



# Ringer News

**United Waterfowlers – Florida, Inc.**

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The VOICE of Florida Waterfowlers

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

2008 UW-F WINTER HUNT & MTG

FROM THE PRESIDENT

THE MALLARD

FLORIDA FOREVER REPLACEMENT

REGIONAL REPORTS

HICKORY MOUND IMPROVEMENTS

DEBERRY CAMP CLEANUP

MARY A STAKEHOLDERS MTG

2008 STA5 YOUTH HUNT

URBAN TURF FERTILIZER RULE

KISSIMMEE RECREATION

GROUP MEETINGS

WATERFOWLERS CODE OF  
CONDUCT

## 2008 UW-F WINTER BOARD MEETING AND HUNT SET FOR JANUARY 19/20 IN CLEWISTON

Members and guests are encouraged to attend the 2008 UW-F WINTER BOARD MEETING AND HUNT. The event will be held in Clewiston during the weekend of January 19/20. Many of those attending will arrive Friday evening, January 18. The meeting headquarters will be shared between the Best Western Clewiston and the nearby KOA Campground. This is

a family event with everyone welcome to participate. Those living in south Florida are welcome to come for the meeting and lunch.

The "Board Meeting" will be held at 12 Noon Saturday, either on the pool deck of the hotel or a facility at the Campground. The exact schedule will be posted on the UW-F web site. A lunch will be served. The meeting will be over by 2 PM to allow the afternoon hunters to leave for the nearby marshes. There are usually a lot of "cook outs" and socializing during the weekend. The last meeting in Clewiston had members and guests from as far as the Tallahassee area.

The winter meeting is an excellent opportunity to meet your fellow members and put faces to the names posting on the UW-F website forums. Often new friendships and hunting partners are discovered.

The meeting will include a review of 2007 and introduction of plans for 2008. Discussions and voting on the UW-F 2008 Project List, 2008 budget and the process for nominating and electing the 2008 Board Members, Officers and Regional Directors will be accomplished.

The design of the meeting is a brief "official" Board Meeting followed by an "open" meeting with all members participating.

The Best Western Hotel has arranged a special rate of \$129.00 plus tax per night and is holding a number of rooms for our group. You must ask for the UW-F duck hunters group rate when making reservations. The hotel is located on Rt. 27 (1020 West Sugarland Hwy.). Phone (863)983-3400. The special rate is good until December 1. Hotel rooms are in great demand during "season" and there is a bass fishing tournament in town the week of the meeting.

The UW-F WINTER BOARD MEETING AND HUNT has become a popular event. The event is held in rotation, north and south, each year. (The 2009 meeting will be in Titusville.) There are many hunting opportunities nearby and the local members will be glad to help those traveling from other parts of the state with access to marshes.

A string on the UW-F Members Only Forum will ask for RSVPs for the lunch to allow proper preparations. Please RSVP on the forum or via e-mail to [info@unitedwaterfowlersfl.org](mailto:info@unitedwaterfowlersfl.org)

## From The President

### THE NEW YEAR LOOMS

Every year at this time while I have been President I look forward into the next year and wonder what will become of our relatively new organization. Founded just six years ago with so many good intentions, nurtured by a too small circle of hard workers and subject to all the traps new Not For Profits face, UW-F is on the verge of rapid expansion, or decline, based solely on who will step up and lead into the future.

The end of the year brings the need for UW-F members to volunteer for the leadership positions for 2008. Hopefully, many of the current leaders will opt to remain in their places. Wholesale change is not good for any organization. However, it is crucial for other members to enter the ranks and do the work that needs to be done to maintain the past successes and to grow UW-F to new heights.

UW-F does not ask for much in the way of funds or donations from the leaders and members, but UW-F does demand a large amount of volunteer time from the leadership.

The commitment to attend FWC, SFWMD, SJRWMD, SWFWMD, SRWMD, USACE, FDEP and other agencies' and governmental bodies' meetings gives UW-F it's reason for existence: To make duck hunting in Florida better for Florida's duck hunters.

Most of these meetings are held during a normal person's work hours. Bureaucrats do not like to work at night or on weekends for the convenience of the common folk. The meetings often occur in

scattered locations across Florida. However, UW-F must be represented. Our membership and Florida's duck hunters count on us.

Who will be the leaders in 2008? The process to select these volunteers is now in motion. UW-F's Articles of Incorporation allow very little member participation as they are written. The process was established by the Founders to protect the integrity of the mission. The Articles state that the current Board will select any replacements by majority vote of the Board. However, each year the past and current Board of Directors have voted to open the process to member selection of the new year's Board members. There are seven Board positions.

Unfortunately, there have never been more than seven applicants for the Board and no election. The Boards therefore have all been "elected unanimously".

All other positions: President, Vice President Secretary, Vice President Treasurer, Membership Chairman and Regional Directors are appointed by the Board of Directors.

How does a member apply for a Board position? The application period is open to February 15, but historically all the names are available for discussion at the UW-F WINTER HUNT AND BOARD MEETING in January. Board of Director Candidates should post up their wish to apply or be re-elected with a short biography on the UW-F Members Only Forum. The close of nominations for Board of Directors is February 15 when voting begins on the web site Forums (if there is a contested position). In case of a contest, each member votes for

seven candidates. The seven candidates receiving the most votes are elected. Voting is closed March 1 and the new Board named, effective April 1.

These new Board members make the Officer and Regional Director appointments at their first meeting. Members wanting to apply for these positions, or be reappointed, need to post their intent on the Forum prior to the new Board's first meeting.

UW-F needs you! Now is the time to volunteer your leadership skills.

