



Canal Current

A wave of information for Cape Coral's Canalwatch volunteers

Newsletter: 3rd Quarter 2020

Environmental News

Little Free Libraries in Cape Coral

Many of the Canalwatch members have supported the City's Little Free Libraries (LFL) through generous book donations but some newer residents may not be familiar with the program. LFL promotes neighborhood book exchanges, in the form of a small library or book-sharing box. Residents can take a book to read or leave one for someone else to find. The goal is increasing access to books for readers of all ages. The book exchanges function on the honor system; everyone contributes to ensure there are always quality books inside for others to enjoy. You do not need to share a book in order to take one. If you take a book or two from a little library, try to bring some to share to that same library, or another in your area, when you can.

In Cape Coral we have LFLs located at Jaycee Park, Rotary Park, Four Mile Cove Ecological Preserve, Sirenia Vista Park, Joe Stonis Park, Lake Kennedy Community Park, Camelot Park, Yacht Club Park, (map on page 8) as well as many locations in neighborhoods. Some are maintained by City staff while others are maintained by local businesses, youth groups, and dedicated residential stewards.

I wanted to take this opportunity to recognize residential stewards Jack Davis and Susan Monteleone-a CW member since 2009, site 16E. Their library can be found at 1208 SE 3rd Street, sharing joy (and books!) with Shamrock Lakes community of Cape Coral.

Interested in learning more about the LFL program? Visit littlefreelibrary.org/ Have extra books you wish to donate? Just stop by any of the locations listed here. Anyone can share books in local LFL book-sharing boxes.



Questions? Comments? Let us know!

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Wildlife spotlight: Bald Eagles

The bald eagle *Haliaeetus leucocephalus* was chosen as the national symbol in 1782. Selected as an embodiment of freedom, power, and independence bald eagles can be seen soaring high and swooping low skimming the surface of a waterbody with their talons to secure fish, seemingly, without getting wet. In 1782, it is likely the country had as many as 100,000 nesting eagles but due to habitat loss and DDT poisoning the population declined greatly. Following enactment of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, US Fish and Wildlife Service listed the species in 1978 as endangered throughout the lower 48 states, except in specific states where it was designated as threatened. Due to this level of protection, bald eagles have made truly iconic comeback. The bald eagle was removed from the USFWS endangered species list and the FWC imperiled species list in 2007 and 2008, respectively.

Protection continues under the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act and the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, along with the state bald eagle rule. Florida has one of the densest concentrations of nesting bald eagles in the lower 48 states with their nesting territories are concentrated in Slash and Aussie Pines near waterbodies. Although primarily fish-eaters, they are opportunistic, feeding on carrion, birds, and small mammals.

Bald eagles live in Cape Coral all year round and can be observed daily.



One long-time CW volunteer Ed Elms (site 82A) shares: "Observing eagles is a great way to deal with stress—a true way to escape from everyday routine. You can't help but be in awe every time you see these spectacular creatures."

In Florida the bald eagle nesting season runs from October 1 through May 15. Females lay 1-3 eggs which are incubated by adults for about 5 weeks. Baby eagles are called eaglets and they start practice flights at 10 to 12 weeks old.

- Harassing, harming, or killing bald eagles or damaging their nest or nesting tree is a crime, please report any violations FWC's 24-hour hotline at 1-888-404-3922
- For injured or wounded bald eagles call the Clinic Rehab of Wildlife (CROW) at 239-472-3644
- New bald eagle nests can be reported to the City of Cape Coral at planningquestions@capecoral.net
- Join the Bald Eagle Watch Program monitoring nest at planningquestions@capecoral.net

**Thank you Canalwatch volunteers for your continued dedication to the program.
Below are some photos provided from volunteers for the third quarter Canalwatch digital event.**

