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Issue 63, April 2024, Circulation: 1,400 subscribers, 12,000 social media readers.

As always, please share with anyone. Ken DeWalt, publisher

News, Events, Community Services and more from I-75 to LaBelle



NEW WEBSITE **www.OnTheRiver.org**

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Connecting Caloosahatchee River Communities from Fort Myers Shores to LaBelle

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The deadline for receipt of any materials is the 15th of the month. Issues go out before the 1st of each month, and may be edited.

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FEATURED IN THIS MONTH'S OTR:

- LOCAL POLITICS: Amanda Cochran, District 5
- LOCAL ALVA BOOKIE Reviews: 2 new titles
- LOCAL Environment: Lake O releases
- LOCAL Land Development: Neal approved again
- LOCAL History: A is for ALVA
- LOCAL: Community Services: Our public libraries
- LOCAL Clubs and Organizations: S.C.O.R.E.
- LOCAL Recipe: SHRIMP PIQUANT ALVA
- LOCAL Sports: Chastain at COTA



Photo by James Whitney

Special THANKS to all who supported ON THE RIVER through our **WINTER GO FUND ME**, and private donations. Our work would not be possible without your generous help and the ADS of our Paid Advertiser's

**ALVA INC, At
the Alva Community Center.**

ZOOM access:

<https://zoom.us/join>

Meeting ID: 852-1643-8980

Passcode: 302401



Info@AlvaFL.org WEBSITE www.ALVAFL.org

NEXT MEETING: Every Second Tuesday, 7pm, Alva Community Center

ALVA INC Meeting, Tuesday March 12, 2024



Notes provided by ALVA INC:

During the March Alva Inc meeting, new information was brought to our attention regarding future Plans for the Alva Community and Lee County that we thought you would be interested in knowing.

1. Caloosa 80 Trailer Park: Alexis Crespo presentation on the Caloosa 80 trailer park had some major changes. First the trailer park will now only have 650 lots which is within the zoning for the property. They are also increasing the preserve area and the setbacks. They still want to build a commercial strip center. To date the changes have not been submitted to Lee County, such that we are able to provide the specific changes as stated. They are still asking for their property to be included in Lee County Future Water and Wastewater Map, but because of the changes in the development the March During the March Alva Inc meeting, new information was brought to our attention regarding future Plans for the Alva Community and Lee County that we thought you would be interested in knowing.



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because of the changes in the development the March 25th Public Hearing has been canceled and no new date has been set. (It is rumored that Lee County plans to connect sewer lines along SR 80 from Riverhall to the Hendry County Line.)

2. Lee County Transportation Priorities: On March 5th Lee County presented their Transportation Priorities PowerPoint. There are plans that will impact the Alva Community and surrounding areas. Specifically Sunshine Road to SR 80, Buckingham Road and Joel Boulevard. I have included the link to the PowerPoint.

Website Link: Scroll through document to get to Northeast Lee County projects.

<https://leecounty.novusagenda.com/agendapublic/CoverSheet.aspx?ItemID=6837&MeetingID=453>

3. Proposed High School NNN: At the Lehigh Acres Community Council Meeting on March 4th, Denise Eberle presented on behalf of Alva Inc and the Community our concerns regarding the development of the Proposed High School NNN (and eventually a middle school (estimate 5,000 students and staff). Armor Persons, School Board representative of our district, also presented at this meeting. Included is the link to the meeting on Youtube. Take a minute and see what is happening.

Youtube Meeting Link:

<https://youtu.be/H4TiPhUHAuQ?si=2LwHuoP6NuADSPLQ>



4. 2024 State of Lee County: The Real Estate Investment Society issued the financial State of Lee County PowerPoint on March 12, 2024. It includes the budget and costs for Lee County. It covers everything happening in the County from Planning 1.8 million sq ft of commercial development along SR 80, Civic Center, septic tanks, WWTPs, etc. If you want to know whats happening in Lee County, check it out. The PowerPoint is attached. "These ARE BIG #'s". 25th Public Hearing has been canceled and no new date has been set. (It is rumored that Lee County plans to connect sewer lines along SR 80 from Riverhall to the Hendry County Line.)

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Lee County Commissioners approve

CARY+DUKE+POVIA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AMENDMENT

Neal Communities Development asked and received an amended Lee Plan Map to include ±788.97 acres on the Lee County Utilities Future Water and Sewer Service Areas. The meeting was held on March 20, and was attended by Alva and North Olga area residents who reported while they were more than civil in their presentations, some board members were not.



Amanda Cochran is running for Lee County District 5 County Commissioner

against short time sitting, Desantis Appointee commissioner Mike Greenwell.

Amanda is a dedicated community leader with deep roots in rural Lee County and has been a force for a slow down in housing development versus the crowding of more and more homes into smaller lots in rural Northeast Lee.

Mrs. Cochran, wife of Darius Cochran, local real estate broker and small rancher, is moving forward already with extensive plans for a very active campaign.

6325 Presidential Court, Suite 7A, Fort Myers, FL 33919, AmandaCochranForLeeCounty@gmail.com 239-980-6271

Her campaign slogan is A LEADER WHO LISTENS



Mrs. Cochran, Republican from Alva, announced her campaign officially on Sunday afternoon March 24th at the A Line Ranch public gathering venue in North Fort Myers. Over 200 of her local supporters including members of ALVA INC, ALVA STRONG, the NORTH OLGA PLANNING GROUP, the BAYSHORE CITIZENS GROUP and many others joined her between 1pm and 4pm to share this Lee County historic moment and enjoy her free chicken barbeque.

What makes this historic? Three things.

First, Amanda is not a politician. She is a wife, mother, and local business woman who, along with her husband, Darius Cochran, local Real estate Broker, believes in the kind of Olga-Alva-Northeast Lee County they grew up in. This area is the LAST rural-agricultural area left in Lee County.

Second, the Lee County District 5 Commissioner she is running to unseat is Republican Mike Greenwell who was appointed to Frank Mann's seat (Republican from Alva) by Governor Desantis to complete Mr. Mann's term at his death two years ago. Frank Mann had been a strong advocate for keeping Northeast Lee County rural, with very careful residential and retail growth. Mike's platform, indeed, his life, has been spent growing retail food and entertainment businesses in North and Northeast Lee County.

Mike Greenwell was not long on the board before he acquired a reputation for ignoring his constituent residents wishes about growth. In fact, he has become famous for ignoring anyone except his developer supporters, and his own prospects for personal enrichment through land and zoning deals with state personalities and some on the Board of Commissioners.

While not proved yet in court, multiple investigative reporters are now developing chains of evidence they believe may show he and other board members have crossed lines, some possibly even legal, over the past several years.



Third, and last, reason Amanda Cochran's campaign is historic is that if she wins against what is ostensibly a Lee County and Florida State Republican Political Machine candidate, she will have done what so many others, running for positions all over the United States, throughout every state since 1776, have mostly tried and failed to do.

Beat the well-entrenched incumbent.

FDOT Confirms LaBelle traffic to flow through center-city at least through 2029

In a phone conversation followed up by the email below I received confirmation that the long hoped for bypass around LaBelle instead of the two bridge plan and connected road changes including roundabouts and new lanes north and south on rte 29 and west on rte 80 will be held off at least until at least 2029.

from: Agacinski, David <David.Agacinski@dot.state.fl.us>

to: "kendewalt@ontheriver.org" <kendewalt@ontheriver.org>

cc: "Gaither, Wayne" <Wayne.Gaither@dot.state.fl.us>, "Suguri, Vitor" <Vitor.Suguri@dot.state.fl.us>

date: Mar 15, 2024, 2:32 PM, s Subject: SR 29 through the City of LaBelle.

Ken, you had posed this question to Wayne Gaither earlier this month:

My question is: What is the plan for studying any type of bypass around LaBelle instead of a second bridge that leads all traffic through the center of town as that traffic grows over the next decades.

I worked with the project manager for the SR 29 bypass feasibility study and our response for you is as follows:

FDOT has programmed a Feasibility Study for a possible SR 29 Bypass around LaBelle, scheduled for FY 2029. In our Feasibility Study for a possible SR 29 Bypass, we will consider the 2050 traffic forecast, which incorporates the foreseeable growth and developments, as well as projected growth for the area. The study will be completed by an independent consultant who has no background knowledge of the current SR 29 Re-evaluation project or the plan proposed by the Second Bridge Group. As for the current SR 29 bridge replacement and capacity improvement project (FPID 417878-8) which includes a one-way pair which is one bridge in each direction, we just completed our second public workshop at the LaBelle Civic Center, are working towards developing the preferred alternative, and anticipate a Public Hearing in early 2025.

Near future game show!



"Sorry Arthur, your answer was actually correct, but Paul shouted his opinion louder so he gets the point. And an extra bonus point also goes to Sue as she was offended by your answer".

Lake O flow turning coastal water brown

(TY NEWS-PRESS, Chad Gillis)



Lake Okeechobee waters continue to blast out of the W.P. Franklin Lock and Dam, and coastal Southwest Florida waters are starting to look like chocolate milk. Aerial images from volunteers with Calusa Waterkeeper show a stark contrast between the Gulf of Mexico waters and the billions of gallons of tainted freshwater coming from the lake.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers typically holds Friday media calls when large-scale releases are conducted, but the agency did not have any such meeting on March 1 and doesn't plan a press meeting until March 29 Army Corps officials Friday afternoon were

unable to say exactly what flow rates will be to the west coast over the next week, which adds to the frustration of many residents and environmental groups here.

No one really knows what to expect. They just know it's coming.

"We're way outside of the harmful flow envelope for the damaging releases to the estuary," said Calusa Waterkeeper Codty Pierce. "It's what the Army Corps needs to see to lower the lake now, and we are receiving the most amount of inundation and we still don't see much water moving south. So we have to be reactive to this."

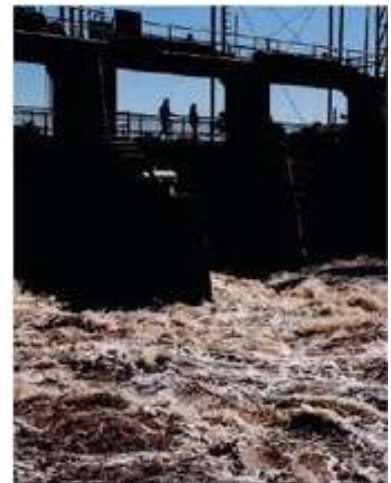
Lake Okeechobee releases, at times, cause some of the largest water quality headaches in Southwest Florida. Some years the releases have brought devastating blue-green algae blooms to the Fort Myers-Sanibel area. Other years the releases have fed toxic red tide outbreaks.

Lake levels have been high for months

Freshwater flows can be high enough to pump water several miles offshore, and long-term releases at these volumes can harm the Caloosahatchee River's estuary and the local economy. Lake Okeechobee levels have been high for months, with surface levels hovering around 16.1 feet above sea level Thursday, according to Army Corps records.

Since 2008, the Army Corps has worked to keep the surface of the lake between 12.5 and 15.5 feet above sea level to provide flood protection and water for urbanized areas, farms and natural systems like the Caloosahatchee. The Army Corps is expected to adopt a new set of regulations later this year, although those plans have been delayed several times.

Flows at the W.P. Franklin Lock and Dam in Alva have been above 5,000 cubic feet per second at times, which is well above the 2,800 cubic feet per second harm threshold for the estuary. The Franklin Lock and Dam divides the Caloosahatchee's estuary from the freshwater, upper portions of the system.



The releases have been talked about on social media platforms and in business circles.

Local business community expressing concern

John Lai, president of the Sanibel and Captiva Chamber of Commerce, said this is the worst time of year to have large, ugly releases along the coast. "It's got us on pins and needles because we can't have the water flowing under our bridge be black instead of blue," Lai said. "We're just hoping the lake levels drop enough that these releases lower the lake enough that they can stop in May."

Lai said he and others in the coastal business community have made their concerns known to the Army Corps and other agencies involved with water management. "To have that much volume come down the river during our busy season is probably the worst timing we could have, especially with our business communities trying to hold on and make as much as they can these first three months," Lai said.

Pierce said he's heard of reports of blue-green algae outbreaks at Davis Boat ramp and one location upstream of the Franklin Lock and Dam. "Initially they talked about six weeks from the 17th of February, but I'm hearing it could go all the way into May," Pierce said. "I believe we'll be going into the early end of summer on the tail end of these discharges."

Pierce said hopes the poor water quality and the attention doesn't hurt fishing guides and Realtors. "We're concerned about how it might impact the economy," Pierce said. "We're not crying wolf here, but the releases are harmful."



Copy the link to the RSVP site to the right into your webbrowser to participate in this ZOOM.



**LAKE OKEECHOBEE
DISCHARGES
VIRTUAL TOWN HALL EVENT**

Tuesday, April 2nd at 6:30 pm

RSVP <https://ow.ly/848230QyRPM>

info@us02.zoom.us
us02web.zoom.us

Sign up

Public Notice: Neal Communities has submitted their Environmental Permit application for Owl Creek to the Army Corps.

(TY Grant Fichter)

The Corps is looking for public input related to the permit. Those interested may **reach out to and email** Michael.L.Taylor@usace.army.mil

This site is environmentally, historically and archeologically significant and should be permitted with the proper oversight and public input.



South Florida Operations Office, SFOO

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers South Florida Operations Office (SFOO) manages and operates five navigation locks and dams along the Okeechobee Waterway: St. Lucie Lock & Dam at Stuart, Port Mayaca Lock & Dam near Canal Point, Moore Haven Lock & Dam at Moore Haven, Ortona Lock & Dam near LaBelle and W. P. Franklin Lock & Dam near Ft. Myers. The SFOO also manages the Canaveral Lock at Canaveral Harbor, Florida.



Battle over wetlands permitting continues

(TY News-Press, Chad Gillis)



Developments still in limbo until final ruling

A fight over Florida's wetlands took another turn Thursday as environmental groups filed a response to a stay granted to the state by a federal judge. The battle is over who is responsible for protecting Florida's wetlands and the endangered and threatened species that use them.

