



## THE MULLET RAPPER GROWS UP

by Denise Wauters

We are so excited to be at the helm as the Mullet Rapper steps to this next level. Thanks to your local establishments we are now able to offer the Mullet Rapper in this new format, for free, and in color!

We are also expanding the paper to cover our local sister communities so we can all enjoy the happenings in our little corner of paradise. Look for events and stories from Everglades City, Chokoloskee, Plantation, Copeland, Jerome, Goodland, Port of the Islands, Lee Cypress, Big Cypress, and the surrounding 10,000 Islands. If you would be interested in submitting news, events, photos or story ideas in any of these communities please reach out!

The plan is to have annual sponsors to help cover the ever-increasing cost of printing and delivery. By making this change we are able to print more papers, in this larger format, go to full color, and *make the paper free*. How could we refuse?

Potential advertisers have expressed that they want their ads to have a larger-foot print than we currently have. By going to this larger format we get to increase our reach. Giving the advertisers what they want while keeping the same Mullet Rapper with the same local voice alive. Win for them, win for us, win for you! Local businesses, now you can support your local paper and get the reach you have been needing. Claim your spot ASAP, we currently only have 12 pages.

You don't know how many times I have been asked "When are you going to increase the cost of the paper?" The paper had been 25¢ for 20+ years. To follow my heart I would rather the paper be free. When looking at the costs of continuing to do the paper at the ever-increasing rate I would have had to increase the price. That was a no-go. When I proposed the sponsorship idea everyone loved it... blew me away! What a wonderful community we live in.

So with humble, heartfelt gratitude to all of you supporters and readers, we will throw caution to the wind and tear off down this road.

*Besides who doesn't loves free and color!*

Reach Out  
[MulletRapper@gmail.com](mailto:MulletRapper@gmail.com)  
(914) 999-1237



## Everglades City Channel Dredging Plans

### Residents Engage in Updates on Essential Maintenance Project for Vital Waterway

By John Nipper

In an effort to keep the community well-informed, the Army Corps of Engineers gathered with the citizens of Everglades City on February 1st, 2024, to provide updates on the ongoing plans to dredge the local channel. The project, which was created to address the natural erosion and storm damage that has affected the waterway since its creation in 1963, aims to restore the channel to its optimal depth and width.

The meeting addressed the progress made so far, with the Channel Conditions Survey and the digitization of channel files, both completed as of November 2022. These initial steps set the foundation for the comprehensive restoration project, addressing the vital water link that connects the Gulf of Mexico to the Barron River area and the turning basin located at the upper end.

Currently, the search for locations for dredged material placement is underway, with seagrass surveys scheduled for the 2024 growing season. Other tasks such as cultural resource surveys and geotechnical investigations are yet to be determined based upon the dredged material placement location.

The Army Corps provided a comprehensive timeline, outlining the anticipated milestones for the project:

- National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Document Public Release: **Fall 2024**
- Real Estate Certification for Dredged Material Placement Site, Permitting, and other critical steps are still **to be determined** based on the final placement location
- Contract Advertisement: **Estimated October 2025**
- Contract Award: Estimated **January 2026**
- Construction Completion: **Estimated January 2027**

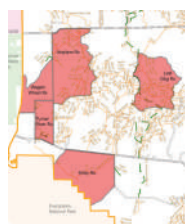
Residents participated in the discussion, expressing their concerns, and seeking clarification on various aspects of the project. The Corps reassured the community that all steps are being taken to minimize disruptions and environmental impact during the restoration.

See **Dredging**, p5

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**Prescribed Burns Begin**  
Big Cypress Begins Fire Season.  
p10



**54th Seafood Festival**  
Lonestar, rides, loads of vendors big success.  
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**Tour Map**  
Discover the charm of Everglades City and Chokoloskee.  
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# Local Event Calendar

## February 18, 2024 to March 30, 2024

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<b>February 18</b>	19	20 P&Z p3	21 Wilderness Wed p9 Food Pantry p3	22 Ladies' Coffee HavAnnA Cafe 8:30a	23 ESHP Meeting p2	24 GC Clays p2 Praise Night p3 Wild Hog p3 Rumble p2 Art In Glades p2 ORA Bazaar p2 ● <b>Full Moon</b>
25	26	27	28 Wilderness Wed p9 Food Pantry p3	29 Ladies' Coffee Island Cafe 8:30a	<b>March 1</b>	2 - RAPPER
3	4	5 City Council p3	6 Wilderness Wed p9 Food Pantry p3	7 Ladies' Coffee City Seafood 8:30a	8	9 Art & Music p2 Sungazing p2 Stargazing p2
10 Art & Music p2 ● <b>New Moon</b>	11 Spring Break	12 Spring Break	13 Spring Break Wilderness Wed p9 Bio Blitz p2 Food Pantry p3	14 Spring Break Ladies' Coffee Everglades Cafe 8:30a	15 Spring Break	16- RAPPER
17	18	19 P&Z p3	20 Wilderness Wed p9 Food Pantry p3	21 Ladies' Coffee HavAnnA Cafe 8:30a Third Thursday p9 Book Club p3	22 Grapefruit Gala p9	23 Art In Glades p2
24	25	26	27 Wilderness Wed p9 Food Pantry p3	28 Ladies' Coffee Island Cafe 8:30a Book Fair Starts p4	29	30 - RAPPER Praise Night p3 Eggstravaganza p3

### Events

**February 23 | 2 pm  
ESHP Meeting & History Talk**

Join ESHP on Friday, February 23, at 2 pm for the Annual Meeting & Historical Talk "Celebrating 50 Years" at Everglades Community Church in the Jinkins Fellowship Hall. RSVP to (239) 451-0265 or [ESHP@hotmail.com](mailto:ESHP@hotmail.com).

**February 24 | 10 am - 1 pm  
Art in the Glades**

Join us for ART in the GLADES on Saturday, February 24, from 10 am to 1 pm. at McLeod Park in Everglades City. A delightful Arts & Crafts Sale showcasing unique local creations and a special book signing event. Admission is free. More Information: (239) 451-0265.

**February 24 | 11 am - 3 pm  
Rumble in the Glades**

[Chokoloskee Family Church](#) is hosting Rumble in the Glades again this year. Featuring Blessing of the Bikes, music, a chili cook off, food trucks, vendors, old cars, and a silent auction in McLeod Park. More Info: <https://visitevergladescity.com/venue/chokoloskee-family-church-of-god>

**February 24 | 8:30 am - 2 pm  
Gulf Coast Clay Fundraiser**

Gulf Coast Clays in Port of the Islands, will be hosting our 2nd Annual Copperheads RLFC Shootout! There will be multiple prizes available for top shooters. This is a fully automated, 14-station sporting clays course. More Info: [https://www.copperheadsrlfc.com/event-info/2nd-annual-gulf-coast-clay-shooting-fundraiser?utm\\_source=AllEvents.in&utm\\_medium=event-discovery-platform&utm\\_campaign=goodland-events](https://www.copperheadsrlfc.com/event-info/2nd-annual-gulf-coast-clay-shooting-fundraiser?utm_source=AllEvents.in&utm_medium=event-discovery-platform&utm_campaign=goodland-events)

**February 24 | 9 - 11 am  
Annual ORA Bazaar**

The Annual ORA Huge Rummage Sale and *New 2 U Boutique*, where we will sell like new clothing, jewelry, and shoes will be held at ORA, on Chokoloskee Island, 150 Smallwood Drive, on Saturday, February 24th. It's open to the public. The gates will open at 9:00 AM and run until 11:00 AM. There will be a plant sale and we are serving lunch from 10 am - noon.

