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WC CONTACT INFORMATION

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

William Powell, President
Bill Bell, Vice President
Michael Boriss, Treasurer
James Schopp, Secretary
Kay Ballard, Director
wcboardofdirectors@swpropmgt.com

HOA STAFF PHONE NUMBERS & OFFICE HOURS

OFFICE: 239-732-7171
Hours 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.: Mon–Fri
After hours: 239-261-3440

Property Manager

John Rowland
wcmanger@swpropmgt.com

Assistant Manager

Jade McKim
wccassistantmanager@swpropmgt.com

Front Office Staff

Bonnie Lorence
adminwc@swpropmgt.com

Activities Director

Maribeth Jones
239-732-7017 – direct line
activitieswc@swpropmgt.com

SHADY PALM: 239-732-5995

Shady Palm Manager

Oscar Escalona
sppmanager@swpropmgt.com

Shady Palm Assistant Manager

Marcus Stone
spassistantmanager@swpropmgt.com

FACILITIES: 239-732-7171

Housekeeper

Antonia Diavila

Maintenance Supervisor

Derrick Olan



This month's cover photo

Thank you to **Sherry Brusha** for our cover photo of the nesting dove.

Winding Cypress website

www.windingcypress.org

Guardhouse/Safe Passage

239.732.7745 | 239-671-7274 after hours
<https://residential.safepassagesolutions.com/index.html>

myHOAst

<https://winding-cypress.myhoast.com/logon>

Newsletter Staff Contact

windingcypresscomm@gmail.com



Snack Shack – photo credit Jane Margulies

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BOARD NOTES & REMINDERS

It's hard to believe we are just seven homes away from being totally built-out! Isn't it wonderful to see the number of construction vehicles dwindling? There will, of course, be a few growing pains, but those are overshadowed by the benefits of living in paradise.

Speaking of benefits, we hope you'll join us for dinner at 4:45 PM March 7th. Our landscape contractor, Brightview, is providing us with a delicious meal, followed by an update/presentation at 6 PM. If you are interested in hearing about some of the challenges they have faced, and their proposed solutions, you won't want to miss this. Of course, we hope we can also show them our appreciation for the good work they have been doing – have you seen the beautiful new plantings around the pool and amenity center?

Getting back to growth, there's no doubt that communication is paramount to keeping things running smoothly. Of the 758 homes that have closed, 664 have opted to receive community-related email (94 have not). Additionally, 563 have registered for e-voting (195 have not). With the rising cost of paper and postage (not to mention the waste), we are most grateful to those of you who have opted for both.

As we launch into March there is so much more we could talk about, but we would be remiss if we didn't take a moment and thank one of our five board members, **Dr. James Schopp**, whose tenure will end on March 15th. It is impossible to capture all the "gifts" Jim has given us over the last year, but certainly his procedural guidance during the many board and community meetings has been invaluable, as has his consultation (as liaison) with the Appeals, Compliance, and ARC Committees. Jim, we can never thank you enough!

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

4 UPCOMING BOARD AND MEMBER MEETINGS



Friday, March 3, 10:30 AM

Open Board Meeting

[click here for agenda](#)



Tuesday Mar 14, 10:30 AM

Members' Meeting - the "threshold" vote

[click here for agenda](#)



Tuesday Mar 14, 11:00 AM

Open Board Meeting

[click here for agenda](#)



Wednesday Mar 15, 6:00 PM

Annual Meeting - Director election (no agenda attached)

Innovation is the ability to see change as an opportunity—not a threat. - STEVE JOBS

VOTING UPDATE

Our HOA has two separate yet equally important votes underway: whether or not to lower the voter threshold required to make future changes to our governing documents, AND the election of 2 directors.

VOTE TO AMEND THE GOVERNING DOCUMENTS

- ✓ 591 members out of 758 have voted on Amendment 1
- ✓ 579 on Amendment 2
- ✓ 566 on Amendment 3

Voting only remains open until the Special Members' Meeting, scheduled for Tuesday March 14th at 10:30 AM!

