FWF and the FGCU Panther Posse Program

First place winner in the “Never Say Goodbye” poster contest.

Read more on page 4!

FWF Priorities for 2017 Legislative Session

by Preston Robertson

The 2017 Legislative Session starts on March 7 and lasts for 60 days. Committee meetings have already begun. The Federation will focus on four major issues this Session, which are specifically outlined below.

1. Fully fund the Florida Forever program.
2. Support the creation of a reservoir south of Lake Okeechobee. (SB10 and HB761)
3. Support a ban on fracking. (SB422 and HB451)
4. Support incentives for flood mitigation.

Get Involved

FWF members, volunteers, staff and our lobbyists will be heavily engaged during the Legislative session. We need our grassroots members to be involved and make your voices heard to affect policy. Here are some ways you can stay informed and let legislators know what you think about key bills during the session:

JOIN THE FWF ACTION ALERT LIST: FWF’s email list will be a crucial tool during the legislative session for sharing information about key bills and votes. Sign up for the list at www.fwfonline.org.

FOLLOW FWF ON SOCIAL MEDIA: We will post regular updates on Facebook and Twitter.

GET TO KNOW YOUR LEGISLATORS: Contact you legislators in their home offices now to get to know them and tell them about the wildlife and conservation issues that matter to you. A little relationship building goes a long way. It is much easier to ask your elected officials to cast a vote or take a stand when they know you. Go to www.myfloridahouse.gov and www.myfloridahouse.gov to find out who represents you.

SHOW UP: There are many opportunities to get involved in the legislative process by giving testimony and meeting with legislators. There may also be rallies and events during the session to give you a voice.

Announcing the 80th Annual Conservation Awards Banquet
Friday April 21, 2017
at the Wyndham Grand Jupiter at Harbourside Place.

See the back page of this issue for all the details!
Coming Together for Florida’s Environment

Wow! This was the only word that came out of my mouth after the presidential election in November. Let me say it again. Wow!! Whether one is a Democrat, Republican, or Independent, no one in his or her wildest dreams could have definitively predicted the outcome. Personally, I was distraught during the campaign. In a free society parents held before embarking on the camping trip. In a free society, a child, my folks took the family to the beach. We were not disrupted. We could only play on the right side or the left side of the pier. Another example was when my father took us camping and said we could invite some friends. He never asked about the party affiliations that my friends’ parents held. We must live together as brothers or perish together as fools.”

Martin Luther King, Jr.

Rick Abbott

The point that I hope I am making is that the environment in the great state of Florida can benefit from healing which will allow prosperity to flourish. We need to come together as a united front defending Florida’s environment from the select few who might be pushing their own agenda to Florida’s detriment. The consequences of division and greed can be vast and will require effort on all of our parts to reverse the effects.

“We must live together as brothers or perish together as fools.”

Rick Abbott

Ron Warneken, Bobbie Lindsay, Joe Atterbury and Tim Bachmeyer.
Dear Florida Wildlife Federation members,

I want to reiterate how much your support means to us. The Florida Wildlife Federation works hard for conservation across Florida in the legislature and beyond. This issue discusses a number of our key challenges with the 2017 legislative session. We also work on national policy with the National Wildlife Federation and conservation allies. FWF is working actively with anglers for a new reservoir south of Lake Okeechobee. Mark your calendars for April 11 as anglers from across Florida will gather in Tallahassee in support of legislation to acquire lands south of Lake Okeechobee which would store, treat and convey water south. Doing so would reduce devastating estuarine discharges during wet years to the Caloosahatchee estuary and to the St. Lucie River and southern Indian River Lagoon. That would be a tremendous benefit but there are other benefits including less pressure on the Lake Okeechobee dike, a 70 plus year old 140 mile long structure in need of constant repairs. The structure was not built to current post Katrina standards and is increasingly vulnerable to piping and potential breaches when the lake levels get too high. A reservoir south of the lake would benefit Lake Okeechobee’s marsh and freshwater fishery. Water stored in this new reservoir would be part of dynamic water storage, treatment and conveyance benefiting Everglades restoration, moving clean water south through the Water Conservation Areas 3A & B on into Everglades National Park and Florida Bay. Senators Bradley and Negron have put forward a bill, SB-10 to create a new southern Reservoir as critical to Everglades Restoration (House Bill 761 does the same). FWF supports this critical acquisition as well as significant increases for conservation lands acquisition through the Florida Forever program.

Regarding the upcoming legislative session, we are seeing legislation that distracts from the acquisition of new land for a reservoir south of Lake Okeechobee. The latest is SB-816 by Simmons which promotes the idea that we should store more water in the Lake. That has lots of problems such as increasing the chances of dike failure, destruction of the lake marsh ecosystem and fishery, not moving water south so the threat of destructive discharges to the northern estuaries remain, failing to provide additional flows of clean water south to Everglades National Park and Florida Bay. The Corps of Engineers now spend millions every year doing emergency repairs to the most vulnerable portions of the dike, but these repairs are insufficient to protect the integrity of the Lake’s dike, if you significantly increase lake levels. The Federation will oppose this and other similarly problematic legislation which distracts from real long term solutions.

Florida Wildlife Federation volunteers like Martha Musgrove have been leaders in the effort to continue the Arthur R. Marshall Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge and to help secure additional resources to help address the significant problem of the invasive old world climbing fern which is one of the worst invasive plants in Florida. Florida, as you know, has one of the worst set of challenges in the nation posed by invasive plants and animals.

Outside of legislative activity in Tallahassee, FWF works actively with the National Wildlife Federation on significant conservation issues at the national level. With the recent election, many longstanding environmental laws and conservation policies are being challenged. FWF continues to support America’s bedrock conservation laws and programs and will oppose efforts to weaken them. FWF also looks for new opportunities to promote natural resource conservation.

