



SCCF MEMBER UPDATE

Election Results: Did Water Win?

By Rae Ann Wessel, Naual Resource Policy Director

The numbers are in, finally. In Lee County voter turnout for the midterm election was 65.63% a marked improvement over the measly 27% turnout in the August primary. Lee County's turnout for the midterm slightly exceeded the statewide turnout of 62.65% for an election in which 8.3 million voters cast ballots in Florida.

In the midst of the water crisis Lee County residents have endured since June, why was turnout in the primary so low? Primaries are traditionally lower turnout but they narrow the field of candidates so they are critically important. How do we best engage residents to understand that the quality of our economy, our individual investment in Florida and ultimately our wellbeing are dependent on clean and resilient water quality? Thanks are due to our Business Roundtable members who gathered to discuss

strategies and opportunities to engage the public. Business support to raise awareness and spark conversations with signs and buttons that urged a vote for water was successful and elevated water as a central theme in the campaigns and voters' decisions.

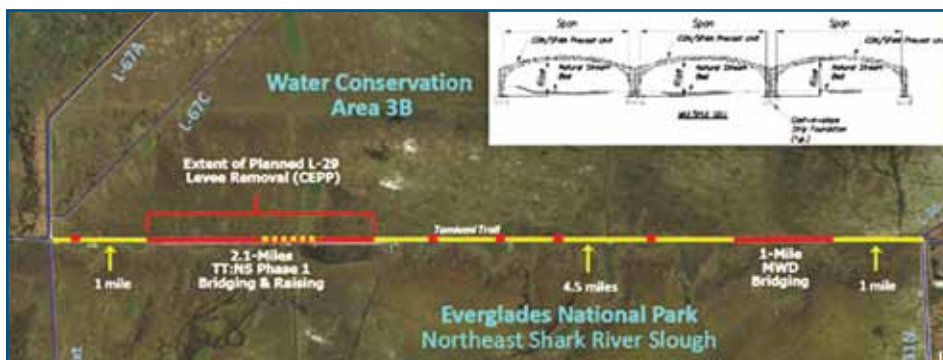
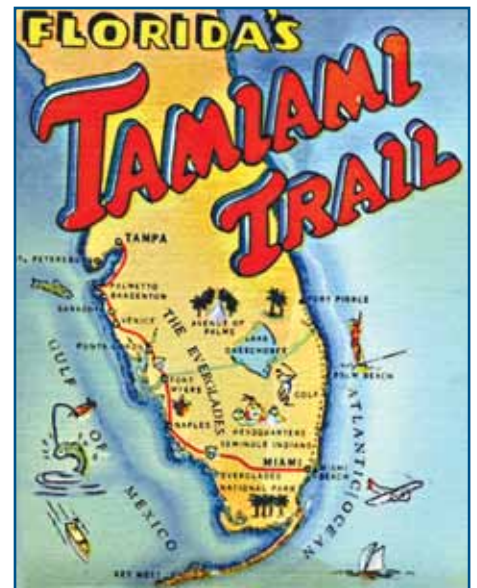
So, did water win? That is entirely up to us. Now, the hard work begins. We must all continue to stay engaged, to communicate our concerns, priorities and ideas with newly elected officials, work with them — then hold them accountable. We will only get the government we allow. Staying engaged is the only way to ensure that our elected officials hear our concerns. As we prepare for this year's legislative session in March, stay engaged by signing up for our Action Alerts and join us in taking action to address water issues (sccf.org under Resources, then Take Action).

Policy: Everglades Progress

Tamiami Trail

Progress on Everglades projects continues as the second phase of Tamiami Trail bridging opened in October, enabling water to flow into and rehydrate the Everglades. The project brings the bridging of Tamiami Trail (a/k/a U.S. 41) through the Everglades to a little over three miles. The Tampa to Miami (Tamiami Trail) road was originally

conceived by boosters over 90 years ago to connect Tampa to Miami and bring traffic through Fort Myers. The project was considered an engineering feat in its day. However, the roadway had the effect of damming south-flowing water on the north side of the road, flooding the lands north of the Trail and starving the Everglades of needed freshwater south of the Trail.



Phase 2 Plan for Tamiami Trail includes raising the yellow segments, creating more water conveyance at red segments.