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### YOUR GUESS IS AS GOOD AS MINE

Will it be too wet or too dry? Lake Okeechobee is projected to be low and there is a drought in much of central and north Florida, but as I write this the sky is dumping rain all across the state. The Kissimmee River only recently resumed flow and the Glades alternate between high and low levels. Lakes in the Panhandle are remnants of former times. Except for the saltwater, who can predict what the conditions will be?

I will predict Florida's duck hunters will shrug off whatever the situation may be and hit the marshes and lakes November 17. The duck numbers expected to winter in Florida are high. The migratory species we hunt are especially plentiful. There is every expectation the growing populations of fulvous and black bellies will add to the season's fun.

Have a great season.....and be careful!

**-Newton Cook**

# For our Young Ringers...

Youth Membership Feature Article by Dave Smith

## \* \* \* \* The Mallard Duck \* \* \* \*

Probably the most easily recognized duck in the waterfowl kingdom is the Mallard Duck, also known as "Greenhead". The Mallard is a large duck, about 20-28 inches in length and has a wingspan of about 36", and weighs approximately 2 ¾ pounds. It has a blue patch on the top side of its wings with a white line around it. The male mallard has an iridescent green head and neck with a white ring bordering it. It has a brown chest, a whitish-gray underside, brown wings and a yellow bill. The male also has two or sometimes three black feathers that curl upward from the top of his tail, giving him a unique appearance. The female mallard is mottled brown and tan with a white tail and an orange bill.

The mallard breeds in most of Canada and the United States. It winters throughout the United States and south to Central America and the West Indies. The mallard can also be found in Europe and Asia. The Mallard is found in all of the flyways of North America.

Most mallard hens breed as yearlings, but they may not have much success; studies show that older hens have much lower duckling mortality than yearlings. "Pairing up" starts as early as October and then the mating continues through March. Mallard males leave the hen soon after mating occurs. The hen usually lays 8-10 eggs in a nest on the ground near a body of water. When the ducklings hatch after 26-28 days, the hen leads them to water and does not return to the nest. The ducklings can swim and feed themselves on insects as soon as they hatch, although they stay near the mother for protection. Young ducklings are not naturally waterproof and rely on the mother to provide waterproofing.

After the breeding season, mallards form large flocks and migrate from northern latitudes to warmer southern areas. There they winter and feed until the

breeding season starts again. Some mallards, however, may choose to spend the summer in areas where food and shelter are abundant; these mallards make the resident populations. The familiar "quack" of the mallard is from the female and it is named the "decrescendo call", and can be heard for miles. A female will give the call when she wants to bring other ducks to her, such as her ducklings, and because of that it is also known as the "hail call". The male mallard gives a more subdued "quack" call. Both ducks give a feeding "chuckle" call.

The mallard feeds in the shallow waters of ponds, sloughs, lakes and rivers. Most of the mallard's diet is made up of plants. It eats the seeds of grasses and



sedges and the leaves, stems, and seeds of aquatic plants. It occasionally eats insects and crustaceans and mollusks, especially when it is young. It prefers to forage in water that is less than 16 inches deep so it can duck its head down and reach plants at the bottom. The mallard sometimes forages on farm lands for grains like rice, corn, oats, wheat, and barley. The mallard duck is excellent table fare, and is considered the standard by

which all other ducks are judged.

The Mallard, like most puddle ducks, springs vertically out of the water when taking flight and is a very strong flier. They have been clocked at speeds from 45 - 55 miles per hour. During migration, mallards have been known to fly almost 2000 miles nonstop.

The mallard is the ancestor of almost all breeds of domestic ducks. It breeds with feral domestic ducks. The offspring of these mismatched pairs exhibit a wide-variety of color patterns. The mallard also mates with other duck species like the Florida Mottled duck and the northern pintail. In fact, there is some concern that the Mottled and Black duck species are in danger from hybridization with the mallard.

**-Dave Smith**

## FLORIDA FOREVER REPLACEMENT LEGISLATION

The Florida Forever program is sun-setting and a project sponsored by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) to replace it has begun. The hunting fraternity has not been pleased with the results of the old law as many parcels of land went into management agreements that did not include hunting and many of the properties that did allow hunting only allowed a minimum of days and hunters. The old law had little input from hunters, UW-F intends that the new legislation be much more friendly to hunter access.

UW-F Regional Director, Captain Chris Chesley, represented UW-F at the FLORIDA FOREVER STAKEHOLDERS MEETING, October 29 in Orlando. Member Dale Ward also attended and supported the UW-F position. The meeting was conducted by the FDEP, Division of State Lands. The following is Capt. Chesley's report.

The meeting lasted all day and was very busy. The opening included FDEP Deputy Secretary Bob Ballard, Acting Director, Division of State Lands, Deborah Poppell, Environmental Administrator, Marianne S. Gengebach, and Lynda Godfrey.

Agenda topics included:

**Do we need a successor program to Florida Forever?** (The unanimous answer was yes.)

**What are the greatest remaining conservation needs that a potential successor program would need to address?** (I emphasized the need to improve the hunting access and improve habitat. The many other stakeholders attending listed all the

standard recreations: birding, hiking, camping, etc. I was surprised that most supported hunting as a legitimate recreation despite there being few hunters in these groups.)

**What are your concerns / challenges relating to conservation efforts under the Florida Forever Program?** (As you can imagine there were many "concerns" listed by the variety of stakeholders present. Population growth and loss of land to urban sprawl predominated.)

**What are the most pressing land management needs?** (I emphasized hunting topics and the need to support the FWC with more funding, noting the hunters and anglers paid for most of the management for their sports with licenses and fees. Improved funding from other state and federal agencies would be important, especially for capital projects such as boat ramps, roads and facilities.)

