



**Florida Department of Environmental Protection
CITIZEN SUPPORT ORGANIZATION
2023 LEGISLATIVE REPORT
(pursuant to Section 20.058 Florida Statutes)**

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

Mailing Address: c/o Scott Taylor PO Box 1479 Sorrento, FL 32776-1479

Telephone Number: 407-381-1144

Website Address (*required if applicable*): AquaticPreserveAlliance.org and AquaticPreserveAlliance.com

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.)

- The Alliance collaborated with and assisted the Aquatic Preserve on many issues, projects, and events in addition to a variety of meetings that included special projects, research, restoration, festivals, and land acquisition. The Alliance's annual meeting was held online 4/20/2022 with 14 attendees. During the period from January 1 to December 30, 2022 Alliance members volunteered over 420 hours to benefit the Wekiva-Middle St. Johns Aquatic Preserve (AP).
- Aquatic Preserve Alliance of Central Florida, Inc. (Alliance), assisted the Wekiva-Middle St. Johns Aquatic Preserve and Wekiva Wild & Scenic River System booths at the annual Manatee Festival at Blue Spring State Park in Orange City, FL. The event attracted a total of 8,222 visitors for the two-day festival at two neighboring parks with 1,525 visitors to the AP and Wild and Scenic booths. Alliance Board volunteered 8 hours.
- The Alliance participated in Lake County's Environmental Symposium with 14 other local environmental groups. The event began with an hour of tabling, followed by keynote speaker Beverly Ward with the Tri-City NAACP who spoke on environmental justice and Lake County's rapid growth rate during 2010-2020. The event ended with a panel discussion on water and open space. Other participating groups included Friends of the Wekiva River, Oklawaha Valley Audubon Society, Lake County Conservation Council. Two Alliance Board members volunteered for a total of 26 hours.
- Alliance President was interviewed for *The Wekiva Wild & Scenic River System, A National Treasure* long-form documentary which is nearing completion. Four volunteer hours.

- The AP and the Alliance created a presentation of 12 mini posters that depicted attributes of the Wekiva-Middle St. Johns AP. The exhibit was hosted at the Enterprise Heritage Center and Museum in partnership with the River of Lakes Heritage Corridor Group. Local businesses, organizations and agencies also participated with mini-posters for the two-month exhibit. The Alliance President also gave an in-person presentation about AP history and updates on current AP activities. 25 total volunteer hours.
- Aquatic Preserve Society (APS) monthly meetings were attended by the Alliance President (as APS VP) and Alliance VP (as APS Board member). Alliance President also recorded meetings in the absence of a secretary. 20 total volunteer hours.
- Alliance President served as liaison for the AP and on the Executive Committee for monthly Friends of the Wekiva River (FOWR) Board meetings.
- Pavilion at Katies Landing on the Wekiva River – Alliance President served on FOWR’s Pavilion Committee researching various structures, creating a budget, assisting with fundraising, reviewing permitting criteria, and preparing grants. The total budget for the Pavilion is \$103,000. Over \$56,500 was raised in 2022.
- Alliance President participated in the Volusia Forever Committee meeting on 1/26/22 in partnership with the City of DeBary in support of a Volusia Forever Application for funding assistance for acquisition of the St. Johns Riverbend 170-acre property. The property was included in the Wekiva-Ocala Greenway Boundary in May 2021 making it eligible for Florida Forever funding. This acquisition, if purchased by the state, would provide a riverfront location for a Freshwater Research and Education Center (as per the Wekiva River Aquatic Preserve Management Plan). Additional Volusia Forever Committee & Volusia County BCC meetings, Volusia County Land Acquisition Manager, and State Lands Appraisers site visits occurred with AP Manager and/or Alliance Board members in attendance on 2/17, 3/10, 3/16 and 4/5/2022.
- *The Wekiva Case Study*, the field section of *Collaborating to Manage Ecosystems*, a UF/IFAS Natural Areas Training Academy course, was presented again - the first time since covid – to a class of 24 at Wekiwa Springs State Park on 10/25/22. Led by the case study author and former AP Manager/current Alliance President, Deborah Shelley, in collaboration with current AP Manager Barbara Howell and Wekiva Wild and Scenic River Ambassador Ashley Konon as instructors. The class included a 2-mile paddle on Wekiwa Spring Run with brief lectures along the way about research and issues related to the run.
- Alliance President and Technical Advisor attended Lake County 2070 Presentation and Planning meeting on 12/6/2022 at the Ag Center in Tavares sponsored by the East Central Florida Regional Planning Council (ECFRPC), 1,000 Friends of Florida and Stetson University. Over 50 attendees watched presentations on current land uses and water consumption trends. Speakers demonstrated how the 2070 estimated population would fare if alternate increased land and water conservation strategies were not implemented. Volunteer hours 5.
- The Alliance Board attended the Lake County Conservation Strategy Workshop on December 15, 2022 sponsored by the ECFRPC and Stetson University, also held at the Ag Center in Tavares. Forty-five participants representing environmental groups, agencies, local governments, and landowners broke into focus groups to map environmentally sensitive areas and discuss strategies to preserve viable natural areas and corridors in what remains undeveloped lands within the county. Mapmakers from ECFRPC and Stetson who listened and participated in the groups, will input new information into a modeling program, redraw maps to prioritize land acquisitions and hold future workshops. Volunteer hours 5.
- Board members assisted with the March 2022 freshwater turtle research logistics by moving canoes and vehicles from Wekiva Island to Wekiwa Springs State Park. Total 10 volunteer hours.
- Dean G. Barber, Alliance Vice President – The Alliance Board and members were deeply saddened by the unexpected passing of our Vice President. Dean was instrumental in creating the Aquatic Preserve Alliance and served as the first President for over six years and as Vice President for two years. Dean was always enthusiastically supportive of Alliance endeavors and always offered wise and valuable advice. Dean was a retired Navy Commander, father, husband, treasured colleague to many aquatic ecologists, and 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.