**February 24 | 10 am  
Wild Hog BBQ**

Join us at Wild Hog BBQ on Saturday, February 24, 2024! Pre-sale tickets at \$20 for adults and \$10 for kids (10 years and younger) are available via Venmo @ Ecsc-WildHog or online. Gate tickets: \$25 adults and \$12 kids. Ticket includes entrance, wildlife show, live bands, swamp buggy rides, Micosoukee culture, and various activities. Enjoy local vendors, Micosoukee famous fry, skeet shoot, archery, BB gun shoot, face painting, wood carvers, and more! Raffles with exciting prizes, including a gun, plus lots of tasty food options. Bring your chairs, coolers, and cash for a fantastic weekend at Wild Hog BBQ! More Info: <https://evergladesconservationsportsmanclub.com/wildhogbbq-1>

**March 9 & 10 | 10 am - 4 pm  
Harbor Arts & Music Festival**

Come to the 12th Annual Harbor Arts & Music Festival on March 9 and 10 from 10 am to 4 pm at MarGood Harbor Park in Goodland. Showcasing top-tier artists, over 25 vendors and diverse cuisines. Enjoy captivating raffle prizes and live performances by Florida's top musicians. Don't miss this blend of great food, art, and music! More Info: [taraogallery@gmail.com](mailto:taraogallery@gmail.com)

**March 9 | 2 - 4 pm  
Sungazing & Time Telling**

Join the Everglades Astronomical Society at Collier-Seminole State Park on March 9, 2024, from 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm EST, for a unique sun-watching experience. For a small fee (\$5 per vehicle, \$4 for a single-occupant vehicle), use specially designed telescopes to view sunspots and solar prominences safely. Explore sundials and grab take-home activities for kids. More Info: [Michelle.Craig@FloridaDEP.gov](mailto:Michelle.Craig@FloridaDEP.gov)

**March 9 | 6 - 9:30 pm  
Stargazing Collier-Seminole Park**

Experience the magic of the night sky at Collier-Seminole State Park for just \$5 per vehicle (up to eight people), including the park entry fee. Bring your chairs and enjoy a presentation by Robyn Pritchard, Mike Usher, and the Everglades Astronomical Society. Following the talk, telescopes

will be available for constellation viewing. Weather-dependent, so call 239-394-3397 on the event day for updates. Remember to bring red-covered flashlights, and please leave dogs at home. Don't miss this stellar evening under the stars!

**March 13 | 10 am - 4 pm  
Fakahatchee Strand Bio Blitz**

Help us understand wildlife trends. Volunteers record observations along Janes Scenic Drive from 8:30-10:30 AM. Meet at the Park Office at 7:45 AM. More Info: [Alex.gobel@floridadep.gov](mailto:Alex.gobel@floridadep.gov) or (239) 961-1925

**March 23 | 10 am - 1 pm  
Art in the Glades**

Join us for ART in the GLADES on Saturday, March 23, from 10 am to 1 pm. at McLeod Park in Everglades City. A delightful Arts & Crafts Sale showcasing

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# 74<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

## WILD HOG BBQ

50940 LOOP RD, OCHOPEE, FL

### SATURDAY February 24, 2024






**Gates open at 10 AM**

LIVE MUSIC

Real Pit BBQ  
FREE Swamp Buggy Rides  
CLAY SHOOTING  
Greased Pole  
Kids Archery & BB Gun Shooting  
All day raffles  
Wildlife Displays  
& Local Vendors!

BYOB  
COOLERS  
WELCOME!

**Tickets: \$25 Adults  
Kids 12 & Under \$12**

Everglades Conservation & Sportsman Club  
FOR MORE INFO: [www.wildhogbbq.com](http://www.wildhogbbq.com)

### Area Clubs

**AA:** Wednesday | 5p  
1st Baptist Church 416 School Drive  
Everglades City

**Lions Club:** 2nd Thursday of month | 6p  
Jinkins Fellowship Hall behind the  
Everglades Community Church  
101 Copeland Ave, Everglades City

### History & Info

**Museum:** (239) 252-5026  
Tuesday - Saturday | 9a-4p

**Smallwood Store:** (239) 695-2989  
Daily | 10a-5p

**EC Visitor Center:** (239) 232-0473  
Daily | 10a-3:30p

### Helpful Numbers

**Airport:** (239) 695-2778  
**City Hall:** (239) 695-3781  
**EC Trash Pickup:** (239) 252-2380  
**Public Library:** (239) 695-2511  
**Carnestown Recycle & Trash:** (239)695-4331

### Post Office

**Everglades City:** (239) 695-2174  
**Chokoloskee:** (239) 695-4468  
**Copeland:** (239) 695-2202  
**Ochopee:** (239) 695-2099

### Local Parks

**Big Cypress:** (239) 695-2000  
**EVG National Park:** (239) 695-3311  
**Fakahatchee Preserve:** (239) 961-1925



## MULLET RAPPER

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(941) 999-1237

**2024 In Stand Dates**

January 20
February 3
February 17
March 2
March 16
March 30
April 13
April 27
May 25
June 22
July 20
August 17
September 14
October 12
October 26
November 9
November 23
December 7
December 21

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**Publisher's Statement**  
We cover news and events for Everglades City, Chokoloskee, Plantation Island, Port of the Islands, Copeland, Jerome, Ochopee, Goodland, Lee Cypress, Big Cypress, and the 10,000 Islands. Our aim is accurate and diverse reporting. Opinions expressed may differ from those of the editors or publisher.

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“The Everglades is a test.  
If we pass it, we may get to  
keep the planet.”  
~ Marjory Stoneman Douglas

### Events

unique local creations and a special book signing event. Discover and support the talents of our community. Admission is free. More Information: (239) 451-0265.

**March 30 | 10 - 1 am  
EC Eggstravaganza**

Mark your calendar for this The Annual Everglades City Eggstravaganza, March 30 from 10 am to 1 pm. Join us in McLeod Park on Copeland Ave and Hibiscus Street West in Everglades City. There will be 4000 candy filled Easter eggs, inflatables, cash eggs, free food, amazing giveaways, and lots of happy kids!

### Everglades Book Club 2024

Meetings are open to all. We just read the book, have wonderful discussions and make new friendships. Meeting are 10 am - 11 am.

**Mar. 21** *Miss Dreamsville and the Collier County Women's Literary Society* by Amy Hill Heath  
10 am at the home of Elaine Middelstaedt, 410 Storter Ave. South

**April 11** *Last Train to Paradise* by Les Stand  
10 am at the home of Patty Huff, 207 North Storter Ave

**Questions**  
Call Diann Lock  
(812) 361-7402

### Community

**Food Pantry  
Wednesdays | 9:30 am - Noon**

Food is distributed from the rear of Everglades Community Church located at 101 S. Copeland Ave., Everglades City. This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

**Praise Night  
Last Saturday | 6:30 pm**

On the last Saturday of each month, First Baptist Church of Everglades City will have a *Praise Night* with a light supper at 6:30 pm, followed by praise music and fellowship.

**Ladies Coffee  
Thursdays | 8:30 am**

Ladies Coffee is a casual weekly gathering for women every Thursday at different local breakfast spots or homes. No rules or fees, just a welcoming space to connect and forge friendships in a relaxed atmosphere.

**Everglades Area Information  
Daily | 10 - 3:30 pm**

The Everglades Area Visitor Center is located at 207 Broadway W., Everglades City. The Visitor Center is open daily 10 am to 3:30 pm.

**Planning & Zoning Meeting  
Third Tuesdays | 6 pm**

P&Z Board meetings are held monthly on the 3rd Tuesday of the month. City Council room, 2nd floor City Hall. Info: <https://www.cityofeverglades.org>

**City Council Meeting  
First Tuesdays | 7pm**

City Council meetings are held every 1st Tuesday of the month @ 7 pm in the City Council room, 2nd floor City Hall. The public is invited to attend. Info: <https://www.cityofeverglades.org>

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## EVG District All-Stars

Collier County Schools is recognizing the skills of our Lady Gators. Each month they are selecting student-athletes that are nothing short of spectacular, exhibiting their skills on the soccer field, basketball court, wrestling mat, and in the weight room. Winter sports teams are experiencing a lot of success throughout the District and that success is due in large part to these team leaders. We are so proud of you!



**January:** Freshman standout Olivia Demere is a tenacious defender from her guard position on the Everglades City School girls varsity basketball team. She is currently the second highest scorer for the Lady Gators, averaging six points and four steals per game. Her coaches say Olivia is the tone-setter on defense, always looking for opportunities to make a key steal or cause a turnover!



**October:** Nora Potter is a freshman and team captain on the Everglades City School (EVG) girls cross country team. She is an excellent runner, already earning a state championship appearance last year and holding the school record in the 3K. With three top-20 finishes so far this season, coaches praise Nora's work ethic, saying she pushes herself to excel and helps her teammates develop their own skills. Nora is a member of student government and the EVG News Crew.



**December:** Junior Gena Collins is a captain of the Everglades City School girls varsity basketball team. Despite not playing all the time, she is an important member of the team and a positive driving force. She is one of only two upperclassmen, and coaches say Gena is a mentor and true leader for her younger underclassmen teammates in practices and during games. She is a three-sport athlete, adding softball and volleyball to her athletic resume for the Lady Gators.



**September:** Junior Jayde Freeman, from Everglades City School, is a co-captain and outside hitter on the varsity volleyball team. She is having a fantastic season so far and is the team leader in three different categories: serving (97%), hitting (74%), and passing (73%). According to Jayde's coaches, she is always working hard to improve her contribution to the team on and off the court, and is an instrumental leader for the Lady Gators.



