

Welcome to the Bonita Nature Place



Bonita Nature Place



Mission Statement

The Bonita Nature Place will provide a local place for learning experiences, volunteerism, and outdoor family activities that strengthens the environmental stewardship commitment within the community while fostering an awareness of old Southwest Florida in its unique, natural setting.

Friends of the Bonita Nature Place Goal

The goal of the Bonita Nature Place is to provide a quality nature center to promote conservation and environmental stewardship through education.



Bonita Nature Place

History

The City of Bonita Springs purchased the 10-acre residential property in 2006. Located just minutes from downtown Bonita on Kent Road, just off E. Terry Street, the property sits adjacent to environmentally-critical preserve lands associated with CREW, South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD), and the Imperial River. In 2009, the property was renamed The Bonita Nature Place (BNP).

In September 2009, the SFWMD recognized the environmental conservation and education elements of the BNP and deeded the neighboring 20 acres to the City of Bonita Springs, which brought the total land area of the BNP to 30 acres.

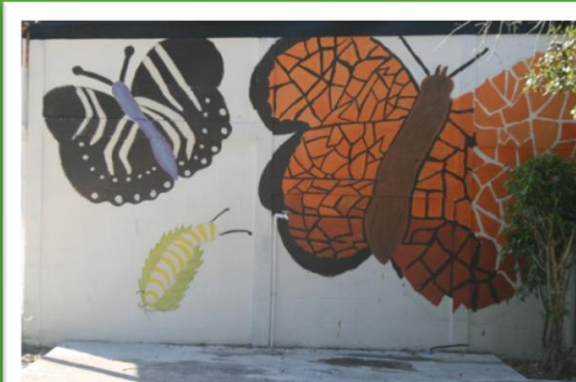
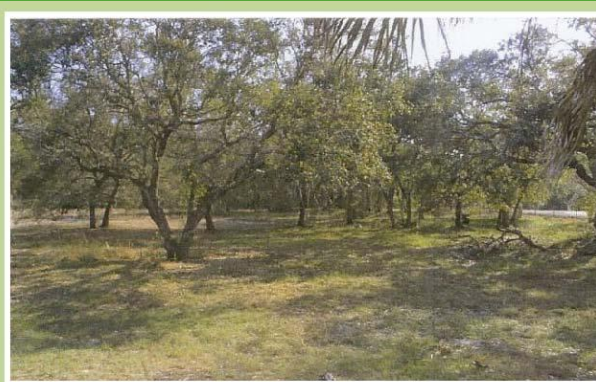
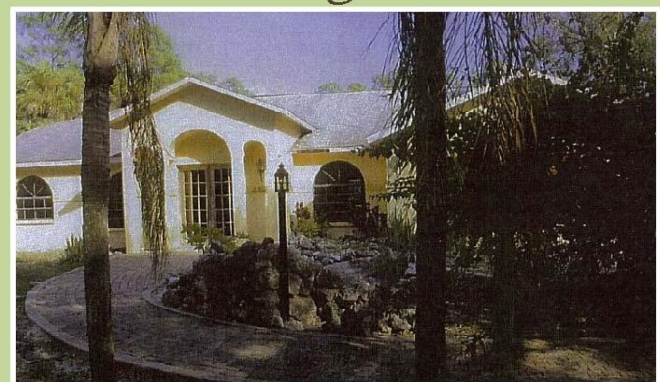
In October 2009, the Friends of the Bonita Nature Place registered as a Not-for-Profit Organization with the State of Florida and was recognized by the Bonita Springs City Council as the resident organization.

Bonita Nature Place also has an ongoing partnership with Florida Gulf Coast University, where interpretive trail systems and displays are being developed so that visitors of all ages can experience the resident wildlife in its natural setting.

