Mason Goss, Ed.D., Fills New Role at SCCF

Will Lead Education Efforts in 'Connecting You to Nature'

Mason Goss, Ed.D., who grew up on Sanibel Island, is filling the new role of Senior Director of Education at SCCF, bringing 26 years of educational leadership to shepherd environmental conservation across SCCF’s educational platforms, including Sanibel Sea School, Native Landscapes and Garden Center, Ocean Tribe Paddlers, Coastal Watch, and No Child Left on Shore programs.

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Nicole Finnicum Moves on as Shannon Stainken Steps Up

Sanibel Sea School Director Nicole Finnicum (left) is ending her eight-year journey with Sanibel Sea School to take a position in Experiential Learning at her alma mater, Ohio University. Shannon Stainken will take on the new role of SCCF Youth Education Director. Finnicum says Stainken “is an outstanding leader” who “will continue to share the magic of the ocean with so many kiddos.”

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Turtle Volunteers Put in Long Hours to Monitor Hatchings

The sea turtle nesting season is all but over. In the last two weeks, only eight new nests have been laid. However, with 340 nests still incubating, four teams of volunteers are out monitoring the beaches...
for five, six, sometimes seven hours at a time every day. Working tirelessly through the buggy mornings and into the hot afternoon, SCCF’s dedicated volunteer team collects data vital to understanding nest productivity and to statewide recovery efforts. **READ MORE**

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**Want to Volunteer for World Shorebirds Day?**

For the sixth consecutive year, SCCF will be participating in global shorebird counts as part of **World Shorebirds Day**. These counts have been conducted during the first week of September worldwide since 2014 to spread awareness about shorebird conservation and gather longitudinal data. SCCF is seeking volunteers to help on Sept. 7. No experience is necessary. **READ MORE**

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**City Council Bans Gas-Powered Leaf Blowers**

Yesterday afternoon, Sanibel City Council voted to approve a ban of gas-powered leaf blowers within the City of Sanibel, whether for private, governmental, or commercial purpose, effective after December 31, 2022. The vote was unanimous. Vegetation contractors who work on Sanibel properties now have 16 months to replace their gas-powered leaf blowers. SCCF partnered with the Committee of the Islands (COTI) in support of this important step toward sustainable landscaping.

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**Evans Presents Priorities to Legislative Delegation**

SCCF Environmental Policy Director James Evans presented SCCF’s 2022 Legislative Priorities at the annual Southwest Florida Legislative Delegation meeting held at Florida SouthWestern State College on Aug. 18. SCCF is focused on nine key priorities affecting Everglades restoration, environmental conservation, harmful algal blooms, water quality, and home rule. **Click**
here for the complete list of 2022 Legislative Priorities.

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Video Captures Plume off Lighthouse Beach

Our water quality is directly impacted by runoff in our watershed as seen from the tannic/brown freshwater plume merging with the emerald-green Gulf of Mexico on Aug. 13 at Lighthouse Beach Park.

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Groundbreaking at Curtain Wall Another Step Towards Everglades Restoration

A small crowd made up of elected officials, federal, state, and local government agencies and environmental groups gathered on Aug. 20 at the eastern edge of the Everglades to celebrate the groundbreaking of another project designed to help restore the River of Grass. The Curtain Wall Project is designed to reduce flooding in an 8.5-square-mile area known as the Las Palmas community and to allow more water to move south into Everglades National Park.

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Volunteers Assist with Marine Habitat Restoration

The SCCF Marine Lab and Coastal Watch team were joined by nine volunteers on Aug. 20 for a trip to SCCF’s oyster reef and mangrove restoration project at Benedict Key in Pine Island Sound. They distributed 125 buckets of fossil shell and planted 1,000 red mangrove propagules to help restore marine habitat and water quality. If you are interested in volunteering for a future project, email SCCF Conservation Initiative Coordinator Kealy McNeal at
No Child Left on Shore Hosts Quality Life Center Teens

Nineteen middle school students in the Fort Myers Quality Life Center’s summer program took part in a No Child Left on Shore fieldtrip for an up-close look at the back bay estuary and barrier island shoreline habitats in July. Quality Life Center, based in the Dunbar neighborhood of Fort Myers, provides youth development programs. The teens explored crabs, sponges, and mollusks on Cayo Costa, met a group of dolphins, and learned about bait fish. READ MORE

Volunteers Needed for Global Coastal Cleanup on Sept. 18

Join in the global effort to keep our oceans healthy by volunteering to pick up trash along a section of beach on Sanibel or Captiva for Coastal Cleanup Day on Saturday, Sept. 18. Every year, SCCF keeps track of the amount and kind of garbage collected as part of Ocean Conservancy's International Coastal Cleanup, using the CleanSwell app (preferred) or provided data sheets.

SIGN UP NOW

Rainy Season Reminds Us that Fish Can Walk

During the onslaught of heavy rains on Sanibel, some remarkable things can be seen, such as the walking catfish. This invasive fish from Southeast Asia is (unfortunately) very common on the island, where it is often seen “walking” from waterbody to waterbody in both residential and protected areas. Last week, SCCF Wildlife & Habitat Management Director Chris Lechowicz captured a video of one moving across a residential Sanibel driveway after a heavy rain event. READ MORE

Meet the Tech: Courtney King

Courtney King has worked since May as an SCCF Sea Turtle Program nesting technician, surveying in the mornings and afternoon.
Meet the Intern: Hollis Hatfield

Hollis Hatfield has been deeply immersed in Sanibel’s unique environment through internships with the “Ding” Darling Wildlife and the SCCF Sea Turtle Program. Originally from Raleigh, N.C., Hatfield earned her master’s degree in wildlife conservation and management from the University College Dublin in Ireland.

Meet the Natives: Torchwood

If you are looking for a unique, low-maintenance plant for a full-sun location in your landscape, torchwood (*Amyris elemifera*) could be the right fit. Torchwood is a small, native tree naturally found in coastal hammocks throughout the Florida Keys and north along much of Florida’s east coast. A precursor to the modern-day flashlight, the common name “torchwood” alludes to its historical use as a torch because its resinous wood produces a bright light when lit.

Wildlife Photos to Share

Thanks to Mike Coler for sending in this photo of a bobcat (*Lynx rufus*) visiting the family cat through the screen of the lanai at their Shell Point home.

DO YOU HAVE WILDLIFE PHOTOS TO SHARE?

*Please send your photos to info@sccf.org to be featured in an upcoming issue.*
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