

MEETING SUMMARY
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
FRIENDS OF FLORIDA STATE FORESTS, INC.
SEPTEMBER 14, 2022
CONFERENCE CALL VIA ZOOM
TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA

NOTE: This is a summary of the meeting, not an actual transcript of the meeting. This meeting was advertised in the Florida Administrative Register.

Agenda Items

1. Welcome & Introductions

Mr. Albury welcomed the Board of Directors and called the meeting to order at 10:00 A.M. All Board Members and guests present introduced themselves, both in person and on the Zoom call.

2. Quorum Check

Members Present in Person or on Conference Call Line:

President Erin Albury
Charlie Kemp
Charles Maynard
Amy Morie
Chris Reed
Dr. Morgan Varner

Absent:

Joe Fritz
David Hunt

FSSF Program Staff:

Bin Wan, Program Coordinator
Vanessa Smart, Program Fiscal Coordinator

Guests:

Johnny Sabo, Florida Forest Service Assistant Director
Jimmy Roberts, Forest Management Bureau Chief
Brian Camposano, Forest Management Assistant Bureau Chief
Keith Rowell, Land Programs Administrator
Bill Vander May, Senior VP-Operations, Kitson & Partners

3. Approval of January 25, 2022 Minutes

On a motion duly made by Morgan Varner and seconded by Amy Morie, it was unanimously voted to approve the January 25, 2022 minutes (summary) after a minor correction.

4. President's Report

Mr. Albury briefed members that after nearly two years working from home during the COVID-19 pandemic, Florida Forest Service has returned to the Conner Building resuming business as usual since July 2022.

a) Marketing Campaign for State Forest Recreation

Recreation in Florida State Forests has been growing significantly since the introduction of the Reserve America reservation system in 2017. The COVID-19 pandemic has led to increased State Forest visitation, as well as recreation revenue (exceeded \$2 million in FY20-21 and FY21-22). The Florida Forest Service has entered into a contractual services agreement with BowStern, a Tallahassee-based marketing communication firm, to promote state-wide outdoor recreation in Florida State Forests.

b) Operation Outdoor Freedom (OOF) Staffing Updates

When OOF was created in 2009, it mainly focused on the southern parts of the state (Florida Forest Service Region 3) with State Program Coordinators David Hunt and Randy Ross overseeing the program. OOF restructured and expanded to northern parts of the state (Florida Forest Service Region 1 and 2) after its initial success. To date, OOF has hosted more than 700 events and served more than 4000 wounded veterans since its inception. During the COVID-19 pandemic, due to safety and exposure concerns, OOF scaled back the program but still hosted 62 events and served 124 wounded veterans with quality experience.

Currently David Hunt, OOF State Program Coordinator, covers Florida Forest Service Region 3 and 4; Danny Caraway, OOF State Program Coordinator, covers Florida Forest Service Region 1 and 2 after Randy Ross retired two months ago.

c) Carbon Sequestration Program Overview

Under Florida Legislative's request, the Florida Forest Service established the Carbon Sequestration Program (tree planting program) promptly with initial funding of \$2 million in FY21-22 and funded 98 tree planting projects from 167 applicants state-wide. For FY22-23, this program was funded at \$8 million. By August 2022, the program had received more than 250 applications equivalent to about \$6 million of funding. The program will consider promoting a second round of applications to reach the \$8 million goal, which in turn is equivalent to 17,000 acres tree planting.

5. Board Action

a) On a motion duly made by Amy Morie and seconded by Erin Albury, it was unanimously voted to approve the authorization to execute a Corrective Deed and related documents to convey 0.122 acres to Elbert A. Barnes and Bertie Hollinhead.

b) On a motion duly made by Chris Reed and seconded by Morgan Varner, it was unanimously voted to approve the authorization to execute a Deed and related documents to convey 4.741 acres to the Board of Trustees of the Internal Improvement Trust Fund.

6. FFSF Budget Report

a) Jimmy Roberts summarized the FFSF FY 2021-22 income and Brian Camposano summarized FFSF FY 2021-22 expenses and showed the results of FFSF FY 2021-22 Budget Audit, which had not found any problems or issues.

b) Brian Camposano discussed the Proposed FFSF FY 2022-23 Budget and emphasized that the budget operates on a thin margin, which might require more funding from interest income.

c) Brian Camposano showed the new FFSF website that soon will replace the old site with new advanced and improved security features while keeping the same functionalities and features from the old site.

On a motion duly made by Charles Maynard and seconded by Morgan Varner, it was unanimously voted to approve the FFSF FY 2022-23 Budget.

7. New Business

a) Brian Camposano summarized last Board Meeting on Babcock Ranch Chapter. Brian also reminded the group that each unit within the Babcock Ranch Community will pay \$0.25/month (\$3.00/year) towards this group in the form of Property Owner Association fees. With thousands of units planned, this will be a steady revenue source for the new chapter.

b) Open Discussion

Regarding to the old FFSF website, Charlie Kemp suggested that it was difficult to purchase an Annual Pass from the website. Brian Camposano responded that FFSF will work with the web developer to improve and make it easier for people to purchase Annual Passes from the FFSF website.

Charlie Kemp mentioned that Withlacoochee State Forest's TMA motorcycle area has experienced exponential growth of visitors in recent years. It even attracted people far away from Alabama. With so many Jeeps and 4x4s in the forest, the impacts to the forest and recreation conflicts with other forest users were very significant. Johnny Sabo responded that Florida Forest Service is actively working with other agencies such as FWC and DEP to reinforce rules and protect natural resources in the area. He again acknowledged that it is an issue and Florida Forest Service will address it.

8. Schedule Next Meeting/Adjourn

The board did not schedule the next board meeting; however, Brian Camposano will reach out to members in a poll for next meeting around the Fall 2023.

On a motion made by Morgan Varner and seconded by Erin Albury to adjourn the meeting, it was unanimously voted by the board to adjourn, as this was accomplished by Board President Mr. Albury at 11:03 A.M.

Summary of meeting provided by:

Bin Wan

Program Coordinator

Friends of Florida State Forests