



Calusa Digest



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Serving Southwest Florida

April, 2002

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Interested in receiving notification of **Emergency Action Alerts**? Send your email address to: **bobbieleeahasty@aol.com**. You will be notified of events that require prompt action such as letters, phone calls, and email. See our web page: **www.sierraclub.org/chapters/fl/calusa/enviro.htm**



Earth Day 2002!

The Calusa Group will be hosting an Earth Day Festival at the Founders' Home in Koreshan State Park on **Saturday, 20 April 2002**. You won't want to miss this! The event will start at 10:00 AM and end at 3:00 PM. There will be several other local environmental groups participating in the Earth Day Festival.

Come experience music and artwork from local musicians and artists. Nathan Dyke from Rhythm Culture will be performing World Music 1-2:00 PM, and hand-painted collectibles with animal themes by Sue Migeot will be featured.

There will be outings throughout the day. Paula from Estero River Outfitters has agreed to help with kayaking and canoe trips. From 10:00 AM to 3:00 PM, Charlie Weeks of Weeks Fish Camp will be providing ecotours of Estero Bay. The tours will last

approximately 1½ hours. The suggested donation for these tours is \$10 for adults and \$5 for children. Portions of the proceeds will go to the State Park and the Sierra Club. In addition, we will be raffling off one of Clyde Butcher's awesome prints! The Lions' Club will be hosting a food and drink stand offering standard picnic fare. The proceeds from this will go to local charities.

Koreshan State Park has given us the Founders' Home for the day, so it looks like we are all set to have a great time celebrating Earth Day. We plan to make this an annual event; we have already talked to the Park officials about having this festival on Earth Day weekend every year.

Please come up to our table and introduce yourselves. We always

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A Note from the Chair

In an effort to produce a more environmentally-friendly newsletter, the Executive Committee recently discussed ways to still have effective communication with our members without using as much paper. Several ideas were tossed around. One was to go to an updated website and put the newsletter on that; another idea was to do an email newsletter. The final, accepted idea was to not do so many newsletters. We realized that not everyone has email, knows how to access a website, or has a computer. We voted to do a quarterly newsletter, producing issues four times per year (January, April, July, and October) instead of ten times per year. This will save trees, and it will also force us to plan our events well in advance. This way our members will have better notice on picnics, presentations, outings and other upcoming events. We will still need volunteers to help fold and label the newsletter for mailing. This is done in the evening of the Monday of the week before the General Meeting (usually the first Monday of the month), and we have lots of fun while we do this. Please contact Meg Hutchins at **992-0641** if you can come help July 1st!

Anyone who is interested in doing environmental activism please send me your email address at **bobbieleeahasty@aol.com** so I can send you our Action Alerts. The Action Alert list is a wonderful tool to continue to protect the environment for our families and our future.

Fisheating Creek Grand Opening!

Attention! The Fisheating Creek Campground Grand Opening has been set for July 13th and 14th. We have fought long and hard to protect this awesome place. The big battle began in 1989, and in 2002, finally, the campground will have its Grand Opening celebration! Clyde Butcher will be in attendance. Florida Governor Jeb Bush has also been invited and representatives from the United States Fish and Wildlife Service will be there. This will be a weekend filled with fun. Guided outings will be going on, and there will be music, food, and great company. Canoe and kayak rentals will be available. A good time will be had by all. You won't want to miss this celebration, so put it on your calendars now.

Earth Day Websites

In honor of Earth Day, we're sharing these useful websites full of tips on how to minimize your environmental impact:

www.earthday.net/goals/footprint.stm
www.nrdc.org/cities/living/gover.asp
www.earthday.ca
www.earth911.org
www.HomeEnergySaver.lbl.gov
www.newdream.org
www.simpleliving.net/default.asp

Local Recycling Websites:

www.charlottecountyfl.com
www.colliercountyrecycles.com
www.lee-county.com/solidwaste

Please recycle this newsletter!

Annual Picnic

Our Annual Picnic will be held on Saturday, 22 June 2002 from 11:00 AM to 2:00 PM at the picnic area in Koreshan State Park. This is an event to celebrate the year's achievements and enable the Calusa Group members to become acquainted with each other and the Executive Committee. This is a potluck picnic, so please bring your favorite dish to share. **RSVP** To Bobbie Lee Hasty at **992-9061** or Meg Hutchins at **992-0641** and let us know what you are planning on bringing. We don't want four or five people bringing the same thing! We had a wonderful time last year, and we are looking forward to seeing everyone again.

We will not be having a General Meeting this month, as our picnic will be our get together and meeting all in one. We always discuss lots of important issues while just relaxing and enjoying the scenery. The July newsletter will inform the members of the next General Meeting as we regroup in the fall.

Also, please note that we do not hold a General Meeting or event in August or September as that time of the year is very slow and many people are on vacation.



