



**Florida Department of Environmental Protection
CITIZEN SUPPORT ORGANIZATION
2022 LEGISLATIVE REPORT
(pursuant to Section 20.058 Florida Statutes)**

Citizen Support Organization (CSO) Name:

Mailing Address:

Telephone Number:

Website Address (*required if applicable*):

Check to confirm your Code of Ethics is posted conspicuously on your website.

Statutory Authority:

Section 20.2551, F.S., Citizen support organizations; use of property; audit; public records; partnerships. In summary, the statute specifies the organizational requirements, operational parameters, duties of a CSO to support the Department of Environmental Protection (Department), or individual units of the Department, use of Department property, audit requirements, public records requirements, and authorizes public-private partnerships to enhance lands managed by the Department.

Section 20.058, F.S., Citizen support and direct-support organizations. In summary, the statute specifies the organizational requirements to submit an annual report each year for each designated CSO and to post that information on the Departments website.

YOUR MISSION AND LAST CALENDAR YEAR'S PROGRAM ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

CSO's Mission: (Consistent with your Articles and Bylaws)

Describe Last Calendar Year's Results Obtained: Brag! (List or discuss the past calendar year's accomplishments and contributions. Cite specific support from last calendar year's Annual Program Plan.)

Describe the CSO's Plans for the Next Three Calendar Years:

CSO's LAST CALENDAR YEAR STATISTICS:

Total Number of CSO General Membership:

Total Number of Board of Directors:

Total Volunteer Hours for the Board of Directors:

ORCP & CSO RELATIONSHIP:

Do not duplicate by describing accomplishments and contributions in the summary (Brag in the above Results Obtained). Below, describes the relationship.

Manager's Comments on the CSO & ORCP Relationship and Support:

Provide your perspective on

- Changing developments of the managed area provided by the CSO.
- Effectiveness of the organization in fulfilling their purpose to support the managed area(s).
- Effectiveness of the Board of Directors in completing their Annual Program Plan.
- The relationship between ORCP and CSO. What went well? Are there areas of improvement?

CSO President's Comments on the CSO & ORCP Relationship and Support:

Provide your perspective on the relationship between ORCP and CSO. What went well? Are there areas of improvement?

SUMMARIZE FINANCIAL ACTIVITY FOR LAST CALENDAR YEAR, DIRECT SUPPORT & REVENUES:

Program Service Expenses are costs related to providing your organization's programs or services in accordance with your mission. Describe and provide expenses that directly support the managed area(s). For established nonprofit organizations, program service expenses generally represent most of the overall expense of the organization. Provide description and total \$ for each that apply.

Building improvement, construction, or renovations	\$
Cultural resources (e.g., historic structure restoration/ renovation)	\$
Natural resources (e.g., native plants, natural lands restoration)	\$
Maintenance equipment (e.g., mowers, chippers, blowers, chainsaws)	\$
Other facilities and landscape maintenance	\$
Vehicles (e.g., trucks/cars, UTVs, golf carts, accessible devices, etc.)	\$
Amenities (e.g., water fountains, benches, picnic tables, recreational equipment, kiosks etc.)	\$
Employees or volunteers support (e.g., interns, training, uniforms, awards, or recognition)	\$
Big ticket visitor center exhibits or interpretation updates	\$

Exhibits, displays, signage \$
 Publications, brochures, maps, etc. \$
 Programing/interpretation support material purchases \$
 Other program services \$
Total Program Service Expenses \$

Visitor Services Revenue

Describe revenues and the sources generated from fundraising on managed area property.

Gift shops, craft stores, and concession sales \$
 Merchandise sales (e.g., plants, firewood, ice, t-shirts, hats, etc.) \$
 Programs and Special Events (e.g., fundraising workshops, seasonal events, concerts, etc.) \$
 Vending (e.g., drink machines, penny press, laundry, Wifi, etc.) \$
 Rentals (e.g., bikes, canoe, kayak, SUPs, etc.) \$
 Managed area donation boxes \$
 Other visitor services revenue \$
Total Visitor Services Revenue \$

NET ASSETS: \$

Organizations end of last year's Total Liabilities minus Total Assets. This is not the above's Visitor Service Revenue minus Program Service Expenses.

CSO AUDIT THRESHOLD:

Last Calendar Year's Total Expenses (including grants) \$

Are the CSO's annual total expenses \$300,000 including grants? Then Section 215.981(2), Florida Statute requires an independent CPA audit using Government Audit Standards ([U.S. GAO Yellow Book](#)). The audit is **due by September 1** (or 9 months after the CSO's calendar year ends) to the Florida Auditor General and to the Department.

