



**Meeting of the Board of Directors
Monday, September 19, 2022**

Members in Attendance

Mr. Carlos Alfonso, Chair; Mr. Preston Farrior, Vice-Chair; Mrs. Laura Russell, 2nd Vice-Chair; Mrs. Kathy Barco, Treasurer; Mr. Ignacio Borbolla; Mr. Joshua Kellam; Mr. Seth D. McKeel, Jr.; Mr. John Pope; Mrs. Donna "Boo" Rawson; Mr. Kent Shoemaker; Mr. Robert Spottswood, Jr.; Mr. Steve Swindal; Mrs. Daphne Wood.

Members not in Attendance

Mr. Richard A. Corbett, Chair Emeritus; Ms. Connie Parker, Secretary; Mr. Eric Sutton, FWC Executive Director; Mr. Paul Avery; Mr. Jerry Pate; Mr. Steve Crisafulli; Mr. Tucker Fredrickson; Mr. Adam Putnam.

Guests & Advisors in Attendance

Mr. John Lacy, Investment Manager, The Lacy Group/Merrill Lynch/Bank of America; Ms. Tindl Rainey, FWC Chief Communications Officer.

Staff in Attendance

Ms. Michelle Ashton, Mr. Will Bradford, Mrs. Danielle Richter, Ms. Anita Forester, Ms. Rachael Schirmer, Ms. Erin Smart, Ms. Lauren Srodka and Mr. Andrew Walker.

I. Call to Order and Opening Remarks - Mr. Carlos Alfonso, Chair

Chairman Alfonso called the meeting to order at 10:51 am Eastern standard with a roll call establishing quorum. He welcomed everyone and thanked SeaWorld for its tour of the Florida Coral Rescue Center and hospitality in hosting the Board meeting. He said he was extremely impressed by the Center and SeaWorld's management of the corals.

Chairman Alfonso reminded everyone that this is the last in-person meeting before *A Night for Nature* and encouraged every board member to secure at least several sponsorships and to attend the event.

New Board member Mr. Shoemaker and new staff member Mrs. Srodka were presented with Fish & Wildlife Foundation lapel pins by the Chairman and CEO Walker. Bronze Foundation Service Awards created by wildlife artist Geoffrey Smith were presented to three board members who must step down December 31st – Treasurer Barco, Mrs. Rawson and Ms. Parker (not in attendance). Chairman Alfonso led the Board and staff in expressing their deep appreciation for the three members' past nine years of exemplary service to the Foundation, FWC and conservation generally.

II. Consent Agenda - Mr. Carlos Alfonso, Chair

June 14 Minutes: Motion made by Mr. Kellam to approve minutes of the June 14, 2022 meeting as presented; seconded by Mr. Shoemaker. Unanimously approved.

Recent Grant Reports- Ms. Forester reported on the most recent reports received by our grantees. She is working on the WFF (deer tag) grantees to improve reporting – specifically to update the numbers of first-time hunters they're recruiting and these individuals' demographics. Ms. Wood moved to approve the reports; Ms. Barco seconded. Unanimously approved.

A suggestion was made by Mr. Shoemaker to move the board books to a paperless, electronic format. Ms. Srodka will survey the board to see who prefers paper and who prefers an e-book for the December meeting.

III. FWC Director's Remarks - Given by Ms. Tindl Rainey, FWC Chief Communications Officer

Ms. Rainey reported there have been recent changes to FWC leadership. Most notably, Legislative Affairs Director Jessica Crawford is replacing retiring Jennifer Fitzwater as Chief of Staff.



A few weeks ago, Mr. Walker and Mr. Bradford joined FWC division directors and other executive leadership to share updates on the Foundation and each division. She explained this was a great point of connectivity and coordination across our teams and every attendee expressed appreciation for the Board and foundation. There is an upcoming Commission meeting in Miami, September 28th-29th. Topics include diamondback terrapin conservation, fishery management council updates, and announcement of this year's Python Challenge Awards. There were about 1,000 participants in the Python Challenge this year from across the country and two other countries.