NEWS FROM THE AGENCY ON BAY MANAGEMENT

At the Estero Bay Agency Bay Management (ABM) meeting on 11 March, Bruce Boler of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) gave a presentation on the Environmental Impact Statement Water Quality Initiative. Since the EPA and the Corps began to study the loss of wetlands, 1000 acres of wetland has been lost to fill. Conventional storm water management is another issue since there is no evidence that damaging pollutants are being removed. After determining the pollutant of concern the pre-construction load rate must be determined to see if post-construction load rate is greater. This process is complicated by first flush of pollutants (peaks of pollutants after rains), which has not been addressed. The new airport construction will be the first monitoring project in this regard.

There was discussion on the location of the Florida Gulf Coast University (FGCU) Marine Lab site. ABM relayed to FGCU that the Estero Bay Buffer property was not the best location in their opinion and suggested additional alternatives.

The next ABM Meeting will be held on 8 April 2002 at the Hyatt Hotel on Coconut Road in Estero so that the residents of south Lee County and Collier County can attend and let their voices be heard. The meeting begins at 9:00 AM, and public comments are taken near the end of the meeting. There will be issues on the agenda to interest everyone, including a presentation by the City of Bonita Springs on the Density Reduction Groundwater Resource water conservation areas east of I-75. Call Meg for more information at **992-0641**.

FUTURE GENERAL MEETINGS

11 April 2002: Dr. Win Everham, Chair, Division of Ecological and Environmental Studies, will address our General Meeting, focusing on Florida Gulf Coast University's (FGCU) new Environmental Studies Program. At the March General Meeting, members expressed an interest in learning more about this new program. In addition, FGCU is considering a modification of the program that would allow the participants to acquire a Certificate of Accreditation, enabling them to become volunteer monitors of natural resources in Southwest Florida. This would offer retirees and others an opportunity for hands-on involvement that is so desperately needed. Dr. Everham has also been asked to speak on environmental careers in SW Florida, so bring any young people that have an interest.

9 May 2002: Ellen Lindblat, Executive Director of the CREW Trust, will speak on the CREW Trust at our May General Meeting. She has been asked to bring a map that will show us what progress has been made in acquiring land and what the future holds for conservation through preservation of land in Southwest Florida, especially with regard to the corridor that would enable wildlife such as the panther to move about safely in search of prey.

Earth Day 2002!

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love to meet our members. The Sierra Club will have a table on the front porch of the Founders' Home. Ask for a schedule of Earth Day presentations and outings at the Rangers' Station as you come into the Park. See you there!

A Tribute to Fay Phillips

After a long illness, Fay Phillips passed away Monday, 25 March 2002 at her daughter's home in Cape Coral. She was a dedicated member of the Sierra Club Calusa Group, and was the Treasurer since the 1970's. She will always be remembered as someone who really cared. She would come to our Executive Committee meetings and bring her Treasurer's Report for the Board to review even when she was very ill and undergoing chemotherapy. Doing what she could to help protect our fragile environment meant so much to her that she kept going when most others would have stopped. I remember her driving a long distance to some of our meetings after her health had taken a turn for the worse, and I would be worried about her being out on the road. I knew she was not feeling well, but Fay would always say, "I'll be fine; I'm feeling a little better today." Fay was an extremely positive person, she had a great sense of humor, and she was loved by all. Fay won several awards during her time with the Sierra Club, and no one deserved them more than she did. We will miss her. Words cannot express the sadness we feel in our hearts.

Calusa Group Chair, Bobbie Lee Hasty

Out There

This is the first article in what I hope will be a prolific connection to y'all environmentally aware people.

I own GAEA Guides, which provides guided kayak nature tours of all the waterways of Lee County and other areas of Southwest Florida. I am **out there** several times per week and thought it would be nice to impart some good news to you, since we get to hear so much bad news.

I had a great discovery a couple of weeks ago. My clients and I had paddled across Estero Bay from our Lover's Key Resort departure point and were exploring creeks and mangrove tunnels on the east side of the bay when we rounded a bend and saw.....two otters frolicking in the water close the mangroves. We were lucky enough to watch them for a few minutes before they noticed us. When they did, they were upset and *hissed* at us, but never really left the area – they may have had young nearby. That was a rare treat and really made our day.

These are the little critters for which we are fighting, so keep up the good work. That's it for now, but you'll be hearing from me.

Connie Langmann
GAEA Guides
239-694-5513

Upcoming Outings

April - Take a hike through the Big Cypress National Preserve. The vast primordial swamps of Big Cypress are home to the highly endangered Florida panther, and one of the most diverse bird populations in the United States lives amid the orchid-strewn limbs of ancient great bald cypresses and islands of tropical hardwoods.