**November:** Josey Ryder is a sophomore at Everglades City School and is an outside hitter on the varsity volleyball team. She has steadily improved, becoming a much more efficient all-around player this year with an impressive 70% hitting rate, 75% serving rate, and 79% passing rate. According to Josey's coaches, she has a true passion for the game, always plays to win, and is a steadfast competitor on the court-inspiring her teammates to do the same.



### EVG Gets A Rating

Collier County Public Schools (CCPS) is proud to announce the District has once again earned an "A" rating, continuing a successful "A" streak dating back to 2017. CCPS is ranked sixth in the state (out of 67 school districts) and one of only 16 Florida school districts rated as an "A." Of note, four schools improved their grades from a "B" to an "A," including Everglades City School. Congratulations to the students, staff, and community of Everglades City for this wonderful accomplishment!

### Join The Fish Art Contest!



Submit your form, creative writing, and original fish-themed artwork featuring Florida's native species.

Deadline Feb 28, 2024 | K-12 (ages 5-18)

Details:

<https://myfvc.com/education/programs/fish-art>

### EVG School Update

Dr. Cherie Allison  
Principal, EVG, Everglades City School

### EVG Scholastic Spring BOOK FAIR

Wednesday, Feb. 28th - March 6th

Everglades City School's spring Scholastic book fair is coming Feb. 28th – March 6th. Students don't want to miss the "Books for Everyone" event with Deputy Sue, Police Activities League on Monday, March 4th.

All students with a returned permission slip will get a book of their choice. Tuesday, March 5th will be our annual "Books and Breakfast" event from 7 – 8:30 am. All students must be accompanied by an adult. Also, that afternoon will be our "Books and Family Fun" event from 3 – 4:30 pm. Only those who attend can enter for book fair give-a-ways. Also, go to the EVG school website homepage for the on-line book fair link. Please share it with family and friends to help EVG!

Thank you!



### EVG Letterman Jackets On sale now until March 8, 2024



Order Now!

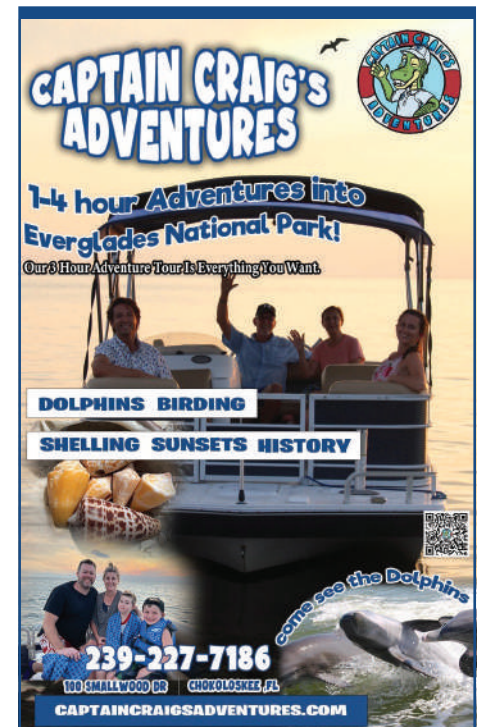
Form found at <https://www.collierschools.com/Domain/24>

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6:00 am - 9:00 pm

**Breakfast Served**  
6:00 am - 11:00 am

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[IslandCafeECity.com](http://IslandCafeECity.com)

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## Dredging

From page 1

This project is funded through the Disaster Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act of 2022, emphasizing the federal government's commitment to ensuring the resilience of critical infrastructure in the face of natural disasters.

As the project moves forward, the Army Corps of Engineers has reassured us that they remain committed to maintaining open lines of communication with the residents of Everglades City, ensuring that the community stays informed and engaged throughout the channel restoration process.

## Proposed Rip-Rap Installation Raises Concerns for Navigational Waterway in Goodland

A proposal for substantial RipRap placement within the Margood Harbor Canal has stirred concerns among residents and users of the waterway in Goodland. The project, aimed at mitigating erosion and restoring property, has sparked debates over its potential impact on accessibility and navigability.

The need for action stems from the erosion-induced loss of property into the waterway, leading to a reduction in depth. To address this issue, an engineering analysis has recommended the use of rip-rap as a solution to prevent future erosion and restore the affected property. Additionally, dredging of the canal is planned to increase navigability and depth, crucial for the community's access to the waterway.

However, not all stakeholders are in agreement with the proposed project. Concerns have been raised regarding the potential encroachment of the rip-rap on the already narrow passageway of the canal. Residents fear that the placement of rip-rap could impede navigation, particularly during low tide, posing challenges for boaters and residents alike.

The proposed work includes the construction of a driveway and the foundation pad for a residential home, resulting in the loss of approximately 0.05 acres of wetlands and surface waters within the man-made canal. Furthermore, the installation of new rip-rap and the refurbishment of existing rip-rap within the canal are part of the project.

Those involved in the project have been responsive to community concerns and seem committed to enhancing the waterway for all users.

Learn more at <https://www.saj.usace.army.mil/Missions/Regulatory/Public-Notices/Article/3645861/saj-2023-000191-sp-klz/>



## 54th Annual Seafood Festival Was A Blast

We kicked off Friday night with Community Night, where the entrance fee was just a donated can of food—tons of them! The whole town turned out to rock out with the local bands.

See **Festival**, p12



1236 Demere Lane, Chokoloskee, FL  
Phone: 239-232-0098

<b>Sun. Worship</b>	<b>10:00 am</b>
<b>Sun. Kids Church</b>	<b>10:00 am</b>
<b>Sun. Renewal</b>	<b>6:00 pm</b>
<b>Wed. Youth Renewal</b>	<b>7:00 pm</b>
<b>Thur. Bible Study</b>	<b>7:00 pm</b>

**Doing Life Together**

## New Packaged Goods Service is Now Available

Everglades Isle RV Resort's Marlin Bar

Now Offers Packaged Goods!

Order online, select your pick up time, and then pick up at the gate!  
Either scan the QR code below, click below, or go to the link online!



<https://bit.ly/3qUgmMA>

When you reach the gate, push the intercom button to let us know you are here to pick up!

