



MINUTES

Meeting of the Board of Directors December 11, 2017 Streamsong Resort, Bowling Green, Florida

Members in Attendance:

Mr. Richard A. Corbett, Chair; Mr. Carlos Alfonso, 2nd Vice Chair; Mrs. Kathy Barco, Treasurer; Dr. Tracy Baker; Mr. Ignacio Borbolla; Mr. Preston Farris; Mr. Tucker Frederickson; Mr. Seth McKeel; Mr. Stephen W. Swindal; Mrs. Daphne Wood; Mr. John Pope; Mrs. Donna Rawson; Mr. Eric Sutton, FWC Executive Director.

Members not in Attendance:

Mr. Jack Curlett, Vice Chair; Mr. Rodney Barreto; Mr. Doug Cone; Mr. Gary Nicklaus; Mr. Bruce Popham; Ms. Connie Parker, Secretary; Mr. Steve Crisafulli.

Guests & Advisors in Attendance:

Mr. Doc Kokol, FWC Liaison to the Foundation; Investment Manager Mr. John Lacy, The Lacy Group.

Staff in Attendance:

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

I. **Call to Order** – Mr. Richard A. Corbett, Chair

The meeting was called to order at 8:11 a.m. with a roll call establishing quorum. Board Chair Corbett welcomed and thanked all for attending. He introduced Erin Smart as the Foundation's new bookkeeper and complimented the Board and staff on the Foundation's progress since the previous in-person meeting.

II. **Consent Agenda**

The minutes of the October 2, 2017 teleconference were reviewed, and no revisions were suggested. Motion for approval by Carlos Alfonso, seconded by Ignacio Borbolla. Motion carried unanimously.

III. **FWC Director's Update** – Mr. Eric Sutton

Mr. Sutton, who had assumed FWC as Executive Director role three days prior, thanked the Board for its support of his appointment and gave a brief and early overview on several FWC's main areas of focus during his administration, which include the R3 hunting program, the Florida Youth Conservation Centers Network and staying on top of Florida's wildlife conflict issues. The Board congratulated Mr. Sutton on his new position, which is subject to final legislative approval.

IV. **CEO's Update** – Mr. Andrew Walker

Mr. Walker presented the Board with a one-year progress report on the Strategic Business Plan, with an overview of the Foundation's FY18 goals. The Foundation is focused on the following strategies:

- Building a strong relationship with FWC, state government and the conservation/outdoor recreation community at large;
- Increasing our major gift (\$5,000+) fund raising capacity, with emphasis on building corporate support, support from other foundations, and identifying and cultivating individual prospects for six- and seven-figure gifts;
- Bringing new public and private partners to the table to extend our impact;
- Continuing to diversify our sources of revenue;
- Refocusing marketing to better support our conservation and philanthropy goals;
- Improving our grantmaking model, to better assess the conservation impact of our grants;
- Further professionalizing the Foundation through skillful hires, training, a formal performance evaluation and merit program, competitive benefits, and improved administrative and HR policies and practices.

Current fiscal health: From 1st quarter FY17 to 1st quarter FY18, the Foundation experienced 17% (\$130,000) year over year growth in net income. At present, Mr. Bradford is projecting operating income in FY18 to grow by \$400,000 over the previous fiscal year, to \$1.5 million, with a corresponding \$700,000 increase in program income, to \$8 million by 6/30/18.

Hurricane Irma Relief Funds: Since the Board's Oct. 2nd teleconference, the Foundation has raised \$116,000 from ~250 donors to benefit hard-hit FWC staff and the charter fishing captains in South Florida, the latter by way of a \$24,000 grant from Maverick Boat Group. Mr. Sutton told the Board how grateful FWC employees were to receive the help. Mr. Walker presented four ideas for replenishing the fund and asked the Board for its thoughts. Mrs. Wood suggested an electronic appeal campaign. She also announced her intent to make a special Irma assistance grant (later announced as \$10,000) and asked the Foundation to apply \$5,000 of a previous gift to Irma assistance as well.

Board Giving: Board philanthropy remains very generous but fell slightly from FY16 to FY17, from \$14,940 per capita to \$11,200 in FY17, likely due to the absence of a BlueGreen gala in FY17.

