



Panther Island: Restoring the Past
“Miracles can and do happen. What was destroyed before my eyes 40 years ago is now reborn”.
Ed Carlson, Sanctuary Director

The rebirth of Panther Island is another affirmation that it takes a varied group of human species to restore natural systems to sustain diverse wild populations. The Panther Island lands were once native, untouched habitat. Converted for agriculture and pasture, this 2880 acre property on the northwest border of the Sanctuary has been restored to a functioning natural system. Native flora and fauna are coming home.

Collaboration among scientists, engineers, investors, elected officials, public agencies and conservation experts contributed to the success of this project. Continued monitoring and perpetual management will be crucial. Now owned and managed by Audubon, Panther Island and an adjacent expansion site will soon serve as an unmatched **Restoration Institute**. Students, educators, and public and nonprofit partners will be able to experience the virgin untouched systems of Corkscrew, the restored mitigation bank, and 700 acres that will undergo major restoration over the next 10 years.

“It doesn’t take much energy, time, money or effort to degrade a natural system. It takes so very much to restore it once lost. Panther Island is unique. We have the great opportunity to start helping people understand this reality.” *Allyson Webb, PI Land Manger*

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Special thanks to:
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Eden Park Elementary

Collier County Audubon Society

Village Oaks Elementary

“Collier County Audubon invests heavily in environmental policy and advocacy. History has taught us that the major battles to hold destructive development at bay while encouraging smart growth last for a very long time, often across several generations. For that reason Collier Audubon also invests in environmental education for children who will be the ones to fight the good fight. We are very pleased to partner with Corkscrew Sanctuary in reaching young people to broaden their public school environmental education, as they will be the informed voters and leaders in the future.”
Alan Keller, President, CCAS

As a Sponsor, CCAS enabled an additional 250 students and 15 teachers from Immokalee schools to participate in Curriculum Programs at the Sanctuary. *Eden Park 5th Grade team relates,* “Your efforts have allowed our students a most valuable experience that they will remember for a very long time. Our visit to Corkscrew Sanctuary has instilled a new way of looking at nature that our students have now grown to love. Without your support, experiences like this would not be possible for our students.”



**CORKSCREW SWAMP
 SANCTUARY &
 BLAIR
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Education Report 2010-2011

**Diversity –
 National Audubon Society Focus,
 Corkscrew Implementation**

Among the 100,000 visitors on Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary’s boardwalk this season were members of National Audubon Society’s Board of Directors. Their annual meeting was an opportunity to discuss national initiatives. The NAS focus is to reflect on how our organization addresses diversity and ways to expand on the positive practices currently in place.



At Corkscrew even our habitats are diverse – pines, prairie and cypress; old growth forest and reclaimed mitigation lands; all impacted by rainy and dry seasons, fires and floods.

Within our education programs, we define diversity in terms of the wide variety of backgrounds, academic disciplines and perspectives of those who deliver scientific material to area students, who themselves are a demographically mixed audience.

The importance of providing science based programs is shared by Audubon, Collier County Public Schools under the Sunshine State Standards, local universities and the Corkscrew education team. Our common goal is achieved through numerous and varied teaching methods. In this report we will illustrate diversity in environmental education at the Sanctuary.

You will hear Partner Educator assessments on how they adapted teaching methods to the outdoor classroom; their students’ responses to experiential learning when they saw a bird or bug they’ve chosen to study, in the wild and visible from the Corkscrew trails. Highlighted are three Florida Gulf Coast University programs covering varied curriculums which involve professors from all departments of the school. Revisit Panther Island, a model of successful mitigation – from cow pasture to thriving wetlands and uplands – with more restoration to come. Meet our Sponsors who underwrite student programs. Once again diversity plays a role. Sponsors come from all areas of our community – foundations, corporations, significant individual donations and small contributions from conservation minded neighbors.

Join our successful team! Become a sponsor! Enlist as a Volunteer!
 Share our accomplishments as you enjoy this report!

**A special thank you to all those who participated in
 Education Department programs over the years.**

Rebecca Beck
 Director of Education

Candace Forsyth
 Donor Relations

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Elementary Curriculum Programs: Building the Foundation 2nd Grade Insect Adventure & 5th Grade Wild Florida Adventure

Corkscrew Sanctuary's partnership with Collier Schools continues to mature ensuring the highest quality cross-disciplinary educational programs. Both students and teachers are positively affected. Workshops expand the scientific knowledge of elementary instructors, as Partner Educators, and better prepare them to deliver classroom and field activities. This creates a more comprehensive and collaborative unit for students. Students benefit by applying knowledge in a real world setting.



