



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

Citizen Support Organization (CSO) Name: Friends of Kissimmee Prairie Preserve Inc.

Mailing Address: 33104 NW 192nd Avenue, Okeechobee, Florida 34972

Telephone Number: 863-202-6658 (Paul Gray)

Website Address (*required if applicable*): www.kissimmeeprairiefriends.org

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 258.015, F.S., Citizen support organizations; use of property; audit. In summary, the statute defines a CSO, requires authorization by the Division of Recreation and Parks, and specifies the use of property. This statute authorizes the Partnerships in Parks (PIP) program for state parks, the program's operational parameters, CSO's operational parameters, and donor recognition.

YOUR MISSION AND LAST CALENDAR YEAR'S PROGRAM ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

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

Friends of Kissimmee Prairie Preserve, Inc. was formed in 2011 to work for the preservation, protection, interpretation and promotion of and in the best interest of Kissimmee Prairie Preserve. The Friends is a Florida not-for-profit 501(c)(3) corporation and relies on membership fees, private donations, and merchandise sales (firewood) to pursue activities on behalf of the Preserve.

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.)

COVID continued to disrupt CSO activities in 2021 but we were able to conduct quarterly zoom meetings and CSO activities.

We resumed wildflower walks, generously lead by Dr. Craig Huegel, and totaled 2 walks in the spring, summer and fall (6 days total). We added spring and fall butterfly walks with Linda Cooper donating her time. Instead of the hay-ride format, we traveled in our personal vehicles for COVID compliance.

The CSO received a \$5000 grant from the Florida State Parks Foundation for Dark Sky signage. The panels are being finished and installed in 2022. We also purchased a second dark sky meter to install at the edge of the Preserve to monitor changes from adjacent housing expansion.

Other items we purchased and donated to the Preserve included ice cards, new seats for the swamp buggy, 1200 plant checklists, 1500 bird checklists and 1000 butterfly checklists.

CSO staff attended the opening of the Florida Trail Gateway kiosk in the town of Okeechobee, participate with the Okeechobee Chamber of Commerce, and helped conduct the first ever Kissimmee Prairie Preserve/Deluca Preserve Christmas Bird Count.

We continue to manage firewood sales on the Preserve, with all proceeds going to the CSO.

Our Facebook page remains popular with more than 1600 members who regularly post photos and reflections of their visits to the Preserve. One post of Swallow-tailed Kites garnered more than 25,000 views and 220 shares! We have 85 official CSO members who pay annual dues or are honorary.

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

We plan to continue working to raise awareness about Kissimmee Prairie Preserve, add members and solicit donations in Florida, nationally, and internationally. We will continue holding events, including Wildflower Walks and Butterfly Walks, and more astronomy events, to introduce new people to the preserve, encourage repeat visitors, and raise funds for Friends projects to benefit the Preserve. Social media, especially our Facebook page, give us an outlet to myriad people.

COVID permitting, the Prairie Days event will be held annually again to increase local interest, involvement, and friends for the Preserve. And we plan to hold specialized educational swamp buggy tours with visiting experts as leaders. We will continue to support Kissimmee Prairie Preserve as a Dark Sky Park with outreach events, by providing needed equipment, conducting dark sky monitoring at and interior and edge sites, and by hosting astronomy programs/events with the Florida astronomy community.

Our CSO will continue to do all we can to help the endangered Florida Grasshopper Sparrow at the Preserve, through use of our FGSP fund, and by educating the public through our web site and social media pages. We will keep the Preserve's three species checklists (Birds, butterflies, and plants) updated, providing them in print and online, and plan to add a species checklist for reptiles & amphibians. We are working on an information campaign to reduce the Preserve's road kill numbers and will help provide new signage toward that end.

Other goals we continue to work toward and discuss are: partnering with more Florida organizations and educators to promote the Preserve, especially the local communities in Okeechobee County and city. We hope to partner with the Florida Native Plant Society to help voucher plant species in the Preserve for Okeechobee County, filling a large data hole in the USF Florida Plant Atlas. We would also like to develop an iNaturalist project with Preserve staff to record useful data about sightings in the Preserve. Our CSO is also looking to modernize the payment process for our firewood sales by utilizing the Square platform. This will allow for campers to purchase firewood using their credit cards, instead of relying on having exact change.

