

2021 IMPORTANT DATES



Work/Fun Parties

April 10th, Dobbs Preserve, Sabal Rd, SJC

May 8th, Wigert-Barron on Barrancas Ave, Bokeelia

Check your email, our website or the Pine Island Eagle



American Beauty Berry

Calusa Land Trust

and Nature Preserve of Pine Island, Inc.



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Just let us know by sending your E-Mail address to

info@calusalandtrust.org

Newsletter #115

Founded 1976

March 2021

www.calusalandtrust.org

President's Report – March 2021

The CLT Taylor-Willow Lake Preserve off Alcorn St. in Bokeelia has been 20 years in the making, from the initial acquisition of two lots in 2001 to the final 28-acre purchase of the main south parcel in 2017. In 2018, we cleared the access right of way from Alcorn St. to the main parcel. We had a driveway culvert installed and a gate with a small parking area. Our monthly work party tried to clear a trail into the interior but it became obvious that it was too thick for our volunteers to undertake.

In 2019, the Acquisitions and Planning (A & P) Committee developed short-term and long-term operation plans for our preserves and it was decided to appropriate funds to contract the clearing of trails for access and for public use on the Taylor-Willow Lake Preserve. The trails were laid out and marked in October but the wet fall delayed the clearing. In January the contractor was able to get in and 3 trails were cut. And we discovered a gem!

The Loop Trail only covers half of the property at this time but it meanders west to the salt flats and then hugs the black mangroves as it turns south. Expect to see wading birds and maybe a feral hog in the tidal flats through the black mangroves as you walk along. At the south end of the Loop Trail, it turns east along an old "skeeter ditch" until it reaches the willow swamp. Here it turns north along the western edge of the swamp until you come out through the hardwoods and back to the gate.



Robert Ballard

(continued on next page)

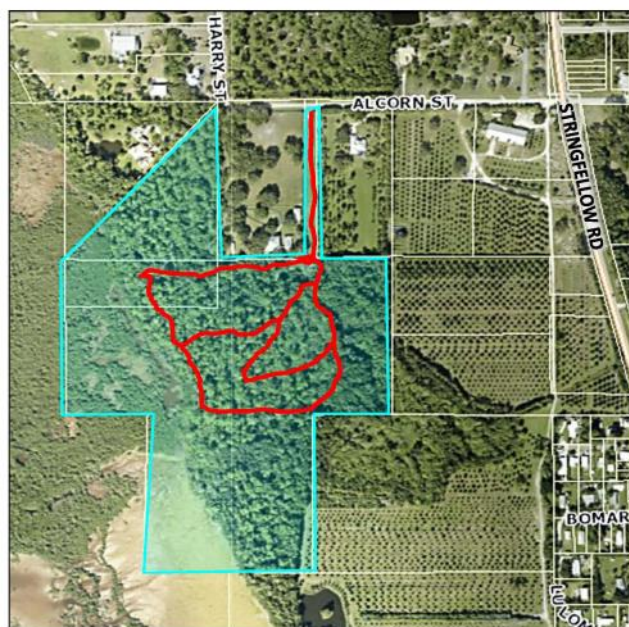
The Old Trail branches off at the hardwoods and winds west to the salt flats, then connects again to the Loop Trail. Keep your eye peeled for migratory birds in the trees along this trail. The Big Pine Trail loops between the Old Trail and the Loop Trail to take you through a high palmetto prairie and a large number of old growth Long Leaf and Slash Pines as well as some scrub oaks. The pines and oaks are full of bromeliads and air plants as well as birds at certain times of the day.

We still have a lot of work to accomplish in the plan but getting the preserve trails open was the major task to be completed and we have met that goal. The A & P Committee will be discussing guidelines for using the preserve and whether or not to open this preserve to dogs on leashes and maybe horses. Issues with trail cleanliness and environmental impact could be a concern because we are experiencing negligent pet owners at the Fritts Park property not picking up after their dogs.

Later this year we should have a new preserve sign at the Taylor-Willow Lake entrance similar to the one at Wigert-Barron Preserve. It's great to see a long-term plan come to fruition to create a wonderful new CLT Preserve. Go explore Taylor-Willow Lake and continue tax deductible donations to help fund future CLT endeavors to protect and enhance Pine Island's natural beauty.