Changes to restoration plans in the Central Everglades Project have altered the original bridging plans. In the next phase, instead of bridging, a series of precast spans will be placed end-to-end at road level to create 50-ft. spans at flowways. These changes

See Trail on Page 2

Trail -- Continued from Page 1

will save approximately \$200 million dollars on the cost of the project.

This project is key to opening up the southern end of the system so that water can once again flow south out of Lake Okeechobee through wetland sloughs under the road, supplying water to the Everglades and Florida Bay.

More Water into Everglades National Park

In conjunction with elevating the Tamiami Trail, the Central Everglades Project (CEP) is designed to modify and enable more water to flow south into Everglades National Park. A major water gate that controls water flow from Water Conservation Area 3A into the canal along the north side of Tamiami Trail (L29), is the S-333 structure in western Miami-Dade County. A project to expand



Land south of Lake Okeechobee with S333 circled in red. The light orange A2 parcel is the EAA Reservoir.

that structure, called S-333N has broken ground adjacent to the ex-

isting structure that will double the amount of water that can move into Everglades National Park and Florida Bay. The structure is estimated to be completed by June 2020.

EAA Reservoir Update: Land Lease

The long-awaited EAA reservoir project has received federal authorization as a modification of the CEP project, designed to allow water to move south out of Lake Okeechobee instead of to the northern estuaries of the Caloosahatchee and St Lucie. The state-owned land designated for the reservoir in SB 10 has been leased to a subsidiary of Florida Crystals, New Hope Sugar Company, for growing sugar cane, under a lease that was to expire in March 2019. In a surprise move at their November business meeting, the South Florida Water

CEO
PROFILE



ryan orgera

I grew up where Gottfried Creek meets Lemon Bay in Charlotte County. My bedroom looked out over a cluster of red mangroves, and I could hear the splash of torpedoing mullets or the heavy breathing of manatees before going to school. "Come quick, a manatee" was a common refrain in our house. As a child I remember wondering why the water was so murky. I overheard a conversation my neighbor had with my father about the blue tides and sandy bottoms he grew up with in the 1950s. I used to daydream about what Florida must have looked like before we dredged canals and modified rivers. That single conversation spurred my lifelong passion for the nature of Southwest Florida.

It is such an honor to return home to this part of our state. After years of traveling the world fighting for our global oceans, I began to realize that my energy would be better spent at home, fighting to clean our waters, caring for our lands, and helping folks fall in love with our nature. I have always seen nature in Florida as elemental to our myriad lifestyles. Nature is not abstract here—it creates the foundation for our economies and cultures. Is it possible to imagine Florida without beaches? Without redfish? Without alligators? If our Florida brand is not nature, what is it?

Everyone tells us we are a divided country, and in many ways we have sharp divisions, but the truth is we consistently arrive at consensus on basic tenets of nature. We universally want clean water. We all desire beaches free of rotting fish. We all want to be safe from hurricanes. Good water quality is as liberal as it is conservative, as American as apple pie. The United States has a prestigious history of leading the world on water quality, but many states, including ours, have real hurdles to overcome. We are in this together, and together is how we effect change in this broken system.

I look forward to serving the nature and people of Sanibel and Captiva. Taking the helm of SCCF is not something I do lightly; I have great reverence for the achievements of my predecessor, Erick Lindblad, and all the dedicated staff here at SCCF. There is so much left to do, and I cannot wait to get things done with you.

Please Help Make the New Year Financially Stable for SCCF



We wish all our members a happy and healthy new year and ask your help to make 2019 a financially stable year for SCCF. You can provide much-needed operating support to all our program areas by making a tax-deductible gift to the Annual Fund Drive.

Watch your mail for the new Annual Fund Drive brochure. It is chock full of examples of the extensive work your contributions support.

Please donate by using the reply envelope in that recently mailed Annual Fund Drive request or give at www.sccf.org. For questions, including how to give securities, please contact Cheryl Giattini at 395-2768 or cgiattini@sccf.org.

\$850K

\$285K

**FY 2018-19
ANNUAL
FUND DRIVE
As of 12/12/18**

EAA Reservoir -- Continued from left

Management District (SFWMD) Governing Board voted to approve an eight-year lease extension on 16,158 acres of land designated for the reservoir. An amendment to the lease released 560 acres of land in the middle of the A2 reservoir parcel, characterized by Florida Crystals as "unfarmable," to the SFWMD to begin work. A condition of the lease extension prohibits use of the leased land for public benefit for at least two years.

