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CALUSA BLUEWAY PHOTO CONTEST WINNERS ANNOUNCED

Fort Myers, FL, Oct. 20, 2011 – Four Lee County amateur photographers have been selected as winners in the 2011 Calusa Blueway Photo Contest, which garnered its most entries in the history of the six-year Calusa Blueway Paddling Festival with 136 pictures.

Fort Myers resident Len Morehead's "Great Egret in Flight" nabbed first in the Wildlife category. Ryan Cantey of Matlacha won first for "Night Watch" — which judges preferred to call "Sunset Paddle" — in the People on the Trail category. Return winner and competitor Carolyn Babb of Fort Myers won first for "Pelicans in Matanzas Pass" in the Signs & Markers category.

A new category — added in 2011 and called "Reflections" — was open to the shooter's interpretation. First place went to Alycia Ellison of Fort Myers for "Evening on the Bayway."

Shutterbugs, nature lovers, paddlers and contest entrants are invited to hear speakers and see the first-place winners' pictures, framed courtesy of sponsor ABC Framing of Lehigh Acres, on Wednesday, Nov. 2. An event is planned for 6:30 p.m. at Rutenberg Park's Eco Living Center, 6490 South Point Blvd., South Fort Myers. It's free and will feature presentations by Cape Coral artist Jeanette Chupack and Lehigh Acres photographer and guide Mark Renz. Chupack will speak on "Kayaking to Photograph and Paint Florida's Wild Places" and Renz will present "Nature Photos Connect Past and Present."

The contest's second-place winners were Doug Schallmoser of Cape Coral in Reflections and Kara Wright of Fort Myers for Wildlife. Gary Vannice of Fort Myers got two second place wins — for Sign & Markers and for People on the Trail.

Third place winners included Sue Christensen of Fort Myers for Reflections, Mr. Morehead for Wildlife, Erika Foye of Pineland for People on the Trail, and Deb Wedeking of Bokeelia for Signs & Markers.

The Nov. 2 reception is on the eve of the 2011 Calusa Blueway Paddling Festival, which runs Nov. 3-6 with activities focused on the Sanibel Causeway. Selected as one of the Southeast Tourism Society's Top 20 Events for 2011, the festival offers chances to try out canoes, kayaks and Stand-Up Paddleboards as well as guided trips, instruction, speakers, evening socials and the Canoe & Kayak Magazine Film Festival. It also features two races and a catch-and-release fishing tournament for a chance to win cash and prizes. Get details on purchasing day-passes and four-day passes at www.calusabluewaypaddlingfestival.com.

A selection of winners' and entrants' photos will be posted on the Calusa Blueway Paddling Festival's Facebook page.