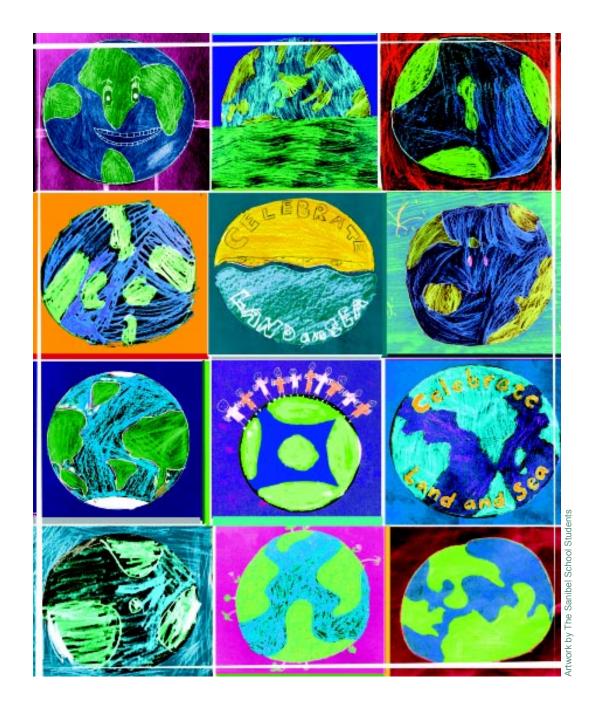


Sanibel-Captiva Conservation Foundation



Annual Report 2005-2006

A Tradition of Caring......



Dear Members,

Sincerely,

Erick Lindblad Executive Director

hick Listlad

Board of Trustees

Paul Roth, *President*Gwenda Hiett-Clements, *Vice President*Ron Gibson, *Treasurer*Janie Frese, *Secretary*Richard A. Collman
Dr. Carolyn Gray
Bill Hillebrandt
Wally Kain
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Ron Gibson, Finance
Dean Skaugstad, Hammerheads (Carpenters)
Wally Kain, Land Management
Paul Roth, Marine Laboratory
Gwenda Hiett-Clements, Membership
Gwenda Hiett-Clements, Resource Development
Fran Cameron, Shop Volunteers

Staff and Volunteer Support Staff

Administrative:

Art Weissbach

Erick Lindblad, Executive Director Wendy Daleiden, Business Manager Marti Bryant, Development Coordinator Cheryl Giattini, Legacy Programs

Environmental Education

Kristie Anders, Education Director
Melissa Upton, Nature Center Manager/Educator
Richard Finkel, Environmental Educator
Dee Serage-Century, Landscaping for Wildlife
**Steve Mickletz, Wilmeth Environmental Education Fund

Marine Laboratory:

Dr. Rick Bartleson, Research Scientist
Dr. Eric Milbrandt, Research Scientist
Dr. Mike Hannan, Data Manager
Molly Murphy, Research Administrator
John Reguzzoni, Research Associate
***Eric Berris, Research Assistant
***Kim Cressman, Research Assistant
***A.J. Martignette, Research Assistant
***Jon Guinn, Research Assistant
***Jeff, Research Assistant

***Brad Klement, Research Assistant

****Jeff Siwicke, Research Assistant

*Dr. Art Weissbach, Visiting Research Assistant

**Lauren Linsmayer

**Mark Nicastro

Native Plant Nursery:

Jenny Evans, Native Plant Nursery Manager Lewis Fort, Nursery Assistant

**Andrea Yacaginsky

Nature Shop and Bookstore:

*Sheilah Morley, Nature Shop Coordinator

*Judi Daugherty, Assistant Shop Coordinator

*Fran Cameron, Volunteer Coordinator

*Carol Gestwicki and *Orlene Shimberg, Book Buyers

Sea Turtle Conservation

*Bev Ball, Program Coordinator

*Sam Landry, Coordinator, Captiva

*Tory and Bill Burch, Coordinators, East End Sanibel

Wildlife Habitat Management:

Brad Smith, Ecologist/Land Manager Chris Lechowicz, Biologist/Herpetologist Victor, Habitat Management Technician

Ron Gestwicki, Field Biologist

**Cara Faillace, Shorebird Project

**Amanda Bryant,

*Volunteer

- **Intern
- ***Grant-supported
- ****Partnership with Florida Gulf Coast University

Volunteers



Caption

To find joy in work is to discover the fountain of youth.
- Pearl S. Buck

We enjoy our volunteers very much and hope that they find joy in working at the Conservation Foundation. When you look at the quantity and quality of volunteer work that occurs with everything we do and accomplish, it is impressive beyond words. The foundation simply would not be able to operate or even exist in such meaningful ways without our volunteer base.

We had 687 volunteers work a total of 22,382 hours, which is the equivalent of 11 full-time staff positions. The actual number is probably higher, because tracking our volunteers and their hours is not an exact science, and not everyone records or reports their hours. However, keeping track of volunteer hours is important to the foundation for receiving grant money, for reporting purposes, and of course to recognize those who give of their time, energy, skills and talent.

A SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR VOLUNTEERS who help us protect wildlife habitat on and around the islands of Sanibel and Captiva!

Board of Trustees and Committees: The Board of Trustees and seven committees kept the foundation on track by assisting with business needs, special-events planning, land acquisition, educational programs and fund raising. Thirty committee members logged 2,058 hours.

Birding in the Preserves: Twelve volunteers led 12 bird-watch outings in the foundation's preserves for a total of 80 hours.

Butterfly House: Three volunteers guided visitors at our Butterfly House for 148 hours, sharing their knowledge of these beautiful winged insects.

Captiva Cruises: Twelve docents gave natural history and estuary talks aboard the *Lady Chadwick* for 1,231 hours. Carpentry Crew, or "Hammerheads": Fifteen Hammerheads maintained the foundation's facilities, repaired

the observation tower, built a beautiful ramp up to an expanded Nature Center porch, and made significant improvements at intern housing. This crew of hardworking volunteers accrued 4,727 hours.

Habitat Management: Seven volunteers spent 188 hours eliminating invasive, non-native vegetation and assisting with the creation and maintenance of trails on our conservation lands.

Landscaping for Wildlife: Twenty-six nursery volunteers helped with potting, weeding and plant propagation. They also sold and delivered native plants for a total of 949 hours.