The Florida Youth Conservation Centers Network hosted 1,751 youth at FWC's four conservation centers this summer, a record number since inception of the 8-week summer season. Helping drive increased attendance:

- introduction of a career camp week for high schoolers;
- adding an extra week of camp at centers where registration was at capacity;
- more scholarships for underprivileged youth (\$\$ raised by the Foundation);
- running a pilot week of camp at Tenoroc Public Use Area, and
- expanding outreach to communities local to our sites.

FWC's upcoming camp projects include:

- A new classroom, bathroom facility, and shooting range at the Joe Budd Youth Conservation Center near Tallahassee;
- Expanding youth conservation activities at the Tenoroc Public Use Area (building an overnight camp at Tenoroc is the FWC and Foundation's long-range goal);
- Adding a Turner Foundation-funded bilingual position at the Suncoast Youth Conservation Center to improve Hispanic community outreach.

In July, FWC had a strong presence at ICAST throughout the Orlando event, North America's largest fishing gear trade show. In the Conservation Corner, the FWC booth provided a centralized point of engagement with members of the fishing and boating industry where staff shared information about the SFR program, best fishing practices, and fishing regulations.

Spiny lobster sport season, known as mini season, occurred July 27th and 28th. FWC had an active presence in the Keys where staff were present to discuss bag limits, measuring methods, boating safety, and coral messaging. They hosted a press conference with K9 and measuring demonstrations and set up a lobster booth at Divers Direct in Key Largo. They had an additional 28 patrol officers from all over the state come to the Keys to assist local officers in patrolling the waters and utilized four OPV vessels with 12 crew members patrolling areas further offshore. Officers handled more than 120 calls related to lobster harvest and conducted over 300 vessel stops during the mini season.

Ms. Rainey concluded with an update on the grand opening of the Palm Beach County Shooting Sports Complex, which is scheduled for October 1st. The Palm Beach County Shooting Sports Complex is one

of the largest ranges in Florida and is poised to become a premiere Olympic shooting sports facility with its international trap and skeet fields. The new range is adjacent to J.W. Corbett Wildlife Management Area and accessible from Seminole Pratt Whitney Road. The completed paving of its two-mile entrance road, local funding for which Foundation Board members helped procure, makes it safer and more convenient to visit the range and our Everglades Youth Conservation Center. Ms. Rainey said FWC leadership is excited to celebrate this state-of-the-art facility and is grateful to the support provided by Palm Beach County, the South Florida Water Management District, and the Foundation.



IV. Foundation President's Remarks - Mr. Andrew Walker, CEO

Fundraising: Mr. Walker reported that for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2022, the Foundation raised \$19.5 million in total revenue, including \$1,318,063 in operating income, \$287,557 in charitable contributions raised for operations and \$11,00,871 in gifts for program needs, led by principal gifts from Garner and Connie Koons and the Fox Rock Foundation. From the \$8 million dollar Koons gift, \$5.8 million had been allocated to an array of present and future projects. These include \$250,000 to establish an emergency fund to support FWC LE officers.

One of the most notable Foundation accomplishments in FY22, Mr. Walker said, was the reinforcing interplay between our fundraising and communications staff, which together raised ~\$2.2 million in approximately six months in response to the Indian River Lagoon manatee crisis.

Manatee update: Mr. Walker said the manatee mortality remains the big story. FWC hopes to double the amount of lettuce needed this year. He emphasized the importance of the trust established between FWC and the Foundation through Ms. Rainey during the manatee issue, given that both the Foundation and FWC had to be working very quickly and usually independently of each other.

For the coming winter, Mr. Walker said we'll be working with FWC to stabilize the cost of lettuce, which fluctuated significantly last year. We also had a conversation with Hubbs-SeaWorld Foundation about increasing promotion of the "Discover Florida Oceans" tag, of which Hubbs receives 80 percent of funds.

The Great Florida Outdoors Raffle: Mr. Walker reported The Great Florida Outdoors Raffle is going very well with ~\$120K raised so far vs. our previous high of \$51,000 when selling the boat at BlueGreen. We anticipate reaching \$150,000 and may ultimately get close to \$200,000 if the winner opts for the \$50,000 cash alternative (allowing us to sell the boat). FWC does not want to send out too many notices to license holders, though response has been strong to them. Both we and FWC have learned a lot in running this raffle and we're pleased with the progress to date. The funds will be used by FWC for a variety of needs.

