



Naples Preserve's 2024 Nature and History Talk Series

Free 10:00 a.m.

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February 27: "Eleven Definitive Days in Collier County's Cultural Identity", Amanda Townsend, Collier County Museum Director. Collier County is made up of 2305 square miles, three municipalities, unincorporated towns, and many distinct communities with a wide variety of vibes and flavors. Given its geographic size and ethnic diversity, how does one define Collier County's identity and culture? Amanda has chosen eleven days spanning over 120 years that define what it is to be a Collier Countian. Join us as she tells the stories of those moments that make over 375,000 of us one.

March 5: "The Story of Big Cypress Swamp in Six Animals", Ranger Jay Kissell, Big Cypress National Preserve. The Big Cypress Swamp has many stories, and the animals that call the swamp home are great storytellers. Join Ranger Jay Kissell as he weaves together the story of six animals that live in the Big Cypress Swamp. It is a story that travels through time. It is a story of changing landscapes and changing attitudes. It is a story of struggles, conflicts, and compromises. It is a story of challenges and the visions of a new future.

March 12: "A Closer look at the Meadow Joint-Vetch", Alex Crow, Botanist, Fish & Wildlife Department of the Miccosukee Tribe of Indians. The Meadow joint-vetch, *Aeschynomene pratensis* var *pratensis*, is a state-listed endangered plant in the bean family, but not much is known about it. Some botanical sources even conflict on the subject of habitat. The Miccosukee are taking a closer look at this unique wetland plant, and its preferred habitat.

March 19: "Mangroves and Mermaids- Putting a Story to the Unknown", Ranger Jess Keller, Big Cypress National Preserve. The natural world holds many mysteries, and there are many stories that have been created to explain the unfamiliar. Exploration and imagination have inspired famous myths that have been told and retold over generations. Join Ranger Jess Keller to unpack the legends, myths and mystique of the flora and fauna found at Big Cypress National Preserve, including the mermaids of South Florida.

March 26: "Conservation Connections: Florida Panthers and Texas Ocelots", Zachary Wardel, Panther Biologist, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission. His program will draw parallels between Florida panthers and ocelots – the US's two endangered felids – in terms of their ecology and conservation. (Note: The topic and speaker may change if Zachary is called out for field work.)

March 19: Annie Kilby, Big Cypress National Preserve. Topic to be determined.

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