

**Minutes of the
Meeting of the Board of Directors
Monday, September 18, 2023**

Members in Attendance

Mr. Carlos Alfonso, Chair; Ms. Laura Russell, Vice Chair; Mr. Seth McKeel Jr., Treasurer; Mr. Robert Spottswood Jr., Secretary; Mr. Keenan Baldwin; Mrs. Valerie Boyd; Mr. Steve Crisafulli; Mr. John Pope; Mr. Kent Shoemaker; Mr. Stephen Swindal; Mr. Joshua Kellam; Mrs. Daphne Wood; Mr. Ignacio Borbolla; Mr. Roger Young, FWC Executive Director.

Members not in Attendance

Mr. Richard Corbett, Chair Emeritus; Mr. Paul Avery; Mr. Tucker Frederickson; Mr. Jerry Pate; Mr. Adam Putnam.

Guests & Advisors in Attendance

Ms. Tindl Rainey, FWC Chief Communication Officer; Mr. John Lacy, Investment Manager; Mr. Preston Fariior, FWC Commissioner; Mr. George Warthen, FWC Division Director Hunting & Game Management; Mr. Rodney Barretto, Chairman, FWC Commission.

Staff in Attendance

Mr. Andrew Walker; Mr. Will Bradford; Mrs. Erin Smart; Ms. Michelle Ashton; Ms. Danielle Richter; Mrs. Anita Forester; Ms. Rachael Schirmer; Ms. Cindy Fray; Ms. Paula Pack; Ms. Francesca Klypchak.

I. Call to Order and Opening Remarks - Chairman Carlos Alfonso

Chairman Alfonso called the meeting to order at 8:35 am and established quorum. He began by welcoming everyone and thanking White Oak for hosting. He recognized White Oak's accomplishments and the vital role they play in the Florida Grasshopper Sparrow Breeding program and the successful partnership White Oak has established with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission and the Fish & Wildlife Foundation of Florida. Chairman Alfonso presented White Oak with a Geoffrey Smith Florida Grasshopper sparrow sculpture in appreciation of this program and partnership. Chairman Alfonso continued by welcoming guests FWC Commission Chair Rodney Barreto, Ms. Tindl Rainey, FWC Chief Communications Officer and Mr. George Warthen, Division Director Hunting & Game Management. He then welcomed Mr. Roger Young, FWC Executive Director, to his first in-person Board Meeting. Chairman Alfonso introduced Ms. Paula Pack as the Foundation's new Events Coordinator.



II. Consent Agenda

June 13, 2023 Minutes: Motion by Mrs. Daphne Wood to approve minutes with identified changes; seconded by Mr. Steve Swindal. Unanimously approved.

Fiscal Year 2024 Goals: Mr. Andrew Walker presented the final version of Fiscal Year 2024 Goals and the updated Foundation Code of Ethics. There was little discussion. Mrs. Daphne Wood moved to approve the Fiscal Year 2024 Goals as presented, seconded by Mr. John Pope. Unanimously approved.

Recent Grant Reports: Mrs. Daphne Wood requested in the future to add dollar amounts to the reports and motioned to approve the grant reports, Mr. Stephen Swindal seconded. Unanimously approved.

III. FWC Report - Mr. Roger Young

Mr. Young welcomed everyone and spoke highly of the Foundation and Commission's partnership.

Hurricane Idalia: Mr. Young and FWC Officers toured the affected areas post-hurricane. FWC assisted in search and rescue, cleanup and by providing overnight security on the water. He thanked the Foundation for their support of FWC employees affected by the storm.

Coral in the Florida Keys: The heated waters in the Florida Keys are causing severe damage to the corals. FWC is moving corals to deeper, cooler waters or land-based facilities.

Python Challenge 2023: The 2023 Python Challenge was held over 10 days; there were 1,050 participants from 35 states and Belgium. Two hundred, nine Burmese pythons were removed this year. FWC estimates that more than 19,000 Burmese pythons have been removed to date via hunting and trapping.