Marine Lab: Eight volunteers assisted with a wide range of projects at the Marine Lab for a total of 616 hours. Their activities included data collection, research, boat maintenance and library organization.

Nature Shop and Bookstore: Forty-one friendly volunteers greeted our visitors, oriented them to the exhibits and trails, tended the shop, stocked the shelves and sold nature-oriented gifts and books for a total of 2,496 hours.

Office: Thirty volunteers sent out numerous mailings, answered the phone, wrote letters, entered computer data and tracked membership. They logged a total of 1,616 hours.

Sea Turtle Conservation Program: Eighty six sunburned volunteers with sand in their shoes and bugs in their faces, driven by the love of this ancient mariner, spent 5,443 hours walking and driving the beaches, marking nests, recording data, making signs, educating residents and coordinating with the state's Sea Turtle Recovery Program.

Shorebird Monitoring: Six volunteers spent 169 hours identifying shorebird nesting habitat on Sanibel, walking the beaches looking for nests, marking nests, recording data and monitoring fledgling success.

Special Events: Three hundred and ninety-three volunteers (yes, that's right!) helped to plan and implement our numerous events and fund raisers for 2,013 hours. These included an Earth Day celebration, Annual Meeting, Tennis Tournament, Chamber After Hours reception, Open House, Home and Garden Art Auction and two island-wide cleanups—the Coastal Cleanup and the Great Island Pick-Up.

Trail Guides: Nineteen volunteers introduced visitors to the ecology and natural history of our Center Tract trail system for 424 hours.

Weeds and Seeds: Five folks with a passion for botany spent 224 hours surveying foundation and other preserved lands identifying plants to develop inventories and document changes in their distribution.

Finance

July 1, 2005 - June 30, 2006

Income:

Contributions/Memberships

Admissions

Nature Shop & Bookstore Landscaping for Wildlife

Education

Sea Turtle Conservation

Wildlife Habitat Management

Marine Laboratory

Memorial

Land

Special Events Misc. Income

Interest/Dividends

Endowment Support Operating

2004 Fund Balance Carry Forward

Total Operating/Project Income

Expenses:

Program Services and Management

General Office

Nature Shop & Bookstore

Landscaping for Wildlife

Education

Sea Turtle Conservation

Wildlife Habitat Management

Marine Laboratory

Memorial

Land

Special Events

Misc. Expense

Insurance

Physical Plant

Public Relations

Total Operating/Project Expenses 2006 Fund Balance Carry Forward

Membership

Membership Category 2005-2006 Totals

Life Family Individual Corporate

GRAND TOTAL

Nature Shop and Bookstore

Land Protection

Legacy Funds



Caption

The Legacy Fund endowments total \$3,100,174. Each year, a percentage goes toward program support. Currently, program support is calculated as 10 percent from the Preservation Fund and 8 percent from the other Legacy Funds, based on the average fund value over the previous 12 quarters. That program support is distributed through six program funds reflective of the Conservation Foundation's core program areas.

- The Preservation Fund, supporting our general operations and ensuring our ability to act in support of the foundation's mission statement.
- The Habitat Management Fund, allowing us to manage the land we have acquired for perpetual conservation.
- The Landscaping for Wildlife Fund, taking the principles of habitat management to homes, businesses and transitional corridors.
- The Environmental Education Fund, underwriting staff positions and broadening our program outreach.
- The Sea Turtle Conservation and Research Fund, supporting our work with threatened loggerheads and other endangered sea turtles.
- The Marine Laboratory Fund, endowing research activities and promoting the health of the marine nursery areas surrounding our islands.

This past year saw the formal induction of honorees to the Legacy Society. The induction ceremony took place following a lovely dinner held at the Sanctuary Clubhouse on Feb. 27. During the event, eight individuals were recognized by receipt of a lapel pin designed especially for the Legacy Society.

Many thanks to The Sanibel Captiva Trust Company for sponsoring this event and administering the endowments. We are thankful to the Legacy Society members who have used various planned-giving vehicles to support the Legacy Funds. To date, we are aware of the following types of planned gifts being used to endow our efforts:

- Outright Gifts of cash, real estate, securities and life insurance. We have received 25 outright gifts to date in this category. Particular thanks to Sally and Al Hanser for a very generous outright gift to the Preservation Fund.
- Charitable Lead Trusts. The foundation will benefit in the future from one charitable lead trust.
- Charitable Remainder Trusts. Planned gifts to the foundation include seven remainder trusts.
- Charitable Gift Annuities. Members have created seven gift annuities in support of the endowments.
- Trusts and Bequests. We are aware of the Conservation Foundation being remembered in 18 bequests and trust vehicles. Among others, we are most grateful for a bequest in the past year from the estate of long-time volunteers Tom and Ginny Johnson.

If you have endowed our work through any of these vehicles and feel we are unaware of your gift, we hope you will inform us so we may thank you now for the gift you have planned for the future.

Legacy Society Members

Tom and Mimi Adams Marge Angst Armand and Beverly Ball Miriam Barndt-Webb **Edward Beattie** Chuck and Sally Bisbee Helen Blomquist F. Norman Bowles, Jr. Charles and Ann Bruning Yolanda Cannon Donald and Carolyn **DeCoster** Don and Meleanor Deming Bill and Millie Ford Charles and Janet Gleason Bob and Jane Hanger Bill Hanger Robert Hanger, Jr. Sally and Al Hanser Bill and Tina Hillebrandt Harry Huizenga Larry and Jeanette James Linda and Greg Jennings Virginia and Thomas Johnson Kind World Foundation

Kip and Andrea Koss **Dunbar and Irene Lockwood** Sally Lupfer Messengers of Healing Winds Foundation John Raffensperger Sally Reed Jack and Rose Rogers Robert E. Schneider Foundation - Dick Schneider John and Florence Scott Barbara Shane Sallie and Gardner Soule **David Stanley** Vesta Stearn Linda Sturgis Barbara Tobin Linda and Tom Uhler Gretchen Valade Helen Webb Jane Werner **Bob Wigley** Pat Wilmeth Bill and Ann Wollschlager Barbara Wood

Fund-Raising & Special Events



caption

The past year boasted many special occasions for members, volunteers and friends of the Conservation Foundation to gather for **fun and fund-raising events**.

