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FISHING TOURNAMENT GIVES ANGLERS A CHANCE TO WIN NEW HOBIE KAYAK

FORT MYERS, Fla., Sept. 9, 2013 – The winner of the 2013 Calusa Blueway Fishing Tournament will nab a Hobie Mirage Pro Angler 12 fishing kayak, courtesy of Hobie and Estero River Outfitters at the annual event scheduled for Nov. 2. Cash prizes will also be available to those who place in the tournament.

Rapidly becoming the premier tournament in Southwest Florida, the catch-and-release fishing tournament is expected to draw 75 anglers to Lee County waterways as part of the Calusa Blueway Paddling Festival along the shores of Southwest Florida.

This year, the Lee County Parks & Recreation event features a one-day competition for anglers who catch and release snook, redfish, seatrout and other species. All fishing must occur on Lee County, Fla., waterways. The Nov. 1 captains' meeting is at Angler's Inn, Matlacha, with refreshments from Bert's Bar & Grill. The weigh-in happens Nov. 2 at Pineland Marina.

The first place finisher will win a Hobie Mirage Pro Angler 12, along with accessories for the kayak, which has a retail value of more than \$3,000. The Hobie Mirage Pro Angler 12 is compact and versatile, equipped with features such as vantage seating, under-seat tackle storage, horizontal storage for four rods and a livewell-ready cargo area.

The second-place winner will receive \$500, based on 50 participants. The third-place angler gets \$300, with the fourth-place winner getting \$150, and the fifth-place winner earning \$50.

"Fishing to win this Hobie kayak or a cash prize should amp up competition," Festival Coordinator Jesse Lavender said. "The Calusa Blueway trail and Southwest Florida waters are among the finest in the U.S. for kayak fishing. We are grateful to Estero River Outfitters for its support of the sport and the tournament."

Tournament proceeds benefit the Florida Society for Ethical Ecotourism, which is hosting the event with assistance from Florida Sea Grant, Lee County Parks & Recreation and Calusa Blueway volunteers. "Florida SEE is excited to be hosting this tournament for the fifth year running," said Joy Hazell, Lee County's Sea Grant agent and the Florida SEE tournament liaison.

The fishing happens during the 2013 Calusa Blueway Paddling Festival, which features demonstrations, instruction, speakers, guided paddles and evening entertainment throughout the first weekend in November in nearby Fort Myers.

Returning this year is a streamlined online registration site for anglers, who pay a \$60 fee to compete. Registration will open Wednesday, Sept. 18. Go to www.floridasee.org and click on "Blueway Festival" under the "Events/Registration" tab.

For more information, contact Lavender at (239) 533-7275 or jlavender@leegov.com, or Hazell at hazellje@leegov.com or (239) 707-1267.

Find festival and trail information on Facebook by searching Great Calusa Blueway or using this link: www.facebook.com/TheGreatCalusaBlueway. Or visit www.CalusaBluewayPaddlingFestival.com. To request trail maps be mailed to you, visit www.CalusaBlueway.com. Or download the Calusa Blueway smart-phone app at the Google Play or iTunes store.