FWF greatly appreciates the support of our members. If you would like to consider FWF in your long term giving or estate planning, we will be glad to work with you. Please contact Preston, Diane or me if you would like to pursue charitable giving with FWF. Tim Bachmeyer, FWF board member and consultant, is a specialist in this area and can also assist with special gifts or estate planning.

It is a personal pleasure and honor to have recently passed my 30th anniversary as President and CEO of the Florida Wildlife Federation, working with you, our board members, allies and affiliated organizations on behalf of conserving Florida’s natural resources and in securing great places for outdoor recreation and experiences. I look forward to continued service on behalf of conservation and to strengthen the Florida Wildlife Federation and its mission.

Yours in conservation,

Manley Fuller

2016 FWF Photo Contest Winners

FWF is pleased to announce the winners of the 2016 Photo Contest. This year, we were grateful to have Nick Baldwin of Tallahassee as our judge for the contest for the first time. He is an excellent photographer and a Life Member of the Federation. Thank you to the over 500 photographers who entered, and to Nick for taking the time to review over 750 photos that were entered. You will find other winning photos from the contest throughout FFWN. Visit www.snappiephoto.com to view the winners online and we hope you enter the contest in 2017.

Birds - Overall Winner

Family Hug, by Thomas Chadwick
St. Petersburg, FL

FWF Southern Regional Director Martha Musgrove (top right) hosting a panel discussion on Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge at The Everglades Coalition 32nd Annual Conference.
Transportation and Conservation Planning

Collisions with vehicles are the major cause of Florida panther mortality. Thirty-four panthers were killed in 2016 on Florida’s highways along with unknown numbers of other native wildlife. Where fencing and underpasses are installed, the deaths drop to almost zero.

One of the deadliest highways for Florida panthers is the nine-mile stretch of I-75 Alligator Alley immediately east of the Naples toll booth. It is the only segment of I-75 Alligator Alley without wildlife exclusionary fencing.

In response to the Federation’s 2015 study and letter petitioning action, Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) announced that wildlife exclusionary fencing will be installed on both sides of the highway from the Naples toll booth to the FakaUnion Canal Bridge. Construction is underway and expected to be completed in 2017.

It is important to maintain habitat connectivity under Alligator Alley I-75 for panthers and other wildlife. Picayune Strand State Forest/Picayune Strand Everglades Restoration Project is on the south side and Collier County’s North Belle Meade Natural Resource Protection Area is on the north side of this exposed stretch of Alligator Alley I-75.

In addition to the exclusionary fencing, FDOT reset the existing rubble riprap under the west side of the FakaUnion Canal Bridge and both sides under the Miller Canal Bridge to create 2ft wide pathways for panthers and other terrestrial wildlife. These passages or ledges under the canal bridges are done and monitoring cameras are in place.

The Federation is continuing to work with FDOT, US Fish and Wildlife Service, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC), Collier County, and private landholders to identify locations to build additional underpasses between North Belle Meade and Picayune Strand State Forest.

A long term monitoring study funded by the Federation identified a major problem with an underpass in eastern Collier County. The situation was brought to Collier County’s attention along with a simple solution. The County built a land bridge with a culvert so wildlife could comfortably cross a wide and deep swale at the north entrance of the underpass. Two panthers were killed in the vicinity. Wildlife biologists suspect the panthers may have been avoiding the flooded underpass and opting to cross the road elsewhere.

The Federation was also successful in securing terrestrial wildlife ledges in the design of new county bridges in eastern Collier County. These bridges are in the OK Slough section of the Big Cypress Area of Critical State Concern. This important wildife habitat links the Big Cypress National Preserve and the OK Slough public conservation lands network.

Wildlife Science and Education

Several years ago the Federation contracted University of Central Florida to study the varied panther underpasses in Southwest Florida and to develop recommendations on designs that are cost efficient without sacrificing wildlife use. This long term study is building on the 2006 Federation sponsored Eastern Collier Wildlife Movement Study and the photo diaries developed by Florida Gulf Coast University’s (FGCU) Panther Posse Program using cameras donated by the Federation. The University of Central Florida is coordinating with the junior panther biologists as well as the director of the Panther Posse Program, “Mrs. Ricky” Pires.

Videos and photos are regularly used in the Panther Posse Program’s education efforts and the Federation’s outreach campaigns. In addition to the education value, panther biologists monitor panther populations, panther movements, and the health of individual panthers without the stress of capture and fitting with a radio collar.

The Panther Posse Program educates fourth and fifth grade students on native wildlife and encourages them to “get outdoors” to explore nature. Every year the Federation provides buses so Panther Posse junior biologists can hike the Corkscrew Regional Ecosystem Watershed (CREW) public conservation lands and experience panther habitat firsthand with knowledgeable “trail guides.”

The year long program educates over 5,000 children and involves hundreds of FGCU students as mentors and guides. The program begins in the fall with a visit to FGCU and its interactive Florida Panther classroom. The program culminates in the spring with the CREW field trip.

Every year the Federation co-sponsors the Florida Panther Festival. The 2016 festival was held at the Naples Zoo and generated the largest crowds ever. The Federation and FGCU Panther Posse Program sponsored a “Never Say Goodbye” poster contest. Judges included Mark Lotz, FWC Florida panther biologist.

The winners were announced and posters revealed at the Florida Panther Festival. The posters will be displayed in Southwest Florida, the Florida State Capitol, and Washington, DC.

Promoting Private Conservation Efforts

Through the Florida Panther Protection Program, the Federation is working with farmers, ranchers, and conservation partners to protect working lands in rural Southwest Florida. These lands provide important wildlife habitat and linkages among the region’s public conservation network.

The importance of private landowners to the recovery of the Florida panther cannot be underestimated. All panther underpasses built in the last ten years connect privately owned and maintained wildlife habitat. Underpasses in planning also involve private lands.

