

**IMPORTANT  
DATES  
FOR 2024**



**Work/Fun Parties**

**April 13 2024**

Nancy Weir Mangrove  
Preserve Sabal Drive, SJC

Or

Calusa Island Cleanup  
Paddle  
Carmen's Kayaks  
Bokeelia

**Peter Ordway  
Memorial Paddles**

(To be determined)

**For more Information**

Check your email,

Our website

[Calusa land trust.org](http://Calusa land trust.org)

Our [Facebook page](#)

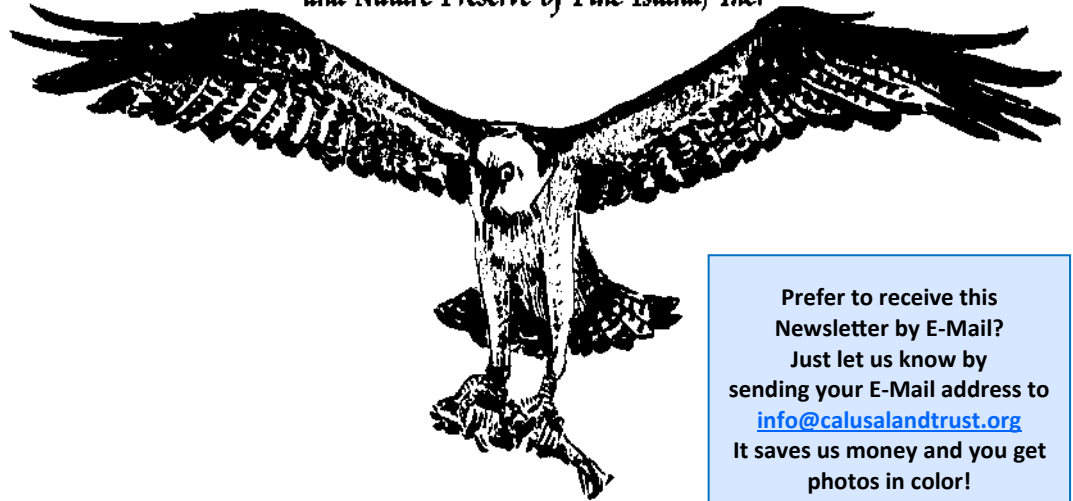
or

the [Pine Island Eagle](#)



# Calusa Land Trust

and Nature Preserve of Pine Island, Inc.



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photos in color!

Newsletter #125

Founded 1976

April 2024

[www.calusalandtrust.org](http://www.calusalandtrust.org)

## The President's Corner

The new year brings some changes for the Calusa Land Trust. I, Frank Potter, was elected to serve as your CLT President. I moved to Pine Island in 2011 and have been an active board member since 2014. Prior to moving to Pine Island, I volunteered with a watershed association in New Jersey and with the Sierra Club in North Carolina.

Robert Ballard, who after 5 years of masterful management of the CLT board of directors, has relinquished the gavel as your CLT President. Fortunately, Robert, a Pine Island native, will remain on the CLT Board of Directors and will continue to assist the CLT in its mission of acquiring and protecting natural land, which is important for retaining the quality of life on Pine Island.

After the CLT annual meeting on January 21, CLT held the 20th Annual Rummage Sale at Fritts Park on January 27, coordinated by Alison Ackerman, with a crew of more than 40 CLT volunteers. Again, the rummage sale included a wide range of items and earned more than \$2,000 for your organization. Thank you to Alison and her crew for a spectacular event, which also offered for purchase CLT clothing, notecards and hats as well our current edition of the *The Nature Lover's Guide to Pine Island*.

The BIG news was the 2024 Great Calusa Duck Race held on March 2 at the Marker 3 Coastal Cantina. The crowd was estimated at more than 2,000 and the ducks had a fantastic race with assistance from many CLT volunteers. Alice Trant, the Duck Race coordinator, was ecstatic about the race and CLT record amount of gross receipts.

In addition to the duck races, food, drink and merchandise as well as games for children of all ages were available. Both silent and live auctions permitted attendees to bid on unique items. More information on the Duck Race is later in this newsletter.

On March 16, CLT was the beneficiary of the proceeds from a bluegrass music program with music provided by *Swinging Bridge Bluegrass Band* from Venice, FL. John Conrath, a new CLT member was the spark for the event and we are all looking forward to similar events in the future. In addition to the music, there were food trucks and vendors of jewelry, clothing, and other merchandise. (See page 5)

The past months have been busy for the CLT and the future months expect to become somewhat easier because of the start of the summer heat and rains. On February 6, Robert Ballard made a highly informative presentation to the Pine Island Civic Association about the mission and the history of the CLT. On February 11, Jim Friedlander led more than 20 kayaks and canoes on a trip (the Peter Ordway Memorial Paddles) around the north end of Pine Island. Later, on March 17, Jim led another kayak trip out of Pineland, again with more than 20 paddlers.

