

Calusa Land Trust

and Nature Preserve of Pine Island, Inc.



Newsletter

www.calusalandtrust.org

July 2002

Calusa Island Preserve Expanded

by Alison Ackerman

Pat Ordway, widow of Peter Ordway, long-time director of the Trust, established a fund to purchase and preserve some property to memorialize Peter, who passed away last fall. The board decided to buy more property on Calusa Island, Peter's favorite retreat, where Peter and Pat would often go to picnic. The particular spot he loved is almost two acres with 200 feet of frontage on Charlotte Harbor. It was owned by Fred Johnson, one of the original Calusa Land Trust founders, who then agreed to sell it for \$30,000, a bargain sale.

The Calusa Island Preserve was the first property owned by the Calusa Land Trust. The initial preserve was about 31 acres, mostly mangrove forest, with about 1,200 feet running clear across Calusa Island from Charlotte Harbor to Jug Creek. Later donations from Fred Johnson added the western 250 feet of Calusa Island, all the way to Shell Cut, and 130 more feet along the harbor that consists of some mangroves plus a Calusa Indian shell midden that itself is over an acre in size.

Closing on the new parcel took place on June 19. Our heartfelt thanks to the many people who donated to the Ordway Fund, particularly Steve Briggs, who contributed valuable stocks, and Ken Keller, who gave a trawler that we sold for \$10,000. These contributions have covered over two-thirds of the \$30,000 cost of the property. Here are some pictures - you can see why Peter loved this spot so much.



Shoreline of latest addition to Calusa Island Preserve



Looking north from midden onto Charlotte Harbor



A resident gopher tortoise pauses at his doorstep

Land Acquisition News

by Phil Buchanan (283-4067)

During the past few months we have added several new preserves and expanded others, in addition to the Calusa Island purchase noted above:

Indian Lake Preserve: The 110-acre central portion of this long sought-after preserve has now been purchased. The Conservation 2020 Program paid \$480,000 and the Calusa Land Trust paid \$10,000. We also have a signed contract for the southernmost 56-acre portion along Galt Island and York Roads. That contract calls for Conservation 2020 to pay \$145,000 and the Calusa Land Trust to pay \$55,000 (\$32,500 of which was reimbursed by the residents of Galt Island Avenue). Closing is expected in July. The northernmost 105 acres, which includes a portion of Indian Lake, remains under negotiation. The title on all parcels will be held by Lee County.

Picnic Island: The Corps of Engineers has given the Calusa Land Trust the right to use their easement on Picnic Island and to manage the property for passive recreational use by the public. We plan to work with the Pine Island Boat Club to keep this island the most popular boating and picnicking destination in our area.

Pine Island Flatwoods Preserve: This preserve, previously 60 acres of all pine flatwoods, is soon to be 92 acres. The Conservation 2020 program is purchasing the 32-acre addition (closing expected in August) at a cost of \$355,000. Look for the Conservation 2020 sign south of Pine Island Village and visit this preserve. It has lots of primitive trails, a wide variety of plant life (particularly wildflowers due to the summer rains), and many gopher tortoises.

Pine Island Center Preserve? Our proposal to convert the Lee County-owned native pine flatwoods across from the fire station into a nature preserve continues to be debated by Lee County officials. That property had been slated to be cleared for ballfields and other active park facilities. Our proposal is that the ball fields and other facilities should be built next to the Pine Island Elementary School to allow joint use. The property next to the school is being offered for sale and would make a perfect park. Some county officials support the proposal while others do not, and it is too early to predict the outcome.

We also continue to negotiate other possible purchases, both solely by the Trust and by partnering with both the Conservation 2020 Program and the Sanibel-Captiva Conservation Foundation.