Since 1994, the Southwest Florida Office’s strategy of combining science, education, and advocacy on well-defined campaigns is resulting in significant wins for Florida panthers and other native wildlife.

Thank you to the individuals, foundations, and companies who continue to support the Southwest Florida Office and the Federation’s wildlife programs.
Troubled Waters

The St. Johns Riverkeeper has sponsored a documentary about growth pressure in Florida and how it is impacting our natural resources. The film focuses on the St. Johns River Basin, but the pressures are evident across the state. It all comes back around to the real heart of these issues which are the mandates coming down from Tallahassee. Beginning in January, viewings have been scheduled around the state.

Upcoming events include:
• Deland February 28 at the Athens Theater
• Jacksonville March 23 at the Sun-Ray Cinema

If you are not able to attend one of the viewings, you are in luck. Access the documentary at https://goo.gl/okVdm9 and learn how we can continue to work together and make our voices heard.

Office Update

In the fall issue of FFWN, our president, Manley Fuller, mentioned that I had relocated to Tallahassee and took on new responsibilities as the Federation’s Planning Director. For our NE Florida loyal members and followers, I want you to know I am still monitoring regional activities and traveling to the area in response to the needs. We continue to maintain an office in downtown St. Augustine at 88 Riberia St. I still serve on the Board of Directors for the Regional Community Institute and I’m excited to be involved with the Institute’s Water Committee led by Dr. Quinton White.

One effort that I am currently working on, which has spread beyond NE Florida, is the development of signs to protect gopher tortoises. I will continue to work with our Conservation Partners group on our action items to protect NE Florida’s natural resources. Our goal is to staff the office with a conservation advocate but we need to identify sustainable funding sources. If you are interested in supporting the campaign please contact Manley Fuller or me at (850) 656-7113.

Keeping the Wild in Florida Since 1936! • February 2017 • Florida Fish and Wildlife News 5
The Florida Wildlife Federation (FWF) and its allies continue the legal battle to ensure that our state government uses the funding from the Water and Land Legacy Amendment, approved by 75% of voters in 2014 (Amendment 1), as the voters directed: to acquire and restore our remaining natural areas. On January 10, 2017, the Federation filed its Amended Complaint against the Florida Legislature, Florida Senate and House leaders and state agencies, specifically, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, the Department of Agricultural and Consumer Services, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission and the Department of State. We assert that the Legislature misappropriated Water and Land Legacy funding and that the state agencies unconstitutionally expended these funds. From a thorough review of the state budget, our Complaint cites over $300 million that we believe has been illegally spent from the Land Acquisition Trust Fund. This money was used for activities not allowed within the confines of the language of the Constitutional provision voters approved.

While all legal actions take time and resources, this effort is well worth it. When three out of four Floridians voted to dedicate funds to sustain our state in the face of the loss of conservation lands, and our elected representatives do not act accordingly, the people must take action. As Florida continues to be paved over and as our aquifer recharge areas and wetlands are lost, what will we leave our children and grandchildren - a hot New Jersey?

The 2017 Legislative Session officially begins on March 7, 2017, but committee meetings are already being held. Please let the Governor, your state Representative and your State Senator know that the money generated from 2014’s Amendment 1 vote should be used to fully fund the Florida Forever program and aid efforts to clean our waters. That is the will of the people.

Go to www.myfloridahouse.gov and www.myfloridahouse.gov to find your legislator.

PS - Update: The Florida Legislature recently invoked statutory law to hold our Amendment 1 litigation in abeyance until the 2017 Legislative Session has concluded.

LEGISLATIVE from page 1

was home to one million residents. We are now at 21 million and growing. To keep a high quality of life, we must preserve our remaining open space, water resources and wildlife habitats. In 2014, 75% of Floridians supported setting aside dedicated funding for land and water protection. By the use of targeted land purchases and the wider use of perpetual conservation easements, we can ensure that future Floridians may enjoy the real Florida and its natural wonders.

2. Everglades Restoration: The Federation supports the concept put forward by Senate President Joe Negron to create a reservoir south of Lake Okeechobee so that excess water from the Lake may be cleaned and sent south to rehydrate the Everglades. The result would be the mitigation of pollution of the Indian River Lagoon and the Caloosahatchee River, and the assurance of water to the Biscayne Aquifer, which one-third of Floridians rely upon. THE BILLS TO SUPPORT ARE SENATE BILL 10 AND HOUSE BILL 761.

3. Ban on Fracking (Hydraulic fracturing): The Federation supports a ban on fracking in Florida. Fracking, otherwise known as well stimulation treatments for exploration or production of oil or natural gas, entails a process heavy in the use of freshwater and carcinogenic chemicals and threatens protected wildlife species. Moreover, the risk to our precious water supply is too great to allow this activity. Bills to ban fracking are Senate Bill 442 and House Bill 451.

4. Flood Mitigation Incentives: The Federation supports measures to incentivize local governments which proactively mitigate the community impacts experienced by increased flooding. More specifically, the Federation advocates for increased participation in the Community Rating Systems program and adaption plans focused on restoring low lying flood prone areas to serve as natural buffers and wildlife habitat.
Everglades Restoration

There are many reasons to support Senate President Joe Negron’s proposal to spend as much as $100 million acquiring a reservoir south of Lake Okeechobee. The best science available, from multiple sources both in and outside government agencies, tells us that acquiring land for a new reservoir south of the Lake has the greatest near-term impact on reducing runoff into our estuaries. It is these surges of water, resulting in unnatural levels of salinity, that lead to the algae blooms that create a sea of green muck where we once had beautiful blue-green water and bountiful sea grasses. Sales data offered by the Florida Realtors Association points to at least a billion-dollar loss in real estate values. Family physicians regularly ask their patients if they have had any contact with local water bodies when treating any respiratory or skin ailments. Tourism suffers and outdoor recreation based businesses are closing and these are just the human impacts.