If you have not voted on the threshold amendments, OR you would like to CHANGE your vote on the amendments (even if you voted electronically), please pick up a ballot at the office, or email our property manager at wcmanger@swpromgt.com to request one.

Again, a special thank you to our members who volunteered to help other members with their

amendment voting: Matthew Zepnick and Donna Huddle.

ELECTION

265 members out of 758 have voted in the director election.

Voting only remains open until our Annual Meeting, scheduled for Wednesday March 15th at 6:00 PM!

For those NOT voting electronically in the election, [CLICK HERE](#) for the agenda, proxy, ballot and candidate bios. Voting materials are also available at the management office. The election vote is a SECRET ballot. Your ballot must be placed in a smaller, SEALED envelope (do not place proxies inside the sealed ballot envelope). The sealed ballot envelope is then placed in a larger sealed envelope with your proxy. Your address and signature are written on the outer envelope only.



Why can't we be friends? - photo credit Jane Margulies



Henry, a Painting - credit Sherry Brusha

COMMITTEE UPDATES

Architectural Review Committee

Ronnie Asafaylo, Chair

SOLAR PANELS

Did you know that the installation of solar panels on your roof for heating your pool may be allowed? If interested, please submit an ARC application and necessary documentation as per the checklist found on www.windingcypress.org.

Please note:

- Any owner who installs a solar panel is advised that the roof warranty may be voided or adversely affected as a result of the installation of solar panels on the roof.
- Solar panels may not be installed on the front elevation of the home.
- All framework panels on the roof must be black or painted to match the color of the roof tiles. The piping must be painted to match the surface to which it is attached.
- A Collier County permit is required prior to beginning installation and must be “FINALED” by the county indicating that county inspections are final and approved, and the project is complete.

PLANT LIST

Have you seen our new and improved plant list for 2023 on www.windingcypress.org? It's beautiful! The plants are listed alphabetically and grouped by the type of plant—accent, groundcover, hedges, ornamental trees, perennials, shrubs, etc. There are now attractive color photos with descriptions indicating scientific names, plant size, and sunlight requirements to help you choose the right plant for the right area. If you are interested in making changes to your garden landscape, please submit an ARC application and necessary documentation as per the checklist found on www.windingcypress.org.

Building & Grounds Committee

Mike Merola and Vince D'Andrea, Co-chairs

GENERAL

- The front fountain is working! The submersible lights will be replaced shortly.
- Bentley Electric will be repairing the streetlights as soon as the parts arrive. LED drivers and boards are on order.
- New shoe cleaners have been installed near tennis courts 4 and 5.
- The board is evaluating a proposal from US Tennis to mitigate water and clay buildup and provide drainage around tennis court 1, and between court 5 and the pickleball courts. In addition, there is an option to clear out the path between the pickleball courts and tennis court 5 to provide an increased walking/sitting area and enhanced aesthetics.
- The fire pit next to Shady Palm has been replaced.
- Three new pool pump motors have been installed.
- Those who attended the February 17 board meeting saw a presentation on Citra-Shield, a product that can be sprayed onto walkways, gutters, and roofs to keep these areas clean for long periods of time. The board is currently evaluating whether to use the product on common areas.
- The committee is working with the finance committee addressing the Delta Engineering reserve report.
- The committee is also reviewing the transition committee report, the Kipcon engineering report, and the Delta engineering report to compile a list of deficiencies to present to Pulte.

