

The MULLET RAPPER

What's Happening in the Everglades & 10,000 Islands
MARCH 23, 2019 - APRIL 5, 2019



AREA INFO
TIDES ~ EVENTS
RESTAURANTS

Everglades City Council Officially Proclaimed March Florida Bicycle Month!

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Mark Your Calendar! April 27th Will Be a Big Day in the Little City!

Spring is here. The beginning of spring signals that the “season” in southwest Florida will soon be ending. Many of our northern visitors (human and avian) will begin their trek back home.

However, there is reason to extend your stay through the end of April - as the 27th will mark the Museum of the Everglades’ 21st birthday, and the 91st anniversary of the opening of the historic Tamiami Trail

If that is not enough to celebrate in one day, this day will also serve as the official dedication of Everglade City’s designation as a Florida Trail Town.

To mark the occasion, many state dignitaries have been invited, the State’s Office of Greenways and Trails will be here, and County and Local leaders will attend as well.

The festivities will begin at 10 am, with fun and interesting things going on throughout the day.

The Everglades Lions Club will set up at McLeod Park offering hamburgers and cheeseburgers for sale—with proceeds going towards the restoration of the playground at McLeod Park.

For more information about the day’s events, www.evergladesmuseum.org or call (239) 252-5026. The event is free and everyone is invited to attend. We hope to see you there!

Dead Trees or Palms Help Generate New Life

By Kathy Brock

Hurricane Irma did more than trash homes and leave behind a big mess for humans. The storm also wreaked havoc on the plants, trees and surrounding environment, damaging or killing many of those too.

However, there is a bit of a silver lining. Cavity dwelling birds and creatures use dead, dying or decaying trees and palms for insect gathering and nesting.

Woodpeckers are particularly fond of dead palm stumps. In fact, if you have a dead palm that has not been removed, you can easily make it into a “luxury home” for woodpeckers that are currently looking for housing to raise their next brood.

Build it and They Will Come

If you have never watched the antics of the red-bellied woodpecker, you are missing out on one of nature’s most entertaining shows. These “woodies” go through quite a ritual of tapping, calling and courting. The nest site is where most of this takes place.



Attracting them is simple! If you have a dead palm or tree in your yard, simply take a 2 inch core bit and core into the trunk about two inches and chip away the

bark so the hole is evident.

The mere sight of that hole start will attract the woodpeckers attention...and soon they will begin the excavation! My last attempts attracted them in just two hours! So before chopping down that “useless” stump remember that the woodies view that stump as a 5-star hotel!

Bats in Your Belfry? Bat Nesting Season Starts April 15th

Submitted by FWC

If you think bats may be living in your building, now is the time to check your attic, eaves or chimney spaces and take action to exclude them. Bat maternity season begins April 15 and runs through Aug. 15, and during this time it’s illegal to block bats from their roost.

“This is a critical time of year for bats, when they give birth and raise their young,” said Terry Doonan, a Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) biologist and mammal conservation coordinator. “If bats are excluded from a building before their young can fly, they can become trapped inside and die.”

Florida is home to 13 resident bat species, including listed species such as the Florida bonneted bat. Some bat species roost in artificial structures, including buildings and houses. Although it is illegal to harm or kill bats in Florida, rules have been developed stating that legal exclusion of bats has to occur outside of the maternity season. Bats cannot legally be captured or relocated.

Bats are beneficial to people and are an important part of the ecosystem. The state’s native bats help keep insect populations under control, with the average bat eating hundreds of insects a night. In addition to the benefit of keeping mosquitoes and other insects at bay for residents enjoying the outdoors, the value of insect suppression by bats to U.S. agriculture has been estimated to be in the billions of dollars.

Bats and other mammals can carry rabies. Although infected bats may not become aggressive, like any other wild animal, they may bite to defend themselves if handled. Don’t touch or go near any wild animal, especially one that’s not acting normally.

For more information on Florida’s bats, go to MyFWC.com/Bats.

RAPPER TABLE OF CONTENTS

Events, etc.	p. 3	Parks & Local News	p. 8
Greg Dupignac	p. 4	Antonia Florio	p.9
School News/ Mike Klein	p. 5	Capt. Merritt	P. 9
Rosy Maple Moth	p. 6	Local –Regional	p.10
My Slice	p. 7	Tide Table	p.11
Recipe & Puzzle	p. 7	Obituary	p.11
Poetry Street	p. 8	Classifieds	p.12

FEATURE: INVASIVE PLANTS, P. 9

UPCOMING EVENTS

Art-in-the-Glades

Saturday, March 23rd, 10 am-1 pm



Come out to McLeod Park in Everglades City on March 23rd. There will be live music, goodies for the kids (and adults) and plenty of local arts and crafts. It's a great time to get some early (and unique) holiday gifts and a great excuse to spend a few hours at the park! Call Marya at (239) 695-2905 for more info.

Pancake Fly-in

April 20, 10 am to noon
Free Breakfast



Pancakes, Sausage & Beverage. Fly-ins and walk-ups welcomed! Next fly-in, April 20th. We hope to see you at the Everglades City Airpark!

Tamiami Trail Anniversary April 27th, Starting at 10 am

Mark your calendars! On April 27th we will celebrate the anniversary of the opening of the Tamiami Trail.

On the same day, our City will be formally presented as a Florida Trail Town by the Office of Greenways and Trails. More details will be posted as the date draws closer.

For event schedules and area news visit www.swflgo.com.

Donations Being Accepted for Independence Day Fireworks Fund

The planning has already started for the annual Independence Day Celebration in Everglades City that will take place on Saturday, June 29th.



Donations are appreciated and help fund the day's event that includes the amazing fireworks, festive parade, and celebration at McLeod Park that features contests for kids and a raffle!

The parade will not be complete without your participation so start planning the decorations for your golf cart, swamp buggy or whatever else you can think of to join in on the fun.