We are seeing a devastating loss of sea grass beds along the Florida Bay. With the disappearance of these nurseries comes the loss of fish and wildlife habitat. At a recent senate appropriations committee meeting, witness after witness reported the fact that where they once saw abundant sea grasses there are now barren wastelands. They report that this is occurring because the water bodies are not functioning properly due to water that ultimately feeds into the Indian River Lagoon. Any fix requires multiple points of attack and will cost millions and millions of dollars. The argument put before policymakers has always been how to prioritize projects and how to pay for it all. Legislators of lobbyists have been hired to make the case for building the reservoir or staying with the original Comprehensive Everglades Plan (CERP) or, most sadly, to block anything from happening at all. FWF supports Senator Negron’s bill for a reservoir south of the lake. We think it has the best shot for saving our unique and fragile Everglades.

Are there pitfalls? You bet!! At that same committee meeting several people spoke in opposition to the Negron Plan. The argument was and fears were raised that a reservoir south of the lake would lead to the closure of another sugar mill, placing the livelihoods of residents in the small mill towns around the lake in jeopardy. Racial overtones and environmental justice are front and center in this debate regardless of the fact that pollution knows no color or party affiliation. This is high stakes capitalism at its worst. Poor versus rich, white privilege versus poor and minority. In a world devoid of socio-economic differences people living around Lake O, who depend upon sugar crops for a job, would realize that mechanization is much more likely to threaten their income than it is fixing the environmental problem that sickens their children. They would not have to choose between a paycheck and a healthy environment. Their employers would seek retraining dollars, educators would offer career training for a generation that knows the writing is on the wall and that a future in Belle Glade, Pahokee or Clewiston will not be built solely on sugar. But policymakers don’t get to make decisions in such a vacuum. And advocates have to make choices: none of them simple and none without tradeoffs. We are almost always faced with a choice that comes at a cost and with little assurance that everything will work out exactly as we want. With the exception of resolutions honoring Mother’s Day or beauty queens, our legislators rarely get to take votes that have a clear “win-win.”

There are those in the Legislature and even among our community who will argue that spending upwards of $100 million dollars on the south reservoir solution means other much needed projects will suffer. This makes me as a glass half-empty argument. For years and despite the voter’s will, the Florida Legislature has done little in the way of supporting land acquisition. At last we have a presiding officer anxious to see Florida Forever spending at levels that can have an impact. If approved by both chambers and signed into law by the Governor, we will have the precedent of bonded funding at levels that begin to approach historic levels. FWF will continue to fight for higher levels of spending for conservation land acquisition, spread as evenly across the state as policymakers and willing sellers will permit. However, today the question is - can we support a much higher level of spending focused on the Everglades? The answer is a resounding yes! To do otherwise threatens the loss of further sea grass beds and wildlife habitat in South Florida. To say no to this proposal jeopardizes both a tourism and real estate economy worth billions of dollars. Before the 2017 Legislature we will have one of the great policy debates of this decade. Let your policymakers know how you feel and please let us know how we can assist you in making sure your voice is heard.

New Wildlife Legacy Club Member:
Robert E. Murtagh, Juno Beach

New Eagle Club Member:
Brenda Ware, Temple Terrace

New Life Members:
Howard Patton, Gainesville
Senator Jack Latvala, Clearwater
Scott Zarecki, West Palm Beach
Kathryn Duncan, Port St. Lucie
Lloyd Schiller, Jupiter
Thea M. Hein-Mathen, Bushnell
Arthur Choate, Coral Gables

Thank you for your generous support!

*Legacy Club Members are those who have donated $5,000 or more in a single gift.
Eagle Club Members are $2,500 donors and Life Members are $1,000 donors.
**FWF Celebrates Arbor Day with the Trees for Wildlife Program**

The Florida Wildlife Federation partnered again this winter with the Iris Garden Club (IGC) of Wakulla County and the National Wildlife Federation to give away close to 1,000 young trees in Crawfordville, a small town south of Tallahassee. On January 21, at the IGC’s Annual Arbor Day Celebration and Tree Giveaway, nearly 500 people came to a downtown park to choose a tree to take home and plant in their yards. Everyone was allowed to take home one free tree in a pot, and then pay a requested $4 donation for each additional tree. The contributions will be used toward next year’s event. The Florida Forest Service also distributed 1,000 Longleaf Pine seedlings.

“NWF’s Trees for Wildlife Program aspires to educate youth about the role of trees in our environment, how individuals can take action to plant trees and provides stewardship for sustaining locally,” explained Luisa Grant, Community Programs Senior Coordinator for the National Wildlife Federation. “Trees for Wildlife also teaches the unique connection wildlife have with trees.”

This year’s National Wildlife Federation grant enabled the IGC to continue to increase the amount of trees given away at the festival. Tree seedlings donated by NWF included Southern Red Oak, River Birch, Buttonbush, Redbud, Mockernut Hickory and Parsley Hawthorne. The garden club’s free trees were Live Oak, Dogwood, Bald Cypress, Redbud, Crabapple, Ogeechee Tupelo, Hop tree, Black Walnut, Arrowwood, Post Oak, Tulip Tree and Chinquapin. All the seedlings were bought from a Florida native plant wholesale nursery and planted in one-gallon pots with potting soil by volunteers of the Iris Garden Club and local school children.

“We were delighted to see so many young children take home trees to plant,” said Jeannie Brodhead, one of the event’s coordinators. “I hope these trees will help to replace some of the trees we lost during Hurricane Hermine,” said Lynn Artz, the other event coordinator. “We’ve already ordered the 1,100 trees that we will give away next year,” said Connie Kolias, Iris Garden Club President. “We will start putting them into pots soon.”

