



Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary
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**Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary
Youth Education Report
2006-07**

In outdoor education programs there is a common theme of interdependence within the natural world. It is known as the “web of life”. Students are taught that if one important element of the natural world is removed or disturbed, there can be serious consequences which affect the well being of the entire system. When all elements of the web are fully functioning, the system is in balance.

At Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary, we view interdependence in nature as a metaphor for the partnerships within the Youth Education programs. Students, teachers, volunteer guides, sponsors and staff bring their personal commitment, enthusiasm for learning and teaching, appreciation of natural sciences and an overall recognition of the value of conservation. These are integral elements of a balanced and very successful education system that serves over 4000 students annually.

Most notable of the Youth Education Activities are the Curriculum Programs – Insect Adventure and Wild Florida Adventure – presented to over 1200 students in 2nd and 5th Grades from 7 neighboring schools.

The boundaries of our web are being expanded through the impact of student programs. Multiple generations are involved, everyone experiences a deep level of understanding and participants are inspired to make behavioral changes in their lives. **The learning does not stop at the end of the field trip.** A lifetime of inquiry has begun.

The following year end report focuses on the participants of the Curriculum Programs. The impact of interdependence is highlighted through photos, student reports, teacher evaluations, volunteer comments, sponsor recognition and the annual 5th Grade poem from Sabal Palm Elementary School.

Welcome to our web!

Rebecca Beck
Youth Education Coordinator

Candace Forsyth
Donor Relations

“Web of Life Long Learning”



Spotting a new bird, recognizing a new plant, or the revelation of an unusual “blue” green tree frog are activities involving the joy of discovery and the wonder of natural science that bring life time benefits and rewards. The message of conservation is being carried forth by students of the Curriculum Programs. Teachers gain greater knowledge in habitats, plants and animals of Florida. Volunteer guides encourage others to become mentors. Chaperones tell their neighbors of eye-opening boardwalk treks. Sponsors build community ties.

STUDENTS



Students are the center of our learning web! They are the future conservationists. They benefit from the unique outdoor classroom at Corkscrew and the training and preparation provided for their teaching teams. Their appreciation for this exceptional learning is evident in their comments.

“Thank you for giving me the privilege to see all of those amazing animals and plants, I enjoyed seeing the alligator, the owl, the snake and the birds. The information is very interesting. I learned so much I name most of my plants in my backyard... **It’s just amazing how nature is...**” *Damian G, SPE 5th grade*

“I was so shocked about that trip. I wanted to help Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary forever. The reason why I want to help is because **I love how the beautiful plants shine and I love how the animals hunt and move around the land. I like it because it is nature.**” *Andy G., EES 5th grade*

“I had a great time there, especially when we saw the alligator eat the fish. It was so fun that when I got home I told my mom and dad everything! **I would remember my whole life when the alligator ate that big fish.** I would also remember those baby alligators, they were so cute. It was awesome how I got to see different animals. P.S. THIS TRIP WAS AWESOME!” *Tammy, SPE 5th grade*



“Thank you for teaching us about habitats in such a fun way...When I got home and told my mom about it she was dumbfounded because I knew so much. It was amazing.” *Kimberly G, SPE 5th grade*

COLLIER COUNTY SCHOOLS

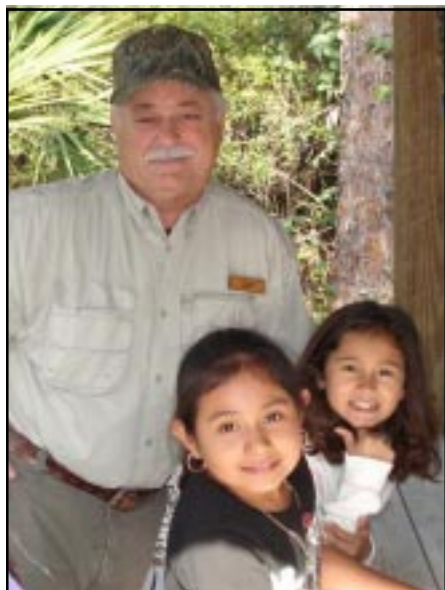
While the Corkscrew staff prepares and delivers programs on site, classroom teachers use gained knowledge to implement meaningful lessons that prepare students for their field experience. **Teachers and District Administrators play an invaluable role in this web and are viewed as extensions of our Sanctuary staff.**

“All teachers on our Poinciana second grade team thoroughly enjoyed the insect unit which included the fascinating field trip to the Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary....surely it is one of the year’s highlights. In our modern society, many students spend large parts of their young lives indoors in school, daycare and connected to electronic activities. **Teachers certainly are thankful for chances to help students understand and appreciate the environment in which they live.** It is an important understanding since today’s youth are the future stewards of our precious earth.” *Poinciana 2nd grade teaching team*



