



President's Message by Randy McCormick

On March 31, Peace River Audubon participated in the First Annual Charlotte Harbor Nature Festival. Although I originally conceived of the idea in the summer of 1999, the preliminary conceptual plan for this festival was drafted in April and May of 2000. The idea was to create a regional nature festival that would provide exceptional opportunities for environmental, educational, tourism, and community development interests in the greater Charlotte Harbor area. Preliminary feedback from exhibitors and participants indicates the festival was a success. I think I can safely say that a very good time was had by all.

The idea of this festival came out of an analysis of the factors that motivate people to preserve wildlife and the natural systems upon which they depend. I believe that we will only work to preserve that which we value. If this is true, then how do we create and/or increase the public's sense of value for nature? One way to increase perceived value is celebration. If we come together as a community and as inhabitants of a watershed to celebrate the rich ecological heritage of the greater Charlotte Harbor area, we will elevate our sense of value for it. As we learn about, experience, and develop a relationship with the diversity of life with which we share this region, we are more likely to want to protect and preserve it. This is what the Charlotte Harbor Nature Festival is all about.

It took a significant amount of work and money to make this festival happen. The primary financial sponsor was the Charlotte Harbor National

Estuary Program. Peace River Audubon contributed money, expertise and hard work. Other contributors included:

Shell Creek Lodge
Florida Environmental, Inc.
Florida Bat Center
Tamiami Art and Frame
AAA-1 Portable Sanitation
Dr. Jerry Gingerich
The Backyard Bird Company.

Several members of PRAS who participated on the festival planning committee offered major contributions of hard work. They include Cyndi Marks, Joy Linn, Clarke Keller, Bill Coombs, Cathy Olson, and Peggy Kampert. On the day of the event many, many others worked long and hard to help make the festival a success. To each and every one of you, I want to offer my deepest thanks. None of this would have happened if it weren't for your generous efforts.

There is something very special about coming together with a group of people to work for a common goal. It restores my faith in the human spirit and gives me great hope for the future. This was the first event of its kind in this area, but I believe we have begun a tradition that will last for many years to come. Planning has already begun on next year's festival. Why not plan now to become part of the team? Let's make next year's festival bigger and better than ever!



Audubon of Florida Southwest Florida Policy Action Plan

Presented by Mike Bauer, Audubon of Florida

Membership Meeting

April 19, 2001

Holy Trinity Lutheran Church

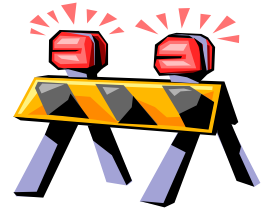
2565 Tamiami Trail, Port Charlotte

7:00 PM Social, 7:30 PM Program

Mike Bauer, Southwest Florida Policy Director for Audubon of Florida, will be taking us on "A Walk through the Environmental Policy Issues of Southwest Florida." He will be focusing on such topics as communication with decision makers, policy analysis, the use of applied science, advocacy and community involvement. He will be reviewing the issues in Southwest Florida and will be presenting Audubon's ten-point plan for a Southwest Florida Restoration Campaign. Mike is a new addition to the Audubon staff and has been charged with establishing an office and Audubon presence in Southwest Florida. Here is an opportunity to meet Mike, learn how to become involved and to provide input to Audubon of Florida's Southwest Florida Policy Action Plan.

Remember, there will be social time with coffee, soft drinks and refreshments beginning at 7:00 PM. The program will start at 7:30 PM. Bring a friend and enjoy an Audubon evening.

AUDUBON ADVENTURES NEEDS YOU!



Audubon Adventures is a learning kit designed to provide multidisciplinary enhancement materials to elementary students. The curriculum is designed to align with national science standards in grades K-8.

Providing a wide range of timely ecological and scientific topics, each kit supplies one whole classroom with learning activities and materials for ONE year. The activities emphasize reading, writing, observation skills, and data collection. Each kit contains 32 issues of 4 different environmental newspapers, lesson plans, duplicating masters, hands-on activities, stories, an "Audubon's Animal Adventures" video, classroom certificate, and more.

But WE NEED YOUR help to provide these well-liked kits to Charlotte County's classrooms! Your donations make it possible to purchase Audubon Adventures. Each kit costs \$40, and we're grateful to receive a donation in any amount. The Peace River Audubon Society was proud to be able to support 36 classes with Audubon Adventures last year. Let's try to support even more this year!!

Please make your check payable to "Peace River Audubon Society" (mark it for "Audubon Adventures"), and send it to: PO Box 510760, Punta Gorda, FL 33951-0760.