The foundation hosted the official kick-off of Sanibel's Luminary celebration, sponsored by the Sanibel and Captiva Islands Chamber of Commerce on Friday, Dec. 1. Foundation staff and volunteers, along with City of Sanibel officials and chamber members gathered at the foundation's gazebo at Periwinkle Preserve to welcome visitors to the celebration. After greetings from chamber president Ron Urkovich, foundation executive director Erick Lindblad (with the help of a portable generator) hit the switch and lit up the area to the cheers of those gathered.

The foundation's **Annual Meeting** was held Wednesday, Dec. 8. After his report to members of the year's accomplishments, board president Bill Hillebrandt presented outgoing board members with framed prints of the familiar blue heron by artist Ikki Matsumoto. Those honored were Bruce Avery, Ann Bruning, Mike Kelly and Dean Skaugstad. After the meeting, members enjoyed ribs and chicken from Rib City and side dishes contributed by those attending.

On Monday, Dec. 12, the foundation hosted it first member **Shop & Sip** event at the Nature Shop and Bookstore. Members had an opportunity to save up to 25 percent on purchases of \$100 or more that evening. Erick and education director Kristie Anders were on hand to greet shoppers and answer questions about the foundation.

The annual Life Member Luncheon took place on Wednesday, Jan. 18, at the Sanibel Harbour Resort and Spa. Life Members dined in the Island Room with a view of the Caloosahatchee. Each SCCF department head presented a report to the members showcasing their department's activities and accomplishments during the

year. A video of environmental education activities created by intern Steve Mickletz had staff and members smiling—and shedding a few tears.

The third annual Home and Garden Art Auction raised \$23,511 to support the intern program. To kick off the event, Bank of the Islands hosted a meet-theartists reception with champagne, wine and hors d'oeuvres on Thursday, Feb. 2. The auction at the Sanibel Community House on the evening of Wednesday, Feb. 8, began with an open bar sponsored by Bank of the Islands and hors d'oeuvres catered by Bailey's General Store and sponsored by John and Sheilah Morley. Prospective bidders enjoyed food and conversation while they viewed the art and took the opportunity to vote for their three favorite artists. Erick extended a welcome and spoke of the interns' immeasurable contributions to the foundation. "They give us energy," he exclaimed. Entertaining as always, auctioneer and trustee Warren Schwab advised the audience to "bid often and bid high!"

The first artwork, setting the pace for the evening, was Helen Baller's *Nantucket Tray Table*, which drew several bids and was purchased by Dean and Shirley Skaugstad for \$3,600. Baller also received first place in the favorite artist vote. Charlie Frese was second and Charlie McCullough was third. Schwab kept the bidding active with his humorous comments as interns moved through the audience to provide close-up views of the artworks.

Forty artists donated generously to the event. The foundation wishes to thank Tom Adams, Laura Ball, Helen Baller, Kathy Boone, Jaye Boswell, Pam Broderson, Mae Buday, Lucas Century, Jerry Churchill, Pat Cleveland, Beth Collette, Lane Conville, Susan Dunn, Ginny Egensteiner, Jenny Evans, Charlie Frese, Neil Glaser, George Graham, Sheila Hoen, Kit (Caroline) Hoisington, Marcia Hopkins-York, Jane Hudson, Lauri Kaihlanen, Petra Kaiser, Joan Furia Klutch, Joyce Krivenko, Francine Litofsky, Charlie McCullough, George McKinnell, Maggie May, Steve Mickletz, Hillary Potter, Myra Roberts, Pat St. Cyr, Nancy Smith, Carolyn Swiney, Cathy Taylor, Nancy Wilson and Odia Wood.

The foundation honored its volunteers for the valuable contributions they made during the year at the annual **Volunteer Recognition Party** at BIG ARTS on Wednesday, March 1. Jayne and Brian Baker of Jayne's Victorian Garden catered the reception for the approximately 150 volunteers at the event.

Various individuals were recognized, including Beverly Ball, sea turtle conservation program coordinator; Sam Landry, Captiva sea turtle program coordinator; Tory and Bill Burch, east end volunteer sea turtle pro-

Fund-Raising & Special Events, continued



caption

gram walker coordinators; Sheilah Morley, Nature Shop manager; Dean Skaugstad, Hammerhead carpentry crew manager; Fran Cameron, shop and office volunteer coordinator; and Gwenda Hiett-Clements, membership coordinator.

Volunteers received service awards for the cumulative number of hours served. Those with most hours included Tim Gardner, 3,000; Harry Bertossa, 4,000; Fran Cameron, 5,000; Beverly Ball, 8,000; Sam Landry, 12,000; and Dean Skaugstad, 13,000.

Volunteers who received awards for 10 years of service were Martha Siders, Joe Giattini, Cynthia Gibson, Marge Keller, Charlotte Kowitch and Candi Mather. Ann Bruning was recognized for 15 years. George Vernay, a Hammerhead carpenter, was honored for his 30 years of service.

To honor the Hammerhead volunteers, foundation staff performed At the Foundation to the tune of On Top of Old Smokey. A video, Toast and Roast Our Volunteers, created by education intern Steve Mickletz, left volunteers laughing so hard they cried with enjoyment.

At the Chamber After Hours on Monday, March 20, outgoing Chamber of Commerce president Steve Greenstein was recognized for his commitment to addressing island issues, including the causeway construction and water quality concerns. Chamber members enjoyed catering by Doc Ford's Rum Bar and Grille.

The foundation's **Burt Bacharach Concert** fundraiser was a tremendous success. Burt Bacharach performed at the Barbara B. Mann Performing Arts Hall on Wednesday, March 29, to a packed audience. Mack Avenue Records, a Detroit-based jazz label, and its CEO Gretchen Valade, a valuable Life Member and foundation supporter, generously underwrote the evening. More than \$54,000 was raised for the operating budget.

Ilona Knopfler, a Mack Avenue artist and smooth jazz performer, opened for Bacharach. Bacharach, accompanied by a seven-piece band and three back-up singers, established a comfortable rapport with the audience as he presented his hits from the past, songs from his new CD, At This Time, and tunes from his familiar movie scores. Bacharach received three standing ovations from the appreciative crowd.

Bacharach came to the after-concert VIP gathering to visit with fans and sign copies of his new CD. He described the audience as his "best ever." In addition to meeting Bacharach, those who purchased VIP tickets had an opportunity to enjoy a pre-party open bar and catering provided by Redfish Blufish. The post-party also featured dance music by Anthem and more delights from Redfish Blufish.

