



# Calusa Digest



No. 5

Serving Southwest Florida

Spring, 2005

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## *EARTH DAY 2005*

**AT KORESHAN STATE PARK  
Off US 41, Estero**

**10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.**

**Enjoy bands, food, a drumming circle, face painting, kayaking, many environmental vendors and representatives.**

### **"Gulf Still In Distress" Brings in top quality local and international Scientists and Speakers.**

Sierra Club will be hosting its second Gulf Still in Distress Presentation. The presentation will be held March 14, 2005 at The Three Oaks Conference Center in Estero off Three Oaks Parkway. Starting at 9:00 a.m. and ending at 5:45 p.m. The event will present the anticipated unbiased results of water quality data by Dr. Larry Brand from the University of Miami and Dr. Brian Lapointe of Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institute. Other specialists include David Cielly Senior Biologist from The Conservancy of SW Florida.

It is a true honor to have Dr. Joann Burkholder from North Carolina University. Burkholder will talk about nutrient loading. Dr. Burkholder's story is told in a must read book called, *The Waters Turned to Blood*. A movie about Burkholder's discovery of the water toxin pfiesteria is in the works. Other speakers include Lee County Smart Growth Director Wayne Daltry. Lee County Commissioner Ray Judah, Lee County Commissioner Bob Janes, Bonita Springs City Manager Gary Price. A presentation "Permission to Pollute" will be given by Sierra Club's Lori Glenn. Hybrid vehicles and information displayed.

For reservations:

Lori Glenn  
239-992-1565

[rosesplus@comcast.net](mailto:rosesplus@comcast.net)

A \$5.00 donation is appreciated per person.

## **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

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## **What are your environmental goals for 2005?**

**We would love to hear about them, so please join us for our monthly meetings located at Calusa Nature Center off Colonial Blvd in Ft Myers. The meetings are held the second Thursday of every month at 6:30 p.m.**

**In March, we hope to have a shorter than normal meeting followed by appetizers and beverages at RJ Gators on Colonial Blvd @ 7:30 p.m.. What do you have to lose? Come on help us save the planet and have some fun.**

**For more information:  
Call Lori Glenn 992-1565.**

**Do you like to travel, meet people and speak your mind? If so, then you may be interested in the position of**

## **Co-Flex-Com representative for the Calusa Group.**

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### **Big Cypress Bend/Fakahatchee Strand Outing on Sunday December 5<sup>th</sup> 2004**

Thirteen eager hikers met leaders Brigita Gahr and Gail Swanson at 9 a.m. on a clear, cool morning at the entrance to the Big Cypress Bend Boardwalk, off the Tamiami Trail several miles west of Collier-Seminole Park, doused themselves liberally with mosquito repellents and set out along the 3/4 mile boardwalk. The water level was low, and we heard quite a few birds, though most were elusive to the eye. We did get a splendid look at a red-shouldered hawk, which posed for the photographs of those with zoom lenses.

At the end of the boardwalk there were no alligators or turtles—the usual denizens of the water hole there—but several herons: great blue, tri-color, immature little blue, and an immature yellow-crowned night heron whose stillness and camouflage challenged spotting. There were a few egrets and white ibis, including one great egret that perched high in a cypress tree.

On the way back we stopped to look at an eagle's nest in a topless cypress tree, and were surprised to see something moving about in it—what we couldn't determine. A pileated woodpecker called and pecked, but wasn't clearly seen except in flight. Other woodpeckers and some warblers teased and disappeared. A ruddy daggerwing butterfly brightened the path near the parking area, and a giant swallowtail swished across the path into the trees.

Piling back into our cars, we drove another eight or so miles east to SR29 and turned north for a couple of miles to the turn-off for Jane's Scenic Drive, leaving the cars at the ranger station and distributing ourselves into four heavy-duty vehicles for the trip into the strand. Along the way we saw many egrets and other herons, as well as black vultures.

Parking at Gate #12, we doused ourselves again with mosquito repellent, and now, as it was near noon, with sunscreen as well, and set off up the old logging tram road, recently trimmed for ease of walking. The path is lined on both sides with swamp, full of crinum lilies, pickerel weed in bloom, a lettuce lake, a few water lilies, cypress and some hardwoods for fall color, bedecked with tillandsia and large bromeliads (not in bloom but colorful still), and profuse with several kinds of ferns.

