

**FSCA**  
**NEWSLETTER**



**FSCA Newsletter March, April and May, 2024**

The leadership of your association hopes this newsletter finds you well. As the weather changes and summertime approaches, we're all starting to feel it. FSCA has been moving at a fast pace during the first quarter of 2024. This newsletter will update you on our accomplishments so far this year. We apologize for its length, but we felt it was important to share all the news with you. Our Website has gone through major changes to help you find what you are most interested in. Current and Upcoming Events, right on the home page!

**Presidents Letter**

First of all, I want to congratulate the 2024 Officers and Board members of FSCA. It is an honor to have been elected President and I hope and plan to live up to the expectations of the job. Hopefully, everyone had a successful and memorable hunting season.

As always FSCA has a busy schedule this year from Youth hunts, fundraisers, banquets, social events, and work projects all to conserve, protect, and promote our traditional heritage and traditional gladesmen way of recreating. Please make a point to follow our website [FSCA1994.com](http://FSCA1994.com) and our social media to stay informed about all the happenings and events.

A big thank you to all of our members, sponsors, and volunteers who have helped make all of our events a success so far this year!

If you are interested in finding out more about us or to get involved with any of the many events upcoming please come to our general meeting the 2nd Tuesday of every month. Location is always posted on our website. We look forward to seeing you at one!

**Matt Nelson**

**President**

## FSCA News March 2024, Events Recap

### FSCA 26th Annual Outdoor Youth Day On February 3rd

The Florida Sportsmen's Conservation Association has always been on the front line for youth outdoor activities. They're always finding ways that attract youth out of the city to enjoy the Outdoors. The Everglades Youth Conservation Camp (EYCC) is an essential resource that FSCA uses to educate and immerse the public in outdoor adventure and conservation education.

FSCA has been a highly engaged partner of EYCC for many years. Words cannot express how successful and well-run this event is after 26 years, and it's a must-see for children and adults of all ages. You need to put the event on your calendar for the first Saturday in February 2025. (February 1st, 2025)

Our annual youth day identifies the value of strong relationships between different stakeholders of EYCC to promote an essential agenda of reconnecting children and families with our unique ecosystem and Florida's outdoor recreation activities. Kids and their families enjoy a whirlwind of outdoor activities in a short period.

This year FAA brought 5 Airboats that gave all participants and volunteers a nice ride around the Airboat Pond. 11 buggy's gave a 1-mile buggy ride through the Pineywoods and sloughs behind the Airboat Pond. Everyone had a chance to shoot a bow, 22 rifles, muzzleloader, and shotgun, along with a brief discussion on the safe handling of firearms. Some enjoyed the primitive style of getting around, by canoeing in the lake or taking a pony ride. They even had a chance to bait a hook to catch fish; like most fishing trips, fish were biting, and the opportunity was there.

The Outdoor Youth Day Event occurs at the J. W. Corbett Wildlife Management Area. FSCA is glad to see boys and girls involved in nature-related activities instead of plugged into the electronic world of games and the Internet. This year, the essential part of the event was a diverse crowd as this was their only chance to break loose from our concrete jungle to enjoy the great outdoors.

The Florida Sportsmen's Conservation Association (FSCA) works to open public land for outdoor recreation. Our club has bloomed into a one-day outdoor fest in which kids and their families can sample a variety of outdoor activities for a \$10 admission fee.

FSCA had 1,392 participants attend Saturday's event, based at the Everglades Youth Conservation Camp in the J. W. Corbett Wildlife Management Area in northern Palm Beach County. Terry Lynn Boatwright, event chair of FSCA, worked with other outdoor recreation groups to produce this year's event. Big thanks to Lewis Prime Grill for preparing lunches for the volunteers at this year's Youth Day everyone enjoyed the brisket sandwich. Thanks to its corporate sponsors who helped pay for expensive items such as fuel for the airboats and swamp buggies, about 150 volunteers worked this year to bring the activities to kids and their families. Special thanks to vendors like the providers of the animal petting area and the pony rides! The combination of sponsors, contributing vendors, and volunteer labor makes Outdoor Youth Day affordable and successful!