The foundation's 14th Annual Tennis Tournament was held at The Dunes Golf & Tennis Club April 8 and 9 with 112 players participating in doubles play. Regarded as the best tennis tournament on Sanibel, the fun began at a kick-off cocktail party and island-style fish fry on April 7, sponsored by Bank of America. The bank also sponsored the T-shirts distributed to the players.

Lunches on Saturday were provided by Sandy Stilwell and Key Lime Bistro and on Sunday by Gaye Levine and Bridget Stone of Redfish Blufish. Lucas Century created the engraved prizes and the grand prize for the raffle, a large glass bowl etched with sea turtles.

Several foundation members and business supporters donated items for the silent auction. Special thanks go to Jan Egeland and Kathy Boone for a gift from Periwinkle Cottage, Neil Glaser for a painting, Tom and Laura Hansen for two framed prints, Karen Bell for a one-week vacation at Compass Point, Jack and Starr Thomas for a four-hour cruise and lunch on Useppa Island, the Finnegan family for a vacation at the St. Francis Inn in St. Augustine, Warren Schwab and Jodi Cort for a one-week vacation in Stratton, Vt., and John Bralove for a computer PowerPoint presentation. The Intrav/Clipper Cruise

Line donation of a trip for two to New Zealand earned the high bid of \$7,000.

This year the foundation's Tennis Tournament raised over \$19,500 for SCCF's operating budget.



caption

Environmental Education

The world is mud-luscious and puddle-wonderful.

- e. e. cummings



caption

Introduction

Education staff continued to provide learning experiences for widespread audiences both on and off the islands. The environmental education department conducted diverse activities and programs designed to engage the community and visitors, to create and maintain partnerships, and to integrate the many aspects of SCCF's work into environmental education. Program participants included realtors, schoolchildren, local homeowners and island visitors, to name just a few.

Whether in one of our preserves, on the water, in the classroom or in the yards of local homeowners, staff reached more than 43,000 people this past fiscal year. Audiences were wide ranging from adults to children of all ages. Additional emphasis was placed this year upon tailoring special learning experiences for our members.

Staff

Education staff remained the same this past year, with the exception of a new education intern, Steve Mickletz. Steve proved to be exceptional, and the foundation benefited from his many talents. Videography is one of his skills, and he created two videos that were the highlights of our Life Member Luncheon and Volunteer Recognition Party. Ask for copies of these videos next time you are in the office.

Kristie Anders completed her 18th year as the education director. She continued long-standing programs geared toward educating new island residents, the realtor community and the ecotourist population. She fostered the long-term partnership with Captiva Cruises and spearheaded outreach on water quality issues. In regard to our focus on member only programs, Kristie organized five boat trips in cooperation with Captiva Cruises.

The length of Kristie's tenure at the Conservation Foundation is second only to that of Dee Serage-Century, our Landscaping for Wildlife educator. Dee has been working at SCCF for 22 years (including five years as nursery assistant and manager, and 17 years as educator). This past year, Dee conducted landscaping-design house calls and classes, maintained our butterfly house and ethnobotany garden, and worked with Steve to promote butterfly education in all fourth-grade classrooms in Lee County.

Richard Finkel completed his sixth year as environmental educator, with an emphasis on teaching area schoolchildren. Richard conducted many of our outdoor programs, ranging from kayak trips and evening astronomy programs to educational activities with schoolchildren. Richard began his tenure with the foundation in 1990, when he was an education intern, working for Kristie. Throughout the following decade, he periodically worked as an educator on Sanibel. He then returned as a full-time staff person in 2000.

The same year, Melissa Upton came on board as the Nature Center manager. She spent much of her time this past year coordinating programs and organized training and field trips. Melissa oversees operations with regard to educational activities at the Nature Center, and spent quite a bit of time developing printed materials, including new signage and the updated look of the Member Update. The education department as a whole reflects 62 years of work experience with and for the Conservation Foundation. We take great pride and joy in sharing our knowledge with others.

Facilities

Major changes took place with regard to the front of the Nature Center this past fiscal year. Our Master Interpretive Plan had called for improved wayfinding and accessibility to our main building, and great progress was made in this regard. Dee used her creative skills to improve the signage for our entrance. Melissa worked with local architect Joe St. Cyr and head Hammerhead Dean Skaugstad to design an expanded porch and a ramp compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act up to the porch. A kiosk at the bottom of the ramp will serve as a well-defined entrance for visitors and give them a clear line of sight to the Nature Shop and Bookstore. The ramp will provide easier access for all people, and the expanded porch provides more room for special events. Thanks to the Hammerheads for all of their hard work.

As a result of two grant proposals Melissa wrote, SCCF received a total of \$6,500 to help pay for materials to build a boardwalk at the Conservation Foundation's



caption

Pick Preserve, which is located across the street from The Sanibel School. In the previous year, outings with school-children to the preserve had been limited during the wet season due to safety concerns. Since the trail was wet during much of the school year, educational activities had been significantly scaled back from previous years.

The Hammerheads constructed the boardwalk and grant money was used to purchase materials. Thanks to the Charlotte Harbor National Estuary Program and the Community Foundation of Sanibel-Captiva for their financial assistance on behalf of this project. Hammerhead contributions to our facilities have saved the foundation tens of thousands of dollars this past fiscal year. We are sincerely grateful to all who have helped.

Learning Experiences

The Nature Center attracted 9,666 people to its exhibits, trails, nature shop and bookstore, and approximately 1,100 people visited the Butterfly House. Our ongoing programs attracted a wide variety of individuals. The following is a sampling:

- Richard, Kristie, Steve and volunteers led 372 people on Turtle Tracks, which teaches people about the forces shaping barrier islands and the variety of marine life that has uniquely adapted to this highly dynamic ecosystem.
- Richard introduced 270 people to the night sky through Stars over Sanibel.
- Richard taught 325 students and 50 of their chaperones about the interior wetland and upland ecosystems during 10 school visits to the Nature Center. Thanks to Charlotte Kowitch, Doris and David Finkel, Fran and Hugh Cameron, and the Charlotte Harbor National Estuary Program for providing funds for bus transportation.
- Volunteers brought 228 bird enthusiasts on weekly Birding in the Preserves walks throughout the Sanibel Gardens Preserve, Johnson Preserve, Pick Preserve and the Center Tract trails.

