possible!

CALUSA CANAL, PHASE II

With our first Calusa Canal lot safely in hand, the Land Acquisition Committee decided to work toward further purchases on Meadow Lane in hopes of someday acquiring all six canal parcels. For those who missed our last newsletter, the "Canal," originally 30 feet wide and 5-6 feet deep, had been dug by the Calusa Indians thousands of years ago, from Pineland across Pine Island through Indian Field Island to Matlacha Pass. Needless to say, most of it has since been destroyed. The six lots on Meadow Lane represent a special opportunity to save a small but continuous piece of history.

Through continuing discussions with other owners, we have been able to obtain an option for another lot, a 1.46-acre piece located at 6330 Meadow Lane currently owned by Mr. Curt Doerfler of Loxahatchee. This option gives us one year to raise the \$15,000 purchase price. If you would like to help out, please mark your donations or membership checks with "Canal." If you have any questions about this project, or would like a tour of the area, please contact Bud House at 283-3493.

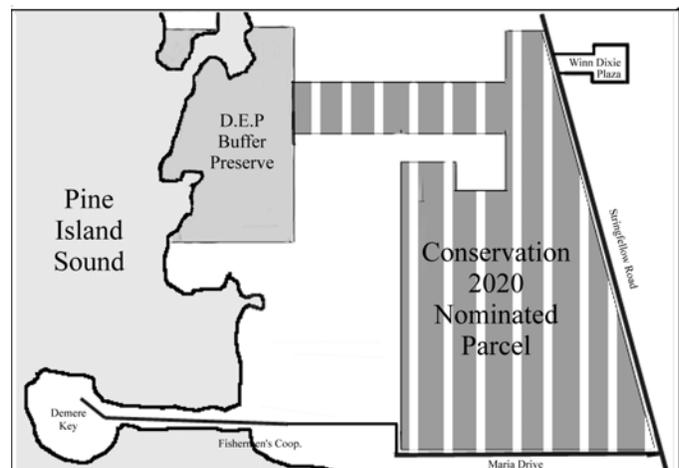
PROPOSED PINE ISLAND CENTER PRESERVE RECEIVES INITIAL COUNTY APPROVAL by Phil Buchanan, 283-4067

Lee County Commissioners voted 5-0 to approve the Calusa Land Trust proposal for Conservation 2020 purchase of a vast 277-acre upland parcel at Pine Island Center. The vote was met with claps and cheers from the 30-40 Pine Island supporters who filled the Courthouse Chamber for the proceeding on September 14. One Commissioner said he had received numerous phone calls supporting the \$3.5-million proposal.

Several of the Commissioners and county staff members praised the Calusa Land Trust for its work on this project, as well as other conservation work. Commissioner St. Cerny noted the Pine Island Center project as a model of government-private cooperation.

The Commissioners' approval means that county acquisition specialists are now authorized to enter into negotiations with the owners, who already have agreed to sell at market value. At least two appraisals will be used to establish that amount. If those negotiations are successful, this preserve could be a reality early in the year 2000.

As you may recall from previous newsletters, the proposed preserve consists of 172 acres of quality pine flatwoods, 65 acres of upland hardwoods, 30 acres of mangroves, and 10 acres of mixed wetland hardwoods. It has an existing old farm road that would make an excellent hiking trail and a pond that attracts numerous wildlife. We have thus far documented 13 protected species living on the property, plus a pair of eagles who are surveying a nesting site on the northern edge of the property.



LONG CUT PRESERVE

The Land Trust, in partnership with the Sanibel-Captiva Conservation Foundation, has acquired an option to buy 130 acres of wetlands from the Jones Trust, which we have preliminarily named the “Long Cut Preserve.” This property is bordered by York and Coconut Islands (which we already own) on the south, Pine Island Sound on the west, “Jungle Cut” and the DEP Aquatic Preserve on the north, and Cherry Estates Canal on the east. It contains “Long Cut” as well as all waterways that Cherry Estates boaters use as their gateway to Pine Island Sound.

The purchase price is \$130,000; the Calusa Land Trust is responsible for 50% or \$65,000. We must raise these funds by July of next year or the option will expire.

Cherry Estates and Trailerhaven area residents are probably the greatest beneficiaries of this purchase. We are therefore asking them to join with us in raising the necessary funds. The Trust already has nearly \$25,000 designated for this project but much more is needed. Please dig deep and contribute what you can to preserve this southeastern portion of our island as we now know and love it.