“As Science and Environmental Education for Collier County Public Schools, I fully support the “Field Trip Specialist” programs at Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary. Insect Adventures and Wild Florida Adventures are programs that provide both teachers and students with an opportunity to become experts in local habitats and issues concerning the environment so close to home... **The relevancy of a trip like this is immeasurable for teachers and students alike.** My hope is that this partnership continues to strengthen.” *Curt Witthoff, CCPS Science and Environmental Education Coordinator*

VOLUNTEERS



Students are inherently intrigued by outdoor naturalists. The historic love of Ranger Rick, the National Park Ranger and nature and wildlife enthusiasts has prevailed over our current generation of youth. Second Grade Insect Adventurers and Fifth Grade Wild Florida Adventurers stand wide eyed as they carefully soak up every piece of valuable information that our naturalists relay. **Corkscrew volunteer naturalists truly "guides", enabling students to experience the solitude and mystery of our pristine environment.** The volunteers on the Youth Education team are top notch and continue to educate themselves far beyond the basic workshops. They share their passion with our visiting school children.

"By improving our understanding of nature, we become better ambassadors to the students." *Jennifer Crawford, CSS volunteer*

Guides find fulfillment in volunteering and through mentoring, resulting in personal growth in all aspects of their lives.

"All of the educational programs include a trek of some length around the magnificent boardwalk. Perpetually unpredictable, the tour easily becomes its own education program; it is different every time, for every group. Smells, sounds, sights and sensations of the swamp surround small troops of student explorers accompanied by their guides.... **My volunteer experience at Corkscrew in itself rejuvenates me each time I participate. Whenever I leave Corkscrew, I leave understanding something new about nature—a new bird call, a butterfly/larva match, the name of a fresh water fish. And I love it a little bit more.**

Volunteering has segued into new experiences for me, further education, a job opportunity and creative ideas for teaching. As a teacher I now search for more ways to incorporate hands on learning outdoors for students. I discovered that science is one of my favorite subjects to teach. All of these terrific elements of my life originated with my phone call to Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary inquiring if they needed more volunteers...and that began a journey that I hope lasts a lifetime." *Jennifer Crawford, CSS volunteer*

Student reports and letters reflect not only all of the fun facts and environmental issues they have discovered, but consistently render sincere thanks to their "GUIDE" to the wild world!

"Dear Cliff, thank you for your guidance through the boardwalk. You made it enjoyable. **You showed the Earth's natural beauty and showed us how to see the world different.** Corkscrew Sanctuary is beautiful and nice to see all of the animals and plants. Enjoying nature is relaxing and peaceful. I hope I can go there again. It's truly a remarkable place for everybody and every age." *Rachel A., SPE 5th grade*



PARENTS

As chaperones, 150 adults personally experience the effectiveness of Curriculum Programs. Hundreds of additional **parents are influenced by their child's excitement.** Our web initiates conversations about conservation between generations.

2006-2007 SCHOOL SPONSORS

Blair Foundation

Dr. Allyn Golub

Karen and Stephen Clegg

Batchelor Foundation

Mrs. Valerie Kratz

Weslyn and Henry Strickland

Collier County Audubon Society

Mrs. Cassie Kiddoo

John and Virginia Rigsby

Special Thanks to : Collier County Public Schools
Big Cypress Basin

When I'm alone in Nature

By Mrs. Craig's 5th grade class, April 2007

When I'm alone in nature, I think about which birds make what sounds
and wonder if I will see a rare species
I watch an alligator catch his lunch
I see a cardinal fly above the trees
I can hear the sound of cardinals and red shouldered hawks
I think about all of the things nature has versus our fancy gadgets and I know nature would win

When I'm alone in nature I think about LIFE
My daily life as an alligator would be building gator holes and fighting other gators
I would be helping the birds because they would find fish in my gator holes
I see tiny baby alligators and I see an inch worm inching away
I would taste the sticks that I'm carrying and my food
I would smell other animal's scat and feel the mud and dirt beneath my feet as I am walking

When I'm alone in nature I think about all of the animals, plants and what I can do to save them
I think about what we humans are doing to the plants and animals
The swamp has the right to be here and we should always be able to enjoy every minute of it
I think about how all of the beauty interacts with each other as though it was a woven tapestry

As I listen to nature I hear the big alligator, the bee buzzing and the bugs crawling
How glamorous the plants are as they bloom in front of you
it's almost as though they are talking to you
Resurrection fern is so amazing because it comes back to life
I will surely remember the soothing chirp of birds and the occasional splash of water
I wish that we could go there again, to the enchanting Swamp