To contribute to the celebration, please send a check to: Everglades City Fireworks Fund, PO Box 110, Everglades City FL 34139. For more info, call Dottie at 239-695-3781. Thank you for your participation!

Dinner & Music at McLeod Park
Saturday, March 23, 5:00 to 8:00 pm
Save the date! Come to McLeod Park for a community dinner hosted by the Everglades Lions Club with music, 50/50 drawing and much more. Cecil is cooking up pulled pork, and there will also be beans, corn, slaw and dessert. Dinner is only \$12. For tickets call Connie Barker; 419-350-6650.

COMMUNITY SERVICES

FREE DENTAL, BLOOD PRESSURE SCREENINGS & BEHAVIORAL HEALTH INFORMATION FOR ALL
April 16, 8 am to 4 pm
The Healthcare Network of Southwest Florida's Health & Smiles Mobile Dental Bus will be in Everglades City on April 16th, from 8 am to 4 pm, in the Everglades Community Church parking lot, providing free dental checks, blood pressure screenings and behavioral health information if requested. For more information or an appt: call 239-986-7323.

THE FOOD BANK IS OPEN!

Wednesdays noon to 2pm



Everglades Community Pantry, a proud partner agency of the Harry Chapin Food Bank, is open every Wednesday from noon to 2 in Jinkins Fellowship Hall at Everglades Community Church. This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

DOCTOR'S CLINIC



Dr. Kirk DeMartino is seeing patients in his Marco Island Office and in **Everglades City on Fridays from 1:30 to 4:30 pm**. You may call his office to schedule an appointment at either location: (239) 642-5552.

NATURAL MEDICINE

Dr. John Martin can see patients in Everglades City on Fridays. Appts: from 10 am to 6 pm. Call to confirm: 813-787-9738.

CEDR Hurricane Disaster Recovery Assistance is Available

Communities of Everglades Disaster Recovery works in conjunction with the Salvation Army and have a team set up in Everglades City Hall (in the old council room). They will have advocates there from **10 am to 3 pm** on Mondays to assist people still in need of help. Stop in the office or you can call Elaine at 239-695-2695 for more information.



NEW E-CITY THRIFT SHOP Tuesday, Thursday & Saturday

The new thrift shop is open Tuesday, Thursday & Saturday from **11 am to 3 pm**. Come see the new store located between the fire station and community center.

Picayune Strand Wildlife Diversity in Photographs by Aaron Davidson

The wildlife has never been as active as it is now in Southwest Florida. After sharing these trail camera photos with my father Jeff Davidson, he believes the wildlife population is at an all-time high since the 1960's.



Seeing a Florida Panther is an amazing sight considering the State estimates their total population to be around 230 in 2017. All pictures have been captured in the Picayune Strand or off the main line on Janes Scenic Drive



Above top: a Florida Black Bear. **Above bottom:** a Florida Panther hunting at night. Both photographs taken in the Picayune Strand by Aaron Davidson.

You Can Help Black Bears!

Please support Senate bill 988 and sign the petition to get Florida black bears listed as threatened! They need our help: <https://tinyurl.com/y3w5vxfr>

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Gregory A. Dupignac, The Bird Whisperer, Passed Away. By Cesar Becerra
 Based on the mere facts and figures it would seem that to capture birdlife one need only fly to Florida as most birders do. Of the 15,000 types of birds around the planet 1,000 of them flap, flutter, land and preen in North America. 500 of the 1000 do so in Florida, but 450 of those 500 do so in the Everglades alone. So again, just land in Miami, take out some semblance of a camera, iPhone or polaroid, and voilà, you will bag your bird shot. Your percentage goes up if you do so at the Anhinga Trail or Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary. But bagging birds was not photographer Greg Dupignac's sole forte. It was more like forming a new relationship with each and every bird that came in contact through the barrel of his camera's lens.

Through his almost angel-like (some would say Santa-like) presence, he would put them at ease and they would dance in front of his lens. But photographing birds, though it came to define his last years in the Glades was just what Gregory "did" but what he emanated was warmth and passion to use his talents to draw many into the plight of the Glades presence. He was a defender without a doubt and did not mince words about some conservation gaffs brewing be it development or oil exploration in his beloved Big Cypress.

But how he got to commune with his birds and how he became the white bearded bard of the birds began with a rebirth experienced by many as they followed the call to come south. Forty-eight years ago Gregory moved from the Jersey shore to Florida, beginning anew in St Petersburg and eventually began a 25-year career in the Naples area as a gallery director dealing in fine art. He would on occasion haul his easel out to the Glades where he would paint. This was strictly for his own relaxation and not as a business but little did he know that those trips would domino into a future career.

While painting he fell in love with the Glades themselves as a whole but in specific, with the birds of The Everglades. Later he began photographing them and really focused the last ten years on showing and sharing what he saw. Thus began his new career as a wildlife photographer. Eventually his love grew so acute to being near his beloved birds that he moved permanently to Everglades City in 2009. He is most inspired in capturing the "beauty of the moment" which is not always easy as birds are generally on the move. And here in lies Gregory's true magical powers. Lens in hand, he would wait hours for a great moment but not necessarily perched on a lawn chair gambling on bird photography's great waiting game. Anyone who ever went out with him on a shoot - as I got lucky enough to do so 3 years back on Loop Road - can attest to the fact that Gregory would stun with intensity. In other words - camera at his side he'd allow the birds to lock on to his aura and then lift up the tool that would allow such permission of beauty to be captured and shared. In many ways I think Gregory's process began with asking each bird's permission to be captured and shared.

In 2016 he moved to Chokoloskee Island. Over the years he witnessed Everglades City flooding and some high water. The years of walking thru swamp and high tides and storms, his legs had been hit hard with lesions and complications due to undiagnosed diabetes. For Gregory, Irma was a major lightening bolt of an opportunity to use its symbolic storm surge to get out of town. Way out of town.

