**Wakulla Springs Alliance**

**August Board Meeting Minutes**

**August 26, 2022**

**9:00 am to 11:00 pm**

**Highlights**

* Howard Kessler has agreed to serve for Sept & Oct and Michael Keys will do November and December.
* Rob Williams made a motion to approve Howard Kessler as chair, seconded by Brian Luipani, which passed unanimously.
* Rob Williams made the motion to send the letter endorsing the Wakulla County Alternative Water Supply Project (golf course wastewater disposal facility), seconded by Tom Taylor, which passed unanimously. See Appendix E.
* Save the English Forest is considering endorsements for funding. Brian Luipani will be sending out information.

**Opening**

* Welcome and introductions – Rob Williams
* Agenda review and approval – Rob Williams
* Anthony Gaudio, meeting facilitator asked that everyone raise their hands to be recognized. There will be time limits on all agenda items

**Approval of minutes**– Tom Taylor

* Howard Kessler made the motion to approve the minutes, seconded by Jim Davis, which approved unanimously

**Approval of financial report** – Jim Davis

* Brian Luipani made the motion to approve the minutes, seconded by Debbie Lightsey, which approved unanimously

**The Florida Wildlife Corridor Act and Wakulla Springs —**Jason Lauritsen, Chief Conservation Officer, Florida Wildlife Corridor Foundation

* There is a map of hotspots and bottlenecks that is used to focus efforts
* The dark green areas are public, private and non-profit property with protection.
* The red hotspots include the Wakulla Springs area.
* Bottlenecks are less than a mile wide.
* The 2021 FL Wildlife Corridor Act is used for funding decisions but is not regulatory.
* The corridor shows 9.6 m acres protected and 8.1 m acres unprotected,
* The Board of Trustees are considering gaps around Wakulla Springs.
* Tools include an economic analysis of jobs and other economic benefits related to the corridor.
* There can be acquisition, conservation easements, payments for environmental benefits, agriculture and ecotourism, corridor compatible communities, solar, etc.
* The FLUX land cover categories are used for prioritization. For example, silva culture is compatible.
* We look at roadwork for opportunities for improved wildlife crossings.
* The Wildlife Corridor Conference is Sept 26-28, 2023.
* C – This is tied to the WSA strategic goal of land acquisition and management.
* C – There is a lot of development pressure in Wakulla County and we should address this. A – This is a hotspot and we need to be notified if development is proposed. Even if there is development, it can have wildlife corridor designations on the site. Jason has an example.
* Q – How does this interact with Fl Forever priorities? A – 82% of acquisitions of Fl Forever lands are in the Corridor areas. FL Forever FL and Rural and Family Land funding is critical. We are working with them to create hubs and connectivity.
* Q – Are you connected with FDOT and do maps show priority roads blocking corridors. A – We are working with all 5 DOT districts and this is on their radar. This is less so in the Panhandle
* References
	+ Florida Wildlife Corridor Act: <https://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2021/976/>BillText/er/HTML
	+ Economic Benefits of Corridor Conservation: <https://floridawildlifecorridor.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Economic-Study_2->      page\_3.2.22.pdf
	+ <https://floridaspringsinstitute.org/its-time-to-establish-a-springs-and-rivers-national-park-in-north-florida/>

**A Springs and Rivers National Park in North Florida?** – Bob Knight, Howard T. Odum, Florida Springs Institute

* Land acquisition and protection is critical but insufficient to restore our springs.
* The [Great Springs and Rivers National Park](https://floridaspringsinstitute.org/its-time-to-establish-a-springs-and-rivers-national-park-in-north-florida/) in N. FL is being proposed.
* The FL Springs Institute, Le-Huu Partners and a national parks foundation are working together.
* They have a video presented at an allies meeting recently. It shows an amazing aquifer that feed rivers, springs and drinking water. We have documented dead and impaired springs.
* To have a park we have to show environmental, geological, cultural history and current value.
* The springs have billions of dollars in economic impact.
* Water use and pollution is from agriculture and public use.
* This can connect to the FL Wildlife Corridor.
* There are 27 m acres in the springs’ basins.
* Saltiness and dark water are increasing in Wakulla Springs, in part from pumping.
* We know the causes and solutions but lack political will.
* Q – Is there a national precedent for non-contiguous parks. A – There are national parks, monuments, etc. The National Park Conservation Commission says this is possible and will may take 5-10 years. The Natchez Trace and others are linear parks.
* C – We all like national parks and this was raised 15+ years ago. There will be opposition including concern about tax bases, etc. Timucuan ecological and historic preserve in northern Duval and Nassau Counties. A – The allies meeting raised concerns and we are considering the benefits. There could be federal funding for acquisition that would supplement FL park funding and staffing. We need public awareness of the dangers.
* Q – Have you consulted the National Cave and Karst Research Institute which includes all the springs. They are involved in Carlsbad and other national parks. There is a USGS Karst group too. Wakulla County others may want to invite them to make a presentation. A – We will contact them in the future.
* C – Long before the Everglades National Park, there was a state park. Becoming a national park has brought billions of dollars. If the Apalachicola had been a national park, it would have been a national issue rather that a battle between oyster fishers and Atlanta developers. Glacier, Grand Tetons and other parks were opposed by locals.