Long term goals include an outdoor covered amphitheater for educational programs, research housing for visiting workers (burn and exotic plant control crews, researchers, VIPs), a new, larger eco-friendly swamp buggy for visitor tours, and new interpretive displays, including displays for the upcoming 24-hour access astronomy area being developed at the Preserve entrance.

CSO's LAST CALENDAR YEAR STATISTICS:

Total Number of CSO General Membership: 97

Total Number of Board of Directors: 7

Total Volunteer Hours for the Board of Directors (Hours from VSys - Work with your parks' volunteer manager): 422.45

PARK & CSO RELATIONSHIP:

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

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

Provide your perspective on

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

The relationship between Kissimmee Prairie Preserve State Park and the Friends of Kissimmee Prairie grows ever stronger. As in past years, their support has been an important part of the success of this park. As Kissimmee Prairie has continued to grow and change over the last year, the CSO has continued to provide critical support that improves the experience of our park visitors.

The CSO has been effective in supporting the park. This year they've funded another order of fire crew tee shirts for park staff and other firefighters who come to Kissimmee Prairie to help us burn. They also funded the purchase of some badly needed replacement seats on the swamp buggy we use for park tours. The Friends of Kissimmee Prairie continues to provide firewood sales in the campground.

The board has been effective in completing the annual program plan. As COVID restrictions have lifted and group events can go back to their normal operations the Friends of Kissimmee Prairie have returned to registering their events at full capacity. This has provided dozens of park visitors the opportunity to experience expert-led wildflower walks and butterfly walks.

Communication between the park and the Friends of Kissimmee Prairie has remained effective through phone and online video meetings. We've adapted to new communication methods out of necessity over the last couple years which has greatly improved meeting capability. Though it's nice that we have the capability of meeting remotely, it would be great to meet with the board in person sometime in the coming year.

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

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

Preserve staff are consistently supportive and cooperative with the CSO. We maintain good personal and professional relationships. The CSO strives to fill the Board with as many of the main stakeholder groups (nature watchers, astronomers, hikers, equestrians) as possible to achieve efficient and relevant communication. The CSO needs to continue to look for ways to increase revenues and give the Preserve more options for improvements. Through the ongoing pandemic, the CSO has been able to maintain a productive relationship with Preserve staff through quarterly Zoom meetings, occasional in-person events and via email.

SUMMARIZE FINANCIAL ACTIVITY FOR LAST CALENDAR YEAR, DIRECT PARK(S) 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 park(s). For established nonprofit organizations, program service expenses generally represent most of the overall expenses of the organization. For the last calendar year 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.)	\$900
Amenities (e.g., water fountains, benches, picnic tables, recreational equipment, kiosks etc.)	\$
Park employees or volunteers support (e.g., interns, training, uniforms, awards, or recognition)	\$
Big ticket visitor center exhibits or interpretation updates	\$
Park exhibits, displays, signage	\$
Park publications, brochures, maps, etc.	\$
Programing/interpretation support material purchases	\$2,198
Other program services	\$11,109.56
Total Program Service Expenses	\$14,207.56

Visitor Services Revenue

Describe revenues and the sources generated from fundraising on park property.

Park gift shops, craft stores, and concession sales	\$
Merchandise sales (e.g., plants, firewood, ice, t-shirts, hats, etc.)	\$11,705.16
Programs and Special Events (e.g., fundraising workshops, seasonal events, concerts, etc.)	\$6,311
Vending (e.g., drink machines, penny press, laundry, Wifi, etc.)	\$
Rentals (e.g., bikes, canoe, kayak, SUPs, etc.)	\$
In-park donation boxes	\$870.95
Other visitor services revenue	\$
Total Visitor Services Revenue	\$18,887.11


NET ASSETS: \$36,234.61

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) **\$14,207.56**

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** (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			
Title	Name	Signature	Date
CSO President			5/30/2022
Park Manager	Alex Creager	Digitally signed by Alex Creager Date: 2022.06.10 07:47:57 -04'00'	06/10/2022

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.