CSO's LAST CALENDAR YEAR STATISTICS:

Total Number of CSO General Membership: 20

Total Number of Board of Directors: 10

Total Volunteer Hours for the Board of Directors: 420

ORCP & CSO RELATIONSHIP:

Don't duplicate by describing accomplishments and contributions in the summary. Brag in the above Results Obtained. Describe the relationship here.

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

Provide your perspective on

- Changing developments of the managed area(s) 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 team and CSO. What went well? Are there areas of improvement?

While many aspects of society have been irreparably altered by covid, support for the Aquatic Preserve from the Aquatic Preserve Alliance of Central Florida (Alliance) remains unwavering, even with the passing of Dean Barber, Alliance Vice President and founding member. Prior to his retirement, Dean was a DEP & FWC Biologist and aquatic plant expert in addition to his U.S. Navy career. He was a mentor to all who knew him and happily gave untold time, service, and expertise to the benefit of the natural environment and particularly to the Aquatic Preserve.

Throughout 2022, the Alliance President and Vice President served on the Aquatic Preserve Society (APS) Board of Directors; monthly APS meetings were also attended by the AP Manager. This frequent contact and the attendance of ORCP Business Planning Program Administrator David Overstreet at APS meetings ensure communications between the Alliance and the ORCP remain frequent, helpful, and convivial.

As 2022 ended, the AP and the Alliance focused on the State of Florida and Florida Forever funding to purchase the 170 acres on the St. Johns River which we had partnered with the City of DeBary to successfully include within the boundary of the Wekiva-Ocala Greenway. In state ownership, the Wekiva-Middle St. Johns AP could proceed with its long-term (management plan) goal of relocating the AP office and creating a Freshwater Research and Education Center. A subsequent application to the Volusia Forever program was approved by Volusia County to provide Volusia Forever acquisition funding for this project.

As 2023 begins, Alliance members continue to assist with research, educational outreach, technical advising and participation in meetings and projects of importance to the local environment, partnering with environmental groups and agencies. Restoration within the AP reach of the Little Wekiva River has been slow to start but FWC and Seminole

County have been controlling exotic plants. Building up the Alliance membership remains a priority as is further development of the new website.

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, a relatively new 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 SUPPORT & REVENUES:

Program Service Expenses are

Building improvement, construction, or renovations	\$ 0
Cultural resources (e.g., historic structure restoration/ renovation)	\$ 0
Natural resources (e.g., native plants, natural lands restoration)	\$ 0
Maintenance equipment (e.g., mowers, chippers, blowers, chainsaws)	\$ 0
Other facilities and landscape maintenance	\$ 0
Vehicles (e.g., trucks/cars, UTVs, golf carts, accessible devices, etc.)	\$ 0
Amenities (e.g., water fountains, benches, picnic tables, recreational equipment, kiosks etc.)	\$ 0
ORCP employees or volunteers support (e.g., interns, training, uniforms, awards, or recognition)	\$ 0
Big ticket visitor center exhibits or interpretation updates	\$ 0
Managed area exhibits, displays, signage	\$ 75
Managed area publications, brochures, maps, etc.	\$ 0
Programing/interpretation support material purchases	\$ 0
Other program services	\$ 150
Total Program Service Expenses	\$ 225

Visitor Services Revenue

Describe revenues and the sources generated from fundraising on managed area property. Replace examples with your information.

Gift shops, craft stores, and concession sales	\$ 0
Merchandise sales (e.g., plants, firewood, ice, t-shirts, hats, etc.)	\$ 0
Programs and Special Events (e.g., fundraising workshops, seasonal events, concerts, etc.)	\$ 0
Vending (e.g., drink machines, penny press, laundry, Wifi, etc.)	\$ 0
Rentals (e.g., bikes, canoe, kayak, SUPs, etc.)	\$ 0
Managed area donations	\$ 225
Other visitor services revenue	\$ 0
Total Visitor Services Revenue	\$ 225

NET ASSETS: \$11,241.44

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

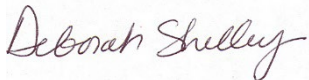

CSO AUDIT THRESHOLD:

Last Calendar Year's Total Expenses (including grants) \$225.00

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.

CONFIRM ATTACHMENTS:

- 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.

This information is complete to the best of my knowledge pursuant to Section 20.058 Florida Statutes			
Title	Name	Signature	Date
CSO President	Deborah Shelley		June 22, 2023
ORCP Manager	Barbara Howell		June 22, 2023

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.

AQUATIC PRESERVE ALLIANCE OF CENTRAL FLORIDA INC

EIN: 47-2140025 | Sorrento, Florida, United States

Form 990-N (e-Postcard)

Organizations who have filed a 990-N (e-Postcard) annual electronic notice.
Most small organizations that receive less than \$50,000 fall into this category.

Tax Year 2022 Form 990-N (e-Postcard)

Tax Period:

2022 (01/01/2022-12/31/2022)

EIN:

47-2140025

Organization Name (Doing Business as):

AQUATIC PRESERVE ALLIANCE OF CENTRAL FLORIDA INC

Mailing Address:

PO Box 1479
Sorrento, FL 32776
United States

Principal Officer's Name and Address:

Scott Taylor
PO Box 1479
Sorrento, FL 32776
United States

Gross receipts not greater than:

\$50,000

Organization has terminated:

No

Website URL:

aquaticpreservealliance.org

Tax Year 2021 Form 990-N (e-Postcard)