Historically, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has issued wetland dredge and fill permits across the United States, but Florida applied for and was granted that authority by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in 2020.

U.S. District Court judge Randolph Moss ruled in Washington, D.C., last month that the EPA illegally gave Florida permission to review and approve wetland dredge and fill permits. The next step, many expect, is that the state will file an appeal.

"The trigger for (the state) to file an appeal hasn't happened yet because the court hasn't rendered a final judgment yet," said Earthjustice attorney Bonnie Malloy. "This is something developers sought because they could get permits quicker than when they go through the (U.S. Army) Corps process, but there were several illegal shortcuts they took putting Florida's program together."

Petitioners who also challenged the state-assumed program include the Center for Biological Diversity, Defenders of Wildlife, the Sierra Club, the Conservancy of Southwest Florida, the Florida Wildlife Federation, Miami Water-keeper and St. Johns Riverkeeper.

Developers have been fighting for decades to have wetland dredge and fill authority centralized under Florida's Department of Environmental Protection. "This (Moss) decision has obviously upended the multi-decade effort to streamline the permitting process while maintaining the same level of protections and standards," said John J. Fumero, a development consultant attorney who sometimes works on behalf of the South Florida Water Management District. "I think they were diligent using the criteria and it was approved by EPA."

The recent ruling put a halt to projects that were close to receiving their dredge and fill permits. Fumero said that move sets the state back decades.

"In the '90s you had to obtain a water management district permit, a DEP permit and an Army Corps permit," Fumero said. "There's always been discussion about that one-stop shop that could be done through one agency. For decades there was discussions about the state of Florida applying for and assuming the federal 404 permitting program, and that finally came to fruition in 2020."



Local projects impacted by ruling

Lee County commissioners and attorneys have complained about the ruling in recent weeks at public meetings, with some painting Moss as a radical liberal activist judge. Fifteen Lee County public works projects were in the approval pipeline or being planned, with an estimated cost of \$765 million, according to county records.

Projects at places like Alico Road, Daniels Parkway and Burnt Store Road must go through the entire permitting process before being approved.

Malloy said local governments should probably go to the Army Corps for their wetland dredge and fill permits. "Collier (County) is saying 'just send us to the Corps and let's get going,'" Malloy said. "Others are acting like it's going to turn the entire economy upside down in Florida."



Malloy said the argument that the Army Corps does not have the staff to review the permits is silly because the agency reviews permits for 47 other states and reviewed permits in Florida prior to 2020.

"That's just contrary to the facts," Malloy said. "Developers want security and one of the things they thought they'd get with Florida processing this is Endangered Species Act liability protection, and that was one of our big concerns. This has national implications because other states have been watching to see if they could do the same thing."

DEP spokeswoman Alexandra Kuchta said in February of 2023 that more than 1,500 Section 404 permits had been issued by the agency at that point, with 145 applications being denied.

Mandated timelines sped up permit review on state level

“When the assumption occurred in 2020 you still had to get two permits, and they swapped the Army Corps for DEP,” Fumero said. “The goal was for DEP to operate the program in Florida and then once



they got the hang of it, it would be moved over to the water management districts, which would have made it a true one-stop, one staff, one set of criteria and standards at one agency.”

Fumero has worked for Lee County in the past, on road projects and well field development. He said the real issue is timeliness, that the Army Corps does not have strict turnaround requirements to help keep development on track.

“If I file a permit with the water management district, they have 30 days to review and provide me with comments and ask for additional information,” he said. “Once the review is complete, the agency has 90 days to issue or deny. The Corps has no such restrictions. You can file an application and not hear from them in six months, and that’s the rub in the landowner and development community.”

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Lee County commissioners could have violated Sunshine Law, legal experts say

(TY Gulfshore Business, BY DAVID DORSEY, PHOTO CREDIT: DAVID DORSEY; GABBY OCCHINO)



“You would have to get them, under oath, to admit that there was something more going on (i.e., you would need additional evidence that there was a coordinated effort/communication outside the public’s eye),” wrote Pamela Marsh, an attorney and former president of Florida’s First Amendment Foundation.

On Jan. 17, commissioners voted 5-0, with no public explanation or debate, to change Alva’s land-use plan to

allow a sewer connection that was proposed to run under the Caloosahatchee River. County building codes require sewer for increases in housing density.

After approximately 40 Alva residents pleaded with commissioners to vote “no,” because they favor keeping the community a rural one, each of the commissioners voted “yes.”

The amendment’s purpose and emotional responses aren’t the issues, said Sam Terilli, an attorney who spent 12 years as legal counsel for the Miami Herald.

“This is really not the merit of the development question,” Terilli said. “Sewer, no sewers, density. It’s really a question of process of what is required or prohibited by Florida Sunshine Law.”

The individual meetings began taking place eight days after Southwest Florida’s state legislative delegation declined to consider creating a special district for the developer at this year’s legislative session.

Commissioner Mike Greenwell, whose district includes Alva, held the first of the one-on-one meetings Nov. 7, his lobby log filed Jan. 2 to the Lee County Clerk of Courts showed. Greenwell met with Terry Miller, a registered lobbyist for Neal Communities about a “utilities issue,” almost one month prior to Dec. 6, when the vote originally was advertised to take place. Miller also managed Greenwell’s campaign. Greenwell declined to comment.

The other five one-on-one meetings took place Nov. 9, according to lobby logs filed with the clerk of courts:

Commissioner Kevin Ruane met with Neal, Ivory Matthews, a vice president for Neal Communities; and Kim Zawacki, an executive assistant with Neal. Miller, who is Ruane’s campaign manager, did not attend this meeting about the “Neal Property,” according to the lobby log. Ruane declined to comment. His meeting took place from 1:30 to 2 p.m., county records show.



Commissioner Ray Sandelli met with Neal, Matthews, Miller and Assistant Lee County Attorney Michael Jacob about Owl Creek, a body of water that flows through the property. Miller also managed Sandelli's campaign. Sandelli declined to comment. His meeting took place from 2 to 2:30 p.m., records show.



Commissioner Cecil Pendergrass met with Neal, Matthews and Miller about the "Duke Farm Property." The involved lands are also known as the Cary Duke Povia property, with the names belonging to some of the owners who put it under contract with Neal. Pendergrass, who declined to comment, is the only commissioner who does not employ Miller as campaign manager. His meeting took place from 2:30 to 3 p.m., records show.

Commissioner Brian Hamman met with Pat Neal, owner of Neal Communities, which is looking to build 1,099 homes on 788 acres in Alva, a development order said. Matthews and Miller also were present. Miller managed Hamman's campaign. Owl Creek was the topic of discussion. His meeting took place from 3:30 to 4 p.m., records show.

Hamman said he would consider doing an interview if the questions were provided in advance. Gulfshore Business declined. Hamman followed up by saying "if/when this turns into a zoning case... I don't want to make any comments that might lead people to believe I have made my mind up before hearing the evidence."

Jacob also met separately with Neal, Matthews and Miller about "Owl Creek Project in Olga." Olga is part of Alva. Jacobs declined to comment, Lee County Communications Director Betsy Clayton said.

Neal, a former state representative and senator, said in an email the meetings were "legislative" in nature and legal. He has yet to agree to an interview request.

Miller said he could not discuss the meetings because, as the registered lobbyist for Neal Communities, "I'm not at liberty to discuss any of their projects."

Miller also works for national lobbying firm Ballard Partners. But in this instance, Miller said he was working for his own company, TM Strategic Consulting, which manages political campaigns and lobbies. Miller said having those two roles were not a conflict.

"It's not at all unusual for people who work for campaigns," Miller said of being in the situation of working for both parties. "It's actually commonplace.

"I get them elected. But then they're going to vote their conscience and their beliefs. I'm a friendly face, but they're not going to vote on it just because it's something that I'm working on. That's just the way it is."

Neal donated the maximum \$1,000 to the campaigns of each of the five commissioners, campaign finance records show.

“So, you’re wondering if there’s a potential Sunshine Law violation?” said Terilli, who is also an associate professor at the University of Miami. “I will say this: It doesn’t look good. It’s not impossible, under the law, for an individual commissioner to meet with a developer and a lobbyist for fact-finding purposes and discussion, etc. But when you have a series of these meetings, and then a 5-0 vote with little or no discussion? It certainly raises the question. Was there a Sunshine Law violation?”

“Under the law, it used to be called daisy chaining. You take little daisies and tie them together, one after another. That’s when you have a series of meetings. With individual commissioners, to pass along information to, in effect, line up votes and truncate public process. The question here will be, what exactly went on in those individual meetings?”



Several attorneys cited *Blackford vs. School Board of Orange County* as case law precedent for the Alva sewer amendment vote to be ruled as a Sunshine Law violation.

“You cannot use a non-Sunshine ‘proxy,’ to avoid a Sunshine violation,” Tony Conticello, an attorney in Tallahassee, wrote in an email. “Likewise, a city official or anyone (including non-Sunshine employees or non-government individuals) cannot act as a ‘liaison’ or ‘proxy’ between multiple governmental officials on public business. Finally, the court will find violations when actions were taken in secret to ‘crystalize’ decisions to the point of ceremonial

acceptance at public meetings.”

In *Blackford vs. School Board of Orange County*, the 1979 case, the judge ruled for a complete do-over in public of the decision to redistrict about 6,000 students “because the individual discussions resulted in de facto meetings by two or more members of the board at which official action was taken,” the ruling said.

“One person basically has the possibility to talk to the next person about what the last person said, even though they’re not there,” Conticello said of *Blackford vs. Orange County*. “The court found that was a violation of Sunshine. Even though there wasn’t everyone together, there was basically contamination of information.

“You can apply the same principles to this. How are you going to be able to figure out what they spoke about at those meetings? They probably should have declined to have those one-on-one meetings because it would look bad. And it looks bad.”

Sunshine Law remains an imperative part of democracy in Florida, said Barbara Petersen, executive director of the Florida Center for Government Accountability.

“Right now, it’s Alva,” Peterson said. “Two months from now, it might be [another part of Lee County]. The fact that they’re meeting with these developers privately and keeping the public in the dark—it should concern everyone. It might be my neighborhood today, but tomorrow, it might be your neighborhood.

“It’s OK for a commissioner to meet with a developer. But you’re talking about back-to-back meetings with the commissioners. That’s an attempt, in my mind, to avoid having a discussion in public, which is what they’re supposed to do.”

Neal participated in public comment during the Jan. 17 amendment meeting, as did members of his development team. It's the meetings that were held almost two months prior that would be called into question, said Michael Barfield, a paralegal based in Manatee County. He has been involved in dozens of Sunshine Law cases.

"Meetings held in rapid-fire succession like those have been found to violate the Sunshine Law," Barfield said. "It certainly is not being transparent and would appear to allow a developer, in this case Mr. Neal, unequal access to decision makers through a lobbyist who just so happens to be the campaign manager of four out of five commissioners. I would call that quite a cozy relationship."

Legally, there's something called a "cure meeting," and in this instance, a judge could rule the Jan. 17 meeting followed proper procedures.

"But it still doesn't excuse the actual, original violation," Barfield said. "A violation is a violation. Yes, you can cure the violation, but it cannot be a ceremonial meeting when you just go through the motions. You have to make a full disclosure of the communications that were held. A judge certainly has the power. I've been involved in dozens of Sunshine Law cases over 20 or 30 years. A judge certainly has the power to invalidate the act. I'm sure that any citizen in Florida—it doesn't have to be in Lee County—but obviously the residents have standing to bring an action to whether the Sunshine Law was violated. They could ask the judge to invalidate the act."



Unintentional Sunshine Law violations carry up to a \$500 fine, Peterson said. Intentional violations can result in up to six months in prison and removal from office, she said.

With none of the five commissioners speaking about what happened Nov. 7 and Nov. 9, that raises suspicions of a violation, Barfield said, but it also makes proving a violation extremely difficult.

"You're likely to never find out the truth of what happened in those meetings, unless there is litigation and witnesses' depositions are taken under oath," Barfield said. "Even then, sometimes memories fade."

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Florida conservation easements preserve land – until a developer needs it

Loophole in the law allows state to release the easement, opening it up to destruction

(TY Florida Phoenix, CRAIG PITTMAN)



Florida may be the only state where the economy depends on the willing suspension of disbelief. I'm not just talking about the thousands of tourists drawn here by the theme park fantasy factories along Interstate 4.

I'm talking about all the developers who tout retention pond lots as "lakefront." The Ponzi schemers who assure suckers that they're making a sound investment. Government officials who promise the public that nothing bad could happen from rebuilding in areas where a storm surge wiped out everyone a few years before.

Now I have a new one to add to my Florida cynic's hit parade: conservation easements. When state government buys the development rights to land instead of spending money to buy the land itself, it has acquired a conservation easement on the property.

You see announcements about them pop out as regularly as the latest updates on Taylor Swift's love life: "State acquires another conservation easement!" "Land preserved by new conservation easement!" "Conservation easement saves rare species habitat from development!"

Those easements have preserved a lot of Florida forests, swamps, and beaches. "Since the late-1990's," the Florida Department of Environmental Protection says on its website, the state has "acquired more than 140 conservation easements and land protection agreements, protecting over 262,000 acres statewide."

But last week, I found out something a trifle disturbing about our Florida conservation easements. It snapped my head back like that scene in "The Killers" where Ronald Reagan smacks Angie Dickinson across a room. Although everyone talks about conservation easements like they're permanent, they aren't.

Some agencies have been quietly disposing of theirs on a regular basis. State law allows them to do that. And because there's no central directory to show where all the conservation easements are located, these state agencies usually don't have anyone looking over their shoulders to object



Kimberly Buchheit, via LinkedIn

These lucrative land deals are supposed to preserve the property in perpetuity. But Kimberly Buchheit, a Central Florida land surveyor and environmental activist, told me, "Perpetuity has reached an expiration date: as soon as it is no longer convenient to protect land or restrict development."