The Board's actions raise serious questions: What's the rush? The agenda item was posted after 9 p.m. the night before the next morning's meeting. Since the lease does not expire until March 2019, why push this through for a vote, without public notification, four months early? What was the risk of the public having a chance to review the proposal and engage in the discussion and decision? It's taxpayer money they are spending so why cut us out of the process?

The SFWMD argues that the \$1 million in lease payments will help pay for construction. But it makes the land unavailable in the interim for emergency flooding for public benefit. What is the cost of not having this land available to saturate with water in emergency conditions, which could reduce the costs and harm incurred by the estuaries? The benefits from flooding these lands means additional storage, greater treatment of water and increased evapotranspiration — movement of water to the atmosphere — limiting unwanted estuary discharges.

Hubris: U.S. Representative Brian Mast appeared before the Governing Board on behalf of himself and incoming Governor Ron DeSantis asking that they be briefed

on the project before a decision was made, arguing that the additional time would not have delayed anything but would provide assurance the action was in the public's interest. The Board rushed the vote forward despite his and public advocates' requests... sure makes one wonder what was really in play and whose interest is really being served.

As we go to print Florida Wildlife Federation has filed suit to reverse the District's approval. Stay tuned.

What About the 2008 U.S. Sugar Purchase Deal?

You may remember back in 2007-2008, when U.S. Sugar lobbyists approached then-Governor Charlie Crist pleading for relief from what they argued were onerous restrictions on their ability to use Lake Okeechobee as their personal water supply and storage feature. The Governor countered with a proposal to buy out the entire corporation: 187,000 acres of land, juice and cane processing plants, railroads, buildings. A contract was signed and the state performed due diligence that produced significant information about the quality of the soils, hydrology, topography and contamination and more.

The SFWMD engaged the public in the River of Grass planning process that proposed nine different designs for how Everglades restoration could clean and flow water out of Lake Okeechobee into Everglades National Park and Florida Bay while reducing the harmful high flows to the Caloosahatchee and St. Lucie estuaries. It was a high time, the first time in 70 years that the op-

See U.S. Sugar on Page 4

U.S. Sugar -- Continued from Page 3

portunity to move water south and begin meaningful restoration of the Everglades and estuaries was at hand. In an interview with the New York *Times*, U.S. Sugar Corporation President and CEO Robert Buker, Jr. said, "It's dollars and cents and the right thing to do. If I had to go out I'd rather — all of us would rather it went out to make the state of Florida better."

It was not to be. The great recession of 2008 made the funding plan unworkable. Following a series of revised contracts, a final contract emerged with a series of options for purchase through 2020. In October 2010 the state purchased 26,800 acres for \$197 million with cash on-hand and preserved the option to acquire the additional 153,200 acres of U.S. Sugar land when economic and financial conditions improved.

In the years that followed, the Governor of the state changed and U.S. Sugar let Governor Scott know they were no longer interested in the sale. And — *Hocus Pocus!* — the options were allowed to expire without state action until there was just the last option expiring in 2020. That option was addressed in the language of Senate Bill 10 for the EAA reservoir. The bill stated that:

- (6) OPTION AGREEMENT: The district must terminate the option agreement at the request of the seller if:
- (a) The post-authorization change report receives congressional approval; or
 - (b) The district certifies to the board, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives that the acquisition of the land necessary for the EAA reservoir project, as provided in subsection (4), has been completed.

The passage of the federal water bill this Fall, authorizing the reservoir, satisfied condition (6)(a) of the bill. At the December SFWMD Governing Board meeting, the District voted to terminate the remaining U.S. Sugar contract option. The bill also specified that eminent domain was not an option.



SCCF Marine Lab scientist, Dr. Rick Bartleson, speaking on Fort Myers Beach to Southwest Florida Sustainable Seafood. Among the groups Rae Ann Wessel has given presentations to were a number of regional Chambers of Commerce.

Perhaps Everglades restoration is a metaphor for life: Things worth having are not won without a fight!

SCCF Staff is Talking!

SCCF staff have been in high demand to provide programs to a wide variety of community organizations and industry groups on the water crisis the past several months.

Everglades Coalition Conference - Hawks Cay, Florida Keys

Join us in the Keys for the 33rd annual Everglades Coalition Conference on January 10-12, 2019. With all the news and progress on Everglades this year, it's a great time to join the largest gathering of federal, state, local and nonprofit representatives engaged in all things Everglades restoration.