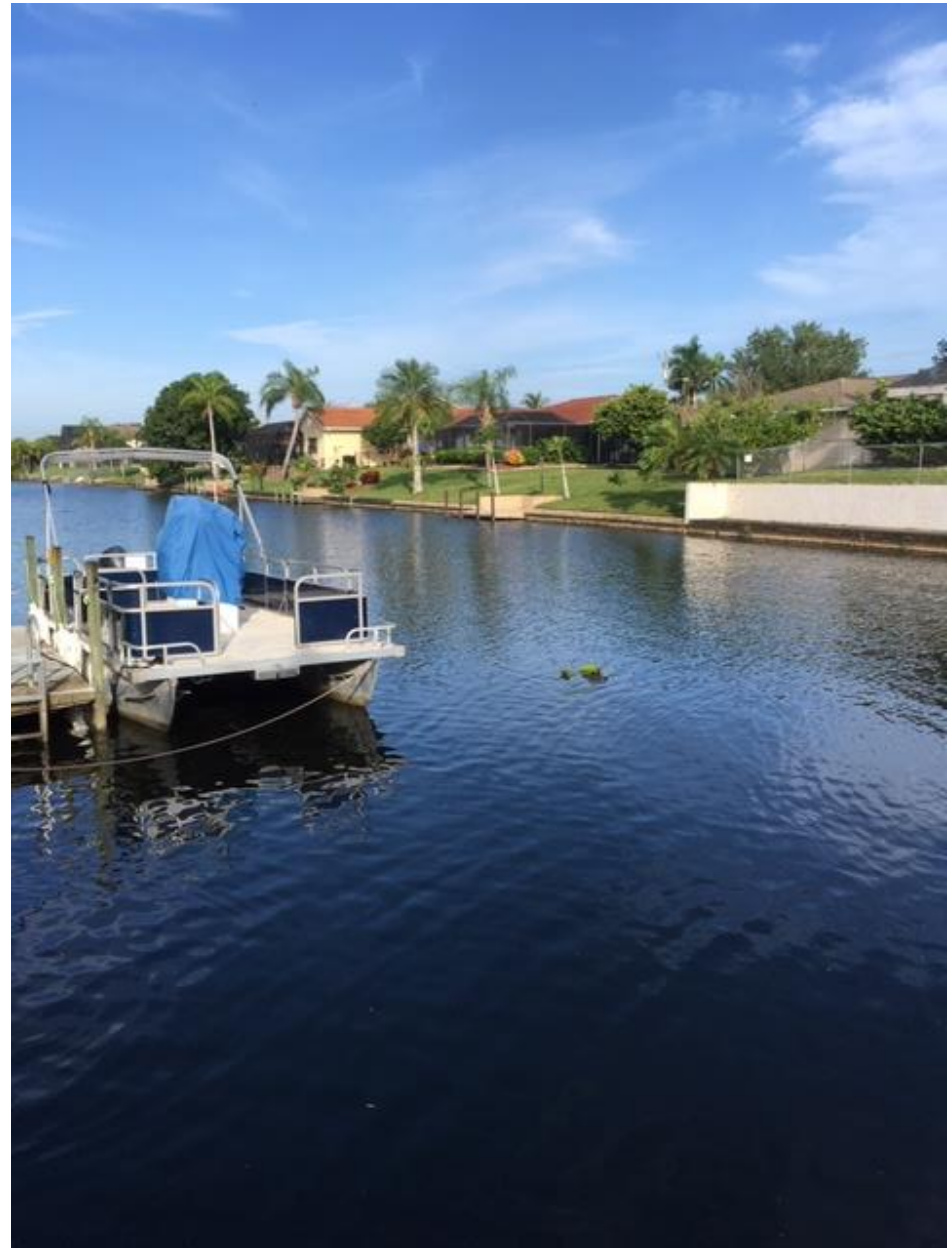
4-2A Pearl and Terry Glenn (*below*)

Why pay the high price of pest control when a more affordable option is available. White ibis snacking on various subterranean insects.



