



MINUTES

Meeting of the Board of Directors April 23 - 24, 2018 White Oak Plantation, Yulee, Florida

Members in Attendance:

Mr. Carlos Alfonso, 2nd Vice Chair; Mrs. Kathy Barco, Treasurer; Mr. Ignacio Borbolla; Mr. Preston Fariior; Mr. Seth McKeel; Mr. Stephen W. Swindal; Mr. John Pope; Mr. Rodney Barreto; Mr. Bruce Popham; Mr. Tucker Frederickson (by phone); Mr. Richard A. Corbett, Chair (by phone); Mrs. Daphne Wood (by phone); Mr. Eric Sutton, FWC Executive Director (April 23 only).

Members not in Attendance:

Dr. Tracy Baker; Mr. Jack Curlett, Vice Chair; Mr. Doug Cone; Mrs. Connie Parker, Secretary; Mr. Steve Crisafulli; Mrs. Donna Rawson.

Guests & Advisors in Attendance:

Mr. Doc Kokol, FWC Liaison to the Foundation; Mr. John Lacy, The Lacy Group/Merrill Lynch investment managers.

Staff in Attendance:

Mr. Andrew Walker; Mr. Will Bradford; Mrs. Breanne Strepina, Mrs. Erin Smart

I. **Call to Order** – Mr. Carlos Alfonso, Vice-Chair

Board Vice-Chair Carlos Alfonso chaired the meeting while Chairman Corbett participated by phone. The meeting was called to order at 9:05 a.m. with a roll call establishing quorum. Mr. Bradford reported the meeting had been duly noticed. Mr. Alfonso gave an overview of the Board dinner the previous night with FWC Director Eric Sutton. Mr. Alfonso complimented Eric on his success to date in his new role.

II. **Consent Agenda**

- A. **Minutes:** The minutes of the December 11, 2017 Board Meeting were presented. Mrs. Wood noted several typographic errors for correction. Motion for approval of corrected minutes made by Mr. Barreto, seconded by Mrs. Wood. Motion carried unanimously.
- B. **2018 – 2019 Committee Assignments:** The proposed slate of 2018 and 2019 committee assignments was presented; assignments were based in large part on board members' preferences noted at the December 2017 meeting and in subsequent conversations with the CEO. Motion for approval by Mr. Swindal and Mr. Pope, seconded by Ignacio Borbolla. Motion carried unanimously.

III. **CEO's Report**

Mr. Walker focused on the marketing goals of the Foundation's Strategic Plan. Michelle Ashton has been recruited from Texas and will join us as our Digital Marketing and Membership Manager on June 18th. Her initial priorities will include

- Promotion of BlueGreen 2018
- Development of a Foundation marketing plan
- Oversight of website, social media and e-newsletter
- Marketing plan for our license plates
- Creation of an in-house data base of financial supporters, social media followers and e-newsletter readers that increasingly functions as a membership.

E-Newsletter: The Foundation has begun sending its first e-newsletter to hunting and fishing license holders in small batches. Of the 11,154 people initially receiving the newsletter, 21 percent opened it (on par with industry averages). Only 0.65% clicked through to a link or the continuation of a story, which is about half of industry averages. But only six people marked it as spam and only 56 people wanted to unsubscribe, which were very encouraging numbers. The Foundation has received the okay from our email vendor to send the newsletter to another 115,000 hunting and fishing license holders. New newsletters will be sent out quarterly initially, eventually monthly. The board commented on the excellent rates received. An open discussion began on suggestions for improvement. Mr. Alfonso suggested moving the highest clicked article to the top of the newsletter. Mr. Popham suggested we note what each reader is interested in via their clicks and immediately respond to this interest with a follow up email on the same topic, a strategy known as “target and retarget.” Mr. McKeel commented the inaugural newsletter was lengthy and suggested future newsletters hold five to six articles. Mr. Borbolla suggested a call to action, such as buy a specialty license plate, be at the top of each newsletter. Mr. Barreto suggested including links to related or otherwise important FWC sites and quick-access links for hunting seasons. Mr. Popham suggested a monthly tip or recipe to be included to create a following. He has had success with this in his business. He also encouraged staff to supplement the newsletter with e-blasts. Mr. Walker promised to work with Michelle Ashton on these suggestions in preparing the Summer 2018 newsletter.

New Website: Mr. Walker shared with the Board several sample pages of the new website design. All-new text is being created for the site. The new site should go live at the end of May 2018 [note: now set for mid-June]. Mr. Alfonso suggested including links to other conservation groups and partners. Mr. Popham recommended liberal use of videos and asking FWC to assist with this. Mr. Lacy recommended including a social media element – like social posts of fishing and hunting experiences -- on the home page. Mr. Borbolla suggested promoting membership/support for the Foundation and some sort of knickknack incentive to be given for becoming a member. Mr. Walker promised to follow up on each of these ideas and report back.

