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Blueway or Bust: Canoe & kayak festival selected as Top 20 Event

Southeast Tourism Society recognizes Calusa Blueway Paddling Festival

Fort Myers, FL, April 27, 2010 – The Calusa Blueway Paddling Festival has been selected as one of the Southeast Tourism Society's Top 20 Events for 2010. The annual canoe and kayak festival this year will happen Oct. 29 – Nov. 7 in the greater Fort Myers area and beach communities.

The Atlanta-based non-profit Southeast Tourism Society represents 12 states and annually recognizes events that reflect its mission of creating economic development through travel and sustainable tourism. The award is significant because the Top 20 Events receive extensive exposure in print, broadcast and online media in the United States and Canada in more than 800 outlets.

The 10-day Calusa Blueway Paddling Festival offers speakers and instruction, cultural and eco festivals, competitive races, a fishing tournament, a photo contest, paddlers' get-togethers and green activities. Events are at public parks and archeological sites as well as resorts, restaurants and campgrounds along the Calusa Blueway Paddling Trail, a 190-mile marked-and-meandering saltwater trail that spans the coast and inland rivers along The Beaches of Fort Myers & Sanibel. The festival is coordinated by Lee County Parks & Recreation and features daily activities, with emphasis on the Oct. 29-Nov. 1 and Nov. 5-7 weekends. Many activities are free.

The 2009 festival saw a 35 percent attendance increase and attracted more than 3,100 people from 18 states, Canada and Germany. It has been dubbed by *Canoe & Kayak* magazine and *Sea Kayaker* magazine as "North America's fastest-growing paddling festival." The festival is a featured event in the Islands Fall Fest promotion by the Lee County Visitor & Convention Bureau.

Festival details are available at www.CalusaBluewayPaddlingFestival.com. For trail information, visit www.CalusaBlueway.com. For Top 20 Events, go to www.SoutheastTourism.org.

Editor's Note: The Beaches of Fort Myers & Sanibel include: Sanibel Island, Captiva Island, Fort Myers Beach, Fort Myers, Bonita Springs & Estero, Cape Coral, Pine Island, Boca Grande & Outer islands, North Fort Myers, Lehigh Acres. Images are available upon request. Visit www.FortMyers-Sanibel.com