



CONNECTIONS

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Editor : Theresa Roake

Copy Editor : Bruce Bunch

Friends of Six Mile Cypress
Slough Preserve
7791 Penzance Blvd
Fort Myers, FL 33966
www.sloughpreserve.org



PRESIDENT'S NOTES

Hope this finds all of you well and enjoying some quality time with loved ones during this time of uncertainty. The Slough's Boardwalk is open as well as all

the parks and preserves in Lee County. This might be a good time to go and check out Six Mile Cypress Slough North if you haven't had the chance. Please go out and explore one of our natural treasures. It'll recharge those emotional batteries. Henry David Thoreau said: "I took a walk in the woods and came out taller than the trees." It's true. I always walk a little taller after spending time out in the woods. And as I'm vertically challenged, it's a pretty good feeling!

In this issue, we learn a little bit about the beginning of our Friends Group from Gayle Sheets, the very first President of Friends. Our Friends organization is nearly 20 years old now. Over the next year we will feature stories about our roots and the plans for how our group can continue to grow taller.

In addition, we learn about birds doing their spring thing, get a peek at the beautiful winning pictures from our photo contest, and new butterfly displays sponsored by Friends are unveiled. Enjoy the read.

As always, thank you for being our Friend.

Theresa Roake



THE BEGINNING

BY GAYLE SHEETS

From the first moment that Rudy Lampron, Alan Cadkin, Joyce Sanders, Alouise Skehan, Walter and Cathy Sedlacek, Ben and I talked about forming a Friends of the Slough, a visitor center was a big part of the vision. Education and Program Specialist Mary Rude's office was off site at Lakes Park and it had serious issues. For gatherings like trainings or working with campers there was only the amphitheater and trailhead kiosk. There was nothing for campers if the weather turned bad.

Roger Clark who had helped conceive and champion Conservation 20/20 was in management at Lee County Parks & Recreation. His was an important voice and he wasn't a real fan of a visitor center because of the disturbance it would cause to the land. If a center were to happen, he was most interested in a pine uplands area which is to the right as you first drive into the Slough. The edge of the mitigation area was a favorite of the Friends Board because of its proximity to the boardwalk. We kept batting around these various sites in discussion because there was also the size of the building to consider.



THE STORY CONTINUES...

But then we were alerted that the city of Fort Myers was deep into plans to extend Penzance to go right through the Slough. If I remember correctly, the city was planning to move the Slough's flow through a special culvert or pipe system that was experimental and intended to guarantee no pollution would reach the water. It disturbed us that the City was that far along in planning. It immediately became clear to the Board that the building had to be situated directly on Penzance as a barrier to any road construction. It was unimaginable that anyone could even consider impeding/diverting/ doing anything whatsoever to the Slough's flow. Any skepticism dissolved; everyone was on board. Barbara Manzo, Deputy Director, Parks & Recreation at that time, was an amazing advocate, working behind the scenes with the County Manager's office to speed things along. Mary Rude knew the best architects to be involved in an eco-friendly project and got that started. It was really important that the Friends existed at that moment because we provided the passion and grassroots support. And the Cadkin Foundation stepped forward very early with a sizable donation, providing a jumpstart to the project. The Friends had a plan. We were small back then, but we were a voice for the community.

NESTING SEASON AT THE SLOUGH

By Carolyn Babb and Sabine Vandenhende

Do you know what bird regularly uses snakeskins in its nest? Or what birds preen each other as a pair-bonding ritual? You can find the answers to these questions and many more as well as other fun facts about nesting birds of southwest Florida at the What's New at the Slough Exhibit in the Interpretive Center at the Slough.

