



Florida Department of Environmental Protection

CITIZEN SUPPORT ORGANIZATION 2018 REPORT IMPLEMENTATION OF 20.058 F.S.

Citizen Support Organization (CSO) Name: FRIENDS OF THE GTM RESERVE

Mailing Address: 450 GUANA RIVER RD. PONTE VEDRA BEACH, FL 32082

Telephone Number: 904-823-4527 Website Address (if applicable): WWW.GTMNERR.ORG

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.

Brief Description of the CSO's Mission:

The Friends of the GTM Reserve's mission is to support and enhance environmental education, stewardship of natural and cultural resources, and scientific research of the GTM NERR through volunteer initiatives, citizen involvement, and community partnerships.

Brief Description of the CSO's Results Obtained:

Friends of the GTM Reserve's officers and directors provide support by attending monthly business meetings, representing the GTM NERR at community events and in groups such as the Management Advisory Group, planning and executing fundraising events, using social media to raise awareness of the GTM NERR and its significance to the community. The Friends board held their annual Strategic Planning Retreat in February where they drafted the 2018-2019 Strategic Plan and approved the annual operations budget. The board has also increased member involvement by expanding their committee structure to include the following: finance, fundraising, events, membership, nominating, and executive.

Due to the Friends ability to financially manage grants, the GTM NERR has been able to expand their research, education, and stewardship programs. Grants include science transfer grants, education grants, crab trap removal grants, and water quality research grants with organizations such as Florida Inland Navigation District, University of Michigan, and University of Florida.

Staff at the GTM NERR have been able to attend certification classes, workshops, and conferences relevant to the GTM NERR's mission, get research papers published, and maintain memberships in organizations and groups using funds provided by Friends and their supporters.

Funds raised by the Friends of the GTM Reserve had also replaced and repaired ATV's essential to the Turtle Patrol, a trailer for the oyster recycling and restoration program, and regular maintenance and replacement on equipment as needed throughout the reserve.

The Friends manage and promote use of the facilities at the GTM NERR to include: weddings and special events, dormitory stays, workshops and classes, beach permits, photography and commercial video permits to increase revenue that is used to fund the research, education, and stewardship programs at the GTM NERR.

The Friends entered into a partnership with Guana Outpost South to provide recreational amenities and improve the visitors experience at the GTM NERR. Amenities include: kayak rentals, stand-up paddle board rentals, bike rentals, bait and tackle, and the sale of recreational merchandise. Proceeds from the partnership help fund programs at the Reserve.

The Friends of the GTM Reserve have increased their engagement with community organizations in order to build recognition and partnerships for the GTM NERR:

- **St. Augustine Weddings and Events Association:** The Friends have continued their relationship with SAWEA in order to increase revenue from hosting weddings at the Reserve. Since last year, revenue from facilities use has increased over 100 percent.
- **St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce:** At the request of the Chamber, the Friends were invited to participate in a tourism task force aimed at increasing visitor engagement in Ponte Vedra Beach. The GTM was identified as a significant tourism driver and is working with the Friends to develop a "Naturally Ponte Vedra" campaign focused on outdoor recreation and passive nature experiences.

The Friends organized several financial appeals to address special needs at the GTM NERR including the following:

- **Marine Turtle Patrol appeal:** The Friends continue to raise funds to support the Marine Turtle Patrol through the Adopt-a-Nest campaign that runs from May 1st to July 31st.
- **Guana Water Quality Project appeal:** This appeal was in response to the research staff's need to add water quality monitoring stations throughout the Guana Lake and River in order to establish baseline data. The appeal successfully funded a year's worth of laboratory testing and has been extended to include additional testing points with the help of Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission and the Florida Department of Environmental Protection.

The Friends have expanded community outreach to promote the mission of the GTM NERR by building relationships with the following media outlets:

- **WSOS and GTM Radio:** Through a partnership with local channel, WSOS, the Reserve broadcasts a weekly radio show, GTM Radio, every Tuesday during the morning drive for thirty minutes. The platform is used to directly communicate with listeners in St. John's County, St. Augustine, Nocatee, and South Ponte Vedra Beach on subjects relevant to the GTM NERR mission, current events, and special appeals.