COMMITTEE UPDATES – CONT'D

LANDSCAPING

- Our landscape company, Brightview, recently provided us with a new site manager. Mike Patterson has a degree in horticulture and has served as a high-level manager. Along with our new site manager assignment, Brightview is also in the process of hiring more employees for WC. Their goal is to provide us with 2 irrigation techs, a 7-person mow crew, 2 4-man prune crews, 4 spray techs, and 2 managers. Additionally, there is a 4-man agronomy team who will continue to visit the property as needed.
- If you have a landscape issue, please place a ticket on the Brightview portal: hoa.brightview.com Be sure to include a contact number so Brightview can call and schedule a time to meet you at your property. If you have not previously registered with Brightview, click "Register" at the top right and put in the community code: WC2022BV
- Our HOA has a **limited** budget to replace dead shrubs and trees. Your replacement may take some time. Additionally, ordering the plants can take up to 6 weeks, depending on the plant species.
- Brightview fertilized the entire property during the month of February.
- Please keep in mind that irrigation does not run on Fridays anywhere on the property. Collier County restrictions allow for irrigation every day except Fridays.

Finance Committee

Steve Shedd & Jim Sullivan, Co-chairs

The Finance Committee has received the HOA's financial statements for the month of January. These statements are of particular interest as we will be measuring our performance against a budget prepared by the homeowners and not Pulte.

The committee has also completed its review of the three proposals mentioned at the last Board meeting. These included tennis court maintenance, cleaning of common area sidewalks and drains, and the replacement of our current security apparatus and system. The Committee's recommendations were provided to the board.

Our Fiscal Year 2022 financial statements were provided to the auditors, and we expect a draft of the FY2022 Audit Report by the end of March.

Activities & Social Events Advisory Committee

Adrienne Bergquist & Pat Orangio, Co-chairs

February had a little bit of everything, from baseball games to concerts to Mardi Gras! March promises to be more fun and games—check out the activities at <https://www.windingcypress.org/current-events-activities!> And remember, if you need to cancel for any reason, please let Maribeth in the Activities Office know. If funds have not yet been disbursed for payment to the venue, she may be able to process a refund for you. Please do NOT request a refund via the website or from your credit card company.

A couple of reminders:

- Please do not prop doors open prior to, or during, events in the Amenity Center.
- Remember to bring either your paper ticket, or your smartphone with the QR code from your activity/event confirmation, for entry to any event you have paid for.
- Please be mindful and respectful of signs on doors during an event and be sure to check in only at the entrance indicated.

And as always, we thank all of you for your continued support!

COMMITTEE UPDATES – CONT'D

Compliance Committee

The Compliance Committee

The Compliance Committee would like to remind all residents to be sure that your hired contractors are licensed and insured. Below is a news article illustrating what happened to one unfortunate homeowner who did not do their due diligence.

https://local.newsbreak.com/naples-fl/2935384426738-naples-man-arrested-after-remodeling-home-without-contractor-license?s=dmg_local_email_bucket_11.web2_fromweb

A few WC Reminders:

We love seeing everyone enjoying our beautiful community and amenities! We ask you please keep in mind a few things:

- All food and beverages must be 4 feet from the pool wet deck. No glass is allowed in enclosed pool area
- While it is nice to be polite to others, we ask you not use your fob to let others in unless you know they are owners in our community
- No animals are permitted in the enclosed pool area or Shady Palm
- Pool lounge chairs cannot be reserved
- It is prohibited to climb on the waterfall and rocks
- Overnight street parking or in the community parking lots is prohibited unless authorized by the HOA for certain circumstances (ex. driveway paver sealing)
- Electric bicycles and golf carts are not permitted on the sidewalks or walking paths
- All golf carts must be registered with the Winding Cypress office and display and Winding Cypress decal on their vehicle.

Safety & Access Control Committee

Michelle Apgar, Chair

At the February 17th board meeting, the committee presented their research, findings, and suggestions for access control, speed control and additional stop signs. A representative from the committee's recommended access control vendor, Ramco, was present, and answered several questions.

Additionally, Collier County and Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) did a resident presentation on bears, trash, and local happenings. The presentation was organized by committee member Ray Leshinger, and Seacrest Southwest's Activity Director, Maribeth.

