



SCCF MEMBER UPDATE

Sanibel Community Lakes Project

By Mark Thompson, Marine Laboratory Associate

SCCF Marine Laboratory evaluates lakes on Sanibel to provide the City and island residents insight into the success of their nutrient reduction strategies.

In the next few weeks, scientists from the SCCF Marine Lab will begin the third round of sampling over 80 lakes on Sanibel to get an idea if pollution control strategies implemented so far have had any beneficial effect on water quality. The lab previously sampled Sanibel's lakes in the dry and wet seasons of 2016 and 2018. The study is funded by the City of Sanibel and provides information which is made available on an interactive website called Sanibel Communities for Clean Water (CCW) <https://sanibelcleanwater.org/>.

Most of the lakes on Sanibel are classified as eutrophic – meaning they are polluted by an overabundance of the nutrients nitrogen and phosphorus. The source of these nutrients is fertilizer and to a lesser extent reclaimed wastewater which is used as irrigation on the island's golf courses and resorts. Since the City's founding, it has worked to reduce water quality issues and protect the natural qualities of the island through ordinances, incentives and projects which originated with the Sanibel Plan, a progressive plan to protect Sanibel's natural characteristics. Some of the ordinances and incentives which work to improve the island's water quality include: The vegetation ordinance, the stormwater ordinance, building codes which reduce impervious surfaces and prevent wetland loss, the fertilizer ordinance, the sewer ordinance and the golf course report card.

The Communities for Clean Water website acts as an incentive for communities to become aware of water quality conditions in their backyard and provides them guidelines for improving any issues existing there. The information we collect during sampling also allows residents to track the progress of any water quality improvement activities which they have initiated. Many residents don't realize the relationship between the abundance of fertilized, irrigated, non-native turf grass and declining water quality. Just remember – a green healthy turfgrass lawn = a green unhealthy lake.



The dry and wet season sampling will be complete by September and the new sampling results should be available on the CCW website by November. We can then all take a look and see if the water quality in our backyards is improving or needs further attention. If you see us out in your backyard dipping water from your lake this year, you are observing the 1st step involved in bringing this information to you. Below: Plantings in a lake's littoral zone at the edge help to clean the lake water. Photo Dana Dettmar, City of Sanibel.



Wildlife Responses to Delayed or Extended Water Levels

By Chris Lechowicz, Director, Wildlife & Habitat Management / Herpetologist

The winter months and the dry season are terms that are usually synonymous in southwest Florida. In most years, the wet season summer rains lessen as October rolls around and by November most sporadic rain events are tied to the arrival of the much anticipated but infrequent cold fronts. Marshes, canals and trails quickly dry out as the dry season reaches its pinnacle in March - May. The wet season usually begins in June or July as the pattern of late afternoon thunderstorms becomes the norm. Fluctuations in these patterns are not uncommon and wildlife is adapted to survive and even take advantage of these “unusual” conditions.

Some years, such as 2016, are irregular with the wet season starting very late resulting in increased wildfire risk due to prolonged drought conditions and extreme summer heat. Although most wildlife species are adapted to survive this delay in seasonal rainfall, if the summer rainfall is cut short then many species with an extended aquatic larval stage such as pig frogs (*Lithobates grylio*) and southern leopard frogs (*Lithobates sphenoccephalus*) might not have enough time to grow and transform into air-breathing adults before the water dries up.

Extended rainfall in the fall and early winter, such as this winter, lengthens the time of standing water in wetlands which enables aquatic life, such as macro-invertebrates (dragonfly and damselfly nymphs, giant water beetle larvae, etc.), amphibians, and live-bearing fish more time to grow and reproduce therefore increasing the food source for higher trophic level species. Wildlife