Forty-five minutes walk along the road through magnificent stands of native royal palms brought us to an old "cracker" cabin, built in 1957 and maintained by Ballard, a sign on the door said. There was a hand pump for washing hands—with soap--and a medicine cabinet with a mirror on the front porch, and an outhouse, complete with moon-shaped window, on down the path. On the dock behind the cabin was a six-foot alligator who ignored us for the entire time we were there (though we all tiptoed out to take photos), and another, smaller one, who posed handsomely on a log next to the dock, apparently waiting his turn to get onto the structure. Larger alligators patrolled the medium-sized lake beyond. A few yards past the outhouse, along a cleared path, two more young gators guarded a wooden footbridge, so that was the end of our walk in that direction. Continued on page 3

Continued from page 4

We neither saw nor heard many birds along the tram road, but again there was a butterfly mascot, this time a white peacock, that flitted about in the clearing in front of the cabin, where by now everyone was eating lunch and taking pictures of each other taking pictures, and of the alligators digesting. As usual with Sierra Club outings, people found common interests and chatted away happily. Brigita and Gail created a pleasant, cheerful ambience.

Back at the parking area by about 1:45, we returned to our own cars—some to continue to Smallwood’s Store in Chokoloskee, only about three miles south of the intersection to SR29 and the Tamiami Trail, others to continue east to Clyde Butcher’s studio, and others to return to Naples and Ft. Myers. The drive back along the Trail was pretty spectacular, with flocks of egrets hanging out near the highway in several places, and plentiful cormorants and kingfishers lining the wires, with hawks, wood storks and the ubiquitous vultures soaring above.

Suzanne Ferguson  
Ft. Myers, Florida



## Sierra Club Outings

*All participants are required to sign a liability waiver on Sierra Club outings. You may preview the sign-in sheet and liability waiver form at <http://www.sierraclub.org/outings/chapters/forms> .) Or call 415-977-5528*

Saturday & Sunday, February 19-20, Camping at Myakka River State Park. Explore one of Florida's oldest state parks developed by the Civilian Conservation Corps in 1934. Outing activities will include: a boat tour, night hike & campfire, choice of biking or canoeing (rentals available), 4 group meals, and a unique opportunity to explore the treetops on a canopy walkway! You can also climb the 70-foot tower for a spectacular view of wetlands, forest and prairie. \$45 members/\$50 non-members (children 12 & under- \$10 discount). For more information contact Brigita at (239) 337-1857 or [bbgahr@msn.com](mailto:bbgahr@msn.com) . Limited to 15 participants, reserve by 2/13. Extra tent available.

Join us on Sunday, March 13, at 9:00 a.m. for a leisurely 2 1/2 mile hike on the CREW Marsh Trails in Estero. Environmental Education Specialist, Deb Hanson, will guide us along the new boardwalk on the Popash Slough Trail. White-tailed deer, wild hogs, armadillos, Florida Black Bears, and endangered Florida Panthers live in the Corkscrew Regional Ecosystem Watershed. The pine flatwoods, oak/palm hammocks and marsh areas contain a variety of vegetation such as slash pine, live oak, sabal palm, wild coffee, and wildflowers. You may want to take along a camera or binoculars. Suggested donation of \$3 members/\$5 non-members. Contact Brigita by March 6 to sign up for this outing at [bbgahr@msn.com](mailto:bbgahr@msn.com) or 239-337-1857. Limited to 15 participants.

### More Outings

Outings are held every month on the Sunday following our general meeting (which is the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of every month). We hike in various spectacular locations throughout the Southwest Florida area. The hikes are not terribly strenuous, so your average Sunday hiker can accompany us. The outings last from 9AM until Noon. Some of the places that we hike throughout the year:

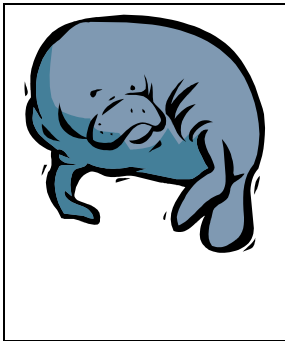
Babcock/Webb Wildlife Management Area  
Estero Bay Buffer Preserve  
CREW (Corkscrew Regional Ecosystem Watershed)  
Hickey Creek Mitigation Area

<b>Outing Leader Training</b>
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Outing Leader Training: Learn how to become a Sierra Club outing leader or get updated on the latest rules and regs. For information contact Rudy Scheffer at 727-726-8375 or e-mail: [rudy@adventuresworldwide.com](mailto:rudy@adventuresworldwide.com)

**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. You don't have to be a Sierra Club Member to come to an outing. Everyone is welcome!



**MEMBERSHIP FORM**

- Yes, I want to be a member of the Sierra Club
- Yes, I want to give a gift certificate.

My Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail Address \_\_\_\_\_

I understand that a gift announcement card will be sent for my use. I've entered my name and address above and the recipient's name and address below.

