

FSCA Newsletter

Hopefully, everyone had a successful and memorable hunting season. I want to thank the outgoing board members of FSCA for all their hard work during their term. I also want to congratulate the new board members and officers, and I look forward to working with all of you going forward. Last year, we enjoyed massive wins for sportsmen and women in Florida.

I look forward to continuing the fight for traditional recreational activities we've enjoyed in South Florida for generations. Thank you to all of our members and volunteers who help keep this club moving forward; we couldn't have done it without each one of you. In closing, please stay tuned to our social media and website for information as we work on some critical issues this year.

Matt Nelson, President



Upcoming Events

- *
- 3/9/2025
Grassy Island Work Day
- *
- 4/27/2025
J.W. Corbett Clean Up
- *
- 5/3/2025
Kissimmee River Clean Up
- *
- 5/17/2025
NWTF/FSCA Awards Banquet
- *
- 6/14/2025
FSCA Fathers Day Shoot
- *
- 7/11-7/12
Florida Airboat Association
Unity Weekend at KOA
- *
- 5/2/25-5/4/25
Florida Outdoor Expo
- *
- FSCA calendar updated
weekly on [https://
FSCA1994.com](https://FSCA1994.com)



FWC law enforcement officer educating Youth Day participants about Florida wildlife.

Picture by Sandra Effertz Photography

FSCA 2025 Dupuis Youth Gator Hunt



"I just wanted to take this opportunity to thank you one last time for such a unique hunting experience this past weekend. We've had the opportunity to hunt turkey, deer, and hog, but this past weekend's gator hunt was by far the most memorable hunt we've ever seen or been on. The hunting guides were first class, and the harvest opportunity was something I'd never seen or experienced. These memories are something Andrew will be talking about for years to come with his kids and grandkids. Again, we truly can't thank you enough for the great, memorable experience you and your volunteer staff provided this past weekend. Thanks so much, and keep up the once-in-a-lifetime experience you've provided for upcoming youth alligator hunting in the South Florida region of the state."

Garrett - Andrew Kusienski

2024-2025 YOUTH HUNTS

Grassy Island
Youth

Turkey/Hog Hunt

Mar 7-9th

*

STA 5 Youth
Gator Hunt

Mar 21-23rd

*

Holiday Park
Youth Python
Hunt

Date TBD

To learn more about our youth hunts or how to sign up, please visit

<https://myfwc.com/education/programs/youth-hunting-program/>

Please like, follow, and share us on social media!



Youth Day 2025

By Bishop Wright

2025 Outdoor Youth Day Recap

This year's Outdoor Youth Day was indeed one for the books, one of the best we've had in the last 27 years! We sincerely thank our generous sponsors who made this incredible event possible. A huge thank you goes out to the 180 volunteers who dedicated their time and effort to creating an unforgettable experience. Your hard work and passion bring joy and lasting memories to so many.

A special shoutout to those who brought their equipment side-by-side, swamp buggies, and airboats; you are the heart of this event! Your contributions continue to be the main attraction, offering thrilling experiences to all who attend.

This year, we were honored to have three VIP sponsors:

Okeechobee Steakhouse and Lewis Prime Grills, who gave our volunteers a five-star lunch, thank you for your generosity! **Wicked Archery**, who took over the archery range and did a phenomenal job managing the lines while introducing creative new ideas, such as using balloons as targets, was a crowd favorite! **Native Boyz**, helped promote this event and crafted outstanding social media coverage, ensuring that our 'Outdoor Youth Day' was showcased in a way that captured its true spirit.

For 27 years, Outdoor Youth Day has been a staple event, offering scenic airboat rides around the Airboat Pond and thrilling one-mile swamp buggy rides through the Pineywoods and sloughs. Participants get hands-on experience shooting bows, .22 rifles, muzzleloaders, and shotguns, all with an emphasis on firearm safety education. Other activities include canoeing, pony rides, and fishing, where catching a fish is almost guaranteed!