"Insects were integrated across the curriculum. There were bugs in writing, math, reading, and even real ones in the classroom. As the children studied, Praying Mantises were growing inside their egg cases and Darkling Beetles were transforming right before their eyes. We were visited by entomologists from Mosquito Control and the University of Florida, Collier Extension. Children were excited to see what a swamp looks like, as many, have never had an experience like this. Most will tell you that their favorite part was the boardwalk or the dipping pond. It is not every day that you get to do things like that. As a culminating activity parents were invited to a PTO/SAC meeting where the kids sang insect songs, recited a poem and preformed a reader's theatre play."
2nd grade team
Sabal Palm Elementary



"It is always an exciting time of the year for both teachers and students when we delve into our Audubon Society Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary Unit. Being a part of this program is truly a remarkable experience that the students not only learn from, but also become advocates for its cause of preserving the land, animals, habitats, water and history." Candace Perez, Corkscrew Elementary 5th Grade

Fifth grade teacher, Shanna Guerin, shares her insight after visiting Corkscrew for the first time. "Our field trip to Corkscrew was nothing like I had first imagined. I had no idea how involved the whole experience would be. I originally thought that we would go on the boardwalk, look for some different species of animals, insects, and plants and maybe even talk a little about their habitats. I soon found out that there was so much more.

I was amazed when I was invited to attend a class at Corkscrew to help us better prepare for the upcoming trip. We went on the boardwalk and discussed the different ecosystems, types of wildlife species and various adaptations of plants and animals living in particular habitats. I came to realize just how little I knew. I began to see many connections to our current curriculum in science. At the end of the unit, I felt that both my students and I had learned a great deal. I am excited to have the opportunity next year to lead a group of eager students along the boardwalk."



University Programs: Ensuring the Future

National Science Foundation's "SENCER": A Community Approach

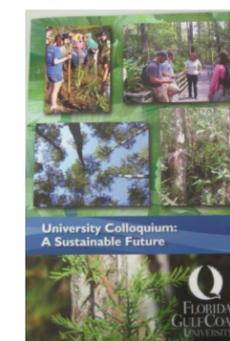
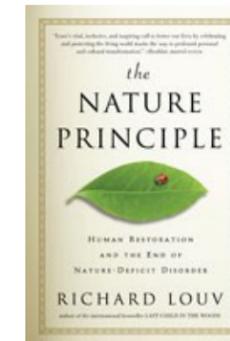
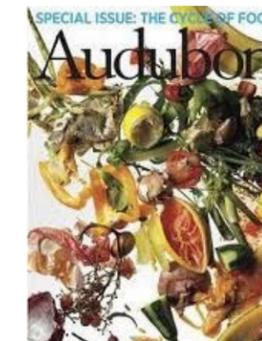
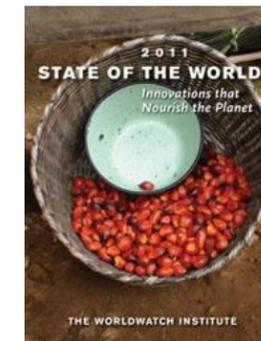
SENCER, "Science Education for New Civic Engagement and Responsibilities" is being used in studies on the Corkscrew boardwalk and Panther Island restoration site. "These have been valuable locations for my environmental biology class, which incorporates the new SENCER approach to pedagogy. SENCER integrates civic engagement and interactions with regional organizations within my overall course design. Student projects compliment their field studies and allow them to apply knowledge gained in the classroom. They are connected to a greater purpose of civic engagement."

David Green, FGCU Environmental Biology Professor/Audubon Member

Whitaker School of Engineering: A Practical Application

Established in fall 2005, the School offers an undergraduate degree program environmental engineering. The course of study involves the application of engineering principles to the design and development of systems, processes, and tools needed for the protection of the environment, human health, and natural ecosystems in order to foster sustainable development.

"I was pleased to engage an FGCU engineering class in applying their knowledge towards our wetland restoration challenges. Audubon exposed this cohort of future engineers to the possibilities and importance of designing with natural systems in mind, to show them it's possible to add value to the environment while meeting design criteria. Students were tasked with developing plans for three wetland restoration projects on Corkscrew property. This first year helped refine the design concepts and identified some important hurdles"
Jason Lauritsen, Assistant Director, Corkscrew Sanctuary



University Colloquium: An Ecological Perspective

"Colloquium" is an interdisciplinary class designed to explore multiple regional issues. Reading assignments for the course include specialized materials. On the list are "University Colloquium: A Sustainable Future" and The Worldwatch Institute's "State of the World, Innovations that Nourish the Planet." Both books are compilations of writings and reports. Worldwatch focuses on the 21st-century challenges of climate change, resource degradation, population growth, and poverty by developing and disseminating solid data and innovative strategies for achieving a sustainable society. Keeping with the trend Audubon Magazine April 2011 focused on The Cycle of Food, changing agricultural practices' impact on humans, wildlife and birds. Also recommended is Richard Louv's latest book, "The Nature Principle." Louv says, "The more high-tech we become, the more nature we need."

Corkscrew is a key field site for "Colloquium", hosting 2000 students each year. Faculty members attend workshops at Corkscrew and serve as guides on the trail. FGCU students in the Student Naturalist program accompany and assist instructors with delivery.

"The Student Naturalist program is a unique opportunity for those interested in education and the natural environment to continue their Colloquium experience as guides. Naturalists gain valuable experience in interpretation and develop leadership skills. Colloquium students really connect with the naturalists and are impressed by their peers' willingness to share their passion for the natural world. Alumni naturalists now work in the Lee County Schools, Calusa Nature Center, USGS and DEP. It truly has been a valuable asset of the FGCU-Corkscrew partnership." Sarah Davis, Colloquium Instructor/Campus Naturalist