- **Action News Jax/Cox Media Group media partnership:** Action News Jax has continued its partnership with the Friends to promote the GTM NERR's Marine Turtle Patrol program. Through this partnership, Action News Jax has created 15-second PSAs with meteorologist Arielle Nixon that are broadcast to their viewers from May 1st to July 31st, and they have active links to the www.gtmnerr.org website on their page and through their banner advertisements. Action News Jax also partnered with the Coastal Training Program team for State of the Reserve, by providing a moderator, meteorologist Mike Buresh, for the opening plenary session.

Brief Description of the CSO's Plans for Next Three Fiscal Years:

See attached 2018-2019 Friends Strategic Plan.

By 2021, the Friends of the GTM Reserve plan to:

- increase fundraising and revenue to fund GTM NERR programs in order to support the NERR's Management Plan and bridge the gap in funding from state and federal agencies.
- increase the number of Friends members and supporters.
- create partnerships with corporate sponsors, family foundations, and grantors.
- expand community outreach through partnerships with other nonprofits, media outlets, civic organizations, and municipalities.
- develop a diverse portfolio of revenue and fundraising campaigns in order to maintain sustainable and consistent funding for the GTM NERR and its programs.

Copy of the CSO's Code of Ethics attached

Certify the CSO has completed and provided to the Department the organization's most recent Internal Revenue Service (IRS) Form 990, 990-EZ, or 990-N/Annual Financial Statement

Friends of the GTM Reserve

Strategic Plan 2018-2019

Background and History

The Friends of the GTM Reserve was established as the Citizen Support Organization (CSO) for the GTM Research Reserve on December 29, 2000, as per a memorandum of agreement (MOA) between the Friends of the Guana Tolomato Matanzas National Estuarine Research Reserve, Inc. and the State of Florida Department of Environmental Protection Office of Coastal and Aquatic Managed Areas (OCAMA). The agreement granted exclusivity to the Friends to serve as the CSO for the GTM Research Reserve located in St. Johns and Flagler County Florida. Under the MOA, OCAMA granted the Friends authorization to provide the following kinds of services for the benefit of the GTM Research Reserve: fund raising events, official meetings of the CSO membership, volunteer activities and projects, and public educational and interpretive activities or events.

Articles of Incorporation for the Friends were filed on September 27, 2000 and the ending date of its first tax year was September 30, 2000.

On December 24, 2003, Articles of Merger were filed with the State of Florida to merge the Friends of the GTM Reserve with the Friends of Guana River State Park upon dissolution of Guana River State Park and its absorption into the GTM Research Reserve boundary.

The Friends of the GTM Reserve received their IRS Tax Determination Letter on August 23, 2007.

The Mission

Support and enhance environmental education, stewardship of natural and cultural resources, and scientific research at the GTM Research Reserve through volunteer initiatives, citizen involvement, and community partnerships.

The Vision

A GTM Research Reserve that is fully funded and supported in order to achieve the conservation of natural biodiversity and cultural resources using science-based strategies.

Core Values

The following core values are at the heart of the Friends of the GTM Reserve. We exist to support the GTM Research Reserve and can only do so if we hold ourselves to a defined set of ideals that align with the Reserve's mission.

Support of Science. The GTM Research Reserve mission is to achieve the conservation of natural biodiversity and cultural resources by using the results of research and monitoring to guide science-based stewardship and education strategies. With that, it is our role as their Citizen Support Organization to support the use of science as the guiding principle in how we advocate and communicate on behalf of the GTM Research Reserve.

Agility and Responsiveness. As a Citizen Support Organization of the GTM Research Reserve, the Friends exist to bridge the gap in funding and provide resources when they are needed most. To do that, we must be agile, responsive, and willing to change course quickly to support the GTM NERR's most urgent needs.

Financial Sustainability. Bridging the gap in funding for the GTM Research Reserve requires that the Friends of the GTM Reserve be financially sustainable and focused on revenue creation. Decisions regarding expenses,

investments, and activities will always be scrutinized through the lens of long-term financial sustainability and growth.

Environmental Stewardship. Protection of our natural resources and stewardship of the coastal ecosystem is key to the goals set by the GTM Research. It is the role of the Friends to be a leader in environmental stewardship and “walk the walk” of sustainability through its actions and practices.

Integrity and Accountability. To meet the needs of the GTM Reserve, the Friends of the GTM Reserve must be a trusted entity in the community and fully transparent with its practices and procedures.