Gift Recipient's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

**Membership Categories**

(Check One)	Individual	Joint
INTRODUCTORY	<input type="checkbox"/> \$25	
REGULAR	<input type="checkbox"/> \$35	<input type="checkbox"/> \$43
SUPPORTING	<input type="checkbox"/> \$60	<input type="checkbox"/> \$68
CONTRIBUTING	<input type="checkbox"/> \$120	<input type="checkbox"/> \$128
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

**PAYMENT METHOD:**

- CHECK     MASTERCARD     VISA

CARDHOLDER SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_

CARD NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_

EXPIRATION DATE \_\_\_\_\_

Contributions, gifts, and dues to the Sierra Club are not tax-deductible; they support effective, citizen-based advocacy and lobbying efforts. Your dues include \$7.50 for a subscription to Sierra magazine and \$1.00 for your chapter newsletter.

Enclose payment information and mail to:

**SIERRA CLUB**  
P.O. Box 52968, BOULDER, CO 80322-2968    F99QV 3303 -1

Residents of Canada may remit in Canadian funds

**OUT THERE**

Some positive insight on our local natural world from someone that is “out there” a lot.

The manatees are back! Not that they ever left, they’re just easier to find at this time of year. These gentle herbivores are congregating in the naturally warmer rivers, creeks and canals. They especially love the ‘spa’ at Manatee Park – the canal that flows into the Orange River is heated by Florida Power and Light, which uses the water to cool some of their equipment.

As we paddle in a lagoon that they have congregated in for millennia, they get quite curious about our kayaks. These 12 ft. long, 2000 lb. critters nudge our boats and nibble on a handle that hangs in the water. We sit still, just watching them watching us.

We see mangroves along the river’s edge, whose low hanging leaves have been chewed on by the manatees. There is not much for them to eat up here so, as the day warms up, they head down the Caloosahatchee towards the sea grass beds in the estuaries. The manatees eat approximately 1/10 of their weight every day, so as you can imagine, that takes up quite a bit of their time.

Then, when it gets cooler in the evening, they head back towards the warmer waters. The Florida Manatee can die from cold stress when the Gulf temperature drops below 69 degrees. Of course, it would take several days of exposure to the cold water for this to happen.

If you would like to learn more about the manatees, Manatee Park, 5 miles east of downtown Fort Myers, has great educational programs going on every day. Or grab a paddle and head out on the waters with a knowledgeable guide and learn more about them.

Connie Langmann

GAEA Guides – guided kayak nature tours

239 694-5513 The Sierra Club’s Statement of Purpose:

**To explore, enjoy, and protect the wild spaces of the earth; to practice and promote the responsible use of the earth’s ecosystems and resources; to educate and enlist humanity to protect and restore the quality of the natural and human environment; and to use all lawful means to carry out these objectives**

## **General Meetings**

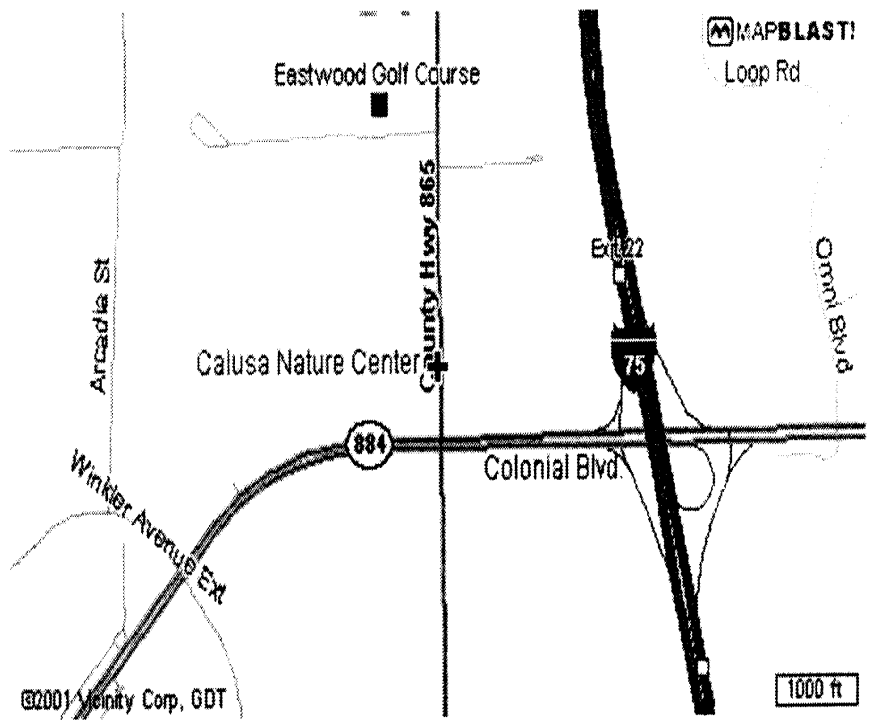
*Second Thursday of Every Month*

Calusa Nature Center Classroom

All General Meetings are followed by the Executive Committee Meeting at 6:30 PM

***Everyone Welcome!***

***Please recycle this newsletter!***



**Sierra Club Calusa Group**

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