Eric Draper was in charge of the Florida State Park system from 2017 to 2021 and he's long been an advocate for environmental land acquisition. I contacted him to ask if he knew about this loophole. He did not and was flabbergasted.

"This turns the whole purpose of those easements on its head," he said.

Nobody paying attention



As always when I have a question about Florida's environmental land-buying programs, I contacted Clay Henderson, who literally wrote the book on this subject ("Forces of Nature: A History of Florida Land Conservation," order your copy today!).

He has more than a mere academic interest in this subject. About 40 years ago, in Volusia County, he helped spearhead the nation's first voter-approved land-buying project. Henderson confirmed that the conservation easement loophole exists. It's apparently been there ever since a change in the federal tax code made the sale of such easements a way to ease the landowners' tax burden.

Clay Henderson via him

In 1996, he said, conservation easements were added to Florida's popular Preservation 2000 land-buying program (the predecessor of the current Florida Forever program).

"We believed there was interest in working with the large forestry interests to purchase their development rights and allow them to continue forestry under more conservation-minded harvesting criteria," Henderson said. The first one issued, he said, was to save some timber property owned by Georgia Pacific in Volusia County.

Over time, the easements have grown in popularity as our parsimonious Legislature has balked at spending a lot of money acquiring land for parks and preserves. Buying only the easements is a way to make a little bit of cash stretch like Mr. Fantastic.

Boosting the sale of those easements even more: The Rural and Family Lands Protection Act, passed in 2001. That law allows the state to buy the development rights from farmers and ranchers and let them continue working the land. So far, according to the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, the state has acquired conservation easements on nearly 69,000 acres of working agricultural land.

Just last month, Agriculture Commissioner Wilton Simpson announced he'd spent more than \$8 million to acquire easements on a 707-acre ranch in Polk County, a 998-acre timber and cattle operation in Putnam County, and a 525-acre cattle ranch in Polk County.

Now the Legislature wants to funnel millions in gambling revenue that the state will receive from the Seminole Tribe to such land preservation programs. As a result, we will probably soon see a boom in conservation easement sales (unless a court halts the exclusive gambling deal).

Sometimes the easements that are lifted were purchased by a government agency to protect the land. Others have been set aside as a required part of a mitigation project to make up for destroying wetlands elsewhere.

No one I talked to was sure when Florida government agencies started reversing the easement ownership to make land available for development again. But it's definitely happening now. Henderson told me that he checked the agendas for the last two monthly meetings of the St. Johns River Water Management District. He found three separate cases where the agency was giving up such an easement — far more than he had expected.

"I don't think anyone's really paying attention to this," he told me. "I suspect it's that there are so many developer consultant types who have a cozy relationship with the staff that it's happening in an ad hoc way."

Having your cake, eating it too

The person who tipped me off about this surprising loophole was a woman from the Central Florida town of Geneva named Katrina Shadix, who is more than a little obsessed with bears. She signs her emails "Beary Best Regards" and runs an organization called Bear Warriors United that sends free bear-proof straps for garbage can lids to anyone who asks.

She emailed me about the loophole last week after an organization called Conservation Florida was trumpeting how it had helped the state acquire a conservation easement on the 1,285-acre Lightsey Family Ranch near Venus. The ranch is the home of such threatened species as sandhill cranes, gopher tortoises, Florida grasshopper sparrows, and burrowing owls.

"The protection of Lightsey Family Ranch further connects the Florida Wildlife Corridor, linking critical green landscapes and wildlife habitats," DEP Secretary Shawn Hamilton told WUSF-FM for a story headlined, "A key portion of the Florida Wildlife Corridor will remain undeveloped." Except maybe it won't, Shadix said.

For one thing, the ranch is not exactly welcoming to any wildlife that might be traveling in the Florida Wildlife Corridor, she pointed out.



A gator caught at the Lightsey Family Ranch, via the ranch

Lightseys have been tending cattle in Florida since 1858, but this Lightsey ranch makes money another way. On its Facebook page, the ranch bills itself as a "Premier HUNTING destination as well as Corporate Retreat." Owner Lee Lightsey made news in 2016 when a hunter he was guiding killed an alligator on Lightsey's property that was roughly the size of Godzilla.

When the DEP paid \$4 million for the conservation easement on the Lightsey Ranch, it agreed to a host of conditions, including allowing the owners to continue bringing in exotic animals for hunters to pursue on the fenced-in property.

“This is really having your cake and eating it too,” said Lesley Blackner, a Tallahassee attorney working with Shadix who’s been giving developers heartburn for a couple of decades. The DEP deal, Blackner said, “expressly authorizes ongoing use of the property as a canned hunt facility and further expressly authorizes ongoing importation of non-native game stock for hunting purposes,”

And, thanks to the loophole, the development rights can revert back to the Lightsey family at some point, she said. “They can cash out in the future when development gets closer,” Blackner said.

Traci Deen, president and CEO of Conservation Florida, acknowledged that conservation easements such as this one may not last to (as Buzz Lightyear used to say) infinity and beyond. “Easements, typically designed to protect the natural or open space value of a property in perpetuity, can be subjected to changes, terminations, or extinguishments under certain circumstances,” she said.

Nevertheless, she told me, “I am unaware of any such action on easements purchased through Florida Forever or P2000, as the Lightsey Family Ranch easement was.” Despite the possibility of a reversal of the conservation easement, Deen said, “Lightsey Family Ranch will never be a subdivision or hundreds of concrete homes — it will always be green.”

Development high-five

Shadix told me she found out about the loophole when she was at an Orange County Commission meeting some years ago. Consultant John Miklos is former chairman of the St. Johns River Water Management District. Credit: water district

She watched in astonishment as the commissioners voted to change the zoning on a parcel from “conservation easement” to one that accommodated commercial development. She then saw a politically influential environmental consultant named John Miklos high-five another consultant who’d drawn up a report on the property, she said.

She called Blackner, who researched the law and found the loophole.

Up to that point, “I was ignorant of the whole process,” Shadix told me “I didn’t know if it was illegal or improper, but I was angry.” She, Blackner, and Buchheit came up with a trio of examples and in December sent a letter about this issue to House Speaker Paul Renner and Senate President Kathleen Passidomo.

Did our fine Legislature leap into action to close this loophole? They did not. They were far too busy ordering the schools to teach kindergarten kids about Communism and deleting references to climate change from state law. You know, the really important stuff.

Contractor’s Wetlands Park?

Here’s one example from their letter, so you can see how this fast shuffle works.

In 2006, the owner of a project called Contractors Business Park in Orlando set aside a wetland to be “preserved” via conservation easement to make up for destroying another wetland during the

construction of a nearby Walmart. The federal, state, and local governments had all signed off on that wetland mitigation arrangement (even though it constitutes a net loss of wetland acreage).

Then, in 2017, the St. Johns River water district board voted to lift the conservation easement on that property. The district's board did that so that the wetland could be paved over as an office park, just as the name implies. Maybe if they had called it "Contractors Wetlands Park" it could have stayed in a natural state.

Anyway, the justification for undoing the easement is that the owner had paid for a different kind of mitigation to make up for the Walmart wetlands destruction. That way, the "preserved" wetland could be developed.

The owner had bought "credits" from a wetland mitigation bank in another area. Mitigation banks are places where wetlands have been restored or merely preserved and then state and federal agencies assign the owner a certain number of credits for that work, which he or she can then sell off for thousands of dollars each.

A lot of Florida's developer-friendly wetland "mitigation banks" do little to really replace the wetlands that are lost to development. They classify dry land as wet, or merely preserve land rather than creating any new wetlands. But buying those credits makes everything look hunky-dory on paper.

You may not be surprised to hear that the consultant on the Contractors Business Park project was Miklos. He was also, at the time of the vote to lift this conservation easement, the chairman of the St. Johns River water board.

He stepped down from that post in 2019 after Buchheit filed an ethics complaint against him for similar conflicts. Buchheit told me that a plat has been filed for more commercial development to be built on that formerly "preserved" wetland.

Slap 'em like Ronnie

I tried repeatedly to reach the current chairman of the St. Johns River Water Management District board; a former state senator named Rob Bradley. If his name sounds familiar, he's the politician who sponsored a bill that forbids local governments from banning the sale of any type of sunscreen, even the kind that causes problems for Florida's coral reefs.

Because his law firm's website says he's "certified by the Florida Bar as an Expert in City, County, and Local Government Law," I'm guessing Bradley is well aware of the conservation easement loophole. He's certainly seen it pop up on his meeting agendas.

Nevertheless, he didn't call me back. Probably he'd been rubbing on some Coppertone and then his hands were too slippery to hold a phone. Shadix tried to tell the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission about the loophole at its meeting last month. She was encouraging that agency to do something to track what was happening to the easements, since nobody else is. They didn't seem interested in becoming Conservation Easement Central, she said.

Deen said one way to strengthen these easements is with "the inclusion of a 'perpetual' term in the deed and defining the purposes of the easement clearly." Those steps can help prevent future attempts to dissolve or compromise the easement.

Blackner told me that other states have more stringent rules for their conservation easements, In Georgia, for instance, you have to go to court and persuade a judge to lift the easement, rather than simply win a majority of votes from a nine-member water board.

If nothing else, she said, it would be nice if Florida changed its law to require that someone who sold their conservation easement to the state would have to pay back the millions to the taxpayers before the easement can be reversed and the land developed.

Personally, I'd go even further. I'd say you could only buy back your development rights after running an advertisement in a general-circulation newspaper inviting any and all taxpayers to appear at a certain public place on a certain day to line up and slap you really hard. I bet some slappers could do it even better than old Ronnie Reagan.

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New SWFL conservation area spans 4M acres and protects endangered species

(TY WINK-Paul Dolan)



Southwest Florida locals have had growing concerns over water, loss of wildlife and access to natural lands for a while. Now a new conservation area spanning more than four million acres will at least temper these issues.

According to the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, the Everglades to Gulf Conservation Area is the 571st addition to the National Wildlife Refuge System, as of Monday.

The area covers 4,045,268 acres, stretching from Southwest Florida to areas of northern Florida. It stretches through 12 counties west of Lake Okeechobee, from Naples to Lakeland.

Animals like Florida panthers, Florida black bears, Everglade snail kites and sand skinks (worm-like lizards) are just some of the rare species that call these areas home.

The Everglades Restoration program will improve because of the relationship it will have with the Everglades to Gulf area. Ever since the Biden-Harris administration took office, the Everglades Restoration program has received “record-level funding.”



“The Biden-Harris administration is committed to conserving our lands and waters for current and future generations,” said Secretary of the U.S. Department of the Interior Deb Haaland, “and our successes expanding the National Wildlife Refuge System underscore our collaborative work to bring these special places closer to the communities that surround them.”

Conservation areas like the Everglades to Gulf Conservation Area are either entirely or primarily made up of conservation easements in cooperation with landowners.



“This new conservation area is a result of the dedication and collaboration of members of the public, partners, Tribes and private landowners who are committed to conserving Florida’s natural heritage – diverse habitat, wildlife and recreation,” said Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks Shannon Estenoz.

The Everglades to Gulf area will supplement established conservation areas, including state lands, that Floridians use to enjoy the wilderness.

Caloosa Humane Center 1200 Pratt Blvd, LaBelle

OUR MISSION

The Mission of Caloosa Humane Society is to serve, shelter, and protect the homeless pets in our care. We are dedicated to finding permanent and loving adoptive homes for our companion animals in need. Our no-kill facility provides low cost spay/neuter services to the community with the goal of reducing the extreme overpopulation of unwanted pets.

SHELTER (863) 675-0997 CLINIC (863) 675-7387 info@caloosahumanesociety.org
<https://caloosahumanesociety.org/>



South Florida Wildlands Association

a non-profit organization dedicated to the protection of wildlife and habitat in the Greater Everglades.

<https://www.southfloridawild.org/>



ALVA HAS A BUY NOTHING FACEBOOK PAGE!

This page is all about getting rid of stuff you don't need/want & helping others in the community!

You can press and hold the QR Code & It will take you straight to our page! Feel free to join & share with your neighbor. Here's the link also:

<https://m.facebook.com/groups/607856844854663/?ref=share&mibextid=OjTNLd>





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Unlike insurance agents and brokers, our navigators have no financial stake in the plans people select and the help a Navigator provides is always free and unbiased.

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 HEALTH PLANNING COUNCIL OF SOUTHWEST FL NAVIGATORS







BIT BY BIT SADDLE CLUB, INC.
"A FUN SHOW FOR HORSE LOVERS OF ALL AGES, DISCIPLINES AND SKILL LEVELS"
9:00 am Show Begins ☆ Public Welcome!

2023 - 24 SHOW DATES: Oct 15; Nov 12; Dec 10; Jan 14; Feb 18; March 17; April 14

Classes

1. In-Hand Showmanship	IN Practice Arena!	Year Membership (single) \$35.00
2. Lead Line Class		Year Membership (family) \$55.00
3. In-Hand Trail Obstacle		Show Cost for Unlimited # of Classes
4. Trail Obstacle	Can be lead line	Members \$50.00 Family \$70.00
5. Timed Fun Class		Non-members \$70.00 per rider
6. Gaited Pleasure —W/T		Cost per class: \$15.00
7. Gaited Pleasure —W/T/C		
8. Gaited Pleasure —W/T		★★ Riders Must Choose W/T/C or W/T. Can not do both.
9. Slow Western Pleasure —W/T/C		"Show Clinics" are offered on Saturday, a week before the show! Members Only!
10. March Rail Pleasure —W/T		★ NEGATIVE COGGINS REQUIRED
11. March Rail Pleasure —W/T/C		PLEASE, NO STALLIONS!
12. Timed Fun Classes —To be determined		★★ Riders Receive Placement Awards ★★
13. Movie Box Raising/Boxing —Fun pattern work —W/T		Members also receive points from each show for year end prizes at the club party in late spring.
14. Movie Box Raising/Boxing —Fun pattern work —W/T/C		
15. W/E March Rising dress —pattern—W/T		
16. W/E March Rising dress —pattern—W/T/C		
17. Basic Western Freestyle Dressage —B/T		
18. English Rail Pleasure —W/T		
19. English Rail Pleasure —W/T/C		
20. English Equitation —on the rail —W/T		
21. English Equitation —on the rail —W/T/C		
22. Timed Fun Class		
23. Command Class —W/T		
24. Command Class —W/T/C		
25. Fun Class —On Back		

Facebook Page [Bit by Bit Saddle Club](https://www.facebook.com/BitByBitSaddleClub)

Contact Adele Smith for more information
305-799-4651 or E-mail bitbybit33@gmail.com

FREESTYLE PERFORMANCES (In Hand & On Back) —These classes are non-judged & will run during lunch break

LOCATION: Lee County Posse Arena 17401 Palm Creek Dr N. Ft Myers, FL

★ ABSOLUTELY NO HITTING/ABUSING OF HORSE ANYWHERE, AT ANYTIME!
★ PROPER DISCIPLINE EQUIPMENT, HEELED BOOTS, SUGGESTED ATTIRE: SHORT OR LONG SLEEVE SHIRT OR "CLUB" T-SHIRT, JEANS, BREECHES, LONG PANTS. 18 YEARS OLD and Under MUST WEAR a HELMET!
★ MULTIPLE ATTIRE AND TACK CHANGES IN BETWEEN CLASSES ARE NOT NECESSARY!



