

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Free guided historical hike tours former airfield site at Buckingham Trails Preserve**

Fort Myers, FL, April 5, 2016 – Celebrate the Memorial Day holiday with a free, guided historical hike from 9:30 to 11 a.m. Saturday, May 28, at Buckingham Trails Preserve, 8790 Buckingham Road, Fort Myers.

This preserve, a Conservation 20/20 preserve, includes remains from the Buckingham Army Air Field's Flexible Gunnery School, a training base operated by the U.S. military in Lee County during World War II.

This 1.5-mile roundtrip hike will be guided by historian Jim Zbick from the Southwest Florida Military Museum & Library.

Nearly 50,000 acres in Lee County were once used as part of the Buckingham Army Air Field Flexible Gunnery School during World War II. Beginning in 1942, military recruits were trained in this area as turret gunners assigned to bomber planes flying over the European and Pacific Theaters. The air field was deactivated in 1945 as the war ended.

Remnants of the military's ground moving target ranges and shooting platform foundations can be seen onsite at this preserve, as well as an elevated berm that once served as part of the military supply railroad which delivered goods and supplies from Fort Myers to the air field.

Suggested items to bring include water bottle, hat, sunscreen and camera. Please wear closed-toed shoes appropriate for hiking. Hiking degree of difficulty is moderate; the path is not ADA accessible. The meeting location is the preserve parking area. Parking is free.

For more information, call 239-204-1125 or visit [www.Conservation2020.org](http://www.Conservation2020.org). For information about guided walks scheduled across all Lee County parks and preserves, visit [www.leegov.com/parks/parks](http://www.leegov.com/parks/parks). For more information about the Southwest Florida Military Museum & Library, visit [www.swfmm.org](http://www.swfmm.org).

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*Note: Photo attached of Jim Zbick leading a tour. Additional photos available on request from Communications Specialist Tim Engstrom at [tenstrom@leegov.com](mailto:tenstrom@leegov.com)*