- Guided Kayak Adventures in cooperation with Captiva Kayak Company gave 56 people a chance to paddle through the pristine wilderness of Buck Key.
- Seagrass Wading Trips took 28 people into the shallow waters of San Carlos Bay to explore the wonders living below the surface of an estuary.
- Weeds 'n' Seeds volunteers led 180 people on numerous outings throughout Southwest Florida to gain a better understanding of Southwest Florida's plant communities.
- Volunteers and staff led trail tours, narrated boat trips and guided people on the beach. Volunteer trail guides led 226 visitors along the Center Tract trails teaching them about the interior wetland ecosystem and habitat management. Captiva Cruise volunteers narrated boat trips for 17,528 visitors during explorations of Pine Island Sound.
- Weekly guided walks continued in the ethnobotany garden. The Cultural History of Florida's Native Plants program taught 50 participants about human uses of native plants for food, shelter, art and medicine.
- Seven Resident Environmental Orientations provided 133 new homeowners with information on the Conservation Foundation and environmental concerns for their island home. Captiva Cruises' generosity with a trolley, boat, drivers and captains has assured a high level of quality and diversity of activity for the program. SCCF's partnership with Captiva Cruises continues to be a vital link in communicating to residents and visitors the importance of estuaries and the vitality of the waters that surround the barrier islands.
- Island realtors inform new and potential residents about the nature of our islands. Recognizing their role, the foundation encourages realtors to participate in an in-depth, accredited eight-hour course that focuses on island wildlife, estuaries, water and other



caption

Environmental Education,

continued



caption

natural resources. Kristie presented the course to 72 licensed realtors this past year. The geographic area for this accredited class has now been expanded to Punta Gorda and Cape Coral.

- The local realtors association requires all new members to attend a half day orientation that includes a program at SCCF – Kristie gave the program was given to 96 new members. Realtors also refer new islanders to our Resident Environmental Orientations, and help us contact new homeowners to receive our welcome packages.
- Fifteen Elderhostel groups visited the Nature Center. Guided trail walks and butterfly house tours were given to 210 people.
- Kristie led 159 members on five boat trips to Boca Grande, Cayo Costa, Useppa and around the fish houses to learn about the history of sport fishing, commercial fishing and current estuarine research.
- Kristie reached about 1,004 people through her speaking engagements and other programs. A wide variety of groups were represented, including the Florida directors of tourism development, the Audubon Society and the Upper Captiva Civic Association, to name just a few. This number also includes more than 100 people who came out to hear award-winning Washington Post journalist Mike Grunwald speak about his book, The Swamp.
- Melissa led 328 people on field trips to Babcock Ranch and Lake Okeechobee.

Landscaping for Wildlife

In year ten of encouraging residents to view their home landscapes as healthy sanctuaries for wildlife and themselves, Dee conducted 71 house calls to members seeking advice. In addition, 110 people learned how to landscape with Florida native plants through classes and tours. Information on landscaping for butterflies reached

550 people through programs for the Sanibel Audubon Society and butterfly house tours. "Florida Butterflies and Their Caterpillars" was widely distributed through the sale of 1,820 copies to garden centers, botanical gardens, school districts and other nature centers.

Special Events

Melissa coordinated two island cleanups, Open House and Earth Day celebrations, and vehicle decorations for the Sanibel Fourth of July parade. These events reached approximately 3,000 people and provided an opportunity to educate people of all ages about our efforts and accomplishments. For the Earth Day event, SCCF collaborated with the J.N. "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge, Sundial Resort, the Sanibel Inn and the City of Sanibel to create an island-wide atmosphere of celebration.

Outreach to Schools

A major component of the foundation's multi-faceted Education Department is working with local Lee County students. The goal is to inspire them through experiences designed to increase their awareness and understanding of the natural world and their participation in its preservation. Richard, Dee and Steve reached close to 4,000 students in Lee County schools during the 2005-2006 school year.

Outreach to schools included environmental education activities at the Pick Preserve with The Sanibel School students, ecology programs with Lexington Middle School students, field trips to Babcock Ranch and the Randell Research Center, and butterfly life-cycle education.

For a third year, 2,914 schoolchildren and 119 adults learned about the life cycle of our state butterfly, the





caption



Environmental Education, continued





caption

caption

Zebra longwing. Fifty-one presentations were made to 128 fourth-grade classes in 32 different schools. One living butterfly life-cycle kit was delivered to each school. Each kit included one screened box (built by our volunteer "Hammerheads") that held the Zebra longwing eggs, caterpillars, and pupae for the students to observe and then release. A container of the larval host plant, Corky Stemmed Passion Vine, was included for the caterpillars to eat and later to be planted in the school's butterfly garden. Following a 30-minute presentation to each fourth-grade classroom, educational materials were distributed that included copies of "Florida Butterflies and Their Caterpillars" and a laminated picture handout describing the life cycle of the Zebra longwing. A sign attached to each box acknowledged the Conservation Foundation.

Richard initiated a new program with middle school students at The Sanibel School this year.
Known as The Pick Preserve Project Group, it uses the Pick Preserve as a base for environmental science projects and learning opportunities. We see this program continuing and expanding with field trips to other local areas to engage and inspire our next generation.

Other Outreach

Concerns about water quality in the Gulf and sounds around the islands have demonstrated the interconnected-ness of businesses, visitors, the hospitality industry, residents and realtors. With perhaps the exception of the founding of the City of Sanibel, the adversity resulting from discharges into the Caloosahatchee River brought people together unlike any other event. By doing so it gave us opportunities

caption



to learn, respect and teach one another. Further, it allowed SCCF's environmental education staff to provide outreach programs to a greater diversity of audiences, such as the Tourist Development Council.

Call Us

While we teach, we learn, and learning helps us discover new possibilities. We would like you to join us in that discovery and invite your neighbors to do the same. Help us reach deeper into the community by giving us an opportunity to teach. If you have a group of interested individuals who would like to learn more about nature on and around the islands, call us, (239) 472-2329.



caption



caption



Sea Turtle Conservation



caption

During the 2006 turtle season, 111 volunteers took part in SCCF's Sea Turtle Conservation Program. For seven days a week during the four-month season, volunteers patrolled beaches at dawn by foot and vehicle, looking for tracks leading to nests, watching for the nests to hatch and digging them upward to count shells and tally the number of young turtles that emerged. Volunteers also gathered trash from the beaches and reported furniture left out overnight in violation of a City of Sanibel ordinance.

