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Contact: Betsy Clayton
Calusa Blueway Coordinator
(239) 533-7474
bclayton@leegov.com

MARK YOUR CALENDAR FOR PREMIER PADDLING FESTIVAL

FORT MYERS, Fla., July 12, 2011 – Paddling enthusiasts are preparing for the sixth annual Calusa Blueway Paddling Festival along the Beaches of Fort Myers & Sanibel, in Southwest Florida, Nov. 3-6. Selected as one of the Southeast Tourism Society's Top 20 Events for 2011, this festival has much to offer for paddling and nature lovers.

The four-day festival, presented by *Canoe & Kayak* magazine, offers hands-on nature experiences along with kayaking and canoeing events such as guided trips, demonstrations, on-water instruction, Stand-Up Paddleboard activities, green events, speakers, a film festival and evening socials.

The festival also gives attendees a chance to get competitive. Participate in two races – the Calusa Classic and Calusa Dash – as well as a photo contest and a catch-and-release fishing tournament for a chance to win cash and prizes.

“The Calusa Blueway Paddling Festival is a get-away like none other. The local community has put together an amazing list of paddling events over four days,” said Jim Marsh, publisher of *Canoe & Kayak* magazine. “There is an extraordinary amount of effort, coordination and resources thrown behind this. They actually roll out the red carpet for the kayakers. It’s a one-of-a-kind experience we will be endorsing to our readership.”

For those attendees who don’t want to miss out on any of the events, this year’s wristband is an all-inclusive pass available for \$60. Valued at \$135, this wristband provides trolley transportation to the festival site for three days of paddling equipment demos, new product testing with *Canoe & Kayak* magazine, admission to the speakers tent, on-water demonstrations, subscription to *Canoe & Kayak* magazine and three evening paddler’s socials with refreshments. The socials include Friday’s feature, The *Canoe & Kayak* Mag Film Fest Night, and Saturday’s Florida Paddling Trails Association annual event with live music and a panel discussion with members of the Watertribe, who will share their experiences participating in an adventure race that circumnavigates Florida. Evening socials may be capped based on space, but this pass guarantees you admission.

Finding lodging is easy. Hotels and inns in the area have created special packages for travelers with paddlecraft. Tent campers and RVers can book waterfront sites with kayak launches and can paddle the Calusa Blueway to the festivities and social hours. Most event sites are reachable by bicycle or trolley. This year the Calusa Blueway Paddling Festival is centrally located on the Sanibel Causeway and serves to highlight the Calusa Blueway Paddling trail, a 190-mile marked and meandering saltwater trail.

Festival details are available at www.CalusaBluewayPaddlingFestival.com, including lodging packages and a schedule of events. For trail information, visit www.CalusaBlueway.com. Find the festival on Facebook and Twitter. The festival is coordinated by Lee County Parks & Recreation, based in Fort Myers, Fla.

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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, Alva, Lehigh Acres. Festival images are available upon request.