**What are the most important recreational needs?** (Vast response from the other user groups, but I was able to get substantial input into the needs of the "consumptive" stakeholders.)

Summary: We have an opportunity to make progress and have input with these staff members as they are looking for "out of the box" concepts to report back to Governor Crist. A number of staff members sought me out after the meeting for further conversations. Bob Ballard, Deputy Secretary FDEP, is an avid hunter and we need to work with him to develop a new Florida Forever program that is friendly to hunting

and fishing. It is important we follow up on this meeting with lobbying of those who will be crafting the new legislation.

*-Capt. Chris Chesley*

### **PUBLIC LAND ACQUISITION & MANAGEMENT CONFERENCE**

December 5-7 is the date of the Florida Public Land Acquisition & Management Conference at the Hyatt Hotel in Sarasota. Each year the conference is sponsored by a water management district. This year the sponsor is the SWFWMD. Topics include: **Unique Challenges of Managing Recreation on Conservation Lands**, Land Acquisition and Urban Growth, Land Management Implementation and Setting Conservation Goals for the Next Decade. The water management districts and other agencies that purchase and manage land for the public consider this meeting a highlight of each year and they are highly influenced by those speaking and attending.

This and past conferences have been dominated by environmental groups. Major addresses are being made by the Florida Trails Association, Audubon Society, Century Commission for a Sustainable Florida, The Nature Conservancy, & Florida Department of Environmental Protection. The Sierra Club is sponsoring a silent auction during the event.

UW-F will be there. UW-F President Newton Cook is committed to making hunting a "natural" right on all suitable public properties. We hope other hunting organizations will participate in these meetings.

**NORTHWEST**

A record-breaking drought is gripping the southeastern United States. Even the governors of Florida, Alabama and Georgia are at each others' throats over water rights in our area. What hope do the ducks and geese have?

Lakes Miccoukee, Iamonia, Seminole and Jackson are low. There will be the usual flocks of geese on Seminole for the limited (this year) season. Ducks will have a hard time finding vegetated marsh areas and the mix of species may tend toward the divers and ringers more than usual. If the Early Season pattern holds true, the wood ducks and others will be concentrated on what few pot-holes remain in the forested areas and will quickly be "shot out" by the concentrated pressure moving them to quieter haunts.

One bright spot could be the PCS ponds. Always a tenuous situation for waterfowling as the ponds are part of a business operation, UW-F's Steve Wilcox met with the FWC biologist responsible for the PCS, Francisc Castiov, and company personnel and forged an improved relationship. Pond Four is often the "hot spot". Hopefully there will be expansion to more ponds in the future. Another possibility could be the renovated HICKORY MOUND impoundment. Still re-vegetating from the storm damage, ducks will need a place to go because of the drought and may choose this area that has been so productive in past seasons. An article elsewhere in

this issue describes the work there.

Normal saltwater opportunities not effected by lack of rainfall will be in the bays and open water of the gulf. Conditions require close attention to safety, but the ducks are out there for those rigged to pursue them.

*-Carl Vinson*

**HICKORY MOUND IMPROVEMENTS**

**FROM AN FWC NEWS RELEASE:**

The improvements to the Hickory Mound Impoundment were officially recognized October 16 when members of the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) and DUCKS UNLIMITED unveiled a sign at the area commemorating the project's partnerships. The project was an upgrade of the impoundment dike and water control structures.

"The reconstruction of the impoundment dike was designed to allow this structure to withstand a 50 year storm event by drastically reducing the number of breaches that have occurred in the past" explained David Nicholson, district biologist at the FWC Big Bend Field Office in Perry. The major portions of the construction project included the installation of two 1,000 foot concrete geoweb spillways, four 5 foot by 5 foot box culverts, one aluminum water control structure and the

placement of rip-rap material along approximately 3,600 feet of the dike as reinforcement in areas susceptible to storm erosion.

"These upgrades also give biologists better control over the flow of water into and out of the impoundment, allowing FWC staff to better manage waterfowl and other wildlife species. This increased management ability will produce higher quality recreational opportunities," Nicholson explained.

The project was funded by FWC, DUCKS UNLIMITED, Taylor County and grants received from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and through the North American Wetlands Conservation Act.

Hurricane Dennis made landfall in Pensacola in July 2005 when construction was about one third completed and the impoundment was in a vulnerable state. The tidal surge resulted in considerable damage. As a result of the damage construction was suspended until after hurricane season. FWC worked with FEMA to recover some funds for repairs and Anderson Columbia assisted by providing storage locations for the debris. Construction was resumed and completed in 2006, and the area reopened for public use. The recreation plan focuses on waterfowl habitat, but also takes into account wading birds, blue crabs and the marine fishery.

## NORTHEAST

The region's premier duck marshes, MERRITT ISLAND NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE, are in the best condition in several years. The new TLS permitting system seems to have worked in most cases, but some hunters remain cautious of the process. The new 25 shell limit will be enforced, some question how, and there is great interest to see if there is improvement in the quality of hunting conditions. Change brings out both concerns and applause. The ducks are already there.

Unfortunately, ducks are not "there" yet as this is being written in most of the northeast. Very few reports of ducks in Guana WMA or along the St. Johns river and lakes such as Jessup and George. Water is high in the St. Johns system. The rafts of bluebills have not appeared on the Indian River or Mosquito Lagoon. A good cold front up north is needed.

Further south, T. M. Goodwin/Broadmoor had an excellent Early Season. The marsh is in great shape and the first series of permits were gone in about two minutes! Nearby Mary A and Sartori marshes have ducks and those with airboats can expect success for the opener. The very fact that Mary A is open for hunting is a story that is told in another article in this Newsletter issue. Thanks to the UW-F and DU members who worked so hard to get the SJRWMD to change their minds about closing the marsh for an adjacent construction project and then going out and doing the hard

work of marking the safety zones and preparing a new airboat jump.

