

# Unit Owner's Committee Meeting

Wednesday -- December 3, 2008 -- 9:00am  
Pelican Landing Community Center

Subject: Spring Creek Nature Park and Butterfly Garden

Presentation talking points:

1. **Objective** -- Establish Spring Creek Nature Park & Butterfly Garden as a Sub-Committee of the UOC to develop a specific plan, budget and organization for the development and maintenance of the park; including a \$500 initial budget for design contingencies.
2. **Concept** -- The concept originally started with development of a butterfly garden in Spring Creek Park, but as more people with broader areas of expertise became involved it was apparent that a "nature park" that included a "butterfly garden" was the most appropriate way to proceed in developing it (or not developing it because of the use of native plants and the least disturbance to native vegetation). Our initial approach is to utilize approximately one third of the area as a butterfly garden, plus add some host and nectar butterfly attracting plants along the incoming walkway and the boardwalk. We intend to reactivate and maintain the infrastructure already in existence with the help of the CDD.
3. **Site Plan** -- There is electricity, non-potable water, a sanitary sewer and a sprinkler system in place. There are also several non-native exotic invasive plants present that need to be removed (i.e. Brazilian Pepper, Octopus plants, etc.). Repair to the brick pavers on the path is also needed. The above utilities, repairs and plant removals are the responsibility of the CDD. We will be meeting with the CDD December 8th to discuss these issues, plus the possible installation of garden paths, hardscape, plant thinning and other areas where they can be of assistance.
4. **A Unique Environment** -- The entire park represents about a third of an acre. It is technically considered an "ecotone"\* , which is a transitional environment where two distinct ecologies integrate creating an overlapping of indigenous species. Transition zones are important because they help to complete the food web and provide habitat for the variety of life that we enjoy (In contrast to manicured lawns). The brackish Spring Creek area is an aquatic zoo and bird aviary with mangrove boundaries that provide spawning grounds and protection for fish, fowl and other fauna unique to that environment. This is in juxtaposition to the park with its open meadow grasses in the center connecting to the pine and hardwood stand that provides upland shelter with towering pines and oaks where birds and butterflies nest and seek protection from predators. This location provides a unique opportunity for us to educate the public about the importance of mangroves and other flora. The native trees and palms, mangroves, wild herbs and tall bushes surrounding the park create an important protective wall shielding the butterflies from high winds.
5. **Protecting butterflies, birds and native plants** -- There are approximately 150 species of butterflies in Florida – 105 in Southern Florida and 79 in Southwest Florida. Some are diminishing in number because of the expanded roadwork and real estate development that has destroyed their native habitat. Our goal is twofold -- preserve this natural habitat and encourage the propagation and appreciation of these beautiful "flying flowers". Birds have a similar plight and the goal is the same.

## 6. **History:**

- a. The Red Fish Point Task Force and subsequent survey suggestions over the years have often mentioned a butterfly garden in this area, plus the importance of our landscape aesthetic.
- b. Exploring and talking with interested residents and outside experts in the development of a butterfly garden at Spring Creek Park:
  - 1) John Sibley – All Native Nursery
  - 2) Robert Graynor -- WCI Director of Landscaping Pelican Preserve
  - 3) Sharon Berg – Owner of Riverland Nursery
  - 4) Nelson Glueck – Baycreek CDD
  - 5) Jesse Mosheim – Bayside CDD
  - 6) Rosemary Allen – Pelican Landing resident and naturalist
- c. Personal visits to other similar facilities include:
  - 1) Pelican Preserve Butterfly Garden, Jim Price – Curator and founder of a 17,000 sq. ft. butterfly garden.
  - 2) Key West Butterfly Aviary
  - 3) Fairchild Tropical Gardens – Coral Gables
  - 4) Naples Botanical Gardens - Naples
  - 5) Calusa Nature Center – Fort Myers
  - 6) Lee County Extension Service – Fort Myers
- d. 2008 Butterfly Conference at Lee County Extension Service attended by Lerew, Hehr, Pospischil and Paver, plus Jesse and Betty Mosheim, Bayside and Nelson Glueck, Baycreek CDD have visited Pelican Preserve.

## 7. **Community Asset for Everyone:**

- a. Many gated communities throughout Florida and our region in particular like Bonita Bay, Mediterra, Pelican Preserve, Copperleaf and others include their butterfly gardens as important amenities that add value and attract buyers.
  - b. The Nature Center will act as a laboratory and educational facility for family members young and old, and will assist residents in developing knowledge to create and enhance their own native landscapes and butterfly gardens, both of which are desirable because they are drought and disease resistant.
  - c. It will provide education on the dangers of exotic and intrusive plants that need to be removed in order to preserve the pristine landscape we enjoy.
  - d. It will provide a serene place to relax, enjoy and learn about the marvels of nature; enjoy a myriad of butterfly species, birds and native wild plants. It will be, “A place to meditate, celebrate and dedicate oneself to the joys and awe of nature.”
8. **Conclusion** -- We appreciate the UOC Committee’s consideration of this proposal and hope you will act favorably toward its adoption today.

**Thank You**

**Bob Lerew and Friends, Owners & Residents**

## \*Appendix:

### Ecotones

#### Sci-Tech Encyclopedia:

A geographic boundary or transition zone between two different groups of plant or animal distributions. The term has been used to denote transitions at different spatial scales or levels of analysis, and may refer to any one of several attributes of the organisms involved. For example, an ecotone could refer to physiognomy (roughly, the morphology or appearance of the relevant organisms), such as between the boreal forest and grassland biomes; or it could refer to composition, such as between oak-hickory and maple-basswood forest associations; or it could refer to both. Ecotones are generally distinguished from other geographic transitions of biota by their relative sharpness. The ecotone between boreal forest and prairie in central Saskatchewan occurs over a hundred kilometers or so, in contrast to the transition from tropical forest to savanna in South America or Africa that is associated with increasing aridity and is dispersed over hundreds of kilometers. The “tension zone” between broadleaf deciduous forests in south-central Michigan and mixed forests to the north is similarly sharp. Ecotones are thought to reflect concentrated long-term gradients of one or more current environmental (rather than historical or human) factors. Though often climatic, these factors can also be due to substrate materials, such as glacial sediments or soils. Regardless of their specific environmental basis, most ecotones are thought to be relatively stable.

Ecotones are often reflected in the distributions of many biota besides the biota used to define them. The prairie-forest ecotone, for example, is defined not only by the dominant vegetation components but also by many faunal members of the associated ecosystems, such as insects, reptiles and amphibians, mammals and birds, that reach their geographic limits there.

#### Wikipedia:

An **ecotone** is a transition area between two adjacent ecological communities (ecosystems). It may appear on the ground as a gradual blending of the two communities across a broad area, or it may manifest itself as a sharp boundary line.

Changes in the physical environment may produce a sharp boundary, as in the example of a shoreline or the interface between areas of forest and cleared land. Elsewhere, a more gradually blended interface area will be found, where species from each community will be found together as well as unique local species. Mountain ranges often create such ecotones, due to the wide variety of climatic conditions experienced on their slopes. They may also provide a boundary between species due to the obstructive nature of their terrain; Mont Ventoux in France is a good example, marking the boundary between the flora and fauna of northern and southern France. Most wetlands are ecotones.

Ecotones are particularly significant for mobile animals, as they can exploit more than one set of habitats within a short distance. This can produce an edge effect along the boundary line, with the area displaying a greater than usual diversity of species.

The word was coined from a combination of *eco*(logy) plus *-tone*, from the Greek *tonos* or tension – in other words, a place where ecologies are in tension.