The Tree Giveaway was organized by the Iris Garden Club of Wakulla County. FWF assisted with fulfillment of the NWF grant, publicity, and participated in the January 21 tree giveaway.

If your garden club or school is interested in the Trees for Wildlife Program, please contact Claudia Farren, Florida Wildlife Federation at (850) 656-7113, claudia@fwfonline.org.

**Remembering the Federation**

If you wish to name Florida Wildlife Federation in your will or estate plan, please use the following language:

The Florida Wildlife Federation, a nonprofit cooperation, organized and existing under the laws of the State of Florida, with principal business address of PO Box 6870, Tallahassee, FL 32314-6870.

Our federal tax identification number is 59-1398265.

**Help Us Plan**

If your plans already include a gift for Florida Wildlife Federation, please let us know. We will honor all requests for anonymity, and you can always modify your gift if your circumstances change. For more information please contact Tim Bachmeyer, FWF Development Consultant, at 561-801-5752 or Diane Hines at 850-656-7113.

More photos of the 2017 and 2016 tree giveaways are at: https://goo.gl/EE66u5

Left: The Trees for Wildlife Program strives to teach kids and their parents about the life cycle of a tree from seed to seedling to mature tree to snag to decaying log, and how wildlife benefit from all these stages of life.

Right: By planting trees, children and their families can help to ensure that wildlife thrive for many years to come.

At the IGC’s 13th Annual Arbor Day Celebration and Tree Giveaway hundreds of families came to a downtown park to choose a tree to take home and plant in their yards. The Florida Wildlife Federation recently partnered with the Iris Garden Club of Wakulla County and the National Wildlife Federation to give away 2,000 trees on January 21, 2017.
FWF is proud to be a co-sponsor for the 4th Annual Heroes Inshore Slam Fishing Tournament

When: May 27, 2017
REDFISH, SNOOK & TROUT

Captain’s Meeting: Port Sanibel Marina
Weigh In: Port Sanibel Marina
Tournament: Safe Light - 4 pm, Check in: 2-4 pm
TOURNAMENT LOCATION – SW Florida …
Launch Anywhere …

Phone: (239) 297-3663 or (813) 471-7234
E-Mail: info@heroesinshoreslam.com

Learn More and Registration:
www.heroesinshoreslam.com

Instagram: howSWFL  Twitter: @southwestflhow
Facebook: @swflhowis

All of the proceeds are donated to Heroes on the Water.

Heroes on the Water helps our Nation’s warriors and veterans from all branches of the United States military unwind using the therapeutic qualities of fishing from kayaks. What looks like a day trip of paddling and fishing is in fact something much deeper and long lasting.

Founded in 2007, the unique kayak fishing program allows the participants a chance to decompress from the stresses associated with combat and the physical rigors of rehabilitation. Warriors enjoy these benefits while on guided fishing trips held in local communities around the country.

Adaptive kayaks, kayaking accessories, and angling equipment is offered on an as needed basis to accommodate a soldier’s particular needs.

FWF is pleased to be in partnership with the SW Florida Chapter of Heroes on the Water. If you are interested in volunteering to assist with this event, which takes place over Memorial Day Weekend in the Fort Myers area, please contact Diane Hines at 850-656-7113 or dhines@fwfonline.org.

Amazon Smile
You Shop. Amazon Gives.

Amazon will donate 0.5% of the price of your eligible AmazonSmile purchases to Florida Wildlife Federation whenever you shop on AmazonSmile.

When you Start With a Smile, we can facilitate Wildlife Crossings statewide which protect wildlife and humans.
Visit https://smile.amazon.com/ch/59-1398265 to sign up!

Amazon.com®
Smile
You shop. Amazon gives.
Congratulations to those members of FWF who earned GreenStar Certification!

The Federation began its GreenStar Certification program to acknowledge our members’ personal commitments to a clean and healthy environment through the use of environmentally beneficial practices in their daily lives. We truly appreciate all those who responded and requested GreenStar Certification. The program is still up and running on our website, www.fwfonline.org. Go to PROGRAMS on the main menu at the top, and you’ll find GreenStar Certification on the drop down menu. From there you will be taken to the online GreenStar Questionnaire.

New Green Star Members
Vickie and Stuart Carver, Lutz
Mary Beth Ridderman, Jacksonville
Think Vertical!
Pat Pearson
Habitats Coordinator

There are many reasons to consider a new and different way of gardening. Perhaps you are an apartment-dweller with only a balcony, or a renter without access to any growing space. Maybe you are not as young as you used to be, or are physically handicapped and unable to take care of a large garden, but would still like to grow veggies and/or some flowers. Whatever the reason you can’t go into a garden … you need a garden that comes to you.

There is a surprising amount of interest in and many sources of information about how to grow a vertical garden, and many new products on the market to help. An hour to google “vertical gardening” on the internet, and a visit to Home Depot or Lowe’s or to your local gardening center to see what products are available should give you enough encouragement to make a start. Home Depot actually runs an instructional course at their stores to teach about the subject. As with anything new, it would probably be wise to start on a small scale, just to test things out. See the photos below for some ideas. I think most of the towers of pots pictured would benefit from being put together with lengths of rebar threaded through their drainage holes to keep the pots from shifting sideways. There are many sources on the internet and in magazines for ways to put many pots together to give you much more space to plant in.

Spring is coming soon, and I am afflicted with the long-time gardener’s need to plant something. I’m starting to plan out a way to get some new plants concentrated nearer to the steps to my deck, and forget spreading them out all over the yard as I usually do. It will be easier to water and to care for them that way. Flowering shrubs such as hydrangeas and azaleas and butterfly bushes already grow in beds around the edges of my yard and will still give me enough color out there to keep me happy, and since I will have to pass by the new plants every day when I go out I won’t forget to water a tomato plant or two when they show signs of needing it.

