

**2021 IMPORTANT
DATES**



**Work/Fun Parties
TBA**

Nov 13, 2021
Wigert-Barron Preserve

For more dates
Check your email, our
website or
the Pine Island Eagle

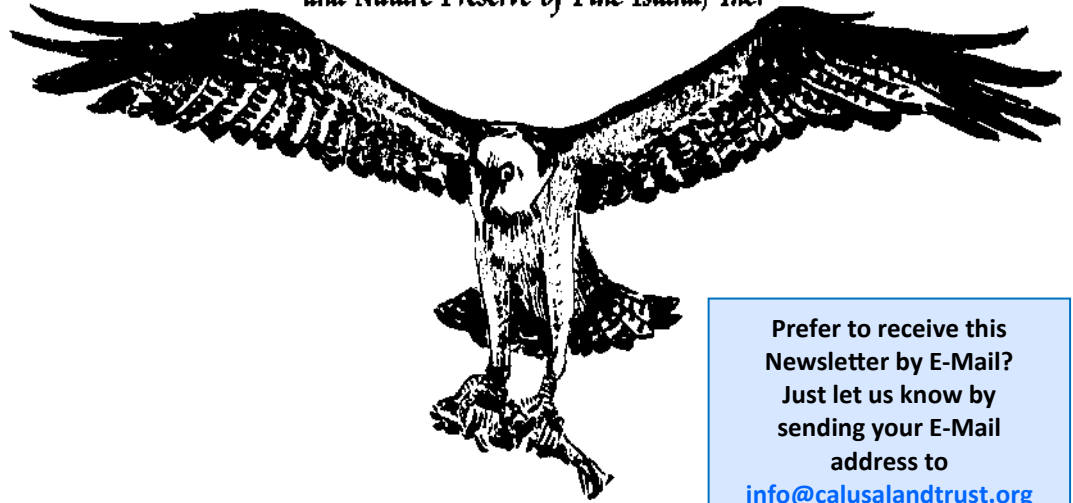
**Peter Ordway
Memorial Mangrove
Adventures Paddles**



American Beauty

Calusa Land Trust

and Nature Preserve of Pine Island, Inc.



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Newsletter #117
Founded 1976

November 2021
www.calusalandtrust.org

President's Corner

Robert Ballard, President

We're off and running on our 2021-2022 year! On October 9, we had our first Work/Fun party at the Taylor-Willow Lake Preserve and despite almost 2 inches of rain the night before, it did not dampen the spirits of the 9 hearty volunteers that showed up ready to work. Unfortunately, the rain had flooded the trails which limited our trail work so we pulled back to work on the entry lane from the road. That was also very wet but we managed to do some clean up until a late morning thunderstorm came rolling in and soaked us all. Joel and Chris Buntin graciously invited the work crew back to their house to dry out and have the pizza under their deck. The November Work/Fun Party will be at the Wigert-Barron Preserve on November 13.



This is the year that CLT is introducing a new membership format. Membership will now run from January to December and we will "renew" memberships at the same time. In the past, membership renewals have been rather haphazard and with memberships expiring all over the calendar year. Letters will be going out soon explaining the new process and requesting your renewal. This change will bring order to the process and we appreciate your understanding as we make this transition.

On Saturday December 4th at 10 AM we will host the first of our Preserve Tours at the Wigert-Barron Preserve in Bokeelia. We will have Docents available to lead folks through the preserve and give insights on the history and features of the preserve. Tours of other preserves will be planned for later in the year.

Our Annual Membership Meeting will be held on Sunday, January 23, with the annual Allison Akerman Rummage Sale the following Saturday (Jan 29) at Fritts Park. Planning is underway for the Great Rubber Duck Race the first weekend in March. Yes, it will happen this year!

The season is here so come out and join us, we are ready to go!

Some of the hardy volunteers at Taylor Willow Preserve



The entrance to our Taylor-Willow Preserve was underwater!

GREAT CALUSA RUBBER DUCK RACE SET FOR MARCH 5, 2022

FIRST PLACE DUCK WINS \$1,000

By: Alice Trant, Head Duck Wrangler

Get Ready for the Swimming of the Ducks! The Calusa Land Trust's 23rd Annual Great Rubber Duck Race is scheduled for March 5th at LOW KEY TIKI in St. James City. The festivities will begin at noon and there will be music for your listening pleasure, hourly 50/50 raffles, with an extensive array of plants at the plant table with expert growing & care advice from CLT members. A much larger and diverse Silent Auction (12-2pm), that includes prizes and gift certificates donated by local businesses and individuals. This year there are again 2 (yes, 2) Spinning Wheels, where "You Spin, You Win"! Featuring Cash prizes as well as Gift Baskets, Home Baked Treats, and prizes & Gift Certificates donated by local businesses.