### Youth Hunting Program Update

March is typically alligator hunting season for the youth hunting program in Florida. FSCA is fortunate to hold four alligator hunts in the Stormwater Treatment Areas (STA) STA 1 East, STA 2, STA 5, and at Dupuis WEA. Between the alligator hunts and the youth turkey hunt on Grassy Island, March is a busy month for FSCA Members.

We would like to take the time to thank the Hunt Masters, all of their volunteers, and the parents for supporting a great youth hunting program. A big shout-out goes to Hunt Masters Lauresa, Kerry, Billy, Steve, Bruce, and Mary for putting together a successful team effort.

On **March 25<sup>th</sup> SFWMD Recreation Forum** We had Matt, Joe, Lauresa, and Bishop attend the Recreational Forum in Naples, working on public access, conservation, and networking. Thank you to all who attended, your efforts to expand public access and experiences on SFWMD lands do not go unnoticed.

## **FSCA News April 2024 Events Recap**

### **On April 6<sup>th</sup> FAA Quarterly Meeting**

A few members of our association attended the FAA quarterly meeting at the Camp Mack Club House. Many airboat and sportsman's clubs from all over the state participated, sharing their events, issues, and concerns. The meeting was very informative, and we encourage you to attend one if you get the chance. On the same day as the FAA quarterly meeting, Billy and Bishop brought the electric bike to the 2024 Light It Up Blue/Airboaters for Autism event at Camp Mack to sell raffle tickets. This event was very successful.

### **On April 13<sup>th</sup> Black Gold Jubilee**

Tommy and Justin did a fantastic job managing our booth and selling E-bike raffle tickets. This year's event was a huge success! The weather was perfect, the food was delicious, the vendors were excellent, and the entertainment was exceptional.

Belle Glade's annual Black Gold Jubilee, a much-anticipated festival, originated from the 1976 Bi-Centennial celebration sponsored by the City of Belle Glade to commemorate our nation's 200th birthday. Inspired by that memorable event, a group of citizens organized a similar festival the following year, shifting the focus to the area's rich soil, nicknamed "Black Gold" for its ability to produce bountiful harvests. In 1978, the first official Black Gold Jubilee kicked off in McDonald Park, next to the Belle Glade Branch Library. Since then, the Jubilee has become the best-attended festival in the area, drawing thousands of residents and visitors from across South Florida.

This year, the festivities took place on Torry Island, offering a full day of fun, food, and entertainment. The variety of food ranged from Greek to Cajun, and from down-home barbecue to soul food. The child-friendly atmosphere brought families out for a day of free games and kids' rides, while adults enjoyed music under a covered stage and a wide array of vendor wares. In the evening, activities moved to the amphitheater stage for musical performances, culminating in a spectacular fireworks display over the lake.

### **On April 21<sup>st</sup> 30th Annual J W Corbett Clean Up.**

The 30th Annual J W Corbett Clean Up showcased the remarkable impact of community involvement in preserving the J W Corbett Wildlife Management Area. Thanks to the dedication of volunteers and organizations like the Florida Sportsmen's Conservation Association (FSCA), our natural spaces are thriving. This year, FSCA coordinated the cleanup with Earth Day, drawing over 75 enthusiastic volunteers who brought positivity to the task at hand. While some were dismayed by the amount of trash removed by conservationists on April 21st, it's significantly less than what was present 29 years ago.

Initiated by FSCA nearly three decades ago, the cleanup has transformed the landscape through education and the tireless efforts of volunteers. Today, JW Corbett WMA stands as a clean and inviting environment for outdoor recreation. FSCA expresses gratitude to all volunteers by offering a complimentary lunch for those who contribute by collecting at least one bag of trash. This year, the cleanup effort will utilize 30-yard dumpsters, a significant reduction from the four 30-yard dumpsters filled in previous years a testament to the success of education and community involvement.