COMMITTEE UPDATES – CONT'D

Shady Palm Advisory Committee

Susanne Abbiati, Chair

Reminders:

Hours: The Shady Palm is now open at 11 AM during lunch times, Wed-Sunday! Also, remember that from 3PM-5PM on those same days, we serve up Happy Hour! Regular kitchen hours stand (with no food served between 3:30PM-4PM). Half-price special on house liquor and wine only; \$1 off draft beer only. All other drinks at published prices.

New menu, new items, new kids' menu: The Shady Palm introduced a new menu last month, with drink and kids' specials. We also added a cappuccino and espresso maker!

Wine: The café is now offering some lower-priced "house" wines for variety. Please note: all café wine pours are 9 oz.

Capacity: It is a busy time of year, and the Shady Palm has certainly experienced a big increase in business! That's great, and we thank all of you for your continued patronage! However, due to the limited capacity of the café, wait times have been longer than usual. To help with this, the Shady Palm now has a hostess, Esparta. Please be patient as we work to accommodate everyone in a timely fashion! As you dine during the busy times, we want you to relax and enjoy your meal! We do ask, however, that you please be aware that your neighbors and friends may be waiting for a table.

Adherence to Rules:

- As a reminder, no dogs are allowed in the Shady Palm.
- For health and safety reasons, the Shady Palm must observe the "No shirt, no shoes, no service!" rule. Please ensure your guests and renters are aware. When entering the café from the pool area, please be sure to wear a t-shirt or bathing suit cover-up, and shoes or sandals.
- The Shady Palm staff is here to provide a pleasing, delicious dining experience. Please be advised that the staff is not responsible for policing the outside/pool area. If you observe an issue, please report it to the office during hours, or call Seacrest Southwest Management after hours at 239-671-7274.



Swallow-Tailed Kite in Flight – photo credit Dick Murray

DID YOU KNOW...?

The nickname for
Naples, Florida is
Paradise Coast.

Is it any wonder??

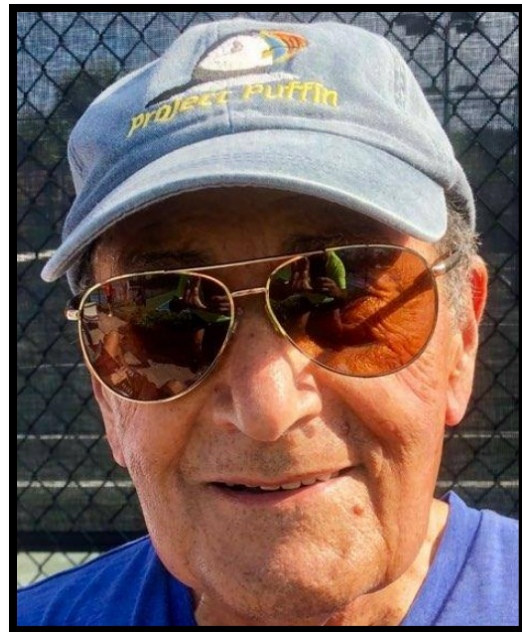
RESIDENT PROFILE: RALPH AKHAVI

Whoever said, “To know him is to love him” must’ve known Ralph Akhavi. A thoughtful, patient, and soft-spoken gentleman of 84, Ralph (whose birth name is Homayoon) exudes patience, kindness, and charm. Yet underneath his calm and gentle exterior, Ralph embodies a keen intelligence, a dry wit, and an incredible fortitude not many can claim.

Born in British-controlled Persia (now known as Iran) in the late 1930’s, Ralph was the oldest of three boys. When Ralph was very young his father, Ali, was invited to the U.S. as part of an Iranian delegation to discuss post-WWII issues between Iran and the states. Having earned a Ph.D. in Economics and Law in France, Ali was an expert on Iran. He was subsequently persuaded by his American counterparts to relocate the rest of his family to the U.S.