Ross Chastain at COTA

(TY Rotoballer- Sean Wrona)



Although Ross Chastain tends to struggle at many of the other road courses (particularly the rovals), he has consistently been a master at the Circuit of the Americas, where he now has a career average finish of 4.0 despite posting his worst-ever finish of seventh in the race on Sunday. Although Chastain faded in the second half of the EchoPark Automotive Grand Prix, he was very strong overall, as he passed William Byron for the lead on a lap 34 restart (making him the first driver to pass Byron for the lead all season) before

Byron retook the lead on lap 44 shortly before both drivers pitted. Chastain outran his finishing position somewhat, as he ranked fourth in average running position, fifth in speed, and sixth in driver rating, giving him probably his best run of the season to date.

TALKING TO CHILDREN ABOUT ONLINE RISKS



For those of us old enough to remember life before the internet, today's access to information online is remarkable. However, like most other technologies, criminals and wrong-doers have found numerous ways to turn this extraordinary tool into something dark, devious and dangerous.

Despite ongoing and endless warnings to parents and their children, minors continue to be lured into horrific online situations. Criminals establish rapport with children and later arrange to meet. They coerce children into sending sexually-explicit photos and videos. They convince and compel minors to become involved in illicit and unsafe behaviors. Threats are made online and, as a result of the violence that this nation has endured, these threats are taken very seriously. The only effective intervention appears to involve parental participation and communication.

It is imperative for parents and guardians to spend time educating themselves about social media, software, games and apps that your children have on their devices. While we may have no interest in these games and forms of communication, it is critical that we understand how easily information can be shared/taken when using these programs/apps.

Make certain that children understand the permanency of posts...of photos...of sharing personal and identifying information. Discuss the potential harm that can arise when sharing photographs, school/home locations and identity-related information. Trying to retrieve/remove posted and shared information is much like trying to put toothpaste back into the tube...it isn't going to happen.



Children must understand that they cannot communicate with anyone that they don't know in "real life." Contact should only be made with classmates, neighbors, relatives and friends. "Friends of friends," not personally known, should be avoided. Additionally, children must be made to realize that even adults can be fooled by online scams and fraudulent activity. They should understand that there is no issue or concern that they cannot discuss with their parent or guardian.

Using privacy settings and strong passwords are important and children should be made to understand their value.

Lastly, children must be made to understand that threats made online...made by them or to them...are crimes and, in many cases, will be met with severe punishment.

Parents and guardians are asked to immediately report all inappropriate contact to law enforcement.

No excuses, ladies.

Get your **FREE** mammogram and pap smear.



Finding and treating cancer early is important.
It can be the difference between life and death.

Eligibility requirements:

- Women ages 50-64, OR
 - Women ages 40-49 with a parent, sister, brother, or child that has had breast cancer
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- Have a household income that is less than or equal to 200% of the poverty level.
- Have no health insurance to cover the cost of clinical breast exams, mammogram, or Pap smear.

Screening Locations:

- 3920 Michigan Ave.
Fort Myers, FL 33991
- 83 Pondella Rd.
North Fort Myers, FL 33903

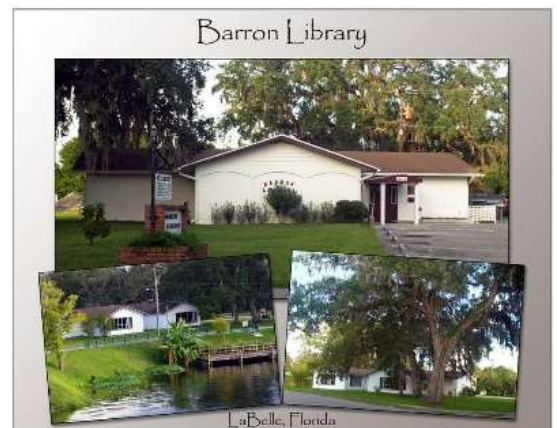
Call for an appointment at
239-461-6100

Visit Lee.FloridaHealth.gov or scan the QR code for more information.



BARRON LIBRARY

at the LaBelle Barron Park



USS Hannah Chapter, Alva, Florida,

<https://usshannahnsdar.org/>



Support Veterans buried at Alva Cemetery in 2024

Help the *USS Hannah* Chapter, NSDAR, honor our veterans by making your donation to Wreaths Across America now and get more bang for your buck!

From DEC 16 THRU JAN 16, 2024, all purchases are doubled.

1 wreath becomes 2, 10 becomes 20 and so on. Even if you purchase a wreath for a different location, as long as it is done using our code, FL0533P, *USS Hannah* Chapter will get credit for it.

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A local, Worldwide, Recognition of American Veterans

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Contact Richard by email at CLICK HERE: SgtErschik@VeteranVisitor.com or by phone/text at 630-642-6500

CONTACT:

Calusa Waterkeeper

P.O. Box 1165

Ft. Myers, FL 33902

***info@CalusaWaterkeeper.
org***

239-899-1440



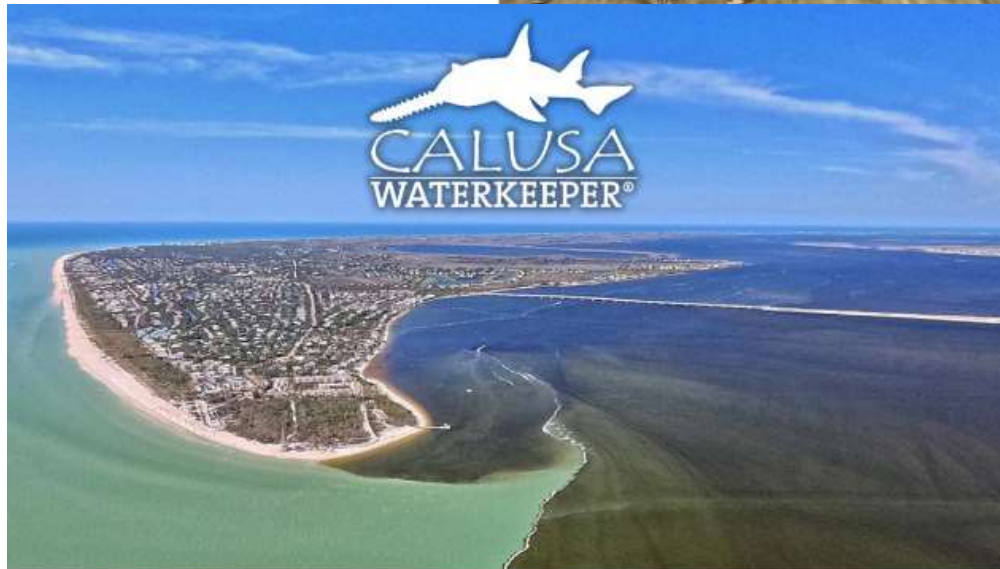
Winter 2024 Session Schedule

Saturday, January 6, 2024 | 9:30am
Fort Myers Regional Library
South Building, Meeting Room A
1651 Lee Street
Fort Myers, FL 33901

Saturday, February 3, 2024 | 9:30am
Location TBD

Saturday, March 2, 2024 | 9:30am
Location TBD

CWK Ranger Academy - Winter 2024 Session



Monthly News & Updates

February/March 2024

It's been an incredibly busy month for our Southwest Florida waterways and for us here at Calusa Waterkeeper! In case you didn't catch it on our incredibly active social media platforms, **Lake Okeechobee harmful discharges** have resumed releasing billions of gallons of polluted water into the Caloosahatchee River. There have also been some interesting developments regarding **state wetland permitting** and other legislative bills. Internally, we have rolled out our brand-new **Ranger Training Curriculum**, onboarded our new Executive Director, and preparing for our **annual meeting, fundraiser and awards luncheon** scheduled for Sunday, March 24, from 2 to 5pm. Please read on to learn more.



Calusa Waterkeeper
Capt. Cody Pierce



Fatherhood Mentors & Volunteers of Lee County, Florida

Sean Ryan, Fatherhood Mentors & Volunteers
Administrator, nearbyclinic@hotmail.com

Joshua Krakow, Active Dads Administrator

Single Dads Outreach has leadership opportunities on its Advisory Council for professions, retired or active, in the fields of social work, law enforcement, corrections and education. In addition, Single Dads Outreach services include mentoring from prior, seasoned fathers. Please contact www.SingleDadsOutReach.org or your local United Way in Lee County to learn about these volunteer opportunities.



BOOKS AND>>>>>>>>

Barron Library

461 N Main St, LaBelle, FL 33935

On the Caloosahatchee

**Technology Help Appointments
@ Barron Library.**



Every Wednesday during the month of March from 10 AM - 1 PM.
Pre-registration is preferred but not required.
Each patron will be provided a 30-minute time slot.

If we are not able to help you within the 30-minute time frame we will make an appointment to meet with you at a later time.

The **ALVA BOOKIE** Book Review

By Ramona DeWalt, Oak Park, Alva, Florida MonaDeWalt1@gmail.com



Mona spent 13 years with Borders Books before she opened her own 5,000 square foot used book store in Douglassville, Eastern PA. Ramona retired with her husband, Ken, in 2014 and has since made it her purpose to help others learn the joys of reading from helping to build the Children's Library at Charleston Park to sharing her BOOKIE SENSE (like Spidey Sense only better read) with other readers. She and Ken have traveled the continent over the past 10 summers visiting friends, family, historic and natural wonders AND Friends of the Library Used Bookstores to search for desired used books at up to 90% discount under list prices and in great condition.

Mona visits library and thrift used book sales everywhere she goes. She and Ken have a constantly changing home collection of over 200 titles yet to read. When read they are most donated to another library book store or friends.

You may contact her via email at MonaDeWalt1@gmail.com

March was Women's History month, so here are my reads focused on strong women.

The Woman They Could Not Silence by Kate Moore is a nonfiction book.

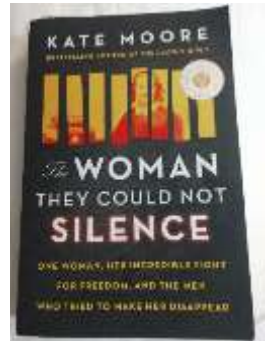
In 1860 Elizabeth Packard, housewife and mother of six, has a husband of twenty six years who plots against her because he feels threatened --- by her intellect, her independence and her unwillingness to stifle her own thoughts. So... he had her committed to an insane asylum.

While there, she learns of so many other sane women who are there for the same reason --- to keep them in line.

This is an unputdownable story of the forgotten woman who courageously fought for her own freedom --- and in so doing freed millions more.

Her refusal to be silenced and her ceaseless quest for justice challenged the medical science of the day and led to a giant leap forward in human rights.

Published in 2021, ISBN. 1914484002



The Girls in the Picture by Melanie Benjamin is a novel based on the friendship between Mary Pickford ("America's Sweetheart") and Frances Marion, Mary's screenwriter, in the glittering new era of "flickers" which evolved into movies.

Their ambitions are challenged by both the men around them and the limitations imposed on their gender --- but their astronomical success could come at a price.

The Girls in the Picture is a story of friendship.... and forgiveness.

Published 2018 ISBN. 978110188682-3



FORT MYERS EAST ROTARY CLUB

NEW LOCATION!

Fort Myers East Rotary Club has moved to River Hall Country Club, 3500 River Hall Parkway in Alva on Wednesday, February 7, 7:30 AM for our breakfast meeting.

For more information about this active Rotary Club, call Ellen Erickson at 239-218-4789.



>>>>>>Fort Myers East Rotarians have "rung the bell" for Salvation Army for over 25 years. President Natalia Armstrong and Chair Ron Davis accepted recognition on the club's behalf.

UPCOMING ROTARY EVENT: Golf Tournament at River Hall Country Club on June 15. More details to follow.

Ham Dinner



Thursday April 11th,
4-7 pm

Ham, scalloped potatoes, coleslaw, baked beans, bun, drink, and delicious dessert

\$10.00 adult \$5.00 child

Eat in or take out

Bethlehem Lutheran Church
14531 Old Olga RD S.E.
Fort Myers, FL 33905
(239) 694-3878



**The Alva Library
Museum**
**21420 Pearl St, Alva, FL
33920**



Originally a public library built in 1909, it now serves as a museum of artifacts from the original settlers of Alva.