Code of Ethics

PREAMBLE

- 1) It is essential to the proper conduct and operation of Friends of Kissimmee Prairie Preserve (herein "CSO") that its board members, officers, and employees be independent and impartial and that their position not be used for private gain. Therefore, the Florida Legislature in Section 112.3251, Florida Statute (Fla. Stat.), requires that the law protect against any conflict of interest and establish standards for the conduct of CSO board members, officers, and employees in situations where conflicts may exist.
- 2) It is hereby declared to be the policy of the state that no CSO board member, officer, or employee shall have any interest, financial or otherwise, direct or indirect, or incur any obligation of any nature which is in substantial conflict with the proper discharge of his or her duties for the CSO. To implement this policy and strengthen the faith and confidence of the people in Citizen Support Organizations, there is enacted a code of ethics setting forth standards of conduct required of Friends of Kissimmee Prairie Preserve board members, officers, and employees in the performance of their official duties.

STANDARDS

The following standards of conduct are enumerated in Chapter 112, Fla. Stat., and are required by Section 112.3251, Fla. Stat., to be observed by CSO board members, officers, and employees.

1) Prohibition of Solicitation or Acceptance of Gifts

No CSO board member, officer, or employee shall solicit or accept anything of value to the recipient, including a gift, loan, reward, promise of future employment, favor, or service, based upon any understanding that the vote, official action, or judgment of the CSO board member, officer, or employee would be influenced thereby.

2) Prohibition of Accepting Compensation Given to Influence a Vote

No CSO board member, officer, or employee shall accept any compensation, payment, or thing of value when the person knows, or, with reasonable care, should know that it was given to influence a vote or other action in which the CSO board member, officer, or employee was expected to participate in his or her official capacity.

3) Salary and Expenses

No CSO board member or officer shall be prohibited from voting on a matter affecting his or her salary, expenses, or other compensation as a CSO board member or officer, as provided by law.

4) Prohibition of Misuse of Position

A CSO board member, officer, or employee shall not corruptly use or attempt to use one's official position or any property or resource which may be within one's trust, or perform official duties, to secure a special privilege, benefit, or exemption.

5) Prohibition of Misuse of Privileged Information

No CSO board member, officer, or employee shall disclose or use information not available to members of the general public and gained by reason of one's official position for one's own personal gain or benefit or for the personal gain or benefit of any other person or business entity.

6) Post-Office/Employment Restrictions

A person who has been elected to any CSO board or office or who is employed by a CSO may not personally represent another person or entity for compensation before the governing body of the CSO of which he or she was a board member, officer, or employee for a period of two years after he or she vacates that office or employment position.

7) Prohibition of Employees Holding Office

No person may be, at one time, both a CSO employee and a CSO board member at the same time.

8) Requirements to Abstain From Voting

A CSO board member or officer shall not vote in official capacity upon any measure which would affect his or her special private gain or loss, or which he or she knows would affect the special gain or any principal by whom the board member or officer is retained. When abstaining, the CSO board member or officer, prior to the vote being taken, shall make every reasonable effort to disclose the nature of his or her interest as a public record in a memorandum filed with the person responsible for recording the minutes of the meeting, who shall incorporate the memorandum in the minutes. If it is not possible for the CSO board member or officer to file a memorandum before the vote, the memorandum must be filed with the person responsible for recording the minutes of the meeting no later than 15 days after the vote.

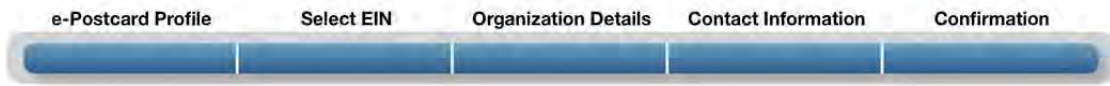
9) Failure to Observe CSO Code of Ethics

Failure of a CSO board member, officer, or employee to observe the Code of Ethics may result in the removal of that person from their position. Further, failure of the CSO to observe the Code of Ethics may result in the Florida Department of Environmental Protection terminating its Agreement with the CSO.



Confirmation

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Your Form 990-N(e-Postcard) has been submitted to the IRS

- **Organization Name:** FRIENDS OF KISSIMMEE PRAIRIE PRESERVE INC
- **EIN:** 453684228
- **Tax Year:** 2021
- **Tax Year Start Date:** 01-01-2021
- **Tax Year End Date:** 12-31-2021
- **Submission ID:** 10065520221225539469
- **Filing Status Date:** 05-02-2022
- **Filing Status:** Pending

Note: Print a copy of this filing for your records. Once you leave this page, you will not be able to do so.

[< MANAGE FORM 990-N SUBMISSIONS](#)