

**Inside this issue...**

- Eagle Scout Travis Hill P. 2
- CREW Science with Dr. Gunnels p. 3
- Save the Dates P. 4

# CREW News

## Corkscrew Regional Ecosystem Watershed

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**Summer 2011**

### Tech @ the Trails

When you arrive at the CREW Trails these days, you might notice a new feature on some of the kiosks and marker posts—QR Codes. QR, or Quick Response, codes are bar-codes that can be scanned with an app on a smart phone or other mobile device to pull up a website with a video, a photo, or other information.

We are using QR codes to connect with new visitors, and to provide more in-depth information about the watershed and its wildlife to visitors at CREW. For example, when you scan the QR code at the seasonal pond marker, it takes you to a short video about seasonal ponds and what kinds of plants and animals to look for there.

To give you an idea of how they work, we've included a sample one here for you to scan. To use it you need a smart phone or web-enabled device:

1. Download a QR code scanner app to your mobile device—some popular ones are Qrafter, QuickMark, Optiscan, Barcode Scanner, & BWScan.
2. Scan the code below and see what happens.



#### CREW Staff

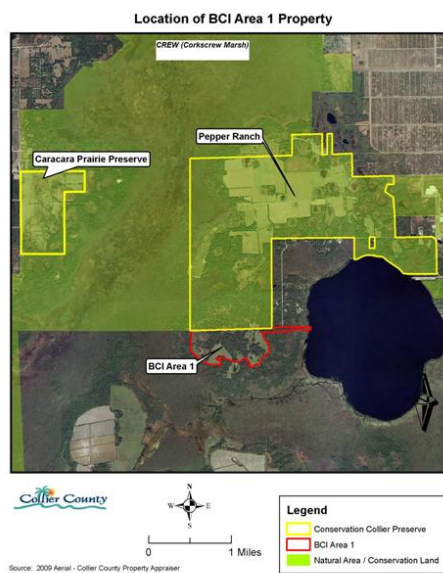
- Brenda Brooks Executive Director
- Deb Hanson Envir. Ed. Specialist

## On the Radar: Issues Related to CREW

by Brenda Brooks, Executive Director

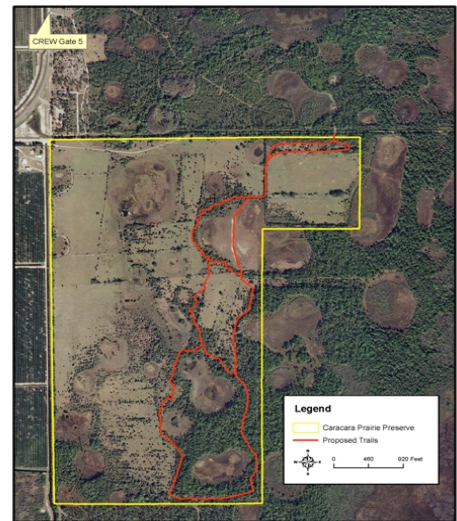
### Land Acquisition

The CREW Trust has always been an advocate for the 60,000-acre CREW Project since its inception in 1989. Over the past 22 years, the CREW Trust has been consistently focused on land acquisition. To date, approximately 45,000 acres have been acquired. Recently, an anonymous donor approached the CREW Trust to request a matching fund of \$235,00 in order to acquire the 235-acre BCI Parcel (Barron Collier Investments, LTD) adjacent to the Pepper Ranch. Our Board of Trustees voted unanimously to match the funds for a total of \$470,000. The BCI Parcel (Area 1 on map) is ranked #2 on Conservation Collier's land acquisition list, and we are hopeful that the Collier County Board of County Commissioners will accept our donation and move forward with the acquisition of this important parcel.



In 2007, the CREW Trust helped to purchase the 367-acre Caracara Prairie Preserve in partnership with Collier County's Conservation Collier Program. Collier County has been busy developing and implementing a land management plan for this preserve that includes public access. The CREW Trust has been working with Conservation Collier staff to design a trail system accessible from the CREW

Conservation Collier: Caracara Prairie Preserve



Cypress Dome Trails. These trails are expected to open later this year to hikers, bikers, birdwatchers and geocachers, so be sure to check our website for updates.

### Mining

Another issue of importance to CREW is the proposed 1,382-acre Lost Grove Mine in Collier County. The proposed mine is located between

**continued on p. 3**

Sign up for our environmentally friendly electronic version of the CREW newsletter by emailing your request to [crewtrust@earthlink.net](mailto:crewtrust@earthlink.net). Thanks!!