Fiscal Year 2024 Budget: FWC's proposed FY 24 budget has been submitted to legislature. The agency is requesting \$200 million over its core budget. If approved, the agency would be able to create 55 new FWC positions.

Chronic Wasting Disease: Mr. George Warthen, FWC Division Director Hunting & Game Management gave an update of CWD in Florida. The first positive case of CWD was identified in Holmes County, but no further cases have been documented so far.

IV. Communications Report – Ms. Michelle Ashton

Communications Report: Ms. Ashton gave an overview of the Quarterly Communications Report

- Our social media audience across platforms has increased to 27,447 subscribers.

- Eblasts remain a vital tool with 46% open rate, and we have maintained a 0.2% unsubscribe rate; 45,359 people currently receive eblasts. We continue to keep up with benchmarks for nonprofit organizations.

Social Media: Ms. Rachael Schirmer updated the board on current initiatives to use micro influencers to promote the license plates. Commissioner Barreto offered to connect the Foundation to several high-level influencers/celebrities with a strong interest in the outdoors.

Recent Media: Ms. Ashton reported that during the summer's coral crisis, the Foundation became a liaison for several key national media. This work helps the Foundation's reputation with media outlets. Print coverage for the Fall will be going out soon, including a *Garden & Gun Magazine* article, our Fall Newsletter, our annual update to *Discover Florida Oceans* plate holders, a manatee update to manatee donors, and our end-of-year giving campaign.

Foundation Toolbox: Ms. Ashton reported on the work to date by the Communications Committee and requested feedback on materials and messages proposed for the Foundation's communications "Toolbox."

V. Finance & Audit -- Mr. Seth McKeel Jr., Mr. Will Bradford, Mr. John Lacy

Treasurer McKeel thanked the Finance and Audit Committee for their participation on the recent Committee call. He updated the Board on our nearly successful effort in the last legislative session to update the springs license plate language. He said we intend to try again next session.

FY23 Year-End Financial Report:

Mr. Bradford reported the Fiscal Year 2023 audit is completed, and the Foundation received no negative findings from the auditors. He is working to finish up the audited financials and he will send them out upon completion.

Mr. Bradford reported \$2 million in total charitable contributions for FY23. The Foundation collected \$14.5 million in program revenue. Investments grew by \$5.5 million and a record \$9.2 million was expended on conservation projects. The Foundation posted an operating surplus of \$901,034 and our unrestricted reserve rebounded by 42% this fiscal year to \$1,312,727. Mr. Joshua Kellam made a motion to approve the FY23 Year End Financial Report, seconded by Mr. Steve Swindal. Unanimously approved.

FY24 Final Budget: Mr. Bradford presented the final budget for Fiscal Year 2024. The preliminary budget was presented to the board at the June 2023 meeting and no material changes have been made. Mr. John Pope made a motion to approve the budget as presented, seconded by Mr. Steve Swindal. Unanimously approved.



Whistle Blower Policy: Mr. Bradford presented the updated Whistleblower policy he worked with our attorneys to complete. Mr. Joshua Kellum made a motion to adopt the revised policy, seconded by Mr. John Pope. Unanimously approved.

Investment Report:

Mr. Lacy gave a year-to-date account review. We are generating significant return on our cash holdings using short-term treasuries. The intentional rotation in our portfolio was discussed. Our portfolios are outperforming their corresponding indexes. With one exception, all our model portfolios are in line with the desired allocations.

VI. Public Comment

Chairman Alfonso called for any public comment or questions. With no public present, he adjourned the meeting at 10:25 am for a tour of White Oak and lunch.

VII. Call to Order Afternoon Session – Chairman Carlos Alfonso

Chairman Alfonso called the afternoon session to order at 1:19 pm and quorum was established. Chairman Alfonso and Mr. Andrew Walker presented an award to Mr. Preston Farris in appreciation for his dedication and work for the Foundation. Mr. Farris has stepped down from the Board to serve in his new role with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission as a Commissioner.