**Request to Endorse Wakulla County’s Alternative Water Supply Project -** Rob Williams

* David Edwards has requested a WSA endorsement for funding of the project. See appendix
* This will reduce nitrates at a about $400/lb., which is much less than the cost replacing septic tanks.
* C – I am concerned about the rapid infill basins, RIBS. A – This will be like wetlands.
* C – This could become a public utility. Have they done a sewer fee for the county to cover operation and maintenance? A – We will rework the golf course. We don’t need the RIBS much but most reuse water will be used to irrigate the golf course. This will also reduce withdrawals for irrigation.
* Q – What happened with the Moore property? A – Wakulla County still owns it and has no plans to do anything at this time.
* Rob Williams made the motion to send the letter endorsing the Wakulla County Alternative Water Supply Project (golf course wastewater disposal facility), seconded by Tom Taylor, which passed unanimously. See Appendix E.

**Springshed and river update**– Cal Jamison

* Visibility has gone from 27.5 feet last week, 37.2 today.
* Q – What boats are operating? A – There are a couple of loaner boats that can’t go up the back channel. Nothing has been done with the old boats. They hope to repair one or two. The hulls are aluminum and in bad shape. Repair or replacement will be over a few years. Reservations are made through the lodge. Some walk-ons are allowed.
* Q – Is the park staff still doing the tours. A – The park staff and volunteers are doing the tours.
* Q – What boats are used for the survey? A – We use the pontoon boat. Maria drives 5 passengers.

**Cave exploration updates** – Chris Werner and Andreas Hagberg

* Chris reported they have been locked out by the rain. We hope we can get back to work.
* Andreas has found some new tunnels from Indian Springs possibly going to Sally Ward Spring.

**Interim Chair Position**– Rob Williams

* Howard Kessler has agreed to serve for Sept & Oct and Michael Keys will do November and December.
* Hopefully we can elect a full-term chair for 2023
* Rob Williams made a motion to approve Howard Kessler as chair, seconded by Brian Luipani, which passed unanimously.

**Announcements, upcoming meetings and events**

* Chad Hanson is interested in becoming a board member and asked about the process to join. A – There will be a nominating committee in November for elections in January.
* Save the English Forest is considering endorsements for funding. Brian Luipani will be sending out information.
* Q - At the last meeting we voted to send a letter on the 88 septic tanks. A – A letter was sent and DEP objected and the developer has not brought it up again.
* C – WSA had a table at the Big Bend Environmental Forum.
* Q – Were the candidates well-informed? A – They were not very aware. Debbie will send a letter to the November candidates so there understand the range of environmental issues, not just solar. 4 of the candidates have taken Jim Stevenson’s tour.

**Adjourn**

* Howard Kessler made a motion to seconded by Rob William, which passed unanimously

**Appendix A**

**August Board Meeting Final Agenda**

**August 26, 2022**

**9:00 am to 11:00 pm**

**Opening**

      Welcome and introductions – Rob Williams

2 Min

      Agenda review and approval – Rob Williams

2 Min Anthony Gaudio Raise hand to be recognized – Time limits on all Agenda items

**Approval of minutes**– Tom Taylor

2 Min Additions and corrections?

**Approval of financial report** – Jim Davis

5 Min Questions?

**The Florida Wildlife Corridor Act and Wakulla Springs —**Jason Lauritsen, Chief Conservation Officer, Florida Wildlife Corridor Foundation

