

**IMPORTANT
DATES
FOR
2024 – 2025**



Work/Fun Parties

October 12 - Wigert/
Barron Preserve,
Barrancas Ave & Aura
Lane, Bokeelia

November 09 - Taylor/
Willow Lake Preserve,
Alcorn Dr, Bokeelia

Duck Race

To be determined

**Peter Ordway
Memorial Paddles**

(To be determined)

For more Information

Check your email,

Our website

Calusalandtrust.org

Our [Facebook page](#)

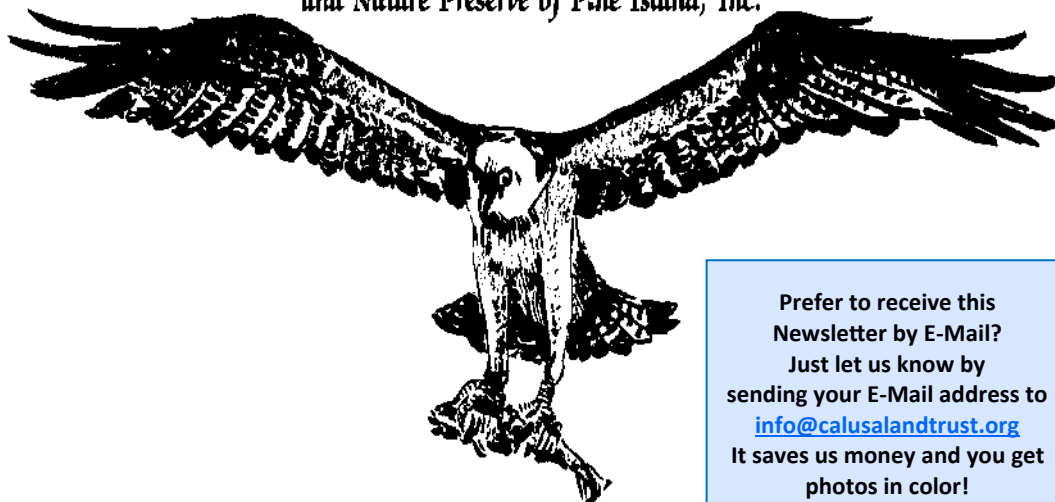
or

the [Pine Island Eagle](#)



Calusa Land Trust

and Nature Preserve of Pine Island, Inc.



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Newsletter #126

Founded 1976

October 2024

www.calusalandtrust.org

The President's Corner

I am happy to announce the start of the reconstruction of the St. Jude Nature Trail boardwalk in Saint James City. Hurricane Ian did substantial damage to our prized nature trail and observation deck. After discussion with multiple local contractors, we accepted the bid from Williamson Bros. Marine Construction of Fort Myers for nearly \$100,000. We are looking forward to its completion with a celebratory opening in the fall. We request that people avoid the St. Jude Nature Trail until work is completed to give the contractors free access to the area.



Previously in April, we formally dedicated the Nancy Weir Mangrove Preserve (previously called the Dobbs Preserve) to honor the memory of Nancy Weir. She was a devoted member of the CLT Board of Directors and Chairperson of the Merchandising Committee. She passed away last Fall while setting up our booth for the monthly Outdoor Island Market. Nancy shared her tireless energy at our CLT Work/Fun Parties, Rubber Duck Race and Rummage Sale. She always pitched in and helped with whatever was needed. We thank her for all she has done for the CLT by dedicating this preserve to her.



Les Smith, Frank Potter Kelly Weir, Robert Ballard

The Greater Pine Island Chamber of Commerce sponsored a series

of activities in June and July. In June, the Chamber held an event at Sun Shrimp on Stringfellow Road and CLT Board Members enjoyed locally-grown shrimp.

On July 4, the CLT participated in the American Legion-sponsored annual parade with the CLT float coming in second place. The float was a labor of love with leadership from Judy Ott and a large cast of volunteers (see attached photo). In July, the CLT participated in **Mangomania**, an annual celebration of the island's best-known crop. CLT board members provided information to the many attendees, as well as enjoying the many varieties of mangoes and mango products available.