Conservation and Youth Programs: We have selected architect Lake|Flator from the competition to design the next generation of youth camp buildings, beginning with improvements to Everglades and building an overnight camp at Tenoroc. We've also been working with Zubakin Property Management to develop the concept for the new FWC headquarters and find a building site location.

VI. Fundraising - Mrs. Danielle Richter, Director of Philanthropy

Coral Restoration Fund: Mrs. Richter presented our new coral swag and signage to be shared with our funding partners in Key West. The Islander Resort has joined and will be donating proceeds from the sale of a plush sea turtle and a specialty drink. We will be taking the plushie idea to different hotels in the Keys in hopes of a similar partnership. Mr. Borbolla suggested trying to get Ocean Reef involved and offered to connect us. Staff will follow up with him.

Recent Gifts & Outstanding Proposals: Mrs. Richter is preparing a report on use of Greater Good Charities' \$113K gift for seagrass planting and manatee rehabilitation. They are great partners, and Dani will be reaching out to them again to partner with this year's manatee feeding efforts. Mrs. Richter continued by reporting we and Sea & Shoreline have submitted a \$1.2 million grant request to FDEP to develop and test robotic planting of seagrass in hopes that it can speed planting and cut labor costs.

Mrs. Richter then asked Mr. Walker to explain two proposals FWC and we recently submitted to the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation.

Conserving the Florida Panther: A \$2.2 million request to create a program to incentivize panther conservation on private land. It provides ranchers and other landowners with annual payments for improving and maintaining high-quality native habitat on their lands.



Florida Coral Rescue Project – Propagation Phase: A \$4.9 million grant request to expand our Florida Coral Rescue Center to begin large-scale sexual propagation of stony corals, with training provided by the Florida Aquarium.

Leave A Wild Legacy: We have purchased software that will aid donors in creating a will and designate our foundation as a bequest; five people so far have chosen FWFF using the software. Studies have shown that donors who have a designated foundation in their will also give more annually. We have also done a few planned giving promotional mailings under our “Leave A Wild Legacy” slogan.

A Night for Nature 2023, update given by Ms. Laura Russell: Eric Silagy has agreed to our desire to honor him and Florida Power & Light for their support of conservation. Country musician Chris Janson will also be honored; his award will be co-presented by Johnny Morris. What’s needed: We’re behind our previous pace on procuring sponsorships and auction items. Chairman Alfonso committed his family’s Tuscany house again to the auction. Mr. Kellam has offered to donate a grand slam turkey hunt if we can find appropriate connections for non-FL sites.

Mrs. Richter concluded by stating our Fall fundraising priorities will be: manatees, coral, annual appeal, ANFN sponsors and promoting the raffle.

VII. Finance and Audit - Ms. Kathy Barco & Mr. Will Bradford, COO

FY22 4th Quarter Report:

Ms. Smart gave the Fiscal Year 2022 year-end numbers. We had an amazing year of fundraising with \$11 million in charitable donations. Total funds under management grew 18% to \$55.5 million. We recorded a total net surplus (ops and program) of \$8.2 million. Gopher Tortoise permit revenue had a record year of \$6.2 million and License plate sales grew 9%. Administration and Management fee income increased 15% year over year despite lowering Gopher Tortoise fees as of January 1, 2022.

The nearly \$500,000 in market losses in June turned a six-figure operating surplus into a \$282K deficit by June 30th. Our unrestricted reserves fell from 24 months to 20 months of “run time,” we’re still above our target of having 18 months of operating expenses in reserve.

Program revenues exceeded the budget by 157%. Thanks to the manatee fundraising effort and two principal (\$1M+) gifts, program-related charitable contributions were a thousand percent over budget.

Investment Report: Mr. Lacy gave the investment report as of close of business 8/17/22. Rising interest rates are making CD’s and other fixed investments an increasingly attractive option.

Mr. Bradford ended by having everyone sign the Code of Ethics and Conflict of Interest statement.