When Ralph was six, he, his mother, and his two younger brothers traveled (by a rather circuitous route, via Alexandria, Egypt) by ship to the United States. After a month-long voyage, the family was reunited in Manhattan where they lived in a one-bedroom apartment. Ralph’s family subsequently moved to Larchmont, N.Y. when Ralph was nine, where they remained for the rest of Ralph’s childhood. As the children were speaking both Farsi and English, one of their neighbors had trouble pronouncing the boys’ names. “My Persian name is Homayoon, but our neighbor struggled with it so he called me Ralph,” he laughs. “My middle brother, Shahrough, became Jack. I guess the youngest, Shahin, was pronounceable because he never gave him a nickname!”

Ralph’s father Ali was invited to return to Iran in the early 1950’s by the future [Prime Minister Mossadegh](#), a widely respected and keenly patriotic man. Unlike his predecessors, Mossadegh was honest and extremely democratic. Once appointed Prime Minister (PM) by the Shah, he in turn appointed Ali Akhavi as his Minister of Economics. Mossadegh was revered by the people of Iran for his social and political advancements. However, Iranian politics, including relations with Great Britain, were extremely fractious at the time.



What does this have to do with Ralph and his family? Turns out, a lot. In 1953 the Shah fled Iran during violent uprisings. At the time, Churchill was PM of England. He approached then-president Truman, requesting U.S. assistance against the uprising. Truman refused. The subsequent president, Eisenhower, however agreed to provide assistance via the CIA through a plot called [Operation Ajax](#). This ultimately reinstated the Shah and led to the arrest of Mossadegh and his cabinet, including Ali Akhavi. Thankfully, orders from the CIA forbade the Shah from executing the former PM and his cabinet. He was, however, empowered to hold them all under arrest, which he did.

Ralph’s father remained in prison in Iran until sometime around 1965. During this time, Ralph received a full scholarship to Lafayette College in PA. After two years, Ralph took leave to serve in the U.S. Army for 3 years, whereupon he returned to Lafayette and earned a degree—and met his future wife, Marie. They hit it off so well that, when Marie moved to NYC to work, Ralph enrolled in Columbia University. Upon receiving his MBA, he and Marie married and moved to Greenwich Village.

RESIDENT PROFILE: RALPH AKHAVI

“While I was serving in the Army, my father was finally released from prison and allowed to leave Iran,” Ralph noted with a smile. “I visited him in Miami, and he was excited about Iran’s booming economy at the time. He encouraged us to go, so Marie and I packed up and moved to Iran.” Once there, Ralph joined his father at Don Baxter Labs, manufacturing pharmaceuticals and disposables such as syringes and catheters. They were quite successful, and Marie and Ralph made a beautiful life in Teheran. They formed a large social network of friends, joined a local country club, and hosted dinner parties. They also adopted a little Iranian girl at six-weeks old, who they named Leila.

Shortly thereafter the embassy was overrun, Americans were taken hostage, and the embassy was taken over by revolutionaries. The Shah once again fled Iran, leaving the political climate in uncertainty. “The Shah was still in power, corrupt, and suffering with cancer,” explained Ralph. “But as long as we didn’t oppose him, he left us alone.” However, in the late 1970’s, the second revolution against the Shah began. “An American representative from the embassy—possibly from the CIA—visited us in Teheran in 1979 and asked what our thoughts were if the U.S. allowed the Shah into the U.S. for treatment,” Ralph continued quietly. “We advised that he should be allowed in as he had been a US ally; however, it would be very unpopular in Iran and therefore held against the U.S. At this point, the Reverend Ayatollah Khomeini—who had previously been exiled by the Shah—returned and organized a Muslim Shiite religious group who took over the government. They confiscated our company without compensation, and it was a dangerous situation for me and my family.”

In the midst of this political upheaval, while Ralph’s father relocated to Paris, Marie and Ralph packed up to leave Iran. Unable to persuade Ralph’s mother to join them, they left for the U.S. with Leila—leaving their passports in the care of the Swiss embassy. Yet once again, life would throw them a curve ball. “When we tried to leave Switzerland to fly to the U.S., we were informed that we could not go because Leila was still an Iranian citizen. The gentleman from the embassy

who had contacted us in Teheran didn’t want anything to do with us anymore. Finally, Marie’s father and godfather prevailed on then-Senator Dodd from Connecticut to arrange for a humanitarian visa for our daughter.” With their belongings and Leila’s visa in hand, they eventually flew to Connecticut, bought a home, and settled in Darien. Once here, they officially adopted Leila as a U.S. citizen.