May - Visit the beautiful and hard fought and won Fisheating Creek. Join us for a leisurely canoe/kayak trip down Fisheating Creek, the only remaining pristine stream feeding Lake Okeechobee. It is judged by many to be the most beautiful paddling area in Florida. Camping is available if desired.

June - Shelling and Picnic on Sanibel Island. The abundance and variety of shells have made Sanibel Island a destination for the shell-obsessed. People come from all over the world, drawn by the song of the seashell. We will parade along the sands doubled over in a stance that's been dubbed the Sanibel Stoop, and picnic on the beach.

Call Ryan Combs at **(941) 495-7962** for actual dates and more information.

Big Cypress National Preserve Public Comment Period Extended

The National Park Service is extending for the second time the public comment period for a plan to look for oil in the Preserve as mineral-rights owners talk with officials from the Department of the Interior about a possible buyout. Collier Resources Company President Bob Duncan said this week, "they continue but nothing substantive yet". He said the company and the Department of the Interior remain on opposite sides of a gap in "value expectations" for the oil and gas rights that is proving difficult to bridge. "Nobody's come up with any bright ideas," Duncan said. The company owns the rights to oil and gas under 400,000 acres of the Preserve on the eastern border of Collier County.

During a visit to South Florida earlier this year, Interior Secretary Gale Norton said the Department was interested in buying the mineral rights. Norton's comments came at the same time the Preserve announced its proposal to grant the company's request to look for oil with certain restrictions. That proposal has been up for public comment since January. The new comment period will end **26 April**.

The proposed permit would allow the company to detonate explosives in almost 15,000 holes dug across a 40-square-mile patch of the Preserve in eastern Collier County. The company also would build an 8-mile access road and a 5-acre limestone pad where an exploratory well would be drilled. The National Park Service has proposed to approve the plan with a host of restrictions on motorized vehicles and helicopters, buffer areas around nesting

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OUTINGS

- 1. Arrive 10 minutes before outing to get signed in. Every effort will be made to start outings on time. Please be prompt!*
- 2. A small fee will be charged for every outing. All outings are rated EASY unless otherwise specified.*
- 3. IMPORTANT! Call Leader first to be sure outing is still scheduled.*
- 4. You don't have to be a member to come to an outing. Everyone is welcome!*

Big Cypress

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sites for bald eagles and endangered woodpeckers, and tree-clearing limits.

The public has flooded Preserve offices with more than 8,000 comments about the permit - most of them opposed to it. Mary Munson, South Florida director for the National Parks Conservation Association, said this week that members of her group equate the Big Cypress proposal with drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. "These really need to be off-limits to activities like this," Munson said. Donahue said he's getting calls from Los Angeles to Wisconsin from people wanting to comment on the proposal.

"We want to get every comment that's out there," he said.

Send your comments and concerns to:

John Donahue
Superintendent
Big Cypress National Preserve
HCR 61, Box 110
Ochopee, FL 34141

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SENIOR	<input type="checkbox"/> \$19	<input type="checkbox"/> \$27
STUDENT	<input type="checkbox"/> \$19	<input type="checkbox"/> \$27
LIFE	<input type="checkbox"/> \$1000	<input type="checkbox"/> \$1250
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General Meeting

Second Thursday of Every Month
Calusa Nature Center Classroom

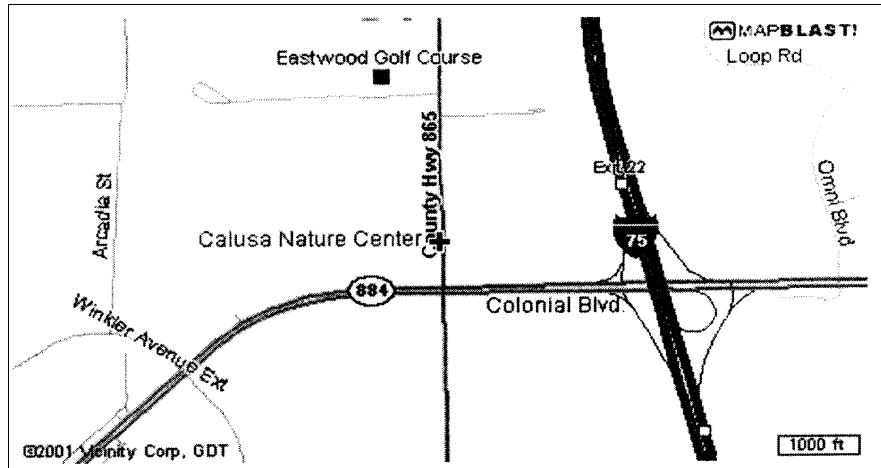
11 April 2002

6:00 – 6:30 PM Socialize and Snack

6:30 – 7:30 PM

Dr. Win Everham

7:45 – 9:00 PM Executive Committee Meeting for discussion of local issues
Everyone Welcome!



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