Robert Ballard
President, Calusa Land Trust

Calusa Land Trust
Taylor Willow Lake Preserve
6231 Alcorn St, Bokeelia FL
<https://www.calusalandtrust.org/our-preserves>



Map: Robert Ballard

A "Noisy Offering" Gratefully Accepted

On Sunday February 28th 2021, a check for \$471.60 was accepted by the current CLT President, Robert Ballard from the Fishers of Men Lutheran Church. This donation was from the Church's January "Noisy offering" (coins hitting the collection plate).

The Calusa Land Trust sincerely thanks the local church members for their generous donation!



2021 Calusa Land Trust Annual Dues are Now Due!

CLT recently changed to an easier membership dues cycle based on the calendar year. All members' dues will be good for January through December each year and will be due at (or near) the beginning of each year. If it is confusing to keep track of the due dates for your annual memberships and donations to charitable organizations, this is a welcome change. This simplification of our CLT membership period will help make life less complicated for you and CLT.

PLUNK-A-PLANK IS BACK!

Perhaps many of you will remember our fundraising campaign in the last decade, whereby you could purchase a wooden board, engraved and then attached to a St. Jude Nature Trail boardwalk or bench. The great effort resulted in a full sell out, with funds used to continue our conservancy mission. No boardwalk or benches (as shown to right) are now available, but we have room for about 30 planks on the rafters of the three tiki huts at the Smith/Dewane Vista, with up to (20 characters per plank) and on the trail. We will engrave your names/message on more permanent composite planks and erect it where you designate. The cost is \$100. You can order your plank online or mail us your request. Your plank will help insure preservation for Pine Island's future.



GREAT CALUSA DUCK WADDLE RAFFLE 2021

LOW KEY TIKI VOTED "MOST POPULAR DUCK WADDLE EATERY"

Thank you Pine Island Community for Calusa Land Trust's Successful 2021 Duck Waddle Raffle Fundraiser! We did it again!

With all the challenges presented in 2020 due to Covid-19, the Calusa Land Trust was unable to have their Annual Calusa Great Rubber Duck Race. So, we had a Duck Waddle Raffle and once again everyone pulled together. We had a Super show of support for Pine Island's Calusa Land Trust! Low Key Tiki received the most Duck Raffle tickets in their Duck Bucket and is the Winner of CLT 2021 "Most Popular Duck Waddle Eatery" trophy that was awarded to them on Saturday, March 6th at Low Key Tiki. The 15 participating restaurants who graciously allowed CLT volunteers to sell Duck Waddle tickets on their premises were: Low Key Tiki, Waterfront, Ragged Ass Saloon, Froggy's, Saltwater Smokehouse, El Pollo Rico, Little Lillie's Deli, Island Grill, Lazy Flamingo, Capt'n Cons, CW Fudge, Hooked Island Grill, Miceli's, Pine Island Pizza & Yucatan Waterfront.

Without their cooperation and participation, we could not have sold over 2,700 Raffle tickets!! And many kudos to the 22 hardy CLT Volunteers who sold tickets while in the sun, wind & battling no-sees. We are constantly in your debt for all you do!

Congratulations to the Winners of the Duck Waddle Raffle!! : 1st PRIZE - \$1,000 - **JUDY OTT** , 2nd PRIZE - \$500 - **NICOLE BELLOCK** 3rd PRIZE - \$250 - **ANGELA SCHULZ**.

Please let me express my gratitude to all the marvelous Pine Islanders, Snowbirds, Guests and Visitors who continually support CLT's mission to acquire, protect and manage our island lands.

See y'all next year at the Great Calusa Rubber Duck Race!

By Alice Trant, Duck Waddle Coordinator



CLT Board Members Joan Rosenberg, Frank Potter & Duck Race Coordinator Alice Trant congratulate Erin Smith, Low Key Tiki owner.

A FACE ONLY A MOTHER COULD LOVE!

By: Marty Kendall

In 2014 after a conservation effort spanning over three decades the wood stork was reclassified from “endangered” to a less serious “threatened” status. This Florida native is a large, long legged wading bird that weighs from 5.5 to 7.3 pounds (for mature males) and from 4.4 to 6.2 pounds (for mature females). They possess a 5+ feet wing span and display black primary and tail feathers. Their heads and necks do not show any feathers, but rather a dark scaly skin. In foraging for food they utilize their long black legs with distinctive pink toes. They wiggle these toes to stir up the bottom of shallow waters in search of food.