I hope I’ll soon be saying “HEL-LO” to a new “Tower of Flowers”, and small clay pots of box basil, chives, parsley, rosemary, thyme, and maybe even strawberries, all lined up neatly and hooked onto a simple wooden frame and attached to my sunny wall like a trellis!

Happy Gardening!

FLORIDA KIDS’ QUIZ
by Pat Pearson

1. Why are the states of Florida and Georgia fighting about the Apalachicola River that flows into the Gulf of Mexico?

2. What is some good news about the number of birds that are killed by flying into communication towers?

3. What color is the Florida State butterfly?

See page 14 for answers, and more information.
Call For Director Nominations

If you are interested in serving as a director of the Florida Wildlife Federation during the September 2017 to September 2018 term, or if you wish to nominate someone to fill one of these positions, please write to the Florida Wildlife Federation Nominating Committee, P.O. Box 6870, Tallahassee, FL 32314-6870; FAX (850) 942-4431.

Nominations must be submitted by

Northwest Region
District I
Escambia, Santa Rosa, Walton, Holmes, Bay, Okaloosa, Washington

District II
Jackson, Calhoun, Gulf, Franklin, Liberty, Gadsden, Leon, Wakulla, Jefferson

Northeast Region
District III
Madison, Taylor, Hamilton, Suwannee, Lafayette, Dixie, Columbia, Union, Bradford, Gilcrest, Alachua

District IV
Baker, Nassau, Duval, Clay, St. Johns, Putman, Flagler, Volusia

Central Region
District V
Marion, Lake, Seminole, Orange, Osceola, Polk, Brevard, Indian River, Sumter

District VI
Citrus, Hernando, Pasco, Hillsborough, Pinellas, Levy

Southern Region
District VII
Manatee, Sarasota, Charlotte, Hardee, DeSoto, Highlands, Glades, Okeechobee, St. Lucie, Martin, Palm Beach, Lee

District VIII
Hendry, Collier, Broward, Dade, Monroe

What’s happened to Big Bend Wildlife Sanctuary Since Betsy Knight passed away?

by Terry Morse

Big Bend Wildlife Sanctuary Inc. (BBWS) was founded by Betsy Knight in Blountstown, FL in 1988. Betsy was a real pioneer with a great love for the area’s native wildlife. In 2006, my husband, John, and I signed on as volunteers at BBWS and Betsy became our mentor. Betsy was in her 70s and it was becoming more difficult for her to do some things, so eventually she asked us to take over BBWS. At the time, we couldn’t assume such a big responsibility, but we stayed to help Betsy and learn from her experience until her death in February of 2012. She hoped that BBWS would continue to do great things for wildlife and we decided to make that happen. Since the property in Altha, Florida, was willed to Betsy’s son, we moved BBWS from that location to Alabama because of the need for wildlife rehabilitators in Alabama, (there were only 19 in the entire state at that time) and so I could be closer to my family.

Although we knew Alabama had only a few rehabbers, we had no idea what an impact moving the sanctuary there would have. The first year (2012) BBWS took in 150 animals and rehabilitated them at our home in Enterprise, AL. It wasn’t until 2013 that the sanctuary was actually up and running at its current location in Level Plains, AL. That year BBWS took in about 400 animals; the next year it was more than 800; and now it is more than 1,000 animals each year. Obviously, there was a huge need for these services in the Alabama wiregrass area. BBWS is currently the only facility in Alabama that has permits to take in all native wildlife species (birds, mammals and reptiles), and one of only five facilities that is permitted to take in Rabbies Vector Species (RVS) such as raccoons, bats, skunks, foxes, and coyotes.

The relocated BBWS carries on Betsy’s legacy by taking in orphaned and injured wildlife and giving them a second chance to live free in the wild. BBWS encourages the public to bring in injured animals to receive appropriate care, and also provides education programs to inform the public about wildlife native to Alabama and surrounding areas, and how they can help ensure their survival. We work hard to replace old stereotypes about wildlife by using our “education animals” in public outreach to provide information about specific species and to tell their stories about why these animals can’t be released in the wild. Alabama needs to expand the availability of educational programming that focuses on developing an appreciation for wildlife and a better understanding of their role in Alabama’s various ecosystems.

To that end, John and I both belong to the Alabama Wildlife Alliance, an organization that wants to increase the public’s appreciation of the state’s native wildlife, improve the care of injured or orphaned wildlife, and mentor current and future wildlife rehabilitators.

When it was located in Florida, BBWS was the first sanctuary that was allowed to take in the Florida black bear for rehabilitation with the plan for release back to the wild. At one time it was thought that such rehabilitation could not be done. However, under Betsy’s direction, BBWS was successful with 45 bears (injured juveniles, adults and orphaned cubs) over the years and rehabilitated them until they could be released. Out of those 45 bears, only two had to be recaptured and placed in a permanent facility because they got too close to humans. We hope to develop the same program here in Alabama. There aren’t many bears in southern Alabama but, since their numbers have increased in Florida, they are searching for more territory to the north and are slowly moving into Alabama and Georgia. There have been two bears in the Alabama wiregrass area over the last five years that were both killed by vehicle collisions. BBWS couldn’t help those bears, but with the experience that we gained while working with Betsy at BBWS in Florida, John and I hope to help other bears in Alabama get a second chance for a life in the wild.

For those of you who knew Betsy Knight and Big Bend Wildlife Sanctuary, you probably remember our education eagles, Agena and Olaha. These eagles are still teaching Floridians and visitors about wildlife and conservation at the E.O. Wilson Biophilia Center in Freeport, Florida. They were moved there before Betsy died. Mr. M. C. Davis had helped BBWS in many ways and it seemed appropriate that the eagles should be given to him for his education programs. Mr. Davis has also passed away now, but the eagles continue his legacy at the Biophilia Center, just as we’re trying to continue Betsy’s legacy at Big Bend Wildlife Sanctuary. We hope she would be proud of the work we’re doing at BBWS.

