



Ringer News

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The VOICE of Florida waterfowlers

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**GOVERNING BOARD
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In the last issue of this newsletter we reported on the disturbing annexation proposal which would have placed 25 square miles of the upper St. John's marsh into the city of Palm Bay. UW-F has been fighting the annexation through a series of letters, e-mails, and public comments delivered at the SJRWMD RAC meetings. We are pleased to report that the plans have been put on hold.

One major objection from the beginning regarded a proposal in the agreement to allow for

de-annexation, subject to a vote of the governing board, if Palm Bay reversed any of the ordinances required by SJRWMD prior to the annexation. UW-F took the position that there was little chance that such a de-annexation vote would ever take place. The only acceptable resolution was to make de-annexation automatic. After several reviews by City of Palm Bay, SJRWMD, and independent lawyers, it was determined that not only would the Governing Board have to vote on de-annexation, the City of Palm Bay council would have to vote to reverse the annexation as well. It was obvious to all involved that any future city council that rescinded the ordinance permitting the discharge of firearms would be unlikely to vote to de-annex no matter what action the Governing Board had taken.

Mr. William Kerr, SJRWMD recreational advisory committee chairman, pledged that any revision of the proposal would be brought before the RAC for public comment before any action was taken by the district. We owe a debt of gratitude to Mr. Kerr for following through with the legal department and verifying that the public's concerns were addressed.

-David Lithgow

STORM WATER TREATMENT AREA HUNTING PROGRAM

After almost two years of meetings with the SOUTH FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT'S Recreation Advisory Committee, the committee's recommendations regarding STA recreation opportunities were forwarded to the WRAC for approval. Approval at the WRAC level is usually accepted by the Governing Board. UW-F proposals were highlighted in the final proposal in a presentation by Gary Goforth, Chief Consulting Engineer SFWMD. The SFWMD staff supported the basic UW-F plan for the expansion of hunting access. Some requests, such as the increase from 25 to 40 permits per hunt, were not approved but will be considered in the future.

The results are the addition of STA 1W to the hunting program with STA 5, the addition of afternoon hunting, and the revamping of the reservation system to a one time per season call in, personal visit to a tax office or FWC web site method of arranging hunts. The "no transfer" rule, with the assigned hunter required to

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FROM THE PRESIDENT

"Water, water everywhere....." Florida is not the ocean but the poem we all learned in school has it right. With 30 inches of rain on much of the state in September and early October during the four hurricanes, the rivers and lakes flooded out into the countryside and into many homes and businesses. Early teal season was a bust for most due to high water and/or high winds. WMAs were closed. Navigation was halted on rivers, including the Kissimmee. Many hunters were kept at home by storm damaged roofs and the challenge of maintaining the family without electricity. The hardy group who did venture out found old haunts with marsh vegetation ripped to shreds, often floating on top of the water. A few found ducks.

Foul conditions are usually a boon to waterfowlers. Cold, rain, ice, blustery wind..... nature's little tortures all portend a good day for duck hunters. We accept the hardships as part of the sport..... and deep down really love the challenges. Therefore, let us move on into the wonders of the new season to come!

UW-F has been active through out the summer and early fall. The SOUTH FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT meetings on the water level regulations for Lake Okeechobee were completed. The recent bias to keep the lake lower (which UW-F supported) really paid off when the rains came. The lake was at 12 feet in early September instead of 15 feet as in past years. Those extra three feet available to accept the run off from the

hurricanes were crucial. Dr. Susan Gray, Division Director - Lake Okeechobee, and her group are to be commended for a job well done.

The regulations for expanding duck hunting on the Everglades restoration Storm Water Treatment Areas were published by the FWC and accepted by the SFWMD. UW-F's positions were highlighted on a slide during the presentation of Dr. Gary Goforth, Chief Consulting Engineer, SFWMD. Many of the positions were included in the new rules. UW-F appreciates the confidence shown by the SFWMD staff and we intend to "earn" our way toward more hunting opportunities in the years to come.

Other work goes on with member and regional director support across the state. The issue of annexation of large portions of the St. Johns River marshes, the access problems in the southwestern bays, Merritt Island Refuge conflicts with other users, and the shrinking habitat with resulting over crowding of hunters in the mid-state region are just a few subjects being addressed. Reports on these issues are included in UW-F newsletters. UW-F has been selected to sit on the commission planning the FUTURE OF HUNTING IN FLORIDA meeting next summer. UW-F is attending the FWC workshops to write the FLORIDA COMPREHENSIVE WILDLIFE CONSERVATION STRATEGY.