Consider adding your business or organization as a sponsor. See levels and benefits on the website (link below). The conference will be held in the Keys at Hawks Cay Resort, Duck Key. Registration and details: <https://www.evergladescoalition.org/conference>

23rd Year of Oxbow & Riverlore Cruises

In November, Rae Ann Wessel started her 23rd year offering Caloosahatchee Oxbow & Riverlore cruises. This year cruises are scheduled for select Friday afternoons and Saturday mornings to enhance the experience. Dates and reservations are available online on our website: scf.org, look for Programs, then Caloosahatchee Oxbow and Riverlore Cruise.

SCCF January 2019 Program Schedule

MAKE YOUR OWN SOLITARY BEE BOX

Many of Florida's solitary bees lay their eggs in hollow branches. Attract these wonderful pollinators to your own yard by making your own bee box! All materials will be provided, and participants will go home with a box and information about attracting these fascinating pollinators to your yard. Please bring your own hammer, if possible. *Wednesday, January 30 at 10 a.m. in the Native Landscapes & Garden Center, Bailey Homestead Preserve, 1300 Periwinkle Way. Cost of the program is \$25 members/\$30 non-members. Please RSVP by calling 472-1932.*

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BOWMAN'S BEACH WALK

Meet your SCCF guide at Bowman's Beach at the foot of the bridge that crosses the bayou on the way to the beach. Your guide will lead you along the beach towards Blind Pass and back along the back dune/bayou trail. Keep your eyes open for shorebirds and gopher tortoises. Learn about SCCF's 50-year role in island preservation. *Free to all but you must pay to park. Wednesdays, January 9, 16, 23, 30 at 9 a.m.*

Program Calendar on Page 6, Program Descriptions continued on Page 7

1st Annual Paul McCarthy Lecture: *Change the Story, Change the World*

The First Annual Paul McCarthy Speaker event, *Change the Story, Change the World* by Andy Goodman, will be held on February 6, at the Sanibel Community Association, 2173 Periwinkle Way at 7:00 p.m. Doors will open at 6:30 and light refreshments will be available. The event is free but pre-registration on EventBrite is required by January 30, 2019 (scf.org, go to Programs and look for event link).

The lecture series was conceived by the Boler family, which provided a grant to cover program costs, as a way to honor a dear family friend, Paul McCarthy, founder of Captiva Cruises and an active presence on the islands for years. February 6 would have been Paul's 67th birthday.

WHY BAD PRESENTATIONS

Happen to GOOD CAUSES



Change the Story, Change the World by Andy Goodman is a chance to learn how the approach to information or call to action can be framed to motivate or engage more people. The art of non-fictional story telling can help engage more people in what may be a particularly challenging situation.

As an example: In Brazil, organ donation was almost considered taboo. There were lots of misconceptions and stigma attached to donation of viable organs for thousands of people whose lives depended upon a transplant. So donation organizations began looking to something Brazilians were passionate about — soccer.

They began working with local soccer clubs to promote donation. This eventually led to people associating intent for organ donation to be a mark of a super fan. To be a donor began to be imbued with the same passion as support for the local soccer hero or community club. The transformation was remarkable and the wait list for patients hoping for a new heart, liver, kidney was reduced to zero.

It was all about the story: discovering what blocked people from advanced consent, what they cared about deeply and changing the culture to celebrate. Moving people from information to knowledge to action is a skill.

Andy believes stories are the single most powerful communication tool we have, with the power to change the world.

The Water Crisis Updated for 2019

Join SCCF on January 24 for an updated version of a program presented in November on the water crisis of 2018, including the devastating Red Tide. We will also talk about what steps need to be taken going forward. The program — updated for 2019 — will be at the Bailey Homestead Preserve. Through November 2018, 2,200 tons of dead sea life were cleaned from Lee County beaches, including 425 tons from Sanibel alone. While it has gained less attention and the impact has been far less overwhelming, there is still some lingering Red Tide. SCCF staff is still responding to sea turtle strandings and CROW is still treating patients with Red Tide symptoms.