(*right*)

18M Keith Vanderbosch
A view of his site on the
Casanova Canal

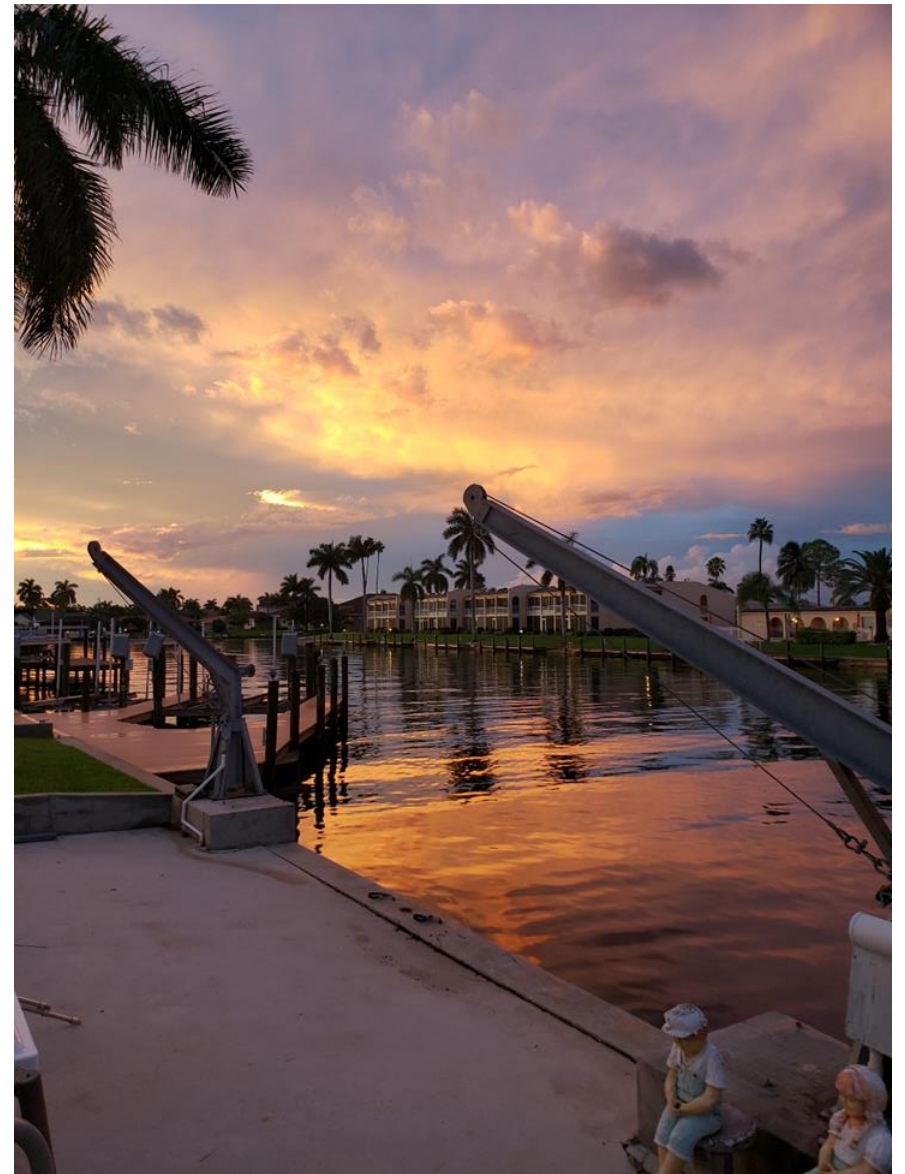




(above)
7E Ron Anderson

(and at right) 13B Barb & Linda Zivney

The beautiful pastels of the waterfront sunset.





(left)
19D Chris Camp
A view of the intersection of the Meredith and
Bronte Canals on the Gold Coast. Southeast Cape
Coral.