Speaking of the project, the final work on the Three Forks Marsh Restoration Project has begun. When finished, the "boat ramp to nowhere" at the end of Malabar road will be usable and connect hunters to a vast system of great duck habitat. The SJRWMD is to be congratulated on their persistence to obtain funds and to get the USACE on the ball to finish this long anticipated restoration.

Even further south, Ansin, Garcia and East Marsh have water despite the drought in the area. The Stick Marsh has water, but vegetation is lacking. What a shame this great fishing and hunting spot is in such poor condition!

What we need now is cold weather to send our feathered winter visitors south.

*Mike Haney  
John Hitchcock  
Winston Miller*

### DEBERRYS CAMP/UW-F MINWR CLEAN-UP DAY

Saturday, September 15, a crowd of UW-F members and friends gathered at the Deberrys Camp just north of the MERRITT ISLAND NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE for a morning of hard work in the sun removing the trash left by the spring and summer "passive" visitors to the refuge. Each year before the opening of duck season volunteers retrieve more than a truckload of debris from the

levees and roads throughout the northern part of the refuge. This year additional work was done with permission from the refuge managers to spray and kill the exotic Brazilian pepper plants along the levees.

The reward for the work is lunch prepared by Deberrys' own T. J. Bennett. T. J. has a well know restaurant in Orlando and his bar-b-que spices up any gathering. This is a family event and fun for all. The camp overlooks the marsh and is a nice setting for the meal and cool drinks during the early afternoon following the stacking of the many bags of trash and debris for later pick up by refuge staff.

ATTENDING: Ron Griffith, T. J. Bennett, Morris Griffin, Don Elliot, Chris Eads, Scott Prince, Wilbur Tranor, Karen Tranor, Robert Tranor, Don Christy, John Hitchcock, Scott Nichols, Randy Clark, Cheryl Clark, Don Bloomquist, Jeff Allen, Keith Yates, Ed Jawowski, Brenden Luflame, Jim Williams, Bob Bissell, C. Foley, Riley Griffith, Kyle Griffith, Casey Griffith, Bryan Strenstrom, Mark Strenstrom, Sumner Foley, Carly Griffith, Duke DuBose, Pat Stone and Newton Cook.

Thanks to the members of the Deberrys Camp for the invitation. UW-F looks forward to supporting this project each year. The work is recognized as a part of the effort to maintain good relations with the refuge staff who have a tough job with too few resources for managing the properties.



UW-F members and friends gathered at the Deberrys Camp annual cleanup day

### SJRWMD MARY A MARSH STAKEHOLDERS MEETING

The evening of August 23<sup>rd</sup> found stakeholders, state officials and SJRWMD staff meeting at the SJRWMD Palm Bay facilities. The subject was the proposed closing of the Mary A marsh during construction. Those attending included Robert Christianson, Director of Operations and Land Resources SJRWMD, Steven Miller, Director Land Management SJRWMD, Doug Votolina, Land Management Southern Region SJRWMD; Nick Wiley, Director of Hunting, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC), Lt. Colonel Holway, FWC law enforcement; Len Schwenneker, DUCKS UNLIMITED (DU) State Chair, Jeff Kraynik, DU; John Hitchcock, UNITED WATERFOWLERS-FL (UW-F), and Newton Cook, UW-F. Several members of the public also attended and spoke during the meeting.

The construction project along one side of Mary A is expected to last eighteen months and would have an effect on at least two waterfowl seasons. The District had announced the closure of the marsh to the public during the construction period. A number of stakeholders who have historically hunted in the marsh protested the need for a complete closure and asked for a meeting to discuss “safety zones” and a partial closure. There was a particular concern of “slippage” of the projected completion date due to past experience with US ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS (USACE) construction activity.

The Three Forks Marsh restoration project is a number of years behind schedule and the “boat ramp to nowhere” at the end of Malabar Road has greatly reduced the confidence level of the stakeholders. There is high support for the restoration project and the end result will be a large and attractive area for recreation, including hunting. The stakeholders repeatedly stated this support and their support of the target and intentions of the USACE and

District staffs. John Hitchcock presented an emotional power point presentation describing the beauty of the Mary A marsh and the marsh’s value to the stakeholders.

Following a spirited round of discussion, the District staff agreed to a compromise which includes a well-defined safety zone separating the hunting from the construction areas. The stakeholders agreed to assist with the clearing of vegetation at the “new” airboat jump needed to access the open area of the marsh and the sign line along an existing small levee. The District and FWC agreed to establish and police the boundary. The District also agreed to spray a portion of the noxious water lettuce that has invaded the normally open water areas of the marsh.

UW-F wants to thank the District and FWC staff for meeting with the stakeholders and working out an agreement. Thanks particularly to Mr. Christianson and Mr. Miller who were willing to give the stakeholders a fair hearing with a “lets see what we can do” attitude.

## CENTRAL

Despite the drought many of the lakes have water as the Water Management Districts are holding them high for water supply protection. Lake Toho, Kissimmee, Cypress and the other "Kissimmee Chain of Lakes" are all in good shape considering the lack of rainfall. Lake Hancock is also higher than it could be and may offer some good hunting. (Remember the ramp on Lake Hancock is dirt...best to have a tilt trailer and four wheel drive). Lake Istakpoga is not as high but would be in good shape if the hydrilla was not sprayed out. The spraying of submerged vegetation to remove hydrilla is a prevalent problem for duck and fish habitat in the Kissimmee system. UW-F actively works to encourage the FDEP and Water Management Districts to consider the wildlife in the scheduling of the spraying.