## Eagle Scout Travis Hill Installs Benches at CREW Trails

I'm Travis Hill, a local Corkscrew resident and member of Boy Scout Troop 119. I recently chose CREW as the recipient organization for my Eagle Scout Service Project. I consulted with CREW Executive Director Brenda Brooks who suggested that there was a need for more trailside benches along the CREW Marsh and Cypress Dome trail systems – a perfect project for an aspiring Eagle Scout!

I designed the bench plans on the computer using Google SketchUp and then visited the trail systems looking for ten good bench spots with shade and a nice view. Together with my dad, we photographed and marked the suggested locations with a GPS and then submitted the plans to Brenda for approval. Two spots were relocated because of likely flooding in the wet season. Once those were chosen, the project was ready to move forward.

All of the materials for the benches were donated by Shoreline Lumber owner Ron Paluck, an Eagle Scout himself. In keeping with the rules of the Eagle Scout service project, I wasn't allowed to participate in any of the labor involved. Instead I had to show leadership in coordinating and supervising each step of the assembly and installation. The benches were assembled in one weekend by a group of volunteers made up of family and friends, and fellow Scouts from my Troop. The following weekend my volunteers and I met Brenda at the trails to install the ten benches.

I learned a lot of valuable leadership skills from doing my project, and I hope that visitors to the CREW Trails will find the benches a welcome addition. There's one bench at the Cypress Dome Trail that's a little off the beaten path, but has a wonderful view of a flatwoods pond! Look for it just southwest of where the Yellow Loop, Green Loop and Blue Shortcut trails come together.

*Editors Note: We'd like to thank Travis and his volunteers for the beautiful benches. Trail visitors have told us how much they love having a place to rest and to watch wildlife at these spots along the trail! Travis received his Eagle Scout honors in a ceremony on June 11, 2011.*



*Travis and his team of volunteers on the day they installed the benches at CREW.*

## THANK YOU FRIENDS of CREW!

**New and renewed memberships  
since 4-8-11**

**Conservancy of Southwest Florida**

**Fred & Nancy Davis**

**Maureen Dombrowski**

**Ron & Mary Echols**

**John & Nancy Elting**

**Dick & Kathy Ennis**

**Layne Hamilton & Jim Goodwin**

**Whitney & Kurt Gray**

**Roger Grossenbacher**

**billy & Katrina Gunnels**

**Cullum Hasty**

**Ken, Deb, & Chelsea Heatherington**

**Charlie & Ginger Huether**

**Doug & Carolyn Machesney**

**George Magee**

**Prosum Technology Services\***

**Southwest Florida Regional Planning  
Council**

**Clarence & Jean Tears**

**Brenda Thomas**

*\* denotes new members*

A special thank you to our members who made contributions to the CREW Trust in memory of CREW volunteer, Tim Tripp. Tim was a skilled photographer who shared his talent generously with CREW.

# CREW Science:

## Tough Choices and Difficult Trade-Offs for the Golden Silk Orb-Weaving Spider

by Dr. Charles (billy) Gunnels

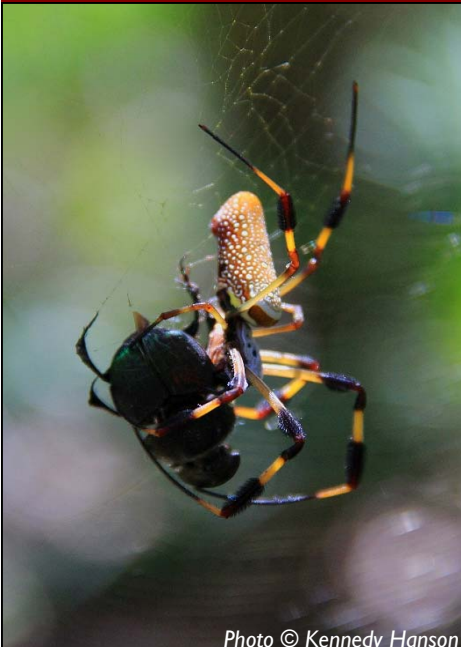


Photo © Kennedy Hanson

Imagine that you have to pick between two options where there are no perfect choices. Making a decision between such choices is problematic because your decision will lead to a unique set of complications depending on your particular selection. Calling this vexing is an obvious understatement, but the problem can be minimized so long as you have good information. Now, imagine that you have to pick between the same two options but this time you lack knowledge about the pros and cons associated with each option. Making such a choice in ignorance is just plain crazy, and you would be right to avoid deciding until you can learn more about each option. Unfortunately, this is not always possible as the time that it takes to gather the needed information is a luxury that is lost in some situations.