With over 20,000 attendees in the past two decades, this event has allowed countless young people to engage in outdoor activities rather than being glued to screens. This year, we were blessed to welcome **1,175 participants**, each of whom walked away with incredible memories to last a lifetime.

Thank you to everyone who contributed to making this year's event a success; we can't wait to do it again next year!

And a big thank you to the Everglades Youth Camp staff for their dedication to preserving this camp's heritage. EYCC's hard work in maintaining and grooming the facility ensures everyone can enjoy the great outdoors. Without your efforts, the experience wouldn't be the same!



Pictures by Sandra Effertz Photography

By Nikki McGoldrick, FSCA, All Rights Reserved

Istokpoga Airboat Ramp Restoration

By Bishop Wright

On February 9, 2024, the **Florida Sportsmen's Conservation Association** and the **Lake Okeechobee Association of Airboaters** teamed up to work on the airboat ramp at the Istokpoga Canal, an essential access point to the Kissimmee River.

The existing slide was never an ideal fit, and the wooden structure had deteriorated significantly over time. The South Florida Water Management District is upgrading the ramp with marine-grade wood to improve durability. Our team focused on removing the old wooden components while preserving the concrete pilings, ensuring a solid foundation for the new structure.

A huge thank you goes out to the chairman, Billy Boatwright, and the **14 dedicated volunteers** who brought an array of power tools to dismantle the old ramp. Special appreciation to **Ricky Burnsed**, who provided a skid steer and mini excavator, saving us from severe backaches! Thanks to his efforts, the heavy lifting was handled efficiently, making the process smoother for everyone.

Projects like this help the district save thousands of taxpayer dollars while maintaining safe and accessible public waterways. We take pride in contributing to these conservation efforts, ensuring outdoor enthusiasts can continue enjoying Florida's beautiful natural resources. It's gratifying to be part of a project that benefits both the environment and the community.



Lake Okeechobee Association of Airboaters

2025 Airboat & Buggy Show

By Bishop Wright

FSCA Leadership would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to everyone who stopped by our booth and visited Niki, Billy, and Bishop during this year's Airboat & Buggy Show. A special thank you goes out to the event organizers for organizing such a fantastic gathering, allowing us to showcase our club and promote the Florida Sportsmen's Conservation Association (FSCA) through raffle bike sales tickets and other merchandise.

The Lake Okeechobee Association of Airboaters (LOAA) would like to personally thank every individual who contributed to this year's show: our incredible sponsors, dedicated vendors, those who brought out their rigs, LOAA hardworking volunteers, event judges, and, of course, the spectators who came out to enjoy the event. Your participation and support helped make this year's show a tremendous success!

We also want to express our gratitude to the Okeechobee County Government, the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC), and the Okeechobee Tourist Development Council for allowing us to host the event at the **Okeechobee County Agri-Civic Center & Fairgrounds**.

Much effort went into planning, setting up, and running the event, and we genuinely appreciate everyone who played a role in making it happen. At the heart of this event is family creating memories, seeing the joy on kid's faces, reconnecting with friends, and earning a little bragging rights along the way! Most importantly, **our focus remains on conservation**, ensuring that future generations can continue to enjoy Florida's great outdoors.

Thank you again to all who participated, and **congratulations to this year's winners!** There were so many outstanding rigs, and we appreciate everyone who took the time to enter.

