

Calusa Land Trust

and Nature Preserve of Pine Island, Inc.



Newsletter

Winter 1998

Greetings to everyone. This newsletter has exciting announcements about our latest activities, plus a recap of all that happened at our annual meeting last month.

YORK ISLAND!

York Island is located off the southern end of Pine Island, across from the Ding Darling National Wildlife Refuge. Local boaters are familiar with York as the long island north and east of the old "mail boat route."

York Island's approximately 200 acres are mostly mangrove forest, with some of the largest black mangrove trees in the area. The south side of the island has a narrow sand and shell ridge. On this ridge grows sub-tropical hammock species such as gumbo limbo, sea grape, and Jamaica dogwood. This is one of the rarest and most endangered habitats in southwest Florida.

Many people were concerned when the southerly ridge was declared "uplands" by Lee County some years ago, opening it for development. With the recent clearing and issuance of building permits on nearby Crescent Island, York Island is threatened with the same fate if not purchased for conservation. The Calusa Land Trust has hoped to purchase York Island for many years, but it has been far beyond our means.

The Sanibel-Captiva Conservation Foundation is now taking the lead in acquiring York Island as a joint project with the Calusa Land Trust. Our two groups are still discussing the details of joint ownership and/or management. Considering its regional importance, it is appropriate that these two organizations work together to preserve this beautiful island.

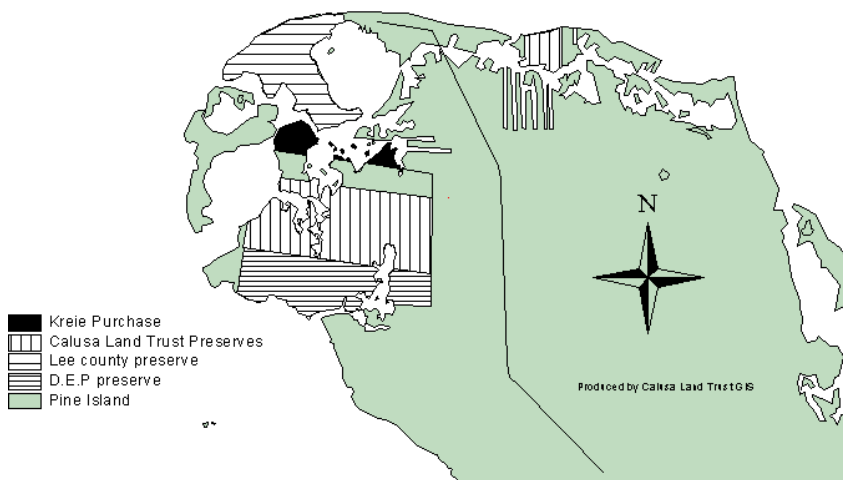
EXPANSION TO BIG JIM CREEK PRESERVE!

With the recent purchase of a valuable 47-acre parcel adjoining Jug Creek and Burgess Bay, the Calusa Land Trust has been able to make a significant addition to its Big Jim Creek Preserve. As the map below shows, most of the northwest end of Pine Island is now secured as preserved lands, with protection and natural resource management shared by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, the Calusa Land Trust, and the Lee County Division of Public Parks.

The purchase of the Kreie parcel was completed last week for \$40,000. It is especially valuable for preserving biological diversity because it includes a rapidly disappearing habitat called a “tropical hardwood hammock.” This hammock is a 3-acre “island” surrounded by a larger mangrove island, with vegetation very similar to the southerly ridge on York Island. A 1986 analysis of undeveloped land in Lee County’s coastal zone showed only 452 acres of tropical hardwood forest remaining in all of Lee County. And that was twelve years ago.

The owners of the property, Mr. and Mrs. Herbert Kreie, Jr., were longtime Pine Islanders who now live in Fort Myers. They had planned to build their own island home on this land, but sold it to the Calusa Land Trust at a reduced price so that this beautiful habitat can be protected forever. A recent bequest from Land Trust member Benjamin Counselman paid for half of this property, but the Land Trust had to use its entire emergency fund plus general operating revenues for the balance. We are actively seeking donations so that the emergency fund will again be available for timely purchase of other parcels that become available on short notice.

As coastal Lee County moves ever closer to full development, biological diversity should be maintained by protecting rapidly diminishing upland habitats along with environmentally sensitive wetlands. Please continue to help your Land Trust work toward this goal by contributing if you can.



Our Land Acquisition Committee is currently considering two other tracts, both adjacent to currently preserved lands on Pine Island. The owners of both tracts have indicated a willingness to sell at a fair price in order to have the lands placed in permanent preservation, but we must first raise the necessary funds.