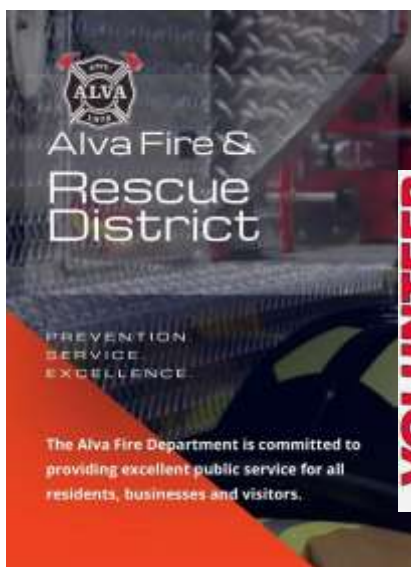
The library-museum Board is making the building available as small group venue for parties, clubs, etc.

THE LIBRARY IS OPEN FOR FREE TOURS
Every Saturday between 10am and 2pm

See a virtual video tour of the Museum at: <http://alvaflmuseum.com> (click on Virtual Tour)

Grant Fichter is overseeing the museum for the board.

Come on out and check out the Alva Museum this Saturday between 10-2, cool off in the AC and check out some of those long-lost treasures. Also, if you have some Alva area history to share bring it by and let us look at it.



Styles Road, Alva,
Florida 33920,
(239) 728-2223



Find out if a fire fighting career is for you!

<https://alvafirecontrol.org/>

The ALVA GARDEN CLUB



Each month we have special speakers presenting interesting and relevant information. We also plan field trips that enhance our knowledge and inspire good garden practices. Membership in the Alva Garden Club is still only \$10 per person. We meet in the Alva Methodist Church Fellowship Hall the 3rd Tuesday of each month at 1 pm.

Everyone is welcomed to join or simply attend the meetings as guests!

The March 9 2024 STRAWBERRY FESTIVAL was a SELLOUT!!!!



YUM!



Youths and Adults **EXPERIENCE ARCHERY**



Lee County Archers welcomes youngsters, adults, individuals, and families, to experience and enjoy this exciting and emerging sport. An affordable individual or family membership fee provides full range access 24/7. Non-members are also welcome on Thursdays and Saturdays, from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm, for an introduction to the range and/or the basics of archery.

Join us at Lee County Archers, where skilled instructors and top-notch facilities await the adventurous. Become a part of our welcoming community. Visit our website www.LeeCountyArchers.com for more information! Or... scan the QR Code below.



Charleston Park Day 2024
12-8 Saturday April 27th

2541 Charleston Park Drive, Alva FL

Fun for the whole family!

- Feed
- Raffles
- Live Music
- Health/Wellness Checks
- And so much more

Charleston Park

For vendor information please contact Lashay Russ

APRIL 22nd, 2024



SCORE Southwest Florida

2201 Second Street, Suite 500, Fort Myers, FL 33901

(239) 533-3102, ch.admin0219@scorevolunteer.org

Serving Lee and Hendry Counties

We provide free and confidential one-on-one business counseling by phone, email, and in-person in Lee and Hendry counties. We also conduct workshops for both start-up entrepreneurs and seasoned small business owners. SCORE is a fully independent private 501-3C non-profit with accountability to and some funding from the SBA.

SCORE Mentors...with experience in virtually every business category you can imagine help with:

- Business plan development, sales and marketing strategies
- Financing, taxes and E-commerce
- Management, administrative and operational procedures
- Ongoing advice to help your decision making

Life-Long Learning Made Easy

SCORE mentors, sponsors and local business owners with a specific areas of expertise conduct a variety of very popular, regularly scheduled, low-cost and free educational seminars and online workshops for establishing and managing a successful small business.

Free Resources

With access to a wide variety of documents, templates and tools to assist you in starting or growing your business, the information provided here covers a wide range of subjects including initial business planning, capital sources, government agencies, and much more.



Major William M. Footman

Sons of Confederate Veterans

Camp 1950, Fort Myers, Florida



Consider joining us at our monthly meeting every 4th Saturday at

Smoke'n Pit Bar-B-Q, 1641 N. Tamiami Trail, North Ft. Myers, FL 33903

Lunch and fellowship - 11:00am, Meeting - 12:00pm

Brigade Commander: Sean McFall

Find out more about us at

Camp Adjutant: Gerald W. Shell, email: adjutant@camp1950.flscv.org
<https://www.camp1950.flscv.org/>



*We care for local grave sites of
Confederate Civil War and
United States veterans of all
wars*



JOB-LINK

Florida Job Link
connects talent



and opportunity, enabling on-the-spot HIRING!

UPCOMING EVENTS BELOW! WE KEEP FLORIDA WORKING! The Best and Brightest Candidates connect with Top Florida Employers face-to-face via our Hiring Events in cities throughout Florida! Florida Job Link is voted #1 Job Fair experience in the state of Florida by attendees!

<https://www.indeed.com/q-Goodwill-I-Lee-County,-FL-jobs.html>



Charleston Park Neighborhood Association

2541 Charleston Park Drive, Alva, FL 33920. 239-728-8895

Charlestonpark1926@gmail.com

Community Center Activities & Training, Lee County Children's and youth sport park, Events throughout the year, Meetings for all every second Monday of the month at 6pm at the Community Center are also available virtually via ZOOM.



The Great Calusa Blueway Paddling Trail



A 190-mile marked canoe and kayak trail that meanders through the coastal waters and inland tributaries of Lee County, Florida. It attracts everyone from first-time kayakers to advanced paddlers and is home to abundant marine life, shore birds and crustaceans.

NEW WEBSITE: www.OnTheRiver.org

<https://www.fortmyers-sanibel.com/calusablueway>

www.RichAndLaurieInSouthFlorida.com



Listen to the Podcast and follow on Youtube, and more!


For information on where to go and what to do in SWFL!

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCvcRaJr9jghdQOgsnU2B6Pw>

FGCU Nursing Students are proud to offer...

COMMUNITY HEALTH SCREENINGS

- Every Wednesday until April 24th (excluding 3/6, 3/27, and 4/3)
- 10:00 am- 12:00 pm
- Located at Charleston Park Community Center



Our Services :

- ✓ Free Blood Pressure Screenings
- ✓ Health Education
- ✓ Community Resource Information

Health is wealth

For More Information:
Contact Tina Ellis at (239)-994-3750 or email tellis@fgcu.edu

NEW WEBSITE: www.OnTheRiver.org

The Firehouse Community Theatre, Inc.

241 N Bridge St, Labelle, FL 33935 (863) 675-3066



Fort Myers CAMERA CLUB



Photographers at all levels of ability throughout Lee County are invited to the regular bi-monthly meetings of the Fort Myers Camera Club. Meetings are held the 1st and 3rd Wednesday each month (from November 1 to April 3) from 6:30 to 8:30 pm.

Meetings are held at the All Faiths Church, 2736 McGregor Blvd., Fort Myers. Annual dues for membership are \$30. Novices are welcome and mentoring is available. Various speakers at the meetings cover topics such as critiquing, competition, and instruction.

See ftmyerscc.com website or email carolheff23@gmail.com for additional information about the Camera Club.

Paid AD



Cell
239-340-3904

Office
239-693-1959

Email
PattyWalkerREMAX@gmail.com

Web
GulfCoastLivingPatty.com

Address
12928 Palm Beach Blvd., Ste A
Fort Myers, FL 33905

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A bit of ALVA History

A is for Alva from the *The Royal Palm Review*

A Substack BLOG by Alva resident TRACY OWENS

https://towens.substack.com/p/a-is-for-alva?subscribe_prompt=free



Eighteen miles up the Caloosahatchee River from Fort Myers you'll find Alva. In its 150 or so years, it's been imagined and reimagined as a citrus industry powerhouse, a bucolic farm town, a cultural oasis, and more. But always, to the lucky people who have lived there, it's been home.

(Photo postcard by F.W. Hunt, a view from the upper Caloosahatchee)

A New Life in Florida

Margaret English, a widow, was 50 years old when she moved from near Bainbridge, Ga., to homestead along the Caloosahatchee, traveling by buggy. She started in December 1875, seven children in tow. Her son John English remembered that it took them six weeks to get there, "never traveling on Sunday," and that once they arrived the cattlemen who lived along the river near Fort Thompson helped them to get set up and survive until their crops came in.

In a 1939 interview, John told a writer from the Federal Writers' Project that many years after their arrival in Florida, his older brother Sampson told him that shortly before their father died in 1870, he had said that no matter what happened, the family had to stay together. And so, they did.

(John and Ida English and family, c. 1900, from the State Archives at floridamemory.com)

Aside from the cowboys and visiting members of the Seminole tribe, who often came upriver, there was a neighbor, James Kellum, the area's first physician.

"He always, as long as he lived, if we needed any doctoring, he did it, and he never sent us a bill," John English said.

Kellum was said to have been a surgeon during the Civil War. Around 1874 he sought the peace of that nearly uninhabited part of what was then Monroe County. He planted hundreds of acres of citrus (which became part of the McGregor groves after his death in 1890) and experimented with every kind



of tropical plant, even successfully growing vanilla, which was thought to flourish no further north than central America.

Kellum and the English family lost their crops and their homes in what was dubbed the “Great Overflow” of 1878, when rains flooded the river and doused lower-lying land. They all moved a couple of miles downriver.



Kellum fetched a wife, Sallie, from Manatee County in 1879. About that same time the Englishes built a house that still stood generations later. It was the family home, and the only place for anyone new in town to board or take meals. A devout woman, Margaret English asked the area’s Methodist circuit-riding preacher to hold services in the home until a church could be built.

(Margaret English, center, at the family home in Alva, from the State Archives at floridamemory.com)

Alva’s first schoolteacher, Marguerite Verdier (later Abell), wrote about her experience living with the English family while she taught school.

“Dear ‘Grandma English,’ as she was called, kept open house... She thought nothing of feeding twenty-five hungry souls on Sundays, Christmas, or other holidays. Nor did she complain at leaving her warm bed on a cold night to nurse a sick neighbor – even though she rode horseback over ten miles of dark, country roads to accomplish the task.”

Other families soon moved in – the English sons helped Dennis Hickey clear hundreds of acres for groves near what is now Hickey’s Creek. Hickey’s descendants came back to the land and ran a popular grove stand well into the 2000s. Edward Parkinson, a British man in his 20s whose father was Lord Mayor back in Barnsley, England, settled in the area around 1885 and set about making a living in the groves. He married Marguerite Verdier’s sister, Mary Carol (Mamie), and established the area’s first community packing house for citrus. He was a Lee County Commissioner and one of Alva’s leading citizens when he died of a heart attack at age 65.

(Mary Carol and Edward Parkinson’s daughter, Edwina, at school in Alva in 1914, from the State Archives at floridamemory.com)

The names English, Parkinson, and Hickey are still prominent in Southwest Florida. Also prominent is a man who left no descendants but did leave an outsize reputation, Peter Nelson, the Dane who dreamed up Alva.



Nelson's Dream

Danish boat captain Peter Nelson had been piloting the waters in Southwest Florida since around the close of the Civil War. A man who loved art, music, and books, he also valued education. In 1878, when the unincorporated settlement of Fort Myers was part of Monroe County, he was a commissioner. He convinced the powers-that-be to grant \$600 for a school in Fort Myers, and he asked his friend James Evans to donate a lot.

He then turned his attention upriver. While taking supplies to a dredge operation north of Fort Myers, he began eyeing a homestead of about 160 acres, on a plateau safe from flooding. He bought the land in the early 1800s, drew a plat of Alva in 1883, and finished the schoolhouse by late 1884. Worship services also moved there.



(Peter Nelson at Boca Grande, 1904, from Florida's Vanishing Era by Eleanor H.D. Pearse, 1954.)

In what seems to have been a dispute over prohibition, which Nelson adamantly opposed, he was removed from the Lee County Commission in 1890. The details are featured in the late Charles Edgar Foster's wonderful book, *The Benevolent Dane*. In the book, Foster exonerates Nelson and also provides the best circumstantial evidence yet that Nelson was, as he claimed, the illegitimate son of Danish royalty.

Nelson had a lively next few decade, working as a captain, becoming postmaster at Cayo Costa, and making frequent visits to Fort Myers and Alva. He continued to nurture the little town he'd founded, allowing the Alva Book Club to house books for lending in one of the houses he owned, later donating the land for the library. He died in 1919.

(The Alva library, c. 1910, with the Alva Methodist Church in the background, from the State Archives at floridamemory.com)

The library, built by Arch English and dedicated in 1909, stands today as the Alva Museum, where you can learn much more about Nelson, Alva, and the generations of families who built the town.

About the Name Alva

The town was not, it has been stressed, named for Thomas Alva Edison, who didn't show up in Southwest Florida until 1885.



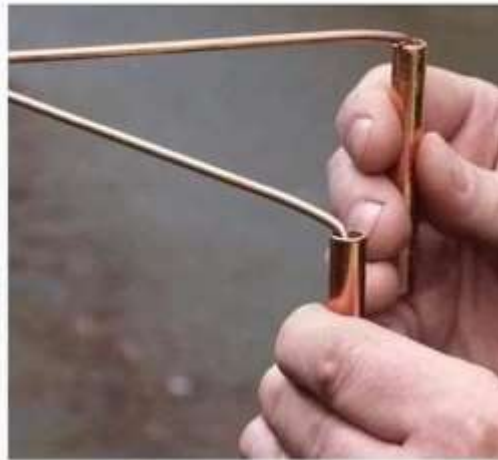
Instead, Alva is said to be named after a white flower that grew profusely on the banks of the upper Caloosahatchee and which reminded Nelson of a flower that grew in Denmark. Later sleuths identified it as *sabatia brevifolia*, which thrives in brackish water.



But when, exactly, did Nelson first reveal the source of the name? The earliest instance I have found is in an Alva retrospective by Marguerite Verdier Abell in the Feb. 22, 1931, edition of Fort Myers Sunday Press. Thomas Gonzalez also notes the origin story in his monograph *The Caloosahatchee* in 1932. If you know an earlier mention of Nelson's little white flower, let me know!

(Sabatia brevifolia, courtesy Florida Wildflower Foundation at flawildflowers.org)

Devices used to find water





The global farm is not only a hands-on training ground for those searching for help in tropical agriculture, but also an educational tool to make the public aware of hunger related issues and the answers there are to alleviate malnutrition and starvation.