This information is complete to the best of my knowledge pursuant to Section 20.058 Florida Statutes		
CSO President		
ORCP Manager		

CSO's Code of Ethics is attached

CSO has attached the most recent Internal Revenue Service (IRS) Form 990, 990-EZ, or 990-N receipt. All IRS Form 990's must be *complete* with Part III Program Service and *all* appropriate Schedules (A, O and others as appropriate). If filing an IRS extension, attach the IRS 8868 receipt and the most recent complete 990 and schedules.

Aquatic Preserve Society, Inc.
Annual Report for Calendar Year 2021

Business

The Aquatic Preserve Society, Inc (Society) held eleven teleconferences, including the annual meeting. The annual meeting is typically done in a day long, face to face meeting, but due to Covid, it was conducted via video conference. Teleconferences are typically one hour long and held on the fourth Wednesday of each month. Other video or teleconferences are held for sub-committee meetings as needed.

The Society managed twenty-eight public interest and other projects for ORCP and several aquatic preserve offices. Contributions for the year totaled \$128,825 and expenditures totaled \$203,504.

The two-year membership terms were completed for Board members Cain and Nall, and were reappointed.

Slate of Officers – President Kevin Claridge, Vice President Deborah Shelley and Treasurer Larry Nall were retained. The Secretary position is vacant but Deborah will perform those duties with help from others.

David Overstreet serves as ORCP liaison with the aquatic preserves citizens groups, including the Society.

Coordination with the Department of Environmental Protection

The Society works closely with its state agency partner, the Department of Environmental Protection, Office of Resilience and Coastal Protection (ORCP). ORCP regularly updates the Society on happenings within the department that may affect the Society.

Director Alex Reed provided an update about DEP staff continuing to work from home due to COVID and that DEP would continue to support the Society through video conferencing.

Senator Brodeur sponsored a Little Wekiva Restoration Bill to address sand deposition that has filled in parts of the river and the local community hopes the bill will be signed by Gov. Desantis.

The Legislature has yet to establish positions or funding for the recently designated Nature Coast Aquatic Preserve (NCAP). The Department is considering nominating the as a National Estuarine Research Reserve which would provide considerable funding. The Department has been in contact with the PEW Charitable Trust for potential startup funding.

David Overstreet informed the Society that the ORCP was moving to the DEP Bob Martinez Center and this may disrupt operations temporarily

The DEP Communications Office has approved the ORCP Citizens Support Organization Handbook. The Society will review the handbook as soon as received. The Society and the other CSOs will participate in editing the handbook. The intent is to keep the document dynamic, so it is more useful.

Nature Coast Aquatic Preserve (NCAP)

As the most recently designated aquatic preserve, the Society is very interested in seeing the office staffed and funded so that management of the site may begin.

Alex Reed reported that ORCP has initiated a contract with UF Sea Grant to hire staff and begin the management planning effort for the NCAP. The contract also includes funding to restart a water quality monitoring program previously managed through University of Florida. This twenty-year dataset was initiated in 1997. The new data will be added to the historic record and allow the team to track trends through time. The monitoring contract has also included benthic monitoring to characterize resources in the new AP. Funding has been provided by the DEP Office of Environmental Accountability and Transparency. Continued funding for FY2021-22 is anticipated to continue this effort.

Earl Pearson at ORCP reported that he will be overseeing this the management plan development process.

Board members, either Kevin Claridge and Larry Nall have attended the management plan development meetings.

PEW Charitable Trust Grant

Meetings between the Society, PEW and OCRP determined it would be most efficient to pass this \$100,000 grant through the Society. The grant will be used to buy boats and a vehicle for staff at the new aquatic preserve to use. The funds were to be disbursed in two \$50,000 payments. Kevin Claridge and Larry Nall worked closely with aquatic preserve staff Tim Jones and Kathy Smith, to select the required equipment, to get bids and to make these purchases. Kevin coordinated the grant and made the required narrative and financial reports.

Living Waters Photography Exhibit

Renowned Florida photographer Clyde Butcher, has gifted the Society with an exhibit of fine art black and white photographs of the aquatic preserves. The intent was to use the exhibit to educate the public about aquatic preserves and to raise funds to assist in their management.

