

Bishop Wright Jr. received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Florida Sportsmen's Conservation Association (FSCA) at its 30th reunion on June 22, 2024.

Robert "Bob" Stossel Sr. admired the young Bishop Wright Jr.'s enthusiasm and drive, recognizing his passion, tenacity, and leadership skills. Bob encouraged Bishop to take a greater role in conservation issues. Over the years, Bishop has had numerous mentors, including Walt Brandon, Johnny Jones, Jack Moller, Randy Dowd, and Barbara Jean Powell. He learned valuable lessons from them and became a respected conservation leader, living by the motto "Winners Never Quit!"

Bishop is generous with his time and talent regarding sportsmen's issues. He serves on the board of the FSCA. He has held leadership positions in the Florida Airboat Association, Palm Beach County Airboat & Halftrack Conservation Club, The Everglades Coordinating Council, and the Florida Wildlife Federation board of directors. Despite his numerous volunteer commitments, he manages to supervise 60 employees in the lawn maintenance company he's employed at.

He and his wife Caroll, married for 24 years, have no children, but Bishop is dedicated to ensuring that today's youth will inherit Florida's rich outdoor heritage. He envisioned FSCA's Outdoor Youth Day, an annual event introducing kids to outdoor recreation, including swamp buggy rides, canoeing, firearm safety, horseback riding, hiking, and wildlife observation. The 25th annual event recently hosted 1,200 participants.

In 1994, when the Everglades Youth Camp faced closure due to outdated infrastructure, Bishop mobilized volunteers to upgrade the camp's waste system, saving \$50,000 and keeping the camp open. As a Youth Camp supporter, he also promotes the region's outdoor heritage by encouraging "old timers" to share their experiences.

Bishop is a leader in Florida's Youth Hunting Program in its 18th season. This program develops young hunters and trains new hunt masters. It has expanded under Bishop's guidance, putting more young hunters in the outdoors and reviving the hunting culture.

In 2009, three out of five children representing Florida at the NRA Youth Hunter Challenge were under Bishop's mentorship, with all three earning the chance to compete in the national championship in Pennsylvania.

Bishop emphasizes conservation ethics and the importance of "paying it forward." He volunteers for conservation projects and leads initiatives to remove trash and invasive vegetation from Wildlife Management Areas. He has spearheaded projects like removing trash, removing obsolete fencing, and planting native vegetation to restore natural areas.

Bishop responds to natural resource emergencies and educates decision-makers about necessary changes. In 1994, he played a key role in "Operation Deer Feed," addressing the plight of deer in flooded areas and involving officials and media to witness the consequences of poor water management. He continues to work with various organizations to educate legislators about environmental issues and the benefits of a healthy ecosystem.

He has consulted with FWC and SFWMD to expand recreational access to numerous public lands in South Florida. Bishop is knowledgeable about public land management issues and has been instrumental in opening access to areas like Nicodemus Slough and the Kissimmee River Basin.

Bishop pioneered the Airboat & Swamp Buggy Festival to celebrate traditional Gladesmen transportation, which has become a significant fundraiser for organizations such as the Palm Beach County Airboat and Halftrack Conservation Club, Florida Airboat Association, and FSCA. As past president of the Florida Airboat Association, he expanded this vision to a state level with an annual unity weekend event that has been successful for 17 years.

Bishop defends Sportsmen's rights to access Florida's lands and waters, advocating for sound testing for airboats and creating an Airboater Code of Ethics. He contributed to the US Army Corps of Engineers study on Gladesmen Culture, emphasizing its importance.

Since 2014, FSCA has hosted annual Earth Day events under Bishop's leadership, removing abandoned research stations and other structures from areas like Water Conservation Area 2, Arthur Marshall Wildlife Refuge, and the Kissimmee River. These projects, which could cost over \$50,000 each if contracted out, were completed with volunteer labor and donated equipment.

In 2015, Bishop testified before the Natural Resource Committee in Washington, DC, advocating increased Sportsmen's access to National Wildlife Refuge Lands. He leads the Sportsman's Trust Group, working to gain more access to USFWS land and building cooperation between conservation groups. He formed the Sportsman's Trust Group in 2018 with Danny Brantley, creating a working relationship with the US Fish and Wildlife Service. This led to the establishment of alligator hunting at Arthur Marshall Loxahatchee Wildlife Refuge, the only refuge in the nation with such a program and new hunting opportunities at other refuges.

Bishop's leadership in conservation organizations inspires volunteerism and bridges communication gaps between governments. He is a proven conservation leader who works to leave natural resources better than he found. For these reasons, Bishop Wright Jr. is the deserving recipient of the 2024 Lifetime Achievement Award from the Florida Sportsmen's Conservation Association.