(right)
59C Scott Bacheler
Using a YSI multi-parameter sonde to take water
quality measurements on the Webb Canal.



96A Benito Tanhehco

The small aquatic plant *Salvinia minima*, commonly referred to as water spangles or sometimes duckweed, partially covering the Killer Canal. An exceptionally wet summer allowed this freshwater species to flourish in the normally brackish water canals in southwest Spreader Canal areas of Cape Coral.

For up to date City of Cape Environmental Resources Division water quality data visit
https://www.capecoral.net/departments/public_works/quarterly_water_quality_reports.php



Photos:

Top left Ron Pye, Environmental Technician Robert Edman and Biologist Kraig Hankins conduct water quality measurements as part of the FGCU study.

Top right Ron in front of his sailing vessel *Magpye*.

Bottom center Ron standing behind the pump and air sampler apparatus as part of the FGCU study.



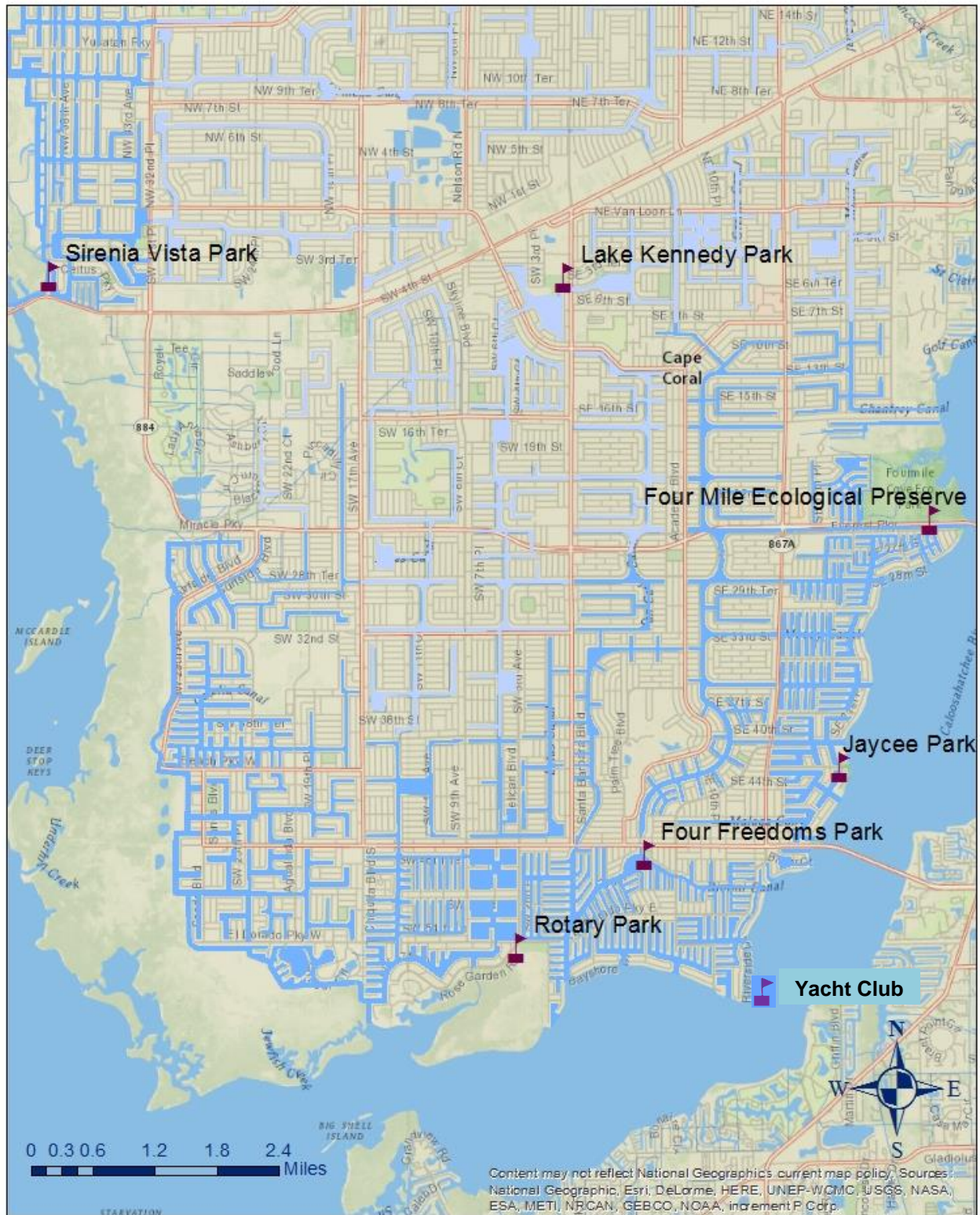
Environmental Resources Division would like to thank and recognize Ron Pye (72C) for his willingness to allow access to his waterfront location for a blue green algae study conducted by Cape Coral Environmental Resources Division and Florida Gulf Coast University (FGCU).

