

Calusa Land Trust

and Nature Preserve of Pine Island, Inc.



Newsletter

www.calusalandtrust.org

December 2003

Picnic Island

by Norm Gowan (283-8203)

After months of negotiating with Florida's Department of Environmental Protection, Calusa Land Trust signed a lease on October 13 agreeing to take over all management responsibilities for Picnic Island.

Located near St. James City adjacent to our recently purchased Sister Keys Preserve, Picnic Island will now be managed for the continued enjoyment of the boating public. The Pine Island Boat Club will be sharing management duties with us. Of top concern is the gradual replacement of the exotic trees with native ones. The exotic shade trees will remain until the native trees are big enough to provide much needed shade. Members of both the Calusa Land Trust and the Boat Club have already begun this process by planting over twenty natives in mid-July and hauling water out to the island to get them established.

We hope everyone will take the time to visit Picnic Island to see what a treasure it is. Once there, you can help out by picking up any trash you may find and hauling it back to the mainland. If you want to have a fire, you may use any wood that is left over from past maintenance work and stacked in a pile; otherwise we ask that everyone bring their own wood. With all of us keeping an eye on things and following common outdoor courtesies like taking away everything we bring, Picnic Island will only get more beautiful over time.



President's Report

James "Alex" Alexander

As you will quickly see, lots of good things have been happening with your Calusa Land Trust. Norm Gowan's article on Picnic Island describes a "one-of-a-kind" cooperation with the state of Florida. This is a marvelous opportunity for us to not only manage one of the jewels of southwest Florida, but also to demonstrate the power of cooperation between different organizations. Brenda Anderson's report on the Great Calusa Blueway (another joint effort, this time with Calusa Land Trust assisting Lee County), ensures that outdoor enthusiasts can more easily enjoy five of our existing preserves. Ed Chapin's Ranger/Stewardship report highlights all the ongoing activities his committee does to improve the quality of our preserves and educate the community.

To date we have been quite successful in adding new lands to be protected. Harold Bruner's acquisition committee report outlines the problems we now face in acquiring more land due to rapidly rising prices and increasing competition. This is a major challenge for the Calusa Land Trust. Therefore, I wholeheartedly recommend that you:

1. Participate in the fund-raisers described in Norm Gowan's comments below—they are a fun way to support your organization.
2. Support the endowment fund—this is important for long-term management of our preserves.
3. Finally, let us know your thoughts and ideas. We would love to hear your suggestions on how to make our organization more successful.

PURPOSE OF THE CALUSA LAND TRUST:

"... to acquire, hold, and manage environmentally sensitive lands, archaeological and historic sites, and other natural lands; to encourage education and research in the fields of conservation and preservation; to establish nature preserves or other protected areas to be used for scientific, educational, aesthetic, or passive recreational purposes; to cooperate with other entities having similar or related objectives; and to engage in any other activity relating to the furtherance of the foregoing objectives."

— *From the articles of incorporation of the Calusa Land Trust (Article II)*

Notice of Annual Meeting by Norm Gowan, nominating committee chair

Our annual meeting will be held on Sunday, January 18, 2004, at 1:00 PM at the Fishers of Men Lutheran Church located at 10360 Stringfellow Road, ¼ mile south of Pine Island Road. A separate notice will **not** be mailed, so please mark your calendars.

In addition to reports on our activities, we will be holding elections for the Board of Directors. Eight of our directors have already been elected for the 2003–04 term (the second half of their two-year terms). They are Jim Alexander, Ed Chapin, Joan Culver, Norm Gowan, Bud House, Judy Ott, Ron Wesorick, and Jack Worthington. The terms of five other directors are expiring; each has agreed to serve for another term if re-elected. They are Alison Ackerman, Harold Bruner, Brian Cotterill, Bill Spikowski, and Rubye Woodhead. One current director, Anna De Meo, has chosen not to run again for personal reasons. Our thanks go out to her for her dedicated service over the past two years!

This leaves two openings on the Board. The Nominating Committee has selected two excellent candidates. The first is Brenda Anderson, an enthusiastic member for many years who has given a great deal of support with her accounting, guiding, and ranger skills. Brenda recently headed up our cooperative effort with the Great Calusa Blueway. The second is Gene Tollman, a past Commodore of the Pine Island Boat Club and a co-founder of the Sailing Club. Gene has worked on several of our fundraising events and has been active in our management of Picnic Island. Additional nominations will be taken from the floor during the annual meeting.

Blueway Report

by Brenda Anderson (283-1878)

At the July board meeting, the Calusa Land Trust board of directors voted to participate in the Great Calusa Blueway by offering five CLT preserves to be included on the blueway map and website.

The Great Calusa Blueway is a marked canoe and kayak trail sponsored by Lee County Parks and Recreation. Phase I is now complete and encompasses Estero Bay from the Imperial River to Bunche Beach. Phase II will include Matlacha Pass and Pine Island Sound and it is scheduled to be completed by March 2004.