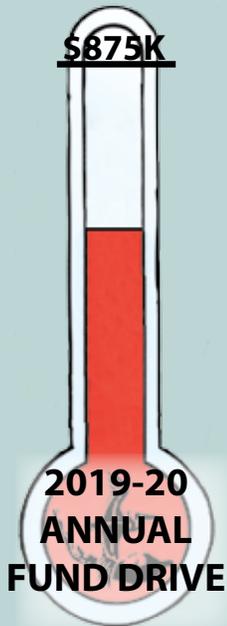


Above: Water levels remain high on the Erick Lindblad Preserve considering it is early January and firelines and trails are usually dry by this time. Middle: Roseate Spoonbills are taking advantage of a lingering depression on an SCCF fireline. When water levels recede, fish, tadpoles, and macro-invertebrates become concentrated making foraging a much easier task. Bottom: Although Sanibel only has only one true winter-breeding frog, the southern leopard frog, giant toads a/k/a cane toads will breed over the winter if out-of-season heavy rains occur and fill in temporary wetlands.

such as wading birds, Sanibel rice rats (*Oryzomys palustris sanibeli*), and aquatic reptiles can continue to feed in areas that are normally dry that time of year. As the water dries down, predators congregate at the remaining pools to have easy access to clustered prey items.

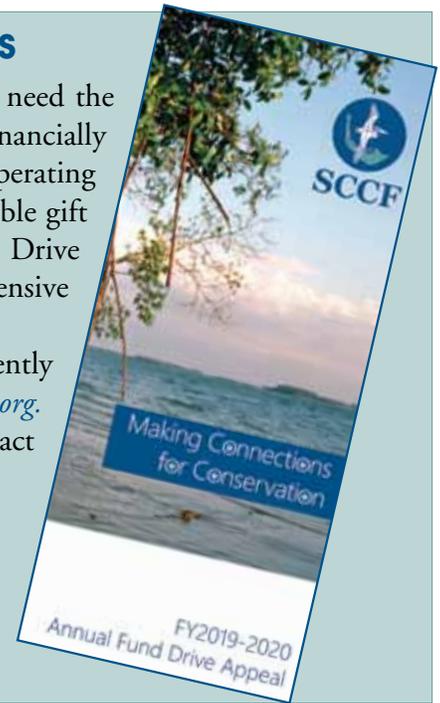
Unfortunately, exotic species such as the giant toad, a/k/a cane toad (*Rhinella marina*) can take advantage of an unusual winter abundance of water by reproducing out of season, especially after a dry down and then an extended heavy downpour that fills up temporary wetlands.

Please Help SCCF Reach its Fiscal Funding Goals



We're more than halfway through the fiscal year and need the support of all our members to make FY2019-2020 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. Please read the Annual Fund Drive brochure mailed in January. It is 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.



Coastal Wildlife Department

By Kelly Sloan, Director, Coastal Wildlife

SCCF is excited to announce the launch of a new Coastal Wildlife Department to broaden and strengthen our ongoing conservation efforts. Pressures on coastal resources have led to declining populations of many species such as shorebirds and sea turtles, and there is a growing need to emphasize the protection of these vulnerable species on our islands.

Many species of wildlife are dependent upon our beaches for all or part of their life cycle. Sea turtles have nested on Florida's dynamic beaches for millions of years, but a wide variety of emerging and worsening issues are threatening their survival. Shorebirds rely on high quality beaches year-round for resting, feeding, and raising their young, and they are constantly faced with a wide variety of challenges.

Surviving in a world of coastal development, ocean plastics, habitat loss, sea level rise, and other threats is becoming increasingly complicated for coastal wildlife. Left unchecked, these threats will seriously jeopardize our imperiled species. It is more crucial than ever to develop an integrated approach that protects local wildlife while balancing economic and tourism needs. A concentrated focus on expanding our coastal conservation efforts will allow us to tackle these issues through monitoring, research, education, and advocacy.

While the future of most coastal species is uncertain, the sea turtles and shorebirds that frequent Sanibel and Captiva are persisting. Sanibel has one of the oldest monitoring programs in the country, and decades of concerted conservation efforts have resulted in an increase in local sea turtle nest counts. In 2019 we documented a record number of hatchlings on Sanibel and Captiva! Our beaches remain vital for numerous species of resident and migratory birds, and last season 4 snowy plovers, 3 Wilson's plovers, and about 27 least terns fledged on Sanibel. We are fortunate to have the help of over 100 enthusiastic volunteers, without whom these successes would not be possible.

