



**Florida Department of Environmental Protection  
CITIZEN SUPPORT ORGANIZATION  
2024 LEGISLATIVE REPORT  
(pursuant to Section 20.058 Florida Statutes)**

Citizen Support Organization (CSO) Name: Aquatic Preserve Alliance of Central Florida, Inc.

Mailing Address: 9710 Easy Dewey Robbins Road Howey in the Hills Florida 34737

Telephone Number: 407-967-7932

Website Address (required if applicable): https://aquaticpreservealliance.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 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)

The Aquatic Preserve Alliance of Central Florida, Inc. (Alliance) mission is to promote and support charitable, educational, and scientific activities that directly and indirectly benefit the Aquatic Preserves of Central Florida. The organization is dedicated to raising awareness and educating the public about the Aquatic Preserves ecosystems.

**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.)

- Alliance met weekly and monthly via telephone or on Zoom with the Aquatic Preserve Manager. 76 total volunteer hours.
- Aquatic Preserve Society (APS) monthly meetings were attended by the Alliance President, who also serves as the Vice President and recorded several meetings in the absence of a Secretary. 18 total volunteer hours.
- Assisted the Wekiva-Middle St. Johns Aquatic Preserve (AP) and Wekiva Wild & Scenic River System with set up and staffing booths at the annual Manatee Festival at Blue Spring State Park in Orange City, FL. The event attracted thousands of visitors for the two-day festival with over 1,500 visitors to the AP and Wild and Scenic booths. The Alliance Board volunteered 12 hours.
- Participated in Lake County's Eco Expo, an environmental symposium held at Lake Sumter State College. The event featured tabling with over 25 other environmental groups, cities, native plant sales, and our local regional planning council. In addition to staffing a table, the Alliance President gave a short presentation about the Alliance, and the Alliance Secretary gave a 40-minute presentation on water quality. The event included a full day of speakers who focused on a variety of environmental concerns. Two Alliance volunteered total of 24 hours.
- Alliance President served as liaison for the AP and on the Executive Committee for monthly Friends of the Wekiva River (FOWR) Board meetings. 22 volunteer hours.
- Freshwater Research and Education Center (R&E) – Board members attended two charettes in April 2023 hosted by Kimley Horn who were contracted by the City of DeBary to develop a park plan for the 170-acre Alexander Island parcel purchased by the City of DeBary. Phase 1 development plans for the city included a trail, trailhead with restrooms, river observation tower, small presentation room, maintenance building, and parking. Phase 2 provided 3 acres for the Freshwater R&E Center with offices, education areas, parking, and boat maintenance structure. Alliance President provided info to Kimley Horn regarding structures necessary to relocate the aquatic preserve office and establish a R&E Center. Board Members continued to coordinate with the City of DeBary regarding park development of the 170 acres. Alliance Board Volunteer hours 36.
- Pavilion at Katie's Landing on the Wekiva River – Alliance President served on FOWR's Pavilion Committee reviewing the budget, assisting with fundraising, reviewing permitting criteria, and contacting potential contractors. Participated with organization of an onsite meeting with residents to present info about the project and discuss any concerns. The total budget, over \$100,000, has been raised. Volunteer hours 40.
- Continued to attend meetings and focus group workshops sponsored by Lake County, the East Central Florida Regional Planning Council, 1,000 Friends of Florida, Stetson University and Strong Towns. Participated in land acquisition mapping and planning strategies for Lake County conservation lands. Other participants included representatives from environmental groups, agencies, local governments, and landowners. Reviewed the final report prepared by Stetson University. Volunteer hours 16.
- River of Lakes (ROL) - Alliance President spoke to the ROL Committee during their March 6, 2023 regular meeting. Topics presented included information about the Alliance, the Wekiva-Middle St. Johns Aquatic Preserve, plans for a Freshwater Research and Education Center, and how the Alliance might continue to coordinate and partner with the ROL on various projects. 9 volunteer hours.
- Prepared slides and text for a FOWR Board member who gave a presentation to South Seminole Rotary on the ongoing Pavilion Project at Katie's Landing. 4 volunteer hours.
- Attended the 2023 Corridor Connect conference in Orlando. Attended several presentations on various conservation land topics and provided mapping information to workshop presenters on gaps in the Wekiva Ocala Florida Forever Project. 10 volunteer hours.
- Scott Taylor, Alliance Treasurer – The Alliance, the local environmental community and beyond are saddened by the passing of Scott Taylor. Scott was instrumental in creating the Aquatic Preserve Alliance of Central Florida, Inc. and served as our Treasurer from its beginning. He was an accomplished photographer and videographer who volunteered his time to create videos and photographs of natural resources associated with the aquatic preserves and throughout his global travels. Scott was enthusiastically supportive of Alliance endeavors, offered wise and valuable advice and supported critical lands acquisitions. A retired businessman, devoted husband, father, grandfather, and long-time board member of Florida Audubon, he also established the Mothers' Milk Bank of Florida and was an active member of Now I Lay Me Down to Sleep, an organization that provides photographs to parents who experience infant mortality. Scott's endless enthusiasm, positive attitude, and benevolent nature is dearly missed.