License Plate Revenues: In the past year, Bear tag revenues leveled off, ending at least for now its six-year sales decline, which may be due to the age and quality of its "look" and the controversy surrounding bear hunting. The Oceans tag experienced a slight increase while the Deer and Springs tags experienced 29 and 20% respective revenue growth. Development of cost-effective, consistent and effective marketing will be a principal focus of the digital marketing and membership manager to be hired this year. Mr. Alfonso suggested recruiting car dealers to promote the tags, much as Mr. Fariori has done at the Ferman Motor Company. Mr. Walker said he and Mr. Kokol are interviewing consumer marketing firms to help us better understand what drives consumer choice. Mr. Walker also said he and the new marketing person will work with Mr. Fariori on strategies for engaging dealers. The Board also discussed the lack of cooperation from the Florida Sportsmen's Land Trust, which is required by statute to have the Foundation review its planned expenditures from the previous deer tag.

Everglades Youth Conservation Camp & Palm Beach Shooting Sports Park: Mr. Frederickson, Mr. Lacy and Mr. Walker reported on the successful October 5th, Jupiter FL Bear's Club lunch, hosted by Mr. Nicklaus, which was attended by ~25 community and business leaders. Next steps are to start bringing small groups and individual prospective donors out to both sites, now that construction has begun at both.

New Partnerships: Mr. Bradford and Mr. Walker reported the Foundation has signed a new MOU with FWC for four of their shooting ranges that better defines our respective roles. Mr. Sutton said he views this as an effective business model for the next few years. Mr. Walker reminded the Board we recently

had Lanigan and Associates audit cash and inventory control practices at Tenoroc to help FWC create a model it can also use at Triple N, Palm Beach and elsewhere.

Mr. Walker also reported on two new Florida panther rehabilitation and highway crossing projects and a lionfish research and management project for which the Foundation raised funds this year.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

V. **Finance & Audit**

Mrs. Barco and Mr. Bradford presented the Financial Highlights of Fiscal Year 2018 for the first quarter (July 17 – Sept. 17). Mrs. Barco told the Board since the hire of the Bookkeeper, Mr. Bradford has been able to work on more strategic projects including finding an additional 1 million cash to move for investment. Mr. Bradford informed the Board there are no current major concerns to report.

Managed Funds Update – Mr. John Lacy of The Lacy Group presented the recent trends affecting the portfolio. During the 11-15-17 F&A meeting, the committee approved for Mr. Bradford to allow cash to be moved to the Blackrock Treasury Trust Fund that is not of immediate need. Mr. Lacy discussed the benefit of this new decision, including the additional 1 million investment Mr. Bradford authorized for investment. He updated the Board on current fund allocations. Mrs. Kathy Barco discussed the Imperiled Species Account and reducing the cash position. She would like to work with FWC's Gopher Tortoise Permitting to better understand their budget and review what cash is available for investment. Mr. Lacy and Mr. Bradford are planning to meet with FWC's Gopher Tortoise Section for a portfolio review and to discuss possible investments. The Board thanked Mr. Lacy for his report.

VI. **BlueGreen 2017**

Event co-chairs Mr. Farrior, Mr. McKeel, Mr. Swindal and Mr. Alfonso gave the highlights of Bluegreen to the Board. 230 guests attended, and the Foundation netted \$200,000 in funds from largely new donors, not including Mr. and Mrs. Wood's \$115,000 check presented at the gala. Florida Commissioner of Agriculture Adam Putnam gave an entertaining and inspiring talk on the importance of our work. Mr. Alfonso suggested having the event in Tampa again in 2018, the 2017 event being such a success. Mrs. Strepina is working on venues and possible dates for the 2018 BlueGreen event.

VII. **Governmental Affairs**

There was further discussion of the Florida Sportsmen's Land Trust and the Foundation's concerns over lack of oversight of FSLT's use of the ~\$500,000 it held in mid-2014 when the Florida legislature transferred the tag from FSLT due to concerns raised by FWC and the hunting community. The Board was provided with an updated summary of the issue. Mr. Walker has had individual meetings with six FL Senate leaders and a key House member. Mr. Alfonso suggested Board members also meet with the Legislature in Tallahassee, and having the Foundation host an event in Tallahassee during session. Mr. Walker will discuss how this might best be done with FWC leadership and legislative affairs staff.

VIII. **Governance**

Committee Chair Mrs. Rawson presented the 2018 slate of officers, which was unanimously approved: Mr. Corbett as Chair, Mr. Curlett as 1st Vice Chair, Mr. Alfonso as 2nd Vice Chair, Mrs. Barco as Treasurer, and Ms. Parker as Secretary. Mr. Walker provided the Board with sign-up sheets for anyone wishing to change committees. An ad hoc nominating committee consisting of Mr. Barreto, Mr. Alfonso, Mrs. Rawson, Mr. Frederickson, Mr. Farrior, Chair Corbett and Mr. Lacy was formed. Geographic priorities for new board members include Naples, Orlando, Palm Beach and the Panhandle.