Acknowledging FSCA President Matt Nelson for his exemplary leadership in coordinating with agencies to secure resources such as dumpsters and permission to utilize swamp buggies out of season is crucial. Special thanks are also due to Tommy McGoldrick, the event chairman, who not only organized the turnout but also personally cooked lunch alongside family and board members. However, the true heroes of this event are the dedicated volunteers whose participation made it a resounding success.

### **On April 26<sup>th</sup> Lake Okeechobee Educational Tour**

FSCA was invited to participate in an educational event focused on raising awareness about Lake Okeechobee. Led by Mike Elfenbein, the tour brought together leaders from diverse backgrounds to discuss crucial issues and share concerns. Several club members joined with their airboats, spending the day in fellowship and guiding the participants.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to everyone involved. Your participation in events like these is crucial for fostering positive relationships with the decision-makers in our state. The tour provided an enriching experience for FAA members, allowing them to engage in meaningful discussions about the lake's significance. Collaborating with skilled professionals who share our appreciation for Lake Okeechobee's beauty was truly inspiring. Events like today's educational tour with Mike Elfenbein's group are invaluable for increasing awareness about the lake's importance. It has been a fulfilling week indeed, and we look forward to continuing our efforts to promote and protect this vital ecosystem.

## **FSCA News May 2024 Events Recap**

On May 4<sup>th</sup> Chandler Slough Project Earth Day, 2024

Celebrating another successful Earth Day venture, the Florida Sportsmen's Conservation Association (FSCA) and Lake Okeechobee Airboat Association (LOAA) joined forces once again in 2024. Their mission? To enhance the Kissimmee River Public Use Area by clearing obstacles and debris. This year's focus was on Chandler Slough, south of Highway 98 on the east side of the Kissimmee River.

Equipped with (10) ten swamp buggies, (6) six side-by-sides, and (2) two mini excavators, volunteers tackled the task with an array of hand tools, including battery-powered saws, drills, impact guns, chainsaws, hammers, and pry bars.

A heartfelt salute to the 58 dedicated volunteers who generously contributed 480 hours of their time to this cause, without expecting any financial reward. Special appreciation goes out to Matt Nelson, Jamie Mellette, Ricky Burnsed, and all those who traveled far to bring their equipment to the project site. Gratitude also extends to the South Florida Water Management District for hosting this event, with a special nod to SFWMD Board of Director Ben Butler for his active participation.

The collaborative efforts of FSCA and LOAA made this Earth Day initiative a resounding success, demonstrating the power of community in enhancing public spaces for the benefit of all. Here's to another impactful Earth Day event in 2025!

On May 3~5th The Florida Outdoor Expo 2024

The three-day Florida Outdoor Expo 2024, hosted by Allsports Production at the South Florida Fairgrounds in the Palm Beach Expo building, was a hit. Activities also took place outside, with a focus on promoting the right to hunt and fish by the Florida Sportsmen's Conservation Association (FSCA). Surprisingly, many attendees were unaware of the upcoming ballot amendment regarding this right.

Participants who checked in and scanned the QR code supporting hunting and fishing rights received a raffle ticket for a Sensenich Propeller worth \$3600, generously donated by Sensenich. Congratulations to Landen Hall, the lucky winner of the propeller. The event also featured Jerry Bridges' race boat number 22, drawing attention to the cause amidst the bustling foot traffic.

Outside, FSCA members showcased two full tracks, four swamp buggies, and the raffle bike, while also promoting Florida's youth hunting program.

As the expo concluded, the FSCA expressed gratitude to all involved, especially Sensenich Propeller and Jerry Bridges, for their significant contributions. Chairman, Billy Boatwright, also thanked volunteers for their dedication and attendees for making the event a record-breaking success. Plans are already in motion for the 5th annual Florida Outdoor Expo in 2025.

On May 11<sup>th</sup> FSCA/NWTF Banquet 2024

FSCA leadership extends its gratitude to Luke Davis and the NWTF for another successful fundraiser, acknowledging the generous support despite a smaller turnout. Teaming up with NWTF aligns with FSCA's goal to benefit local wildlife management areas, preserving habitats and fostering hunting opportunities.