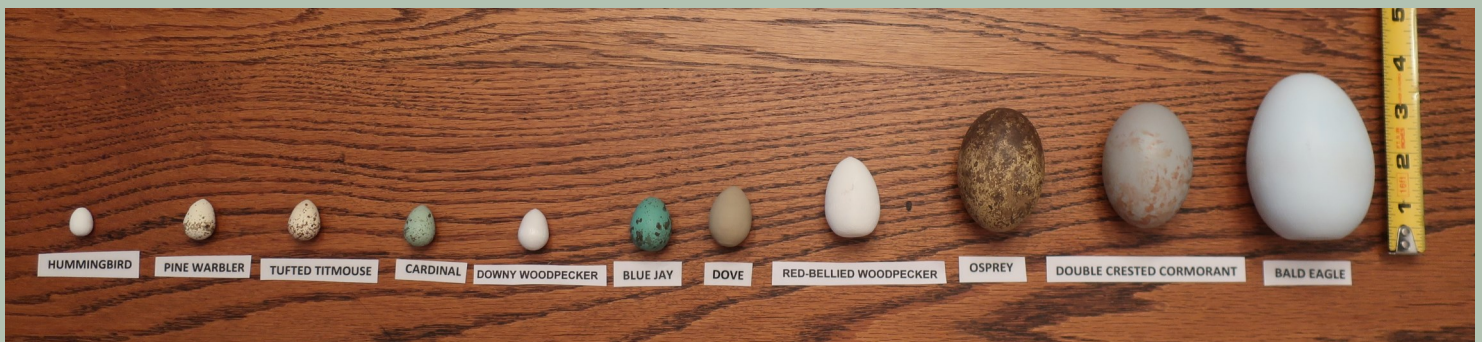


Mourning Dove Nest in Mitigation Area
Photo By Carolyn Babb

Love is in the air for the birds that nest in the spring in southwest Florida. Timing for nesting depends on several factors, including the availability of food for the babies hatching, and the warmth provided by more sunlight with the longer days.

Food for the young, including seeds, caterpillars, bugs and small fish, is more plentiful as the weather warms, and there is a longer period of sunlight. Many different birds nest in southwest Florida, from the eagles to the hummingbirds. Birds observed nesting in the Slough this time of year include great egrets and snowy egrets, anhingas, green herons, little blue herons, limpkins, tufted titmice, barred owls, red shouldered hawks, mourning doves, mockingbirds and cardinals.

The new exhibit in the Slough Interpretive Center contains a map of likely sites to observe these nesting birds. There are wooden life-size replicas of the eggs found in the nest and an actual mockingbird nest. There are many fun facts about the birds and their life style plus you can test or enrich your knowledge through some trivia questions. Also included are many photographs of these birds, taken at the Slough. The Friends Corner Store at the Interpretive Center has many good resources for the topics of local birds, nesting and the young. Titles available include "Sibley Field Guide to the Birds of Eastern North America" and "The National Audubon Field Guide to Florida." Once the Slough and the Interpretive Center reopens, please stop by and learn about the nesting occurring in the Slough.