*Note: You must be 21 or older to order and to pick up.*

Everglades Isle  
803 Collier Avenue  
Everglades City, FL 34139

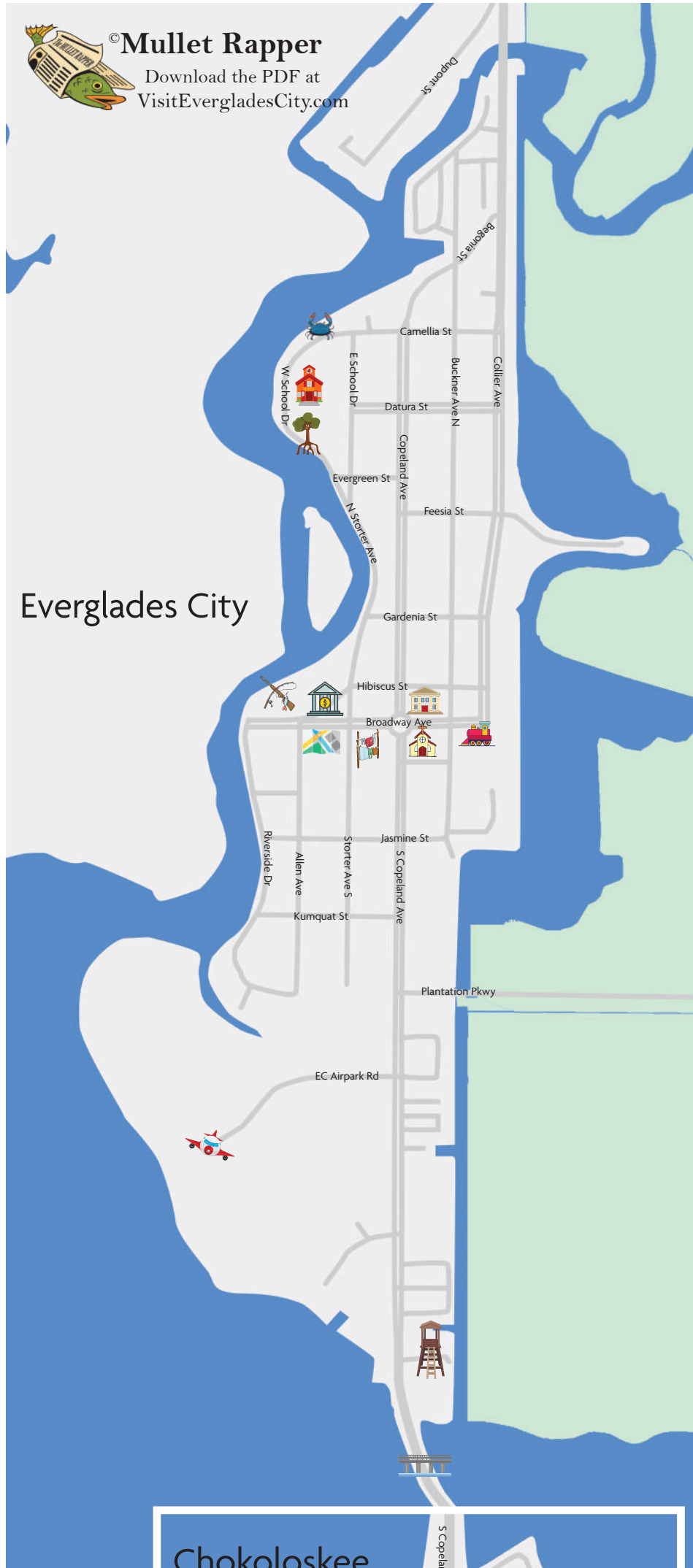
**Just look for the Lighthouse!**





© Mullet Rapper

Download the PDF at VisitEvergladesCity.com



## Tour Everglades City & Chokoloskee

Discover the charm of Everglades City and Chokoloskee by walking, biking, or driving with our tour map, offering a fascinating exploration of local history and uncovering hidden gems along the way.



**Stone Crabbing** has deep roots in Everglades, dating back to the '60s, with pioneers like Totch Brown, an Everglades legend, making significant contributions. At midnight each October 5th, stone crabbers embark on voyages into the Gulf of Mexico, transporting 1,000 to 5,000 traps to deploy into the water. It's not a simple task. This strategic planning allows the traps to accumulate stone crabs by the time the season officially opens on October 15th. When the season kicks off, and crabbers start pulling in traps, they aren't just a stone's throw away from Everglades City. Many have a three-hour journey from the dock to their initial crab line in the Gulf, with the traps strategically placed in waters ranging from 20 to 150 feet deep.



The **Old Collier County Courthouse** stands as a historic two-story concrete structure situated in Everglades City, Florida.

Constructed in 1926 by Barron Collier, the visionary behind the development of Collier County and its eponymous namesake, this courthouse reflects the Classical Revival architectural style. In 1962, the county seat was relocated to East Naples, prompting the construction of a new courthouse complex. Subsequently, the venerable building found a new purpose as Everglades City Hall.



Opened on Monday, July 9, 1923, the **Bank of Everglades** played a vital role in the newly established company town of Everglades City, founded

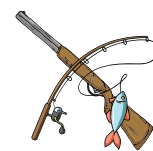


**Everglades City School** has been a rockstar in our town since 1895. The first building got wiped out by a cyclone, and it floated upriver after a hurricane in 1910. By 1923, we had a fresh school with two rooms and two teachers for 45 kids. PE class meant swimming in the river, with two brave souls on gator watch! It kept growing, serving the whole town until 1948. The current school, rocking since 1961 and a face-lift in '95, tells a story of grit and commitment. Go Gators!

by Barron Gift Collier. Initially situated on the north side of Broad Street near the Barron River, the bank later relocated in 1926 to two-story building, positioned a block away from the renowned Rod & Gun Club, facing the Barron River. Serving as the sole banking institution in Collier County until the opening of the Bank of Naples in 1949, the Bank of Everglades remained a cornerstone of the community. The bank, enduring the aftermath of Hurricane Donna in 1960, faced flooding, but employees ingeniously hung soaked bills on an outdoor clothesline to dry, ensuring none were lost. Remarkably, in its 36-year run, the bank was never robbed, attributed to the town's limited access. Listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1974, the building had diverse roles post-closure, including a boarding house, local newspaper headquarters, and a bed and breakfast. Despite damages from Hurricane Irma and the passage of time, plans for extensive renovation are underway, with the goal of establishing the restored building as the permanent home of the Everglades Area Visitor Center. Gifted to the Everglades Society for Historic Preservation in 2021, the building, recognized as one of the top 11 structures in Florida deserving restoration by Florida Preservationist Magazine in 2018, remains a significant part of Barron Collier's legacy.



Everglades National Park's **Mangroves** harbor some intriguing features. One unique aspect is the "walking" adaptation of red mangroves. These mangroves develop prop roots that not only support the tree but also enable it to "walk" by extending into new areas, providing a fascinating spectacle of nature in motion. Moreover, the mangroves play a crucial role in the Everglades ecosystem by serving as natural filters. They trap sediments and pollutants, contributing to water purification processes. This ecosystem service is vital for maintaining the health of the surrounding waters and supporting the diverse array of wildlife found in the park. Additionally, the mangroves' ability to thrive in brackish water, where freshwater and saltwater mix, showcases their remarkable adaptability. This adaptability is particularly essential in the Everglades, where the intricate balance between freshwater and saltwater ecosystems is a defining characteristic.



Dating back over 1,000 years, Historical Everglades City saw its first white settlers arriving after the Civil War. William Smith Allen became the first permanent settler in 1873, and early pioneer George W. Storter, Jr., cultivated sugar cane and established a trading

## Chokoloskee



© Mullet Rapper

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- Seafood Baskets
- Stone Crabs
- Quesadillas
- Fried Alligator
- Beer & Wine



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## Find The Icons On The Map

post and post office. The Storter family house later evolved into the renowned **Everglades Rod and Gun Club**, initially frequented by Yankee tourists on yachts for hunting and fishing. Barron G. Collier, a prominent Memphis businessman, acquired the club in 1922, operating it as a private establishment. Over the years, the club welcomed international dignitaries, U.S. presidents, and notable figures like Ernest Hemingway, John Wayne, and Jack Nicklaus. Today, the club maintains its Old Florida charm, offering cottages for rent, a dining room overlooking the Barron River, and access to fishing along the river and in the Everglades. The club continues to honor its rich history and is open to the public, inviting visitors to experience the allure of Old Florida.



Embark on a captivating journey through history at the **Museum of the Everglades**. Originally established in 1927 as a commercial laundry by influential landowner Barron Collier, the museum's building holds a storied past. Once a bustling center of business and the region's inaugural County seat, the town saw ambitious developments, including Barron Gift Collier's construction of the Tamiami Trail in 1923 and became the clubhouse for the Everglades Women's Club in 1965. The museum, faithfully restored to its original 1920s Collier-era appearance, stands as a testament to this dynamic period, listed on the U.S. National Register of Historic Places in 2001. Exhibitions, including The Storter Collection, offer a unique glimpse into the region's earliest history, with artifacts, words, and pictures documenting the stories of adventurous settlers.



**Everglades Community Church** Originally established as a Presbyterian congregation in 1926, Everglades City's historic church stands as a testament to the area's deep roots. Completed by April 1940 on land donated in May 1939 by the estate of Barron Gift Collier, founder of the county and its largest landholder, the church played a vital role in the community during the era when Everglades City was a Collier company town. The significant gift of land came with conditions: the structure must be completed before October 1, 1940, and the church should be non-denominational. Meeting these requirements, the dedication ceremony occurred on May 5th, 1940. Over the years, the church has seen changes, including the addition of a fellowship hall and breezeway in the late 1950s, and the installation of a digital carillon in 1990. Designated as historically preserved in 2007, the church reflects the aspirations and attainments of the city's pioneers, contributing to the rich history of Everglades City. From its early days as a haven for Gladesmen to the vibrant

community it is today, the church stands as a cherished landmark shaped by the enduring spirit of its residents and the legacy of Barron Gift Collier.



The **Old Railway Depot**, formerly part of the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad and situated in Everglades City, stands as a historic relic with a storied past. Constructed in 1928 in the iconic Spanish-style stucco prevalent in Florida, it served a vital role in transportation and trade during the 1920s when Everglades City was the epicenter of the Colliers' ventures in southwest Florida. The Atlantic Coast Line Railroad linked Everglades City and Immokalee, extending further toward Moore Haven, facilitating the transport of tomatoes and cypress, crucial commodities of the region. Following its railway days, the building gained cinematic fame in the 1957 film "Wind Across the Everglades," starring Burl Ives and Gypsy Rose Lee. After its closure, it morphed into the Everglades Seafood Depot Restaurant, featuring an added banquet hall. However, recent challenges, including hurricanes and the COVID-19 pandemic, have left the property in a state of disrepair. Despite efforts to secure financing for restoration, the building faces the threat of demolition, prompting calls for preservation by Mayor Howie Grimm Jr. and the Everglades Society for Historical Preservation. The impending decision on its fate adds urgency to the ongoing saga of this significant historical landmark.



