

Calusa Land Trust

and Nature Preserve of Pine Island, Inc.



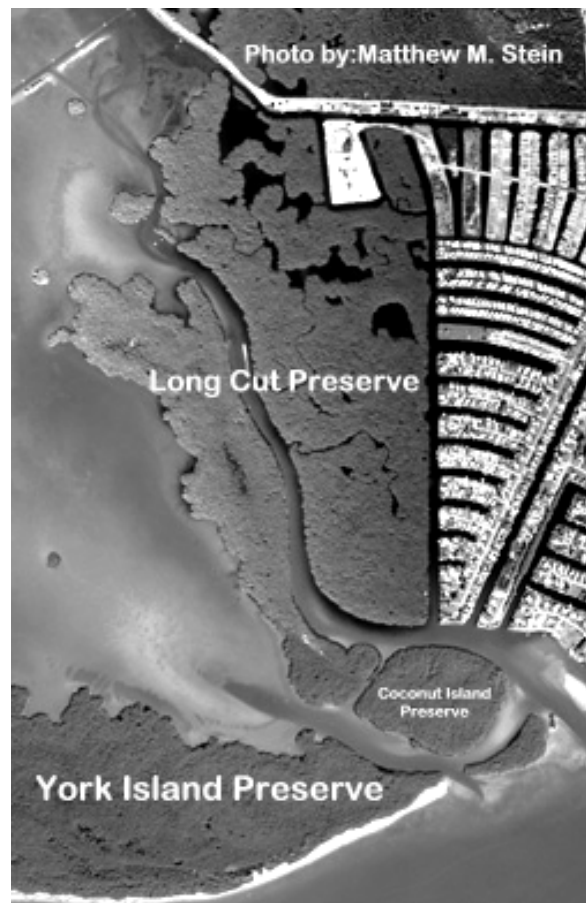
Newsletter

November 2000

Long Cut Purchased!

The Long Cut Preserve has been purchased! The Calusa Land Trust and the Sanibel-Captiva Conservation Foundation have jointly purchased this pristine mangrove forest west of St. James City.

The Long Cut Preserve is named after the waterway that cuts through its center. The preserve is a beautiful 130-acre of mangrove fringe and islands, with limited uplands along the eastern edge. As shown on the photograph, it lies north of York and Coconut Islands (which we jointly purchased with SCCF in 1998), east of Pine Island Sound, west of Cherry Estates Canal, and south of "Jungle Cut," the Galt Island Calusa mounds, and the DEP Buffer Preserve. It constitutes a perfect getaway for those who love nature. It also means that we have drawn a protective "U" of environmental preserves around the southern end of Pine Island, assuring that the essential character of St. James City, as a small town surrounded by lush subtropical habitat, will never change. We are all proud of this achievement!



Notice of Annual Meeting

by Richard M. Little

It's time once again to consider new members for our 15-member Board of Directors. As of today, we have three openings for 2-year terms. Your Nominating Committee has 3 well-qualified candidates who are willing to serve: Joan Culver of Matlacha, John (Jack) Worthington of Bokeelia, and Jim Alexander of St. James City. If any of you members wish to nominate additional candidates, please give me a call at 283-4974. Candidates for the Board will be elected by the membership at our upcoming annual meeting, which will be held on Sunday, January 21, 2001, starting at 1 PM. The KOA Campground has offered the use of their clubhouse for this annual meeting; this same group a few years ago generously funded the chickee hut on our St. Jude Nature Trail. The KOA is located at 5120 Stringfellow Road, about two miles north of St. James City. Be sure to put this date on your calendar now.

Kayaks!

by Bud House

About a year ago, the Calusa Land Trust accepted the donation of two marvelous fiberglass kayaks from the Tapager family, operators of the Tropic Star boat tours from the north end of Porto Bello Street to Cayo Costa and Cabbage Key. These kayaks are used on outings and by CLT members; arrangements for their use should be directed to the CLT President Richard Little at 283-4974.

Land Acquisition Committee

by Phil Buchanan

We closed the Long Cut Preserve purchase on September 8 and cannot wait for the celebration on November 4 at the Waterfront Restaurant! (See below for details on the party.)

More good news is that we have a contract to purchase the southern portion of Merwin Key from the current owner, the Children's Home Society of Florida. Merwin Key is the large island off the southeast coast of St. James City, just across the Intracoastal Waterway from Picnic Island. The northern portion (some 40 acres) is already preserved as part of the Matlacha Pass Wildlife Refuge, which is managed as a part of the "Ding" Darling Wildlife Refuge complex. We hope to go to closing before the November 4th Long Cut celebration and will announce the details then.

The Trust is also in the early but promising stages of negotiations with a landowner who owns four different large parcels of mangroves in St. James City and Bokeelia. As our regular readers well know, 32% of Pine Island's mangroves are still privately owned (10% have been destroyed and 58% have been preserved). We also have had discussions with several other mangrove landowners, but with less promising results.