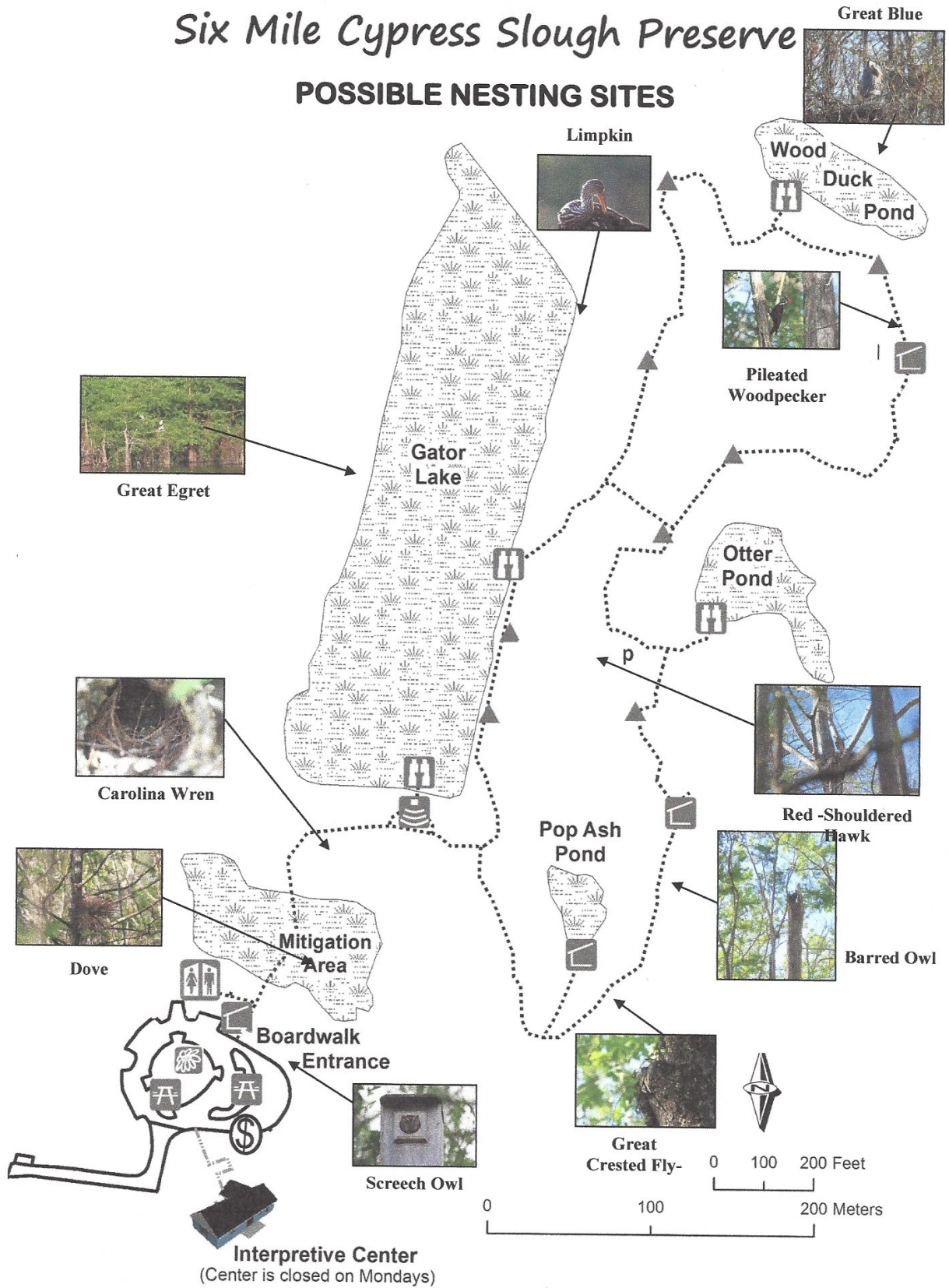


Bird Eggs of the Slough

Photo By Carolyn Babb

Six Mile Cypress Slough Preserve

POSSIBLE NESTING SITES



FRIENDS PHOTO CONTEST 2020

By Sabine Vandenhende

The 10th Friends Photo Contest was a real success! The photo contestants of all ages once more delivered an array of extraordinary photos of the Slough. Come and admire the winning pictures as well as all the entries. Discover the new magical mural while you're there.

ANIMALS



1st Place
Cathy Webb



2nd Place
Dennis Church



3rd Place
Dennis Church



Honorable Mention
Barbara Shearer



Honorable Mention
Jim Matiya

BIRDS



**1st Place
Carol Matthai**



**2nd Place
Dennis Church**



**3rd Place
Stephen Lang**



**Honorable Mention
Carol Levengood**



**Honorable Mention
Stephen Lang**



**Honorable Mention
Carol Matthai**

PLANTS & LANDSCAPE



1st Place
Bill Baburchak



2nd Place
Deborah Wedeking



3rd Place
Linda Normoyle



Honorable Mention
Cathy Webb

Honorable Mention
Linda Thompson



YOUTH



**1st Place
Bailey White**



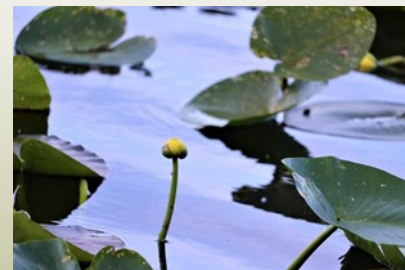
**2nd Place
Bailey White**



**3rd Place
Virginia Bayne**



**Honorable Mention
Kaya Hammond**



**Honorable Mention
Jamesyn Redding**

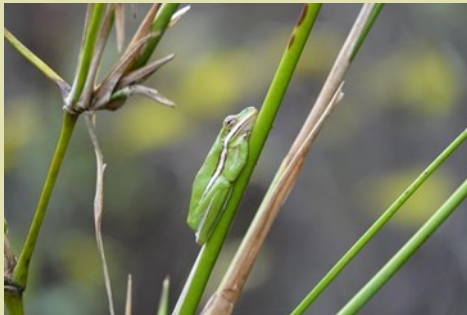
STAFF



1st Place
Sabine Vandenhende



2nd Place
Carolyn Babb



3rd Place
Sara Maliva



Honorable Mention
Sabine Vandenhende



Honorable Mention
Sabine Vandenhende

MOSAIC MURAL: THE GRAND REVEAL



The buildup...