Your VOICE is being heard!

As we put this newsletter together, duck hunters across the state are bringing the decoys out of attics, repainting

many, patching the camouflage netting, taking the mud motor out for a test spin and generally gearing up for the first hunt of the year. Those beautiful Florida sunrises with a myriad of colorful waterfowl winging across the marshes beckon. Herons, egrets, ibis, ospreys, hawks and eagles....and those heart stopping flocks of blue wing teal, ringers and woodies will bring the rush of emotions only a duck hunter knows. I wish all UW-F members and friends a safe and memorable season.

-Newton Cook

DIRECTORS MEETING JANUARY 8

A Directors meeting is planned to be held in conjunction with the traditional UW-F winter hunt in the Merritt Island area. The meeting will be at noon on Saturday January 8. All Directors, Regional Directors and members are welcome to attend. Following the official meeting there will be an open discussion.

Watch for details on the UW-F web site.

We will be having a special presentation to commemorate the 50th year in the duck blind for our president, Newton Cook. It was 1954 when a 14 year old was taken to Real Foot Lake by a kind uncle. The young man shot a Blackjack that day on the storied lake and that experience hooked him for life. We all owe a debt of gratitude to Newton's uncle. Won't you come and join us for a fun hunt, a productive meeting and a special day for a hard working duck hunting advocate. DL

Governor Bush Accelerates Restoration of America's Everglades

--Eight key environmental projects to be completed 10 years ahead of schedule--

AMERICA'S EVERGLADES –

Joined by a host of environmental advocates, Governor Jeb Bush today unveiled an ambitious plan to accelerate the restoration of America's Everglades. As part of the \$8 billion state-federal partnership to restore the River of Grass, Florida is stepping up the pace to complete critical environmental projects more than a decade ahead of schedule.



"Florida is strengthening its commitment to the Everglades by further accelerating the largest environmental restoration effort in this nation's history," said Governor Jeb Bush. "Completing critical restoration projects more than 10 years ahead of schedule will provide immediate environmental, social and economic benefits."

The culmination of months of discussion with their federal partners, Florida is speeding up funding, design and construction to complete eight Everglades restoration projects over the next seven years. At substantial savings to taxpayers, the projects include construction of more than 8,000 acres of treatment marsh, which use plants to clean pollution from water flowing into the Everglades. In addition, above ground reservoirs will offer 418,000 acre-feet of water storage -- the same capacity as six million residential swimming pools.

"Florida's determination to accomplish results at less cost demonstrates our commitment to this massive environmental endeavor," said Department of Environmental Protection Secretary Colleen M. Castille. "Our strategic investment will revive wildlife habitat, improve flood control and deliver 50 percent of the surface water storage needed to replenish the entire 2.4 million-acre marsh."

Governor Jeb Bush and Nicolás Gutiérrez, Chair, South Florida Water Management District Governing Board, sign the Acceler8 agreement to expedite critical Everglades restoration projects.

Accelerated projects include:

Biscayne Bay Coastal Wetlands will restore the quantity, quality, timing and distribution of freshwater to Biscayne Bay, expand coastal wetlands, revive marine habitat and improve the health of Biscayne National Park.

C-111 Spreader Canal will provide a more natural sheet-flow to Florida Bay eliminating harmful freshwater discharges and revitalizing wetlands and wildlife habitat in the Southern Glades and Model Lands.

C-43 West Storage Reservoir will capture and store stormwater runoff and freshwater releases from Lake Okeechobee to protect coastal estuaries. The 160,000 acre-feet reservoir will also provide a reliable supply of water supply for the Caloosahatchee Estuary along with nearby farms and residential areas.

C-44 Reservoir/Stormwater Treatment Area will capture and treat excess stormwater runoff before it enters the St. Lucie Estuary and Indian River Lagoon. The project includes construction of 4,000 acres of treatment marsh along with a 4,000 acre, 10 foot deep above-ground reservoir.

Everglades Agricultural Area Reservoir Phase 1/Bolles and Cross Canals will protect coastal estuaries and reduce the flow of nutrients into the

Everglades by capturing and storing freshwater releases from Lake Okeechobee, along with agricultural stormwater runoff, in a 190,000 acre-feet above ground reservoir.

Everglades Agricultural Area Stormwater Treatment Area Expansion will enhance the performance of 40,000 acres of wetlands already built by the state and construct an additional 4,500 acres of treatment marsh.