OTHER LAND ACQUISITION NEWS

While our fundraising committee works to raise funds for the Calusa Canal and Long Cut Preserve, we continue to pursue other possible acquisitions. To guide our efforts, we are developing a database of Pine Island’s endangered properties. It is still in an early stage of development, but we have drawn some preliminary conclusions. For instance, we now believe all of Pine Island’s endangered habitats can be divided into 38 properties (some with multiple owners) and prioritized as to their level of endangerment. We have found that a mere seven significant native upland areas remain on Pine Island - they range from 17 to 350 acres each and vary as to quality. We have also discovered that even though the Calusa Land Trust and the Florida Department of Environmental Protection have both made great strides in protecting Pine Island mangroves, 31 significant mangrove areas remain in private ownership.

Because there are so few natural parcels left, we plan to concentrate most of our efforts on acquiring uplands, but we will also work on some really critical and endangered mangrove areas too. Besides buying up the smaller parcels ourselves whenever we can, we plan at least one or two more Conservation 2020 nominations for the larger parcels. We also will pursue more joint efforts with the Sanibel-Captiva Conservation Foundation and continue to negotiate conservation easements where appropriate. Finally, a few of the 38 properties may be ideal for purchase by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Commis-

sion for wildlife refuges, or by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection for preservation as aquatic buffer preserves.

We currently have two joint CLT/SCCF offers outstanding for purchase. They are both mangrove islands in Pine Island Sound. We are also negotiating a conservation easement with a landowner of an endangered scenic area in Bokeelia. We hope to report progress on these arrangements in the near future.

NOTES FROM THE PRESIDENT

by Ed Chapin

It has certainly been a long hot summer and many exciting things have been going on with Calusa Land Trust as you can read in this newsletter. In this space, however, I am going to take a moment away from all the activities to express my heartfelt thanks to all of you for your generous support over the years. I would also like to thank all of our many volunteers who have given their valuable time over and over again for the projects and maintenance chores that sometimes seem never-ending. I do not have room to mention every person I am thinking of, but I would like to mention a few at this time.

First, I must recognize our treasurer, Bill Spikowski, who has done a great job of balancing our books, creating new accounts as necessary, making investment recommendations, and filing the multiple tax returns and reports required of us to keep our tax-exempt status. He really deserves a huge thank you for his tireless work which seems so confusing to most of us. We are currently looking for someone with expertise to assist in this very important job, especially with our tax and corporate filings; our books and taxes get more complicated every year.

Next I want to thank a past president, Norm Gowan, our current membership chairman and fundraising chairman extraordinaire! He keeps careful track of hundreds of donations each and every year, making sure the books are ready for our tax reports. And in his spare time he is out raising money; without his efforts, we could not have acquired over 400 acres last year alone.

Another long-time dedicated volunteer is Bud House. Thanks to his initiative, we now own a part of the old Calusa Canal that once stretched across Pine Island. This archaeological site is very important to the history of the area and is in imminent danger of being lost forever. I could go on and on about Bud but I must mention another long-time volunteer who helped found the organization back in 1976. Alison Ackerman has been doing an outstanding job year after year as our newsletter editor, making each article clear and accurate. It seems like every time she completes one and we send it out, I not only hear good things about it, but our members respond with their membership renewals and donations.

Another volunteer making a significant impact on our organization is Richard Little, who has worked very hard to make our Stewardship Program a success. He was also instrumental in organizing our new Ranger Council and continues to put in many many hours each month serving on the board of directors and volunteering for projects.

Lastly I would like to thank Phil Buchanan, who, as one of our newest Board members, has gone above and beyond every call of duty. Not only is he responsible for our very successful *Nature Lovers Guide to Pine Island*, but he has spent all summer doing an environmental inventory of the entire Pine Island area. This will be invaluable to our acquisition program.

This brings me to a brief report of what our Rangers have been doing this summer. They have not only put in more native plants along the St. Jude Trail in August, but did a clean-up and exotic plant removal in our Back Bay Preserve in September. On September 18, many participated in the Coastal Clean-Up, concentrating on Calusa Island and Lee County's Bocilla Preserve. I was there and I must say we found noticeably less trash than in previous years.

In closing, I remain in awe of how much effort so many have given for this organization. I thank all of you.

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

by Norm Gowan (283-8203)

Our membership has once again reached a new high; we are up to 786 total members with 466 (62%) current in their dues. Remember, individual and family memberships are the life blood of this organization, so be sure to check the label on this newsletter to see if there is a little bug (*), indicating it's been one year since your last contribution. Please continue to support us. Thank you!

