

CHNEP 2013 calendar celebrates natural environment



The CHNEP 2013 calendar depicts the beauty and diversity of the native, natural environment of southwest Florida — all thanks to the 165 people who generously donated more than 400 photographs and paintings, those who completed an online survey, and our financial partners, sponsors and donors.

See www.CHNEP.org to learn more about the calendar. Calendars are mailed to all who are *Harbor Happenings* subscribers as of Sept. 14. New subscribers will pay \$15 to have a calendar mailed. Calendars will also be available at select events and several locations in November.

Florida Panther, DeSoto County | Susan E. Hoffman

Remapping the Condition of the Shoreline — You Can Help Volunteers Needed to Update Shoreline Survey in 2013

Citizen kayakers and boaters completed the first comprehensive mapping of the Lee and Charlotte county estuarine shoreline in 2007 and again in 2010. Volunteers paddled and motored along the urban and residential coasts, each time collecting more than 5,000 important pieces of information about how much shoreline was natural vegetation, nonnative vegetation or “hardened” with seawalls or riprap. They also estimated hurricane damage to the vegetation.

The initial shoreline surveys combined on-site field visits by volunteers with aerial photography interpreted by scientists at Photo Science. Photo Science compared the 2007 data to aerial photo data and then incorporated it into a report.

With volunteer help, the CHNEP plans on updating the shoreline survey by spring of 2013. The update will compare the results of all three surveys. The 2013 survey is supported with a grant from the Florida Coastal Management Program, Florida Department of Environmental Protection and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

These surveys provide accurate shoreline vegetation condition information that helps inform resource managers in their efforts to restore and maintain estuary shorelines that support diverse fishery and invertebrate populations. The data are also used in studies such as one on the wetland conditions and changes within the watershed, which was conducted by the Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council and the CHNEP, and funded by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the CHNEP. Survey information helps implement the *Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan* (CCMP), the CHNEP’s plan to protect the environment.

We need a corps of volunteer kayakers and boaters to help conduct the shoreline survey in 2013. No experience is necessary. The

CHNEP will provide training and materials, though volunteers will need to have their own water transportation. We will be organizing volunteers and team leaders beginning in December. If you would like to volunteer for the shoreline survey or would like more information about the project, please contact CHNEP Communications Manager Maran Hilgendorf (mhilgendorf@swfrpc.org, 866/835-5785, ext. 240).

The reports mentioned in this article and background information about the study methods are available at www.CHNEP.org.



Joe Mullen and Ed Engel surveyed Coral Creek and Amberjack Slough in 2007.

The shoreline is an important transition area from land to water. Native vegetation provides valuable contributions to the food web and protect land from erosion. More than 4,000 urban lots were reviewed in 2007 and 2010. In 2010, 52% of the lots had mangroves, up 4% from 2007. Of lots with mangroves, 39% trimmed them, up 7% from 2007. Of trimmed mangroves, 38% were less than 6 feet in height, a violation of state standards, down 8% from 2007.