Bill and Tory Burch are responsible for the six miles of beach on Sanibel's east end, running from the lighthouse to Tarpon Bay. Divided into six zones, that stretch of beach requires the largest number of volunteers, each patrolling one mile. Bev Ball is the program coordinator and also supervises patrols on Sanibel's west end, which runs from Tarpon Bay to Blind Pass. Patrolling by Jeep, volunteers take turns monitoring this seven-mile stretch, which produces the greatest number of nests on Sanibel. Sam Landry coordinates nest monitoring on Captiva beaches.

2006 Statistics

Turtle season finished with a total of 216 nests on Sanibel and Captiva, only a few nests more than the 2005 season. Since 1992, when the Conservation Foundation took over the sea turtle monitoring program from Caretta Research, the most productive year was 1995, with more than 534 nests recorded. Worldwide, as well as on Sanibel and Captiva, the number of sea turtle nests has been in gradual decline due to a variety of factors, including turtle deaths from longline fishing and loss of nesting and feeding habitat. Some marine scientists believe that global warming also is affecting the long-term survival of sea turtles. One result is that the warming changes the temperature of beach sand which, in turn, affects the ratio

of males and females. Ocean currents are also affected, which might change the migrations of turtles to nesting and feeding grounds. There is some indication also that higher water temperature might bleach out coral reefs and thus affect turtle habitats and feeding sites.

2006 Volunteers

Of the 111 total volunteers, there is a special group of people, called "permittees," who are licensed by the state to dig the hatched nests, recording statistics for the state agency that supervises the sea turtle monitoring program. Permittees this year were Kristie Anders, Paul Andrews, Armand and Bev Ball, Les and Sandy Boyle, Tory and Bill Burch, Judi Daugherty, Allen Dunham, Tom and Connie Edgar, Richard Finkel, John and Debbie Friedlund, Tim Gardner, Eve Haverfield, Tom Krekel, Sam Landry, David and Chandra Liebetrau, Bettie Modys, Dee Serage-Century, Bill Simons, Tom and Linda Uhler, John and Shara Weaver, and Bill and Ann Wollschlager.

Other volunteers who handle special tasks related to the program include the following:

Chris Andrews, Computer Programming
Paul Andrews, Sandy and Les Boyle and
Sam Landry, Turtle Strandings
Allen Dunham, Turtle Brochure Distribution
Dee Fulk, Refurbishing Nest Stakes
Inge Glissman, Adopt-A-Nest
Kit and Dave Yudowitz, Lighting Flyer Distribution
Kit Yudowitz, Nesting Maps

Thanks and appreciation go to all the sea turtle volunteers, who spent many hours taking care of our sea

turtle



caption



Native Plant Nursery



caption

The Native Plant Nursery has finished another busy year of helping spread native plants throughout Sanibel and Captiva islands. This year, staff and volunteers have sold, delivered, propagated and consulted about approximately 150 different species of Florida native plants. Many of our customers' yards are still recovering from Hurricane Charley and the milder impacts of Hurricane Wilma, and the nursery staff has stayed busy helping residents replan and replant their yards. Many people here on the islands have realized the resilience of native plants, and we have had great comments about how their native plants are rebounding from the storms.

Volunteers and Interns

In the past year the nursery had at least 26 volunteers assisting with day-to-day operations, including weeding, potting, planting seeds and making cuttings, among a multitude of other tasks. The nursery also recruited two hard-working interns, thanks to the success of the Intern Art Auction. Jennifer Steenblock spent six months with us, and in addition to her day-to-day nursery activities, she started a computer database to track the success of our propagation efforts. Andrea Yacaginsky arrived from upstate New York at the beginning of June, and she has been a tremendous help with the planting projects the nursery undertakes in cooperation with the City of Sanibel. With the help of this fine crew, the nursery is kept neat, tidy and running smoothly. We couldn't do it without them!

Landscaping for Wildlife and Education

Nursery staff led several classes this past year, including Meet the Natives and Native Plant Propagation. Nursery manager Jenny Evans and Landscaping for Wildlife educator Dee Serage-Century also stayed busy giving one-on-one "house call" consultations to homeowners throughout the season. Next year, we plan to expand educational opportunities to include classes, field trips and garden tours.

Partnerships

The Native Plant Nursery continues its partnership with the City of Sanibel to improve planting areas throughout the island. This year, staff has planted cul-desacs in the Beachview and Shell Harbor areas. We have also improved bike path buffer areas along Sanibel-Captiva Road, including areas near the intersection with Tarpon Bay Road and across from The Bailey-MatthewsShell Museum. Additionally, the nursery has been assisting Sanibel beautification efforts with maintenance schedules of Lindgren Boulevard medians, and we have been working with the J.N. "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge to obtain plants for restoration efforts on its property.

The nursery is also working in cooperation with the Captiva Community Panel on a grant from the State of Florida's Division of Forestry. The program allows homeowners on Captiva to receive a 75 percent discount on 14 different species of native trees. These trees are being planted to restore a native tree canopy on Captiva Island that was damaged by Hurricane Charley. This project continues through September of 2007.

Staff Transitions

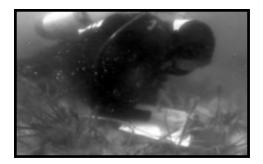
This year has also been a transitional year for nursery staff members. Nursery manager Jenny Evans reached her year anniversary in August. Assistant Manager Lane Conville recently moved to the Miami area to attend graduate school in Landscape Architecture, and we wish her the best of luck in her future endeavors. The assistant manager position has been filled by Lewis Fort. Many nursery customers already know Lew, who came to SCCF in 2004 as a nursery intern. Since then, he has stayed on as a part-time staff member, and now we are happy to welcome him as a permanent staff member.

Operations

The nursery has been extremely fortunate this year to obtain a brand new nursery truck. Our new Dodge Sprinter can hold approximately three times the number of plants as our previous Ford F-150 pickup. The new truck is an enormous help to nursery staff during deliveries and planting projects, as well as on plant buying trips.