Conservation has always been intertwined in Sanibel and Captiva's unique history and for nearly 40 years SCCF has worked closely with local partners to protect wildlife on Sanibel's beaches. The four full time staff members in the new Coastal Wildlife department look forward to the opportunity to play a significant role in coastal conservation by expanding our scope to meet current and future challenges.



From left: Andrew Glinksy (Research Associate), Jack Brzoza (Biologist), Audrey Albrecht (Manager), and Kelly Sloan (Director). Photo courtesy Jeff Lysiak/Island Sun

Policy Review

By Rae Ann Wessel, Natural Resource Policy Director

In January 2019 I made a list of aspirations for our policy work titled "A Year From Now" to look back in January 2020 to see what progress we've made. Despite knowing how busy we've been I was still pleasantly surprised at the progress. My list included policies and projects.

Policies

- Establish cyanobacteria toxin standards. **Progress!** In 2019 DEP began their triennial review process of agency regulations so the timing was right. Early in the year we met with them to ask that toxin standards be added since EPA had issued guidance for two cyanotoxins in 2016. When they told us they were not planning that regulation for this 3-year review we joined an agency challenge drafted by the Center for Biological Diversity. In June the Department granted our petition and is now working on standards. In 2019, EPA raised toxin exposure limits based on a singular, poorly designed study so we continue to work to get protective public health standards adopted. We have asked that regulations include testing of water, air and sand so that we can begin to understand the ranges of toxins and their dynamics during blooms.
- Reducing Pollution at the Source. The next items on my list were all related to reducing sources of pollution at their source because we can't stop toxic algae blooms if we keep feeding them. Nutrients are the currency of algal blooms and they don't care where they come from.
 - Updating storm-water regulations. **Progress!** Pollution comes from everything washing off the land into the water. Florida's stormwater regulations are

25 years old and have not kept pace with growth and best available science. Addressing both urban and agricultural stormwater is a priority of the Blue Green Algae Task Force (BGATF) appointed by Governor DeSantis to address sources of pollution that cause harmful algal blooms. This is included in a water bill for this legislative session.

- Reestablish septic inspection and maintenance programs **Progress!** This is a priority in the BGATF and is in the water bill for this legislative session.
- Establish advanced waste water (reuse/irrigation) standards. Still waiting.
- Improve oversight over disposal of biosolids **Progress!** A biosolids task force is reviewing and recommending stricter rules for permitting, tracking and monitoring the different grades of waste sludge as fertilizer.

Projects

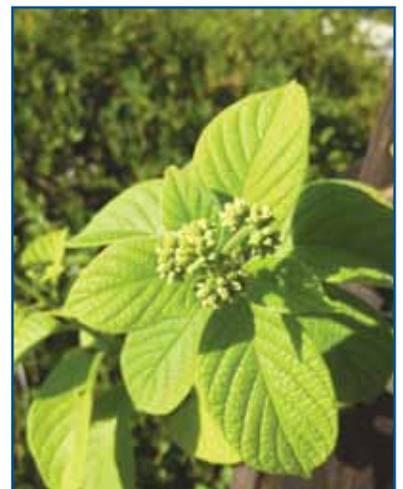
- Establish a water quality treatment component for C43 reservoir. **Progress!** The governor prioritized this project and a group is established to work on the design.
- Fund and accelerate EAA reservoir. **Success!** Funding from the state legislature, \$200 million from the federal government and a directive from the SFWMD has resulted in work starting on the reservoir.

This year's legislative session we will be working on and following water legislation closely. Please stay tuned as we'll need your engagement to have a successful outcome at scdf.org/natural-resource-policy.

Notes from the Homestead: Chiggery Grapes

By Jenny Evans, Native Landscapes & Garden Center Manager

Easily classified as a "great plant that has an unfortunate name," Chiggery Grapes (*Heliotropium verticourtii*) is a relatively unknown vine with lots of potential, both for wildlife and ethnobotanical use. As a member of the Borage family (other Florida relatives include Scorpiontail and Sea Lavender), the curling cluster of small white flowers is a feast for insect pollinators. The pearl-like fruits also add a handsome quality to the woody vine. If placed in a landscape, a solid structure is necessary to support the full weight of this substantial climber where it can quickly create summer shade over a sitting area, all while supporting the local wildlife. Back to its name, however... thankfully, the plant is not branded for creating a refuge for chiggers, but instead mashed up leaves are rumored to be an antidote to chigger bites. And though final studies have not been published, research has been done to investigate the plant's properties for diabetes, as early studies showed that it was useful in the treatment of hypoglycemia.