Bonita Nature Place

Grounds

The property sits along the beautiful banks of the Imperial River, a coastal river that drains the freshwater associated with the Corkscrew Regional Watershed into the estuarine areas of Estero Bay. The location makes it a perfect gateway to the southern CREW lands, while it simultaneously offers potential links to blueways for paddlers in the region. The location features a mosaic of interconnected habitat types including oak hammocks, pine flatwoods, riverine forests, and aquatic areas.



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Wildlife



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Gopher Tortoises

The BNP is home to over 24 active Gopher Tortoises. The Gopher Tortoise is currently classified as a Threatened Species, primarily caused by urban development and habitat loss. Our preserve at BNP is important to their survival as their burrows are located throughout the BNP property.



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Gopher Tortoises



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The Bee House

The Bee House is home to our European Honeybee Observation Hive. The bees are thriving under the special care of our resident Beekeeper, Chris! Our hives are registered with the Department of Agriculture. Many bee hives, a crucial component of a healthy ecosystem, are found on the BNP grounds. Below, FGCU Professor Charles Gunnels and one of his classes are conducting a lab experiment, using the beehouse as an educational tool.



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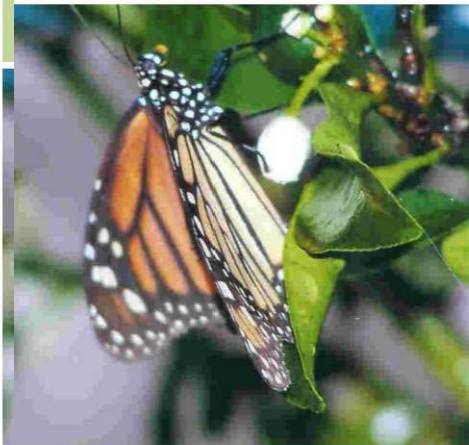
The Bat House

Our large Bat House was donated by Kent Road resident, Cullum, Hasty and the pole was donated by Florida Power and Light (FPL). Community partnerships and collaborative efforts are integral to our goals and successes at the BNP.



BUTTERFLY GARDENS

Our community volunteers planted two butterfly gardens! The main garden features Florida Native Butterfly plants, while the second garden is made up of Florida-friendly plants. The butterflies, bats, and bees are all facing existence complications due to the widespread use of pesticides. At the BNP, we are hoping to bring some recognition to these issues. Florida-friendly landscaping and Xeriscape.



Events

Stargazing Night



Opening Day



Bonita Nature Place

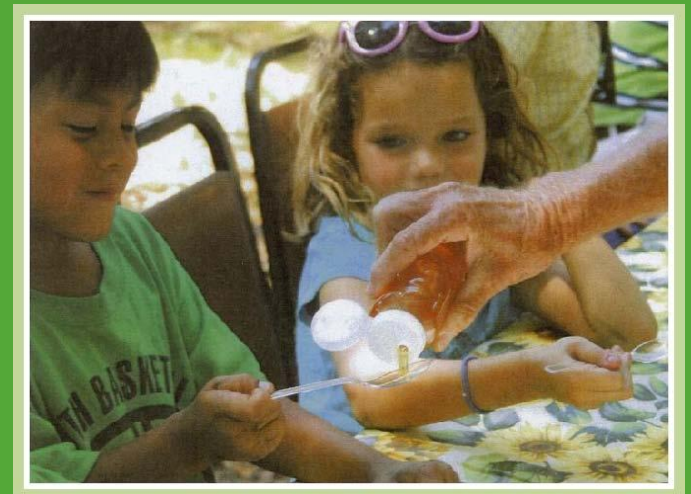
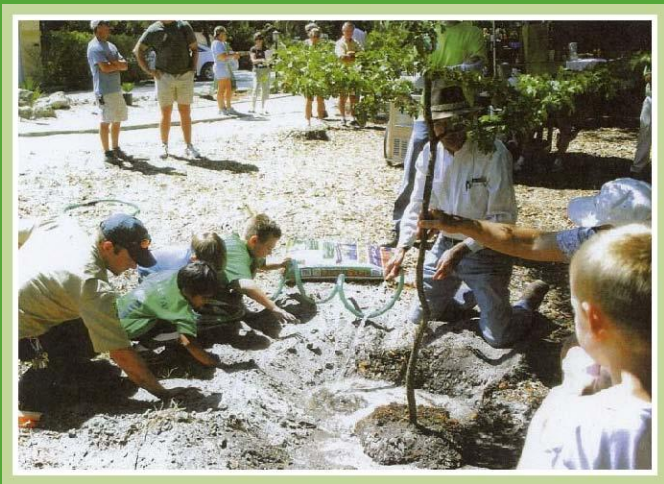
Earth Day



