

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Contact: Betsy Clayton  
Calusa Blueway Coordinator  
(239) 433-3855  
[bclayton@leegov.com](mailto:bclayton@leegov.com)

**Blueway or Bust: Mark calendar now for premier paddling festival**  
***Festival set for Oct. 23-Nov. 1, 2009 in Lee County, Florida***

Lee County, FL, (USA), June 19, 2009 – The nation's premier canoeing and kayaking destination will sizzle with autumn activity in late October during the fourth annual Calusa Blueway Paddling Festival along the Beaches of Fort Myers & Sanibel in Florida.

The 10-day festival offers a buffet of speakers and instruction, cultural and eco festivals, competitive races and tournaments, paddlers' get-togethers and green activities. Events are at public parks and archeological sites as well as resorts and campgrounds along the Calusa Blueway Paddling Trail, a 190-mile marked-and-meandering saltwater trail on Southwest Florida's Gulf Coast.

Meet the man who circumnavigated Florida's coast, kayaking from Alabama to Georgia along the Sunshine State, including segments of the Great Calusa Blueway. Stay in hotels that offer special packages to travelers with paddlecraft, including ready-at-sunrise box lunches and access to ice machines and hoses. Book yourself into a campground right along the trail at a site that includes a guided tour with the Florida Paddling Trail Association to historic Mound Key, an island once inhabited by the Calusa king. Attend the Calusa Costume Ball dressed as a conquistador or sea wench, and then hear ghost stories on a moonlight hike.

Festival attendees also can get competitive. A photo contest, two canoe/kayak races and a catch-and-release fishing tournament are planned; some have cash prizes. Visitors can give back to the community by joining in a countywide waterway marine debris cleanup called Monofilament Madness. Buy a Blueway Wrist Band and enjoy extra value at many of Southwest Florida's attractions, restaurants, galleries and marine/outfitter locations.

The festival features daily activities, with emphasis on the Oct. 23-25 and Oct. 30-Nov. 1 weekends. Many activities are free.

Festival details are available at [www.CalusaBluewayPaddlingFestival.com](http://www.CalusaBluewayPaddlingFestival.com), including entry forms for canoe and kayak races, a catch-and-release fishing tournament and photo contest. Listings of other activities, hotel packages and national ride-share options also are included on the site.

For trail information, check out [www.CalsuaBlueway.com](http://www.CalsuaBlueway.com). Maps are available or can be mailed to you. Online interactive maps, suggested routes, outfitter and put-in locations, wildlife tips and a social media site are included at the Web site.

Calendar listing: Calusa Blueway Paddling Festival: Oct. 23-Nov. 1, 2009, along the Beaches of Fort Myers & Sanibel. Details online at [www.CalusaBluewayPaddlingFestival.com](http://www.CalusaBluewayPaddlingFestival.com). Dates, times, phone numbers, costs, etc. are posted; Web site is routinely updated.

*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.*