Voila!



The crowd goes wild!



Photo contest reception attendees begin exploration of mosaic mural featuring photos from previous contests.

Photos by Sabine Vandenhende



“Butterflies...flowers that fly and all but sing.”

Robert Frost



BUTTERFLY DISPLAYS MAKE THEIR DEBUT

By Theresa Roake

New informational butterfly displays sponsored by Friends were unveiled earlier this year in the Slough. Two of the displays are located in the Rock and Stroll Butterfly Garden in the center of our parking lot. One is on the west side of the garden near one of two new beautiful garden arbors. The second one is located at the top of the garden to draw visitors into the center. I had the pleasure of arriving the day staff installed them. My eye was immediately drawn to the vivid colors. Visitors were already strolling through to take a look. These two displays explain the life cycle of butterflies as well as fun facts about the Zebra Longwing, Florida’s state butterfly. The third display is located on the boardwalk railing near the kiosk at the amphitheater. This display features information regarding butterflies out in the Slough itself. Wildflowers are blooming out there, so be on the lookout for the flowers that fly.

REMEMBERING FRANK MURRAY

By Theresa Roake



We say a fond farewell to retired Friends' Treasurer Frank Murray who passed away in April.

Frank moved to Cape Coral in 2004 with his wife, Mary, after a 41-year career as a news reporter and editor. He worked at several newspapers in Florida, at the Associated Press in Miami and Washington, and 17 years at The Washington Times from which he retired in 2003 after six years of covering the White House and nine at the Supreme Court. News competitors jokingly accused him of unfairly using his accounting training to decode the Federal budget. Frank was a member of the White House Correspondents Association Board of Directors.

Frank was the Friends' Treasurer for nine years and when he retired at the end of 2016, former Friends President Carolyn Babb said "The Board could be confident that every penny that has been obtained from membership, a donation or Friends Corner store revenue was accounted for and tracked by Frank." Frank didn't like meetings; he'd already attended too many press conferences and meetings in his life. But if we had a question for Frank, the answers were always thoughtful, well-researched and johnny-on-the-spot.

Frank used to stop by the Slough on Sundays when I was working in the Interpretive Center. He would come to pick up the Treasurer's mail and collect donations for deposit. On a Sunday in January a few years ago he came in and I engaged him in conversation. The topic turned to the Martin Luther King holiday and he mentioned he was fortunate enough to be a junior reporter covering MLK and the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960's. Can you imagine the stories he covered during his career?

Frank was a man of many talents and we were lucky to know him and benefit from his expertise.

MEMBERSHIP

For more information on joining or renewing go to our website at
www.sloughpreserve.org.

Renewing Members

Thank you for your continued support.

Peter & Eleanor Blitzer
Cynthia Borodkin
Larry Broser
Scott Cooper
Dave & Jan Cornell
Arleen Creeden
Joann Davis
Mary Denison
Jim & Karen Duff
Paul & Gayle Edwards
The Fulmers
Christine Grannis
Brian & Bonnie Hogan
Billy & Hope Holleran
Richard & Andrea Houle
The Imlers
Annisa Karim
Julian Korn
Terri Krass
Alice Krebs
Ricky Kreeger
Jean Landon
Gary & Alice Lavimoniere
Tom Mahoney & Maddy Maxeiner
Sara & Bob Maliva
Richard Martinez
CC Mattingly
John Merchant
Dave & Margaret Minnick
Gretchen Monti
Mary Murrari
Kris Nelson
Marcia O'Hara
Nancy Olson
Chuck & Kathleen Pavlick
Stacy Prater
Carole Rabanes
Kim Reuter
Arnie Rosen
David & Nancy Rummel
SanCap Audubon Society
Walter & Cathy Sedlacek
Ben & Barbara Shearer
Gayle Sheets
Peter & Mary Slidell
Mark Smith
Mary Lou Weddle
Erin White

Welcome New Members

Don Anderson
Nancy Armstrong
Kay Flatten
Mike Kelliher
Martha Ledman
Meredith Leonard
Michael & Allison Lund
Michael McLean
Michael and Mary Morris

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President

Sabine Vandenhende ,
Vice President

Nancy Olson,
Secretary

Sara Maliva,
Treasurer

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Donna Cressman
Terri Krass
Bud Schopp

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TWEET WITH FRIENDS @FriendsofSixMil

