



# Pine Island Knotes

Newsletter of the Pine Island Preservation Society

Number 14

June 2016

## Pine Island Offers Places to Kayak and Canoe



This etching of pioneers paddling was created by Vera Zimmerman, historian/artist in 1982. Zimmerman's art is seen throughout many of the Sams House exhibits.

During May the Indian River Lagoon was the subject of presentations focused on the changes that have affected the Lagoon through human impact and advances to transportation methods, as well as biodiversity of this most important part of our local environment. Bo Platt of the Marine Resources Council gave a presentation on their work to raise awareness about the Lagoon and what must be done to restore it to a healthy condition again.

In late May Biologist Tim Kozusko and EEL Program Manager Mike Knight lead 17 kayakers on an adventurous paddle on the Sams Creek from Pine Island Conservation Area to the Sams House and back.

Preliminary plans are underway to build an educational access dock for Estuarine studies on the Indian River Lagoon near the Sams House Nature Center. The structure will also accommodate kayak/canoe docking.

## Kaitlin Hurley Joins EEL Program Naturalists at Sams House Nature Center

Welcome Kaitlin Hurley, newest member of the Sams House Staff who began as a naturalist with the EEL Program on May 9.

She recently completed an internship at the Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge where she assisted with youth programs.

A Titusville native, Hurley obtained her degree in Environmental Science from FSU. She likes plants and animals, but she really loves children and teaching them about nature. She and fellow naturalist Patty Rendon have prepared new curriculums for the upcoming school year when hundreds of students will visit the Sams House for environmental and historical programs.

All positions are now filled at the Sams House Nature Center.



Kaitlin Hurley

## Calendar of Events

- Sat., July 2, 11 a.m. to noon - "Pioneering the Wilderness of Pine Island"
- Sat., July 9, 10 a.m. to noon - Sewing Demonstration by Ladies of the Order of the Confederate Rose
- Sun., July 10, 10 a.m. to noon - Nature Craft Workshop
- Sat., July 16, 11 a.m. to noon - Mosquito Presentation
- Sat., July 24, 11 a.m. to noon - Butterfly Presentation
- Sat., October 22, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.- NMIHOA Annual Picnic
- Sat., February 11, 2017, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.- Annual Pioneer Day Festival at Sams House and St. Luke's

## EEL Program Celebrates 25 Years of Land Conservation

The Environmentally Endangered Lands (EEL) Program of Brevard County was established by means of a public referendum voted upon by residents of Brevard County to purchase and protect environmentally sensitive lands 25 years ago. There are now 24,000 acres made up of 32 properties in Brevard County protected and managed by the EEL Program. The Pine Island Conservation Area covers 880 acres which includes the Sams House Nature Center. The 25th Anniversary was celebrated by several public events at different EEL properties held during the month of May. Public activities were held at Sams House all day and into the evening on May 7 including a presentation by Gator Bill Robb, a reception and program about the accomplishments over the past 25 years, story telling by pioneer descendents, a campfire cookout and an evening owl prowl.



Gator Bill Robb (right) discusses alligators in nature pavillion at Sams House assisted by nephew Frank Robb (left).



Guests relax, tell stories and roast hot dogs and marshmallows around the campfire pit at Sams House.

## Snake Survey Being Conducted on PICA

*by Martha Pessaro, Sanctuary Steward*

Frank Robb is currently working on his degree in Environmental Sciences and has initiated a project with the EEL Program involving the surveying of the snake population.

Currently there are three boxes set up where the snakes go in and do not come out. These boxes have been used in snake surveys on the Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge at KSC. Frank has catalogued the trapping and release of snakes for the past two months and the species that keep appearing in the boxes are Coluber constrictor priapus, the Southern Black Racer. These non venomous snakes are abundant at the Pine Island Conservation Area (PICA) and Frank is working on species location, length, and sex. Staff has seen other species around the area, but none are entering the boxes at this writing.

Frank Robb is the nephew of Gator Bill Robb and assisted with the presentation on the occasion of the EEL Program 25th Anniversary during the month of May. We thank Frank for all of the work in collecting the data from this project as it is very helpful to our Management Plan for the Central Region.



Frank Robb, far right sets snake traps with the help of team.



Patty Rendon, Sams House naturalist, checks snake trap.

## July Begins Chopping and Prescribed Burns for PICA

July will be spent prepping for two prescribed fires at the Pine Island Conservation Area (PICA). The Environmentally Endangered Lands (EEL) Program staff will be using a roller chopper pulled by a dozer to “lay down”/chop overgrown vegetation. To see the process in action, a FWC video on YouTube can be viewed by searching “Roller Chopper 1.” The process will reduce the height of vegetation making for a safer more complete burn. With each unit burned at almost 100%, grasses and other native vegetation that has been shaded out by taller shrubs will have a chance to grow and get a foothold in the area. The whole process will allow the habitat to reach a more natural cycle.