We have three conservation easements for mangroves areas in process, one of which we hope to finalize (and announce) in the next month.

We would like to ask members to assist the Land Acquisition Committee by identifying landowners on Pine Island who are willing to donate or sell (bargain sales or full market value), in fee simple or by conservation easement, their mangrove holdings on Pine Island. The Trust is an IRS 501(c)(3) organization and all land, property, or cash donations to the Trust are fully tax deductible. In addition to income tax deductions, donors also receive relief from real property and estate taxes, but most of all get to help preserve our Pine Island environment and way of life. (We can sometimes pay up to market value for mangrove or other environmentally sensitive properties.) Call Phil Buchanan at 283-4067 for more information.

The biggest news this month is the extent of our joint projects with the Lee County Conservation 2020 program. The Board of Directors has allocated a total of \$90,000 to support 2020 program purchases and has offered to co-manage environmentally sensitive properties on Pine Island. The properties, all primarily native slash pine/palmetto uplands, are as follows:

<u>Property Owner</u>	<u>CLT Matching Funds</u>
Shiffman (proposed “Pine Island Center Preserve,” across from Winn-Dixie)	\$25,000
Thompkins (across from and north of Tropical Homesites)	\$10,000
Mills (Galt Lake Area, St. James City)	\$10,000
Todd/Hoke (north of Mills property)	\$10,000
Eckerty (Indian Lake area, north of Todd/Hoke property)	\$10,000
Eckerty (“Village Links”, south of Pine Island Village)	\$10,000
Willow Lake, Spignese portion (south of Alcorn Rd in Bokeelia)	\$10,000
Willow Lake, Mozingo portion (west of Spignese)	\$5,000

The Spignese and Mozingo properties are our latest 2020 nominations. They cover the large uplands properties with the “Pine Island Trust II” sign south of the Catholic Church in Bokeelia. The area, some 110 acres in all, is called Willow Lake because it is home to a beautiful marsh with a heavy oak canopy. The area also has very large and numerous slash pines and longleaf pines, but strangely, very few willow trees (that we have found thus far).

Calusa Canal, Phase II

by Bud House

Phase II of the Calusa Canal acquisition is now complete. Contributions from many sources made it possible: James and Suzanne Long and the Lee Trust for Historic Preservation, Inc. each contributed \$1,000 for the cause. Forty-five generous Calusa Land Trust members and friends and a final \$7,000 anonymous contribution put the fund drive over the top. The deed transfer took place on July 13, 2000. The CLT stewardship committee has been active in eliminating exotic vegetation, which appears to be a continual task, at least for a few years.

The CLT board of directors has voted to try to acquire all six parcels along Meadow Lane that still have evidence of the famous Calusa Canal that stretched from the Pineland archaeological site, across Pine Island, and ended at Indian Field Island in Matlacha Pass. Attempts to find willing sellers of the remaining lots have been unsuccessful to date. We have a new arrangement for the purchase of additional lots as they may become available. A national organization, the Archaeological Conservancy, has agreed to purchase any of the future acquisitions and hold them until the CLT can raise the money for their purchase. This will result in the sellers acquiring their money as soon as market value is determined and contacts can be arranged. CLT members will be informed as soon as future acquisitions can be arranged. Any questions may be directed to Bud House at 283-3493.

President’s Message

by Richard M. Little

The summer’s heat is past and the season’s rains have left our preserves lush with new growth and teeming with wildlife. Do visit one, like Long Cut or Underhill, where you can melt into the solitude of verdant mangrove-banked windy creeks reflecting the noonday sun, treating all your senses to the estuarine banquet of sights, sounds, smells, and yes, briny seatastes. Tread the salt flats at Baxley and sniff the healthy sulfury stench of organic life sustaining its ecological balance

as seaside and sandy rill kiss and bring forth life. Hike the St. Jude Trail about 10 AM, after the no-see-ums and before the heat, count the Zebra butterflies you spot, rest in the stillness of the chickee hut, listen for the mullet plop, the barnacle crackle, the great blue heron squawk! Walk the boardwalk and contemplate the love and intention of each name carved on the planks and rails. Stretch out on the bench at Calusa Point and enjoy the scenery, nature, history and heritage that you helped safeguard.

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

by Norm Gowan (283-8203)

LAND TRUST MEMBERSHIP NOW STANDS AT NEARLY 800 — About 73% are current with their dues. Look at the address label on this newsletter and if a star (*) follows your name, it means that it has been more than a year since you last contributed. As always, we ask you to please continue your support in preserving Pine Island.

FUND RAISING EVENTS

by Norm Gowan (283-8203)

LONG CUT PRESERVE CELEBRATION — Come on out on Saturday, November 4th, to the Waterfront Restaurant in St. James City and help us to celebrate our purchase of this spectacular preserve. Boaters can congregate in Long Cut at the south end of Cherry Estates Canal at 12 PM for a brief on-the-water ceremony. At 1:00 PM, after a round of victory speeches from the Trust as well as the Sanibel-Captiva Conservation Foundation (our partners in this venture), there will be a fish fry lunch for only \$5 per person served up by J.D. and Kriston of the restaurant. All members and their guests are invited!