Mr. Walker moved on to current issues:

FWFF-Community Foundation of Tampa Bay Partnership: The partnership was approved by the Board at its December 2017 meeting. It includes setting up a permanent or reserve (temporary) fund at the Foundation co-marketed by us and the Community Foundation to encourage more conservation philanthropy in the Tampa Bay region. A motion was made by Mrs. Wood to create a reserve fund at the Community Foundation using \$25,000 of unrestricted revenue, seconded by Steve Swindal and John Pope. Motion carried unanimously.

Suncoast Youth Conservation Center: Mr. Walker updated the Board on the project that Ms. Parker has been leading -- construction at SYCC of a wheelchair-accessible boardwalk and fishing pier adjacent to the five-acre saltwater pond and marsh. This is a \$500,000 project; Ms. Parker has gotten much of the labor donated by the Union Sportsmen’s Alliance, and Ben Hur Construction of St. Louis is installing the pilings below cost. FWC’s Rae Waddell is dedicating state and privately raised funds held by our Foundation for the purchase of lumber and other materials. All this totals \$420,000, leaving only \$80,000 left to raise. Mr. McKeel and Chairman Corbett are working with the Foundation staff to approach

several major Tampa businesses, and Mr. Walker is talking with the Community Foundation of Tampa Bay about it. It was suggested that other area unions might want to help.

Everglades Youth Conservation Camp: We learned from Ms. Waddell recently that the final bids for construction of the first 24-person cabin/lodge at the EYCC came in at \$524,000 – more than double the estimate FWC had received two to three years ago. Ms. Waddell is working with the FL Department of Management Services to see what can be done to substantially reduce the cost and has asked our Foundation for similar assistance. Mrs. Wood suggested reworking the plans created by HDR Engineering; Mr. Barreto suggested appointing a conservation-minded construction manager to help find the right subcontractors and to ensure costs are kept low while ensuring quality work. Mr. McKeel mentioned one such person in the Tampa area. Mr. Walker promised to follow up on these and other ideas, including alternatives to traditional construction (e.g., pre-cast concrete, log cabin kits).

Prospect Tracking Reports: Mr. Walker drew the Board's attention to the latest versions of the Foundation's confirmed and potential prospect tracking reports, which are guiding the majority of our major gifts work and include each Board member's prospects.

IV. **Committee Reports**

Nominations: The ad hoc Nominations Committee has developed a slate of proposed new Trustees, which Mr. Walker presented. The nomination of professional golfer-turned-businessman Jerry Pate from Pensacola, who has served on the northwest Florida water management district for many years, was moved by Mr. Barreto, seconded by Mr. McKeel. Motion carried unanimously. The nomination of Palm Beach civic leader and outdoorswoman Laura Russell was moved by Mr. Barreto, seconded by Mr. McKeel. Motion carried unanimously. Finally, the nomination of Tampa business executive and outdoorsman Paul E. Avery was moved by Mr. McKeel, seconded by Mr. Barreto. Motion carried unanimously.

Finance & Audit: Committee Chair Kathy Barco asked Mr. Lacy of The Lacy Group/Merrill Lynch to report on recent performance of our investment portfolio and market trends. After doing so, Mr. Lacy also reported on the Foundation's annual meeting in March with FWC's gopher tortoise mitigation staff. He and Mr. Bradford also presented the proposed replacement for the Foundation's current retirement plan, which is a simple IRA that matches up to three percent of each employee's salary. The F&A Committee reviewed this plan at its 02/21/18 meeting and is recommending Board approval. Mr. Barreto made a motion to approve the retirement plan, seconded by Mr. Farris. Motion carried unanimously.

At Chairwoman Barco's request, Mr. Bradford presented the second and third quarter FY2018 financials. Through the third quarter (March 31, 2018), we have accumulated a \$295,000 operating surplus vs. an originally budgeted deficit of \$49,000, but careful management of our expenses, stronger fundraising and good investment returns have led to the current surplus. Based on our FY18 operating budget, we now have ~13 months of operating reserves, an increase of three months' reserve since the start of the fiscal year. Programmatic efficiency has increased two points to 88 percent, well above national standards.

Program income for the first three quarters was \$8.1 million vs. \$5.8 million in FY 17, a 39 percent increase. This includes \$703,000 in program-related charitable gifts in FY18 vs. \$428,000 in the prior fiscal year, a 64 percent increase.