**Everglades Airpark** Once envisioned as the grand Everglades Jetport in 1968, this ambitious project aimed to be the world's largest airport, sprawling across 39 square miles with six runways and futuristic infrastructure. Located in South Florida, it was strategically positioned for intercontinental supersonic travel. The venture, initiated during the Golden Age of air travel, faced environmental opposition that led to its abandonment after completing only one runway. The planned hub, designed for planes like the Boeing 2707, succumbed to the cancellation of supersonic aircraft programs. The airfield, now known as Dade-Collier Training and Transition Airport, operates as a general aviation facility and training ground. The airport, nestled in the Big Cypress National Preserve, stands as a testament to when aviation dared to dream big and supersonic travel captured imaginations.



**Ernest Hamilton Observation Tower** was built in 1984 by Thomas Mitchell. The wooden structure provides an excellent vantage point, elevated 75 feet above the ground, allowing visitors to ascend 108 steps for an awe-inspiring view. From

### First Baptist Church

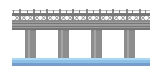
*Knowing Him and making Him known!*

Praise Night, last Saturday of the month, light supper, music, fellowship at 6:30 pm!

All-ages Sunday School: 9:45 a.m., Sunday Worship: 11:00 a.m. & 6:00 p.m.  
Wednesday Worship: 6:00 p.m.

416 School Drive / P.O. Box 550, Everglades City, FL 34139, Call Us:(239) 695-3871

this lofty perch, the surrounding landscape unfolds in all its glory — a mesmerizing panorama that includes the expansive mangroves, Chokoloskee Island, the Everglades, and the picturesque Ten Thousand Islands. You could spot various bird species, including the graceful flight of a roseate spoonbill.



**Chokoloskee Island**, with its rich history dating back to the late 1800s, is intricately connected to the mainland by a causeway built in 1956, providing the only access by car to this remote and unique locale. The **Chokoloskee Bridge**, constructed with an initially projected 50-year lifespan, became functionally obsolete in 2007, raising concerns about its safety and prompting the Collier County Commissioners to take action. The \$8 million replacement project was awarded to Kelly Brothers, a contractor, in response to the community's pressing need for a safer and more accessible connection. This new bridge, completed in 2018, not only adheres to current standards but also offers increased width and height, ensuring smoother passage for a range of vessels. The seawalls, integral for fishing platforms and protection, were retained during the 18-month construction period. Chokoloskee's history is not only encapsulated by this vital causeway but is also marked by tales of notorious characters, including the alleged serial killer Edgar J. Watson, and the era of moonshine and plume hunting that once permeated the swamps and waters surrounding this intriguing island. The bridge, a lifeline for residents, embodies the resilience and evolution of Chokoloskee Island through the pages of time.



Nestled on the southern tip of Chokoloskee Island, the **Smallwood Store** stands as a living testament to the rich historical tapestry woven by the visionary Ted Smallwood in 1906. Embraced by the vibrant trading community of Chokoloskee, this iconic establishment became a focal point for Seminole Indians, local fishermen, farmers, and hunters, arriving via an array of vessels such as skiffs, rowboats, and small schooners. Weathering the forces of nature through multiple hurricanes and remodels, the Smallwood Store now serves as an immersive museum, unfolding the captivating history of Chokoloskee Island and the surrounding 10,000 Islands. A journey through its exhibits offers a captivating glimpse into the enduring spirit of pioneers who shaped the region, portraying old Florida's resilience and timeless allure.



As you explore our piece of paradise, make sure to stop by the "Glades Building" where the **Everglades Visitors Center** resides at 207 West Broadway. This building exemplifies the enduring spirit of Everglades City. Constructed by Jan and Tony Brock of Glades Realty on the grounds of the former community center, which was demolished after Hurricane Donna's devastation in 1960. The building has served as a cornerstone of the community for decades. Purchased in 2019 by Craig and Bonnie Woodward, the building underwent extensive renovations. The east wing, now home to the Everglades Cafe, has been a bustling hub of activity, housing various coffee shops and artisans, enriching the local culture. In February 2021, the Everglades Society for Historical Preservation transformed a portion of the building into the Everglades Visitor Center, infusing it with tales of the area's rich history and guiding tourists to explore its unique treasures. Originally, the Chamber of Commerce operated a Visitor Center in Carnestown, but after changes in ownership and challenges, Everglades Society for Historic Preservation (ESHP) took the helm, with Kathy Brock playing a pivotal role in its establishment.

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Unit 1: Beds:3 Bath:2 SqFt:1492 | Unit 2: Beds:2 Bath:2 SqFt:1388  
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## What's The Oldest Building In Everglades City?

by Rev. Bob Wallace



I was standing in front of “the friendly little church on the circle in Everglades City” when a man came up to me and asked, “What’s the oldest building here in Everglades City?” I pointed across the circle to a big old brown building a couple of blocks away and said, “the oldest building in Everglades City is the Rod & Gun Club.”

Visit Florida tells us it was built in 1873 upon a foundation set by the first permanent settler, William Smith Allen. It was purchased in 1922 by Barron Collier, a wealthy rancher and industrialist after whom Collier County is named. Collier turned it into a private establishment for his well heeled friends. The club has attracted many famous guests over the years, including Ernest Hemingway, John Wayne, Burt Reynolds, Sally Field, Sean Connery, Mick Jagger, Danny Glover, Joe Pesci, George Bush Sr., Gypsy Rose Lee, and Jack Nicklaus.

According to [www.rodandguneverglades.com](http://www.rodandguneverglades.com) Barron Collier was responsible for putting the Everglades on the map. At the beginning of the 20th century, he built a miniature city with functioning buildings designed for various

purposes for his employees. He built several buildings to serve his employees. This included a laundry building, a bank, a post office and telegraph, bakery, the Everglades Inn, administration offices, a department store, a pharmacy, and a restaurant. (The bank today will soon become a Welcome Center, and the laundry is museum.) He even printed his own money to be used as scrip and exchanged for U.S. Dollars when leaving the area. Collier acquired the property from the Storter family and turned it into a vacation club for the elite and wealthy. He even had a couple of US Presidents as guests. And he helped the construction of



Photos: Courtesy of Rod & Gun Club



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The Friendly Little Church on the Circle  
**NON-DENOMINATIONAL**

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Everglades City, FL 34139, 239-784-7318  
The Rev. Dr. Bob N. Wallace, Pastor

◆ Sunday Worship - 11:00 am ◆

Listen to past sermons online:  
[www.evergladescommunity.church](http://www.evergladescommunity.church)



### Birding in Big Cypress

In Big Cypress Preserve, birding isn't just a hobby—it's a treasure hunt for the most stunning winged beauties! If you want to go start your journey on Loop Road (CR 94), where wading birds steal the spotlight. Picture herons and egrets strutting their stuff while Barred Owls peek from the trees, and if you're lucky, catch a Swallow-tailed Kite making a majestic flyover. It's like a bird-lover's dream unfolding along this scenic drive.

For a deeper dive into the avian wonderland, take on the Florida National Scenic Trail from Loop Road. Brace yourself for a rendezvous with Red-cockaded Woodpeckers, along with their pals, the Brown-headed Nuthatches and Northern Bobwhites, hanging out in the pinelands. The thrill of spotting these unique species against the backdrop of this untamed wilderness is truly something special.

In the shallow waters of Big Cypress, Herons, Egrets, and other long-legged birds that engage in hunting are collectively known as wading birds. There are 16 species of wading birds in the preserve, making them some of the most commonly seen birds in Big Cypress.

At Kirby Storter and H.P. Williams Roadside Parks, get ready for an up-close rendezvous with nature's stars. Boardwalks here provide front-row views to waders, warblers, woodpeckers, and occasional bluebirds. It's a bird symphony by the water's edge!

Big Cypress Preserve is a birding paradise full of surprises at every corner!



the Tamiami Trail, a major highway into the city, cementing its productivity and legitimacy as a potential city.

Today, the club is a living monument to a Gilded Age. According to *Trip Advisor*, this is “The largest subtropical wilderness in the United States. The Everglades is like no other place in the world.” And the Rod and Gun Club is open to guests who can fish in the Everglades or the Barron River, hike on local trails, or visit nearby Native American reservations. Historical Everglades City dates back over 1,000 years. Steve Winston, writing

in *Visit Florida* said, “From the outside, the Everglades City Rod & Gun Club looks simply like an old brown lodge. But when you open the doors and walk inside, you're suddenly enveloped in a timewarp. The ambience – and all the furniture – is from the turn of the century. In fact, it's the original furniture from the days when the Rod & Gun Club was a playground for some of the world's wealthiest people.”

