

Wednesday Notes, January 18, 2023

Walk the walk - two new labyrinths in southwest Florida await you . . .



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Recycle. Renew. Reuse. Repurpose.

All these “R” words are real at Lemon Bay Conservancy Wildflower Preserve on the Cape Haze peninsula, Englewood, Charlotte County, FL.

A former 18 hole golf course was abandoned for four years and then bought in 2010 by the Conservancy. The 80 acre property has undergone a major habitat restoration – old golf course ponds are now a series of interconnected wetlands and uplands are restored to native habitats – a massive effort completed by the Conservancy in 2021 in partnership with Southwest Florida Water Management District and NOAA.

What happened to all that dirt dug up to make wetlands? Recycled to make a hill 40 feet high. It even has a name - Hope Point.

Please hold your laughter about hill height – here in flat Florida 40 feet high is a steep pitch. Heck, anything above sea level qualifies as a bit of a climb. Indulge us.

There is a straight up path to the top of Hope Point and another meandering slow reveal path that wanders up the slope gradually. Both paths are eight feet wide with freshly mowed grass - easy to walk.

The top of Hope Point is flat. Here you will find a lovely surprise - a seven-circuit Baltic



While tending a beach labyrinth on Boca Grande, one that washed away in Hurricane Ian, Tonya realized the flat top of Hope Point was calling out for a labyrinth. And so, it came to be with massive help from volunteers.

The Baltic design means there is one path for the journey in, and a different path for the journey out. It is a very ancient labyrinth design. Rocks outlining the path came from other parts of the preserve, as did the pine straw and pinecones on the path.

Benches will go around the outside of the labyrinth. More benches are nearby – overlooking the wetlands and a bird rookery.

Wildflower Preserve is open to Lemon Bay Conservancy members daily and to the public as part of regularly scheduled nature tours and events.

One event coming up soon - Their annual Open House on February 11 from 8 a.m. to 3

p.m. Booths for community groups will be set up in the meadow area.

It is on my calendar. There will be tours of the property. A dedication of the labyrinth is planned at 10 a.m. You are invited.

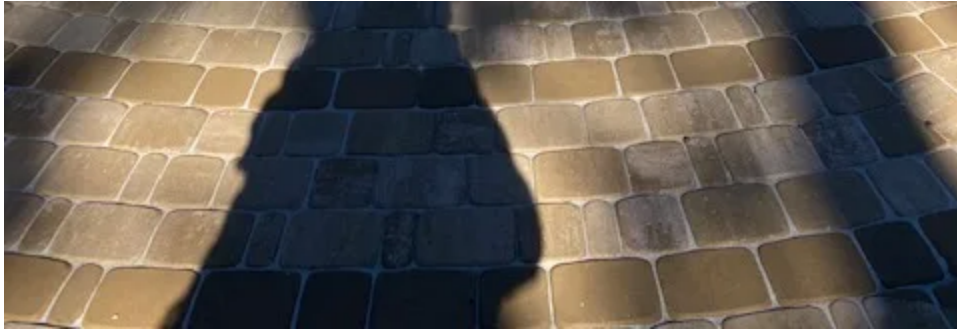
The preserve is located on the Cape Haze peninsula, at the southeast corner of the Gasparilla Pines Boulevard and Placida Road (Hwy 775) intersection. Parking lot address is 3120 Gasparilla Pines Boulevard, Englewood, FL 34224. Admission is free.

A bit to the north in Venice, Florida, a new 11 circuit Chartres Cathedral design labyrinth graces the area in front of Venice United Church of Christ.

After church member Judy Dennison passed away in December 2021, fellow church member Vicky Ferguson spearheaded a labyrinth project in her memory.

Shade trees cast long shadows over the two-toned paver labyrinth located in front of the church and near a neighborhood sidewalk.





A graceful curving paver walk leads you to the beginning. Here my shadow and I get ready to walk the labyrinth.



In the center the United Church of Christ logo is embedded as a paver design.



Engraved pavers will be placed at the labyrinth. Many members of the church have donated to this cause. There will be a dedication of the labyrinth during church service on Sunday, March 19, 2023. The church service is at 10 a.m. You are invited.

United Church of Christ is located at 620 Shamrock Blvd., Venice, FL 34293. After the service come to the Fellowship Hall for coffee and pastry.

Based on my book *Circle the Center Labyrinths in Florida*, I'll be doing an introduction to the labyrinth and walking it. (Spoiler alert: there is no right or wrong way to walk a labyrinth – dance the circuits, sing, skip, carry in an intention, hug someone on the path, whatever works for you).

Bottom line: Whoever you are and wherever you are on life's journey, you are welcome to walk a labyrinth.

And now you know there are two new sacred spaces waiting for you to take the first step on the path.

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TO KNOW MORE

<https://www.ucc.org/>

<https://lemonbayconservancy.org/wildflower-preserve/>

<http://www.lucytobias.com/books/circling-center-labyrinths-florida/>

<https://labyrinthociety.org/>



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