Marine Laboratory



caption

Introduction

The Marine Laboratory continues developing as a center of information on the state of local estuarine waters and aquatic habitats. Our database is expanding while our influence on local policy and the research activities of other institutions is growing. The Marine Laboratory has become a leader in conducting local environmental research. With attainment of this goal, however, we do not rest. We do pat ourselves on the back for a job well done but we also know that our research activities are only small part of the environmental vigilance essential to obtain a complete picture of the status of our aquatic environment.

During this past year we have witnessed an escalation in the problems in our local waters and a simultaneous increase in interest by local citizens about the issues associated with these problems. The Marine Lab and its staff have been active in continuing to provide accurate, unbiased, sophisticated and timely data that can be used to fully assess the status and trends in our local aquatic conditions. Meanwhile, the professionalism of the staff continues to expand in its expertise and its leadership role on area environmental issues.

Staff

Core Staff: During this past year key personnel were added to the core staff. Dr. Rick Bartleson, a Fort Myers native, came on board as an aquatic plant specialist. Rick quickly assumed a leading role in continuing our seagrassmonitoring program ably initiated by Jaime Greenawalt. His activities also include expanding our research expertise in the area of algae blooms. Maggie May's departure left a void in office and grants management that was quickly and expertly filled by Molly Murphy, a recent graduate of Florida Gulf Coast University. Molly's skills in accounting have proven her worth in providing accurate and timely information on the status of our many extramural research projects.

Sponsored Research Staff: Recent Louisiana State University graduate Eric Berris was hired initially as an intern, but later assumed the role as Research Assistant. He has been chiefly working with Dr. Bartleson on a seagrass and algae mapping project. New additions to the sponsored research staff also include Jeff Siwicke and Kim Cressman. They have been instrumental in initiating and implementing a large-scale multidisciplinary study to investigate the effects and extent to which freshwater releases from Lake Okeechobee are having on our environment.

Other Staff: Visiting Research Scientist Dr. Art Weissbach has expanded his research efforts with the Biotechnology Department at FGCU. His activities have greatly increased the sophistication of our research and have helped increase our linkage with the local academic community. During the summer of 2006 we were fortunate, once again, to have as interns Lauren Linsmayer and Marc Nicastro (Sanibel and Captiva residents, respectively). The intensity of their effort, enthusiasm and dependability is greatly appreciated.

Research Programs

Core Research: The core research program continues to assess the status and trends in the aquatic ecosystem that surrounds our islands on a long-term basis. Core research projects continue in Bay Scallop Population Dynamics, Assessment of Seagrasses, Evaluation of Microbial Diversity, Ecological Function in Seagrass Beds, Characterization of Seagrass-associated Juvenile Fish Communities, Spotted Seatrout Growth, and Long-term Growth Trends in Mangrove Forests. Our annual report card, based on the core research program, is updated each fall and can be readily viewed on our Web site.

Sponsored Research: Marine Lab staff increased its extramural grant funding to more than \$500,000 during the past year, an increase of nearly 30 percent in outside funding. In fact, outside funding for the lab has been increasing by 25 to 30 percent each year for the past three years.



Marine Laboratory, continued



caption

Projects include studies on redfish juvenile habitat, algae assessments, mangrove assessments, seagrass transplantation, scallop re-introduction, the blue crab fishery, seagrass surveys, impacts of freshwater releases in the estuary, and environmental database development. An inspection of the specific grant titles, funding levels and agency sources reveals the breadth and depth of the research being conducted by the lab through outside sponsorship.

Participation in sponsored research helps the Marine Lab in several ways. We are able to hire expert research assistants to address additional research questions. These projects also allow us the opportunity to purchase the latest research equipment. Additionally, sponsored research funding allows the Marine Lab to direct much needed effort toward resolving short-term environmental issues while the core research program continues in long-term environmental assessments.

Community Interactions: At the heart of the Marine Lab lies its chief function—to relate our knowledge about the status and trends in our local waters in a meaningful way to those who would benefit from it. Marine Lab staff members continue to be eager purveyors of the information, data and study results that we obtain. Lab staff regularly communicates study results to the public through a variety of means, including print media, radio, television, and seminars to interested audiences.

Just as important is our willingness to communicate our study results to peers in the scientific community. Staff members regularly attend professional meetings and present research results to withstand the scrutiny (and advice) of professional colleagues. Thus the influence of the Marine Lab is not just local but truly regional, national and international in scope.

On the Horizon

The Marine Lab is beginning its fifth year of existence, and the wear and tear on equipment and facilities are beginning to show. During the next year will be a concerted effort to update our computers and meet the maintenance requirements of well-used vehicles and boats.

On the whole, the Marine Laboratory continues to keep pace with current issues concerning the health of our local waters. The staff continues to meet the challenges of the future while keeping an eye on past circumstances. Last, and most important, owing to the support of the membership of SCCF, the Marine Lab continues.

Project Title/Funding Agency

Ecological baseline assessment of mangrove, fishes, and seagrass habitats in anticipation of Clam Bayou Restoration/City of Sanibel

Seagrass assessments in San Carlos Bay/ Caloosahatchee River/SFWMD

Invasive Plant Control Database Development/JNDDNWR

Mangrove Restoration at Shell Point/SFWMD

Mangrove Restoration/Conservancy of SW FL

Microbial Diversity of Estero Bay Tributaries/Conservancy of SW FL

Assessing the Relationship between Environmental Conditions and the Blue Crab Fishery in Relation to Restoration Goals for the Caloosahatchee River/SFWMD

Expanding Bay Scallop Restoration in Pine Island Sound Using Competent Larvae/MML - CHNEP

Stabilization of Florida's Bay Scallop Metapopulation: Enhancement of Local Populations to Maintain the Subspecies Range/FWRI - Ocean Trust

The Ecological Impact and Geographic Extent of Freshwater Releases from Lake Okeechobee into the Caloosahatchee River/Estuary - Part I/SFWMD

The Ecological Impact and Geographic Extent of Freshwater Releases from Lake Okeechobee into the Caloosahatchee River/Estuary - Part II/ Lee County

Algal Bloom Distribution and Seagrass Growth Rates in the Nearshore Estuarine Waters of Sanibel Island: Spring 2006/City of Sanibel

Repair and Maintenance of Seagrass Meadows in Charlotte Harbor/WCIND

Community Mangrove Restoration of a Rookery Island/USFWS

Wildlife Habitat Management



caption

Introduction

The Wildlife Habitat Management Program (WHMP) has continued over the past year to expand restoration efforts, to broaden our research of the islands' ecosystems, and to increase awareness of our efforts. The awarding of important grants and continued close relationships with our island partners, the City of Sanibel and J.N. "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge, has enabled the planning and completion of new restoration projects and the hiring of additional staff to assist with specific tasks related to our overall objectives.