VIII. Communications Report - Ms. Michelle Ashton, Director of Communications

Communications June to September Report:

Ms. Ashton began by reporting that FWFF's pro-hunting “Watch the World Wake Up” campaign has launched. We are promoting through eblasts, digital ads on social media and YouTube, and print ads. Ms. Ashton then shared the long version of the video. Ms. Schirmer shared a few social media comments received from the public about the video, all were very positive.

Ms. Schirmer reported Instagram engagement is up 40%, Facebook by 18.6%, and Twitter by 7.6%. Our audience across all platforms totals 21,860.

Ms. Ashton seconded Mr. Walker’s earlier comments, saying our The Great Florida Outdoors Raffle is exceeding our expectations and will continue through December. She reported that earned media



placements continue to increase, securing national coverage for the Florida grasshopper sparrow in *Garden and Gun*. Manatee and coral pieces are also in the works by various journalists. Greg Allen from NPR will be doing a piece on the Florida Coral Rescue Center, and *Wild Kingdom* will soon be releasing its coral episode filmed at the center in January.

Our eblasts remain a vital communication tool with 42% open rate and .3% unsubscribe rate.

Ms. Ashton gave an update on direct mail communications. DFO license plate, coral, and manatee updates have been mailed, and our fall newsletter will be coming out soon. She concluded by sharing that we launched a planned giving campaign in August with the “Leave A Wild Legacy” campaign, resulting in several new bequests.

IX. Grants - Ms. Anita Forester, Grant Programs Administrator

Recent Grant Reports: Ms. Forester drew the Board’s attention to the grant final reports in the Board book. Reports from grantees continue to improve and she’ll be meeting with several to help them collect key data. She continues to believe our grantees are doing effective work.

The Board then reviewed the recommendations of the advisory springs and deer tag committees in reviewing the grant requests received this cycle. After extensive discussion of each proposal, the following grants were awarded.

Protect Florida’s Springs (PFS23) Approved Grant Award

<i>Manatee Observer Program in Salt and Silver Glen Springs, Clearwater Marine and Research Institute</i>	\$19,927
<i>Is Your Water Well? Private well test awareness and nitrate monitoring, Florida Springs Institute</i>	\$20,000
<i>Swaying New Home Buyers Mindsets Towards Sustainable Landscapes, The Nature Conservancy</i>	\$11,000
<i>“Freedom Lawns” Social Marketing Behavior Change Campaign, Alachua County</i>	\$15,000
<i>Altering Public Attitudes and Practices that Harm Florida Springs, Florida Springs Council</i>	\$8,400
<i>Springs Project Funding Analysis, Florida Springs Council</i>	\$4,000
<i>Connecting Florida’s Sportsmen and Women with a Healthy Springs, Florida Wildlife Federation</i>	\$5,000
<i>Florida Springsheds Cleanups, Current Problems</i>	\$13,400
<i>Ecological Health Assessment of the Silver Springs System, Florida Springs Institute</i>	\$31,000
<i>SpringsWatch Training Workshop, Florida Springs Institute</i>	\$15,121
TOTAL PFS23 Approved	\$142,848

Fish & Wildlife Foundation of Florida “Deer Plate” (WFF23) Approved Grant Awards

<i>Special Wounded Warrior and Youth Waterfowl Hunts, United Waterfowlers of Florida, Inc.</i>	\$3,000
<i>The Introduction to Archery Experience, Shoot Straight Archery</i>	\$8,800
<i>Operation Outdoor Freedom Food Plots, Florida Forest Service</i>	\$6,000
<i>Tracks Over Wheels, Removing the Barriers Initiative</i>	\$14,000
<i>Second Expansion of Pasco County Archery Program, Pasco County</i>	\$3,079
<i>Proverbs 31 Outdoorsman Continuation, 10 CAN, Inc.</i>	\$13,750
<i>Mobile Summer Archery Camp(s), Trinity Sportsman Ministries</i>	\$7,000
<i>ALLOUT EcoRover Adventures 2023, Florida Disabled Outdoors Association</i>	\$25,000
<i>FHF’s New Hunters Program, The Future of Hunting in Florida</i>	\$14,817
<i>TOW- Tracks Over Wheels- North Florida, Eleos- The Care Network, Inc.</i>	\$10,450
<i>Phase III: Enhance Sonfishers Archery Program & Wildlife Education, SONFISHER</i>	\$6,000
<i>4-H W.O.L.F. Camp, UF/IFAS Extension</i>	\$3,000
<i>Gator Gobbler youth, women & collegiate hunts, NWTF – Gator Gobblers</i>	\$7,500