These Calusa Land Trust preserves will be presented as "Highlights" on their map with various activities offered. (Note: it was decided that camping would not be one of these activities.)

<u>Preserve</u>	<u>Activities</u>
St. Jude Trail	Hiking, picnicking
Back Bay Preserve	Canoeing
Underhill Creek Preserve	Canoeing
Fritts Park - Big Jim Creek	Canoeing, picnicking, paddlecraft launch, parking
Shell Cut - Calusa Island Preserve	Picnicking

Picnic Island will also be listed on the Great Calusa Blueway Map. This state-owned property is managed by Calusa Land Trust; in accordance with our recent agreement with the state, primitive camping will be allowed using wilderness camping etiquette.

Our CLT Blueways Committee (Harold Bruner, Ed Chapin, Joan Culver, Judy Ott, Ron Wesorick, Jack Worthington, and myself) is now in the process of marking the canoe trails on our preserves. We will start with those listed above and eventually include all of the trails that we have been using on the Peter Ordway Mangrove Water Tours. If you are interested in helping paint or place the markers, please contact me at the above number or by e-mail: Brenda1040@hotmail.com.

Acquisition Committee Report

by Harold Bruner (464-2436)

The acquisition committee continues to pursue ways to preserve additional land in Greater Pine Island. There have been no acquisitions this fall, but two specific opportunities are being pursued. One is a donation that the owners hope to complete by the end of the year.

An interesting dilemma has come before the committee and the board. In our last CLT brochure we asked for people to contact us if they were willing to donate their land or to sell it to us at market prices. Real estate values have risen so much on Pine Island recently that there is some concern on the board about paying today's high prices. Feedback from our membership about this issue would be helpful.

At the next acquisition committee meeting we are going to continue to focus on ways of acquiring properties that are adjacent to preserves we already own. We will also be discussing an exciting new idea about acquiring certain lands that might be overlooked in this current market.

If you have any ideas, comments, concerns or suggestions about CLT land acquisition, please call my cell phone at (239) 464-2436 or e-mail me at hbruner@greider.net.

Ranger/Stewardship Report

by Ed Chapin (392-0090)

Work Parties: In July, several rangers braved the heat at Picnic Island and Sister Keys and planted about twenty trees: slash pines, mahoganies, seagrapes, buttonwoods, gumbo limbos, and live oaks. We want to get the trees in the ground before the rainy season was entirely over. Afterwards we picked up trash and headed home.

In September, we went to Big Jim Creek and Fritts Park, trimming around the trees and inching down the canoe trail removing errant branches and roots.

In October, Harold Bruner and Bud House went to Dobbs Preserve to clean up the trail and plant four 5-foot slash pines near the road. Then they went to St. Jude Trail, planting more slash pines near the entrance. At the Eagle Preserve, Brian Cotterill, Judy Ott, and I trimmed and marked the nature trail while pulling hundreds of melaleuca seedlings.

In November, the rangers once again spread out, this time to three preserves. Bud House and Harold Bruner went to Merwin Key, to “basal bark” Australian pine trees and pick up trash. Joan Culver and I boated to Picnic Island to water a newly planted live oak and two slash pines. We also picked up a bucket of trash, cut down and poisoned Brazilian peppers and Australian pines, and pulled up over 100 carrotwood seedlings. It was quite a productive day, but it was the group who kayaked to Back Bay, Jack Worthington, Brenda Anderson, and Terry and Susan Clements, who found the real surprise and ended up with a bonus to boot. Besides the usual bottles and styrofoam cups found while trash collecting, they came across a very nice inflatable dinghy with no motor. It did not take long to analyze the situation. After Brenda towed it back, a phone call to the sheriff's office confirmed their suspicions: it was stolen. The owner, who lives on Sanibel, was so grateful to get his boat back that he made a \$100 donation to the trust!

Canoe Trail Now Open: The canoe trail leading from Fritts Park to Big Jim Creek has been closed for over a year because of vegetative overgrowth. It is open once again, thanks especially to Pete Golling, who went out every day for a week straight, cutting and trimming the final 100 feet of the trail. Now that the cooler days are here, everyone should try to find an afternoon or morning to enjoy this beautiful trail once again.

Mote Marine Juvenile Fish Project: As mentioned in a previous newsletter, Calusa Land Trust has agreed to work with Mote Marine researcher Dr. Aaron Adams to monitor juvenile fish in St. James Creek, Big Jim Creek, Jug Creek, and Pine Island Creek. So far, we have gone out twice using a 35-foot seine net to trap the fish so we can measure and count them. (We have a special permit to do this, by the way.) So far we have pulled up anchovies, silversides, snook, snapper, shrimp, needlefish, pinfish, and the less familiar mohara. To make this project worthwhile, we need to go out several more times and need a few more volunteers. If you are interested, please beep me at the number above.