Southern Golden Gate Estates will restore a natural flow of water to Ten Thousand Islands National Wildlife Refuge, restore wildlife habitat, improve the quality and quantity of water delivered to coastal estuaries and maintain flood protection.

Five Water Preserve Areas will provide a buffer between natural and developed areas and divert urban runoff into constructed and natural storage areas. "Sound environmental and financial management is putting Everglades restoration ahead of schedule at considerable savings," said Henry Dean, Executive Director for the South Florida Water Management District. "We are delivering environmental results faster and making water available for nature quicker than originally planned."

With more than 254,000 acres of the land needed to complete Everglades restoration already in public ownership, remaining parcels will be acquired at today's prices avoiding future expenses from rising property values. While creating construction and engineering jobs in



South Florida, labor and materials will also be purchased at today's prices.

"The Administration enthusiastically endorses and welcomes the Governor's new 'Acceler8' initiative," said James L. Connaughton, chairman of the White House Council on Environmental Quality. "It will help us in our joint efforts to restore the Everglades faster and more efficiently and effectively. Our federal agencies will not only be able to help the State achieve dramatic results on a faster pace for these eight projects, but Acceler8 will free up resources to allow the Administration to focus on completing other critical CERP projects and the Modified Water Deliveries Project."

Restoring America's Everglades is reviving habitat for more than 60 threatened and endangered species, establishing a reliable supply of water for more than 8 million Floridians and providing flood control consistent with the restoration -- a benefit underscored by the impact of three hurricanes on South Florida's shores.

Under the leadership of Governor Bush, Florida forged a 50-50 state-federal partnership to implement the \$8 billion Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan and has committed more than \$2.5 billion through the end of the decade to clean up and restore America's Everglades.

For more information, visit; www.evergladesnow.com.

EVERGLADES RESTORATION IMPORTANT TO FLORIDA DUCK HUNTERS

As the State and Federal Government proceed with the restoration of the Everglades it is vital to have an organization like UW-F involved with the process. Plans for public use and recreation for these projects must be submitted in the early stages. Any changes to the individual project scope

documents after congressional approval are difficult. The money for recreation must be sought from the very beginning to ensure we will not be locked out of more public lands. These projects will represent the largest man made marshes in the world. The opportunities for waterfowling will be

tremendous. South Florida will be a desired destination for premier duck hunting. Now more than ever we must remain vigilant, keep our ears to the ground, scour the newspapers and internet for updates and be sure to be the VOICE for Florida waterfowlers.

SOUTH

As usual the 8 Street Gang had to log a lot of miles to get only a few ducks during the early season. Although preseason scouting reports made us optimistic about hunting Everglades Frances Taylor WMA, emergency closures prohibited us from hunting our home turf. This WMA remains closed and we hope it will open in time for the regular season. On opening day the whole gang was set to go to TM Goodwin but it was closed due to Hurricane

Jeanne. Instead, we headed for Moore haven and were able to harvest some woodies. On Sunday Juan and I headed to a private field in Homestead where we were able to harvest 5 BWT. Wednesday we went to Moore Haven again and were skunked but were able to test the new Hyper 35 at the big lake. Loaded with 2 guys and dog we were able to consistently run 27mph on an engine that was not broken in and is not a production model. It appears that this is the wave of the future! UW has been doing its own form of predator control in the Everglades as many of our members drew permits for the statewide alligator hunt and we did our part to make the waters safer for our dogs and fellow hunters! So long from the South, until next time!

-Alex Urquia



UW-F & 8th Street Gang members Johnny Perdomo (left) and Alex Urquia (right) take part in Florida style predator control.

SOUTHWEST

I promise I won't use the "H" word. You know the one I'm talking about. After four of them hit our beloved state this year I'm afraid to even whisper that awful word. Early teal season was a little rough as I only had the weekend to hunt (Sunday was a bust thanks to Frances). Saturday dawned slightly overcast and humid, but I didn't care as the first trip of a new season is always welcomed. My friend Jim and I were on the maiden voyage of the newly christened "Quack Attack". Man that name is much cooler than last seasons "Duck Barge". The old rig looked like a barge too, with its squared off camo burlap covered blind. Though we shot ducks from her, I felt like I was hunting from a big floating box on the

bay. During the summer we designed and built (through trial and error) a folding blind, complete with grass matt camo. Wow what a difference! A new name was needed for this duck slaying rig. Enter the "Quack Attack". Well the teal played impossible to get, but the mottled ducks pitched right in. Very cool. Not only that, but herons and egrets walked all around us unaware of the two predators in the marsh. After the morning flight was over I got out of the boat to get a firsthand look at the new set up. All I can say is "Grass Island". It looks so much more natural than the "barge". Look out ducks!