IX. “FL for All” Campaign

Mr. Walker updated the Board on campaign planning. The working title is, “Florida for All: The Campaign for Conservation and Outdoor Heritage.” He reviewed the \$35M+ of currently unfunded needs identified by FWC projected for the next three to four years, the geographic distribution of these needs vs. Florida’s centers of wealth, and our natural audiences for this campaign. He proposed a series of organization-building benchmarks for the campaign and suggested fundraising marketing be organized around the following five themes:

- Conserving Wildlife
- Returning Kids to Nature
- Promoting Hunting and Shooting Sports
- Controlling Invasives
- Protecting Our Fisheries and Reefs.

Foundation staff will continue working with FWC to prioritize needs within these themes and present the Board in April with a recommended list of fundraising goals and options for increasing staff capacity for meeting those goals. The Board complimented Mr. Walker on his presentation.

X. Foundation Awards Programs

Mr. Kokol and Mr. Walker updated the Board on the Guy Harvey Award being presented to Investigator Paul Hein. The Board approved the nomination of Mr. Kipp Frohlich for the Rodney Barreto Award and Mr. Scott Sanders for Louise Ireland Humphrey Award, which will be presented at the Feb. 7 – 8, 2018 FWC Commissioners meeting.

The Board then adjourned for lunch and a tour of Streamsong given by Mr. Alfonso.

XI. “Wildlife Foundation of FL” (Deer) & “Protect FL Springs” Tag Grant Applications

Mr. Bradford began by updating the Board on the new online grant application and review system. It has worked reasonably well. He discussed the recent teleconference with the deer tag grant advisory committee and in-person meeting with the springs grants advisory committee. Excellent suggestions for focusing the springs grants in future for maximum conservation impact came out of the in-person springs meeting; we plan a similar face-to-face meeting with the deer tag committee in 2018. In response to a question on committee makeup by Mr. Swindal, Mr. Bradford explained the springs advisory committee was created by the legislature per the following language:

“The granting advisory committee shall be composed of nine members, including one representative from the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, one representative from the Department of Environmental Protection, one representative from the Department of Health, one representative from the Department of Economic Opportunity, three citizen representatives, and two representatives from nonprofit stakeholder groups.”

Mr. Bradford noted we have the ability to choose the actual members within those guidelines. Chairman Corbett welcomed ideas on new members to fill several current vacancies on the springs committee.

The deer tag advisory committee, on the other hand, is not legislatively mandated. Chairman Corbett said the deer tag committee members are well known to him, and he felt confident overall with their recommendations. Mrs. Barco suggested including two open citizens on the committee from separate regions, one from North Florida and one from South Florida. [Note: staff will seek additional members along the lines suggested by Mrs. Barco.]

Mr. Farrior requested the tag grant advisory committees include a short-written summary of their perspective on each grant, to give the Foundation Board more detail on the committees' thinking. A discussion ensued about grant proposals being summarized in the future so Board members can easily review each grant proposal. Mrs. Wood suggested the head of each committee might also attend the Board meeting to answer questions from the Board, much as FWC does when bear tag grants are considered. Mr. Walker indicated it's his long-term desire for staff to have the capacity to talk to each applicant before the Board votes – and to do more follow up with grantees on the success and takeaways from their funded projects. [Note: staff will ask the committees for such written summaries and ask committee chairs to be present at the fall 2018 meeting.]

After considerable thoughtful Board discussion,

Springs Research Grants – motion by Mrs. Wood to fund the proposals recommended by the advisory committee except RES 07 and RES 10. Mr. McKeel & Mr. Alfonso seconded the motion. Approved unanimously.

Springs Outreach Grants – motion by Mr. McKeel to approve all proposals recommended by the advisory committee. Seconded by Chairman Corbett. Approved unanimously.

Deer Tag Grants – Mr. Swindal moved to fund all proposals recommended by the advisory committee. Approved unanimously.

Deseret Ranches Proposal – Mr. Bradford presented the Board with an additional application submitted after our deadline, but receiving strong support from FWC biologists and leadership, to help fund a five-year deer management study on Deseret Ranches central Florida lands. A discussion followed on the scientific and conservation benefits of this project. Dr. Baker moved to approve an initial two-year grant, based on his past experience with Deseret's land management and wildlife staff. Mr. Borbolla and Chairman Corbett seconded. Approved unanimously.

XII. Next Meeting of the Board

The April 23-24 meeting will include Board review of the "Conserve Wildlife" (bear tag) grant applications and be held at the White Oak Plantation north of Jacksonville.

The Board then met in Executive Session.

There being no further business, Chairman Corbett adjourned the meeting at 4:45 pm.