Wilma had done grave damage that Gregory never forgot so when the word came down for mandatory evacuation he drove off in his tiny blue car towards Naples but the chaos there at shelters pushed him away to another shelter where he also witnessed panic and mayhem. Looking at his leg, and with the steps he had miraculously taken just before the storm to get health insurance, Gregory boldly called 911 and was whisked away to Fort Myers' Gulf Coast Medical Center.


While on tour in Chicago I received a call from Gregory on my voicemail that he had broken his pelvis and was in the hospital. I called him up and had the last conversation with him trying to cheer him up saying that "a few pins later" he'd be back at home. But that was not to be. During the process of surgery doctors discovered cancer, and a day later while assessing the bad news that it was inoperable (stage 4), he suffered a stroke that took him from us in a matter of hours.

See some of Greg's amazing photography: <https://500px.com/gregoryd1903>.
 Read Gregory's obituary on page 11.

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*A Message From Superintendent
Dr. Kamela Patton*

February kicked off a busy season of academic activities and competitions! Our 8th Annual STEAM Conference was a phenomenal event with more than 1,800 teachers, parents, students, and community members attending. Our explosive speaker, Kate the Chemist, energized the crowd and our exciting STEAM Village, Marketplace, and Bistro Cafe offered endless opportunities to learn and play! Make sure to check out the STEAM Conference video (<https://www.collierschools.com/Page/12614>) for all the highlights.

Our 2018-2019 Golden Apple recipients were announced last month by Champions For Learning with surprise classroom visits! Please join me in congratulating our honorees!

Kudos also to the students who participated in the Laws of Life essay contest this year. We had more than 5,000 essays submitted! Congratulations to our CCPS division winners!

Good luck to all students participating in activities such as the annual Spelling Bee, Middle School Scholar Bowl, High School Debate, and many more during the month of March.

Looking forward to April, mark your calendars for April 2nd at 6pm for our Virtual Symposium: Building Grit and Strengthening Resilience in Children. We will share more details in the coming weeks.

As we continue the year, our #CCPSFamily looks forward to continued #CCPSSuccess!

~ Dr. Kamela Patton

For information, visit the Collier Public Schools Website:
<https://www.collierschools.com/>

School Schedule, March 2019

April 19: No School
April 22: No School

**Mullet Rapper Donations to
Everglades City School in 2019 = \$774**

Thank you to everyone who buys the Mullet Rapper every two weeks. Remember, the Mullet Rapper donates 100% of the proceeds from the sale of the print edition of the paper to Everglades City School to help fund the athletic department.

When you see the coin receptacle, please put your quarter (or more) into the slot!

Remember, When You Buy the Print Edition of the Mullet Rapper

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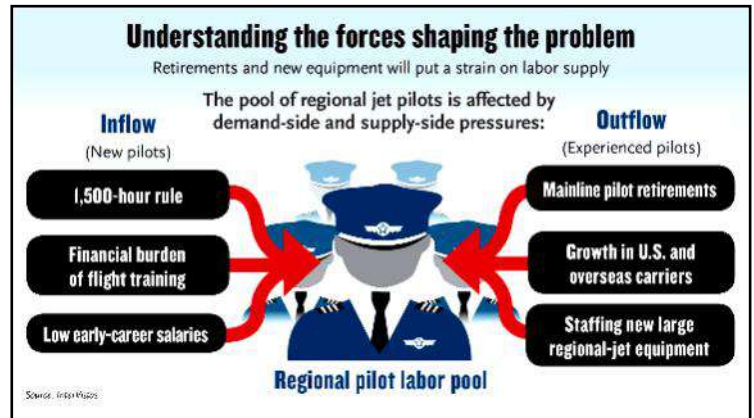
FLYING INTO THE FUTURE

Pilot Shortage Threatens Industry

by Mike Klein

Over the past few years many of the US airlines have issued concerns about an impending shortage of commercial airline pilots in the near future.

Most of today's professional pilots do not come from the military as in previous generations, but are developed through civilian schooling. The costs for training and certification are significant; by the time one is qualified for the Air Transport Pilot rating, flight and regulatory training can easily reach the level of several thousands of dollars.



Boeing has projected that aviation will need 790,000 new pilots by 2037 to meet growing demand, with 96,000 pilots needed to support the business aviation sector. At the Farnborough Air Show, Airbus estimated demand at 450,000 pilots by 2035. Even with Airbus' more conservative number, the gap between demand and supply is vast.

Bob Seidel, an experienced pilot and CEO of air charters company Alerion Aviation, says the pilot shortage also threatens private aviation.

This year, as in past years, the Airport Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA) is awarding pilot training scholarships to encourage future pilots to enter the aviation community.

**2019 AOPA Scholarship Flight Training
Applications Will Close Soon!**

Don't miss This Opportunity to Apply for a Scholarship to Help Pay for Your Flight Training Expenses

The application deadline is **April 2, 2019, 11:59 p.m. EDT**. Thanks to generous donations to the AOPA Foundation, AOPA is offering multiple scholarships to help AOPA members reach their flight training goals.

Scholarships ranging from \$2,500-\$10,000 will be awarded to high school students, teachers who are introducing youth to aviation, and other AOPA members. Depending on the scholarship, funds may be used for primary flight training or advanced certificates and ratings.

For more information and to apply, please visit the AOPA Flight Training Scholarships page at <https://tinyurl.com/y3s42ydu>.

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Lucky Us! A Beautiful Rosy Maple Moth Visits Our Everglades City Home
by Kathy Brock



Sometimes you have a lucky day! In January, right on our front door, the most beautiful pink moth sat for many hours while we snapped photos and *oohed and aahhed!*

We checked it out on the internet and discovered that it was a Rosy Maple Moth! Given their very short lifespan, we were fortunate to see him or her in the moth stage!