You can find out more about BBWS on our webpage (www.bigbendwildlife.org) and our Facebook page is (www.facebook.com/Wildlife2ndChances).

*Editor’s Note - Betsy Knight served on the FWF Board of Directors for 10 years and was a wildlife rehabilitator in Florida for over 40 years.
Monarch Butterfly Update

Claudia Farren
Education Consultant

Monarchs need our help more than ever. In March of 2016 a severe snowstorm with heavy rain and strong winds in the Oyamel fir forests in central Mexico’s Transvolcanic Belt killed from 3 to 50 percent of some colonies. The butterflies continue to face other threats in their winter home including illegal deforestation, salvage logging of downed trees, and a new mining operation that could dry up springs vital for the fir trees and pollute the butterfly’s water sources. Here in the United States, farming practices have changed which no longer help the species migrate from Mexico to Canada and back.

Eastern migratory monarchs that spend the months of late October to early March in Mexico come mainly from the United States and southern Canada east of the Rocky Mountains. In late summer and fall, Florida is an important migration flyway for monarch butterflies headed to Mexico. Parts of South Florida and the Panhandle coast have year-round populations. As climate warming continues, more butterflies are expected to stay in Florida for the winter. If the Mexican population continues to decline, Florida monarchs will be even more important to the survival of the species.

Monarch Nectar Plants Florida

*Florida nectar plants for monarch butterflies to add to your garden*

Monarch butterflies need more than milkweed to sustain them throughout their lives. They also require native nectar plants for nourishment and fuel for breeding and during migration.

Click [here](https://goo.gl/McQz61) to see an excellent guide to Monarch butterfly nectar plants specific to Florida. Common and scientific names, photos, bloom times, flower color and water needs are included. These 23 plants have been chosen because they are known to be hardy and are commercially available.

Here is the link: [https://goo.gl/McQz61](https://goo.gl/McQz61)

Conservation Calendar

**March 7, 2017**
Florida Legislative Session begins

**April 4, 2017**
Everglades Action Day
Tallahassee
info@evergladescoalition.org

**April 19-20, 2017**
FWC Commission Meeting
Tallahassee
www.MyFWC.com/Commission

**April 21-22, 2017**
FWF Awards Banquet & Meeting
Wyndham Grand Jupiter
at Harbourside Place
dhines@fwfonline.org

**Friday, April 21**
Conservation Awards Banquet

**Saturday, April 22**
Board/House of Delegates Meeting
www.wyndhamgrandjupiter.com

**July 10-11, 2017**
FWC Commission Meeting
Gainesville
www.MyFWC.com

**September 22-23, 2017**
FWF Board of Directors Annual Business Meeting
dhines@fwfonline.org
Florida Wildlife Federation asks:

Do you want to make sure that your children and grandchildren have a healthy environment and can enjoy quality outdoor recreation in Florida?

Do you want to ensure our lands and waters are conserved and available for resource-based public recreation?

If you agree that we must protect the future of well managed outdoor recreation by acquiring public conservation lands, encouraging private-lands conservation, and restoring habitats and populations of fish and wildlife through sound management, then we would like you to become a member of the Florida Wildlife Federation.

By joining with us, you will become part of a dynamic, statewide organization with the goal of conserving Florida’s fish, wildlife, water and plant life in the face of rapid loss of habitat statewide. It is only with the financial support of our members that we may continue to pursue these goals. Please join or donate today!

We need your support to conserve Florida’s wildlife and habitat for today and the future!

Don’t forget about a gift membership!

Yes! I want to join the Florida Wildlife Federation to conserve, protect, and restore Florida’s natural treasures such as springs and water bodies, fish & wildlife habitats, and to enhance the public’s enjoyment of resource-based, outdoor recreation in Florida. With your membership you will receive the FFWN publication, Florida Fish and Wildlife News (FFWN) by mail or email (please select your choice below).

请选择支付方式：
- [ ] Student............. $15
- [ ] Associate............ $35
- [ ] Family.................. $50
- [ ] Sustaining............. $100
- [ ] Sponsor.................. $250
- [ ] Wildlife Steward........ $500
- [ ] Life Member.......... $1,000
- [ ] Eagle Club Member... $2,500
- [ ] Wildlife Legacy Club... $5,000

Enclosed is my payment for $__________
Please charge my payment to: [ ] Visa [ ] MasterCard [ ] American Express [ ] Discover
Card # _____________ Exp. Date ______
Signature ___________ Sec. Code ______
Name _______________________________
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Phone _______________________________
Email _______________________________

Please send me my FFWN by ____ Mail ____ E-mail ____
Please add me to your list to receive occasional e-mail updates.

This is a gift membership from: ______________________________

Florida Fish and Wildlife News • February 2017 • Keeping the Wild in Florida Since 1936!
Spectacular Scenery and Exciting Fishing Adventures Await the Winner of Florida Wildlife Federation’s 5th Annual “Fish or Cruise” Sweepstakes

The Florida Wildlife Federation is pleased to announce the 5th Annual “Fish or Cruise” Sweepstakes which started in January. Here’s your chance to win a Fantastic Travel Prize: A Costco Travel Cruise in the Caribbean (you select the cruise you want), OR a Fishing Trip at Sitka Point Lodge in southeastern Alaska, OR you may decide to take the $10,000 cash prize ...

Your choice!

The drawing will be held at the FWF offices on Thursday, June 22, 2017.