Animals are confronted with the same suite of problems when making a decision. Just like us, animals have to make many choices between imperfect options. In biology, we call this a trade-off. Fortunately, the severity of a biological trade-off can be minimized because in most cases animals pick up information about their environment. Consider a mouse, for example, that is confronted with a trade-off between foraging in a prairie, which contains abundant food but increased exposure to predators, and a forest, which contains smaller amounts of food but protection from predators. Gaining information about the presence or absence of predators would be extremely valuable for our hypothetical mouse. A knowledgeable mouse would be expected to forage in the prairie if it found evidence of few predators and in the forest if it learned about the presence of many predators.

So, what does an animal do when it is forced to make a life-altering choice without sufficient information? This is exactly the situation that faces female **golden silk orb-weaving spiders**

(*Nephila clavipes*) in the CREW. This spider is the MEGA spider that is familiar to almost every hiker who visits the CREW during the fall because of the spider's enormous body and huge web. However, the story of the golden silk orb-weaving spiders starts off tiny and inconspicuous. You can see them presently throughout the forest in the oak hammock and pop-ash slough but they are easy to miss owing to their small size. These young spiders move into the canopy from the forest floor as they grow and build new webs in search of food, mates, and protection. This development and movement culminates in a final one-off decision as the spider prepares their last web before reproducing. Once the spider builds this final web, they live on it for months and are forced to deal with any situation that arises. Since the spider cannot predict the future, they create this final web without complete information about that location and the environmental conditions that they will be experiencing.

This challenge has attracted my research interest over the past two years, and in a project that is spearheaded by David Cavanaugh, a student in the Department of Marine and Ecological Sciences at Florida Gulf Coast University, we are examining the behavioral development of these spiders as they grow and move through the forest.

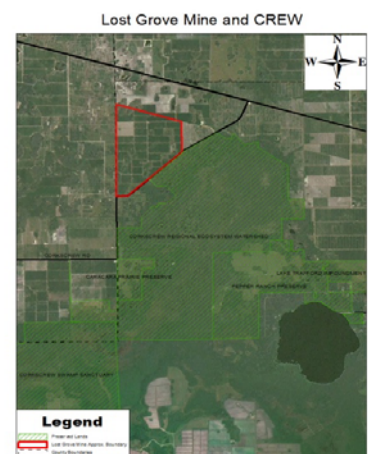


Photo © Kennedy Hanson

Our preliminary data suggest that golden silk orb-weaving spiders balance a trade-off between reproduction and parasitism. Female spiders that attract multiple males for reproduction also attract many parasites, and female spiders that attract few males also attract few parasites. This is an ongoing story. So, stay tuned as we expect to complete this work before the end of the year.

### Issues—continued from p. 1

CR 850/Corkscrew Rd. and SR 82, adjacent to the northern tip of our preserve system near the entrance to the Marsh Trails. The mine applicant presented their project to the CREW Trust Executive Committee last year, and has agreed to present once again to our Board of Trustees this month. The CREW Trust staff organized an informational meeting with local partners and has attended other meetings as well to continue to stay abreast of this very important issue.



## Join the "Friends of CREW"

When you become a "Friend of CREW", you are helping to ensure the quality of life for your community, your children, and future generations by protecting our vital water resources and wildlife habitat. Please consider returning this Membership Form to CREW along with your contribution. More information at <http://crewtrust.org>.

### Membership Levels (please select one)

- |   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Preserver (\$5,000 and up) | <input type="checkbox"/> Southern Bald Eagle (\$1,000) | <input type="checkbox"/> Bobcat (\$50)      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Panther (\$3,500)          | <input type="checkbox"/> Swallow-tailed Kite (\$500)   | <input type="checkbox"/> Families (\$35)    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Woodstork (\$2,000)        | <input type="checkbox"/> Ghost Orchid (\$100)          | <input type="checkbox"/> Individuals (\$25) |
|   |  | <input type="checkbox"/> Students (\$10)    |

Name (please print) \_\_\_\_\_

Company/Organization (business memberships) \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, ST, ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (        ) \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

(Providing your email address helps us get CREW information to you quickly – we do not share your information with other organizations.)



Connect with CREW on our Facebook fan page where we post daily updates, news, and events.  
[www.facebook.com/CREWTrust](http://www.facebook.com/CREWTrust)



You can also follow us on Twitter  
[@CREWTrust](https://twitter.com/CREWTrust)

# SAVE the Dates!

**September 23, 2011 9:30 AM**  
**CREW Trustees Meeting**

**CREW Stanley Hole Golf Tournament**  
**October 14, 2011**



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