It was purchased in 1972 by the Bowen family from Michigan, who are still operating it. They've closed the top two floors of the main building and kept the bottom floor with a fine restaurant, great room, Victorian sitting rooms, and general store as an authentic monument to those grandiose times. They've built five cottages with four units each for guests.

According to *Divine Naples* “Modern-day Everglades City, and the nearby Chokoloskee Bay, were inhabited by Native Americans for thousands of years. A few years after the Civil War, was when the region really started to see its share of American settlers. By 1899, George Storter, Jr. claimed the land and became a successful sugar cane plantation owner. He established a trading post in 1892 and acquired a post office named ‘Everglade’ which is where Everglades City got its name. Then tourists and wealthy vacationers in their yachts who loved to hunt, and fish came.

The first church and schools were built at the close of the nineteenth century. General stores and trading posts popped up. The ones already established became busier. Stores such as that of the Smallwood family, still standing today, became successful.

And all the rest, as they say, is history.”

Reverend Dr Bob N. Wallace  
Everglades Community Church  
<https://evergladescommunity.church>



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See Events



## Museum of the Everglades

105 West Broadway Avenue Everglades City, FL



Originally a 1927 commercial laundry, the Museum of the Everglades building testifies to the town's history as a bustling business center and the region's first county seat. Now a museum, it's open Tuesday

to Saturday from 9 am to 4 pm with free admission. Certain events may require reservations. Book your reservation at [colliermuseums.com](http://colliermuseums.com) or call (239) 252-5026. Come explore Everglades heritage today!

### Exhibits & Events

#### WE ARE STILL HERE - the Continuing Story of the Miccosukee Tribe January 23 – May 11



Pauline Reeves Gallery will present both the past and present of the Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida. Created in collaboration with the tribal council, the exhibit explores the Miccosukee's culture and heritage while celebrating their unique achievements in self-governance, education, environmental protection, and more.

#### Third Thursday Talk Series

Learn about a wide range of topics at an exhibit companion lecture happening every third Thursday of the month from 2 – 3 pm.

#### Where Did He Find the Time? — Barron Collier, Visionary Businessman March 21 | 2 – 3pm



Best-known in our region as the founder and developer of Collier County, Barron Gift Collier was a prodigious and prolific businessman in every sense of the word. In this (almost) birthday tribute, Museum Manager Thomas Lockyear will celebrate Mr. Collier's uncanny commercial acumen and explore some of his lesser-known ventures that included a chain of

hotels, bus lines, banks, newspapers, a telephone company, and even a steamship line. Also included will be a discussion of Mr. Collier's development of the Radium Springs Spa and Resort in Georgia and Luna Park Amusement Center at Coney Island, New York.

#### Paved With Good Intentions: How the Road Through the Everglades Harmed the Seminole and Miccosukee April 18 | 2 – 3 pm



While we celebrate the construction of the Tamiami Trail as a "miracle of modern engineering" that connected Florida's coast and opened Southwest Florida to tourism, we often fail to acknowledge the reality that there were indigenous people living in the lands the road was built through. The Tamiami Trail not only

displaced the native population, but it also had devastating and irreparable effects on their culture — socially, economically, and spiritually. In this talk, Museum Manager Thomas Lockyear attempts to tell "the other side of the story" and explores the concept of the Everglades as "stolen land".

#### Wilderness Wednesdays at the Museum Series January 3 - April 17 | 2 – 3 pm



Embark on a captivating journey into the heart of the Everglades with Wilderness Wednesdays, an enriching lecture series held every Wednesday from 2 to 3 pm at the Museum of the Everglades. In collaboration with the Big Cypress National Preserve, this seasonal program features presentations by ranger staff and esteemed partner organizations, delving into the distinctive flora, fauna, and remarkable biodiversity of this unique ecosystem. Spanning January to April, each week unveils a new topic presented by the National Park Service, promising an immersive exploration of the

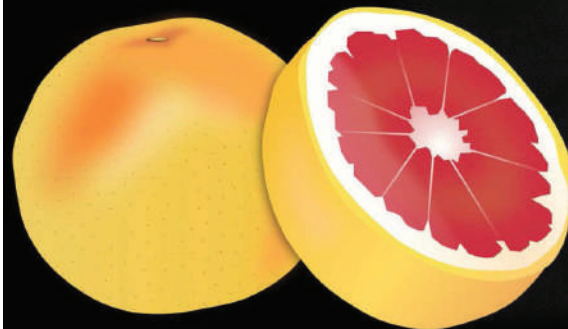
Everglades' natural wonders. For further details and updates on scheduled talks, contact the Museum of the Everglades at (239) 252-5026 or visit [CollierMuseums.com/events](http://CollierMuseums.com/events)

## It all started with grapefruit.

# The Annual Grapefruit Gala

with live music by  
the Jack Shealy  
Band

FRIDAY,  
MARCH 22<sup>nd</sup>  
5PM – 7PM



Museum of the Everglades  
105 W. Broadway  
Everglades City  
239-252-5026 for more information

Outside in the parking lot – Bring Your Own Chair!

### Annual Grapefruit Gala

March 22 | 5 – 7 pm

Join us in the parking lot at Museum of the Everglades for our annual whimsical country dance with live music by a bluegrass incarnation of local favorites The Jack Shealy Band.

Enjoy tasty finger foods and complimentary wine along with fresh local citrus as we celebrate the birthday of county founder Barron Gift Collier. Collier's 1921 purchase of a grapefruit grove at Deep Lake ultimately shifted the local economy toward tourism and led to the creation of our county. That's why we say "It all started with grapefruit." Stop by and raise a toast to our founder.

No formal attire required at this gala. Just bring a chair and don't forget your dancing shoes.

More Information: [colliermuseums.com](http://colliermuseums.com) or call (239) 252-5026.



### Florida: #1 Retirement Spot

Florida has officially snagged the title of the top state to retire, according to WalletHub. It's not news to us locals, but it's always nice to get some recognition!

With our strong economy, low taxes, and a crime rate that's easy on the nerves, it's no wonder folks are flocking here. Recent nods for talent attraction and entrepreneurship just add more sparkle to the Sunshine State.

WalletHub loves our affordable health services and the endless fun for seniors, making Florida the ultimate retirement spot. As more folks catch on, our sunny state keeps shining as the go-to paradise for retirement. Welcome aboard, future Floridians!

More Info: <https://wallethub.com/edu/best-and-worst-states-to-retire/18592>

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## Spinach with Citrus Dressing

### Dressing:

- 1/2 cup cider vinegar
- 1 tsp garlic, minced
- 1/4 tsp hot pepper sauce
- 1/2 cup pureed mango
- 1 1/2 TBS sugar
- 1 TBS fresh lime juice
- 1/4 cup olive oil
- 1/2 TBS sesame seeds
- salt & pepper to taste

### Spinach:

- 2 pounds of baby spinach, washed and dried
- 1 TBS olive oil

### Directions:

In a blender, pulse together vinegar, garlic, hot pepper sauce, mango, sugar and lime juice.

Submitted by Patricia Huff

Slowly add olive oil and sesame seeds.

Season with salt and pepper to taste.

May be prepared in advance and kept in refrigerator (bring to room temperature and shake well before using).

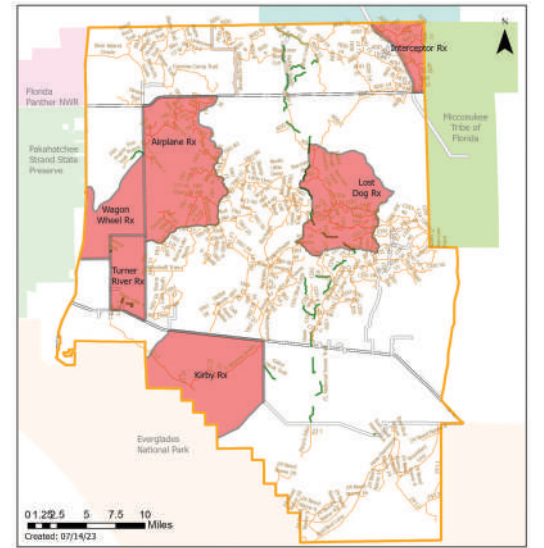
In a large skillet (on medium high setting), heat olive oil, add spinach and sauté (stirring constantly) until just wilted.

Drain and serve with a small amount of dressing drizzled on top. Additional dressing may be served separately for guests to add more if desired.