17391 Durrance Road, North Fort Myers, FL 33917 | 239.543.3246 | info@echonet.org
<https://www.echonet.org>



There are six fenced-in "Dog Parks" which allow for off-leash play. On-leash dog walking is allowed at many locations (listed below).

Dogs must be accompanied by an adult and must remain on-leash at all times while walking in the park. Find out more at: <https://www.leegov.com/parks/dog-parks>



Six Mile Cypress Slough, Lee County Park

7751 Penzance Boulevard, Fort Myers, FL 33966

A mile of wonder 30 minutes away from Alva.



Manatee Park

10901 Palm Beach Blvd,

Fort Myers, FL 33905

239 690 5030



Olga Community Park

2325 S Olga Dr, Fort Myers, FL 33905

(239) 533-7275



Hickey's Creek Mitigation Park

17980 Palm Beach Blvd, Alva, FL, 33920

-Great for quiet creek kayaking. -Fun for walks and picnics.



ALVA BOAT RAMP PARK

21580 Pearl St,

Alva, FL 33920



W.P. Franklin Lock & Dam South Recreation Area

Franklin Lock Rd. , Alva , FL 33920. Contact: (239) 694-2582

WP Franklin South Recreation Area is a day use area located on the Caloosahatchee River adjacent to the WP Franklin Lock and Dam. Visitors can watch boats traversing the 152 mile Okeechobee Waterway



W.P Franklin Lock & Dam CAMPGROUND

Camp by reservation only

17850 NORTH FRANKLIN LOCK ROAD, ALVA, FL 33920, 239-694-8770

<https://www.recreation.gov/camping/campgrounds/233661>



Alva Community Center PARK

21471 North River Road, Alva, FL 33920 , (239) 728-2882

Shady lawns & baseball field



Telegraph Creek: Unspoiled kayak trail



out-of-the-way, uncrowded, scenic, quiet and full of wildlife.



NORTH FORT MYERS Recreation Park

2000 North Recreation Park Way, North Fort Myers, FL 33903,

This park features an 18 hole Disc Golf course , call (239) 297-8916

Veterans Park Recreation Center

55 Homestead Road South, Lehigh Acres, FL 33936



BABCOCK RANCH ECO TOURS, Museum and Gator Shack Restaurant Go to website to reserve tours

<https://babcockranchecotours.com/>



Alva Angel's



Giving back to the families of our community

Are you cleaning out your house and planning to donate the items you no longer want? Please consider donating those items to Alva Angel's. We can pick up small and large items and we will gift those items to people in need or sell the items to raise money for the upcoming holiday season to purchase wish list items.

Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/AlvaAngelsOrganization>

Lee County Conservation 20/20 manages over 50 preserves spread throughout Lee County, including within the boundaries of most cities. These preserves combined total nearly 30,000 acres.

Preserves are open daily during daylight hours. Access may be limited at certain locations due to temporary flooding, special restoration projects, or isolated location. Information about each Conservation 20/20 preserve can be accessed from the website: <http://www.leegov.com/conservation2020/preserves>

NEW WEBSITE: www.OnTheRiver.org



Bob Janes Preserve



Daniel's Preserve at Spanish Creek



Carter's Lane



Buckingham Trails Preserve



Olga Shores Preserve



Alva Scrub Preserve



Telegraph Creek Preserve



Oak hammock



Frank Mann Preserve



CALOOSA HATCHEE REGIONAL PARK

19130 North River Road, Alva, FL 33920

EMAIL: leeparks@leegov.com

Shelter rentals, primitive tent camping,
Horse and bike trails.

Campground phone: 239 694 0398



GOPHER TORTOISE DAY

**WEDNESDAY
APRIL 10
2024**



HICKEY'S CREEK MITIGATION PARK

Hike with the Biologist | 9 - 10:30 a.m.

- Join FWC biologist Steve Schattler for an informative hike highlighting management activities at Hickey's Creek. Learn about gopher tortoise biology, along with co-management of the **Florida scrub jay**.
- Bring sturdy shoes, sun protection, and binoculars.
- 3300 Bateman Road, Alva, FL 33920
- **Free | RSVP** to mmiller2@leegov.com or (239) 229-0522

PINE LAKE PRESERVE

Meet the Manager & Self-guided Tour | 9 a.m. - noon

- Meet preserve manager Julie Motkowicz for some gopher tortoise fun facts and then embark on your own gopher tortoise survey along the trails. Can you find them all? Arrive anytime between 9 a.m. and 12 p.m.
- 27225 Kent Road, Bonita Springs | park at Bonita Springs YMCA
- **Free | all ages**





TERMITE AWARENESS WEEK

Termite Awareness Week is March 10-16, 2024. Florida is home to over twenty different species of termites with the most damaging species being subterranean, drywood, and conehead termites. These termites cause billions of dollars of damage annually in the United States and correct termite identification is pivotal to successful prevention, control, and protection of your home.

Subterranean termites live and invade from underground, and a single colony can cover one acre underneath homes. They typically live in dark, moist, hidden environments underground but will create and live in carton nests aboveground. These can be found in walls and attics of structures and in nearby trees. To move above the ground, these termites build mud tubes on foundations, walls, and nearby trees. These mud tubes are a sign of termite activity and used for detection. The most damaging subterranean termites are *Coptotermes* species, which include Formosan and Asian termites, and *Reticulitermes* species, which include the Eastern subterranean termite. All these termites can be found throughout Florida, except for the Asian termite, which is located primarily in South Florida.

Drywood termites live and forage in dry wood. There are many different species of drywood termites in Florida, and these are located throughout the state. They enter structures through swarming from infested trees, stored wood, or other structures near your home. Unlike subterranean termites, drywood termite colonies grow slowly and thus do not cause as much damage as subterranean termites. A tell-tale sign of drywood termites are sawdust-like piles near the infestation, these piles are hexagonal shaped pellets or waste of the termite.

Non-native, invasive conehead termites were unintentionally brought to Florida and, as a result, now have an established population in Broward County. Native to South and Central America and many Caribbean islands, they were most likely introduced to the State when an infested boat docked at a private marina. Conehead termites live aboveground in carton nests and build an expansive network of tunnels in which they travel to and from feeding locations. Their tunnels are typically the first sign of an infestation. Tunnels are often found on trees and landscape plants, but also on or in buildings, exterior wooden structures, debris piles, and more. Because conehead termites live aboveground, humans can easily move them to new locations. While the Broward County population is the only known occurrence of conehead termites in the United States, they could exist anywhere in Florida. The Department asks everyone to help in locating not-yet-discovered infestations in the State. If you suspect you may have seen conehead termites, please report your sighting to the [FDACS Conehead Termite Eradication Program](#).

The Department recommends that you hire a licensed pest control company for correct termite identification and protection for your home. You can find out if a company is licensed in Florida at: <https://www.fdacs.gov/Business-Services/Pest-Control>. For more info and tips: <https://www.fdacs.gov/Consumer-Resources/Health-and-Safety/Protect-Your-Home-from-Pests/Termites>.





Eastern subterranean termite workers, soldier, and swarmer. Photos: Castner, UF/IFAS



Formosan subterranean termite workers, soldiers, and swarmer. Photo: Castner, UF/IFAS



Drywood termite workers, soldiers, swarmer, and pellets. Photos: Buss, UF/IFAS



Conehead termite swarmers, nymphs, workers, and soldiers. Photo: B. Thorne. Conehead tunnels covering sheet of plywood, and conehead nest and tunnels in red mangrove. Photos: Tenn, FDACS

HPCSWF

ACA MARKETPLACE & 1095A FORM

Our Services

Health Planning Council of Southwest Florida is a nonprofit organization dedicated to assisting individuals residing in our 10 counties: Charlotte, Collier, Desoto, Glades, Hardee, Hendry, Highlands, Lee, Manatee, and Sarasota in enrolling for affordable health care plans under the ACA. We provide free, unbiased, and confidential assistance in-person and virtual. Although the Open Enrollment period has ended, consumers who experience qualifying life events are still eligible to enroll in a health plan for 2024. Some common life events that can trigger a Special Enrollment Period (SEP) include: loss of health coverage, moving/relocation to an area where your current health insurance is no longer valid, marriage, divorce, childbirth or adoption, changes in citizenship status, or if your household income falls below 150% of the Federal Poverty Level.

If you have experienced any life changes and are uncertain about your eligibility for an SEP, please feel free to contact us at 1.866.547.2793 or visit <http://www.EnrollSWFL.com> to schedule an appointment with one of our certified local navigators.

1095A: We provide assistance at nearly all VITA sites.

Can I still get Health Coverage?

26 days to enroll

HEALTH PLANNING COUNCIL OF SOUTHWEST FLORIDA

- Get up to \$2,000 in premium assistance
- Get up to \$1,000 in out-of-pocket assistance
- Get up to \$1,000 in copay assistance

GET OUR LATEST NEWS!
Get our latest news at www.EnrollSWFL.com

Reconcile

YOUR CURRENT TAX PREPARED BY US WILL BE RECONCILED TO YOUR NEWLY RECEIVED ASSISTANCE FROM THE HEALTH PLANNING COUNCIL OF SOUTHWEST FLORIDA TO ENSURE YOU RECEIVE THE MOST ACCURATE TAX RESULTS.

WE'LL BE THERE TO HELP YOU WITH ANY QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS.

From March 15, 2024 through December 15, 2024, HPCTC members can enroll in any plan that is available to them at or below 250% of the FPL. You get the 150% SEP by submitting a new application or updating an existing one.

CONTACT US
1.866.547.2793 / www.EnrollSWFL.com/

HEALTH PLANNING COUNCIL OF SOUTHWEST FLORIDA

ANNUAL CHARLESTON PARK DAY

APRIL 27TH, 2024
12PM - 8PM

THESE COMMUNITY PARTNERS WILL BE JOINING US FROM 12PM - 4PM

2541 CHARLESTON PARK DR. ALVA, FL 33920



Southwest Florida Cooking by
MAGGIE McManis
of Oak Park, Alva
Contact Maggie to find out more at: Maggie1m@att.net



SHRIMP PIQUANT ALVA

Ingredients-

2 tablespoons butter,
1 cup chopped onion,
1 green bell pepper, chopped,
1 red bell pepper, chopped,
1 stalk celery, chopped,
1 large clove, garlic, minced,
14 1/2 ounce canned Campbells chicken
broth.
2 tablespoons tomato paste.
1 tablespoon brown sugar
1/2 teaspoon cayenne pepper
1/2 teaspoon ground black pepper
1 pound shrimp shelled and deveined
3 cups hot cooked rice



Directions-

In a large skillet over medium heat, melt butter and cook, onion, peppers, and celery with garlic until tender. Add chicken broth, tomato paste, brown sugar, cayenne pepper, and black pepper. Stir until well blended. Bring mixture to a boil. Reduce heat and let simmer for 15 minutes. Add shrimp. Cover pan and simmer 3 to 5 minutes or until outside of shrimp is pink and the inside is opaque and forms a "C" shape. Serve over hot cooked rice. Serves 4.



SWFL Crime Stoppers is NOT a substitute for calling 9-1-1. In the event of an emergency, please call 9-1-1. Those who submit a tip are called "tipsters" and will remain 100% anonymous. No caller ID. No recorded lines. No tracking of phone calls. We want your information, not your name!

Put simply it is a three-part approach to solving the crime problem. SWFL Crime Stoppers relies on cooperation between our community, the media, and law enforcement to provide a flow of information about crime, wanted fugitives and suspicious activities.



Mission

Volunteer Florida strengthens Florida's communities through national service, fostering volunteerism and leveraging resources.

<https://volunteer.volunteerflorida.org/>



Effective immediately, persons who are experiencing homelessness (living outside, in a car, or other place not meant for human habitation) and seeking permanent housing resources in the Lee County CoC should contact 239-533-7900, and select options 1, 5, then 3, to complete a Coordinated Assessment.

Once upon a time,
there lived a king
who was only
12 inches tall.
He was a terrible
king, but he made
a great ruler.

I'll let my self out



All young people
DREAM of a bright
future—one that's full of
OPPORTUNITIES.
POSSIBILITIES.

**MENTORSHIP
MATTERS!**

Today's mentee is tomorrow's
leader, so let's help them
shape a strong future.

Join us for a **virtual open house** to learn
more about becoming a **MENTOR (BIG)**

EVERY WEDNESDAY FROM 4 PM - 4:30 PM

Contact **Teresa Taft** at **941-586-0707** | ttaft@bbbssun.org

JOIN US ON ZOOM AT:
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81091089176>
Meeting ID: 810 9108 9176

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Church in Southwest
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Small Groups - Worship -
In Person gatherings for
locals – Counseling –
Prayer – no grass to mow
- no sidewalks to sweep.

Lead Pastor

Rev. Christy Holden



Let's Gather in

EVERY one WELCOME!! Really.

Every Monday Evening, 7pm
Eastern Time

Zoom ID 895 2725 4110
Passcode 475719



LaBelle Downtown Revitalization Corporation

proudly announces the Downtown LaBelle Historic Walking Tour! Take a walk into Old Florida's past through our new self-guided tour, featuring audio clips of those that helped make LaBelle what it is today.

Visit Downtownlabelle.com/walking_tour.com to start your tour today, or download the app with your Apple or Android device by searching "Downtown LaBelle." Happy trails!

COMMUNITY COOPERATIVE



Community Cafe, Mobile Pantry's, and Meals on Wheels

HOW YOU CAN HELP: DONATE so that we can continue purchasing food to distribute at our Mobile Pantries. **HOST A FOOD DRIVE** and collect non-perishable food items to stock our shelves.

VOLUNTEER in the Community Cafe, at a Mobile Pantry, or as a Meals on Wheels Driver. Call (239) 332-7687. Tami@communitycooperative.com or call 239-332-7687, ext. 125.