There will be a panel discussion with:

- Dr. Eric Milbrandt, SCCF Marine Lab Director
- Rae Ann Wessel, Natural Resource Policy Director
- James Evans, Director of Natural Resources — City of Sanibel
- Dr. Rick Bartleson, SCCF Research Scientist
- Kelly Sloan, SCCF Sea Turtle Coordinator

- Location: Bailey Homestead Preserve
1300 Periwinkle Way
- Time: Doors open 6 p.m.
Refreshments at 6
Presentation from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m.
- Tickets: \$10 through EventBrite. From scf.org, click on Programs and look for event link.
Advance purchase recommended.

On a happier note, join SCCF on Sunday, January 13 for a special concert by The Jon Stickley Trio being hosted by Point Ybel Brewery to roll out their SCCF-themed beer. More on Page 7.

SCCF PROGRAMS

JANUARY 2019

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1	2	3 Turtle Tracks-10	4	5
6	7 Weeds Seeds-8:45	8 Panther Corridors-10	9 Bowman's Beach Walk-9	10 Turtle Tracks-10	11 Tai Chi-9:30@ Bailey Homestead Preserve	12
13	14 Weeds Seeds-8:45	15	16 Bowman's Beach Walk-9	17 Turtle Tracks-10	18 Tai Chi-9:30@ Bailey Homestead Preserve	19
20	21 Weeds Seeds-8:45	22 Trail Walk-11 Conservation Photography -10	23 Bowman's Beach Walk-9	24 Turtle Tracks-10 Water Crisis: 2019 Update -6-7:30pm @ the Bailey Homestead Preserve. Tickets EventBrite. Advance registration recommended.	25 Tai Chi-9:30@ Bailey Homestead Preserve	26
27	28 Weeds Seeds-8:45	29 Trail Walk-11	30 Bowman's Beach Walk-9 Make a Bee Box - 10 at Bailey Homestead Preserve	31 Turtle Tracks-10 Shorebird Nesting-2		"Water" Art Exhibit w/ San-Cap Art League Feb 4- 28 at Bailey Homestead Preserve

SCCF January 2019 Program Schedule

CALOOSAHATCHEE OXBOW & RIVERLORE CRUISE

Come with us to experience the historic meanders of the upper Caloosahatchee on this 2.5-hour cruise guided by Rae Ann Wessel. Friday cruises depart at 1 p.m. and return by 3:30 p.m.; Saturday cruises depart at 9 and return by 11:30. Both depart from the W.P. Franklin Lock & Dam Park off SR 80 in Olga. *Friday cruises: January 25 (SOLD OUT), February 1, March 1, March 29. Saturday cruises: February 16, March 16, April 13 and May 11. Space is limited. Advance reservations and payment required. Register online: from sccf.org, click on Resources upper right and follow Oxbow Cruise dropdown. \$45 per person.*

CONSERVATION PHOTOGRAPHY & ETHICS

With the rise of digital cameras and smartphones, the world of photography has been made accessible to just about everyone. Wildlife and landscape photography are especially popular in Southwest Florida but these ecosystems are fragile. Learn about conservation photography and what considerations to keep in mind. SCCF Public Outreach Coordinator Alexis Horn is a published professional photographer. *Tuesday, January 22 at 10 a.m. in the SCCF auditorium. Cost of the program is \$5 per adult, with members and children attending for free.*

FLORIDA PANTHERS AND WILDLIFE CORRIDORS

Florida panthers are the rarest mammals in North America – and their future depends on wildlife corridors. While not found on Sanibel, they play an important role in maintaining the ecosystems of Southwest Florida. The last few years have seen record-breaking panther deaths, but there is hope. Prior to joining us, SCCF Public Outreach Coordinator Alexis Horn ran the Sierra Club's Florida Panther program. *Tuesday, January 8 at 10 a.m. in the SCCF auditorium. Cost of the program is \$5 per adult, with members and children attending for free.*

CONCERT AND SCCF-THEMED BEER AT POINT YBEL

Please join SCCF and stop by to hear The Jon Stickleby Trio at Point Ybel Brewing Company when Point Ybel rolls out their brand new SCCF-themed beer to benefit SCCF's work. The genre-defying Jon Stickleby Trio combines flatpicking guitar with sultry violin melodies and classical, jazz influenced drumming to create textural soundscapes. *Sunday, January 13, from 3-5 p.m. Donations will be gratefully accepted at the door for what is sure to be an amazing show! Point Ybel is at 16120 San Carlos Blvd, #4, in Fort Myers.*