Trail Upgrades at the Erick Lindblad Preserve

By Justin Proctor, Special Projects Manager

We are full steam ahead with the Trail Reinterpretation Project happening throughout the SCCF trail system at the Erick Lindblad Preserve. Staff and volunteer groups are combining forces to develop a lot of new features that will offer a more enjoyable, engaging, and educational experience as you walk the trails.

Our 4+ mile trail system offers one of the best opportunities to connect with Sanibel's natural terrestrial landscapes. Come spend a morning on our trails quietly birding along the Sanibel River, photographing flowering plants throughout the upland hammock, or looking for mammal tracks in wet soil.

Be sure to pick up (and return after using) an updated, laminated map at the parking lot trail entrance. Note that these new maps also indicate the higher and drier trails that you can take to keep your feet dry during wetter periods of the year.

Above right: Our elevated boardwalks through dense forests covered with air plants are picture-perfect. Right: Hammerheads building owl boxes and creating new signage for the trails. From left to right: Tom Toering, Wally Kain, Dean Skaugstad, and Jim Brent.



PINE ISLAND SOUNDS SUNSET CONCERT CRUISE

Sunday, March 1, 4:30 pm — SCCF and Captiva Cruises present 2020 Grammy Nominee Amythyst Kiah on an intimate 2-hour sunset cruise aboard the Lady Chadwick. Ticket sales support SCCF's water quality efforts. You can learn more and buy tickets at Eventbrite/SCCF or visit sccf.org



SCCF & CAPTIVA CRUISES PRESENT

Pine Island Sounds

A SUNSET CONCERT CRUISE SUPPORTING SCCF'S SOUND SCIENCE

SCCF FEBRUARY 2020

HAPPENINGS
PROGRAMS
OPPORTUNITIES

AFTER SCHOOL: ENGINEERING CHALLENGES

Tuesdays, Feb. 11 – Mar. 3, 3:30-5:30pm — This STEM series will challenge students to think critically and solve real world problems. We will utilize hands-on activities to solve engineering problems centered around the ocean. Students will work in teams, with limited supplies, to solve engineering problems. Open to students ages 6-13, \$20 per session. Register at sanibelseaschool.org.

BIRDING PADDLE AT BUNCHE BEACH

Thursday, Feb. 6, 12:45pm — Join the Ocean Tribe Paddling Club for an afternoon paddling and birding excursion at Bunche Beach Preserve. Meet at the kayak launch in the Bunche Beach parking lot at 12:45pm. The paddle will begin at 1pm and will last about one and a half hours. Bring your own vessel, or a limited number of loaner vessels can be reserved in advance. RSVP to oceantribepaddlers@sanibelseaschool.org.

SANIBEL SEA SCHOOL SUMMER CAMP REGISTRATION
Priority registration for returning campers starts Feb. 8 at 10am. General registration opens Feb. 15 at 10am. Sign up at sanibelseaschool.org.



BIRDING SUNSET CRUISE

Tuesday, Feb. 11, 4:45pm — Join us for a cruise out of McCarthy's Marina as we explore the back bay estuarine waters while discussing the ecology and birds seen along the way. The cruise will be narrated by SCCF Shorebird Biologist Audrey Albrecht and Captiva Cruises/SCCF Educator Richard Finkel. Proceeds will support SCCF's shorebird monitoring program. \$45/adult, \$35/child. For reservations, call Captiva Cruises at 239-472-5300 or book online at www.captivacruises.com.

BOWMAN'S BEACH WALK

Wednesdays, 9-11am — 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. Free to all. You must pay to park.