In August, Tropical Storm Debby gave the island a glancing blow and, despite much rain and some flooding, did not cause major damage to our preserves. This leads to the schedule of activities for the fall season. Our plan work/parties starting in October at the Wigert-Barron Preserve and monthly work/parties through to May 2025. (See page 4 for more dates and locations)

We will be looking forward to seeing our friends and volunteers in the coming months.

Frank Potter, President

Photos by Cheryl King



The Passing of the Torch by Robert Ballard

It is with deep sadness that we learn of the passing of "Mr CLT", Ed Chapin. Ed led the monthly CLT Preserve Fun/Work Parties, the Peter Ordway Wilderness Paddling adventures, and served as President, and Chief Land Steward for many years.

His family is planning a celebration of his life later this fall. We will keep you posted as we learn more details.



Two fallen Volunteer heroes - Ed Chapin & Nancy Weir.



Ed Chapin & Robert Ballard

St Jude Trail 2014

The top two photos were then and
bottom two photos are Now under reconstruction,



Cogon Grass, The Truly “Evil Weed” By Brian Cotterill

There are few plants species, especially among the grasses, that I can readily ID from a moving car zipping down Stringfellow Road. Or from an interstate highway. Cogon Grass is one of those species. Once you get to recognize them, they are that easy to spot.

Also known as *Imperata cylindrica* (L.) Raeusch., it is a native to Southeast Asia, and was intentionally introduced to Florida in the 1930's for erosion control, as packing material and ironically as a forage crop.

Due to the high silica content in the leaves, and relatively sharp edges, it's often the last thing browsers will dine on. Thanks to its dense fibrous root system of rhizomes, it does a good job with controlling erosion.

The plant is considered “fire friendly” because the plants burns at a high temperature, harming other native species. Thanks to the underground rhizomes, it bounces back faster than almost any native from the flames. This grass really can disrupt an ecosystem.

What makes it identifiable is its:

- Yellow green color, the tips of which can turn reddish with colder temps (rarely here),
- Dense uniform growth, crowds out natives,
- Signature flowers (reminds me of a white plume of cotton candy)
- Leaves are sharp edged and have a whitish off-center midrib, and
- Plant is typically 2-3 feet tall.

Cogon Grass has been labeled one of “[the world's worst invasive weeds](#)” by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and banned by federal legislation, yet could be found for sale at garden stores and on-line retailers at the same time. It's so bad that some states like Alabama offer financial help to eliminate this pest species.

Sources:

Cogon Grass, Beware of Cogon Grass

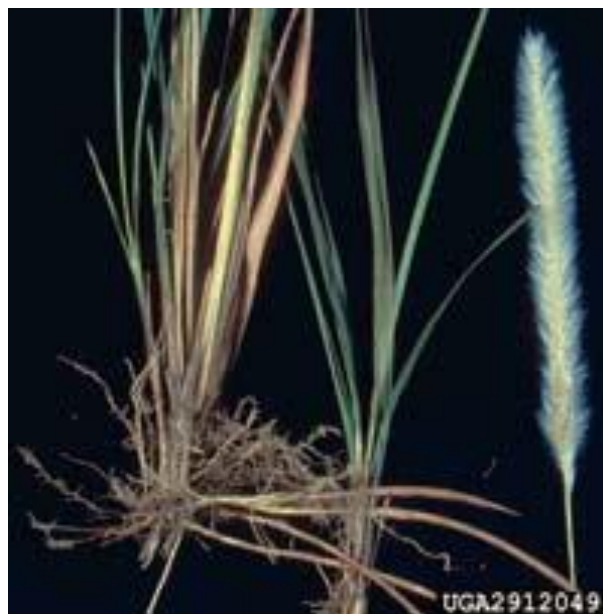
<https://www.fdacs.gov/Forest-Wildfire/Our-Forests/Forest-Health/Invasive-Non-Native-Plants/Cogon-Grass>

Cogon Grass <https://myfwc.com/wildlifehabitats/habitat/invasive-plants/weed-alerts/cogon-grass/>

Cogon Infected States, find your states resources <https://www.cogongrass.org/>

Biology and Control of Cogongrass (*Imperata cylindrica*) in Southern Forests

<https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/publication/FR411>



Work / Fun party schedule 2024-2025

Summer is almost over and hopefully by the end of September the temperatures will start to moderate. Time for the Calusa Land Trust (CLT) to renew our Winter/Spring Preserve Work/Fun Parties on the 2nd Saturday of the month. We will begin on October 12 at the Wigert-Barron Preserve on Barrancas Ave in Bokeelia. The work party begins at 9 am and we go to noon, with pizza brought in for the crew about 11:45 am. It is a time to share food and conversation with each other.