Ranger/Stewardship Report

by Ed Chapin

As usual, our hardworking rangers and stewards have been very busy maintaining and enhancing our preserves. Since November, we have had 9 work parties with 50 volunteers who have contributed over 500 hours of valuable labor. Some of their work includes:

- removing all the melaleuca from the Peter Ordway Tropical Hammock,
- removing almost all the Brazilian pepper & Australian pine from Calusa Island,
- removing all the melaleuca from the Calusa Canal lots on Meadow Lane,
- ongoing plant control at the Baxley and Dobbs Preserves,
- trimming and trash clean-up at Fritts Park, and
- trimming bushes and trees plus removing some invasive plants at the St. Jude trail.

I want to again thank our volunteers for their valuable contribution of hard work, worth many thousands of dollars to Calusa Land Trust.

Ranger Council: We also had a Ranger Council meeting at Fritts Park on March 11, when we planned our work schedule for the next six months and discussed land stewardship problems that need our attention. One change we are going to implement is to divide our Saturday work parties into two groups so we can service more preserves every month. Our new schedule is on the next page so mark your calendars if you can lend a hand.

Coastal Cleanup: In September, Keep Lee County Beautiful will be sponsoring the annual Coastal Cleanup, so keep an eye on the Pine Island Eagle for the exact date, times, and locations. I will be leading a group to the Bocilla Preserve west of Bokeelia that day; if you can help, let me know by beeper (392-0090) or e-mail (ecalusaed@aol.com).

Peter Ordway Mangrove Water Tours: This past season we took 97 people on 6 guided water tours and in the process of having fun we raised over \$400 for the land trust. These trips are very popular and always an adventure. Check the next page for future trips. If you want to go, give me a call or beep me (see above). I hope to see old friends there as well as new.



June work party at Fritts Park (from left): Brenda Anderson, Jim Alexander, Joan Culver, Ed Chapin; Judy Ott, Richard Little

Announcements

Board of Directors Meeting: The next board meetings will be held on July 16 and August 20 at the Elks Lodge at Pine Island Center. These meetings, scheduled for the third Tuesday of each month, begin at 6:30 and usually run no longer than 8:00. Anyone is welcome to attend to listen as well as share ideas.

WORK PARTIES

Saturday, July 13	8:00 AM	St. Jude Trail and St. James Creek Preserves
Saturday, September 7	8:00 AM	Kreie Preserve and Peter Ordway Tropical Hammock
Saturday, October 5	8:00 AM	Long Cut and the York/Coconut Preserves

RANGER COUNCIL

Monday, October 14	6:30 PM	Fritts Park, Beach Daisy Lane (just south of Pink Citrus Trailer Park)
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GUIDED CANOE TRIPS

Saturday, November 16	9 to 12	York and Long Cut Preserves
Sunday, December 15	12 to 3	Big Jim Creek Preserve

Trips last between 3 and 4 hours. \$15 donation per canoe/kayak is suggested.

Calusa Canal, Phase III

by Bud House (283-3493)

The Archaeological Committee is pleased to announce that Phase III of the Calusa Canal acquisition has begun. We have negotiated the purchase of a third lot, located at 6360 Meadow Lane, through the non-profit Archeological Conservancy, who will hold the deed interest-free until Calusa Land Trust raises the necessary \$15,000. The deed transfer from the Wiksveens, the current owners, is imminent.

Meanwhile, all of the exotics, primarily an estimated 2,457 melaleuca trees (well, it seemed like that many), have been cut and their stumps treated by the Saturday volunteer work crew. As the grass has not been cut for four or five years, many pine trees, longleaf and slash, have sprouted. They are beautiful little trees and the maintenance plan for the canal lots, currently being prepared, intends to include many more in the future.

The Fundraising Committee would like to jumpstart its campaign to raise the needed \$15,000, by giving a beautiful Calusa Canal T-shirt to any donor who gives \$50 or more. If you would like to start things off and send in a contribution, please mark your check accordingly ("Canal") and specify what size you would like, S, M, L or XL. Call me anytime with questions or any comments you may have. I can be reached at 283-3493. On behalf of the committee, I would like to thank all donors for joining in the preservation of this archaeological wonder.