ANNUAL MEETING

Our annual meeting was held on January 18 at the Elks Club at Pine Island Center. About 50 people attended on that beautiful day, and many took turns making announcements and discussing an array of related topics and upcoming events. President Rich Larkin presided over the meeting and asked board members and committee chairpersons to give brief reports.

Treasurer Bill Spikowski began by handing out his yearly financial statement (reprinted at the end of this newsletter) and announced that financially we were now in a good position to again purchase land. (After reading this newsletter, you can see that no time has been wasted!) He also told a little about Benjamin Counselman, who moved with his family to Tice in east Fort Myers in the 1920s and resided there until his recent death. Mr. Counselman was a true “man of the soil” who farmed his entire life, growing every kind of vegetable for sale in the Fort Myers area, even as his farm became surrounded by a very different Tice than he had moved to. Mr. Counselman was active in civic and church activities, and was a member and supporter of the Calusa Land Trust. He died recently and left the Land Trust a generous donation to carry on the work of protecting valuable land.

Rick Moore, Land Acquisition Committee Member, announced that the board of directors has offered to raise \$22,500 to help the Sanibel-Captiva Conservation Foundation purchase York Island (see story on Page 1). The SCCF has acquired an option to purchase the entire island for \$225,000 by April 1998. The board of directors will plan a fund-raising campaign for York Island.

President Rich Larkin announced that the Calusa Land Trust is negotiating with the South Florida Water Management District over mitigation for lands owned by the Greater Pine Island Water Association. The Land Trust has offered to guarantee that 43 acres of land in the St. James Creek Preserve will remain perpetually exotic-free, in exchange for a \$30,000 donation from the Water Association. This donation would relieve the Water Association of a costly and ineffective mitigation project on their own land. The donation would be invested in a trust fund to pay for perpetual maintenance.

Norm Gowan, Membership and Fund-raising Chairman, reported that our total membership count for individuals, families and businesses stands at 586. This is a net gain of only 9 since last year because we lost several old members. The good news is that we gained 83 brand new members. He reminded everyone to check the labels of their newsletters for an “*”; whenever you see one, it is time to renew your membership. Norm also asked that anyone who does not wish to remain a member of the Land Trust or receive our newsletter to please drop us a line.

Norm also described the “Sponsor a Member” program to increase membership; many have participated and the results are frequently printed in this newsletter. Just remem-

ber, whenever you are out and about, share what you know about CLT and help others to support our cause to save natural lands. They will be glad you did and so will you.

Norm also announced that 353 planks had been bought for the St. Jude Trail boardwalk, raising \$17,600. And with the recent publicity in Gulfshore Life and the Fort Myers News-Press, more requests are expected, so the construction crews will add more planks including a ramp. (Since the annual meeting, Phil Buchanan has agreed to supervise the new construction and take over for Chic Kennedy who has done a super job.)

Fund raising events last year were great successes. The Poker Run on December 7 brought in \$2,876, with the winner taking home \$1,120 with a hand of four nines! This year a new shorter canal course was added for the benefit of the faint-of-heart (or in case of bad weather). Look for news of this year's event, scheduled for December 6, 1998.

Last year's rummage sale, organized and run by the House, Ingelse, and Jephson families, netted over \$1,000 for CLT. Another rummage sale is scheduled for March 21 (see details below). The St. Patrick's Day Dinner and Party was not only fun, it brought in another \$1,000, with almost 200 corned-beef-and-cabbage dinners served to the sounds of music provided by Jimmie Eisenberg and friends. This year's event is planned for March 17 (see details below).

Joe and Jimmie Eisenberg are sponsoring a program to benefit kids on Pine Island. 400 "Cheeseburger Gift Certificates" are being distributed at the Pine Island Elementary School by Principal/Trust member Tommy Thompson as incentives for completing selected assignments. Two picnic tables were also purchased for the school's use. This is the start of a campaign to build a pavilion at Fritts Park which will be available for various youth organizations such as the Boy Scouts, etc. There will be more on this as plans are further developed.

Richard Little, Chairman of the Trail/Park Interpretive Committee, spoke about our effort to improve the canoe trail from the Fritts Park drainage ditch out to Big Jim Creek. Volunteers have been helping with this but more would be appreciated. He also said that a canoe ramp may be built in the future. Richard encouraged everyone to go out some time, take that canoe trip you have always thought about, and just "absorb nature."

Peter Ordway, G.I.S./Mapping Chairman, announced that markers had been placed along the Fritts Park canoe trail to help everyone navigate their way in and out. He has also produced a map of the trail. Soon, everyone will be able to get a copy right at the site before heading out. Also, he and Ed Chapin are organizing canoe trips this winter. (As of this newsletter, two of them have already taken place and were great fun, one exploring the Big Jim Creek Preserve and the other to Calusa Island where Peter and Ed

led an informative tour. The third trip is scheduled for Saturday, March 28, and boaters will be paddling out to York Island.) Call Peter at 283-5918 for the exact meeting place and time of all canoe trips. Canoes are usually available if you do not have one.