Some in the west central area probably should give the CHASSAHOWITKZA NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE a look this season. Often the ducks appear there in their old numbers during a dry year.

The three SJRWMD permitted marshes are in about the same shape as last season. Too much area covered by cattail monocultures and not enough open spaces. The permitting system has been revamped using TLS with the special \$25 SJRWMD permit but no longer requiring the additional \$25 fee for Ocklawaha Prairie for the quota hunts. Like the changes at T. M. Goodwin and MINWR, some hunters have reasonable concerns of what the results will be. Note: on Emeraldalda Marsh, Area 4 and Area 7 will be closed due to construction. The construction project there should result in a "flow way" marsh that will cleanse the waters in Lake Griffin. The marsh should also become a good habitat for waterfowl.

The Kissimmee Restoration area has been dry all year as the Kissimmee River did not "flow" for over 200 days.

However, some recent water has been released and, with a little rain in the right places, the marsh could "come alive". Hunters will have to watch the water levels for the river. The marsh is notorious for having massive populations of ducks one day and almost nothing the next as the teal are very fickle!

*Wilbur Tranor,  
Dennis Dutcher  
Randy Clark*

## SOUTHWEST

### DRY!

Those three letters describe the situation in the freshwater rivers, lakes and marshes of southwest Florida. Crooked Lake, Hancock, Walk in Water and Panosakee are all lower than normal. There were some scattered ducks in the fresh water during Early Season. Find a concentration of teal in what shallows with vegetation remained and you had a good hunt.

The fall migration of "big ducks" will find slim pickings in the fresh water unless a major rain occurs before season. This may be the "year of the salt"! Remember when hunting in the Tampa area that large areas are off limits to hunters. The entire Pinellas County, Tampa Bay city limits and areas around McDill Air Force Base. The Ten Thousand Islands National Wildlife Refuge may have a better concentration of ducks as well if a lack of fresh water habitat persists.

Hunters in the southwest are lucky to have the not too far away STAs and Lake Okeechobee to fall back on during years like this. However, Lake Okeechobee could be a challenge this year due to low water.

*Jimmy Moreland  
Mike Kuhn*

## SOUTH

The water level in the Glades is not too high and they are not closed.....that is the good news this year. It seems the season will begin with good conditions in the ARTHUR MARSHALL LOXAHATCHEE NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE (WCA1) and WCA 2 and WCA 3. Ringer paradises all, and with a good distribution of other ducks, especially teal and fulvous.

The STAs are always duck Meccas and are already covered with teal and a wide variety of other species. STA 1 W has clouds of teal as this is written, drawn by the remnants of rice planted last year to stabilize the muck after the hurricanes. The Early Season on the STAs was as usual, great on STA 5, good on the newly opened STA 2 and spotty on the others.

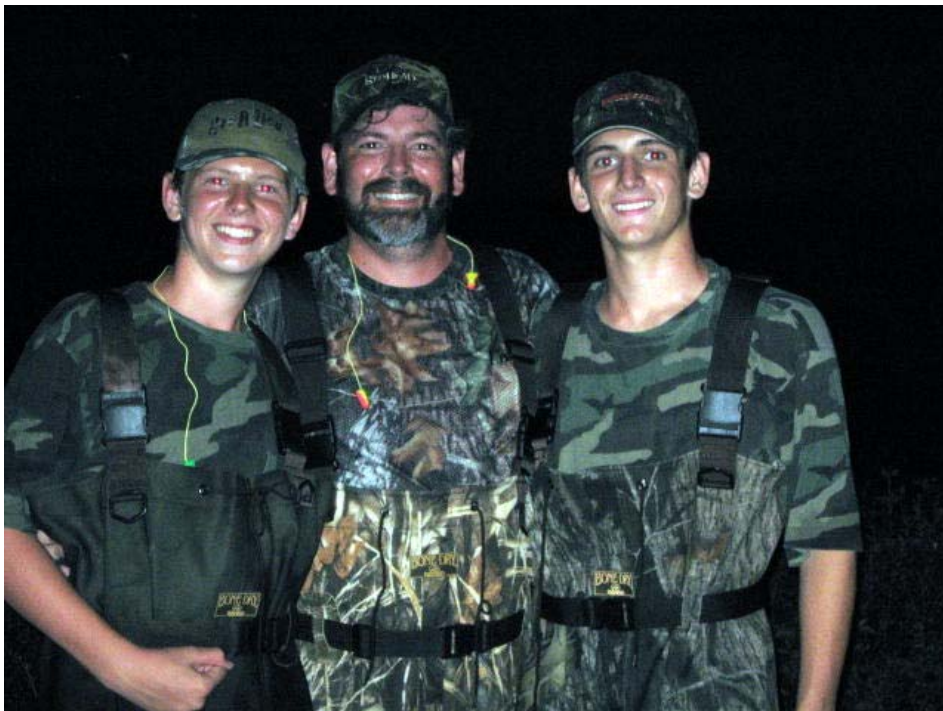
Meetings have been numerous. The Holiday Park concession change to a Broward County Park continues to need attention as a series of public meetings continues. The SFWMD Recreation Workshop, headed by David Lithgow, meets quarterly. The vast construction projects for Everglades Restoration generate several meetings each month where we must attend to be sure boat ramps and public access are included in the plans. Our cooperation with the Everglades Coordinating Council and the Arthur Marshall Foundation enhances the reach of UW-F.