Here is a brief species overview from butterfliesandmoths.org: **Life History:** Adults emerge in the late afternoon and mate in the late evening. Females begin laying eggs at dusk the next day in groups of 10-30 on leaves of the host plant. Eggs hatch in about 2 weeks and feed gregariously when young. Older caterpillars feed alone. Fully-grown caterpillars pupate and overwinter in shallow underground chambers. Moths do not feed and die after soon after mating.

Flight: One brood in the north from May-August, two broods in the south from April-September, possibly three broods in the Deep South and Florida from March-October.

Caterpillar Hosts: Maple trees including red maple (*Acer rubrum*), sugar maple (*A. saccharum*), and silver maple (*A. saccharinum*); and oak trees including turkey oak (*Quercus laevis*). *Photo by Tim Brock.*




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		38	E	D	D	Y		39	D	A	R	T	S

Solution to March 9, 2019 Puzzle



My Little Slice of Paradise
by Kathy Brock

In past "Slice" articles I have voiced my frustration with flood insurance rates and some of the "rules" that seem to be inconsistently enforced causing rates to balloon for some and stay reasonable for others.

Frustration can be debilitating or a source of motivation. It motivated me to see what options may be available for those of us who are feeling the sting of skyrocketing rates.

In a recent federal government press release I read about the future of FEMA insurance rates which reinforced what I already knew...the rates are going up, way up. One report I read said to expect them to double in 2020. That would put my policy in the 5-figure range making it unaffordable for about 90% of homeowners, including me.

I began my research knowing I currently have two choices, take it or leave it. Being a "nervous Nelly" being uninsured would make me uncomfortable. Paying over \$10,000 annually would make me even more uncomfortable...the research continued...

Is FEMA flood truly the only game in town? Whenever any organization monopolizes an area, it is never a good thing for consumers...it robs us of our options. The provider can do whatever they want without the risk of losing customers. If we have no other option, we must accept what they are offering, like it or not.

In a free market system, there must be other options? And, what I found out is there are other options. There are private insurance firms that offer flood insurance, and there are private companies willing to underwrite policies in our area. I obtained quotes and they were far more reasonable than what I am being quoted by FEMA flood insurance.

Truth be told, private companies can go out of business. Private companies can cancel your policy or opt not to renew it. There is a bit of "risk" opting to move back to the private sector.

However, if you are on a fixed income or simply unwilling to hemorrhage money for escalating insurance rates, changing to a private company may be your next best option.

You do need to do your due diligence and check the company out. You need to make sure they are accredited and that your policy has "teeth" - that it will pay if and when you need it.


It is easy to start the educational process using "the school of Google". Just Google "private flood insurance" and you will see multiple carriers are out there. Next, contact those companies.

I have started this process for myself and will be making changes when my FEMA policy is up in June.

Understand that *I am not advocating that you cancel your FEMA-backed policy.* What I am advocating for is choices for those of us being priced out of that system. I believe we need to be aware of all available options so we may choose what is best for our own family. If a private option and the FEMA-backed option were close in price, I would opt for the more familiar FEMA backed policy. For me that is not the case, however.

In the coming weeks and months as I find out more information I will share it with you in the Mullet Rapper and post it to our website and facebook page (www.facebook.com/evergladescitynews) In turn, if any of you have good information to share, please email to us so we can share it with our readers! Knowledge is power!

Island Life Recipes
The Perfect Shortcake
My Mom's Recipe by Kathy Brock



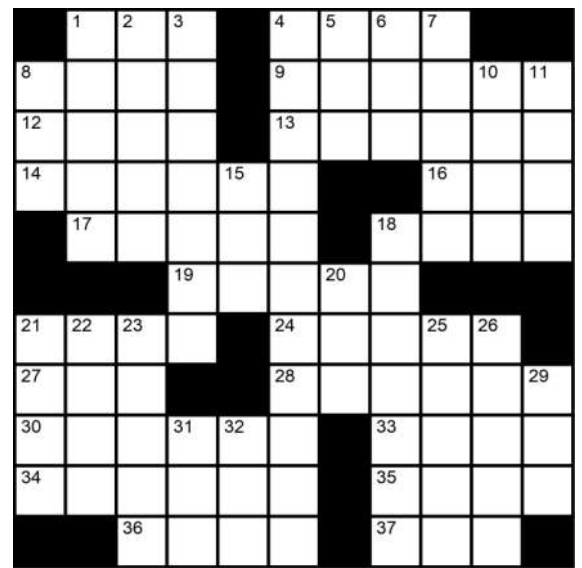
- ✂ 1 1/4 cups flour
- ✂ 2/3 cup sugar
- ✂ 1 1/2 teaspoon baking powder
- ✂ 3/4 cup milk
- ✂ 1/3 cup butter or shortening
- ✂ 1 egg
- ✂ 1 teaspoon Vanilla

Directions: Heat oven to 350°. Grease and flour an 8 x 8 x 2 baking pan. Cream butter, sugar, vanilla and egg, and then add rest of the ingredients. Mix until fully blended. Spoon into pan and bake for 35 minutes or until toothpick comes out clean. Top with prepared, fresh strawberries or any other fruit with juice and whipped cream. Vanilla ice cream is a great addition too. This is a simple yellow cake recipe with the sugar reduced so it isn't overly sweet when you top with the goodies. Hint: to make the strawberries extra good, puree about one cup of berries with 1/3 cup sugar and 1/3 cup water. Add that to the prepared berries so you have delicious juice to top it with! (If using all-purpose flour, omit baking powder)

MULLET RAPPER CROSSWORD

Across

- 1 London radio and TV network
- 4 "As --- alone, by blue Ontario's shores" (Whitman)
- 8 Miles of "Psycho"
- 9 Incendiary gel
- 12 Wide smile
- 13 Oscar winner --- Loren
- 14 Brush expert
- 16 Some are secret
- 17 Up and about
- 18 Assay
- 19 Singer Mars
- 21 Twenty-four were baked in it
- 24 Nab
- 27 Neuman's mag
- 28 Bay State capital's nickname
- 30 Native American village
- 33 Partiality
- 34 Executioner
- 35 --- Karina
- 36 Woodpile
- 37 Stage joke
- 36 It can be the limit