ALVA MIDDLE FFA

Find us on FACEBOOK

https://www.facebook.com/AlvaMiddleFFA/?show_switched_toast=0&show_invite_to_follow=0&show_switched_tooltip=0&show_podcast_settings=0&show_community_review_changes=0&show_community_rollback=0&show_follower_visibility_disclosure=0

RIVERDALE BRANCH LIBRARY

2421 Buckingham Road, Fort Myers



Learn English at the Library

English Café

English Café is a **free** and **informal** conversation session for adults learning English as a second language.

Sessions provide adult learners an opportunity to practice speaking English. You should have basic English skills.

ESL – English as a Second Language

ESL classes offer adult language learners formal instruction in reading, writing and speaking English. Registration is required.

Find a Program Near You

We offer sessions throughout Lee County.

Check for locations and times at leelibrary.net/events or call 239-479-4636.



leelibrary.net/events



**For more
information on
this and other
great programs
and resources,
please visit our
website at
leelibrary.net**

ALSO now at Riverdale Library!



Beginner's Tech Workshop: Setting Up Your New Device

Thursday, April 11, 2024

10:30am - 12:00pm

The technology workshop is designed to empower participants with the knowledge and skills required to effectively set up and optimize their new computers and tablets.

Upon completion, participants will possess the confidence and knowledge to unlock the full potential of their new computers and tablets. This workshop promises an enriched digital experience, enhancing productivity both personally and professionally.





**Charleston
Park
Neighborhood
Association
Stress
Management
posters
created by
volunteer
students of
FGCU**



Resources

What is stress:

<https://www.who.int/news-room/questions-and-answers/item/stress#:~:text=Stress%20can%20be%20defined%20as%20experiences%20stress%20to%20a%20degree>

Effects of Stress:

https://vailhealthfoundation.org/news/learning-about-stress-and-its-effects/?gad_source=1&gclid=Cj0KCQjwncWvBhD_ARIsAEhZHW-ZmjpY3C:GLnTMAsTO_Ve4SFH4awes_HUIJUmZrAFQ3CINoMIMaAueFALw_wcB

Mind and Body Approaches to Stress and Anxiety: What the Science Says

<https://www.nccih.nih.gov/health/providers/digest/mind-and-body-approaches-for-stress-science#:~:text=Meditation%20and%20Mindfulness%20Based%20Stress%20anxiety%20and%20depression%2C%20and%20insomnia>





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Harry Chapin Food Bank
OF SOUTHWEST FLORIDA
Fighting Hunger, Feeding Hope

**Give TIME. Give
MONEY. Give FOOD.**

To make a donation, **call**
(239) 334-7007 or visit
[www.harrychapinfoodbank.](http://www.harrychapinfoodbank.org)
[org](http://www.harrychapinfoodbank.org)

We do our best to keep you all informed on where you can get food and how you can help.

For Food pickup locations:

<https://harrychapinfoodbank.org/?s=Food+locations>



Behavioral Healthcare for All


Call our
Welcome Center at 239-275-3222 Mon. –
Fri. 8:00 am – 5:00 pm to speak with a
customer service representative to
schedule a Care Connection appointment
in-person or via tele-health.


SalusCare is a Fort Myers, Florida based not-for-profit mental health
and substance abuse service provider.

SalusCare has 6 locations to serve you throughout Southwest Florida.
Our fees are affordable and may be adjusted to the means of our
patients based on household income.

<https://www.saluscareflorida.org/>





**Mental Health FIRST AID**
from NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR MENTAL WELLBEING

**YOUTH MENTAL
HEALTH FIRST AID**

LEARN HOW TO SUPPORT THE YOUNG PEOPLE IN YOUR LIFE

Youth Mental Health First Aid teaches you how to identify, understand and respond to signs of mental health and substance use challenges among adolescents ages 12-18. You'll build skills and confidence you need to reach out and provide initial support to young people who are struggling. You'll also learn how to help connect them to appropriate support.

AFTER THE COURSE, YOU'LL BE ABLE TO:

- Recognize common signs and symptoms of mental health challenges, including anxiety, depression, eating disorders and attention deficit hyperactive disorder (ADHD).
- Recognize common signs and symptoms of substance use challenges.
- Understand how to interact with a young person in crisis.
- Know how to connect a young person with help.
- Better understand trauma, substance use, self-care and the impact of social media and bullying.

Join the more than
2.6 MILLION
First Aiders who
have chosen to be
the difference in
their community.



Blended training

Join us on

May 14th, 2024

Hendry County Emergency Management
4425 FL-80, LaBelle, FL

From: 9:00AM-3:00PM



Contact Edwin Melendez at
 Edwin.Melendez@Flhealth.gov
 or call 863-843-0168

REGISTER NOW

Learn how to respond with the Mental Health First Aid Action Plan (ALGEE):

- A**ssess for risk of suicide or harm.
- L**isten nonjudgmentally.
- G**ive reassurance and information.
- E**ncourage appropriate professional help.
- E**ncourage self-help and other support strategies.

*Blended Training which means completion of online assignments prior to attending class





**Mental Health FIRST AID**
from NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR MENTAL WELLBEING

**MENTAL HEALTH
FIRST AID**

LEARN HOW TO SUPPORT YOUR FRIENDS, FAMILY AND NEIGHBORS

Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) teaches you how to identify, understand and respond to signs of mental health and substance use challenges among adults. You'll build skills and confidence you need to reach out and provide initial support to those who are struggling. You'll also learn how to help connect them to appropriate support.

AFTER THE COURSE, YOU'LL BE ABLE TO:

- Recognize common signs and symptoms of mental health challenges.
- Recognize common signs and symptoms of substance use challenges.
- Understand how to interact with a person in crisis.
- Know how to connect a person with help.
- Use self-care tools and techniques.

Join the more than
2.6 MILLION
First Aiders who
have chosen to be
the difference in
their community.

**REGISTER TODAY FOR
IN-PERSON TRAINING!**

Date and Time:
April 10-11, 2024
9 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Location:
Hendry County Emergency Management
4425 FL-80, LaBelle, FL

How to Register:
Email Edwin Melendez at
Edwin.Melendez@Flhealth.gov

Learn how to respond with the Mental Health First Aid Action Plan (ALGEE):

- A**ssess for risk of suicide or harm.
- L**isten nonjudgmentally.
- G**ive reassurance and information.
- E**ncourage appropriate professional help.
- E**ncourage self-help and other support strategies.



For more information, visit MHFA.org



Alva Area FOOD PANTRIES

Grace UMC, Fort Myers Shores

Second Saturday Free Meal & Food Pantry, 8am to 2pm

CALL to RESERVE your FOOD

239-694-2797

Charleston Park Community Center

239-728-8895

FOOD PANTRY

Every week, Friday, 10am-2pm

ALVA Methodist Church

Food Pantry @ Bethany House

Food Pantry: 9am-12pm 2nd & 4th Wednesdays

239-728-2277

CALVARY NATIONS Church

19850 Palm Beach Boulevard, Alva

Every Saturday, 3pm until supplies run out.

239-7285566

St. Vincent DePaul RC

Our Lady's Cupboard Food Pantry

Call (239) 694-3985 for hours open.

Some LaBelle Area Churches:

Assemblies of God

915 Lake Manor Dr Labelle, FL 33935

(863) 675-0900

International Christian Fellowship

233 Clark St, Labelle, FL 33935

(863) 675-4227

Carlson Memorial Church

310 Campbell St Labelle FL, 33935

(863) 675-0656

Pentecostal Church of God

55 Orange Ave, Labelle, FL 33935

(863) 675-0938

The Channel UMC Ft Myers/LaBelle

Fully ONLINE LIVE, Mondays, 7pm, EST

<https://www.facebook.com/TheChannelUMC/>

ZOOM LINK:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89527254110?pwd=bWEyL283YW9sck52R2V5UDVqTEJiQT09>

LaBelle Assembly of God

915 Lake Manor Dr Labelle FL

(863) 675-0900

Church of Christ Central

60 Hendry St, Labelle, FL 33935

(863) 675-4796

LaBelle First Baptist

330 N Main St, Labelle, FL 33935

(863) 675-2171

Eastside Baptist Church

1110 S Carlyle St, Labelle, FL 33935

(863) 675-3595

Our Lady Queen of Heaven Parish

355 S Bridge St, Labelle, FL 33935

(863) 675-0030

El Faro Assemblies of God of LaBelle

431 Bryan Ave, Labelle, FL 33935

(863) 675-5947

Christ Central LaBelle, Reformed

540 1st Ave LaBelle FL

(863) 675-2100

Grace Baptist

4200 Ne Eucalyptus Blvd, Labelle, FL 33935

(863) 675-3349

Good Shepherd Episcopal

1098 Collingswood Pkwy, LaBelle FL

(863) 675-0385

Christ The King Lutheran

1362 Thigpen Rd, Labelle, FL 33935

(941) 675-2733

New Testament Assembly

60 Calhoun St, Labelle, FL 33935

(863) 674-0444

Paynes Creek Primitive Baptist

83 Campbell St, Labelle, FL 33935

(863) 675-1435

Saint Matthews Missionary Baptist

929 Caloosahatchee Ave, Labelle, FL 33935

(863) 675-4451

Bethel Holiness

1153 Cornelia Dr SW, Labelle, FL 33935

Church of Peace

814 Fordson Ave, Labelle, FL 33935

(863) 674-0074

New Bethel Baptist

874 Suwanee Ave, Labelle, FL 33935

(863) 675-3205

Upper Room Church of God

345 S Bridge St, Labelle, FL 33935

(863) 675-7001

Some Alva & Fort Myers Shores Churches:

St. Vincent DePaul's RC Church

13031 Palm Beach Boulevard, Fort Myers, FL 33905

www.stvincentftmyers.org 239-693-0818

Alva Methodist Church

21440 Pearl St. P.O Box 96

Alva, FL 33920

Alvamc@embarqmail.com

www.ouralvachurch.org 239-728-2277

Alva Church of God

21520 Park St, Alva, Florida 33920

239-728-2644

Liberation International Church

Avenue D, Charleston Park

Alva, FL 33920,

239-601-4870

New Hope Faith Temple of Jesus Christ

23210 Avenue D, Charleston Park

Alva, FL, 33920 239-770-4974

Buckingham Presbyterian Church

4241 Buckingham Road

Fort Myers, FL 33905

www.buckinghampc.org

Light of the Nations Filipino Congregation

19850 Palm Beach Blvd (at Calvary Church)

Alva, FL, 33920

239-728-5566

First Spanish Assembly of God Church

2219 Joel Blvd

Alva, FL

Countryside Wesleyan Church

17750 Palm Beach Blvd, Alva, FL 33920

239-368-3270

Calvary Nations Church

19850 Palm Beach Blvd

Alva, FL 33920

CalvaryChurchSwfl@yahoo.com

www.calvarynations.org 239-728-5566

First Baptist Church of Alva

2790 Joel Blvd, Alva, FL, 33920

www.alvabaptist.com 239-728-2034

Grace Church, Ft Myers Shores

14036 Matanzas Drive, Ft Myers, Florida 33905

www.egracechurch.com 239-694-2797

Bethlehem Lutheran Church

14531 Old Olga Road,

Fort Myers, FL 33905

www.blcefml.org 239-694-3878

Olga Baptist Church

2364 South Olga Drive

Fort Myers, FL 33905

www.olgabaptist.org 239-694-2012

olgabapch1@embarqmail.com

Crossroads Baptist

10721 Palm Beach Blvd, Fort Myers, FL 33905
(239) 693-2777

Cielo's Abierto's Ministries

10721 Palm Beach Blvd, Fort Myers, FL 33905
(239) 297-6472

Fort Myers Shores Seventh Day Adventist

14830 Palm Beach Blvd, Fort Myers FL
(239) 693-0341

Olga-Fort Myers Shores Methodist

14036 Matanzas Dr, Fort Myers, FL 33905
(239) 694-2797

Olga Baptist

2364 S Olga Dr, Fort Myers, FL 33905
(239) 694-2012

Rosa De Saron Assemblies of God

13235 Palm Beach Blvd, Fort Myers FL
(239) 694-8777

Victory Christian Center Assemblies of God

11431 Palm Beach Blvd, Fort Myers, FL 33905
(239) 694-5131





12 Step Programs along the Caloosahatchee

Because Alcoholics Anonymous was exclusive to people who struggled with alcohol addiction, a vast array of other programs were formed to aid and support those in recovery from other addictive disorders. These include the following groups:

Any type of group you do not find listed below may be sought at this website:

<https://www.addicted.org/directory/category/lee-county-3.html>

Before going to the meeting, confirm time and place by phone

ALVA:

Alva Community Center, 21471 N River Rd, Alva, FL 33920

-AA Way, 8pm Wednesdays, Big Book, OPEN

St. Matthews House, Cypress Creek & North River (rte 78) Roads, Alva

Jill's Place (for women) AND Justin's Place (for men), 239-687-7633 or intake@stmatthewshouse.org.

<https://stmatthewshouse.org/whatwedo/justinsplace/jills-place-retreat-center>

FORT MYERS SHORES:

Grace, Fort Myers Shores, (239) 694-2797, 4036 Matanzas Dr, Fort Myers:

-AA COED, Open Disc: Mon, 12pm, office

-AA Men: Mon, 7pm, office

-AA Women: Tues, 7pm, office

-AA COED, Open Disc: Wed, 12pm, office

-AA Open Disc: Thu, 7pm, office

-AL Anon COED: Fri, 12pm, Classroom 2

-AA COED, Open Speaker: Sat, 7pm, Community Center

-AA COED, Open Disc: Sun, 7pm, office

-CHOOSE RECOVERY: 6:00pm, Grace UMC Shores Facebook Page LIVE until COVID-19 is under control.