The flatwoods habitat at PICA (2100 Pine Island Road, Merritt Island) historically burned every 1 to 3 years. Now fully staffed, the Central Region plans on burning with prescribed fire in that rotation of every 1-3 years. This will keep vegetation height lower and allow the historically native species to regain control. It will also reduce and minimize the risk of wildfires. The newly maintained habitat will offer visitors a more accessible and natural view of the area. The lower vegetation height will also offer better birding opportunities as well as a glimpse of the deer population foraging on new growth.

Come experience the many opportunities that this EEL sanctuary provides to better appreciate Brevard’s natural lands. For a historical view on the area, stop by Sams House at 6195 North Tropical Trail. Our education staff is on site Tuesday through Sunday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. with house and cabin tours every Thursday and Saturday at 3 p.m..

*David DeMeyer, EEL Land Manager, Central Region*

### Spring Sprucing



Volunteers spent Saturdays in April freshening up the native plant areas around the Sams House as well as trimming shrubs and trees and applying weatherproofing solutions to exterior exhibits and signage.

### Cub Scouts Built Butterfly Houses



Twelve members of Cub Scout Pack 701 from St. Lukes recently built butterfly houses and installed them in a native plant area near the new pavillion.

### Hands-on Recycled Papermaking at Sams



Participants were thrilled that Patricia Tierney, former naturalist at Sams House, could return for a Saturday session on making beautiful textured paper out of recycled paper. Some of the participants returned the following Saturday to add nature stenciling and design to their hand made paper.

Pictured to left is Shannah Trout in the screen room pulverizing scrap paper in blenders to be used for the paper making process.

## Contact Information

David DeMeyer, EEL Land Manager for Central Region; Martha Pessaro, Sanctuary Steward; Patty Rendon, and Kaitlin Hurley, EEL Naturalists at Sams House can be reached at 321 449-4720.

[www.facebook.com/samshousepineisland](http://www.facebook.com/samshousepineisland)

[www.facebook.com/eelbrevard](http://www.facebook.com/eelbrevard)

<http://www.brevardcounty.us/EELProgram/Areas/SamsHouseSanctuary/Home>

(this website is where the Volgistics program, which allows volunteers to sign up for shifts or projects online, as well as record volunteer hours, is located...click on the ♥)

Website: currently unavailable

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

Pine Island Knotes editor: Darleen Hunt, 321 452-8433, [dhunt125@aol.com](mailto:dhunt125@aol.com)

## Pine Island Preservation Society Board of Directors

Rick English, president;

John Schantzen, vice president;

Elaine Leclerc, secretary;

Patty Meyers and Darleen Hunt, co-treasurers;

Darleen Hunt, newsletter editor;

Sandee Natowich, webmaster;

Diane Stees; Al Sams; Jerry Stubbs; Celia Williams;

Noreen Watza; Kevin Gidusko; and Molly Thomas

## President's thoughts...

*Summer is upon us with a vengeance! The heat and storms of Florida afternoons can be hazardous to our health. Try to get most of your outdoor activities accomplished in the mornings to avoid those conditions.*

*As you can see from the schedule on the front page, there will be several programs in the air conditioned comfort of the Sams Cabin over the next few weeks. Please take advantage of those comfortable surroundings to have some fun and learn new skills and techniques.*

*This would also be a good time of year to make sure that your PIPS dues are up to date. Our dues pay a large part of the support that we provide to the PICA and Sams House. Those dues and volunteer hours are a great way to 'pay it forward' and provide a great resource for our residents and visitors alike. Encourage others to join in the fun and our efforts by sharing the membership application below with others who want to continue great programs for the community and help conserve our natural resources through support for the Brevard County EEL program.*



*Rick English*  
President

## MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Membership is open to any individual or organization willing to support the Pine Island Preservation Society in its activities to assist the Pine Island Conservation Area, including the historic Sams House, and the Environmentally Endangered Lands Program of Brevard County, Florida.

*Your contact information will be handled as private data and will not be shared with anyone.*

PLEASE PRINT

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

PLEASE CHECK CATEGORY OF ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP:  New  Renewal

<input type="checkbox"/> Senior (55+)	\$10	<input type="checkbox"/> Student	\$10	<b>Corporate Memberships</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Senior Couple (55+)	\$15	<input type="checkbox"/> Family	\$20	<input type="checkbox"/> Horseshoe Crab	\$100
<input type="checkbox"/> Individual	\$15	<input type="checkbox"/> Sams Descendants	\$10	<input type="checkbox"/> Gopher Tortoise	\$250
<input type="checkbox"/> Supporting	\$50	<input type="checkbox"/> Patron	\$1000	<input type="checkbox"/> Barred Owl	\$500
<input type="checkbox"/> Senior Couple Supporting	\$75	<input type="checkbox"/> Life	\$250	<input type="checkbox"/> Eagle	\$1000
				<input type="checkbox"/> Mastodon	\$5000

Please make check payable to Pine Island Preservation Society or "PIPS" and mail check and membership application to:  
Pine Island Preservation Society, Inc. 6195 North Tropical Trail, Merritt Island, FL 32953