Ed Chapin, Land Management Committee Chairman, announced that Joe and Judy Baxley have completed the donation of 5.39 acres to the Calusa Land Trust. This land is located on the southeast side of Pine Island almost abutting Pine Island Creek, and has been appraised at \$30,000. It is considered a “transitional zone,” consisting of some pines and palmettos as well as beautiful mangroves. This is a splendid donation and we are extremely thankful for the Baxley’s generosity. A future newsletter will contain more details on this land and a map of it and other Calusa Land Trust properties.

Bud House, Archaeology Committee Chairman, brought us up to date on our plans to one day purchase land which used to be part of the Calusa Indian canal system, built 1,000 - 1,500 years ago and stretching from Pineland to Indian Field Island, then across Matlacha Pass and through Cape Coral to the Caloosahatchee River. This past year, CLT has been investigating 6 undeveloped lots along Meadow Lane. The lots are uplands and buildable with each one probably costing from \$10-\$20,000. Our hope is to receive help from the archeology community to purchase them.

President Rich Larkin wanted everyone to acknowledge the generous efforts of Don and Mary Shontz who recently announced that they are moving up north. Although Don recently resigned as a member of the board, both have worked hard over many years with countless projects. Many of you probably learned about the Land Trust by talking to the Shontz’s at one of the many community gatherings they attended on our behalf. Rich Larkin will present them with a plaque thanking them for “their generous efforts and substantial contributions to the success of Calusa Land Trust through their endless marketing of tickets, shirts, and prints during their many years of service to the Trust.” We will all greatly miss them.

Other announcements at the meeting::

- ✓ Rubye Woodhead, our new historian, has put together a masterful scrapbook of all the newspaper articles and photographs of various CLT events. The book was at the meeting for all to page through.
- ✓ Phil Buchanan, our new nature guide, is planning a comprehensive environmental guide to Pine Island to include articles on biking, camping, and canoeing for example, and even explanations of various issues such as mitigation, conservation easements and how a land trust is organized. He is going to need help writing many of the articles and also needs pictures and drawings. He welcomes ALL donations, so please call him at 283-4067 if you can help. Don’t be surprised if he calls you first.
- ✓ Cathy Valenti has applied for (and since received) a grant through the Catholic Church to conduct a survey of Pine Islanders concerning their awareness of various

health and environmental issues. The survey is presently being distributed. To promote this project, she is organizing a march to be held on Earth Day, April 25, when every participant will start out at the St. Jude Nature Trail and walk to the St. James City Civic Association. Sponsors will donate money for each walker and all the proceeds will go the Calusa Land Trust. Watch for notices around the island or in the Pine Island Eagle. Become a sponsor or a walker, and be sure to fill out a survey.

Election of New Board Members — Before Rich Larkin adjourned the meeting at 2:00, the following people were elected to serve two-year terms on the Board of Directors: Alison Ackerman, Phil Buchanan, Chic Kennedy, Richard Little, Rick Moore, Bill Spikowski, and Rubye Woodhead.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Next Board Meeting *March 16, 1998*

This meeting will be held at the Pine Island Public Library at 6:00 P.M. All board meetings are open to the public.

St. Patrick's Day Dinner and Party *March 17, 1998*

This year's party promises to be even better than ever! Food service will be continuous starting at 1:00 PM, with music starting at 3:00, so plan to come out. This party will again be held at the Elks Club/Greater Pine Island Civic Association building at Pine Island Center. Some help in serving is needed, so please contact Marie Gowan (Kitchen Boss) at 283-8203 to volunteer.

Rummage Sale *March 21, 1998*

This year's sale will be held at the Elks Club/Greater Pine Island Civic Association building at Pine Island Center. Donations may be dropped off at the Elks on Friday, March 20 between 8:00 and 11:00 A.M. If you need more information, contact Shirley House at 283-3493. Everything you can donate will help. In any case, don't forget to come out and shop!

Beer Tasting Party *March 21, 1998*

Yes, this is on the same day as the rummage sale, but it should all work out nicely with everyone doing a little shopping in the morning and going to a party in the afternoon. And if you have also noticed this is indeed a new event. It will be held at the "Jungle Garden" of members Joe and Jimmie Eisenberg, and will be similar to the 12/8/96 Back Bay Celebration. Hot dogs and tap beer will be served for all as well as a sample beer tasting of imported/microbrews presented by member Dave Yaros of Miller Brands. \$100 donors to the York Island Fund will receive free admission for two as well as a

complimentary boat cruise to York Island. Admission is \$20 per person for all others. Call Norm Gowan at 283-8203 for more information.