Shortly after getting his family settled, Ralph returned to Iran to move his mother to an apartment. Once she was settled and he attempted to return to the U.S., life really got interesting. “That wasn’t going to happen. I was arrested at the airport! The officials told me they were detaining me as a spy for the CIA,” laughed Ralph, shaking his head. “I was so confused! None of it was true, and I tried to explain this to them. However, no one would believe me.” During the next three years, Ralph endured a harrowing life forced between house arrest and prison. He was subjected to three mullah-run trials, each with no verdict delivered. Ralph finally appealed to one mullah, saying “I have a duty to look after my family!” For some unknown reason, he released me.”

While Ralph was imprisoned, the same embassy gentleman contacted Marie and asked if they could eavesdrop on her phone calls with Ralph. Assuming the CIA was the party involved in the wiretap, she felt she had no choice—she agreed. During the next three years, during Ralph’s sporadic periods under house arrest, he was able to place calls to Marie. They never mentioned his situation or other political details to each other, knowing the CIA was listening in.

When asked what arrest was like in Iran, Ralph shrugged nonchalantly. “Being under house arrest was okay because I was restricted to my own apartment. But prison was not. I was in a cell with many other men, and I avoided conversation. I didn’t want to know anything about any of their charges, because I didn’t want to be forced to repeat what I knew to the guards. They fed us garbage, and every time they moved us from one location to another, they blindfolded us.” Was he frightened? “Only when I was

RESIDENT PROFILE: RALPH AKHAVI

blindfolded. They were executing prisoners, and I was afraid, since I could not see where I was being taken, that I would mistakenly be placed with the men being executed. It was very stressful.”

During this time, Ralph’s father passed away in France. Years later Ralph’s mother came to the U.S. and lived with them until Leila was grown. Ralph and Marie eventually relocated to Florida, and his elderly mother died shortly thereafter. “Her entire world had turned upside down,” Ralph said quietly. “Nothing was the same anymore.”

These days, Ralph doesn’t think too much about the turmoil and fear of those years. “I stay in touch with my brothers— Shahrough travels between Egypt and the U.S. with his Egyptian wife, and Shahin lives in Paris. But because of the religious faction ruling the country, I am afraid that the situation in Iran will get worse before it gets better. Women are forced to wear veils and are executed if they don’t comply. The Ayatollah is now 84, and all the power is with the mullahs.” So rather than dwell on the past, Ralph fills his days with his grandchildren and great-granddaughter Josephine. No longer playing tennis or pickleball, Ralph spends time playing bridge online and dining with friends. And as members of the Naples Council on World Affairs, they recently gave a presentation on present-day Iran. With their wealth of insight and experience to offer, this writer is sure it was a presentation worth watching!



What exactly is the “Ides of March”?

Beware the Ides of March, as the saying goes. So what does that even mean? The word “Ides” is derived from the Latin word “idus,” which refers to the middle day of any month in the ancient Roman calendar. Contrary to popular superstitious belief surrounding its origins, Ides simply marks the first day of the full moon in every month, typically falling between the 13th and 15th. Therefore, the Ides are specifically the 15th day of the months of March, May, July, or October, and the thirteenth day of the remaining months.

The Ides were the designated days for settling debt each month in the Roman empire and generally included the seven days preceding the Ides for this purpose. No doubt debtors who could not pay their debts considered the Ides to be unlucky days as they were typically thrown into prison or forced into slavery.