VIII. Fundraising -- Ms. Dani Richter

Ms. Richter introduced Ms. Francesca Klypchak as the Foundation's new Philanthropy Coordinator. Ms. Richter presented the Major Gifts report and Fundraising calendar. The Major Gifts report raised the question of what to do with a large unrestricted bequest. Mr. Walker drafted a policy and requested the Board's feedback. The Board discussed the policy and terms. Mr. Walker will work with Mr. McKeel and the F&A Committee on the policy and re-present it to the Board at its December meeting.

Neon Migration: Ms. Richter updated the Board on the migration to the Foundation's new donor management software. The migration is underway and expected to be completed by the end of the calendar year.

FreeWill Update: Ms. Richter reported August was *Make-A-Will Month*, which the Foundation promoted, leading to four new people including us in their estate plans using our FreeWill software. The Foundation has contracted with planned giving specialist Gordon Nelson for assistance with any individuals looking to make a planned gift. Mr. Nelson is also advising us on our planned giving promotional materials.

Young Professionals Association: Ms. Richter has begun speaking with other YPAs about recruiting young professionals to become involved with conservation. The board discussed various scenarios for a YPA. Mr. Joshua Kellam made a motion to approve a pilot program in concept, with details to follow. Seconded by Mr. Robert

Spottswood Jr. Unanimously approved. A subcommittee for the Young Professionals Association was formed with Mr. Joshua Kellam, Keenan Baldwin, and Mrs. Valerie Boyd agreeing to join.

Campfire Concert: The event will take place Friday evening, March 29, 2024, at the Pelican Club in Jupiter, Florida to benefit the Everglades Youth Conservation Camp.

IX. CEO Report/Strategic Business Planning -- Mr. Andrew Walker

Mr. Walker presented the Fiscal Year 2023 final report against goals, noting the Foundation had raised a record \$25.6 million in total revenue. He noted more than \$800,000 net was raised by the highly successful Night for Nature, and \$2.7 million has been raised for manatees and seagrass restoration against an original goal of \$250,000.

Staff capacity has limited progress on raising the \$4.9 million needed to transform the Florida Coral Rescue Center into a propagation facility, a need heightened by this summer's extreme heat event. He noted that at FWC's request, we are funding the travel and lodging of 14 coral aquarists who are overseeing care for 18,000 branching corals pulled from in situ nurseries in the Keys until water temperatures return to normal in November.

Mr. Walker moved on to our Fall priorities which include fundraising for the FWC payment-for-ecosystem services program to protect panther habitat, the conversion to the Neon donor database, the Nov. 8th EYCC event honoring Chair Emeritus Dick Corbett and his wife Cornelia, and planning for the Campfire Concert. Architect charrettes will be held Nov. 15 and 16 for and at the EYCC & Tenoroc youth camps, respectively. The Board is invited.

Strategic Business Plan: Mr. Walker presented a few questions to elicit thoughts on the future direction of the Foundation. Early committee observations and ideas were discussed. The ad hoc planning committee will meet several times during the Fall.



X. “Wildlife Foundation of Florida” (Deer Tag) Grant Applications -- Ms. Anita Forester

Ms. Forester presented 34 proposals for consideration. After extensive discussion of the proposals, the Board agreed to allocate \$557,898 in Wildlife Foundation of Florida tag monies to the following projects:

Organization Name	Project Name	Award
NWTF Heart of Dixie Purrs and Spurs	8th Annual Jakes Day	\$2,500.00
United Waterfowlers Florida, Inc.	United Waterfowlers-FL Wounded Warrior Waterfowl Hunts and Youth Hunts	\$6,200.00
Florida Hunters and Community who care Inc-DBA Florida Hunters for the Hungry Inc	Florida Hunters for the Hungry	\$10,000.00
Florida Trappers Association	Florida Trappers Association Women and Youth Training 2024	\$2,500.00
National Wild Turkey Federation	FWC/NWTF/FFS Florida Wild Turkey Cost-Share Program	\$20,000.00
Homegrown 4-H	Next Level Homegrown Archery	\$4,000.00
Florida Bowhunters Association Inc	The Florida Bowhunters Jamboree	\$8,530.00
The Future of Hunting in Florida	FHF 2024-25 New Hunter program.	\$25,967.00
Belmont Academy Charter School	Belmont Archery Program Equipment Update	\$1,396.00
Removing the Barriers Initiative	Freedom Trax Florida	\$7,455.00
Florida Forest Service	OOF Food plots 2024 - Blackwater	\$6,000.00
Expedite life	Expedite Life Adaptive Wild Hog Hunt	\$2,000.00
Southeastern Dog Hunters Association	8th Annual Rumble In The Swamp Youth Small Game Hunt and Outdoors Day	\$4,500.00
Southeastern Dog Hunters Association	Annual Apalachicola Forest Clean Up Day	\$1,000.00
University Of Florida/Holmes County 4-H Association	Habitat Heroes: Inspiring Youth to Build and Conserve Habitats through Education and Responsible Hunting	\$5,000.00
Southeastern Dog Hunters Association	Youth Buck In Rut Hunt 2024	\$3,000.00
American Disability Adventures	Hunting for Disabled Veterans in Central Florida	\$22,750.00
FWC	Suncoast Youth Conservation Center Archery Range	\$55,000.00
10 CAN, Inc.	Project EDHS: Education & Diversity in Hunting and Shooting	\$10,000.00
Grace Church Melbourne	Project AAROW	\$7,500.00
Shoot Straight Archery	The Introduction to Archery Experience Part II	\$3,100.00
Blackwater Fox Hunters Association	60th Annual Blackwater Fox Hunters Association Field Trial & Bench	\$6,000.00
Manatee County Natural Resources	Manatee County Hunt Program and Archery Education	\$40,000.00
American Daughters of Conservation	L.O.S.T “Ladies Outdoor Skills Training”	\$4,000.00
Sportsability Alliance	ALLOUT EcoRover Adventures 24	\$24,000.00
NWTF – Gator Gobblers	NWTF Gator Gobbler Outreach Hunts	\$8,000.00
FWC-FWRI	Gobbling and Nesting Chronology of Wild Turkeys in South FL	\$25,000.00
Seasons Of Hope Outdoors, Inc	Hunt 4 Hales Youth Deer Hunt 2024	\$4,500.00
FWC	Tenoroc Youth Conservation Center Archery Range	\$55,000.00
Southeastern Dog Hunters Association	10th Annual Dog Days Of Summer Youth Field Trial	\$3,000.00
FWC	Chronic Wasting Disease Response	\$150,000.00
FWC	Title sponsorship of the Florida NASP Tournament	\$30,000.00
TOTAL		\$557,898.00

XI. Open Session – New Business & Emerging Issues

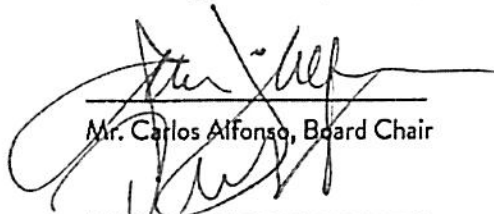
There were no new items presented for discussion.



XII. Closing Remarks

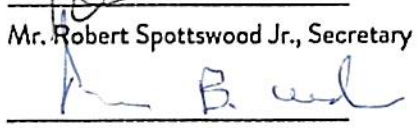
Chairman Alfonso informed the Board Governance Committee Chair Mrs. Laura Russell is leading the effort to identify our class of potential Board candidates for the coming year. He asked that anyone with suggested candidates contact her.

Chairman Alfonso thanked everyone for attending the meeting, and there being no further business to discuss, adjourned the meeting at 3:17 pm.



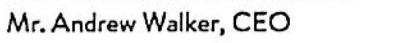
Mr. Carlos Alfonso, Board Chair

2/20/24
Date



Mr. Robert Spottswood Jr., Secretary

2/28/24
Date



Mr. Andrew Walker, CEO

3/11/24
Date