Membership Report

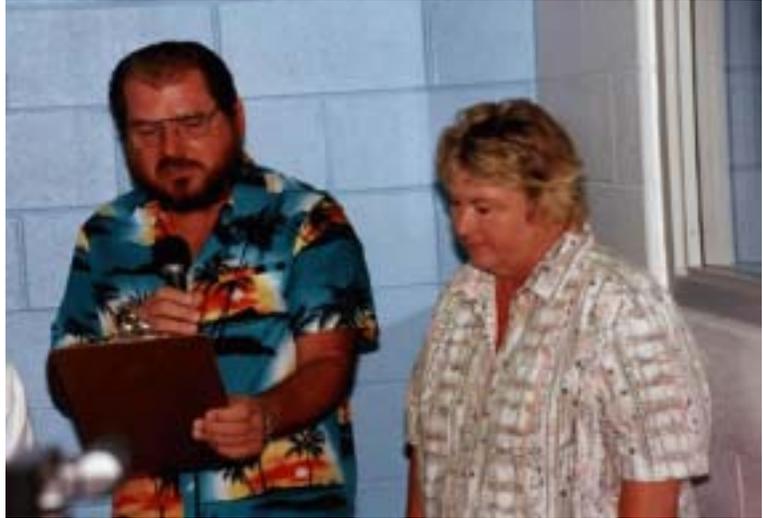
by Norm Gowan (283-8203)

Land Trust membership has remained fairly steady around 800. As of this writing it is 825 with 441 (53%) current in their dues. We usually receive a flurry of donations with the publication of a newsletter so let's hope this one is no exception! Please take a look at the mailing label on this letter while it is still in your hand and see if it has an asterisk "*" after your name as a reminder that it is time to donate again.

Regional Land Trust Report

By Ed Chapin

On May 10 and 11, I attended the Southeast Land Trust Conference in Chattanooga, sponsored by the Land Trust Alliance. Over a hundred participants attended the sessions designed to educate us on important land trust subjects. I was able to attend four sessions, two about managing land for public access and two on farmland conservation. These were very educational and eye opening. The sessions stressed the importance of keeping accurate, up-to-date records of how land uses are changing in our area, educating the public about our preserves, and building local support to insure we can continue to recruit people to keep our land preserves protected in perpetuity. This is especially important for us because we are an all-volunteer organization. I also learned about the difficulty that farmers are having keeping their land in today's economy, and the trend among land trusts to work with farmers to keep agricultural land productive, not only for its main purposes but also for the scenic value of working landscapes. Farmland in fast-growing areas has often increased in value for urban purposes and is being lost to urban expansion at an unprecedented rate. This will be a big challenge to us in the future. If you would like to learn more about the Land Trust Alliance, you can visit their web site at www.lta.org.



Pat Williams was awarded a plaque and a letter of commendation for her efforts on behalf of the Calusa Land Trust in a ceremony at Pine Island Elementary on May 14. Phil Buchanan made the presentation. When not working for the Trust, Pat teaches first grade at the school.

Fund Raising Projects

by Norm Gowan (283-8203)

Plunk-A-Plank: This project continues to prosper with 581 plank names purchased so far providing \$29,512 gross income to the trust. Is your name out there yet?

Rubber Duck Race: This year's race on March 30th was a fun-filled success, netting a whopping \$7,000 for the trust. We had a somewhat different format this year, with the morning dedicated to kids' activities such as a bounce house, face painting, snow cones, a clown, and a magician. The "Caribbean Sound" steel drum band entertained everyone during the afternoon as 2000 rubber ducks waited eagerly for their event. Fifteen magnificent prizes were awarded for the owners of the first fifteen ducks with a six-foot hand-carved tarpon (by Pine Island's own Jan Bailey) heading up the list. This was really a terrific day for everyone and next year we plan to do it all over again.

Announcements

Request for volunteers: The passing of Peter Ordway has left us desperately needing someone to learn the computerized mapping and geographical information system (GIS). You have all seen the fine maps that Peter produced for us. We own the ArcView software and are ready to pass it over to a computer-oriented person with the hardware and time to learn the system. Interested parties can contact Phil Buchanan at 283-4067 or Bill Spikowski at 334-8866.