## Big Cypress National Preserve Begins Prescribed Fire Season

South Florida Fire & Aviation will conduct a series of prescribed fire operations across Big Cypress National Preserve over the coming months, as weather conditions and other parameters permit. The planned treatment areas cover approximately 147,633 acres in 6 separate burn units, strategically placed throughout the park as part of a multi-year fuels treatment plan.



Fires are a natural and important ecosystem function for Florida's environment. Using prescribed fire as a land management tool helps reduce the risk of wildfires to communities and developed areas. Fire benefits the ecosystem by renewing wildlife habitats and promoting ecological diversity.

As prescribed fire operations are implemented, some visitor impacts are anticipated. Temporary closures are expected to ensure visitor and firefighter safety during operations. The public will be advised of specific area closures by press release, web alert, and posting of signs in appropriate areas. Visitors are encouraged to check the website daily in order to ensure roads, trails and access areas are open to the public.

Please utilize the provided map of 2023 planned treatment areas when planning activities, including hunting, within the preserve. For more information follow this link: <https://www.nps.gov/bicy/learn/news/big-cypress-national-preserve-begins-prescribed-fire-season.htm>

February 3, 2023 Puzzle Solution

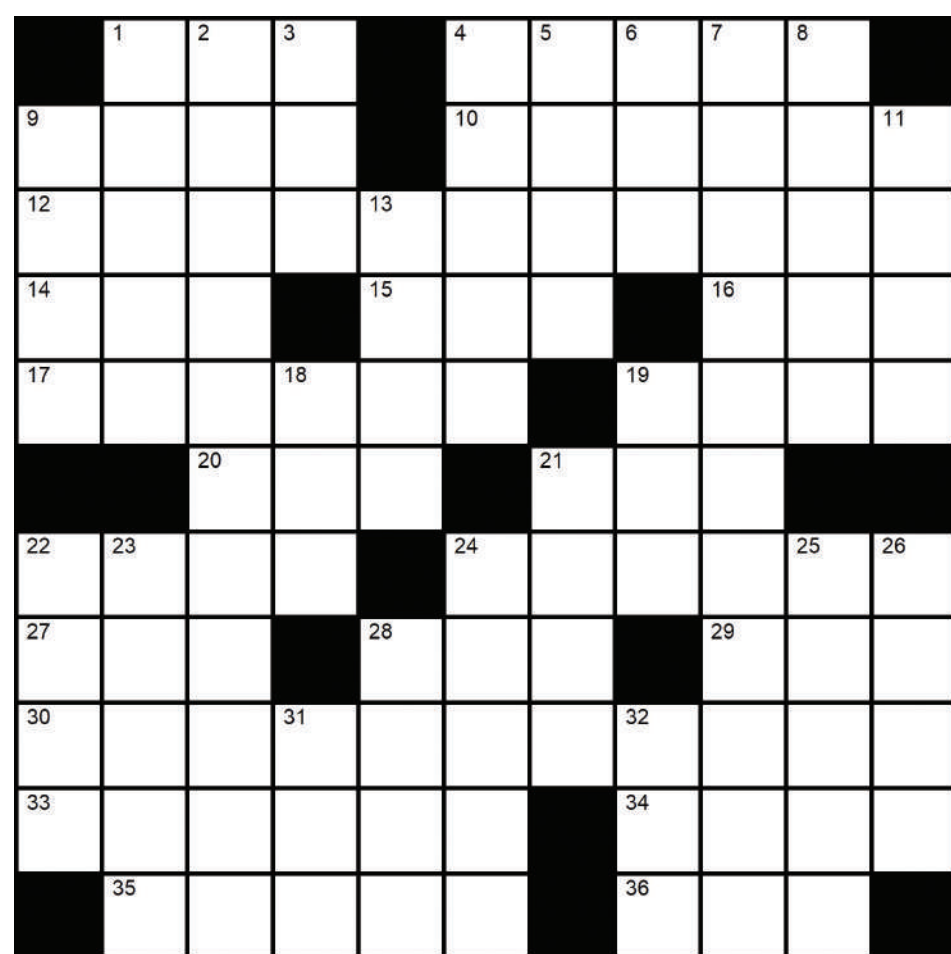
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36	S	E	S	T	E	T				37	A	P	E	S			

### Pets of the Everglades

**"Scout"**  
Owner: Tucker Haitz

## MULLET RAPPER CROSSWORD

- ### Across
1. "Monty Python" ainer
  4. Accommodate
  9. Mélange
  10. Boa or anaconda found in the Everglades
  12. Plant also called a windflower
  14. Fellow
  15. Cabernet, e.g.
  16. Oolong, for one
  17. Bad mark
  19. A junket from the rooftop right on time
  20. Anatomical duct
  21. Churchill's "so few": Abbr.
  22. European auto
  24. Time in power
  27. High craggy hill
  28. Prefix with night or day
  29. Lacking value
  30. A public gift
  33. Good-for-nothing
  34. Doctrines
  35. Aligns audio and video
  36. Fraternity letter



- ### Down
1. Swell
  2. Range of life in ecosystems like the Everglades
  3. Atlantic catch
  4. Breathing problem
  5. Turned blue, maybe
  6. Store convenience, for short

7. Glossy or matte
8. Contents of some cartridges
9. Mice catchers
11. "Cool!"
13. Kind of dealer
18. "For Me and My \_\_\_"
19. Dust remover
21. Change
22. "Beetle Bailey" dog
23. Burns and Allen, e.g.
24. Winter coats
25. Big city close to Everglades
26. Building additions
28. Catchall abbr.
31. Elephant's weight, maybe
32. Barely beat

### Captain Morgan's Seafood Grill

Located On The Circle

Open Wed - Sun | 11 am to 8 pm  
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Wild Caught Shrimp Tostones

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2/17/24



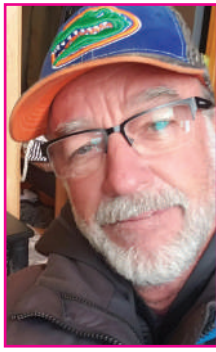
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<b>Angler's Cove, Port of the Islands</b> Wed 4 pm – 11 pm Thur-Sun 12 am – 11 pm (Kitchen Closes at 9pm)
<b>Camellia Street Grill</b> Daily 11 am – 9 pm (239) 695-2003
<b>Captain Morgan's Seafood Grill Corp.</b> Wed-Sun 11 am – 8 pm (239) 232-0041
<b>City Seafood</b> Mon-Fri 8 am – 3 pm Sat & Sun 8 am – 4 pm (239) 695-4700
<b>Diving Pelican Restaurant</b> Sun-Thur 11 am – 8 pm Fri & Sat 11 am – 8:30 pm (Outside bar to 11 pm) (239) 232-0475
<b>Everglades Cafe</b> Thur-Mon 11 am – 3 pm Closed Tue & Wed (239) 351-4875
<b>The Hangout</b> Thur-Mon 11 am – 3 pm Closed Tue & Wed (239) 232-0461
<b>HavAnna Cafe</b> Daily 8 am – 8 pm (239) 695-2214
<b>Island Cafe</b> Daily 6 am – 9 pm (239) 695-0003
<b>Joanie's Crab Cafe</b> Thur-Tues 10:30 am – 4 pm Sat & Sun 10:30 am to 5 pm (239) 695-2682
<b>Nely's Corner (Inside EFC)</b> Fri-Sun 6:30 am – 4 pm (239) 695-4222
<b>Rod &amp; Gun</b> Mon-Thurs 11:30 am – 4 pm Fri-Sat 11:30 am – 8 pm (239) 695-2101
<b>Triad Seafood Market &amp; Cafe</b> Daily 10:30 am – 4 pm (239) 695-2662

Markets
<b>Right Choice Market</b> Daily 9 am – 7 pm (239) 695-4535
<b>Grimm's Stone Crab</b> Mon-Sat 8 am – 5 pm (239) 695-3222

Worship
<b>Chokoloskee Family Church</b> Sun: 10 am School & Worship, 6 pm Renewal Wed: Youth Program 7 pm
<b>Copeland Baptist Church</b> Sun: 10 am School, 11 am Worship
<b>Everglades Community Church</b> Sun: 11 am Worship, 9:45 Sunday School
<b>1st Baptist Church of Everglades City</b> Sun: 9:45 am School, 11 am Worship & 6 pm Service Wed: 6 pm Bible Study
<b>Holy Family Catholic Church</b> Sunday: 10:30 am Mass (Dec - April)

### Winter Fishing In The 10,000 Islands

by Captain Mike Merritt



Well, at the time of writing this month's article, we are having a warming trend that has fired up the Snook fishing. If this continues then the Snook bite should be good this month. The backcountry is where it's at right now. Casting shorelines with soft plastics has been producing lots of action with a few decent fish mixed in. There are quite a variety of baits out to use and they all work to a degree.