Lake Okeechobee produced a lot of ducks during Early Season. Problems were noted due to the crowding that resulted from the low level of the lake and the tight spaces in the reduced marshes. Scouting can be detrimental when these conditions exist. Boats should not keep running through the resting ducks after they are "found". Take the time to look for alternate spots and leave the ducks as undisturbed as possible. This season, hunting ethics will be sorely tested in the tight quarters.

*Alex Urquia  
Tony Sanso*

**UW-F AWARDS 2007/08  
SEASON'S INITIAL  
"FIRST DUCK PINS"**

Congratulations to Andrew Schuettler and Nicholas Schutettler for their success during Early Season at STA 5 in Hendry county. Both opened the new season with their first ducks, bluewinged teal. Three generations of the family were in the marsh to celebrate the event. Grandfather and father were probably as proud as the youngsters.



UW-F awards new duck hunters with "UW-F FIRST DUCK PINS" when notified by sending a brief description of the hunt, the name of the hunter and address for mailing the pin. Send a photo if available. The information should be emailed to: [newtoncook@bellsouth.net](mailto:newtoncook@bellsouth.net).

The hunters will have their names mentioned in the UW-F NEWSLETTER and some of the

photos will be published as space permits.

Waterfowling is a family tradition. The first duck harvested is a life-long memory for the new hunter and those who are with them. The "UW-F FIRST DUCK PIN" is a nice memento of the event.

We expect to send a lot of these pins out this season!

**UW-F FALL RAFFLE  
FEATURES BERETTA  
WHITE ONYX 20 GAUGE O/U**

Funding for UW-F depends on members' dues and two annual gun raffles, Spring and Fall. These sources are extremely important as UW-F purposely limits fund raising events to prevent any conflict with the national conservation groups who need large donations to support projects in the waterfowl breeding areas. The UW-F Fall GUN RAFFLE features a:

**BERETTA WHITE ONYX 20 GAUGE OVER AND UNDER WITH FIVE FACTORY CHOKE TUBES AND A HARD CASE.**

This beautiful shotgun would be a welcome addition to any collection. Suggested Retail Price is \$1875.00.

Thanks to GANDER MOUNTAIN, 550 Belz Outlet Blvd., St. Augustine, FL 32084 for sponsoring the raffle.

Donations are \$5.00 per ticket or 5 tickets for \$20.00. As usual, a new member who joins during the raffle period receives one complimentary ticket. The drawing will be at the UW-F WINTER HUNT AND BOARD MEETING on January 19 in Clewiston. You do not have to be present to win.

Donations for tickets can be made on the UW-F web site (Fundraising) or by e-mailing [newtoncook@bellsouth.net](mailto:newtoncook@bellsouth.net) for tickets.

**SUPPORT THE UW-F FALL RAFFLE.....KEEP THE UW-F VOICE LOUD AND CLEAR!**

## UW-F BOOTHS BUSY AT BPS HUNTING CLASSICS

The BASS PRO SHOPS OUTDOOR WORLD HUNTING CLASSICS and the grand opening of the new Miami BASS PRO SHOP presented opportunities for UW-F to exhibit at four events in August and September, Fort Myers, Dania, Orlando and Miami. The UW-F booths were manned by local UW-F members who were busy greeting visitors, friends and other members who came to the events.

A number of new UW-F members were signed up and raffle ticket donations were brisk. The Spring Raffle Shotgun drawing was held at the Dania event. Chad Robertson of Oviedo was the lucky winner. These events have become a time for local members to gather and "talk ducks". Often the booths were filled and the crowd was blocking the aisles. The UW-F booth is always among the most active at these shows.

One of the highlights of the events occurred at the grand opening of the new Miami store. Visitors to the UW-F booth included Pro-angler Jimmy Houston, who mentioned he hunted ducks "at home" in Louisiana and BASS PRO SHOP founder Johnny Morris. Mr. Morris made several favorable comments about the booth and asked if he could have one of the UW-F Camo Hats, while dropping a bill on the table. (Why would he need a camo cap when he probably has several million in inventory?). We were glad to oblige and he walked away with his entourage. The cash turned out to be a one hundred dollar bill. Nice gesture.

Thanks to BASS PRO SHOPS for giving "not for profits" a first class venue to take our causes to the public.

## CHAD ROBERTSON WINS UW-F SPRING RAFFLE

The Dania BASS PRO SHOP HUNTING CLASSIC was the location of the drawing on August 5, 2007 for the winner of the BERETTA A391 XTREMA 2 shotgun featured in the UW-F SPRING RAFFLE. Chad Robertson of Oviedo was the lucky winner.

Congratulations go to Chad and many thanks to all the UW-F members and friends who donated to the SPRING RAFFLE. Thanks also to BASS PRO SHOP OUTDOOR WORLD Dania for sponsoring the raffle.

The two raffles UW-F conducts each year are extremely important. The funds help finance the UW-F web site and the UW-F NEWSLETTER. Information on the UW-F FALL RAFFLE can be found in another article in this edition.

## UW-F TO SPONSOR STA-5 FEB.5 YOUTH HUNT CELEBRATION

South Regional Directors Alex Urquia, Jorge Gutierrez and Tony Sanso will lead the large group of volunteers sponsoring the 2008 STA 5 Youth Hunt Celebration to be held at the entrance of the STA on February 5, 2008. There will be food and prizes for all the young hunters, families and mentors who attend.

In commemoration of the tragic loss of one of UW-F's own Youth Members, the event will be named the **JACK BYLSMA III YOUTH HUNT CELEBRATION**.

UW-F has supported an event at the entrance for several years and is glad to be the lead organization again this year. It is important to note that the FWC and the SFWMD are responsible for the hunting on the STA. Hunting is by permit only and these agencies determine the rules and regulations for hunting and access. Those who want to hunt during the morning and afternoon sessions must obtain and follow all regulations.