ANNOUNCEMENT ANNOUNCEMENT ANNOUNCEMENT

SILENT AUCTION

At Annual Dinner Meeting, Thursday, May 17, 2001

All members and guests are welcome

We will be having a silent auction this year in conjunction with our Annual Dinner Meeting on May 17. You will not want to miss it!

What's a silent auction? Well, first of all a silent auction is fun! Items which have been donated will be set around the room on tables. Beside each item will be a bid sheet. The bid sheet will state who donated the item, the retail value and the minimum bid. Lines will be provided on the sheet for bidders to write in their name and the amount bid. As the evening rolls on, you can jump up and check out how the bid sheets are coming along. If someone has outbid you, you can write in a new bid.

At a specified time announced at the beginning of the evening, the bids will be closed and the highest bidder gets the item. We will be accepting cash and personal checks. All of the proceeds from the sales go to support the Peace River Audubon Society. So, come and join in on the fun and who knows, if the other bidders fall by the wayside, you can get a really good deal on very special items!

CAYO COSTA STATE PARK FIELD TRIP

Submitted by Lynn Bates

On March 10, a congenial group of 35 left Punta Gorda and traveled to Bokeelia on the north end of Pine Island. We boarded a pontoon boat at the Jug Creek Cruise Lines Marina after viewing more than 50 white pelicans. Captain Tom McLaughlin took us on a tour along Charlotte Harbor to Pine Island Sound, Pelican Bay and then to Cayo Costa Island. We were fortunate and had lots of sunshine, glassy smooth waters and an escort of dolphins. Capt. Tom pointed out numerous birds and island sites as we traveled across the grassy water flats. A female frigate bird gave us quite an aerial show!

Arriving at Cayo Costa, we boarded a tram which took us across the Island to the Gulf of Mexico. Some of our group went to look for shells and birds on the beach. Our leader Norm Leppan led some of us on a walk along the Gulf Trail and immediately spotted a huge great-horned owl asleep in a tree! Several campers nearby said they had seen the owl catch a squirrel the night before. Close by was an osprey perch and nest. Upon closer view, the little one in the nest turned out to be a baby great-horned owl!! We also viewed palm, black and white and yellow rumped warblers, white-eyed vireos, willets, sanderlings, a ruddy turnstone and all types of egrets, herons, woodpeckers, gulls, hawks, doves, ducks and swallows. There was a gorgeous crystal blue-water lagoon toward the south end of the Island that was timeless in its beauty and peacefulness.

At 3:30 pm, we boarded the boat for our return trip. We stopped at a small cove, but no night herons were visible. At the next cove, an immature bald eagle let us watch him. We then cruised past Bird Island (a rookery) and Useppa Island (with mansions and turn-of-the-century homes) as we were accompanied by a pod of 7 dolphins. We also set into flight at least 100 Black Skimmers that were resting on a long dock. What a sight!

We docked back at Jug Creek about 5 pm, having had a wonderful Peace River Audubon Society outing with perfect weather, sightings of 47 bird species and enjoyment of nature and our environment.

Peace River Audubon's web-site address is:

<http://clubs.homeearth.com/peacriver->

OFFICERS:

PRESIDENT:	Randy McCormick	863-993-3288
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Ellen Hawkinson	Clarke Keller
Marilyn Ress	Bob Wilkin

Editor Joy Linn 637-8160; email: linn59@home.com

2001 Calendar of Events:

- 4/19 Meeting 7:30 (Refreshments at 7): " **Audubon of Florida**
- Southwest Florida Policy Action Plan** - Mike Bauer, Audubon of Florida
- 4/21 Shell Key Pres & Ft. Desoto Pk—Randy McCormick **863-993-3288**
- 4/5 Mote Marine Aquarium & Selby Gardens—George Marks
- 4/17 Annual Banquet

NOTE: THE NEXT SCHEDULE WILL BE PUBLISHED IN THE SUMMER ISSUE



BURROWING OWL SITES (POSSIBLE)

PUNTA GORDA, FL

6-1-99 Final Count:

22 Sites, 37 Adults, 42 Babies = **79 Total**

6-12-00 Final Count:

23 Sites 45 Adults, 47 Babies = **92 Total**

AUDUBON MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Phone (optional) (____) _____

Please enroll me as a National Audubon Society and Peace River Audubon Society member. I will receive Audubon and The Florida Naturalist magazines and the White Bird newsletter.

One year - \$20 Two years - \$35

Please send this application with your check to:

The National Audubon Society
 Membership Data Center
 P.O. Box 51003
 Boulder, CO 80323-1003 7XCH E14

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Please enroll me in the Peace River Audubon Society only. I will receive the White Bird newsletter.
 One Year - \$10

Please mail this application with your check to our local address.