Their nests (typically three feet in width) are located when waters are at their most shallow levels, thus providing a fish concentrated area for feeding their young. They are usually situated in colonies of 100 to 500 nests. Cypress and mangrove wetlands provide a needed water level of about one foot. In south Florida the nesting season (2 to 5 eggs per nest) spans in the cooler months of October to June. The incubation period requires about one month and the offspring are fledged in ten to twelve weeks thereafter. An interesting statistic is that one nesting pair with two fledglings consumes over 400 pounds of fish during the nesting season.

Unfortunately, development has severely disrupted their breeding by altering the water flow in the wetlands. Locally, the Corkscrew Swamp (a sanctuary under the supervision of the Audubon Society of SW Florida) boasts perhaps the largest wood stork rookery in the state. The Calusa Land Trust owns over 2400 acres of protected Pine Island, a portion of which support a safe environment for these beautiful creatures. You can help by supporting CLT, bolster measures for clean water and let your gardens prosper with non-cypress mulch. By the way, next time you attempt communication with a wood stork, don't expect a response from these voiceless birds; they only HISS. Anyway, how can you resist that wonderful face!



Photo: Martha Huard

FROM THE MERCHANDISE COMMITTEE

We'd like to introduce our new website “store”. You've been asking for an internet store for years! And now, YES, we did it! Our merchandise is on our website: calusalandtrust.org to view and ORDER! You can place an order & use your credit card on our Paypal system, you can have it mailed or you can pick it up at the “seasonal store” in Bokeelia! After your order comes in, I am notified per email. If you want to pick up your order, be sure to leave your best contact info to make arrangements for the pick up. We want your “visit” to be easy & enjoyable.

There is plenty of inventory this year due to Covid holding us back from doing our regular sales, so give it a TRY!

NOTE: THIS SERVICE WILL BE ACTIVE UNTIL MID APRIL then all merchandise volunteers go back North.....and we will start up again Dec.1st

Gloria Andrews, Merchandise Chr., gand9053@aol.com (517)-990-5836

Our other “State Bird” - Salt Marsh Mosquitoes

Pine Island is infamous for large numbers of salt marsh mosquitoes (*Aedes taeniorhynchus*). Why so many mosquitoes? During some of their initial studies on a Sanibel Island, University of Florida entomologists found over 45,000 salt marsh mosquito eggs in a single square foot of turf dug from the coastal wetland. That equates to 1.96 billion eggs per acre and Lee County has around 56,000 acres of mangroves and salt marshes, many of which are right here on Pine Island. Their eggs hatch synchronously with a high tide or rainstorm, and they spend on average 5-6 days as wigglers in the water living together. Eventually they come together forming large “balls” of hundreds to a thousand larvae. Some of these aggregations are large enough to be spotted by mosquito control inspectors who they fly over in helicopters. The larvae in these balls are in constant motion, which is thought to intimidate feeding mosquito fish.

The adults are known to fly up to twenty-five miles in a day, so our newly emerging mosquitoes can be in Lehigh Acres the next morning. Adults tagged on Sanibel were found in Labelle within three days! As with most mosquito species, only the adult female who needs a blood meal, necessary for egg production. Males do not have biting mouthparts and live for only a few days after mating. Both genders feed on flower nectar which is needed for flight energy and they likely pollinate some plants as they feed. The females are considered opportunistic feeders on nesting sea turtles!

Besides being a real nuisance, they are not an uncommon health problem on Pine Island. They are a reservoir for dog heartworm, which can infect many familiar mammal species such as dogs, cats, coyotes, foxes, and occasionally even humans. Heartworms can grow to almost a foot long inside their host!

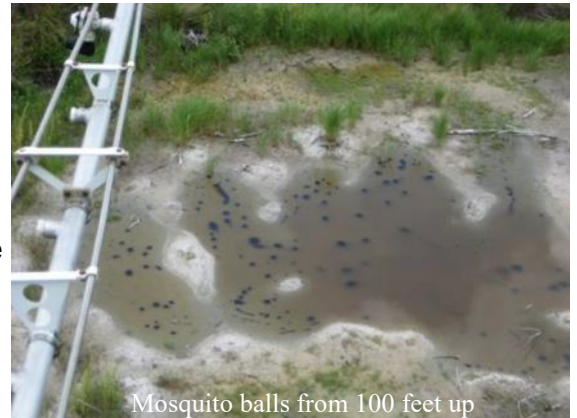
We also have many freshwater mosquito species including *Aedes aegypti* (Yellow Fever Mosquito) and *Aedes albopictus*, (Asian Tiger Mosquito). Both species which can be sources of Zika, Dengue fever, Yellow fever, and Chikungunya fever. These mosquitoes are known as tree hole or container breeders and their larvae are found living in bird baths, “tank bromeliads”, discarded cans & bottles and especially abandoned tires. Drain containers and flush bromeliads with a hose whenever possible. The adults of these species rarely stray from their larval habitats.