The study consisted of monthly water quality measurements and sample grabs from Ron's location on the South Spreader Waterway.

Additionally, an air sampler was placed outside of Ron's home as a method to collect particles suspended in the air, including potentially toxic ones from blue green algae.

Although over the course of data collection, blue green algae was not present as it was in the summer of 2018, the information gathered in this study will be an important component in understanding background levels of blue green algae toxins and their potential for effecting people's health.

Little Free Libraries in Cape Coral



Native Plant Profile

Buttonbush

Cephalanthus occidentalis

Buttonbush is a Florida native shrub, or sometimes small tree, that is often found in wetland ecosystems. What is unique about the buttonbush are its large ball shaped flowers. In spring and early summer, when the buttonbush is in bloom, the flowers resemble a pincushion or spiked ball with its numerous pistils and small white flowers surrounding the ball. These flowers are very fragrant and perfume the air of the wetlands, swamps and water courses they inhabit. Many pollinators such as butterflies, moths and bees visit these flowers for nectar. The fruit and seeds are an important food source for birds and waterfowl.

While buttonbush would make an appealing ornamental in home landscapes because of its attractive flowers, it is difficult to find in nurseries. Additionally, the leaves of the buttonbush, if consumed, are toxic to animals and people. Its deciduous nature often gives the buttonbush the appearance of a barren shrub through the fall and winter months. While these attributes may make the buttonbush more at home in the wild than in the garden, it is unquestionably easy to find when visiting parks and hiking trails that have wetlands. Six Mile Cypress Slough in Fort Myers is such a place. It's boardwalk meanders thru a cypress swamp. Be sure to visit this attraction in spring or early summer and the unmistakable large white flower balls of the buttonbush will be easy to observe.



Photo: Atlas of Florida Plants (florida.plantatlas.usf.edu)

For more information on Six Mile Cypress Slough, please visit:

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



US Army Corp of Engineers Jacksonville District

As water quality often begins upstream, below are some links to information regarding Lake Okeechobee and its management.

For information regarding the proposed new Lake Okeechobee System Operating Manual (LOSOM) please visit: <https://www.saj.usace.army.mil/LOSOM/>

For information regarding water management of Lake Okeechobee and water releases to the Caloosahatchee, St. Lucie or south thru the Everglades, please visit: <https://www.saj.usace.army.mil/WaterManagement/>

For information regarding Everglades restoration projects, please visit: <https://www.saj.usace.army.mil/Missions/Environmental/Ecosystem-Restoration/>

And for current conditions of the entire Lake Okeechobee watershed, including the Kissimmee Chain of Lakes, the Caloosahatchee and St. Lucie Rivers and the areas south of the lake comprising of the Everglades Agricultural Area, the Stormwater Treatment Areas and the Everglades National Park, please visit:

<http://w3.saj.usace.army.mil/h2o/reports/StatusDaily.htm>

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