The event also includes an Energetic Live Auction (featuring the spirited chant of Johnny Glisson) highlighted by ½ Day Fishing Charters, ½ Day Tree Service, Resort stays, Glass Art Work and More, as donations are just starting to come in. Thank you local businesses! Low Key Tiki will also be offering a luncheon special and a convenient beer tent for happy celebrants. And again this year, by special request, CW Fudge will be selling their delicious and various popcorn flavors & other treats! We want to extend a warm Pine Island welcome to Herb Smith, our New Duck Race Emcee. Herb will keep the festivities moving along with announcements and Duck Race commentary!



The big event will be the Duck Races occurring between 3 and 4 pm (wind and tide are factors). The Super Duck Race is first with 200 Baby Ducks (\$20 each, sold only on race day) competing for 50/50 cash winnings. 2 Winners will be announced immediately after the Super Duck Race! The Major Attraction will thereafter be the Adult Yellow Rubber Ducks consisting of 3000 numbered ducks (\$5 each and going on sale soon) racing for cash and gifts. The Winning Duck will earn \$1,000 cash, 2nd scoops in \$500, 3rd place \$250 plus five runners-up each waddling home with a bag of goodies worth at least \$200. Buy Early and Buy Often, since tickets are likely sold out by race time.

After resting in the off season all ducks have been in training and are just itching and quacking in anticipation of race day. Even if you are not the owner of a winning duck, you can be proud of your support of the Calusa Land Trust, Pine Island's all-volunteer land conservancy, with its mission to acquire, preserve and protect this special place called Pine Island.



Rubber Duck Race Tickets will soon be available from member volunteers, certain dates & times at Local restaurants as well as Low Key Tiki & CW Fudge Factory and on our website (calusalandtrust.org). One may also contact the CLT President, Robert Ballard, at 239 770-0070 or mrobertballard64@gmail.com.

Treasures of the Trails for November 2021: Gators & Birds & Butterflies, Oh My! – at Wigert-Barron Preserve

Photos & Text by Judy Ott



Can You See Me Now? As with most walks in nature, treasures abound if you are patient, quiet, look & listen. Look closely at this photo & you'll see an alligator making a quick exit right – avoiding getting it's picture taken.

What is This Place? This gator & these birds were caught lounging near Rubye's Pond in the CLT Wigert-Barron Preserve.

How Do You Get There? The Wigert-Barron Preserve is 5 blocks east of the Bokeelia post office on Barrancas. There are 2 parking areas on Barrancas Ave, just past Aura Lane.



What's There Once You Get There? This 32 acre CLT preserve has a marked nature trail that passes along 5 distinct habitats: rare coastal scrub, pine flatwoods, mangrove forests, Rubye's freshwater pond & a butterfly garden. There is an amazing variety of pines, oaks, mangroves, ferns, wildflowers & birds – & the gator. There are informational signs & benches along the way.

Is the Gator Always There? Probably not – it's elusive & there's a "gator crawl" between the pond & nearby mangroves (they prefer fresh & brackish water). It's 5 or 6 feet long & it's not possible to tell its age or gender (males are bigger) from a safe distance. Gators are native to Florida & can live up to 50 years & grow up to 13 feet long in the wild. They are most aggressive when protecting their nest (in spring/summer) & when

"trained" to eat human food by people feeding them. It is illegal to feed gators in Florida – for good reason – they can cover half their length in 1 quick leap & out sprint humans. So respect their personal space & stay at least 50 feet away.

Which Birds are These? Left to right in the photo: Little Blue Heron (yep), White Ibis & Tricolor Heron (likely). Little Blue Herons are small & well, blue – blueish green legs, bluish bill with black tip, bluish maroon head, bluish slate body – except for juveniles, which are white or mottled white/blue as they grow into adult plumage. They are "stand & wait" predators & stalk small fish, crustaceans, amphibians & insects along tidal flats, estuaries, streams & swamps. Tricolor Herons are slightly larger, with distinctive white bellies & neck fronts, yellow legs & a more aggressive fishing style.

What's this Butterfly? Descriptively named, White Peacock butterflies have black spots on their white & orange wings. They are common residents of South Florida in open gardens, old fields & wet roadside ditches. They fly quickly & erratically between low growing flowers, especially Beggarticks (*Bidens alba*).

What's this Flower? Rose-rush (*Lygodesmia aphylla*) is named for its rosy pink color & rush-like nearly leafless thin stem. Common in dry pinelands, scrub & disturbed areas of Florida & south Georgia, they bloom in summer & fall – becoming inconspicuous without the delicate daisy-like flower.

Enjoy your treasure hunting!