<i>FWC/NWTF/FFS Wild Turkey Cost-share Program, National Wild Turkey Federation</i>	\$25,000
<i>Project ARROW, Grace Church Melbourne</i>	\$12,500
<i>Youth archery range loaner out kit, Florida Bowhunters Association</i>	\$4,761
<i>Gobbling and Nesting Chronology of Wild Turkeys, FWC-FWRI</i>	\$24,000
<i>Gators, Gals, and Guns, University of Florida Wildlife Society</i>	\$2,500
<i>Lakeland YHEC Youth Primitive Hunting, FWC</i>	\$4,000
<i>Access North Florida, Tri-State Christian Fellowship</i>	\$11,350
<i>59th Annual Field Trial & Bench Show, Blackwater Fox Hunters Association</i>	\$5,500
<i>7th Annual Rumble in the Swamp , Southeastern Dog Hunters Association</i>	\$4,000
<i>Apalachicola National Forest Clean Up Day, Southeastern Dog Hunters Association</i>	\$1,000
<i>Youth Buck In Rut Hunt 2023 , Southeastern Dog Hunters Association</i>	\$3,000
<i>9th Annual Dog Days Of Summer , Southeastern Dog Hunters Association</i>	\$3,000
<i>Increasing Hunter Participation in Monitoring for Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD), FWC</i>	\$26,000
<i>Drawn by Grace Youth Outreach, Drawn by Grace, Inc.</i>	\$5,300
<i>Hunt 4 Halee Youth Deer Hunt 2023, Seasons Of Hope Outdoors, Inc</i>	\$4,500
<i>Title sponsorship of the Florida NASP, FWC</i>	\$30,000
<i>Determining the Publics Attitudes and Opinions of Ebike Use on WMA's, FWC</i>	\$10,000
<i>Expanding/ continuing archery, Eastside Elementary Bowbenders</i>	\$4,517
<i>Blackwater OOF kitchen, Florida Forest Service</i>	\$20,000
<i>Restock of YHPF Equipment, FWC (Youth Hunting Programs)</i>	\$30,300
<i>Introduction to girls' outdoor Archery, Lake Wales Rotary Foundation, Inc.</i>	\$1,245
TOTAL WFF23 Approved	\$354,869

New Non-Tag Grant Requests: Two additional grant requests for funding were presented to the Board:

- 1) *The Ribbit Exhibit: Frogs and Toads of Florida* -- \$30,380 for Tampa Bay Watch Discovery Center
Mr. Farrior motioned to fund at 50% of the request, Ms. Russell seconded, motion passed unanimously.
- 2) *Cherry Lake FWC request* (General Funds grant) Mr. Spottswood Jr. motioned to fund at \$15k, Mr. Kellam seconded the motion, motion passed unanimously.

X. Open Session- New Business and Emerging Issues

- a. For our December board meeting we will be selecting a new set of officers, new committee assignments, a new chair for governance and a new communications committee.
- b. The April 23-24, 2023 Board meeting will be held in Naples at the Conservancy of Southwest Florida. The September 17-18, 2023 Board meeting will be held in Yulee at White Oak Conservation.
- c. The formation of a FWFF Young Professionals/Advisory Group was discussed. The members of this YPO could become future board members, volunteers, etc. Mr. Walker to work with Chairman Alfonso on what the structure would look like. Mr. Shoemaker noted the investment of staff time needed to create a successful program.

XI. Closing Remarks- Carlos Alfonso, Chair

Chairman Alfonso mentioned keeping Mr. Lane, the deer tag committee head, in their thoughts after the tragic death of his son. He thanked everyone for being here. There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 2:54pm.



Mr. Carlos Alfonso, Board Chair

Date

Ms. Connie Parker, Secretary

Date

Mr. Andrew Walker, CEO

Date