In March, April and May, we will hold a monthly work party to clean up our preserves. On February 10, CLT held a work party at the Nancy Weir Mangrove Preserve (formerly the Dobbs Preserve) with more than 15 volunteers helping to clear debris from the trail. A work party was held at the Wigert-Barron Preserve on March 9. On April our work party will be split up on the 13th with the options to either participate in the Carmen's Kayaks Calusa Island cleanup or the Nancy Weir Mangrove Preserve (Dobbs) touch up for pre-dedication for renaming the Dobbs preserve in her honor for her dedication and work. Each work party includes a pizza lunch for the hard-working crews to share and to socialize with other CLT volunteers.

Please remember our valued contributors to our efforts including

- The Pine Island Garden Club
- Sanibel-Captiva Conservation Foundation (SCCF)
- Carmen's Kayaks in Bokeelia
- Gerard's Tree Service
- Mike Faulkner of John R. Wood Properties
- Dr. John M. Richards, DDS
- Ingman Marine
- Marker 3 Coastal Cantina
- WB Williamson Bros Inc.

## Duck Race 2024

The latest edition of the Calusa Land Trust's Rubber Duck race was held on March 2024 at a new location, Marker 3 Coastal Cantina (formerly the Ragged Ass). This years race was judged by all as a raging success! The hosts were fantastic, food & liquid refreshments were excellent and the ducks RACED!! There was a new crew helping to recover the racers this year, Williamson Brothers Construction were great help with the race. Flip to page 4 for aerial photos of the race taken by a drone!



## CALUSA LAND TRUST HOLDS 48TH ANNUAL MEETING

To a standing room only crowd the Calusa Land Trust held its 48<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting on Sunday afternoon January 21<sup>st</sup>. A soggy Fritts Park caused the event to be relocated to the Fishers of Men Lutheran Church. The meeting was conducted by President Robert Ballard. He summarized the stewardship efforts in maintaining over 2400 acres of preserved lands, particularly in light of the challenges posed in the aftermath of Hurricane Ian. Committee chairpersons tendered their reports and the general membership voted to reelect seven incumbent Board of Directors members: John Kendall, Marty Kendall, Cheryl King, Carolyn Murphey, Judy Ott, Frank Potter and Joan Rosenberg.

Recognition was given to retiring Board member Bill Hummer and special thoughts were rendered to the late Nancy Weir who died unexpectedly last November. In a surprise recognition past presidents Brian Cotterill and John Kendall welcomed Robert Ballard to the “past” status and presented him with a crystal trophy in appreciation of his five years service as president.

Upcoming events were highlighted including its major fundraiser, The Great Calusa Rubber Duck Race, to be held on Saturday March 2<sup>nd</sup> at the newly opened Marker 3 Coastal Cantina in St. James City. The proceeds from the duck race are utilized to support its mission to protect the natural diversity and beauty of Pine Island by acquiring, managing and preserving in perpetuity environmentally sensitive or historically important land and to foster appreciation for and understanding of the environment and its heritage. More details are available on its website, [calusalandtrust.org](http://calusalandtrust.org).

### Work Parties

The Calusa Land Trust's monthly work/fun parties will be held Saturday, April 13th, beginning at 9 am and you can choose whether to volunteer on land at the Weir Preserve or by water via kayak for the annual Calusa Island Clean-up in Bokeelia. The recently renamed Nancy Weir Mangrove Preserve (formerly the Dobbs Preserve) contains 76 acres along Matlacha Pass and consists mostly of mangrove forest except for its western border with a marked pedestrian trail with access bridges at both the north and south entrances. This preserve's mission will concentrate on removal of invasive vegetation and hurricane downed foliage.

Volunteers are requested to meet at the south easement entrance located at the corner of Sabal Ave and Tangerine Dr in the Tropical Point subdivision. Those that choose to assist by retrieving trash and debris along Jug Creek should meet at Carmen's Kayaks located at the north end of Porto Bello St in Bokeelia (239-333-7332 for rentals).

The Calusa Land Trust is an all volunteer land conservancy and, thus, relies upon its members and caring guests like you to steward its preserved lands. It is recommended that participants provide themselves with work gloves/clothing, pruning/chain saws and a happy spirit. Volunteers at both sites will be rewarded with cold beverages with a pizza lunch at St James Creek and entertainment and a food truck in Bokeelia.





## Duck Race Photos by Williamson Brother's drone



## Treasures of the Trails for March 2024: Roseate Spoonbills at Taylor Willow Lake Preserve

Text & Photo by Judy Ott



It's been 2 years & a hurricane since our last Treasures of the Trails from Taylor Willow Lake Preserve. In April 2022 the treasures from the preserve were the sounds of the wind blowing through the tall treetops & the calls of the prairie warblers, great crested fly catchers & chuck-wills-widows. Today, the best treasures are still the sound of the boisterous wind blowing through the trees & something special – roseate spoonbills on the salt flats west of the loop trail.

