



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

Citizen Support Organization (CSO) Name: Friends of Biscayne Bay

Mailing Address: 1277 NE 79th St Miami FL 33138

Contact: friendsofbiscayneBay@gmail.com

Website Address (*required if applicable*): <https://friendsofbiscaynebay.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 Friends of Biscayne Bay's (FOBB) mission is to support and benefit the Biscayne Bay Aquatic Preserves, by aiming to preserve, protect, and enhance the bay and all natural waterways tidally connected to the bay in an aesthetically natural condition so that its biological and aesthetic values may endure for the enjoyment of future generations.

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.)

FOBB was excited to launch plans in 2023 to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the Biscayne Bay Aquatic Preserves occurring in 2024. In July, FOBB held a public launch event in Miami Shores to promote the 50th anniversary and announce our plans. FOBB has partnered with Miami-Dade County Biscayne Bay Friendly Program and the Cortada Foundation to create a Biscayne Bay environmentally-focused art, engagement, and action campaign across Miami-Dade County known as "The Flow-Its All Connected!" It is FOBB's intention to commemorate this historic anniversary with greater activation around water quality issues in 2024 and 2025.

In July, FOBB supported a ghost trap rodeo in conjunction with our DEP partners at the Biscayne Bay Aquatic Preserves office. This ghost trap rodeo was held to provide an opportunity for the public, county, and city officials to remove derelict crab and fish traps from Biscayne Bay. These "ghost traps" trap wildlife and bycatch that die when left unattended.

FOBB supported an effort by Florida International University to increase Biscayne Bay data transparency known as the Biscayne Bay Reef Observation Interpretation and Prediction System (BBROIPS). This project will create a publicly available visuospatial one-stop shop for all types of Biscayne Bay data. FOBB supported and continues to support this effort by publicizing meetings, actively participating in discussions at the meetings, and working with project leads at FIU to bring BBROIPS to fruition. In addition we continue to try to locate and help gather data for this project, by always advertising it in our newsletter and locating and securing historic data sets and ensuring they do not get lost.

FOBB supported the annual “Baynanza” event, promoting youth involvement in a clean and healthy Biscayne Bay by promoting and attending the annual cleanup at the J Farina Mangrove Preserve in North Biscayne Bay, we offered 20 kayaks for the public to use to collect trash at the Greynolds location as well as having a team of 6 people pick up trash at that location. FOBB continues to update our website (friendsofbiscaynebay.org) with updated information and graphics to convey and publicize up-to-date information on Biscayne Bay conservation and our programs. For the first time we also created action alerts using, action network, so the public can better activate on advocacy issues related to the aquatic preserve.

FOBB helped create a coalition of other environmental groups fighting to protect a bird rookery in Biscayne Bay, and for better boating speed regulations, particularly surrounding the spoil islands near 79th street causeway.. Year round Speeding restrictions on boats, identifying no entry zones to protect wildlife and better enforcement of existing laws is the focus of this group. It is really a subset of the Biscayne Bay Marine Health Summit which we have been a part of since 2016.

In December, FOBB was honored to be featured in “Preservation Today,” the conservation magazine published annually by Dade Heritage Trust. In our cover photo and article, FOBB highlighted the significance of the Biscayne Bay Aquatic Preserves designation back in 1974 and how important Biscayne Bay is to our county to this day. In addition we introduced our new project for the 50th anniversary.

Throughout 2023, FOBB advocated for improvements to several federal Biscayne Bay restoration projects, namely the Army Corps Back Bay Coastal Resilience Study and the Biscayne Bay Southeastern Everglades Ecosystem Restoration (BBSEER) Project. FOBB is in favor of increasing green infrastructure in federal projects in Biscayne Bay, maintain green space in Miami-Dade County, promote smart growth, and incorporating environmental justice principles in these projects. Members of FOBB were active participants in the Back Bay public charrettes held throughout 2023. FOBB supports preservation and restoration of the Biscayne Bay Coastal Wetlands in order to increase county resilience and improve Bay water quality. FOBB advocated for the maintenance of the Miami-Dade Urban Development Boundary, opposing projects that would destroy wetlands. It is FOBB’s position that wetlands are necessary in Miami-Dade County for Biscayne Bay’s water quality and as a steady source of freshwater flow into Biscayne Bay. Throughout the year, FOBB members have advocated at Biscayne Bay Commission and Biscayne Bay Watershed Management Advisory Board meetings for increased protections around the Bay and its watershed.