15 Min Presentation

5 Min Q&A

5 Min Discussion

**A Springs and Rivers National Park in North Florida?** – Bob Knight, Howard T. Odum, Florida Springs Institute

15 Min Presentation

5 Min Q&A

5 Min Discussion

**Request to Endorse Wakulla County’s Alternative Water Supply Project -** Rob Williams

10 Min Presentation

 2 Min Motion to Endorse Rob W agrees to write letter

**Springshed and river update**– Cal Jamison

5 Min Presentation

**Cave exploration updates** – Chris Werner and Andreas Hagberg

 5 Min Presentation

**Interim Chair Position**– Rob Williams

5 Min Motion to Approve Howard Kessler to Serve for Sept & Oct

**Announcements, upcoming meetings and events**

 2 Min

**Adjourn**

90 Min Total Allocated Time

Appendix B

**8-26-22 WAKULLA SPRINGS Board Meeting Participants**

**\* Indicates those present**

Officers

Robert Williams, Chair \*
Robert E. Deyle, Vice-Chair
Tom Taylor, Secretary \*
Jim Davis, Treasurer \*

Directors

Gail Fishman \*
Rob Gelhardt

Albert Gregory \*

Andreas Hagberg \*

Cal Jamison \*
Howard Kessler \*

Mike Keys \*

Debbie Lightsey \*

Brian Luipani \*

Lindsay Stevens \*

Members and Guests

Anthony Gaudio \*

Chad Hanson \*

Mark Heidecker \*

Chuck Hess \*

Bob Knight \*

Jim Stevenson \*

Paul Thurman \*

Kathleen Von Hoene \*

Sophie Wacongne-Spear \*

Chris Werner \*

**Appendix C**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **WAKULLA SPRINGS ALLIANCE** |  |
| **FINANCIAL REPORT**  |  |
| **FOR THE 7 MONTHS ENDED JULY 31, 2022** |  |
|  |  |
| **INCOME** |   |
| Donations |  $ -  |
|  Memberships |  4,815.00  |
|  |  4,815.00  |
|  |  |
| **EXPENSES** |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  Awards |  118.20  |
|  Florida Corporate Annual Report |  61.25  |
|  Big Bend Environmental Forum |  100.00  |
|  PayPal Fees |  193.81  |
|  Earl Bacon Agency - Insurance |  1,097.00  |
|  |  1,570.26  |
|  |  |
| **SURPLUS/(DEFICIT)** |  3,244.74  |
|  |  |
| **BANK BALANCE - 12/31/2021** |  5,412.79  |
| **PAYPAL BALANCE - 12/31/2021** |  454.17  |
|  **TOTAL - 12/31/2021** |  5,866.96  |
|  |  |
| **BANK BALANCE - 7/31/2022** |  6,815.38  |
| **PAYPAL BALANCE- 7/31/2022** |  2,296.32  |
|  **TOTAL 7/31/2022** |  **$ 9,111.70**  |

**Appendix D**

**Project Title**

Wakulla County - 2022 Alternate Water Supply Project

**Project Description**
Wakulla County requests funds for an effluent reuse irrigation system and recharge rapid infiltration basins (RIBs). The project will benefit Wakulla Springs basin by introducing AWT standard effluent by irrigating 140 acres of land and 4.5 acres of RIBs embedded in the County owned golf course. Wakulla County has received over $58M from DEP for the septic to sewer conversions to improve and protect Wakulla Springs. To continue these projects, the county must expand its effluent disposal.

**Project Benefits**
Once constructed, the reuse irrigation and recharge RIB system will reduce groundwater withdraw and provide aquifer recharge that  meets/exceeds the current wastewater standards set by DEP.

**Total Nitrogen reduction (lbs./year)**
12157

**Total project cost**
$ 4,942,250.00

**Cost Effectiveness**
The system will utilize previously constructed infrastructure to convey the effluent from the WWTF to the golf course. Additionally, the County has already made significant investments in due diligence and land acquisition for this project. The proposed disposal system will provide beneficial re-use, thus reducing the need for groundwater withdraws, as well as provide a component of aquifer recharge through the RIB system.

**Proposed start date** 09/01/2022

**Estimated end date** 06/30/2023

**List the plans/commitment to operate and maintain project.**
Wakulla County will operate and maintain the effluent reuse irrigation system and recharge rapid infiltration basins once constructed along with the entire sewer infrastructure. The county has a commitment to maintain the sewer infrastructure as a public utility.

**Project Location** Wakulla County Golf Course – 3874 Coastal Highway, Crawfordville FL

**Appendix E**