The Calusa Clothesline by Nancy Weir

Our merchandise hats & tee shirts are available online at [Shop! Calusa Land Trust](#). There you can see the items and pick your favorites. The process is easy (even I can do it!). But if you have a problem, call me and we can chat it out or make an appointment to come to my house in St James City. You can save the \$5 shipping fee and hand pick your items.

You may contact Nancy at (859) 221-2104 or NWeir749@gmail.com

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From the Friends of Lovers Key, A New Speakers Series:

“WHAT YOU SEE ON THE LAND, LANDS IN THE SEA: CONNECTIONS BETWEEN LAND USE AND WATER QUALITY”

Join experts and community members in a series of monthly evening discussions about the state of our coastal eco-systems and restoration efforts. Learn and be a part of the solutions. Discovery Center, Lovers Key State Park, 6:00 – 8:00 pm. Tickets are on sale through Eventbrite. Go to the “Events” section of the Friends of Lovers Key website: <https://friendsofroverskey.org>

December 3, 2021 – **Film - “Eternal Vigilance: The Story of Estero Bay Aquatic Preserve”**. This 26-minute film will be followed by a **discussion with John Cassani, Calusa Waterkeeper**. John writes extensively on water policy and leads regional efforts to monitor the health of the waters of the Caloosahatchee River and Estero Bay watersheds.

January 13, 2022: **Nick Penniman – “A History of Water Stewardship in Southwest Florida”**. Nick Penniman served as publisher of the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* and served as chair of the Collier County Growth Management Committee. He is author of *A Toxic Inconvenience: Red Tide and Blue-Green Algae on Florida's Coast* and *On the Knife: A History of Sugar in Florida*.

February 10, 2022 – **“The State of Estero Bay – Challenges and Solutions” - A Panel Discussion**. Learn about water quality in the Estero Bay watershed from regional experts engaged in efforts to restore its health. Featured speakers include Dr. James Douglass, FGCU, Matt Feeney, Assistant City Manager for Bonita Springs, Dr. Mike Parsons, FGCU and Director of Vester Field Station, and Nicole Weigold, Marine Scientist for Bonita Springs, and Jennifer Hecker, Charlotte Harbor National Estuarine Program.

March 10, 2022: **“Environmental Journalism in Southwest Florida: A Panel Discussion”**
Join Amy Bennett Williams of the Fort Myers News Press and Stephanie Byrne of WINK News for an inside look at how environmental stories are reported in Southwest Florida

April 22, 2022 (Earth Day). **“The Bald Eagle and the Gulf of Mexico – A Cultural and Natural History” featuring Jack E. Davis**. Dr. Davis is Professor of History and Rothman Family Chair of the Humanities at the University of Florida-Gainesville. His area of expertise is environmental history and sustainability studies. In 2017, he won the Pulitzer Prize for *The Gulf: The Making of an American Sea*.

OUR PINE ISLAND ARMADILLOS

By: Marty Kendall

Armadillos (“little armored ones” in Spanish) are mammals and give birth to four identical babies from one egg. Gestation in our nine-banded type is eight months. The young are born with soft, leathery skin which hardens



Adult nine-banded armadillo; notice large claws and ears.
Credit: www.birdphotos.com, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Creative_Commons

within a few weeks. They become independent from six to twelve months from their births. Although their undersides are soft and furry, the armor-like skin is their main defense system, since they roll up in a ball for protection when provoked. These creatures possess long, sharp claws for burrow digging and for night time dining on grubs (a favorite), snails, larvae, beetles, cockroaches, grasshoppers, ants and termites. Their mouths contain no molars or canines, but rather numerous cheek teeth. When startled they will jump some three to four feet into the air, which can cause mortal contact with the under bottoms of motor vehicles. Swimming is a major skill with the abilities to walk on the bottom (breath holding for up to six minutes) or traversing deeper waters by swallowing air so their stomachs and intestines can serve as buoyancy ballast.

Interestingly, armadillos serve as medical studies in leprosy, since their low body temperatures protect them from the effects of the disease. Note, however, humans can contract leprosy from handling the animals, particularly in Texas, Louisiana and here in Florida. In some cultures their shells were utilized for lute musical instruments.

The average armadillo measures two to four feet long and weighs eight to eighteen pounds. Their life expectancy in the wild is seven to ten years, but upwards to twenty years in captivity. Their home burrows are about eight inches wide and up to fifteen feet deep. Our Pine Island armadillos are native and shared this island with the island's original inhabitants, the Calusa Indians.



Florida Panther with dinner :“on the Half Shell”. Photo by Lee Reed

Annual Membership Form

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

_____ \$500 Patron
_____ \$1000 Benefactor
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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.
November 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 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