3/23/19

Down

- 1 Yankee Yogi
- 2 Cockneys, Liverpoolians et al.
- 3 Incredulous response
- 4 Trainers
- 5 Brazilian City, --- Palo
- 6 Software program, briefly
- 7 California border lake
- 8 Computer monitor letters
- 10 Hot --- (M A S H role)
- 11 Sail support
- 15 Respectful form of address
- 18 Carryall
- 20 "Forget it!"
- 21 Current units
- 22 One Beatle
- 23 Best possible
- 25 Main US importer
- 26 --- He (Chinese river)
- 29 Youth org.
- 31 Letters on some party invitations
- 32 Section of a race





Poetry Street
by Katherine Tullie

“Springtime Goals”

Springtime is a time to replenish
our heart and soul
It is a time to sort out some
important and uplifting goals
By placing one foot in front of the other
every step of the way
Let's focus on what is really
important to us every day
A fresh new start in attitude
may be what we need
In order for our goals in life to succeed
Springtime can be an
uplifting time, for sure
Let us all go for the springtime cure
By focusing on our own ability for
positive change everyday
We can fill our hearts with goodness
as we start each new day
Let's enjoy a springtime sunrise
and turn the page
We can start anew at any age
We can carry love and hope
in our top pocket each day
These springtime goals are there
for us to attain, I must say
By gathering all our priorities together
We can reach our goals even
in stormy weather
Focusing on our lives with gratitude
is the thing to do
With a springtime attitude
to see us through!

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Kathythepoet@gmail.com
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Area Parks

**FREE Ranger Led Programs at
Big Cypress. Reserve Your Spot Now**

Join us as we get out and explore the wonders of the Big Cypress Swamp! For general information call 239-695-4111. For reservations call 239-695-4758. Reservations are accepted up to 14-days in advance of the activity date. Ranger scheduled activities are free. Please download the updated list of programs at swflgo.com/big-cypress-national-preserve/.

**FREE Ranger Talks Daily at Everglades
National Park – Gulf Coast Station**

At 1.5 million acres Everglades National Park is vast—the third largest National Park east of the Rockies.

Whether you're a local resident or visiting from afar, you're invited to stop by and learn more about Everglades National Park and the coastal mangrove ecosystem in this region that supports so many wading birds, fish, and other wildlife.

Boat tours of the 10,000 Islands depart hourly from our dock. We also offer short ranger-led programs. Meet the ranger at the picnic kiosk next to the waterfront; check the display board in front of the Visitor Center for exacts times and topics.

Featured talks include:

- *Flowing Through Time: The History of Water Management in Everglades Park'
- *Stone Crabs: Sustainable Fishery
- *Big White Birds: What Are They? What Are they Doing?
- *The Calusa Indians of Chokoloskee Bay

The Gulf Coast Station is located in **Everglades City at 815 Oyster Bar Lane.**

The Visitor Center is open daily from 8 AM to 4:30 PM.

For more information on programs and events at Everglades Gulf Coast Visitor Center logon to nps.gov/ever/planyourvisit/calendar.

Local Happenings

Census Jobs! Starting at \$17/hr.

Hiring is underway for jobs in the **Everglades City area** working the 2020 U.S. Census, as the Census is committed to having people work in their own communities. Generally, these are part-time jobs with flexible hours, home-based (mileage reimbursed), and pay starting at \$17/hour -All applications must be completed at 2020census.gov/jobs.

**Job Opportunities at
Port of the Islands**

Full Time With Excellent Benefits

Port of the Islands has two career opportunities available for the right candidates! Guest Services Supervisor and Guest Services Agent. The right candidates will be team players and have the ability to work flexible schedules. To view each positions requirements, visit <https://swflgo.com/port-of-the-islands-careers/>.

Book Club Meeting April 11



The Everglades City Book Club meets monthly during the season. We welcome visitors who are interested in books and discussion. If you would like to check out our club, please come to one of the club meetings. For more details, contact Diann Lock at: 812-361-7402.
Apr. 11: Lilac Girls by Martha Kelly, Hosted by Diann Lock

**Discover area parks, history,
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When Plants Go Rogue: Aggressive Exotic Plants Endanger the Everglades

By Antonia Florio: Science Communications Liaison, Everglades National Park

When I was a 17-year-old high school student studying for the AP biology exam, I had a revelation that plants were aliens. They can do everything we humans wish we could do. They could make their own food from sunlight. They could even continuously grow if part of their body got chopped off.

This then led me to my second big conclusion about plants: they would one day take over the world. After we moved to South Florida, I realized that many of my teenage ideas about plants were, well, sort of right.

Some plants seem to have the ability to take over if given the right conditions. South Florida definitely offers plants that opportunity. South Florida is a plant paradise. You can't come here and not notice how green everything is year-round.

A year after we moved here and I began working in Everglades National Park, our tiny bamboo we had kept in the tiny bathroom window of our New York City apartment grew enough that it broke a 10-inch pot.

I began to learn about all the crazy invasive plants we have in the park, and my mind was blown. A 2017 report found that at least 26 percent of all plant species found in the park are exotic, or non-native. These non-native plants can drastically alter ecosystems.

Then, why do pythons get so much media attention when invasive plants are as great of a threat, if not more, to the Everglades and our own livelihood? Of the estimated 270 exotic plant species in the park, the "big four" are melaleuca, Australian pine, old world climbing fern and Brazilian pepper. These species are targeted for treatment because they are the most widespread and cause the most damage.

The one that covers the largest area of the park is Brazilian pepper. It was imported from South America in the 1840s because the fruits are pretty. European holly doesn't grow well here, and early Florida colonists needed their holiday red berry fix.