Nothing has changed in my county (Pinellas) concerning the ability to duck hunt. Hunting's legal, but discharging a firearm is not. Makes it a little tough,

huh? If I could just coax them into slam dunk bow range. Would it be considered ethical to water swat ducks with bow and arrow?

Hope everyone's lives are getting back to normal after all the hurr.....oops, I almost said it. Well good luck to all this season and I hope to see some of you on the water. Just not too close to my decoy spread, OK? Next issue I'll have an update on how the new blind worked and hopefully better news on the legality of local hunting.

Shoot straight,

-Mike Kuhn

POLK COUNTY

I attended a meeting regarding duck hunting at Circle B Ranch at the request of Gaye Sharpe, head of the Polk county environmental lands program. Others at the meeting included representatives from the FWC, Sierra Club, Polk County Sheriffs department, Audubon Society, SWFWMD and Polk county land management.

The good news is that duck hunting will continue on the property. There are expectations that the hunts will be better organized and controlled. The property was flooded by the hurricanes and the condition for the season is questionable as there are no plans for major efforts to artificially correct water levels.

The Sierra Club's representative, Marian Ryan, mentioned her activity to bring duck hunting to a tract purchased by the SWFWMD three years ago known as the

Old Florida Plantation. The property is on the southwest side of Lake Hancock. The land use staff at the SWFWMD indicated it is critical for waterfowl organizations and other interested parties to be heard during the planning stages of the land use plan.

-Brent Burris

NORTH CENTRAL

Water Is up!

1 Orange Lake Basin, water is back to the high mark and hydrilla and coontail is back.

2 Orange creek, water levels look great for Puddlers this year.

3 Ocklawaha Prairie is open for a fee the habitat looks good

4 Emeralda, some issues with water level and the spraying of hydrilla is a concern. The issue with the hydrilla is that it is back in Lake Griffin look for the divers to be back in open water

5 PCS water levels in 4 and 8 should bring the good old day's back, very good news. There have been some improvements to the ramps but still muddy

6 Okahumpka lots of hydrilla, them ringers will take a pounding opening day

With they way the water is spread out this year I feel that you will need to SCOUT SCOUT SCOUT every chance you get

Good luck and be safe this year

-Phil Harper

NORTHEAST

Now that things have settled down after the storms, things don't look so bad in NE Florida. Three Hurricanes can bring drastic changes to water levels as well as effecting winds. Many of NE Fla's lakes and rivers received much needed water. This should make it easier to get into back bays and coves that were dry before.

Guana River WMA looks good for when the ducks show. As for Merritt Island, hunters lucky enough to get permits should have a good opening. Inland, higher water levels have covered most hydrilla, but as quick as the stuff grows, it won't take long to top out again. Inland lakes, such as Orange and Loclossa, look outstanding and inland wooded creeks' water levels should start to drop leaving pools that woodies love to rest and feed in. The St Johns will be lower, allowing hunters to hunt flooded, shallow grasses and apparent pot holes.

With a few more cold snaps, the ducks should come to a buffet of good waterfowl food. Hurry up Nov! Until then, hunt safe and take a kid with you!

-Duke DuBose

MEMBER CONTACT INFO.

HAVE YOU CHANGED YOUR E-MAIL, PHONE NUMBER OR HOME ADDRESS? If so, please contact David Lithgow (PM or post on the Members Only site to his attention or e-mail to dlithgow@bellsouth.net).

STAY IN THE LOOP!

STA's

(Continued from page 1)

show a picture identification at check in, allows a fair allocation of hunting opportunities. From the accolades recorded on the UW-F web site, this new system is a great improvement over the previous call in methods.

The 2004 season will have over 2000 hunters on the premier water fowling marshes in Florida, versus about 500 in previous years.

The Everglades restoration program will create hundreds of thousands of acres of man made marshes and reservoirs, none of which are scheduled to be opened to public use without the direct input of the Recreation Committee. UW-F's position on the committee is important to the future of all waterfowling in south Florida. The management of the filter marshes just happens to coincide with the most advantageous methods to attract wintering waterfowl. The new marshes will hold the preponderance of the wintering flocks and adversely impact the normal patterns of concentrations of ducks in the glades and the southern marshes of lake Okeechobee. Hunting on STA's will help disperse the concentrations.