Staff

New staff: Victor Young, who worked as an intern in the summer of 2005, joined us full-time as field technician, a position left open when Danny Rogers departed in March (he and fiancé Maggie May from the SCCF Marine Lab moved to Kentucky). Also new this year was a seasonal technician, from March through July, filled by Cara Faillice to coordinate and assist with the Snowy Plover Program. Gary Williams, who filled a field position created in cooperation with our partners, left in August, and efforts are under way to fill that position. We also are seeking to hire someone to coordinate and oversee land management operations.

Existing staff: Chris Lechowicz continues as field biologist in charge of wildlife monitoring and data management. Chris also works throughout the organization handling computer and network problems. Ron Gestwiki works as a seasonal field biologist, focusing on vegetation monitoring during the winter months. Brad Smith manages the program, handles grants and coordinates restoration contractors.

New Facility

The long awaited opening of the Wildlife Habitat Management Building is almost here. At the time of this writing, the building is near completion. The facility will be home to all the SCCF Wildlife Habitat Management Program activities and will include space for maintenance and storage of equipment as well as office space. With this facility in place, the WHMP will have the necessary space and basic equipment needed to better meet our restoration and management objectives. The facility will also demonstrate and confirm to granting agencies and other professionals the SCCF's commitment to land stewardship.

Research

Snowy plover research has continued this past year to examine the factors influencing nesting success. Early results suggest beach width and the availability of vegetative cover near the shoreline are important factors in nest site selection and success on Sanibel. These data will help to inform management decisions, not only on Sanibel but throughout the state.

Monitoring

Efforts continue to track trends in the abundance of prey species on conservation lands. Trend data over multiple years will play an integral part of our management activities and future restoration efforts by indicating when and where problems are occurring and helping to correlate changes with specific disturbance events—such as nutrients, fire, hurricanes or storm surges—or management activities.

Also ongoing are vegetation monitoring to determine relative dominance of cover types, and forage abundance and diversity for gopher tortoises. These data will also serve to guide management decisions and indicate whether we are meeting specific objectives.

WHMP staff, "Ding" Darling refuge staff and volunteers also continue monitoring nesting shorebirds. More than 130 snowy plover and several hundred least



Wildlife Habitat Management, continued



caption

tern nests have been protected and monitored for success over the past five years. Our efforts to protect these birds on Sanibel are becoming known throughout the state and the eastern United States, and data are being integrated with that of other researchers to better understand nesting population trends throughout the state.

Management

As a result of equipment failures and persistently poor weather conditions, we were unable to meet our target number of acres for controlled burning. We completed a burn of approximately 50 acres on the Frannie's Preserve. As well, we were able to reopen all of our fire lines and complete some new line construction.

Work continued over the summer to create the Periwinkle Hammock Trail, which is a .6 mile trail on the Periwinkle Preserve. Several hundred additional plants will be installed this year and the trail is being smoothed and mulched in preparation for a fall 2006 grand opening.

The West Sanibel River Preserve restoration, located off of Sanibel-Captiva Road between Legion Curve and Rue Belle Mer, is expected to be complete by the summer of 2007. So far, approximately 50 of the preserve's 133 acres have been cleared of invasive non-native vegetation, and old mosquito-control ditches are being filled as we go. New to the preserve this year was a bald eagle nest—the third on Sanibel. The pair was able to successfully fledge one eaglet in April. Although the appearance of the nest delayed our clearing work, we now have permits that allow us to clear around the nest tree during the non-nesting season. All precautions are being taken to prevent harm to the nest.

Also started this year was the removal of all remaining stands of Australian pines from SCCF lands. This project, referred to as the Last Stands, began off Sandcastle Drive in June, and is expected to be finished by summer 2007. This project also includes funding for replanting on various properties where Australian pines are cleared.

Outreach

WHMP staff members have spoken at several meetings of both professional peers and the general public in the past year to share information learned from our research and experiences in restoration and recovery of ecosystem function.

Grants

Grants totaling \$849,510 in the 2005-2006 fiscal year continue to fund work on the West Sanibel River Preserve, Wulfert Point Tortoise Preserve, snowy plover research and ongoing land management efforts. These funds will continue to support work in those areas through the end of 2007.

An additional grant of \$50,000 from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Coastal Ecosystems Program has been secured for additional clearing and planting work. Other restoration projects to reclaim spoil mounds along the Sanibel River and ensure the long-term survival of gopher tortoises on the islands are in the works, and we are actively seeking funding for these projects.



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Annual Fund Drive Donors

For Fiscal Year 2005-2006, our Annual Fund Drive goal was \$675,000 to cover program support and specific habitat management and educational projects. The Annual Fund Drive also allowed us to undertake two very special projects:

- It allowed us to finish the much-needed Wildlife Habitat Management Facility by funding the last third of the budget needed for the project. The facility will house equipment and staff responsible for managing our more than 1,800 acres of conservation lands.
- It allowed us to make Nature Center improvements so our entrance is more accessible to parents with strollers as well as disabled and older visitors. The expanded porch also improves our special events space. The money will also be used to create kiosks and interpretive signage, so islanders and visitors in locations throughout Sanibel and Captiva can learn of our work and be directed to our Nature Center.

Thanks to the following people for helping with the Annual Fund Drive 2005-2006!

\$300,000 and over

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\$100,000 to \$199,999

The Haas Family
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Funds for printing the Annual Report were provided by:



Tel: (239) 472-7211 Fax: (239) 472-7212 1699 Periwinkle Way, Sanibel Island, Florida 33957

Editing by Jill Tyrer
Layout and design by Melissa Upton
Cover artwork by The Sanibel School Students

SANIBEL-CAPTIVA CONSERVATION FOUNDATION 3333 SANIBEL-CAPTIVA ROAD P.O. BOX 839, SANIBEL FL 33957

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