Canoe Trip *March 28, 1998*

A canoe trip to York Island will be held on this day, led by Peter Ordway and Ed Chapin. Call Peter at 283-5918 for details.

NEW OFFICERS

At the Board of Directors meeting on February 9, officers for the coming year were elected. Below is a complete list of board members, officers, and committee chairs.

Ed Chapin	President Land Management Committee Chairman	277-6807 (pager)
Richard Little	Vice-President Trail/Park Interpretive Chairman Land Management Committee Member	283-4974
Bill Spikowski	Treasurer Government Liaison & Business Manager	334-8866
Ruby Woodhead	Secretary Historian	283-1288
Rich Larkin	Land Acquisition Committee Chairman Past President	283-4871
Norm Gowan	Membership Chairman Fund Raising Committee Chairman Past President	283-8203
Alison Ackerman	Newsletter Editor Past President	997-5442 337-5586
Chic Kennedy	Construction Project Manager Land Acquisition Committee Member	283-7121
Peter Ordway	G.I.S./Mapping Chairman Grant Committee Chairman	283-5918
Rick Moore	Land Acquisition Committee Member Land Management Committee Member Past President	283-1206
Bud House	Archaeology Chairman Land Acquisition Committee Member Land Management Committee Member	283-3493
Phil Buchanan	Construction Chairman Pine Island Nature Guide	283-4067

CALUSA LAND TRUST TREASURER'S REPORT – SUMMARY FOR YEAR OF 1997

FUNDS ON HAND AS OF 1/1/97:

Unrestricted Accounts:	\$21,529.00
Emergency Fund:	\$10,000.00
Public Relations Fund:	\$1,868.09
Land Management Fund:	\$30,494.16
Boardwalk Fund:	\$4,542.64
TOTAL:	\$68,433.89

INCOME SINCE 1/1/97:

Art Sale Proceeds:	\$544.38
Dividends from Investments:	\$4,594.33
Memberships and Donations:	\$13,347.78
Bequest:	\$20,000.00
Songwriters Festival Proceeds:	\$292.44
Poker Run Proceeds:	\$2,876.24
'97 Proceeds from '96 Carved Fish Raffle:	\$62.00
Rummage Sale Proceeds:	\$1,037.10
St. Patricks Party Proceeds:	\$1,000.00
T-shirts Proceeds:	\$805.00
TOTAL:	\$44,559.27

LAND MANAGEMENT & OTHER EXPENSES SINCE 1/1/97:

Land Stewardship Expenses:	\$4,133.55
Insurance & Fees:	\$1,975.75
Office Supplies:	\$112.62
Postage:	\$662.13
Printing and Paper:	\$574.89
TOTAL:	\$7,458.94

LAND ACQUISITION COSTS SINCE 1/1/97:

Closing Costs for Baxley Donation:	\$435.43
TOTAL:	\$435.43

FUNDS ON HAND AS OF 1/1/98:

Unrestricted Accounts:	\$53,214.79
Emergency Fund:	\$10,000.00
Public Relations Fund:	\$549.94
Land Management Fund:	\$35,038.98
Boardwalk Expansion Fund:	\$2,318.08
Boardwalk Maintenance Fund:	\$3,000.00
Fritts Park Expansion Fund:	\$977.00
TOTAL:	\$105,098.79

Respectfully submitted,

Bill Spikowski, treasurer

CALUSA LAND TRUST MEMBERSHIPS AND DONATIONS:

_____ \$15 Individual Member	_____ \$100 Kreie Land Purchase
_____ \$25 Family Member	_____ \$100 York Island Purchase
_____ \$50 Donor or Organization	_____ \$_____ for _____
_____ \$100 Contributor	Sponsor's Name (<i>optional</i>): _____

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Second Address? _____

Second City, State, Zip? _____

Phone _____

Today's Date _____

A COPY OF THE CALUSA LAND TRUST'S OFFICIAL REGISTRATION AND FINANCIAL INFORMATION MAY BE OBTAINED FROM THE STATE OF FLORIDA'S DIVISION OF CONSUMER SERVICES BY CALLING 1-800-435-7352 (TOLL-FREE FROM WITHIN FLORIDA). REGISTRATION DOES NOT IMPLY ENDORSEMENT, APPROVAL, OR RECOMMENDATION BY THE STATE OF FLORIDA. FULL FINANCIAL DETAILS, INCLUDING FEDERAL TAX RETURNS, CAN BE OBTAINED BY CONTACTING THE LAND TRUST'S TREASURER AT 941-334-8866 DURING WORKING HOURS.

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