PROJECT “X” — It has been our custom for the last couple of years to designate contributions of \$100 or more, not otherwise designated, to Project “X.” This has been defined as our next land acquisition not yet determined. It gives us a real leg up on a new project without starting from scratch on a new fundraising campaign. Please continue with your generous donations while we continue to search for wonderful new land to preserve.

PLUNK-A-PLANK — The boardwalk on the St. Jude Nature Trail now has 514 names carved in the planks. For only \$50, you can have your name preserved in wood, or perhaps have a loved one memorialized. We now have three “Memorial Benches” on the trail with a fourth about to be erected. If you haven’t visited the boardwalk yet, give it a try – you won’t be sorry.

RUMMAGE SALE — Our annual rummage sale will be held on Saturday November 25 at CLT’s Fritts Park on Beach Daisy Lane, just south of the Pink Citrus Trailer Park. The sale will begin at 8:00 AM and go until noon. All items to be donated should be delivered to Fritts Park on Friday, November 24, 2000, from 8:00 AM until 5:00 PM, If there are any large items that need delivering, please call Shirley House, at 283-3493. Volunteers will be needed to assist in making the sale a success so please consider lending a hand.

UPCOMING EVENT — Mark your calendar for the next Rubber Duck Race on March 10!

Land Stewardship Report

by Ed Chapin

Our volunteers have been busy all summer. On October 7th we worked at the St. Jude Trail weeding and trimming, then on October 14 and 15 we had local Boy Scouts working to improve Fritts Park. This is a public service project headed up by scout Jeremy Depew. This has come at a good time for the Calusa Land Trust as we are improving Fritts Park for the new season of “Music On Pine Island” starting in February 2001.

Our fall canoe and kayak trips will be on Saturday November 18 to Calusa Island Preserve and on Saturday December 16 to Long Cut Preserve. Call me for details (beep me at 277-6807, enter your phone number, and I will call you back).

In September we worked at the St. James Creek eagle preserve with Lee County staffers. This was very well attended, with 17 volunteers working on trail building and maintenance. We also had three of our new Junior Rangers come out and help. They all worked hard and did an outstanding job — we are very lucky to have these young volunteers! The Junior Ranger education program was started by CLT board member Cathy Valenti last year. We now have 10 Junior Rangers and would like to have many more. This program is for 3rd graders and up. It teaches kids about their natural surroundings, how to identify plants and animals, and why it is important to protect the environment. We have self-guided workbooks available at the library or on request. It seems when kids know about this program, they really enjoy learning about their environment.

On September 11 we had a Ranger Council Meeting at Blue Crab Key. We set a work schedule for the next few months as shown below; we are always looking for new volunteers to come out and help — please consider donating some time!

November 11	9:00 AM	Long Cut Preserve
December 2	9:00 AM	Fritts Park
January 6	9:00 AM	Kreie Preserve
February 3	9:00 AM	Kreie Preserve
March 3	9:00 AM	Baxley Preserve

Getting to Know Your CLT Directors

by Richard Little

The next four newsletters will introduce the various directors who serve our members:

- Alison Ackerman, founding member, newsletter editor, CLT Ranger, and Junior Ranger committee member. Alison also works full-time plus, teaching in the Lee County school system. Thanks, Alison!
- Bill Spikowski, founding member, spouse of Alison, co-editor/publisher of the newsletter, former Lee County land planner, principal consultant Spikowski Planning Associates, and treasurer extraordinaire. A very talented and busy guy! Thanks, Bill!
- Ed Chapin, founding member, chief ranger of CLT preserves, chair of the ranger council, and active on most committees. Ed knows native plants and animals and brings great dedication and energy to our stewardship programs. Ed has a full-time on-site marine mechanic business. Hats off to Ed!
- Norm Gowan, chair of membership, fundraising and finance committees. Norm’s leadership and creativity have been major factors over the past decade in building the CLT membership from a few hundred to over 10% of Pine Island’s population. He’s the guy who “bugs” us to keep our CLT dues paid up. Norm is retired from industry and gladly donates his many learned skills to help the cause. Thanks, Norm!

CALUSA LAND TRUST MEMBERSHIPS AND DONATIONS:

_____ \$ 15	Individual Member	_____ \$__	Calusa canal purchase
_____ \$ 25	Family Member	_____ \$ 23	Nature Lover's Guide to P.I.
_____ \$ 50	Donor or Organization	_____ \$__	for _____
_____ \$100	Contributor	_____ \$ 50	Plunk-a-Plank <i>(fill in lettering below)</i>
_____ \$250	Angel		_____

Sponsor's Name (optional): _____

Your Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Second Address? _____

Second City, State, Zip? _____

Phone _____ E-mail address _____ Today's Date _____

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**Calusa Land Trust & Nature Preserve
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