During its annual awards banquet, FSCA recognized individuals and organizations for their contributions to conservation. Awards ranged from the Horizon Award for emerging leaders to the Ethical Sportsman Award for combating land misuse. Notably, the "Tree for Marjory" award honors retirees or deceased members, symbolizing their legacy.

The NWTF's "Save the Habitat. Save the Hunt." initiative embodies its commitment to conserving wild turkeys and preserving hunting traditions. Over the years, NWTF's efforts have conserved millions of acres of habitat, recruited hunters, and opened access to public hunting grounds. Facing declining turkey populations and hunting participation, NWTF devised innovative strategies, including habitat restoration and community engagement.

NWTF focus on local wildlife management areas has revitalized turkey populations and enhanced overall wildlife habitats. Collaborative efforts such as food plots, native tree planting, prescribed burns, and habitat preservation have yielded significant results.

## FSCA News May 2024 Events Recap continued

Despite recent challenges, FSCA remains dedicated to its mission and is actively seeking passionate volunteers to support its initiatives. Efforts are underway to regain representation on the NWTf state board, aiming to secure more funding for local wildlife management areas, particularly in South Florida.

FSCA has its annual awards banquet where we recognize members, non-members, agencies, and volunteers for their hard work and dedication. Leadership would like to also thank everybody who was nominated for their contribution congratulations on their efforts and dedication to conservation.

- **Horizon Award:** A member who has only belonged to the FSCA for 3 years or less and has made significant contributions toward being part of the leadership, and congratulations to Justin Lovellette
- **Conservationist:** This award honors a man who has exemplified the highest principles of good sportsmanship and whose leadership abilities have made a significant impact on conservation, congratulations to Bo Moyer
- **Woman Conservationist:** This award honors a woman who has exemplified the highest principles of good sportsmanship and whose leadership abilities have made a significant impact on conservation, congratulations to Nikki McGoldrick
- **Youth Award:** Can be anyone under the age of 21 or a Youth Organization that has contributed to improving sportsmanship or the cause of conservation, and congratulations to Tyler Lukens
- **Agency Award:** Should be employed by the state, city or federal resource agency that has demonstrated dedication to protecting Florida's fish and wildlife resources, and congratulations to James Erskine
- **Non-Member Award:** A member of another club or council that has had a significant sportsmen achievement in the past, and congratulations to Paige Anderson
- **Tree for Marjory:** This award honors the recipient with an oak tree to be planted in a special place in the woods, accompanied by an engraved plaque. This award should be presented to someone that has retired or is deceased, to memorialize them in addition to dignifying their past achievements, and congratulations to John Halverson
- **John C. Jones:** The recipient of this award has extended an extraordinary amount of time and effort towards the impact of conservation and sportsmen. This award is solely chosen by the President, and congratulations to Brad Weihrauch
- **Board:** A member of the Board, chosen by the Board that has given extra effort as a member, and congratulations to Tommy McGoldrick
- **Ethical Sportsman:** Someone who has been instrumental towards the arrest and/or conviction of an individual who has mistreated the land and/or its resources, ie. Littered, poached, land destruction, etc., and congratulations to Todd Hokle

FSCA leadership attributes the success of the event to Chairmen Billy Boatwright and Steve Stroh, alongside their dedicated committee members including Marc Rivard, Tommy McGoldrick, Mark Dombroski, and Bishop Wright Jr. Special recognition is given to Brynn Summerlin for his vibrant presence and ability to make the evening enjoyable for all attendees. Additionally, the leadership of Matt Nelson inspired everyone to contribute to the event's success, making it a memorable occasion for all involved.

## FSCA News June 2024 upcoming events

Our club has several upcoming events. As the dates approach, we will provide more details. In the meantime, please check the flyers. For more information and updates, contact the person in charge listed on the flyers.

Lastly, we need to be aware of Amendment 2 – protecting your right to fish and hunt. Our Agriculture Commissioner Wilton Simpson has donated \$100K toward the importance of this campaign. The amendment will need 60% of votes to be sure this passes in November 2024. Please check our website for more information.

<https://www.fsca1994.com>