Focus Areas

To accomplish the mission, the Friends have five focus areas. Everything we do to achieve our mission and sustain our success falls under one of these areas:

Fundraising

Member Development

Outreach and Communications

Organizational Excellence

Program Support

2018 Objectives and Goals

For the 2018-2019 Fiscal Year, the Friends of the GTM Reserve board of directors has defined the following objectives and goals based on the GTM Research Reserve’s Management Plan, Program Work Plans, and most relevant needs. Goals shall be assessed as of the end of the 2019 fiscal year.

Objective #1: Improve existing nonprofit guidelines and develop governance best practices in order to become a stronger and more sustainable Citizen Support Organization for the GTM Research Reserve.

Goal 1.1: Update and refine existing Finance Policy

Goal 1.2: Complete an independent financial audit

Goal 1.3: Develop Employee Handbook

Goal 1.4: Develop Board Evaluation Policy

Objective #2: Create a culture of collaboration between the Friends members and GTM Research staff in order to improve and support program outcomes.

Goal 2.1: Hold quarterly Meet-and-Greets with the Friends board of directors, key volunteers, and GTM Research Reserve Program Managers

Goal 2.2: Schedule biannual coordination meetings between GTM Research Reserve Program Managers and Friends Committee Chairs

Objective #3: Increase engagement with corporate and community partners, foundations, and local professionals in order to drive fundraising that supports the GTM Research Reserve programs.

Goal 3.1: Create a corporate membership program

Goal 3.2: Develop a community partnership

Goal 3.3: Secure two new corporate partners

Goal 3.4: Secure funding from two new foundations

Objective #4: Develop a strong outreach and communications program that aligns with the GTM Research Reserve and leverages the expertise and reach of our Friends members.

Goal 4.1: Develop and implement a legislative outreach program to educate state and federal representatives on the value of the GTM Research Reserve

Goal 4.2: Participate in four outreach events in collaboration with the GTM Research Reserve

Goal 4.3: Develop a targeted outreach program in St. Augustine

Goal 4.3: Develop a Cultural Resources awareness program in collaboration with the GTM Research Reserve

Objective #5: Increase number of Friends members in order to increase revenue, improve committee engagement, and grow the GTM Research Reserve volunteer program.

Goal 5.1: Increase the number of Friends members by ten percent over previous fiscal year

Goal 5.2: Conduct a member survey

Goal 5.3: Hold two stewardship events for top tier Friends members

Objective #6: Ensure financial sustainability of the Friends in order to provide continued support of the GTM Research Reserve's programs

Goal 6.1: Meet revenue and expense goals as detailed in the 2018-2019 Friends budget

Goal 6.2: Develop Grants Administration strategy to support GTM Research Reserve grants

CODE OF ETHICS

FRIENDS OF GUANA TOLOMATO MATANZAS NATIONAL ESTUARINE RESEARCH RESERVE, INC.

PREAMBLE

- 1) It is essential to the proper conduct and operation of the Friends of the Guana Tolomato Matanzas National Estuarine Research Reserve, Inc. (herein "CSO") that its board members, officers, and employees by 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 know 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 Friends of the Guana Tolomato Matanzas National Estuarine Research Reserve, 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, and 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, 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. 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 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.



Department of the Treasury
Internal Revenue Service
Ogden UT 84201

Notice	CP211A
Tax period	September 30, 2017
Notice date	February 26, 2018
Employer ID number	91-2081432
To contact us	Phone 1-877-829-5500 FAX 801-620-5555

Page 1 of 1

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FRIENDS OF GUANA TOLOMATO MATANZAS
% JAY LANGFELDER
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PONTE VEDRA FL 32082-6527



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Important information about your September 30, 2017 Form 990

We approved your Form 8868, Application for Extension of Time To File an Exempt Organization Return

We approved the Form 8868 for your September 30, 2017 Form 990.

Your new due date is August 15, 2018.

What you need to do

File your September 30, 2017 Form 990 by August 15, 2018. We encourage you to use electronic filing—the fastest and easiest way to file.

Visit www.irs.gov/charities to learn about approved e-File providers, what types of returns can be filed electronically, and whether you are required to file electronically.

Additional information

- Visit www.irs.gov/cp211a
- For tax forms, instructions, and publications, visit www.irs.gov or call 1-800-TAX-FORM (1-800-829-3676).
- Keep this notice for your records.

If you need assistance, please don't hesitate to contact us.