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FISHING TOURNAMENT GIVES ANGLERS A CHANCE TO WIN NEW HOBIE KAYAK

FORT MYERS, Fla., June 6, 2011 – The winner of the Calusa Blueway Kayak Fishing Tournament will nab a Hobie Pro Angler fishing kayak from Hobie and Estero River Outfitters at the annual event scheduled this year for Nov. 5. Cash prizes also will be awarded.

Fast becoming the premier kayak fishing tournament in Florida, the catch-and-release event is expected to draw 75 anglers to Pine Island Sound as part of the Calusa Blueway Paddling Festival along the shores of Southwest Florida.

This year's event features a one-day competition for anglers who catch and release snook, redfish, sea trout and other species. All fishing must take place on Lee County, Fla., waterways. Captains' meeting, weigh-in and awards take place in Matlacha.

The first place winner will receive a Hobie Pro Angler kayak complete with accessories, which has a retail value exceeding \$3,000. The Hobie Pro Angler offers stability, an adjustable seat and plenty of space for tackle boxes and gear for a day of fishing. The second-place winner will receive \$500, based on 50 participants. The third-place finisher gets \$300; the fourth-place angler earns \$150; and the fifth-place finisher wins \$50.

"It's incredible to have such an amazing kayak donated as our grand prize this year," said Josh Harvel, tournament director who also is a Hobie Fishing Team Member. "The Pro Angler is one of the best fishing kayaks available today. I'm very excited that Hobie and Estero River Outfitters have come together with the Calusa Blueway to help promote the great sport of kayak fishing."

The Nov. 4 captains' meeting will include a reception sponsored by returning sponsors Angler's Inn and Bert's Bar. The digital weigh-in and the awards presentation will be Nov. 5 at Matlacha Park. Anglers can enjoy live music and local food, thanks to the annual event called Taste of Matlacha and Bluegrass for a Blueway, which will coincide with the tournament this year.

Tournament proceeds benefit the Florida Society for Ethical Ecotourism, which is hosting the event with assistance from Lee County Parks & Recreation and Calusa Blueway volunteers. "Florida SEE is excited to be hosting this tournament for the fourth year running. It gets bigger and better every year," said Joy Hazell, tournament coordinator and Florida SEE board member.

The 2011 Calusa Blueway Paddling Festival has partnered up with *Canoe & Kayak* magazine, which will be instrumental in providing demo boats, seminars and evening entertainment throughout the weekend in nearby Fort Myers. The festival has been condensed from its usual 10-day format to four days, offering seminars, on-water instruction, races, guided trips, a photo contest and social events for paddling enthusiasts.

Registration form and rules are coming soon to www.CalusaBluewayPaddlingFestival.com. For more information, contact Harvel at (239) 233-0655 or yaknitup@embarqmail.com or co-chair Joy Hazell at hazellje@leegov.com or (239) 533-7518.

Note to media: Images available upon request. E-mail bclayton@leegov.com

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

The Calusa Blueway Paddling Festival Fishing Tournament. Saturday, Nov. 5; fishing on all Lee County, FL, waterways with tourney awards at Matlacha Park, 4577 Pine Island Road NW, Matlacha, FL 33993. It's part of the Calusa Blueway Paddling Festival. Register and get details online at www.CalusaBluewayPaddlingFestival.com.