Summer has been good for the invasive plants that we are constantly battling to minimize on the preserves to give the native species room to flourish. Our focus for the first Work/Fun Party will be removing the new growth of Ear Leaf Acacia, Brazilian Pepper and any other invasive plants that we may come across.

So, if you would like to get involved in helping our small group of volunteers join us for our first outing in October. You do not have to be a CLT member to participate but if you are not a member and would like to join the CLT you can go to our website and hit the join button. We currently have approximately 2,400 acres under our care on the island and are looking to protect any available natural uplands from further clearing.

Our schedule for this season is as follows:

- October 12 - Wigert/Barron Preserve, Barrancas Ave & Aura Lane, Bokeelia
- November 9 - Taylor/Willow Lake Preserve, Alcorn Dr, Bokeelia
- December 14 - St Jude Trail, Stabile Road, St. James City
- January 11 - Fritt's Park, Beach Daisy Lane, Bokeelia
- February 8 - Bud House/Calusa Canal Preserve, Meadow Lane, Bokeelia
- March 15 - Nancy Weir Mangrove Preserve, Sabal Drive, St. James City
- April 12 - Calusa Island Preserve, Calusa Island, Bokeelia,
Lat 26.7023 / Lon -82.1494 (by boat only)
- May 10 - Kreie Island Preserve, Kreie Island, Bokeelia
Lat 26.6932 / Lon -82.1736 (by boat only)

The schedule is subject to change depending on weather conditions and pressing needs of preserves. Notice of CLT Work/Fun Parties are published in the Pine Island Eagle a week or two before the event and also posted on the CLT Facebook page and the CLT website calusalandtrust.org.

Come out and join us in October and help us preserve some of the natural beauty of this place we call home.

Robert Ballard
Chief Land Steward
Calusa Land Trust



Treasures of the Trails for October 2024: Searching for Summer Sunrise Surprises

Text & Photos by Judy Ott

Searching for Treasures of the Trails this month led to sunrise wandering in our Nancy Weir Mangrove Preserve & St. Jude Nature Trail. The trails offered so many treasures that I'm letting pictures speak louder than words. Sunrise is a great time to explore PI nature – it's cooler, colors transition from muted grays to bright hues & quiet gives way to a symphony of critters starting their days. Because of recent rains & high tides, the trails were soggy but abundant mosquito fish kept mosquito number in check. What trail treasures have you found lately?

Nancy Weir Mangrove Preserve (5600 Sabal Ave., SJC)



Fiddler Crabs: Boys tend house & girls get food.



Sea Purslane: A salty succulent that's edible.



Raccoon Tracks: Walk this way.



Red Mangroves: "*Red, Red – Pointy Head*". In water with shiny pointy leaves, red walking roots & cigar propagules.



Blank Mangroves: "*Black, Black – Lick the Back*". Next to water with gray salt sparkly leaves & black snorkel roots.



White Mangroves: "*White, White – Hold on Tight*". Near water with oval leaves with nodules at base & notch at tip.

St. Jude Nature Trail at St James Creek Preserve (3541 Stabile Road, SJC)



Fish: Mosquito fish hiding, mullet jumping & snook stalking.



Leather Fern: Big fronds leathery on top & spore "suede" below.



Grounded: Benches floated to treetops by lan back down to earth.

Annual Membership Form (Renewals due January 1st)

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

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

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PO Box 216
Bokeelia, FL 33922

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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.

October 2024

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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 for which the corporation is organized is to own and hold real and personal property for the use and benefit of the general public; to perform all other matters and acts authorized pursuant to the laws of the State of Florida for corporations not for profit; 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"*.

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

*Calusa Land Trust Articles of Incorporation, Article II