Bonita Nature Place

For our Children

Richard Louv's book entitled *Last Child in the Woods* describes the disconnection between children and nature. Studies link time spent outside with improved grades, increased concentration, and higher levels of self-esteem and imagination. Just a short hike and some time spent at the BNP can reconnect a child with the natural world around them! Community partnerships with our local YMCA aim to connect our local children with our natural landscapes. For example, campers from the Bonita Springs YMCA Summer Camp Program will take advantage of being able to hike to the Bonita Nature Place.



Bonita Nature Place

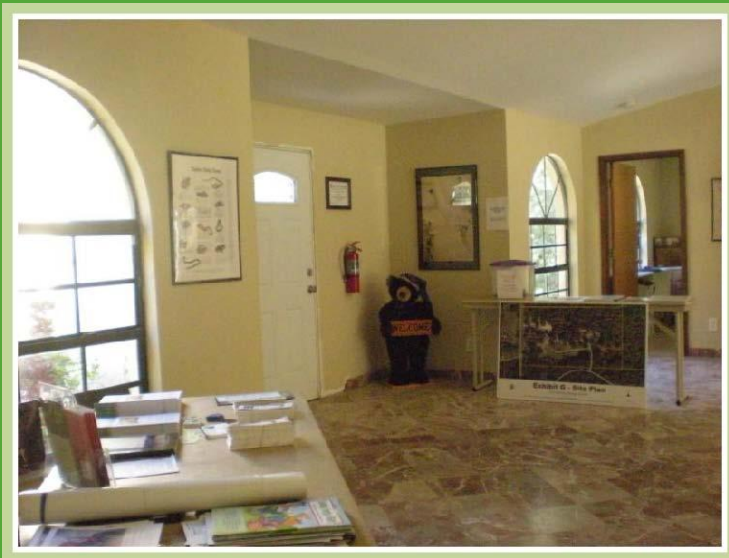
For our Children



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Meetings, Exhibits, & Lectures

We have the space and ability to accommodate group meetings. Additionally, exhibits are currently being implemented to enhance the educational experiences. Lectures and Workshops from area ecologists, environmental organizations and community partners are a large part of our BNP community offerings.



Bonita Nature Place

Community Partnerships & Donations

Go outdoors ... give the gift of nature!!!

State of Florida registered 501 c3 not for profit corporation

Donations are greatly appreciated and accepted.

Volunteer

If you would like to volunteer your skills, time, or join the Friends of the Bonita Nature Place, please contact Bonita Springs Parks & Recreation 239-992-2556.

Friends of BNP Board of Directors

Kathy McGrath Secretary

Dallas Revord..... Treasurer

Steve Trudnak..... Chairman

Professor David Green

Denny Berens

Alex Grantt

Cullum Hasty



Bonita Nature Place

Photo Credits

Janet Martin: City of Bonita Springs

Arleen Sheehan: City of Bonita Springs

Steve Trudnak: Johnson Engineering
Logo Design

Crissy Michelle

Slideshow Presentation

David Green: Florida Gulf Coast University

Hours

Tuesday ~ Saturday 9:00am ~ 1:00pm
Sunday from Noon ~ 5:00pm

Contact Information

www.bonitaspringsrecreation.org

239-992-2556