UW-F will be glad to advise and assist interested parties with information regarding the youth hunt and the event. Please contact the Regional Directors above as listed on page 13 of this Newsletter.

## TRAGIC ACCIDENT CLAIMS UW-F YOUTH MEMBER

Labor Day brought tragedy to the Jack Blysmas family with the accidental death of fourteen year old Jack Blysmas III in a watercraft accident on Lake Okeechobee. The words of sorrow of so many friends and UW-F members can only have some small measure of consolation to the family and love ones during such a trying time but were sincerely expressed. The memorial service in Okeechobee drew hundreds, as those who knew Jake, as he was called, gathered in sadness to commemorate the young man they knew as an avid sportsman full of life and excitement.

## UW-F SUPPORTS REMOVING PHOSPHORUS FROM URBAN FERTILIZER

UW-F Regional Director John Hitchcock has been leading a battle to re-write the recently proposed Florida Urban Turf Rule. The rule issued by the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (DACCS) sets the limits for Nitrogen and Phosphorus in fertilizers to be used on "urban" turf, ie: lawns. The new rule has very little if any actual reduction of possible applications of phosphorus fertilizers. Phosphorus is acknowledged as a damaging factor in the deterioration of water quality and the growth of unwanted plants in Florida's water bodies. A Consumer Task Force has been formed to meet around the state and present the new rule to stakeholders. UW-F has attended these meetings speaking for a revision eliminating phosphorus.

Phosphorus is the middle number on the label for fertilizer bags. (ie: 10-10-10) The number represents a percentage of the product content. Florida has a background level of phosphorus in the soil and rainfall that will maintain established turf. The addition of thousands of tons of phosphorus into the Florida drainage systems creating cattail monocultures, reducing oxygen levels, supporting algae blooms, and other environmental damage is not necessary for urban uses. Unfortunately the new rule does not address the issue as was expected. A review of bags of fertilizer now in stock at retail outlets found that many of the current products could still be sold under the proposed rule.

A ban on a phosphorus material to protect the environment was accomplished some years ago

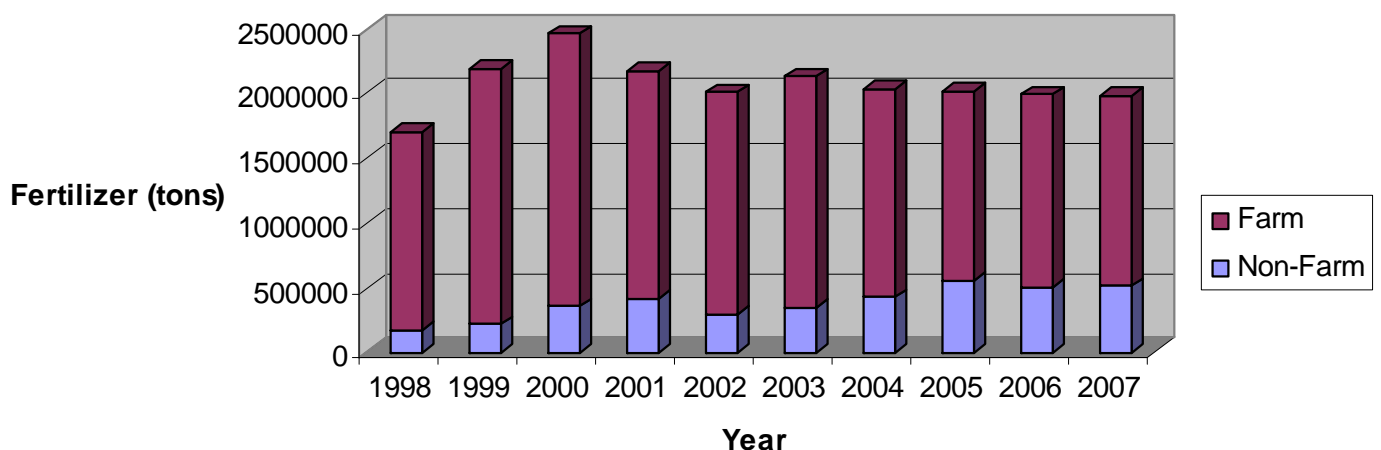
when phosphates were removed from laundry detergents. Minnesota and Maine have also banned phosphates in lawn fertilizer products.

The Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Project (CERP) is spending billions of the taxpayers' dollars to remove phosphorus from the entire Everglades watershed from Orlando to Florida Bay. Allowing truckloads of fertilizer containing the chemical to be imported into Florida and sold for distribution on the same watershed is self-defeating.

UW-F will continue to work to improve the rule.

Members will be alerted on the YAHOO group email system and on the UW-F web forums on how they may assist the project.

**Total Fertilizer Use in the State of Florida from 1998 to 2007**



**Urban turf fertilizer has grown from 10% to 26% of all fertilizer consumed in Florida over the past 10 years.**

## KISSIMMEE RECREATION GROUP ENDS IN STALEMATE

The KISSIMMEE CHAIN OF LAKES PUBLIC USE CONFLICT RESOLUTION WORKSHOP ended an almost year long series of meetings Monday October 29 at River Ranch in a deadlock. The SFWMD and FWC put together the meetings with a professional conflict resolution team from the University of Florida. The purpose was to determine the public recreation program for a variety of properties north of Lake Kissimmee and the shoreline surrounding the lake.

The origin of the workshop was a request from hunters to do something about the “trashing” of the Gardner Cobb properties that was detrimental to the habitat and wildlife. There was hope that the property and nearby areas could be put under a Public Use Area system of regulations that would keep the area open for hunting, but on a biologically sound basis.