Service Project: Pine Island's Boy Scout Troop 20 volunteered to do a community service project for us. I decided to let them tackle our Back Bay Preserve and open a canoe trail. They have gone out twice and have completed the clearing process. Together we will soon mark the new trail with crab trap floats tied to branches and then create a map for our Peter Ordway Canoe Trail Guide.

Ranger Council Meeting: Five Rangers met on October 13 at Fritts Park and worked on setting up the next six work party dates and all canoe trips for the Peter Ordway Water Tours. They are both outlined in the table below. My hope is that in the coming year, we will continue to see our regular friends come out to work and enjoy our beautiful waterways as well as seeing many new faces. Please consider joining us at one or more of the following events.

WORK PARTIES

Saturday, December 6	9 to 12	Fritts Park, Baxley Preserve, Calusa Canal <i>(meet at Fritts Park)</i>
Saturday, January 3	9 to 12	Fritts Park, Big Jim Creek, Kreie Preserve <i>(meet at Fritts Park)</i>
Saturday, February 7	9 to 12	Long Cut, York Island <i>(meet at Hopkins Point)</i>
Saturday, March 6	9 to 12	St. Jude Trail, Dobbs Preserve <i>(meet at St. Jude Trail)</i>
Saturday, April 3	9 to 12	McCardle Island, Underhill Creek <i>(meet at Tropical Point)</i>
Every Sunday	11 to 1	Meet at Fritts Park for brunch first

PETER ORDWAY MANGROVE WATER TOURS *

Saturday, December 13	Fisheating Creek <i>(off island)</i>
Sunday, January 25	Back Bay Preserve
Saturday, February 28	Big Jim Creek
Sunday, March 21	Calusa Island
Saturday, April 24	Underhill Creek

** Reservations required. Beep Ed at 392-0090 or e-mail him at ecalusaed@aol.com. Ask him to add your name to his e-mail list and he will notify you before each trip.*

RANGER COUNCIL MEETING

Monday, March 8	6:30	Fritts Park
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Membership Report

by Norm Gowan (283-8203)

We currently have 791 members with 450 (57%) current in their dues. Because we greatly depend on our regular membership donations to keep us going, please take a look the address label on your newsletter. An asterisk "*" after your name means it has been a year since your last contribution.

We have made two timely announcements by way of e-mail in the past couple of months. We sent the announcements to the 278 members for whom we have valid e-mail addresses. If you did not receive an announcement regarding our lease of Picnic Island or our Plant-a-Pine project, we don't have your address! Please send it along with your next donation, or e-mail it to me at this address: GoldenPond@CcalusaLandTrust.org.

Upcoming Board of Directors' Meetings

The board of directors holds regular monthly meetings at the Elks Lodge at Pine Island Center. The next three board meetings are scheduled for December 16, January 20, and February 17. These meetings, held on the third Tuesday of each month, begin at 6:30 and usually run no longer than 7:30 or 7:45. All are welcome to attend and listen as well as share ideas.

Fund Raising Projects

by Norm Gowan (283-8203)

ENDOWMENT FUND: Our new Endowment Fund was inaugurated at the January 2003 annual meeting and explained in our last newsletter. We have had an excellent response to jumpstart this project and now we are looking to add to it. So far we have received \$3,778 with \$9,853 pledged. Please review the details in our last newsletter or on our website. To make this fund truly work, we need everyone's support.

FUND-RAISING EVENTS:

- ✓ The 11th Annual Poker Run on the water, sponsored by the Pine Island Boat Club to benefit the Trust, will be run on December 7th. Tickets may be purchased for \$5 a hand or a \$100 donation to the Trust will get you five complimentary tickets from the Boat Club.
- ✓ The 6th Annual Rubber Duck Race will take place March 13th at the Double Nichol Pub in St. James City. Tickets are \$5/duck. Many great prizes! Plan to come out or contact me for tickets.
- ✓ We continue to carve names in hand rails and memorial benches. To date, we have done 637 names for almost \$32,000 in donations! One more name will put us over! Will that be yours?



Ed Chapin leans on ancient gumbo limbo tree on Calusa Island

CALUSA LAND TRUST MEMBERSHIPS AND DONATIONS:

_____ \$ 15	Individual Member	_____ \$500	Angel
_____ \$ 25	Family Member	_____ \$ ____	Endowment Fund
_____ \$ 50	Donor or Organization	_____ \$ ____	_____
_____ \$100	Contributor	_____ \$ 50	Plunk-a-Plank (fill in lettering below)

CREDIT CARD #: _____ **EXPIRATION DATE:** _____

SIGNATURE (for credit card only): _____

Your Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____ Today's Date _____

Second Address? _____

Second City, State, Zip? _____

Phone _____ E-mail address _____

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). OUR REGISTRATION NUMBER IS SC-03439. 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 239-334-8866 DURING WORKING HOURS. THE CALUSA LAND TRUST NEVER EMPLOYS PROFESSIONAL FUNDRAISERS; 100% OF YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS ARE RETAINED BY THE CALUSA LAND TRUST.

**Calusa Land Trust & Nature Preserve
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