

Soundside Learning

This Week On Core Sound

Earth Day A Huge Success!

Learning and excitement at Core Sound

The long and anticipated build-up to Earth Day at the Core Sound Waterfowl Museum & Heritage Center did not disappoint on Friday, April 8th when over five-hundred students from around Carteret County descended upon the Museum's grounds for a day of learning and fun!

Ranging from from Kindergarten through fifth grade, these students were able to experience an extraordinarily wide range of environmental-science related content. From "escaping" a shrimp trawl through a Turtle Excluder Device, to learning about pollination with live honeybees, these students were able to learn, hands-on, about many of the amazing wonders of our natural world and the importance of doing our part to ensure it remains as pristine as possible.

Perhaps the most wonderful aspect of the day was that much of the education for these visiting students was provided by participating students from Down East Middle School's eighth grade class who served as expert trail guides to lead students along the Museum's Willow Pond Trail. These eighth graders spent the two weeks prior to Earth Day learning the various plant species, vines, and interesting facts about the trail as they prepared to share their knowledge with their younger peers.

As students completed the Willow Pond Trail, they were escorted around the grounds by their "earth day escort" to over twenty education exhibitors scattered about the museum's grounds waiting to share with them the many wonders of the natural world around Core Sound. This wonderful day for our area's students would not have been possible without the incredible help and generosity of our wonderful volunteers and exhibitors who so selflessly volunteered their time for the benefit of our schools.

To everyone who helped make this day so wonderful, *thank you.*



Students look on as Dr. Ike Southerland explains the anatomy of an oyster at Core Sound Earth Day, 2022.

Photo: Mrs. Lisa Kittrell

A Down East Fishing Village... In Florida

“They came for the fish—mullet to be exact”

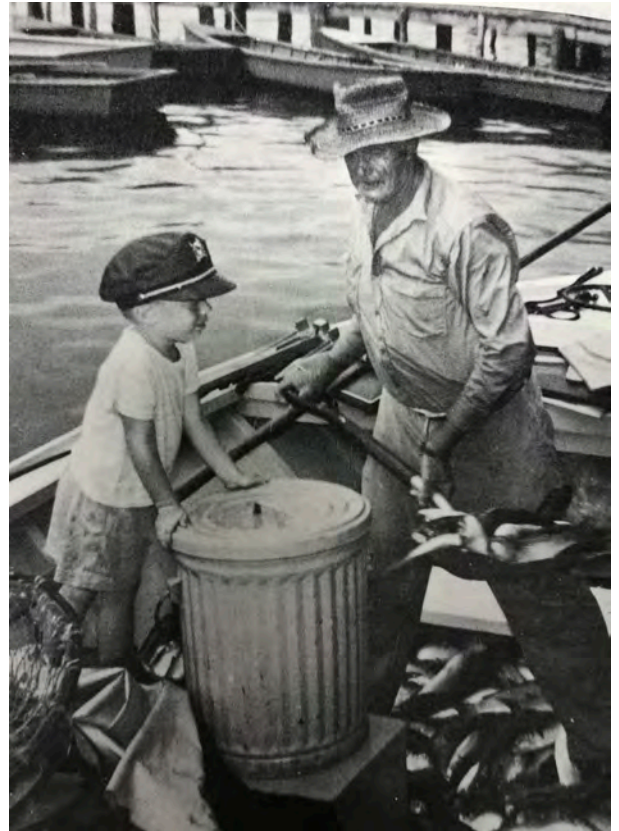
As a native of Down East reading through some of the available literature on the town of Cortez, Florida one might feel that they could substitute place names like “Smyrna”, “Atlantic”, or “Cedar Island” and the text would read much the same. In *Cortez - Then and Now* author Mary Fulford Green writes “This is my hometown. There was a time when I could close my eyes; visualize each house; name the people who lived in it; and, recall some shared events.” This is a phenomena not so unfamiliar to many natives of Down East, Carteret County. This author recalls evening rides about Harkers Island, to the ‘eastard, where my grandmother would look at the passing houses and comment on who used to live in each one, followed by “I don’t know who lives there now.”

These similarities between our Down East communities and that of Cortez are not simply by chance. Nor is it by chance that Cortez is full, to this day, of families of Guthries, Fulfords, Taylors, and Lewises to name just a few.

Cortez, located on the gulf coast to Florida on the shores of Sarasota Bay, was founded in the 1880s by fishermen and their families from Carteret County. In *Finest Kind*, an account of the village of Cortez and its people, author Ben Green poses the question of *why* those fishermen might have packed up their families and few belongings to make the long journey to Cortez. “They came for the fish—mullet, to be exact...” he says. Many of the first fishermen to make their way to Cortez, including one of the village’s first settlers, Capt. Billy Fulford of Straits, NC, came only for the seasonal run of roe mullet in October and November. Eventually, though, as more fishermen opted against a return to their North Carolina homes in favor of the large schools of Florida mullet, Cortez began to grow into a vibrant fishing village at the turn of the century.

The juniper-planked boats, fishing techniques, and even the distinct elizabethan-laced brogue are shared between the people of Cortez, Florida and Down East, North Carolina. Unfortunately, we also share a far darker commonality. Much like Down East where massive new development threatens our historical ways of life, our sacred culture, Cortez faces a similar threat. As Ben Green writes, “The truth is that underneath the serenity something is powerfully out-of-sync in Cortez. There are forces at work inside and of of this little village that, if not controlled, will destroy this way of life completely.” Once again, one could insert “Down East” for “Cortez”... and the text would read the same.

Still, these communities hang on to the old ways, anchored by generations of hardy, storm ravaged peoples who have refused to let go despite the storms.



Tink Fulford, son of Capt. Billy Fulford, unloads a catch of jumping mullet in Cortez, Florida with his grandson assisting, circa 1959.

*Photo: Ben Green:
Finest Kind*