Government Affairs: Mr. McKeel updated the Board on the FL Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles' ongoing review of expenses reported by the Florida Sportsmen's Land Trust and recommended no action by the Board at this time. Mr. Walker presented a summary of all Florida conservation-focused license plates. Mr. Barreto suggested a partnership with Fish Florida, which provides fishing instruction

and gear to children and teens across the state. Mr. Borbolla suggested reviewing the under-performing tags and making more use of social media to promote sales. Mr. Walker promised to work with Michelle Ashton and Doc Kokol on a license plate marketing plan and to reach out to Fish Florida.

BlueGreen 2018 – BlueGreen 2018 co-chair Preston Farrior noted this year’s event will be held 10/27/18 at Armature Works in Tampa. We’re still seeking our speaker/guest of honor. Chairman Corbett said he would speak to Johnny Morris, founder of Bass Pro Shops, and to former Georgia Governor and current U. S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue. Mr. Lacy suggested creating a weekend-long schedule of events for BlueGreen and partnering with *Garden & Gun Magazine* to promote it. The staff promised to follow up with the co-chairs. Mr. Walker said he was looking forward to working with the Board on recruiting new sponsors and renewing last year’s. Mr. Alfonso suggested we hold a Board conference call in the near future focused on sponsors.

V. “Moving the Conservation Needle” Session

The staff has given considerable thought and had dozens of discussions with many FWC and other experts on how a foundation of our size can have the greatest possible impact on Florida’s most pressing conservation issues. Mr. Walker outlined for the Board’s consideration five initiatives and possible major strategies for each as the proposed principal fundraising priorities for the next four years. The initiatives are

- A. Get Youth Back to Nature – \$6.2 million estimated goal
 - 1. EYCC -- \$2.1 million
 - 2. Tenoroc -- \$1.0 million
 - 3. Scholarships, School Field Trip Funds, etc. -- \$100,000
 - 4. FYCCN Endowment -- \$3 million in outright, bequest commitments
- B. Combat Florida’s Worst Invasive Species -- \$850,000 est. goal + possible X-Prize
 - 1. Lionfish biocontrol, genetic & lure research program -- \$500,000
 - 2. Lionfish culling support -- \$100,000
 - 3. Python biocontrol, genetic & radiotelemetry research -- \$250,000
 - 4. Increased bounties for python capture -- \$50,000
- C. Preserve Our Outdoor Heritage (Promoting Hunting & Shooting Sports)
 - 1. Public & private funding for Palm Beach clubhouse -- \$3 million
 - 2. Outdoor Heritage Center 3-year pilot program -- \$3 million (est.)
 - 3. R3 support funding -- \$200,000
- D. Restore Florida’s Reefs -- \$350,000+ and possible X-Prize
 - 1. Lionfish suppression (*as above*)
 - 2. Long-term reef restoration & resilience monitoring -- \$100,000 (est.)
 - 3. Future strategies -- \$TBD
 - 4. Possible reef insurance plan -- \$250,000 in matching funds
- E. Conserve Wildlife (& Prevent Extinctions) -- \$1 million
 - 1. Grasshopper Sparrow Research, Breeding, Reintroduction -- \$200,000
 - 2. Other wildlife conservation priorities (numerous species) -- \$800,000

In discussing these proposed priorities, Mr. Kokol suggested targeting millennials as well as older generations. Mr. Alfonso suggested designating a seat on the Board for a millennial, and Mr. Borbolla suggested using focus groups to determine what motivates the millennial generation. The Board complimented Mr. Walker on the work the staff has done to refine and narrow the focus of our fundraising campaign.

VI. CWT Grant Applications

Reconvening after lunch, the Board turned its attention to reviewing 19 proposals totaling \$502,000 submitted for the ~\$400,000 of available funding under the “Conserve Wildlife” specialty license plate program. Mr. Kokol presented to the Board the current CWT grant proposals and explained FWC’s internal grant preparation and vetting process. A thoughtful and detailed discussion of each proposal ensued. The Board ultimately decided to fund 13 proposals for the full amount requested, which totaled \$388,000, via a motion made by Mr. Popham, seconded by Mr. Borbolla. Motion carried unanimously.

VII. Open Session

Mr. Barreto requested the email addresses of the three new board members and suggested Ron Bergeron’s Green Glades Ranch in Weston as the location of a future Board meeting.

Board Calendar: The next Board teleconference will be Tuesday, June 5th at 2 pm ET to approve the proposed FY2019 budget. The fall board meeting is slated for September 23-24, 2018 at the Gilchrist Club; we may test other September dates with the Board if it looks as if we may lack a quorum.

The staff will send to the Board proposed dates and locations for our CY 2019 meetings and teleconferences. The spring meeting will be held in South Florida, possibly at Green Glades Ranch, and the fall 2019 meeting will be held in northern Florida, possibly Pensacola, Apalachicola or a return to White Oak Plantation.

There being no further business, Vice-Chair Alfonso adjourned the meeting at 2:36 pm ET.