Another freshwater mosquito species is *Culex nigripalpus* which are potential sources of the viruses that cause West Nile fever and St. Louis encephalitis. Though birds are their primary host, these mosquitoes will readily attack man, where we become inadvertent victims of the virus. Don’t be a victim, wear light colored, long sleeved clothes, & wear an insect repellent.

By Brian Cotterill



Typical Breeding Habitat



Mosquito balls from 100 feet up



Mosquito ball closeup



Gambusia mosquito fish

Donations Accepted but Rummage Sale Postponed

by Alison Ackerman

After conferring with all the members who work on this event each year, the consensus is to postpone the sale until the virus is under control.

I still hope you and your friends are collecting treasures to donate. I am happy to come collect any donations you want to get rid of, or I can meet you at Fritts Park most any time. The best way to contact me is to call or text me at (239) 851-3176 or email me at alison@spikowski.com. Alison



Smile.Amazon.com - Again

If you shop at Amazon, you can support a charity, like the Calusa Land Trust, by choosing us as **your** favorite charity. To shop at AmazonSmile you can type smile.amazon.com in your computer or mobile device's web browser.

Once designating a charity, the AmazonSmile Foundation will donate 0.5% of the purchase price. **The Calusa Land Trust and Nature Preserve Of Pine Island** has received \$2,031 as of February 2021. That was a jump of 25% over last November!

LAND STEWARDSHIP REPORT

Ed Chapin, Chief Ranger

Many folks assume that land conservancies just buy land to prevent development, but that is not the case with the Calusa Land Trust. We acquire, restore as best as possible to its natural state and then must manage and steward the properties. Without the latter, exotic invasive plants will return to dominate and replace our native creatures in their habitat once more. CLT work/fun parties provide a fix for this unfortunate problem. We say "work", since we get sweaty and dirty in our restoration tasks; we say "fun" because we gain a "warm fuzzy" feeling from our efforts and enjoy the fellowship with like minded volunteers.

Interested? The pandemic has not dampened our enthusiasm. In fact, recent events have enjoyed 25, 30 even 35 participants. Our February work/fun party was at the Taylor/Willow Lake Preserve working on the new nature trail. On March 13th we will be at the St. James Creek Preserve emphasizing boardwalk/bench repairs and the April 10th event will be at the Dobbs Preserve. On May 8th we plan to be at Wigert/Barron in Bokeelia. You can sign up for our email reminders or merely watch for an article in the *Pine Island Eagle*. Hope to see you there!

Annual Membership Form

_____ \$ 25 Basic Member
_____ \$ 50 Donor
_____ \$100 Contributor

_____ \$500 Patron
_____ \$1000 Benefactor
\$ _____ Other Amount

Mail to:
Calusa Land Trust
PO Box 216
Bokeelia, FL 33922

CREDIT CARD #: _____ **EXPIRES:** _____ / _____ **Sec. Code** _____

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Name: _____

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Full financial details, including federal tax returns, can be obtained by contacting the Land Trust's Treasurer at (239) 283-3871 during working hours. Federal Employer Identification Number: **59-1782265**. The Calusa Land Trust is an exempt Organization under section **501(c)(3)** of the IRS code. Florida Dept of Agriculture & Consumer Services registration number **CH3439**. No portion of donations received by the Trust is paid to any professional solicitor. 100% of all donations are received by the Trust.

March 2021

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



The Calusa Land Trust Mission Statement

The purpose of the Calusa Land Trust is to protect the natural diversity and beauty of the Pine Island region by acquiring, managing and preserving in perpetuity environmentally sensitive or historically important land and to foster appreciation for and understanding of the environment and our past. The Land Trust is a broad coalition of individuals, families, and businesses who agree that the acquisition and protection of natural land is important if we are to retain the quality of life which makes the Pine Island region so attractive to people and to wildlife. The Land Trust is supported entirely by people who donate their time, talent, and financial support to protect irreplaceable natural resources. The Land Trust does not engage in political activity or lobbying and takes no position on zoning or regulatory matters.

The Calusa Land Trust represents people's willingness to put their money and time where their hearts are to make a difference.