More important than selection is the accuracy of casting. As a guide, this can be the most frustrating part of the day. When you know if a good cast is made it will produce fish. If you are not able to make accurate casts then you can't expect to have as good a result as if you were an accurate caster. I suggest to anglers to hit as many of the little pockets along a bank as possible. Work your bait out about 10-15 ft. and then recast, The more casts you make the more action you get. Long casts down the edge of a bank will get any fish laying out but the majority of your Snook bites will be right at the edge or under the edge. Practice your casts if you need to. Set up a target and develop your skills. Consistency is key. If you hold the rod a little different every time you cast then you can't develop consistency.

All this being said there is a bite going on right now so get out and enjoy it while the water temps are rising. There are also still plenty of Redfish in the backcountry, not to mention Black Drum. These guys will take Gulps fished on a jig head very readily. The size of the jig head you use will depend on the depth and what type of bottom you are fishing. A 1/4 oz. is a good weight for most of the time. I prefer a jig with a really strong hook as I have had hooks straightened and have even had hooks break from some manufacturers. I use Roos Baits jig heads as he makes them with a nice hook and they hold up to big fish. The worst thing that can happen is your client hooks a trophy fish and the hook fails. I have had this happen, but not since I started using these jigs.

February is also known here as the best month to catch the biggest Seatrout of the year. I still prefer a DOA glow shrimp on a popping cork for these guys. But a jig or bucktail will also work. And of course, it's hard to beat live shrimp. The flats, bars, rocks, and even backcountry will all produce this time of year. Depending on how warm it gets this month you can see the Tarpon start showing back up, although that typically starts more next month. Let's all hope for warmer weather and some stability and have a great month fishing here in our Everglades!

Good luck fishing, Capt. Mike Merritt

**Mike Merritt, Fishing Guide**

(561)252-4324

[SnookFishing1@juno.com](mailto:SnookFishing1@juno.com)

### Snook Season Opens March 1

It's Snook Season starting March 1 this year. The perfect time to learn about our favorite catch. There are five distinct species of snook, with the common snook taking the spotlight in this report. Known for their adaptability to varying salinity levels, snook display catadromous behavior, migrating from freshwater to saltwater for spawning. Additionally, they exhibit protandric hermaphroditism, with larger individuals typically transitioning to females, contributing to a robust breeding population.

Snook, particularly as juveniles, are voracious feeders and display cannibalistic tendencies. As they mature, their diet shifts towards mullet, pinfish, small crustaceans, and other diminutive fish. Ranging from Galveston, Texas, southward through Florida to Rio de Janeiro, snook demonstrate resilience but are sensitive to cold weather, facing harm when water temperatures dip below 60 degrees.

These fish boast an impressive lifespan of over 20 years, with the largest snook on record weighing 59 lbs., 12 ounces off the coast of Costa Rica. In Florida, a 44 lbs., 3 ounces snook caught in Fort Myers in 1984 holds the conventional tackle record, while Chokoloskee saw a 30 lbs., 4 ounces fly fishing record in April 1993.

Current regulations include "slots" for snook, enforcing a bag limit of 1 fish per day between 28 to 33 inches. Don't forget to share your success by sending us a photo of your noteworthy catch.

Happy fishing!

Barron River Tides				
2/17/2024	Sat	4:06 AM	-0.13	L
2/17/2024	Sat	1:06 PM	1.55	H
2/17/2024	Sat	3:41 PM	0.87	L
2/17/2024	Sat	8:35 PM	2.29	H
2/18/2024	Sun	5:17 AM	-0.17	L
2/18/2024	Sun	1:46 PM	1.73	H
2/18/2024	Sun	5:11 PM	0.9	L
2/18/2024	Sun	9:57 PM	2.27	H
2/19/2024	Mon	6:22 AM	-0.22	L
2/19/2024	Mon	2:15 PM	1.83	H
2/19/2024	Mon	6:26 PM	0.85	L
2/19/2024	Mon	11:13 PM	2.32	H
2/20/2024	Tue	7:17 AM	-0.26	L
2/20/2024	Tue	2:37 PM	1.88	H
2/20/2024	Tue	7:24 PM	0.76	L
2/21/2024	Wed	12:13 AM	2.43	H
2/21/2024	Wed	8:01 AM	-0.28	L
2/21/2024	Wed	2:41 PM	1.91	H
2/21/2024	Wed	8:08 PM	0.66	L
2/22/2024	Thu	12:58 AM	2.53	H
2/22/2024	Thu	8:40 AM	-0.28	L
2/22/2024	Thu	2:36 PM	1.98	H
2/22/2024	Thu	8:46 PM	0.55	L
2/23/2024	Fri	1:36 AM	2.6	H
2/23/2024	Fri	9:15 AM	-0.24	L
2/23/2024	Fri	2:45 PM	2.1	H
2/23/2024	Fri	9:21 PM	0.45	L
2/24/2024	Sat	2:10 AM	2.61	H
2/24/2024	Sat	9:48 AM	-0.18	L
2/24/2024	Sat	3:03 PM	2.21	H
2/24/2024	Sat	9:55 PM	0.36	L
2/25/2024	Sun	2:44 AM	2.58	H
2/25/2024	Sun	10:20 AM	-0.09	L
2/25/2024	Sun	3:26 PM	2.3	H
2/25/2024	Sun	10:29 PM	0.27	L
2/26/2024	Mon	3:19 AM	2.48	H
2/26/2024	Mon	10:49 AM	0.02	L
2/26/2024	Mon	3:50 PM	2.36	H
2/26/2024	Mon	11:03 PM	0.19	L
2/27/2024	Tue	3:55 AM	2.34	H
2/27/2024	Tue	11:15 AM	0.15	L
2/27/2024	Tue	4:12 PM	2.38	H
2/27/2024	Tue	11:38 PM	0.13	L
2/28/2024	Wed	4:35 AM	2.15	H
2/28/2024	Wed	11:37 AM	0.29	L
2/28/2024	Wed	4:31 PM	2.38	H
2/29/2024	Thu	12:17 AM	0.09	L
2/29/2024	Thu	5:19 AM	1.94	H
2/29/2024	Thu	11:52 AM	0.43	L
2/29/2024	Thu	4:47 PM	2.36	H
3/1/2024	Fri	1:01 AM	0.07	L
3/1/2024	Fri	6:16 AM	1.71	H
3/1/2024	Fri	12:03 PM	0.57	L
3/1/2024	Fri	5:08 PM	2.35	H



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# CLASSIFIEDS

**HELP WANTED:** Our Everglades Area Visitor Center is looking for volunteers to greet tourists from around the world and share their knowledge of our local businesses and recreational opportunities. Call Patty at (239)719-0020 or email [snookcity@gmail.com](mailto:snookcity@gmail.com) for information.

**PET PHOTO CALL:** If you have cute, crazy or just lovable pets please send their photo to the Mullet Rapper and we'll put them in the paper for all to enjoy. They'll be Famous!

[MulletRapper@gmail.com](mailto:MulletRapper@gmail.com)

**HELP WANTED:** The Mullet Rapper is seeking photographs of happenings in Everglades City and surrounding areas. If you like to attend local events, have a camera (phones work) and you have the desire to share your imagery with the community please contact me or send your photos with a brief description to:



[MulletRapper@gmail.com](mailto:MulletRapper@gmail.com)

**ANNOUNCEMENT:** Do you love fresh flowers? Have you ever dreamed



of growing your own herbs, fruits, and vegetables? Do you have a green thumb but not enough space? If so, WE WANT YOU! We are organizing the first-ever community garden in Everglades City!! Raised planter beds, dirt, and water will be provided. All you need to bring are some seeds and lots of Love! So far we have planted bananas, Santini avocado, starfruit, sugar, apples, sugarcane, pineapple, and papaya. Sounds awesome right?

If you're interested call or text Tod at (818) 554-9365.

# Festival

From page 5



That night, Lonestar, the lead band, absolutely rocked the stage.

Saturday kept the excitement going with a plethora of vendors and some seriously cool rides for the kids.



As Sunday rolled around, we indulged in some truly fabulous seafood and music!

Just look at all the fun!



# SERVICES



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[lowermatmike@gmail.com](mailto:lowermatmike@gmail.com)



I don't know about you, but I'm already counting down the days until next year's festival—I just can't wait!

**Thank you, FLSCA, for your hard work!**