Brazilian pepper has since invaded almost every habitat in South Florida. It grows so thick that it shades out and displaces native vegetation. "Florida Christmas holly," as it is called, can even produce chemicals that suppress the growth of other plant species. Invasive plants do not play fair.

In one area of the park that was once farmland, the goal is complete eradication of Brazilian pepper. If you've ever visited the park and gone on the Nike Missile Tour, you've passed it. Lovingly known as the Hole-in-the-Donut because native plants (the donut) surrounded the farmland (the donut hole). This 6,300 acre area was completely invaded by Brazilian pepper when farming ceased there in 1975.

Park scientists knew something had to be done. That much Brazilian pepper in the center of a national park put our native plants at risk. Most years since 1997, parts of the Hole-in-the-Donut are completely scraped down to the bedrock.

This eliminates any chance invasive plant seeds remain and removes the farmed soil that allows Brazilian pepper to flourish. This is hard work, especially in the warm and humid Florida summers. But for some scientists, working in the Hole-in-the-Donut is a dream come true.

"I was in the field every day combating invasives, which was awesome," said Hannah Doherty, a biological science technician in the park.

Doherty was a Biocorps intern with the park last year and came back because she loved the restoration work so much. "I love the Hole-in-the-Donut," she said. "It's so cool that an area that was so disturbed could be restored to its natural state. Being a part of that is really special."

The Hole-in-the-Donut restoration project is turning into a 30-year success story. Complete removal of Brazilian pepper is expected over the next few years, as long as the right weather conditions persist. Score one for restoration.

But it is not realistic to think that we can rid the entire park of all the invasive species like we were able to do in the Hole-in-the-Donut. Invasive plants occupy a lot of the park – at least 200,000 acres of land, or 30 percent of it. We just don't have enough money, and we don't have enough resources to eradicate all of the exotics. We can manage them, though.

"We rely on long-term management to control invasive plants in the park," explains Hillary Cooley, the botanist in charge of the Exotic Plant Management Program in Everglades National Park. "You need to do multiple treatments to ensure success. It's challenging work because you're trying to control the plant species that inhabit about 1 million acres of land. Our BioCorps interns, contractors, and partners like Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission who provide resources are a big help."

(continued on page 10)



Fishing in the 10,000 Islands With Capt. Mike Merritt

March is upon us and the month has started out with some really nice weather. Of course, we expect the winds to pick up, but while it's nice out we are taking advantage and fishing on the outside and a little off shore.

Today was a prime example of what can happen when the winds lay down combined with warmer waters. We saw schools of Permit offshore. Baitfish are abundant with everything feeding on them. We hooked some nice Cobia including a 27 lb. fish that was landed by 90-year-old Vinnie. We saw Tarpon, Black Drum, Snook, Reds, and Seatrout. Suffice it to say the fishing is great!

Schools of Reds are still feeding in and around the islands. Live shrimp is the best way to find these guys. There are a few slot size fish in these schools but most are on the short side. Lots of fun.

Snook will start to show up on the outside again this month, but there are still lots of fish in the backcountry. These fish have been eating everything from jigs to shrimp to live bait. They are not being real picky right now. As the month progresses we will start catching more big fish on the outside and jigs always seem to work best this time of year. I like the Assassin jig heads rigged with DOA paddle tails. Colors will vary but root-beer is a good place to start.

Tarpon are definitely showing up and the month of March should produce some great action on the outside edges of the flats and even in the rivers. Live crabs will catch them, but so will artificials. Diving lures or jigs fished with larger tails will produce.

Trout are still on the flats and in the rivers. We have been catching some very large Trout in the backcountry too. It is a great time of the year to get out as the bite is hot and the variety this time of year makes for some great fun! So plan your trip and make some memories. Good luck fishing, Capt. Mike Merritt

Fish With Captain Mike Merritt!
C: 561-252-4324 O: 561-795-3437
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Download the Fishing Limits Guide
<https://swfgo.com/florida-saltwater-fishing-regulations-2018/>



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Continued...Invasive Plants

(from page 9)

Cooley and her team use an integrated approach to manage exotic plants. Treatment depends on the type of plant. It can involve use of herbicides, prescribed fire, biocontrols, and sometimes just crude cutting and pulling of exotics. Whatever works to get the job done.

"An integrated approach allows you to use all of your tools in your toolbox," Cooley said.

Biocontrols have been useful for combatting melaleuca, another of the "big four" invasives. Melaleuca was introduced in southern Florida from Australia in the early 1900s. It was purposely planted in the Everglades to help drain the swamp and allow for development long before we knew that was a really bad idea.

Melaleuca has been extremely successful in the Everglades, and large expanses of it disrupt historical water flows. This not only puts our native species at risk, it also affects our drinking water.

"Melaleuca has the potential to cause major hydrological damage in South Florida," said Linda King, subsection leader for the FWC Upland Plant Management Program. "It's crucial that we have a good management plan, know what we've treated, and carefully plan our next course of action."

To figure out the next step in melaleuca control, South Florida scientists turned to Australia for answers. Like most invasive species, melaleuca does not spread aggressively in its native habitat because it has natural enemies to keep it in check. Scientists wanted to bring some of those natural enemies to Florida to use as biocontrols.

After years of field studies and quarantine laboratory testing, scientists released a biocontrol, the melaleuca weevil, in Florida in 1997. The hope was that it would attack melaleuca in Florida like it does in Australia.

And it seemed to work. The spread of Melaleuca slowed. So then a second natural enemy was released, a plant louse called the melaleuca psyllid. And more have been released since. Biological controls need to be carefully chosen and studied before being used, but they are effective at slowing the spread of exotics.

This doesn't mean that we will be able to completely eradicate all of the melaleuca or other invasive plants from the park. But we're heading in the right direction to keep them from taking over the Everglades.

Avoid plants that are invasive!