St. Vincent De Paul RC, 13031 Palm Beach Blvd, Fort Myers: Fort Myers Shores Group OStAH – Tuesday, 8:00 pm

Calvary Assembly of God, 11431 Palm Beach Blvd, Fort Myers:

-Night Owls OD – Saturday, 10:05 pm

LEHIGH ACRES:

-AA SUNRISE GROUP - MONDAYS, WEDNESDAYS, FRIDAYS & SATURDAYS 7AM

705 Leeland Heights Blvd E, Lehigh Acres

(239) 275-5111

LEHIGH ACRES (cont):

-AA MONDAY AT A TIME - MONDAY 6:30PM

5513 8th St W, Lehigh Acres

(239) 275-5111

-AA CHAIR'S CHOICE - TUESDAY 6:30PM

5513 8th St W, Lehigh Acres

(239) 275-5111

-AA SPIRITUAL SEARCH GROUP - TUESDAY 8PM

705 Leeland Heights Blvd E, Lehigh Acres

(239) 275-5111

-AA THIRSTY THURSDAYS - THURSDAY 6:30PM

5513 8th St W, Lehigh Acres

(239) 275-5111

-AA HERE AND NOW- SUNDAY 6:30PM

5513 8th St W, Lehigh Acres, 33971,

(239) 275-5111

**-NA HOPE WITHOUT DOPE - THURSDAY & SATURDAY
6:30PM**

705 Leland Heights Blvd. E., Lehigh Acres,
(866) 819-5346

-AA LEHIGH SUNDAY NIGHT - SUNDAY 8PM

705 Leeland Heights Blvd E, Lehigh Acres
(239) 275-5111

**-AA HEARD IT THROUGH THE GRAPEVINE - FRIDAY
6:30PM**

5513 8th St W, Lehigh Acres
(239) 275-5111

-AL ANON MOVING FORWARD AFG - MONDAY 10AM

705 Leeland Heights Blvd E, Lehigh Acres
(888) 425-2666

-AA FIRST THINGS FIRST - MON-SUN 7AM

5513 8th St W, Lehigh Acres
(239) 275-5111

-AA NOONERS - MON-SUN 12PM

705 Leeland Heights Blvd E, Lehigh Acres
(239) 275-5111

LABELLE:

**Good Shepherd Church, (239) 275-5111, 1098
Collingswood Pkwy, Labelle**

-AA-PORT LABELLE GROUP – ODH- SUNDAY 7PM

-MAKING THE EFFORT -OLbHD- MONDAY 7:00 PM

-AS BILL SEES IT- OD- SATURDAY 9:00AM

-WED BIG BOOK GROUP- OBBH- WEDNESDAY NOON

-OPEN DISCUSSION -ODH- FRIDAY 7:00PM

First Christian Church, Rte 29 & Ford Ave, LaBelle

-LABELLE GROUP-ODAH- THURSDAY 7:00PM

-STEP GROUP-Cst- TUESDAY 7:00PM

-Al Anon- AFG - THURSDAY 7PM

138 Ford Ave, Labelle
(888) 425-2666

-AA-THURSDAY 7PM

138 Ford Ave, Labelle
(239) 275-5111

-AA-MEETING AT THE INN - WEDNESDAY 7:15PM

Port LaBelle Inn, 1568 Oxbow Dr, Labelle
(239) 275-5111

NOT TODAY - MONDAY 6:00PM

133 N Bridge St, Labelle
(866) 819-5346

IF you know of any other 12 step or non-12 step recovery group in the Alva area (From Hendry County Line to Fort Myers Shores, north and south of our river) please let me know its name, location and the phone number for information to list here. Thank you! kendewalt@ontheriver.org



Important Phone Numbers & Websites

Font Size: [Share & Bookmark](#) [Feedback](#) [Print](#)

AGENCY	NORMAL BUSINESS	EMERGENCY
American Red Cross (Local Chapter)	239-278-3401	239-278-3401
Arson Alert Hotline	800-342-5869	800-342-5869
Blood Donor Centers	888-9-DONATE	
- Lee Memorial Blood Center	239-343-2333	
- Florida's Blood Centers	239-574-3170	
Cape Coral Emergency Management	239-573-3022	911
Cape Coral Police Department (non-emergency)	239-574-3223	911
Dept. of Financial Services (Insurance)	239-461-4001	800-22-STORM
Federal Emergency Management Agency	800-621-3362	800-462-7585
Florida Division of Emergency Management	850-413-9969	
Fort Myers Police Department	239-321-7700	911
Lee County Animal Services	239-533-7387	239-533-7387
Lee County Emergency Information Hotline / United Way 211	239-433-2000	211
Lee County Emergency Management	239-533-0622	239-533-0622
Lee County Government	239-533-2111	
Lee County Health Department	239-332-9501	239-332-9501
Lee County Public Safety & EMS	239-533-3911	911
Lee County Sheriff's Office	239-477-1000	911
Mobile or Manufactured Home Residents	850-617-3004	
National Weather Service/Tampa Bay	813-645-2323	
Poison Information	800-222-1222	800-222-1222
Salvation Army, The	239-278-1551	239-278-1551
Sanibel Police Department	239-472-3111	911
Traffic Conditions in Florida (Current)	511	511
United Way of Lee, Hendry, Glades & Okeechobee Counties	239-433-2000	211

AGENCY	WEB ADDRESS
Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT)	www.ready.gov/cert
Department of Financial Services (Insurance)	www.myfloridacfo.com
Department of Homeland Security	www.dhs.gov/
Florida Lightning Safety	www.weather.gov/safety/lightning
Mobile or Manufactured Home Residents	www.flhsmv.gov/mobilehome
American Sign Language Preparedness Videos	www.lee.gov.com/publicsafety/emergencymanagement/plan
StormReady	www.weather.gov/stormready/

Paid Ad: 4/25



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Paid AD, 11/24



Amanda Cochran
FOR COUNTY COMMISSIONER, DISTRICT 5

AMANDA Cochran
for Lee County Commissioner
A LEADER WHO LISTENS

GET ON BOARD
Let's Make A Change | Let's Be Transparent

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AMANDA
A LEADER WHO LISTENS

Dedicated to the future of Lee County, I want to hear what your concerns are!

AMANDASCOCHRAN.COM

Paid AD 5/25

Manatee & Eco River Tours

March through November – join us for an ECO RIVER TOUR where we leave from Sweetwater Landing Marina on SR 31 in Fort Myers and travel eastbound on the Caloosahatchee River through the original river course (oxbows) learning of the history of the area. Travel through the W.P. Franklin Locks and then return to the marina after a lovely 2-hour narrated cruise.



SUNSET CRUISE!

Join us for a sunset cruise from Sweetwater Landing Marina going westbound on the Caloosahatchee River. A nice spread of hors d'oeuvres is provided along with water and soda. You are welcome to bring your own beverage if you'd like. Enjoy a leisurely cruise on the Caloosahatchee, watch the birds come into rest for the night and enjoy the spectacular southwest Florida sunsets!

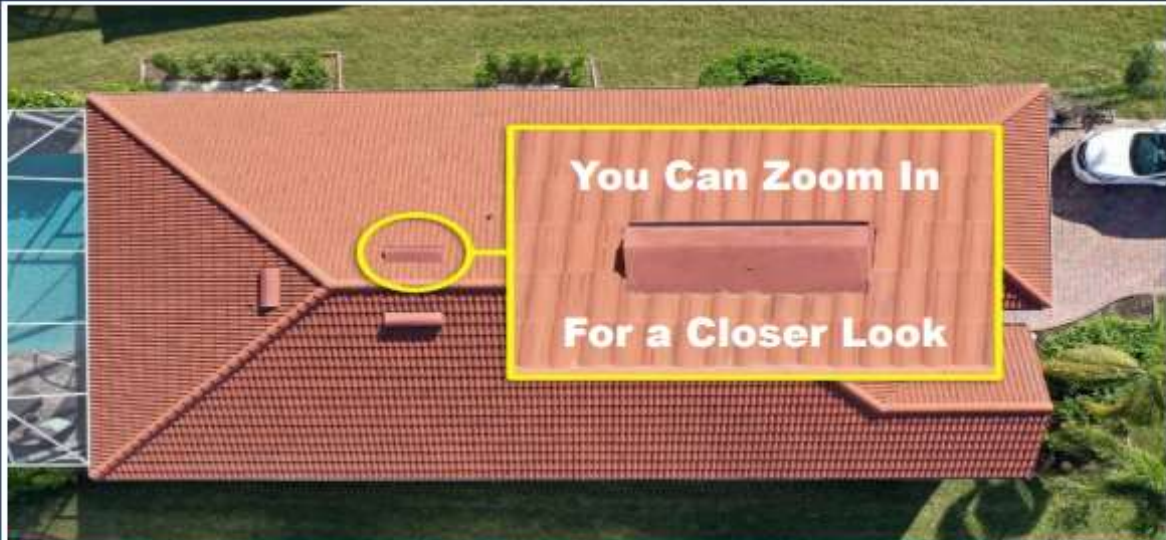


All tours leave from Sweetwater Landing Marina located at 16991 S.R. 31, Fort Myers, FL 33905

To book visit our website at: www.ManateeAndEcoRiverTours.com

Paid AD 3-12/24

GET A DRONE PIC OF YOUR ROOF



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Discover the Affordable Roof Inspection Solution for just \$99.00

Forget costly contractors! With this exclusive offer, you save money while gaining peace of mind about the condition of your roof. Within 2-days of ordering, we will "fly-over" and provide you with a "zoomable" Air Shot image of your roof in .JPG format. Simply provide your **name, address, phone, and email**, and we'll handle the rest. Don't miss out—order now!

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Paid AD 3-6/24



<https://supportukrainenow.org/>

Support Ukraine Now (SUN), we are a community of Ukrainian and international activists. Our mission is to engage the network of leaders in supporting Ukraine.

We work on providing the most effective help to Ukraine, in immediate response and rebuilding, by enabling foreigners (individuals and organizations) to help.



We started as an informational platform, and turned into an ecosystem of diverse projects in the civil sector, economy, diplomacy, and welfare.

Initiated by Global Shapers Hubs in Ukraine (Kyiv, Lviv), and supported by the Global Shapers Community and the World Economic Forum.



<https://www.hawaiicommunityfoundation.org/maui-strong>

The Maui Strong Fund is providing financial resources that can be deployed quickly, with a focus on rapid response and recovery for the devastating wildfires on Maui.

HCF will not be collecting a fee for donations to the Maui Strong Fund; 100 percent of the funds will be distributed for community needs.

<https://fortmyers.org/resources/hurricane-information/>



Wildfires are EVERYWHERE in North America, Europe, Africa...everywhere this year.



What can you do to help people dealing with the loss of homes, loved ones, entire communities?

<https://www.redcross.org/donate/donation.html>
L



Is MSF providing medical care in Israel?

MSF does not currently run medical programs in Israel. This is because we focus on filling the greatest gaps in health care, and Israel has strong emergency and health systems. MSF has offered its support to Israeli hospitals treating large numbers of casualties following attacks by Hamas militants on October 7.

How is MSF helping in Gaza?

MSF's activities in Gaza are currently very limited. We are unable to safely coordinate and run our usual activities. We have made the very difficult decision to move our international medical staff to the south of the Gaza Strip following Israel's evacuation order. Some Palestinian staff have also moved south. However, some of our Palestinian colleagues have

remained in northern Gaza, on an individual basis, and continue to offer their support to the wounded under extraordinarily difficult circumstances.

<https://www.doctorswithoutborders.org/get-involved/ways-to-give>

Before you donate funds to ANY relief organization, Protect Yourself

Give to established charities or groups whose work you know and trust.

Be aware of organizations with copycat names or names similar to reputable organizations.

Be wary of new organizations that claim to aid victims of recent high-profile disasters.

Do your research. Use the Federal Trade Commission's resources to examine the track record of a charity.

Give using a check or credit card. If a charity or organization asks you to donate through cash, gift card, virtual currency, or wire transfer, it's probably a scam. Learn more about this trick from the FTC.

Practice good cyber hygiene:

Don't click links or open email attachments from someone you don't know.

Manually type out links instead of clicking on them.

Don't provide any personal information in response to an email, robocall, or robotext.

Check the website's address—most legitimate charity organization websites use .org, not .com.

After a natural disaster or other emergency, carefully vet any contractors before hiring them to work on your home or business.

Paid Ad , 3-6/24



Meet Sam
Owner of
Hopeful Horizons Counseling

- ~ Registered Clinical Social Work Intern
- ~ Completed Bachelor's degree in Social Work from Florida Gulf Coast University - class of 2022
- ~ Completed Master's degree in Clinical Social Work from University of Central Florida - class of 2023.
- ~ Supervised by Jessica N. DiMaria, LCSW - Florida / SW17667
- ~ Validator, empathizer, warm and non-judgemental to all.

Contact Sam by calling
941-769-2844 or by emailing
Sam.HopefulHorizons@gmail.com
HopefulHorizonsCounseling.org

HOPEFUL HORIZONS
COUNSELING
GENERAL PRACTICE THERAPY

ON THE RIVER Alva Community Newsletter – Advertising Rates as of August 28, 2023

The FREE monthly online OTR E-Newsletter is circulated to 12,000+ readers including 1,400 individual subscribers. We encourage all to share it as well.

Ads run full across the 9x11" OTR page, then down the fraction of the page you choose.

Advertising rates per each month :

¼ Page... one issue: \$40.00, six issues: \$30.00each, twelve issues: \$25.00each

½ Page... one issue: \$60.00, six issues: \$50.00each, twelve issues: \$40.00each

Full Page... one issue: \$100.00, six issues: \$90.00each, twelve issues: \$70.00each

NEW!!! Beginning with the February issue, 2024, Ads will appear at the end and a second time at no additional cost, selectively placed within the body of the newsletter.

Upon request we can format ads for you with WORD.doc copy and j.peg photos or logos. We can also scan any copy and/or photos you provide to create a single j.peg of your ad.

You will receive a screenshot proof of the ad for your approval as soon as we have it formatted before its issue is published. Lack of response to the proof will be considered acceptance.

Full payment for all issues contracted for is to be made by the 15th of the month preceding the first month in which the ad is to appear, which is also the date the ad copy is to be received. Payments are to be by check made out to Ramona DeWalt, noted: OTR.

CONTACT: Ken DeWalt, publisher, with any questions. kendewalt@ontheriver.org

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