There remain advocates against public access to the STAs within the various bureaucracies involved. It is mandatory that those hunting the STAs are careful to practice a high standard of ethics. The STAs' primary purpose is to filter the incoming water from the

agriculture and urban developments, reducing the phosphorus to a very low percentage. Anything that distracts from that purpose will be banned. The impact of hunters and boats disturbing the process will be monitored. Therefore, when you are on the STAs, consider your activities in this regard. Also, the "non consumptive" users are watching for any reason to complain, such as empty shotgun shells floating in the water. Be sure you leave the area as clean, or cleaner, than when you arrived.

UW-F believes these man made marshes can become an internationally renowned destination for scientists, bird watchers and hunters. UW-F members are participating in a historic development that will be enjoyed by the future generations to come. The cooperation and support of many SFWMD and FWC staff members are very much appreciated by UW-F. The work required to plan and execute a new hunting program on marshes under very strict environmental control is difficult and often contentious. The opening of additional marshes will depend on the positive reviews of the scientists. From the test program on STA 5, all expectations are that the STAs and reservoirs now under construction across south Florida will become part of a vast waterfowling Mecca.

STA brochures are available on the FWC web site:

www.wildflorida.org/hunting/wma/South_Region/STA-1-West.pdf

www.wildflorida.org/hunting/wma/South_Region/STA-5.pdf

UW-F PUBLIC COMMENTS AT OCTOBER SFWMD WRAC MEETING

Newton Cook addressed the WRAC as follows:

UW-F participated during the last year in a series of workshops on the proposal to modify the management rules for the water level in Lake Okeechobee, chaired by Dr. Susan Gray. We believe Dr. Gray deserves our thanks for her work which led to the lake being at 12 ft. in September instead of higher as in past years. The District is often criticized, sometimes unfairly, but the lower level before the recent storms may well have prevented a tragedy.

On the topic of my comments, UW-F thanks the WRAC for the expansion of hunting on the STAs. We appreciate the SFWMD staff for the work and support of the efforts to add recreation, especially hunting, to the STA activities. The STA managers are to be commended for moving toward a more open door policy within the guidelines of the environmental purposes. The goal of UW-F members is to earn the STA managers' respect and willingness to open all appropriate properties to water fowling on most days of the season.

Thanks, also, to the FWC, especially Steve Coughlin, for taking on the task of establishing the regulations and managing the hunts.

UW-F is pleased that the hunts have been expanded to two STAs and each will have

morning and afternoon sessions. These actions multiply the opportunities by four. We had hoped one of the STAs would have experimented with up to forty pairs of hunters versus the current twenty-five. We will suggest this trial for next year.

Most important, the objective for increased hunting on the STAs goes far beyond the few hunters lucky enough to be chosen. The STAs are a great success story as magnets for the wintering flock of waterfowl in Florida. Unless hunted, the normal distribution of waterfowl in the glades and lake will not occur. Many complaints were recorded last season and the loss of recreation and economic activity in these areas will grow until most, if not all, the STAs are hunted on most of the sixty day season.

UW-F has suggested a program similar to the LOXAHATCHEE FEDERAL REFUGE be used for the STAs. We look forward to working with all partners on this project.

Emerelda Marsh Update

Prior to the early teal season and after visiting the marsh, I spoke to the SJRWMD folks in charge of marsh maintenance to find out what their plans were for this year. The marsh looked great, however, the news I received is not good at all. The SJRWMD had several sprayings scheduled for the marsh including during the week of the early teal season. I tried to discuss the issue and see if somehow the spraying could be delayed until the duck hunting season closes. I did not

prevail. I was told that the hydrilla discharged from Emerelda into Griffin was an issue and that Griffin had recently been sprayed to eradicate a hydrilla bloom. Well, I have not seen Griffin lately, but I can imagine that the hydrilla must have cleaned up the soupy water in that lake very nicely prior to chemical application.

I am afraid that there will be no puddle ducks in Emerelda this year again!!!! Our only hope is that SJRWMD gets the spraying done early and only once or twice to give the time for the chemicals to dissipate before the ducks migrate. Hopefully, they also won't kill all the aquatic weeds in the process so the ducks will have something to eat. For the life of me, I cannot understand why these agencies insist on poisoning all of our waters and wiping out the food supply for waterfowl precisely when the birds migrate to Florida!!! Does anyone have a constructive idea of how to deal with this perennial issue that is devastating waterfowling in Florida?