Find out more here:

www.colliercountyfl.gov/your-government/divisions-a-e/environmental-services/invasive-exotic-plant-species

Fakahatchee Strand News

Winter Fakahatchee Tram Tours Are the Perfect Day-Excursion!

Beautiful weather makes now the perfect time to experience a swamp walk or tram tour in **Fakahatchee Strand Preserve State Park**. The park, east of Naples, is Florida's largest and has been called "the Amazon of North America."

Ghostrider Tram Tours of the park are from 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. The naturalist led tours are offered for \$25 per person most Thursdays in March and are named for the famous ghost orchid found in the park.

The Naturalist Led Tram Tour and Swamp Walks are from 9:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. This \$60 excursion takes visitors into knee-high water and is offered on most Tuesdays during the season.

For directions, complete details and required reservations for all Fakahatchee adventures: www.orchidswamp.org and click on Tours and Events. **Please be advised that tours sell out quickly so it is recommended to call and schedule your dates as soon as possible!**

You can reach us by phone at (800) 362-8590. We look forward to seeing you there!

About the Fakahatchee Strand

The Fakahatchee Strand Preserve State Park is perhaps the best example of a subtropical, strand swamp in the United States. The Fakahatchee Strand is a linear swamp forest, approximately twenty miles long by five miles wide and oriented from north to south. The Strand harbors one of the largest concentrations and diversity of native orchids in North America, and supports numerous rare and endangered animal species. It is also one of the core areas of the current range of the Florida Panther.

The Strand's 85,000 acres are part of the main drainage slough of the Big Cypress Swamp. The Fakahatchee Strand is linked hydrologically to the Everglades system and is particularly important to the estuarine ecosystem of the Ten Thousand Islands area.

Local Happenings

Bike Ride at Bear Island is True to its Name by Dana Fendrick

It was a nice cool morning (at first) and we saw lots of wildlife on our Bear Island ride- a couple of deer around mile 4, a black racer and gators, lots of birds - hawks, swallow-tail kites, herons, ibis, buzzards, and a turkey. The road was in good shape.

Then things got interesting around mile 9 - we were heading out to the "big hill" on the Harold Strand Trail, one of the riders was ahead of us a little bit & he spots a turkey and speeds up to get a better look - then he sees a black thing behind the turkey and realizes it's a bear! So we stop about 100 yards away and watch the bear - he sees us and starts ambling towards us!

The bear keeps coming towards us, so we all raise our arms and start yelling - he finally turns off & heads into the woods. We decided that's a good place to turn around, as we don't want to ride by where he might still be hanging out, so we didn't make it to the big hill. It was a good ride, got in about 20 miles and only passed 2 vehicles on the way!

Card Racks at E-City Hall Feature Businesses & Attractions



There is a great new resource at Everglades City Hall. The card racks on the first floor by the entry have free brochures about area businesses and attractions for visitors.

If you would like your information added to the racks, please contact Kathy Brock at 954-662-7003, or via email at mulletrapper@gmail.com.



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EATERIES & AREA WORSHIP

Angler's Cove, Port of the Islands

(642-1025): Monday - Wed 5 to 11 pm,
Thurs to Sun Noon - 11 pm

Camellia Street Grille (695-2003):

11:00 am – 9:00 pm daily

City Seafood (695-4700):

8:00 am – 10:00 am; breakfast
Noon-6pm Lunch & Dinner

Glades Haven Marina (695-2091):

Deli Closed. Marina is open.
Live bait available at marina

Havana Café (695-2214):

Open Daily, 7 am to 4 pm
See our ad on page 10!

Island Café (695-0003):

6:00 am – 9:00 pm; daily

Ivey House (695-3299):

7:00 am – 9:00 am; daily

Joanie's Blue Crab Café (695-2682):

11:00 am – 4:00 pm

Open: Mon., Fri., Saturday & Sunday

Rod & Gun (695-2101):

11:30 am - 8:00 pm; daily

Triad Seafood & Café (695-2662):

Open Every Day
10:30 am-5 pm

MARKETS

Right Choice Supermarket (695-4535):

M-Th 9 am– 7 pm, Fri-Sun, 7 am to 7 pm

Grimm's Stone Crab (695-3222):

Open Mon.-Sat. 8 am to 5 pm

Fresh Produce

Right Choice Supermarket

See listing under "markets"

SUNDAY CHURCH SERVICES

Chokoloskee Church of God

Sunday: 10 am Sch., 11 am Worship
Wed. 7 pm Hr. of Prayer

Copeland Baptist Church

Sunday: 10 am School, 11 am Worship

Everglades Community Church

11:00 am Sunday Worship, See ad p. 11

1st Baptist Church of Everglades City

9:45 am Sunday School, 11 am Worship
6 pm Sunday, 6 pm Wed. Bible Study

Holy Family Catholic Church

Sunday Mass, 10:30 am

St. Finbarr Catholic Church, Naples

Phone: 239-417-2084

San Marco Catholic Church, Marco Isl.

239-394-5181

BARRON RIVER TIDES

LAT: 25.87° N LONG: 81.37°W

More Tide Locations On: www.SWFLGO.com!