Deborah Shelley and Terry Cain led a conversation about the needs and costs to maintain the exhibit. Cleaning, framing repair and new photo pouches were discussed. The Board approved funds not to exceed \$875 for cleaning and pouches.

The \$250 fee for use of the exhibit was also debated. While a use fee is essential to generate funds to maintain the exhibit, it is understood that many small locally based volunteer organizations may not have available funding. The Society Board has the authority to waive fee for worthy organizations that cannot afford it. The Board decided to address this on a case by case basis as requests are made.

Barbara Howell and Deborah Shelley reported the collection will be displayed at the Casselberry Art House June 3 to June 30, 2021.

Connie Dominianni reported the St. Lucie County Cultural Alliance was interested in exhibiting the collection at two venues. Irene Arpayoglou will coordinate and get back with the Society. Deborah will coordinate getting the exhibit from Casselberry to St. Lucie. The Alliance was able to pay the use fee.

Web Site Revisions

Marc Virgilio has been doing research on upgrading the website. To date the Society has depended on a Facebook page, which does not fully support our needs. Potential costs were discussed and Marc was authorized to register a domain name and to set up a Weebly account.

A basic format was worked out and populated with existing information from Facebook. The Society will begin collecting and posting photos and reports from the various projects funded. Setting up a mechanism to receive donations was discussed. A paypal button was added to the site. Dean and Larry tested the feature successfully during the meeting by making small donations. The feature can also be used to pay dues rather than bothering to write and post a check.

Check out the website at: aquaticpreservesociety.org

Aquatic Preserve Reports

ORCP Aquatic Preserve staff gave regular reports, including photo and video, on projects involving Society funding or of general interest.

Tampa Bay Aquatic Preserves Manager Randy Runnells gave regular updates on the status of activities in the aquatic preserve he manages.

The Society is funding the restoration of BC-21 an island in Tampa Bay. The island is heavily used by the public and is infested with exotic vegetation. The restoration project removed the exotics and replanted desirable native vegetation. Randy and aquatic preserve biologist, Sara Brehm, monitored the project gave regular reports of the status of the restoration as the exotics were removed, and native species were planted, and the restored sites were maintained. After one year of work, they signed off on completion of the project.

Equipment in poor condition, often hampered progress on this and other projects. Tampa Bay staff requested, and the Society funded, replacement of a of a truck, replacement of an outboard motor, and replacement of another boat and motor. The Society also provided a side scan sonar for mapping of benthic resources, as well as a camera and binoculars for monitoring of bird colonies.

The equipment enabled staff to monitor expansion activities at Port Manatee and to conduct emergency water quality sampling around the old Piney Point phosphate plant, which was near collapse at one point.

The Society also provided native plants for restoration of other areas within the aquatic preserves, by volunteer groups under the supervision of aquatic preserve staff.

Randy and Heather Stafford also provided updates on their efforts to establish a CSO group for the Tampa Bay Aquatic Preserves, to coordinate volunteer efforts, raise funds, and otherwise support resource management efforts within the Tampa Bay system.

Randy invited Society members to join the TBAP at the St. Pete Boat Show. The Society helped fund their educational display and the booth at the boat show.

Randy thanked Larry and the Society for their assistance with these projects.

Board member Dean Barber reported on the ongoing coordination between the Central Florida Aquatic Preserve Alliance and the City of DeBary for acquiring 170 acres on the St. John River Reach of the Wekiva River AP. The aquatic preserve seeks to relocate the office and in partnership with the Alliance, establish a Freshwater Research and Education Center on the site, while the city wants to develop a trail along the existing berm. Dean indicated he would like to see additional support and/or more involvement from DEP and the Society. The group decided that Deborah and Dean would coordinate to prepare a memo detailing status and concerns for Kevin to send to ORCP management. The Society provided a letter of support for this effort.

Deborah provided an update on a Legislative appropriation for restoration of a portion for the St. Johns River affecting Wekiva River Aquatic Preserve. They are awaiting Governor's consideration of the \$500K.

Heather Stafford and Mindy Brown, manager of Charlotte Harbor Aquatic Preserves, provided an update on the seagrass scar mapping at the Charlotte Harbor Aquatic Preserves that the Society funded through a public interest project. The study funded a contract to analyze 2022 aerial imagery of the seagrass communities in the Charlotte Harbor aquatic preserves and to compare them with a 2003 study of the same area. The study found that education and regulatory efforts in the system have resulted in a substantial reduction in propellor damage to seagrass resources.