
Newsletter

March 1993

ANNUAL MEETING

The 1993 Annual Meeting of the Calusa Land Trust was held on January 30th at the American Legion hall near St. James City. There were approximately 50 members and interested people in attendance. President Rick Moore called the meeting to order and thanked all those able to come and show their support.

Membership Chairman Alison Ackerman reported that since the Calusa Land Trust reactivated in 1989, about 275 individuals, families, organizations and businesses have joined. Of those 275, 79 have already renewed their memberships for 1993 and 19 new members have also joined. (EDITOR'S NOTE: Since the annual meeting, 16 more renewals and 13 new memberships have been received.)

Rick gave an update on the St. James Creek Preserve project. About 98 people have donated at least \$100 to buy an acre or more of this beautiful land. The rest of the funds have been drawn from general membership donations, and to date the Calusa Land Trust has already made two of the three payments. By June of 1993, the final mortgage payment of \$7,200 must be made, and the entire 320-acre tract be owned free and clear!

Treasurer Bill Spikowski handed out the following summary of his financial report for 1992:

Insert report here.

Plans are in the works to construct a plaque listing all the people who have bought an acre or more of this Preserve. This sign would be posted at the entrance of the trail. Also, a local artist is drawing a decorative border of animals and plants to be used as an outline on copies of the deed. Everyone who purchases an acre or more will receive one.

There has been considerable progress clearing Brazilian peppers to create a nature trail at the St. James Creek Preserve. Land Management Chairman Ed Chapin reported that he and many volunteers have worked several Saturday mornings, and most of the pesky plants are now cut down. The Calusa Land Trust is hiring a professional to bring in a wood chipper to cut up the existing brush piles and spread the wood chips on the trail, which will officially be named "St. Jude Trail." For those interested in seeing what has been done, there is now an unobstructed pathway cleared from Stabile Road eastward to St. James Creek. The next big job will be the removal of the remaining stumps. And in the meantime, Lisa Dodd has offered her expertise as a landscape architect to help plan the finishing of the trail.

Eagle Preserve Report

Lisa Dodd announced that a closing date for the Pine Island Eagle Preserve has been tentatively set for May 30 of this year. This project involves the purchase of 62 acres of pine flatwoods, with the rest of the 118-acre parcel being mangrove wetlands along St. James Creek. As you may remember from another newsletter description, this tract is located next to the St. James City Post Office, extending from Stringfellow to Matlacha Pass. Because of the valuable active eagle nest located on it, the Florida Communities Trust and Lee County have agreed to purchase the entire piece for preservation. Lisa Dodd originally wrote the application on behalf of Lee County, with the Calusa Land Trust agreeing to obtain an option on the land and provide management assistance also. She said that the active involvement of a local land trust was a key factor in gaining final approval from the Florida Communities Trust. The current owners will donate \$20,000 to Calusa Land Trust to use for managing the land. Our only other financial obligation will be to pay the 1993 real estate taxes. (EDITOR'S NOTE: I am sure all of you would join me in thanking Lisa for her hard work and dedication in saving so many acres of slash pine forests and an eagles' nest which will now never be disturbed. Let's cross our fingers that the closing is successful!)

C.A.R.L. Project Update

Jim Beaver announced that the Charlotte Harbor Flatwoods acquisition project, encompassing 9,920 acres in Charlotte and Lee Counties located between U.S. 41 and Burnt Store Road, has been ranked #20 on the Conservation and Recreation Lands (CARL) list for possible purchase by the state of Florida. Jim believes there is a good chance the Flatwoods Project will make the next cut. For those of you who answered our appeal to write letters in support of this project, many many thanks. Calusa Land Trust will be writing a letter to encourage final purchase and we urge anyone who can to do the same. If you do not have a copy of the Summer/Fall newsletter, please call Alison Ackerman at 997-5442 and she will send you a copy of the names and addresses to which to write.

NEW PROJECTS for 1993!!!

Frederick K. Johnson, one of the original founders of Calusa Land Trust, has agreed to donate his long-term land lease on about one and a half acres of tropical hardwood hammock on Calusa Island to the Calusa Land Trust. This land is very close to 40 acres of mangrove swamp that the Trust already owns as a result of a previous donation. The Board is considering various options with regard to a dilapidated building on the property and some effort may have to go into tearing part of it down. In the meantime, the paperwork has been started, and the only funds the Trust will need will be half of the closing costs.