3/23/19	Sat	5:11 AM	2.66	H
3/23/19	Sat	12:14 PM	0.22	L
3/23/19	Sat	4:58 PM	2.75	H
3/24/19	Sun	12:43 AM	-0.16	L
3/24/19	Sun	6:05 AM	2.39	H
3/24/19	Sun	12:53 PM	0.41	L
3/24/19	Sun	5:34 PM	2.71	H
3/25/19	Mon	1:33 AM	-0.12	L
3/25/19	Mon	7:04 AM	2.11	H
3/25/19	Mon	1:32 PM	0.59	L
3/25/19	Mon	6:14 PM	2.6	H
3/26/19	Tue	2:29 AM	-0.04	L
3/26/19	Tue	8:12 AM	1.88	H
3/26/19	Tue	2:17 PM	0.76	L
3/26/19	Tue	7:02 PM	2.45	H
3/27/19	Wed	3:35 AM	0.04	L
3/27/19	Wed	9:35 AM	1.74	H
3/27/19	Wed	3:31 PM	0.88	L
3/27/19	Wed	8:12 PM	2.29	H
3/28/19	Thu	4:47 AM	0.1	L
3/28/19	Thu	1:17 PM	1.78	H
3/28/19	Thu	5:05 PM	0.92	L
3/28/19	Thu	9:37 PM	2.2	H
3/29/19	Fri	5:54 AM	0.11	L
3/29/19	Fri	1:53 PM	1.92	H
3/29/19	Fri	6:22 PM	0.88	L
3/29/19	Fri	10:54 PM	2.2	H
3/30/19	Sat	6:54 AM	0.1	L
3/30/19	Sat	2:05 PM	2.02	H
3/30/19	Sat	7:23 PM	0.79	L
3/31/19	Sun	12:03 AM	2.28	H
3/31/19	Sun	7:46 AM	0.09	L
3/31/19	Sun	2:00 PM	2.13	H
3/31/19	Sun	8:10 PM	0.67	L
4/1/19	Mon	12:59 AM	2.4	H
4/1/19	Mon	8:29 AM	0.08	L
4/1/19	Mon	2:10 PM	2.25	H
4/1/19	Mon	8:49 PM	0.55	L
4/2/19	Tue	1:43 AM	2.52	H
4/2/19	Tue	9:07 AM	0.1	L
4/2/19	Tue	2:29 PM	2.38	H
4/2/19	Tue	9:23 PM	0.42	L
4/3/19	Wed	2:20 AM	2.6	H
4/3/19	Wed	9:41 AM	0.13	L
4/3/19	Wed	2:52 PM	2.5	H
4/3/19	Wed	9:57 PM	0.3	L
4/4/19	Thu	2:55 AM	2.63	H
4/4/19	Thu	10:13 AM	0.18	L
4/4/19	Thu	3:16 PM	2.59	H
4/4/19	Thu	10:30 PM	0.18	L
4/5/19	Fri	3:30 AM	2.62	H
4/5/19	Fri	10:43 AM	0.25	L
4/5/19	Fri	3:39 PM	2.65	H
4/5/19	Fri	11:05 PM	0.08	L

Obituary



Gregory A. Dupignac, 73, of Copeland, FL, formerly of Toms River, New Jersey died Friday, March 8 after a short illness. Greg was born in Teaneck, N.J., December 4, 1945 and raised in Bergen County graduating from Fort Lee High School in 1963.

Greg attended the University of Tennessee before returning home to join his father in his real estate and insurance agency in Englewood Cliffs and then Toms River.

Greg relocated to Southwest FL where he eventually embraced the artist he always was. Greg managed several Naples art galleries before opening his own just off 5th Street South. For the past five years Greg lived in the Everglades where he was a highly-regarded photographer of the birds of South Florida being honored with one-man shows on both the East and West coast.

Greg was predeceased by his parents, Frank J. and Elizabeth Dupignac and his brother-in-law, John Taber. He is survived by his brother, Frank J. Dupignac, Jr. and his wife, Arlene, of Toms River, his sisters Donna Ginsberg and her husband, Jay, of Doylestown, PA., Denise Taber of Toms River, Deborah Riber and her husband, Jeff, of St. Petersburg, FL and many nieces and nephews.

Greg is also survived by his good friend, Vanessa Barros, and the tight-knit Everglades Community of artists and environmentalists. He will be missed by all. Services are private. Greg volunteered at his local foodbank and contributions in his honor to the foodbank of your choice will be greatly appreciated



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CLASSIFIED ADS

FOR SALE: Condo #409 at Captains Table, 1 bed, 1 bath, fully furnished, newer appliances, new porch, windows, community pool, \$105,000 call Bill 763-443-7419.

FOR SALE: Completely remodeled mobile home with lot (9000sf) in Copeland. 2/Br, 2/Bath, large living room, open kitchen and back porch. Fenced property with large shed, city water & sewer. \$42000, negotiable. 241 Swain Street. Call 941-203-0694

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JOB OPPORTUNITY: Housekeeping/laundry: River Wilderness housekeepers need to multi task, work independently, have vision and an understanding of hospitality. They must be able to tend to the cleanliness of the units as well as manage the laundry facility. Dependability, trainability and a strong work ethic is a must. This position is for Thurs. & Fri. The work day starts at 10am most days and ends when the work is complete. For more information contact Jay at 239-695-4499.

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RV LOT FOR SALE in VR Corp in Everglades City, # 22. Electric & sewer hookup. Concrete pad is ready for your RV. Call 954-261-3550 for info.

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FOR SALE: Condo @ The Estuary. Corner unit, 2 BR 2 BA + den. Nicely furnished. Large double car garage. Boat ramp & pool onsite. Glades Realty, 239-695-4299, www.GladesRealty.com, \$274,000.

FOR SALE: Condo #418 in Captain's Table, 1bed/1bath, totally renovated, fully furnished, new appliances, high impact windows/door, community pool. \$109,500. Call Vivian 786-395-9253. MLS 218025142

FOR SALE: Club Everglades home. A fisherman's paradise & weekend retreat, \$299,500. Built in 2006. 2 bedrooms, 2 1/2 baths. Call Jim Prange for information at 239.642.1133 Premier Sotheby's International Realty.

The MULLET RAPPER

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Patricia A. Huff, Snook Publications

PUBLISHER/ EDITOR

Kathleen Brock

PHOTOJOURNALIST

Helen Bryan

CONTRIBUTORS to this Issue

Marya Repko, Elaine Middelstaedt, Aaron Davidson

Kamela Patton, Patty Huff, Antonia Florio,

Katherine Tullie, Mike Merritt, Mike Klein

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We strive to present the facts accurately

We encourage contrasting points of view

The views expressed in signed articles are not necessarily those of the editors or publisher.

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