CALOOSAHATCHEE OXBOW & RIVERLORE CRUISE

Saturday, Feb. 15 at 9:30am (sold out) Tickets still available for Mar. 6 & Apr. 3 — This guided monthly cruise explores the meanders of the historic upriver Caloosahatchee. We follow the river back to a time when a waterfall served as the headwaters of the Caloosahatchee and settlers braved the wilderness. The 2.5-hour adventure begins by locking through the W.P. Franklin Lock in Olga.

EVENING AT THE HOMESTEAD: CLIMATE CHANGE & FOOD

Wednesday, Mar. 4, 6:30pm — Join us for an enlightening lecture by Jackie Vitale, Chef-in-Residence at the Robert Rauschenberg Foundation, as she explores how our food system impacts the changing climate, from seed to supermarket; fridge to landfill. Our energy and transportation industries get most of the attention when it comes to climate change, but the food system also plays a large role in our warming planet. We'll also learn about the historical and economic roots of our current industrial system, and present possibilities for a brighter future. The focus will be on positive solutions we can bring back to our kitchens! Presented in partnership with FISH of SanCap. Doors will open at the Bailey Homestead Preserve at 6pm for light bites and refreshments. Register for tickets at Eventbrite/SCCF; \$10.

Space is limited. Tickets are \$45 per person with advance reservations required at Eventbrite/SCCF.

COMMUNITY BEACH WALK

Saturday, Feb. 15, 9-11am — Sanibel Sea School offers a series of guided "Opt Outside" beach walks to encourage people to get out and explore with loved ones. Come join our marine science educators to explore what has washed ashore! Free for all ages; children under 18 should be accompanied by a parent or guardian. Meet at Sanibel Sea School at 8:45am. Register at sanibelseaschool.org/beachwalks. For more info, call 239-472-8585 or email info@sanibelseaschool.org.

FIZZY FERMENTED DRINKS WITH JACKIE VITALE

Wednesday, Feb. 5, 9am-noon — In this hands-on workshop, explore the world of fizzy fermented drinks with Jackie Vitale, Chef-in-Residence at the Robert Rauschenberg Foundation. Jackie will lead participants in making kombucha, ginger bug soda, and sweet potato fly. Participants will leave with ingredients to prepare at home, as well as in-depth recipes. Registration required at Eventbrite/SCCF. Meet in the Pavilion at the Bailey Homestead Preserve, 1300 Periwinkle Way. Call the Native Landscapes & Garden Center at 239-472-1932 with questions.

INTERIOR WETLAND TRAIL WALKS

Tuesdays, Wednesdays & Thursdays, 11am-noon — Sanibel Island is a unique barrier island in Florida because it still has an interior freshwater wetland ecosystem. Join us for a guided walk through the interior wetlands and mid-island ridges of the Erick Lindblad Preserve with discussion of native habitats, natural and cultural history and preservation efforts. Meet at the Nature Center. Call 239-472-2329 with questions.

ISLAND ART EXHIBIT

Feb. 4 – April 2; Monday – Friday, 9am-12pm; Saturday 10am-1pm — This cooperative exhibit between SCCF and the Sanibel Captiva Art League (SCAL) features original works of art interpreting the theme of Island. Come enjoy the fresh works of artists who were inspired by SCCF's mission to conserve and protect our islands' natural beauty, wildlife and resources. The exhibit is inside of the Bailey Homestead house, 1300 Periwinkle Way; admission is free. Call the Native Landscapes & Garden Center at 239-472-1932 with questions.

SCCF FEBRUARY 2020

HAPPENINGS
PROGRAMS
OPPORTUNITIES

MAKING THE LAND WORK WALKING TOURS

Mondays at 2pm & Thursdays at 10am — Join us for a one-hour walking tour of the Bailey Homestead Preserve that blends SCCF's conservation work on the historic property, the history of the land itself and some stories about the pioneering Bailey family. Walking shoes are recommended. No reservations are needed. Suggested donation of \$5 to SCCF greatly appreciated. Bailey Homestead Preserve, 1300 Periwinkle Way, meet at the kiosk at the head of the Shipley Trail. Call the Garden Center at 239-472-1932 for more information.