MANGOMANIA '99

The Calusa Land Trust participated in MangoMania '99 with a booth that displayed our past, present, and future preservation projects on Pine Island. The event was well attended, drawing an estimated 5,000 people over the July weekend. A good number of those folks visited our display, learning about Calusa Land Trust and its mission, with some buying memberships, books and raffle tickets for the Cypress painting by Gerry Phillips. Our income after expenses was \$280. While not a financial block buster, we got our story across to a lot of interested people, some of whom joined on the spot. Perhaps just as important, the Calusa Land Trust was definitely a noticed presence at this

community event. Thanks to all the volunteers who worked 2-hour shifts and kept the booth open for those 2 long hot July days.

FUND-RAISING EVENTS

by Norm Gowan (283-8203)

In addition to membership donations, we host a series of events each year which help fund our acquisitions and are also a lot of fun. Check out this list and plan on joining us for some or all of them. Call me anytime for more information.

PLUNK-A-PLANK — The boardwalk on the St. Jude Nature Trail now has 477 names carved into the planks and railings. For only \$50, you too can have someone's name preserved for posterity. If you have not visited the boardwalk yet, grab your bug spray and take this more enjoyable walk down the trail.

POKER RUN — This will be the 7th annual Poker Run on the water sponsored by the Pine Island Boat Club to benefit the Land Trust on Sunday, December 5. Anyone can play for a \$5 ticket and the winning hand has always taken home well over \$1,000. Read the Pine Island Eagle for details.

ROAST BEEF DINNER — This dinner will be held once again at the beautiful jungle garden of Jimmie and Joe Eisenberg. The dinner, with all the trimmings, will be cooked on site by Dave and Nichole Nichols of the Double Nichol Pub. Beer, wine and soft drinks are all included. Pontoon boat tours around Long Cut Preserve will be provided before the dinner on Saturday, February 26. All this is included for a minimum donation of \$50 per couple to help pay the \$65,000 we must raise by next July to complete the purchase of Long Cut Preserve. Boat tours start at 12:00 P.M. and dinner will be served at 3:00. This is open to Land Trust members and their guests only, so it will not be advertised.

ST. PATRICK'S DAY — This will be our 4th year to host this great corned beef and cabbage dinner at the Greater Pine Island Elks Lodge on Friday, March 17, starting at 1:00 P.M. You can't find a better traditional dinner with live music and fun going on all afternoon and into the evening.

RUBBER DUCK RACE — The first rubber duck race we ever held, in March of this past year, attracted the largest crowd I have ever seen in St. James City. Everyone witnessed 1000 rubber ducks streaking for the finish line. Prizes of a weekend at South Seas Resort, a 27" color TV, a stereo CD player and more were awarded to the owners of the winning ducks of the last race. In the year 2000, the race will take place on Monroe Canal at the Double Nichol Pub on Saturday, April 8. Mark your calendars and watch for more news in the papers.

CALUSA CANAL FENCE ERECTED

To keep farm vehicles off our newly-acquired Calusa Canal property, we are constructing a split rail fence around it. This effort has been coordinated by Geoffrey Rogers of Rustic Fence Company in St. James City. The initial work party was held on Tuesday, October 5, led by Rogers and assisted by land trust volunteers. If you can help finish this project or assist in managing this property, please let Bud House know. His number is 283-3493. By the way, Meadow Lane is the second street north of Stringfellow off of Harbor Drive.

1999 RUMMAGE SALE

Plans are proceeding for the Calusa 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 or barbecue beef sandwiches. 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, if you need someone to pick up your things, call the sale's organizers, Shirley House at 283-3493 or Cari Caudill at 283-9710. Folks can shop and have a bite to eat while enjoying the beauty of the park. Shirley and Cari are asking for volunteers to help price items on Friday and assist at the sale on Saturday. Fritts Park is located on Beach Daisy Lane just south of the Pink Citrus Trailer Park near Bokeelia.

CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS

| <u>DATE:</u> | <u>TIME:</u> | <u>EVENT:</u> | <u>CONTACT:</u> |
|--------------|--------------|-------------------|---|
| Nov. 27 | 8-2 P.M. | Rummage sale | Shirley House, 283-3493 Cari Caudill, 283-9710 |
| Dec. 5 | | Poker Run | Norm Gowan, 283-8203 |
| Feb. 26 | noon | Roast beef dinner | Norm Gowan, 283-8203 |
| Mar. 17 | 1 P.M. | St. Patrick's Day | Norm Gowan, 283-8203 |
| April 8 | | Rubber duck race | Norm Gowan, 283-8203 |

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 _____

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