The good news is that in the future, SJRWMD expects to control hydrilla by altering water levels in the marsh. That was the plan for this year apparently, however, due to various circumstances the control of hydrilla via water level adjustments was not implemented. Hopefully, this water level control management plan will be put in place in the coming year and will become the method of choice for aquatic weed control in Emerelda.

In addition, I was told that there are plans to connect the marsh with Griffin through the existing canal system and to let the water levels in the marsh adjust with the level in Griffin. This latest development is still under discussion at the upper management level of the SJRWMD.

-Alain Kassab

UW-F PARTICIPATES IN FLORIDA'S COMPREHENSIVE WILDLIFE CONSERVATION STRATEGY WORKPLAN

A series of workshops across the State were conducted by FWC as part of the Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy. UW-F participated along with many "interested parties" including some groups not supportive of "consumptive" recreation.

The State qualifies for substantial federal funds (State Wildlife Grants) by establishing the strategy. The funds are to be used for preventing wildlife from becoming imperiled and keeping common species common. Congress created the program in 2001 as part of the Conservation Trust Fund.

The FWC is the designated state agency that receives and manages SWG funds in Florida. The goal is to create a strategic vision for conserving all of Florida's wildlife, not just plan for the agency. The strategies are being produced by every state and territory to address the entire diversity of wildlife and habitats.

-Newton Cook

UW-F FALL RAFFLE SHOTGUN

Members recently received raffle tickets for the Fall Raffle. The FRANCHI 912 VARIO SYSTEM 12GA SEMIAUTO with chokes and case is featured. There will be a maximum 1000 tickets sold. Donation is \$5 per ticket or 5 tickets for \$20. The drawing will be held at the UW-F winter hunt and Directors Meeting the weekend of January 8.

New members joining during the raffle period receive a free ticket.

UW-F is financed by members' annual dues and two gun raffles per year. Support of these purposely limited fund raisers is important. Please sell or buy the tickets promptly. Many members request and sell more. Additional tickets are available by contacting David Lithgow or Newton Cook.

MEMBERSHIP FACTS PLEASE READ!

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL- UW-F depends on a growing membership base. Please renew your membership on time. THE ADDRESS LABEL ON THIS NEWSLETTER HAS THE DATE WE LAST PROCESSED YOUR ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP. PLEASE CHECK NOW!

UW-F WEB SITE-

Many members continue to miss out on the fun and wealth of information available at the UW-F web site. Please visit unitedwaterfowlersfl.org and register to use the forum. It's a benefit of your membership and registration is fast and easy. This site received over 177,000 hits last month. We are phasing out the YAHOO group site, and all future e-mail alert broadcast messages will be via the UW-F site. GET IN THE LOOP.....SIGN UP TODAY!

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UW-F member wins summer raffle shotgun.

Greg Finenco, Promotions Manager for the Orlando Bass Pro Shops Outdoor World presents the Beretta Xtrema 3.5 to new UW-F member and lucky dog, Chris Kuhn.

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The VOICE of Florida waterfowlers

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What has United Waterfowlers – Florida, Inc. done for you?

I think the biggest benefit to being part of UW-F is being connected to a group of people that feel similar about protecting duck hunting in the state of Florida. A person can go out on their own and have some impact, but numbers carry more weight.

Ron Bloomquist (Quackers)

I have always felt that there was much that was needed but little was getting done...especially when it came to dealing with "THE SYSTEM". I felt like a lone voice calling out but nobody could here my lone voice. I deep down knew that there were many like me that while they had the "vision and foresight" lacked a unified voice..... Now we have that and it is making a difference! I've also met and hunted with some truly great guys...

Joe Richter, Sr. (DuckmanJR)

I first learned of UW-F by accident.....just happened to be going to BASS PRO SHOP for some item and it happen to be the Hunting Classic weekend...the first one UW-F had ever been in...and I stopped at the table and spoke with Larry Alloway. Joined and volunteered to help. We still get a lot of new members that way. Immediately, I met several people who became both new hunting partners and friends. My knowledge of duck hunting techniques for Florida grew in multiples. And then the real fun began, I became an active advocate representing UW-F at agency meetings and realized how important the work UW-F does is to the future of our sport here in Florida. This work has brought a host of new friends and contacts across the state and an avocation for my forthcoming "retirement" next year.

Newton Cook (N. Cook)

UW has given me the opportunity to give something back to waterfowling, by helping the FFWCC in their Wood duck Banding Program. Also by letting me volunteer to educate the future of our sport, the kids at the FFWCC's Summer Youth camp.

Winston Miller (Whistlingwings)