Chairman Rich Larkin reported that his Land Acquisition Committee has been waiting for the St. James Creek Preserve to come to a successful close before embarking on any new ventures. However, they have been looking into some future possibilities, notably some tracts that are contiguous to existing Calusa Land Trust properties.

Election of Board of Directors

Before the election, Rick Moore thanked two outgoing members, Richard Holmes and Bobbi Shanks, both of whom have greatly helped us these last three years. Certificates of appreciation were awarded. Luckily they both assured us that they will stay involved and continue their support. The following people were elected to the Board of Directors for two-year terms: Ellie Boyd, Ed Chapin, Norm Gowan, Rich Larkin, Gloria Sajgo and Don Schontz. The other five Board members, Alison Ackerman, Jim Beever, Kate Fitzgerald, Rick Moore and Bill Spikowski will serve the second year of their terms in 1993.

After the general membership meeting, the Board elected the following officers for 1993:

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| President: | Alison Ackerman |
| Vice-President: | Rick Moore |
| Treasurer: | Bill Spikowski |
| Secretary: | Gloria Sajgo |

CALUSA LAND TRUST "BOOSTERS"

Calusa Land Trust received a big boost from a recent (1/31/93) excellent article in the News-Press and from continuing coverage in the Pine Island Eagle. Membership inquiries and T-shirt sales benefited tremendously. Our members, you, are still our best advertisers, though, and the newly released Calusa Land Trust video tape should help you convince your friends and neighbors to join us in preserving Pine Island's natural beauty and precious wildlife assets. Call Rick Moore if you would like a copy of the video tape to view and/or circulate; copies of the tape are also available at the library.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Trash Bash '93 will be held on April 17, from 8:00 to 3:00. Ed Chapin will head up a crew in Bokeelia, meeting at the Harbor Hideaway on Barrancas Avenue; and Rick Moore will be working in the St. James City area. Call them if you would like to join up. Ed's number is 283-1167 (afternoons) and Rick's is 283-1206. Call Bernadette, the organizer for all of Pine Island, at 283-4576 if you have any other questions. She told us at the annual meeting that there will be prizes and other fun things to do and see at the Center that day.

Canoe Outing!! On March 20, at 9:00 a.m., there will be a canoe outing at the Big Jim Creek Preserve in Bokeelia. Ed Chapin, our outings coordinator, is investigating a new spot to launch the canoes. Call him at 293-1167 for details and to let him know you are coming. There are extra canoes to borrow, and space in other canoes as well.

VOLUNTEER HELP NEEDED!!!

St. Jude Trail workers - 1st Saturday of each month from 9-12:00. (The Eagle incorrectly printed the 1st and 3rd Saturdays.) Call Ed if you can help or just come to the Trail at 9:00 with gloves, clippers and saws if you have any. Any kind of help is very much needed. We hope to start planting native plants and trees soon.

T-Shirt Sales - Call Mary or Don Schontz at 283-5212. This committee not only keeps track of our shirts, but orders more when needed and coordinates sales during events. It's a great fundraiser and people seem to love the shirts and learning about what we do. Give Don or Mary a call if you would like to help out.

Other committees also need help from time to time. When a job needs doing, one person will often tackle it single-handedly in the interest of saving time. But most would agree that working together with a few other people can be less stressful, as well as fun. We have asked you on occasion to help out and many have come forward. That is how we have had so much success. Now that we are starting a new year and once again need a few more volunteers, won't you consider calling one of the committee chairpersons below? If the committee does not yet have a leader, call Alison Ackerman, our new President, at 997-5442 (mornings).

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| Land Acquisition | Call Rich Larkin at 283-4871 |
| Environmental Research | Call Jim Beever at 995-7614 |
| Membership Committee | Call Norm Gowan at 283-8203 |
| Land Management | Call Ed Chapin at 283-1167 |
| T-shirt/hat sales | Call Mary or Don Schontz at 283-5212 |
| Newsletter | Call Alison Ackerman at 997-5442 |
| Public Relations | Call ? |
| Entertainment/Activities | Call ? |
| Fundraising | Call ? |

Membership Note

We are reminding those of you who have not yet renewed your membership for 1993 that now would be a good time to do so. There is a star by your name on the mailing label (but if we have made a mistake, please let us know by calling our new Membership Chairman Norm Gowan at the number above).

THANK YOU!

You may have noticed our new letterhead showing an osprey in flight. An artist who specializes in naturalist drawings created this for us at no cost. We wish to thank Samuel Emrys Evans for his time, effort and beautiful drawing that will now symbolize the Calusa Land Trust's efforts.