WILDLIFE FOCUS: PALM RATS

There is a prevalent pest in Winding Cypress. It might be cute to some people, but it is certainly a destructive nuisance. It is best to be proactive so that it doesn't become a pest to your home. This pest is called a Palm Rat, also known as roof rats, citrus rats, black rats, and ship rats. They belong to the Muridae family of the rodent. The most common identifying characteristic of palm rats is their tail. They are hairless and longer than the combined length of their head and body.

Palm rats prefer lofty homes like tree canopies, dense shrubs, and climbing vines. They begin searching for food shortly after sunset, using trees, utility lines, downspouts, and fences to gain access to attics, overhead garage storage, woodpiles, and other sources for shelter and food. They are nocturnal and scurrying sounds in the attic at night are often the first sign of a palm rat infestation in a home.



If you have a palm tree within three feet of your roofline, it will be easy for these rodents to jump from the tree onto your roof. (Try to keep your palm trees from touching your house.) If the openings on your roof are not properly sealed, then rats will gladly move into your attic. Any vent on your roof that has an unobstructed opening of over half an inch is an open door into your home. Likewise, you should try to use an obstruction in your downspouts like the one linked here for your convenience. Be mindful of how easy an open door is and keep your garage doors closed, especially at dusk and dawn. [AMAZON DOWNSPOUT](#)

Once you have palm rats in your attic, they will proceed to chew insulation and wiring, defecate all over the place, and make scurrying sounds that will drive you crazy in the early morning hours. In general, the rats will stay in the attic but will occasionally move into the walls of your home. Be vigilant if you see evidence of feces in and around your home (see image below.)



Salmonella, leptospirosis, and rat-bite fever are among the dozens of diseases spread by palm rats. When foraging for food, palm rats contaminate food meant for humans, pets, and livestock. Palm rats are omnivores, eating both plants and animals, and are very fond of citrus fruit. They also favor pet food, pet feces, birdseed, meat, and grease, infesting storage sheds and BBQs. Besides spreading disease, palm rats may cause extensive damage when nesting in walls and attics. Chewed, exposed wires inside walls can spark, causing interior walls to catch fire. Should you find yourself with an infestation, you will most likely need to reach out to a local animal and wildlife trapper.

OUT & ABOUT: CREW

What exactly is CREW Land & Water Trust?

In the 1970s, Ed Carlson and Mike Duever were attempting to determine the best way to manage the water levels of Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary. As they began looking at the contour lines in the area, they found that the best way to protect the water of Corkscrew Swamp was to maintain the existing watershed in its natural state. Piece by piece, Audubon, Lee County, and the South Florida Water Management District began acquiring pieces of the watershed. In the 1980s, the concept of the Corkscrew Regional Ecosystem Watershed (CREW) was conceived to assist in the acquisition of the entire CREW project which encompassed Corkscrew Marsh, Flint Penn Strand, Bird Rookery Swamp, and Camp Keais Strand.

In 1989 Corkscrew Regional Ecosystem Watershed Land & Water Trust was formed and designated as a public/private partnership trust made up of adjoining landowners, businesspeople, governmental agencies, and conservation interests, to coordinate the land acquisition and land management for this 60,000-acre watershed project. The CREW Project boundaries now encompass 70,249 acres, of which nearly 64,000 are in some form of conservation.

and is managed by the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD). The heart of CREW is Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary, owned by the National Audubon Society. Located just to the south of Corkscrew Swamp is the CREW Rookery Bird Swamp, the subject of our spotlight this month.



Spotlight on CREW Bird Rookery Swamp

If it's wildlife you want to see, the CREW Bird Rookery Swamp is the place for you! Containing twelve miles of natural paths and a 1500' boardwalk, this CREW gem provides a place for hikers to immerse themselves in the Big Cypress Swamp without getting their feet wet. Once parked, you'll begin your journey along a well-worn path that quickly joins a short walk along CREW's longest boardwalk. Almost immediately, you'll find yourself ground-level with some of Florida's most exciting wildlife, including snakes, fish, ibis, vultures, wood storks, hawks, herons—you name it for bird sightings—as well as Florida's ubiquitous alligators.