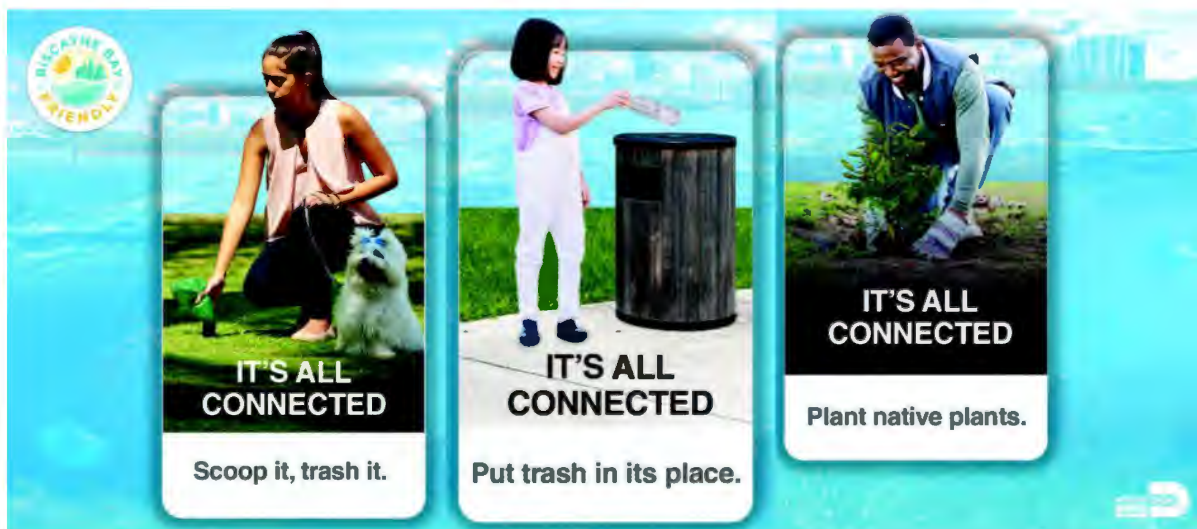
Describe the CSO’s Plans for the Next Three Calendar Years:

The Friends of Biscayne Bay (FOBB) plans to continue to support the Biscayne Bay Aquatic Preserves in its mission of stewardship and to preserve, protect, and enhance Biscayne Bay. FOBB will aid in public education, volunteer events, such as clean-ups, and provide financial assistance to the Aquatic preserves to address “Issue Four: Public Access and Use” of the BBAP Management Plan. We will continue to defend Biscayne Bay from threats of development, pollution, and policy changes that will have detrimental effects on the Bay. This addresses the Water Quality and Habitat loss Issues outlined in the BBAP Management Plan.

FOBB will use 2024 and 2025, the 50-year anniversary of the BBAP, to launch our countywide community engagement project “The Flow-Its All Connected.” Our plan is to use the 50th anniversary to support the County’s Reasonable Assurance Plan process and inspire action around Biscayne Bay water quality. Specifically, we are gathering funds to launch a countywide “Adopt A Storm Drain Program,” with artwork and QR codes placed near storm drains around Miami-Dade to engage residents and teach how to take action on a healthy Biscayne Bay. For this historic anniversary, we are partnered with the Miami-Dade County Biscayne Bay Friendly Program and community organizations like The Cortada Foundation and Dade Heritage Trust.

FOBB will work with the Biscayne Bay Watershed Management Advisory Board, the Biscayne Bay Commission, and the Biscayne Bay Southeastern Everglades Restoration project delivery team to develop plans most beneficial to water quality and biodiversity in Biscayne Bay. Finally, FOBB plans to relaunch the kayak “paddle out for a cause” program, which consists of public affordable kayak trips led by FOBB members. These trips have the dual purpose of public outreach and fundraising to support our programs, namely the 50th anniversary project.

FOBB hopes to gain further Bay advocacy in the coming year of our 50th anniversary and use that momentum to further our organization’s mission.



We are promoting these three “Biscayne Bay Friendly” as actions any resident can take for the 50th Anniversary of the BBAP, graphics courtesy of Miami-Dade County.

CSO’s LAST CALENDAR YEAR STATISTICS:

Total Number of CSO General Membership: N/A we do not have a membership but our newsletter circulation is 800 people, and we have a board and advisory board of 20 people.

Total Number of Board of Directors: 11

Total Volunteer Hours for the Board of Directors: ~760

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?

This year has been a good one for Biscayne Bay Aquatic Preserve and our Friends Group. As the AP is celebrating its 50th anniversary, FOBB has been a great partner in getting the word out and producing material to let the public know about the importance of the AP. FOBB had a great success at the Biscayne Bay Marine Health Summit where they were able to host a wonderful panel describing the history of the AP with interviews from some of the integral people related to its founding. It has been difficult for BBAP to find things that FOBB can help with as we have many of the day to day tasks covered and don't have much land to manage. The past year many issues have come up with trash on the spoil islands. I hope to have FOBB help get volunteers for spoil island clean ups and help raise awareness about Leave No Trace. As the president said communication has been poor between the CSO and BBAP causing issues fully fulfilling the mission. This can be solved by working out the issues and better understanding the requirements on both sides. An annual plan has not been developed yet this is a task that needs to be prioritized and will assist in completing the mission. Overall it has been a good year and we look forward to more hands-on work in the future.

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?

This past calendar year has enlightened the benefits of strong communication and cooperation with the Preserve Manager and staff. In the past, the staff has worked on many more aspects of the FOBB day to day. Currently, the FOBB board has provided funding for their own staff to perform these activities and more. Having a new manager, Griffin Alexander, has helped us to realize the strength of our relationships with previous managers and how important it is to maintain and improve upon this.