Hunt 4-Cylinder Class

1. Kenny Leitheuser
2. Gary Armstrong
3. RJ Stossel

Hunt 6-Cylinder Class

1. Zach Dombrowski
2. Charlie Phillips
3. Mason Faulk

Hunt Car Motor Class

1. Cody Collignon
2. Kenny Leitheuser
3. Kristi Rhodes

Show Airboat

- Best of Show:** Kevin Rhodes
1. Todd & Gary Armstrong
 2. Dan & Gary Armstrong
 3. Randy Burgin

Ride Airboat

1. Todd & Gary Armstrong
2. Randy Burgin
3. Gary Armstrong

Hunt Buggy

1. Cody Cable
2. Kenneth Ruszenas
3. Weston Shepard

Show Buggy Best of Show: Kirk Kennedy

1. Maverick Johnson
2. Johnny Escobar
3. Kerri Cogolin

Tracks

1. Goss Family
2. Kirk Kennedy
3. John Jones

Side x Sides

1. Andy Busscher
2. Charlotte Young
3. Dustin Mansfield

Tonka Class

1. Noah Gonzale
2. Lincoln Garcia
3. Amelia Wright

We appreciate everyone's involvement and look forward to an even bigger and better event next year! See you in 2026!

Everglades Day at the Arthur R. Marshall Loxahatchee Wildlife Refuge

On February 8, **Billy, Bishop, and Tommy** dedicated their time to representing hunting and fishing at The Everglades Day Festival is an annual event that stands as the refuge's largest gathering of the year!

This exciting festival offers a wide variety of activities for the whole family. **Kids' Fun Zone** – Obstacle courses, a story walk, rock climbing, and lawn games, **"Try It" Activities** – Fishing with **Reel Fishing Charities** and an archery range, **Tram Tours & Guided Walks** – Exploring the beauty of the refuge, **Electrofishing Demonstrations** – A unique look at fisheries research, **Keynote Speakers** – Presenting in the Visitor Center Theater, **Local Exhibitors & Vendors** – Showcasing conservation efforts and outdoor gear, **Food Trucks** - Offering a variety of delicious options

Billy, Bishop, and Tommy handed out literature about Florida's Youth Hunt Program at their booth and shared photographs showcasing FSCA's efforts to preserve natural resources. Their discussions emphasized conservation issues and the ongoing work being done to protect Florida's outdoor heritage.

Everglades Day continues to be a fantastic opportunity to educate the public about conservation, responsible hunting and fishing, and the importance of protecting our wildlife. A big thank you to everyone who helped make this event a success!

Congratulations to the 2025 Elected Board Members

President – Matt Nelson

1st VP- Kerry Garceau

2nd VP- Lauresa Musgrove

Secretary – Nicole McGoldrick

Treasurer- Mark Dombrowski

Publication Director- Joe Rabena

2 Year Board

Pete Lumb

Dan King

Johnny Escobar

Robert Hickman

1 Year Board

Justin Lovellette

Thomas McGoldrick

Steve Stroh

Terrilynn Boatwright

Alternate Board

Christian Duke

Andrew Bernett

Honorary Board

Bishop Wright

Paul Hickman

Todd Hallman

Honorary Past

President

Billy Boatwright

In Memory

Sean embodied the true spirit of a Glades man. His dedication to our club and numerous other conservation organizations helped instill a love for the outdoors in countless young people. He devoted his life to preserving our outdoor heritage for future generations, ensuring that the traditions of Gladesmen would endure.

Sean was always there for those in his circle; his passion for the outdoors was admired by many, and his generosity knew no bounds. He was a gentleman in every sense, and his absence will be deeply felt.

Tonight, Sportsmen, Conservationists, and Glades men have lost a giant. Sean was always the first to volunteer, the first to stand up for outdoor rights, and the first to show up on workdays. He faced the final chapter of his life with remarkable strength, never losing that unwavering smile. Though a man who asked for nothing in return, his presence was enormous in the hearts of those who knew him. He never sought recognition, plaques, or awards, and he did it all because he believed in it.

From Washington, D.C., to the Florida Wildlife Commission, from the South Florida Water Management District to the wilds of the American West and safaris in Africa, Sean lived life to the fullest. And even in his final days, if you spoke to him on the phone, you'd never know he was sick. His attitude remained as optimistic as ever.

Rest easy, Sean. Thank you for every hour and every effort you dedicated so that future generations can experience the authentic Florida outdoors.

RIP Sean, you will be missed!