2ND ANNUAL PAUL MCCARTHY LECTURE SERIES:

FEATURING SYLVIA EARLE

Friday, Feb. 7, 5:30pm — SCCF is thrilled to host "Her Deepness" Dr. Sylvia Earle, who along with Jane Goodall, is considered to be one of the most important conservationists of our time. A legendary oceanographer, Earle will be the guest speaker at the Sanibel Community House. Doors open at 5pm for light bites and refreshments. The lecture will begin at 5:30pm. Register for tickets at Eventbrite/SCCF; \$20/\$10 for students.

NEW MOON MEDITATION

Sunday, Feb. 23 at 5:40pm — Enjoy a guided meditation on the beach as the sun sets and the moon rises. (Sunset at 6:25pm) Meet at Alison Hagerup Beach Park, 14790 Captiva Dr., Captiva. Suggested donation \$10-15, proceeds benefit SCCF's sea turtle research program. Bring a towel or blanket. For more info, contact info@ambuyoga.com or 239-314-9642.

PHOTOGRAPHY IN THE WILD

Tuesday, Feb. 11, 9-10:30am — Join Alex Horn, SCCF's Education & Volunteer Coordinator and an accomplished photographer, for a hands-on learning experience on how to create eye-catching photographs. Attendees will begin the workshop with a tutorial on the basics of wildlife photography. The second half will explore the Bailey Homestead to put these new tools to use! All skill levels are welcome and all types of cameras may be used, including mobile phone cameras. RSVP through Eventbrite/SCCF; \$15 SCCF members/\$20 non-members. Call the Native Landscapes & Garden Center at 239-472-1932 with questions.

WEEDS & SEEDS

Mondays at 8:40am — We are a group of amateur botanists who enjoy finding and identifying native plants on Sanibel and in the Caloosahatchee watershed. Our walks, visiting different locations in Lee County, last for two hours, and are guided by a leader with a plant list. Meet at the Nature Center at 8:40am (depart at 8:45am) at the base of the porch and carpool to the site. Walks are free but donations to SCCF are welcome. Please email karl Werner@sbcglobal.net for more info.

SAVE THE DATE: BEER IN THE BUSHES 2020

Get your dancing shoes ready for Beer in the Bushes on April 11. This much anticipated end-of-season fundraiser is set to wow you with high energy live music, amazing food truck creations, the craftiest beers from SW Florida's favorite breweries, and surprises to delight and inspire! More info soon at Eventbrite/SCCF.

SCCF FEBRUARY 2020

HAPPENINGS
PROGRAMS
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SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
2 Island Art Exhibit Feb.4 thru Tuesday, April 2	3 Weeds & Seeds Making Land Work	4 Interior Wetland Trail Walks	5 Bowmans Beach Walk Fizzy Fer, emted Drinks	6 Birding Paddle Making Land Work	7 Sylvia Earle, McCarthy Lecture	8
9	10 Weeds & Seeds Making Land Work	11 Photography in Wild Birding Sunset Cruise Interior Wetland Trail Walks	12 Bowmans Beach Walk	13 Making Land Work	14	15 Community Bch Walk
16	17 CLOSED Weeds & Seeds	18 Interior Wetland Trail Walks	19 Bowmans Beach Walk	20 Making Land Work	21	22
23 New Moon Meditation- Captiva	24 Weeds & Seeds Making Land Work	25 Interior Wetland Trail Walks	26 Bowmans Beach Walk	27 Making Land Work	28	29
1 March Pine Island Sounds Sunset Cruise & Music	2 Weeds & Seeds Making Land Work	3 Interior Wetland Trail Walks	4 Bowmans Beach Walk Climate Change & Food	5 Making Land Work	6 Nature Journaling @ BHP - March 11	7

All programs at Bailey Homestead Preserve unless otherwise noted, 1300 Periwinkle Way

sccf.org/calendar



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

February 2020 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

Nature Center Hours:
Nature Center closed for a "refresh" but trails are open. Check website for programs.

Native Landscapes & Garden Center Hours:
at 1300 Periwinkle Way, Bailey Homestead Preserve
Monday - Friday — 8:30am to 4pm
Saturday from 10am to 3pm (January through April)

Visit the Sanibel Slough Trails
at the Erick Lindblad Preserve.
Open every day, dawn to dusk.

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

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



sanibel
sea school

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