SHOREBIRDS OF SANIBEL & CAPTIVA

Join SCCF biologists to learn about the shorebird species that nest on our beaches, including snowy plovers, least terns and wilson's plovers. SCCF has been monitoring beach nesting birds on Sanibel since 2002. Learn how you can safely share the beach and help us protect our feathered friends. *Thursday, January 31 at 2 p.m. Free to members and children, \$5 for non-members.*

TAI CHI AT THE BAILEY HOMESTEAD PRESERVE

Learn the ancient art of Tai Chi while connecting with the natural serenity of the Bailey Homestead Preserve. Tai Chi is a movement meditation and individuals can benefit from its focused body-mind awareness, alignment, balance, breath, flexibility, and relaxation. Class is aimed at newcomers but all levels are welcome. Wear loose-fitting comfortable clothing, comfortable shoes, water. Bring a yoga mat if you have one available. *Fridays for six weeks, January 11-February 15, 9:30 a.m. - 10:30 a.m. \$12 members/\$15 non-members per class. Please RSVP by calling 472-1932.*

TRAIL WALKS: EXPLORE SANIBEL'S INTERIOR WETLANDS

Sanibel Island is a unique barrier island in Florida because it still has an interior freshwater wetland ecosystem that has not been lost to development. Join us for a guided walk through the interior wetlands and mid-island ridges of the Center Tract with discussion of native habitats, natural and cultural history and preservation efforts. *Trail walks will be offered through March on Tuesday through Friday at 11 a.m. starting January 15. Meet at the Nature Center and proceed to the trails. Cost of the program is \$5 per adult, with members and children attending for free.*

TURTLE TRACKS

Sanibel Island had one of the first sea turtle monitoring programs in the country. Learn about the life cycles and habits of the sea turtles and shorebirds that nest on our beaches, SCCF's monitoring activities, and what we are doing to protect them. You can also learn more about the devastating impacts on sea turtles of this past summer's Red Tide, when 192 dead sea turtles washed up on island beaches between July and September. *Thursdays at 10 a.m. in the Nature Center auditorium. Free to members and children, \$5 for non-members.*

WATER CRISIS UPDATE

Get an update on the water crisis of Summer 2018 with Red Tide, Blue-green algae. *See Page 5 for details.*

WEEDS & SEEDS

We are a group of amateur botanists who enjoy finding and identifying native. Our walks visit different locations in Lee County, lasting for two hours, and are guided by a leader with a plant list. Depending on the location visited, you may need parking money. Please bring a hat, water, sun-block, and comfortable enclosed shoes with socks. *Meet at the Nature Center at 8:45 a.m., at the base of the porch and carpool to the site. Walks are free but donations to SCCF are welcome.*

- Jan 7 Shipley Trail & Garden Center
- Jan 14 Erick Lindblad Preserve Nature Trails
- Jan 21 Dayton Preserve
- Jan 28 Sanibel Gardens or Frannie;s Preserve



Sanibel-Captiva Conservation Foundation
P.O. Box 839
Sanibel, FL 33957

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January 2019 Member Update



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SCCF Nature Center

3333 Sanibel-Captiva Road
(1 mile west of Tarpon Bay Road) / P.O. Box 839, Sanibel 33957

SCCF Nature Center and Main Telephone:

(239) 472-2329 Fax: (239) 472-6421 www.sccf.org blog.sccf.org

Native Landscapes & Garden Center: (239) 472-1932 (at the Bailey Homestead Preserve)

Marine Laboratory: (239) 395-4617

Wildlife & Habitat Management: (239) 472-3984

SCCF is dedicated to the conservation of coastal habitats and aquatic resources on Sanibel and Captiva and in the surrounding watershed through:

- Marine Laboratory
- Natural Resource Policy
- Native Landscapes & Garden Center
- Sea Turtles & Shorebirds
- Wildlife & Habitat Management
- Land Acquisition & Stewardship
- Environmental Education



Nature Center Hours:

Monday - Friday 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. from October - May
8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. from June - September

Native Landscapes & Garden Center Hours:

at 1300 Periwinkle Way, Bailey Homestead Preserve
Monday - Friday — 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Saturday from 10 a.m. — 3 p.m. (January through April)

Visit our Nature Center

- Trails & Observation Tower
 - Education Center
- \$5/adult, children under 17 free, members free.

Find the latest real-time water quality readings from our RECON sensors at www.recon.sccf.org

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