The request grew into a professionally conducted process to outline public use for all the lands north of Lake Kissimmee and the shoreline, much of which had recently been acquired for the planned raising of lake levels as part of the total Everglades Restoration project. The following were selected to participate:

Danny Brantley	Kissimmee River Valley Sportsmen Association	Francis Howell-Coleman	Polk County Sierra Club
Newton Cook	United Waterfowlers-FL, Inc.	Don Conyer	FFWCC
Eric Egensteiner	Lake Kissimmee State Park	Dr. Paul Gray	Audubon of Florida
Bill Helfferich	SFWMD	Bob Hoover	Florida Airboat Association
Gary Lee	Southport Ranch	Carey Lightsey	Landowner
Byron Maharrey	Everglades Coordinating Council	Bob Nelson	The Nature Conservancy
Steve Pennington	Gardner Hunt Club (landowner representative)	Julia Recker	Osceola County
David Speake	Director of Forestry	Jeff Spence	Polk County
Kent Wimmer	Florida Trails Association	Gary Zipper	Landowner

The initial meetings found the group passing by the required 75 percent margin recreation involving hiking trails, camping, kayaking, bike riding and horse back riding. When hunting was put on the agenda there was an immediate call for “no hunting/sanctuary” by a substantial number of members, including areas currently hunted. Obviously, since the hunters had asked for this review to bring some needed control to Gardner Cobb, the five or six hunting advocates were unpleasantly surprised that they now faced a movement to ban hunting on currently hunted areas and to prevent hunting on the newly acquired public land that had historically been hunted when private.

The moves by the anti-hunters were blocked as only five votes were needed. However the tone of the meetings had been set and the voting blocs established. Even worse was when consideration of hunting around the shoreline of Lake Kissimmee, including two large marshes on the east side, were on the agenda the landowners bloc voted in conjunction with the anti-hunters to prevent deer hunting along their fence-lines. Again, the five “hunting” votes could at least prevent adoption of that recommendation. The landowners did not like the idea of the “common folk” hunting adjacent to lands they were leasing for many thousands of dollars. The now public land ran all the way to the lake shore presenting a free refuge next to their lands with all the economic advantages.

These blocs persisted throughout the months of the meetings much to the consternation of the facilitators. The final three votes at the last meeting cemented the differences and no resolution was possible.

Fortunately, the next step is the report developed from these meetings by the facilitators will move to the SFWMD WRAC Recreation Workshop for review and work before moving to the full WRAC and later the SFWMD Governing Board.. David Lithgow is the leader of the Recreation Workshop and sits on the WRAC.

Frankly, as one who participated in the meetings at River Ranch, I have a lot more confidence in the outcome we can expect from the SFWMD Recreation Workshop. Very difficult issues have been resolved in that body on a consensus basis.

Members should be ready to attend the Workshop meetings as those opposing hunting will surely be present.

***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!** Any date before **11/15/2006** is past due! You may send the application on this page along with a check to the Sebastian address on the front page. You can also renew at the website using a credit card or Paypal. Just click on "Membership".

**UW-F WEB SITE**

Please visit the UW-F website at [unitedwaterfowlersfl.org](http://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 **1,365,000** hits in October from nearly **4500** unique visitors. The discussion forums contain a wealth of information regarding specific UW-F projects and other topics of interest to Florida duck hunters. If you are not registered to access the member's side of the forum you are missing out on valuable discussions and your fellow members are missing out on your important input. Feel free to contact David Lithgow for assistance in registering. [dlithgow@bellsouth.net](mailto:dlithgow@bellsouth.net)

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**Membership Application**

**First Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Last Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**City:** \_\_\_\_\_ **State:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Zip Code:** \_\_\_\_\_


















**Telephone:** (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_-\_\_\_\_ **Email:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Please Check Level Of Membership:**

Membership (\$25.00) \_\_\_\_\_ Youth (15 and under \$10.00) \_\_\_\_\_  
This annual level member receives a membership decal, UW-F Newsletter, and access to members-only areas of the United Waterfowlers - Florida website.

Sponsorship (\$100.00) \_\_\_\_\_  
This annual level member receives a high-quality hat with an embroidered logo, membership decals, UW-F Newsletter, and special advertising rates on the United Waterfowlers - Florida website.

## A Waterfowl Hunter's Code of Conduct

-  Learn and practice safe hunting techniques.
-  Obey and support all wildlife laws and report all violations.
-  Respect the land and the landowner and always obtain permission before hunting.
-  Do not let peer-pressure or the excitement of the hunt cloud your judgment.
-  Know the capabilities and limitations of your shotgun and use it safely.
-  Do not shoot beyond your personal ability – 30 yards or less is an effective range for most hunters using steel shot.
-  Select a single bird as a target. Do not indiscriminately fire into a flock of birds.
-  Do not shoot at birds that are circling or approaching the decoys of another hunting party.
-  Positively identify your target as a legal bird and insist on a good shot.
-  Make every effort to retrieve and utilize waterfowl harvested.
-  Do not contribute to another hunter's bag. Party shooting is illegal.
-  Approach the shooting area with caution and consideration for others and avoid unnecessary noise, light, and movement.
-  Set up least 150 yards from any other hunting party. Do not encroach on another hunter's location.
-  Avoid knowingly interfering with another hunter and respect the right of others to lawfully share the out-of-doors.
-  Pick up your empty shell casings and other litter and dispose of them properly.
-  Value the hunting experience and appreciate the beauty of the outdoors.
-  Share responsible hunting with others, especially youth, and work for waterfowl conservation.

*United Waterfowlers – Florida, Inc.*

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[www.unitedwaterfowlersfl.org](http://www.unitedwaterfowlersfl.org)

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