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

The Alliance will continue to:

- \* Support Aquatic Preserve volunteer resource management and education/outreach activities; continue to conduct fundraising to support aquatic preserve activities; and "To better serve the needs of basin researchers and the public, a Freshwater Research Center with an education component is envisioned at a direct river access location." Wekiva River Aquatic Preserve Management Plan, 2014.
- \* Work with partners to acquire a suitable location for the Freshwater Research and Education Center, develop a Grants Package for funding solicitation, coordinate stakeholder planning committees, and assist with the relocation of the Aquatic Preserve office.
- \* Participate in inter-agency working groups and support local environmental organizations on projects and issues which affect the Aquatic Preserves and surrounding areas, including the Lake County Eco Expo.
- \* Continue to serve on Friends of the Wekiva River's Pavilion Committee and support efforts to construct a covered pavilion for public use at Katie's Landing on the Wekiva River reach of the Aquatic Preserve.
- \* Enhance and update our website.
- \* Expand general membership and seek qualified Board members.

**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, describe the relationship.

**AP 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 the ORCP team and CSO. What went well? Are there areas of improvement?

2023 was a hard year for the Alliance with the deaths of the President, Dean Barber, in December 2022 and the Treasurer, Scott Taylor, in September 2023. Efforts to rebuild the Board and attract new members are progressing and, despite those and other setbacks, the CSO continues to:

Work with other local organizations to preserve land and watchdog developments in the Wekiva River AP's springshed.

Liaise with other entities and organizations on projects in and affecting the AP.

Assist with land acquisition of critical lands within the Wekiva-Ocala Greenway project area.

Monitor plans for the City of DeBary's Alexander Island Park regarding establishment of a Freshwater Research and Education Center (per WRAP Mgmt. Plan) on the north end of the 170-acre property.

The relationship between the ORCP team and the CSO remains intact and productive. The new President, Deborah Shelley, serves on the Board of the Aquatic Preserve Society, and coordinates travel for the APS' Clyde Butcher 'Living Waters' Exhibit. She stays in close contact with the AP Manager. Growing the CSO membership, particularly in Lake and Volusia counties is a priority for 2024.

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

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

The Aquatic Preserve Alliance of Central Florida (Alliance) and the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, Office of Resilience and Coastal Protection (ORCP) work well together to accomplish mutual goals. As described above, the Alliance frequently works closely with Aquatic Preserve (AP) Manager on numerous projects and activities. The Pavilion Project is an excellent example of teamwork and partnerships with the Friends of Wekiva, the AP Manager, the Florida Park Service, and the Alliance. This project will greatly enhance public use and safety at Katie's Landing, an addition to the Lower Wekiva River Preserve State Park along the Wekiva River, by providing a 24 x 44 covered pavilion. Two Alliance Board members served on the Board of the Aquatic Preserve Society (APS) and the Alliance President also serves as the Vice President of the APS. The monthly teleconference meetings with APS are another example of good communication and maintaining rapport between the Alliance, APS and ORCP.

**SUMMARIZE FINANCIAL ACTIVITY FOR LAST CALENDAR YEAR, DIRECT AP(S) SUPPORT & REVENUES: Program Services** are costs related to providing your organizations' programs or services in accordance with your mission. Describe and provide expenses that directly support the AP(s). For established nonprofit organizations, program service expenses generally represent most of the overall expenses of the organization. For the last calendar year provide the total \$ for each that apply. **Do not use commas.**

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.)	\$
ORCP employees or volunteers support (e.g., interns, training, uniforms, awards, or recognition)	\$
Big ticket visitor center exhibits or interpretation updates	\$
Preserve exhibits, displays, signage	\$
Preserve publications, brochures, maps, etc.	\$
Programing/interpretation support material purchases	\$
Other program services	\$ 254
<b>Total Program Service Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 254</b>

**Visitor Services Revenue** are revenues and the sources generated from fundraising on preserve property. **Do not use commas.**

Preserve 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.)	\$
In-preserve donation boxes	\$
Other visitor services revenue	\$ 254
<b>Total Visitor Services Revenue</b>	<b>\$ 254</b>

**NET ASSETS:** \$

Organizations end of last year's Total Assets minus Total Liabilities. 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** (9 months after the CSO's calendar year ends) to the Florida Auditor General and to the Department.


**CONFIRM ATTACHMENTS:**

Code of Ethics

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.

**2024 CSO Legislative Report Acknowledgment**

**This information is complete to the best of my knowledge pursuant to Section 20.058 Florida Statutes**

Signature: 

Print name: Deborah Shelley

CSO President

Aquatic Preserve Alliance of Central Florida INC

Date: 03 June 2024

Signature: **Barbara Howell** Digitally signed by Barbara Howell  
Date: 2024.06.03 12:30:36 -04'00'

Print name: Barbara Howell

AP Manager

Date: 6/3/24

# **The Aquatic Preserve Alliance of Central Florida, Inc.**

## **CODE OF ETHICS**

### **PREAMBLE**

- (1) It is essential to the proper conduct and operation of The Aquatic Preserve Alliance of Central Florida, Inc. (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 The Aquatic Preserve Alliance of Central Florida, Inc. 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. 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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Select EIN

Organization Details

Contact Information

Confirmation

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

- **Organization Name:** AQUATIC PRESERVE ALLIANCE OF CENTRAL FLORIDA INC
- **EIN:** 472140025
- **Tax Year:** 2023
- **Tax Year Start Date:** 01-01-2023
- **Tax Year End Date:** 12-31-2023
- **Submission ID:** 10065520241567964216
- **Filing Status Date:** 06-04-2024
- **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](#)