To enter the “Fish or Cruise” Sweepstakes or for more information visit www.fwfonline.org and click on any of the icons for the Sweepstakes located throughout the site, including the Sweepstakes navigation at the top of every page. Then click on “Fish or Cruise” Sweepstakes.

Ticket contributions are $5 each, or 6 tickets for $25. You can also order 15 tickets for $50 or 35 tickets for $100.

As the state’s population continues to grow, paying critical attention to our remaining natural resources is more important than ever. Since our founding in 1936, the Florida Wildlife Federation has grown in membership and resources, enduring ups and downs, victories and losses. Like many other non-profit organizations, we rely upon the good will of our supporters and donors to keep the doors open.

If you believe, as we do, that all citizens and visitors benefit from a clean, healthy and productive environment, and that our state’s future will be brighter with natural habitats intact and flourishing, please support the Florida Wildlife Federation by participating in the 2017 “Fish or Cruise” Sweepstakes!

Congratulations to the winner of the 26th Annual Boating Sweepstakes. Florida Wildlife Federation’s sweepstakes helped raise funds to pursue vital wildlife and fish programs that ensure that we all continue to enjoy Florida’s wondrous outdoors.

2016 Boating Sweepstakes Winner

Claudia Farren, Sweepstakes Coordinator, with Stephen Roeder, CPA at Carroll and Company, who pulled the Grand Prize Boating Sweepstakes ticket at Federation Headquarters in December.

Jeff Haynes, of Largo, winner of the 26th Annual Boating Sweepstakes, accepting his Grand Prize certificate from Ann Yanek-Dasovich, former FWF director in District VI.

FWF’s 26th Annual Boating Sweepstakes Drawing was held on December 15, 2016 at 3 pm at Federation Headquarters. The drawing was supervised by Carroll and Co., Inc., Certified PublicAccountants. Attending the drawing were: (from the left) Sarah Gledhill, FWF Planning Director; Officer John Beeman, Tallahassee Police Department; Danny Gwynn-Shapiro, Florida Fish and Wildlife News Producer and Editor; Diane Hines, Vice President of Administration; Tessa Kleck, Administrative Assistant; Claudia Farren, Sweepstakes Coordinator; Mattie Robertson, former FWF Staff; Preston Robertson, VP for Conservation and General Counsel; Michelle Forman, Executive Administrative Assistant; and Stephen Roeder, CPA, Carroll and Company.

We cordially invite you to attend the Florida Wildlife Federation’s 80th Annual Conservation Awards Banquet and Silent Auction Fundraiser. This year’s banquet events are being held at the Wyndham Grand Jupiter Hotel. The evening events include a delicious dinner, the awards ceremony and our famous Silent Auction as well as an art exhibit by Peter R. Gerbert. You don’t want to miss this opportunity to meet the 2017 Conservation Award Winners and to bid on items including fine art, trips and amusement park tickets from the Silent Auction fundraiser. I sincerely hope to see you in Jupiter for the 80th Annual Conservation Awards Banquet.

Yours in conservation,

Manley

Friday, April 21st

5:30 pm
Cocktail Reception + Silent Auction
Preserve A + B Ballroom Prefunction Area
Hors d’oeuvres & Cash Bar
Silent Auction and Art Exhibit
Featuring: Peter R. Gerbert

7:00 pm
FWF’s 80th Annual Conservation Awards Banquet
Preserve A + B Ballroom
Dinner & Presentation of Awards
($100 per person)

Wyndham Grand Jupiter ~ Luxury Waterfront Hotel

Enjoy a sense of laid back luxury at the Wyndham Grand Jupiter at Harbourside Place, which is nestled on the bank of Jupiter’s Intracoastal Waterway. Located within Harbourside Place, the Wyndham Grand Jupiter is surrounded by unique dining, shopping, and entertainment. The Wyndham Grand Jupiter offers luxuriously appointed guestrooms and suites, in addition to an exquisite lobby lounge, pool bar and gym. The Palm Beach International Airport is just 17 miles away.

To make your room reservations, call 1-800-996-3426. Request the Wyndham Grand Hotel in Jupiter, Florida. Identify yourself with the “FWF Awards Banquet group,” or just “FWF” to receive the group rate of $169.00 per night. The cut-off date to receive this rate is March 29th. Availability and room rate not guaranteed after March 29th.

Daily $12 Hotel service fees waived for this group. Overnight self-parking rate is $8 per night. Complimentary guest room services include internet access and use of the Fitness Center, the pool and lobby lounge.

For the past twenty years, wildlife artist Peter R. Gerbert and the Florida Wildlife Federation have developed a fine relationship, helping each other in many ways. Peter’s artwork has enhanced our Awards Banquet each year with a tasteful exhibit of his outstanding wildlife art work. This year you can meet Peter by attending the April 21st Conservation Awards Banquet. You will have the opportunity to view and purchase works of art which he will have on display for the evening.

Registration Form For Banquet and Silent Auction

Please reserve your banquet tickets no later than April 10th!

Attn. Diane Hines, Florida Wildlife Federation
P.O. Box 6870, Tallahassee, FL 32314-6870
Questions? Email: dhillen@fwfonline.org

Friday, April 21st — 80th Annual Conservation Awards Banquet — Wyndham Grand Jupiter, $100.00 per person. Enclosed is $________ for ______ people for the Banquet. Event Includes Cocktail Reception, Cash Bar, Awards Banquet and Silent Auction. Special Dietary Requests must be noted in advance:

Please enter the names of all persons attending with you:

Total amount: $________

Checks payable to Florida Wildlife Federation

You may also register online at www.FWFawards2017.eventbrite.com

Name:__________________________________________
Address:_________________________________________
City, State, Zip:_______________________________
Discover, AMEX, VISA, MC #:____________________
Exp. Date:_________ Security Code:_________ Total charged:____________________
Signature:________________________ Phone #:________________________
Email:________________________________________