Roseate Spoonbills are illusive locals that get their name from their pink plumage & spoon-shaped bills. They can be 32 inches tall, with a wingspan of 50 inches. In the spring & summer, they're found in the bays & estuaries of the Gulf Coast, including Pine Island. In winter, many migrate to Central & South America. They mate in the summer & build nests hidden in the mangroves. The males brings gifts of nesting material to attract mates. They are monogamous, raise 2-4 chicks a season & can live to be 10 years old. Spoonbills feed by swishing their spoon-shaped bills back & forth in the water searching for small invertebrates, fish & crustaceans. Roseates' pink coloring deepens as they mature – perhaps from their diet of reddish shrimp & crustaceans. Like many birds with pretty feathers, roseate spoonbills were hunted nearly to extinction in the 1800s, but began to recolonize the Gulf Coast in the 1900s & their numbers have slowly risen. Today, their biggest threat is habitat loss.

Taylor Willow Lake preserve has 37 (hurricane ravaged) acres of hardwood hammock, willow swamp, mangroves & salt flats, now interspersed with a multitude of non-native plants. Many of the tall oaks & pines remain standing & may be over 100 years old. The rash of invasive, exotic plants are racing for the sunlight offered by the trees downed by the hurricane. Calusa Land Trust has a vision for restoring the preserve to it's former glory. The tasks include removing & mulching the invasive plants, planting a variety of native plants, mulching the trails, & adding descriptive signs & a kids story trail. We are currently writing a description of that vision which we plan to submit for grant funding ASAP. We are planning for Rosier Days ahead at Taylor Willow Lake Preserve.



## Botanic cards raise money for CLT

Story and photo By Ellen Ballard

Eileen Hoffman is a retired teacher from Toledo who has spent winters in Bokeelia since 2009. As with many snowbirds, what started out as a couple weeks is now the full winter plus a visit in July. Eileen and her husband Harold are committed volunteers with the Calusa Land Trust and other PI organizations. Harold helps with work/fun parties on the preserves and Eileen creates greeting cards using botanic flowers, grasses, and even weeds that are mostly from Pine Island.

Over the years, Eileen not only has donated all her time and needed supplies, but has patiently taught her process to other CLT volunteers, including Ellen Ballard and Kathy Weinberger.

Eileen and her minions start with collecting flowers from the roadside during morning bike rides and walks. Sometimes, homeowners are approached for permission to pick flowers that are particularly eye catching. Favorite Pine Island flowers include tropical sage, tasselflower, small ferns, pine needles, gaillardia (blanket flower), blackberry lily, frangipani, panicle leaf tick-trefoil, scorpion tail, coral honeysuckle, moringa, and bougainvillea.

Once flowers are picked and completely dry, they are laid out to make a pleasing arrangement for a small card. Flowers are secured onto layers of wax paper and tissue with diluted Elmer's glue. Saved editions of the Eagle and Florida Weekly come in handy as the works in progress are laid out to dry overnight. The next step is to iron each one and trim them to size. Paper inserts (where the writing occurs) are cut to size and glued into the outside layer of botanic card stock. The last step is packaging cards with envelopes and getting them to market!

It may have been days or months since those flowers were picked but now, they're ready to be sold. Packages of cards (4 cards/\$10) can be purchased at the monthly Chamber of Commerce Island Market at the Fishers of Men Lutheran Church, the CLT Annual Meeting, the Garden Gala, the Duck Race, and at Mango Mania. Creating botanic cards is a volunteer labor of love and creativity to benefit the Calusa Land Trust.

Thank you Eileen!



Two Images from the Bluegrass fundraiser for CLT held SJC March 16th

Music by *The Swinging Bridge* bluegrass band.

John Conrath & Frank Potter check out the 50/50 pot. The winner very graciously donated it back to the Land trust!!





# Calusa Land Trust Rummage Sale

By Alison Ackerman

I am not sure about all of you who were able to come and work this sale, but I am just now feeling like my old self! So much work from everyone and I heartily thank you all! The total proceeds will hopefully go up a bit, as some items may yet sell on Craigslist,. So fingers crossed.

We were also able to give Alice Trant many items for the Duck Race event- paintings, and many nice and cute things for the gorgeous baskets her team creates.

So all in all, a successful two days which could never have been done without so many pitching in. From my records, I counted about 32 people pitching in over the course of those 2 days, plus several other days spent in preparation. This also includes "the brave security team", camping overnight following the tradition started by founding father Ed Chapin, to safeguard the scene from adverse weather events. The were rewarded by being serenaded by coyotes and great horned owls!!

Cheers everyone, and I'll see you at another CLT event hopefully!



# Annual Membership Form (Renewal due January 1st)

\_\_\_\_\_ \$ 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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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.  
**April 2024**



## Board of Directors

**Frank Potter**  
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**John Kendall**  
 Director

**Cathy House**  
 Director

**Robert Ballard**  
 Director

**Joan Rosenberg**  
 Treasurer

**Joe Perry**  
 Director

**Alice Trant**  
 Director

**Carol Mullin**  
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**Carolyn Murphey**  
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**Cheryl King**  
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**Brian Cotterill**  
 Newsletter Editor

**Judy Ott**  
 Planning & Acquisition

**Marty Kendall**  
 Secretary

**Les Smith**  
 Director

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