According to Robert Lucius, CREW's Executive Director, you can enjoy this—and all CREW public areas—from dawn until dusk, 365 days a year. "Once the SFWMD purchased the lands, they became accessible to the public. CREW Trust offers free private and group hikes and other educational offerings as part of our mandate to facilitate public access on behalf of the district. We work hard to serve as educators for the public, offering information on both the ecosystem and the water system here at CREW." With a small core staff of



Today, approximately 28,000 acres of land inside the CREW Project boundaries has been purchased

OUT & ABOUT: CREW

three (including Bob) as well as volunteers, he explained that public membership to the Trust is key, helping them to maintain more than forty miles of trails. Membership ensures early access to programs, discounts, and members-only events. “Memberships really are the core of how we continue to move forward, offering many school programs, two private and primitive campsite opportunities, private tours, and other educational opportunities for the public—most free of charge.” The Trust also offers trail sponsorships (currently six, located at various trail heads), and an annual golf tournament typically held in October.

Impact of Development on CREW Natural Habitats

In addition to providing natural flood protection, water filtration, and vital aquifer recharge to these protected areas, CREW also serves as an important wildlife corridor and as an environmental education field-classroom for all ages. Boasting a myriad of natural communities—including marshes, cypress and maple swamps, oak hammocks, and pine flatwoods—CREW provides crucial habitat for many of Florida’s native wildlife, including the swallow-tailed kite, black bear, and Florida panther. In fact, as we experience the recent burgeoning population growth in Southwest Florida, the area is experiencing significantly greater demands on natural resources, especially water. Just as importantly, we are seeing a significant decrease in green spaces for natural outdoor recreation and—

perhaps most importantly—a frighteningly rapid shrinking of Florida’s natural wildlife habitat.

FMI on CREW Land & Water Trust and CREW Bird Rookery Swamp

Directions to CREW Bird Rookery Swamp: From Interstate 75 exit 111, Immokalee Rd (CR 846), drive east for 11.4 miles. After the curve, you pass the stoplight for Oil Well Rd (CR 858). When you reach Shady Hollow Blvd, turn left. Follow the road for 1.5 miles to the trailhead parking on the right.



Exec Director: **Robert (Bob) Lucius** is a retired U.S. Marine who joined the CREW Land & Water Trust after a long and varied career in government, academia and the nonprofit sector in the United States and abroad.

Since relocating to SWFL, Bob has taught sustainability courses at Florida Gulf Coast University. He is a graduate of Norwich University, National University, the Naval Postgraduate School, George Washington University and Fielding Graduate University, where he received his Ph.D. in Organizational Development & Change. Bob and his wife Casey have a son and several rescue cats who fill their lives with affection and occasional terror. You can contact Bob at rlucius@crewtrust.org . FMI on CREW Trust: <https://crewtrust.org/about/>

Just a few sightings from this author on a recent visit to CREW Bird Rookery Swamp...





MONTHLY ACTIVITIES

Be sure to sign up for any activity you may be interested in at <https://www.windingcypress.org/current-events-activities>

Winding Cypress

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6 MARCH | 11-2pm

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MONTHLY ACTIVITIES



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DAY**

FRIDAY, MARCH 17TH

\$40

**6-9PM
SHADY PALM**



\$10

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EVENT ROOM AT THE AMENITY CENTER

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Monday, 7:00 PM
March 27th Event Room

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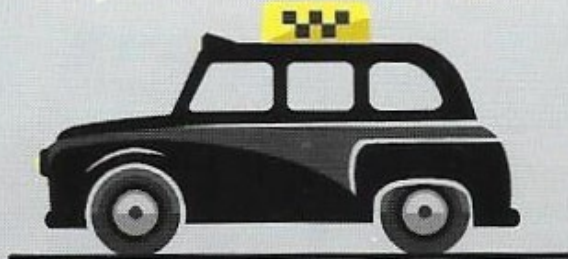


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