We will actively work to

strengthen the current relationship so that we may benefit from maximum cooperation. While we have had many successes in the past years, we know we need more cooperation and planning to better implement the management plan together. We have ideas on how to strengthen this relationship and bring higher success to our conservation efforts, especially since we will be planning for our 50th anniversary. We are excited in 2024 to work with the ORCP office on the development of a new Biscayne Bay management plan.

The ORCP office has been helpful in providing FOBB with tabling materials and supplies to help with outreach, including informational pamphlets, giveaway goodies, and a tablecloth. But many of these materials are dated and need updating and this really should have been done in advance of the 50th anniversary. We hope to use this milestone Anniversary as a springboard into better education programs for the public and additional

fundraising opportunities so that we can afford to purchase what is needed to continue our strong advocacy towards the needs of the Aquatic Preserves.

We hope that there is more assistance from DEP over the coming year to help celebrate this milestone anniversary as there was for the 40th anniversary. Help with Public Relations, Video Production, Event Space, Swag, New Pamphlets for the public that include Friends of Biscayne Bay contact information are a few ideas. We suggest a meeting to discuss how we can celebrate the 50th which for us is 2024 and 2025 together for the big overall anniversary of the Aquatic Preserves.

We also struggle with a revenue stream as our Bayologist Camp and educational programs have funded the friends group in the past. We should consider how to reopen these activities, however to do this space would be needed and more cooperation with the aquatic preserve including storage of equipment and supplies at the office. This has been problematic under new management but was not an issue in the past, we hope this can be corrected moving forward.

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. For the last calendar year provide description and total \$ for each that apply. Replace examples with your information.

Friends of Biscayne Bay 2023 Budget			
Total Income	16,625.00		
Total Expense	32,045.73		
Revenue	-15,420.73		
Ending Balance:	8,962.64		
Budget Breakdown			
Item	Income	Expense	In-Kind
Fundraising	16,625.00		
Staffing			
Labor, Travel, and Materials		23,797.65	
Projects			
Public Engagement			
Ghost Trap Rodeo		4,930.00	
Increasing Bay Access			
Park Bench		3,318.08	
Outreach			
Website			480.00
Action Network			1,200.00
Miscellaneous			
Accounting			450.00
Event: DEP Funds sep 26		159.59	

Total:	16,625.00	32,045.73	2,130.00
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Total Expenses: \$ 32,045.73

Total Revenue: \$ 16,625.00

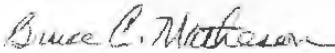
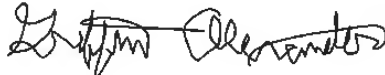
NET ASSETS: \$ 8,962.64

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) \$32,205.32

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			
Title	Name	Signature	Date
CSO President	Bruce Matheson		6/5/2024
ORCP Manager			6/24/24

- 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.

Friends of Biscayne Bay, Inc.

CODE OF ETHICS

PREAMBLE

- (1) It is essential to the proper conduct and operation of Friends of Biscayne Bay, 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 Friends of Biscayne Bay, 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 Friends of Biscayne Bay, Inc. board members, officers, and employees.

1. Prohibition of Solicitation or Acceptance of Gifts

No Friends of Biscayne Bay 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 Friends of Biscayne Bay 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 Friends of Biscayne Bay 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 Friends of Biscayne Bay 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 Friends of Biscayne Bay 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 Friends of Biscayne Bay's board or office or who is employed by Friends of Biscayne Bay 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 Friends of Biscayne Bay employee and a Friends of Biscayne Bay board member at the same time.

8. Requirements to Abstain From Voting

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

Form 990-N

Electronic Notice (e-Postcard)

OMB No. 1545-2085

Department of the Treasury
Internal Revenue Service

for Tax-Exempt Organization not Required to File Form 990 or 990-EZ

2023

Open to Public Inspection

A For the **2023** Calendar year, or tax year beginning **2023-01-01** and ending **2023-12-31****B** Check if available Terminated for Business Gross receipts are normally \$50,000 or less**C** Name of Organization: **FRIENDS OF BISCAYNE BAY INC****3191 GRAND AVENUE,****MIAMI, FL, US, 33323****D** Employee IdentificationNumber **84-1721430****E** Website:**F** Name of Principal Officer: **BRUCE C MATHESON****3191 GRAND AVENUE UT****330667, MIAMI, FL, US,****33233**

Privacy Act and Paperwork Reduction Act Notice: We ask for the information on this form to carry out the Internal Revenue laws of the United States. You are required to give us the information. We need it to ensure that you are complying with these laws.

The organization is not required to provide information requested on a form that is subject to the Paperwork Reduction Act unless the form displays a valid OMB control number. Books or records relating to a form or its instructions must be retained as long as their contents may become material in the administration of any Internal Revenue law. The rules governing the confidentiality of the Form 990-N is covered in code section 6104.

The time needed to complete and file this form and related schedules will vary depending on the individual circumstances. The estimated average times is 15 minutes.

Note: This image is provided for your records only. Do Not mail this page to the IRS. The IRS will not accept this filing via paper. You must file your Form 990-N (e-Postcard) electronically.