

NO BARRIERS

A Publication of the Florida Disabled Outdoors Association



Special points of interest:

- SCUBA Dive at Pennecamp
- SportsAbility 2004
- FDOA Skeet Shoot

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A New Chapter is Written with Wheelchair Users SCUBA Diving Pennecamp State Park for the First Time

Key Largo, FL – The thought of SCUBA diving may be slightly intimidating for some, but ten divers with disabilities dove Pennecamp State Park in September, 2002. Diving at Pennecamp wasn't possible for those who are in wheelchairs prior to this event. The endeavor was sponsored by the FDOA with its Recreational Activities Program for Adults with Disabilities (RAPAD) and the Handicapped Scuba Association (HSA).

What inspires a person with a disability to attempt scuba diving? When asked, Donna Dickens a disabled diver on the John Pennecamp dive trip stated, "Freedom of movement and pleasure! I have spinal bifida and cannot walk on land. However, in the water I can move around freely with just my arms this experience is immeasurable and inspiring to say nothing of the beautiful world that I can explore underwater".

A specially equipped dive boat made its way from Miami to make this possible. An electronic dive platform was able to raise and lower divers from the boat to the water. "This technology enables divers with disabilities to dive alongside

able-bodied divers. The goal is to make it possible for everyone including those who have a mobility impairment - instead of creating programs solely for the disabled," stated David Jones, FDOA President.

David Jones, FDOA President, has worked diligently with the State Parks Department to improve accessibility for people with disabilities. Having a disability himself, David Jones understands this very well. The Florida Parks have been working with Jones to make each of the parks more accessible and to become ADA compliant. "This project is one more step in eliminating the barriers that exist in our parks. We want to welcome everyone to enjoy the great outdoor recreation that our sunshine state has to offer." stated Jones.

As a result of the trip to Key Largo the FDOA and Florida Park service are working together towards a common goal of making John Pennecamp State Park accessible to all persons. The goal is to have a fully equipped boat for persons with disabilities available at the park year around. This trip made the Florida Park Service aware of the needs of persons with disabilities



Donna Dickens illustrating her skills to Dive Master Mark Rausch

and through this awareness the future success of the goal.

Representatives from the FDOA Advisory Board, Florida Park Service, Coral Reef Company, Pennecamp State Park, US Coast Guard, and TNT Lift Systems met at the end of April 2004 to assess the practicality of adding a hydraulic lift to the El Capitan, a snorkel boat operating out of John Pennecamp State Park. The boat was assessed and it was determined that it could be fit with a hydraulic dive platform.

The boat is scheduled for annual Coast Guard inspection in October of this year. FDOA expects that an accessible boat will be available in 2005! This great accomplishment would never have been possible without the dedication of FDOA volunteers — Janet Gladden and Donna Dickens. This shows that a team effort truly can lead to progress!!

SportsAbility Tallahassee – April 16-17, 2004

FDOA held its premier program **SPORTSABILITY** at no charge to participants in Tallahassee for the eleventh year on April 16-17, 2004. This year, the (FDOA) had two new partners: Tallahassee Community College and Florida State University. Though the two schools have contributed venues and volunteers in the past, both institutions became co-sponsors this year. TCC students helped plan the event, searching for financial sponsors, recruiting volunteers, promoting the event, and building equipment. Florida State student athletes from the football, basketball, volleyball and track teams volunteered to help at Saturday's outdoor day.

Over 800 people from all walks of life participated in SportsAbility. Jones said the new partnerships will help ensure the future of SportsAbility. FDOA has also created an Advisory

Board that meets regularly to provide a broad community support to the efforts.



Al Verhine enjoys horseback riding at SportsAbility.

DAY ONE - RESOURCE EXPO AND INDOOR ACTIVITIES

SportsAbility featured indoor activities on Friday at TCC. Friday's activities included disk golf, laser target shooting, adaptive fishing tennis and golf. There was a wheelchair basketball game that included members of the TCC baseball team and other students. Friday's event also included a "Resource Expo," featuring programs, products and services of interest for people with disabilities.

DAY TWO - OUTDOORS DAY

Saturday's activities featured water sports: sit-down water skiing, sailing, canoeing, kayaking, jet skiing and fishing. There were also land activities including: archery, hand-pedaled bicycling, target-shooting, ATV rides, horseback rides, golf and disk golf. Joanne Rogers, chair of the TCC physical education and recreation programs, said planning the event was a rewarding experience for her students.

SPORTSABILITY is much more than fun. It is a wonderful occasion to help educate the public about recreational opportunities while providing valuable community resource information.

Next year SportsAbility will be held on April 15-16, 2005 at the same locations. See you there! ♻️



Walter Bunso of Kayak Adventures, LLC assists Tom Delilla in a kayak adventure of his own!



FDOA – striving to provide access for everyone

2004-2005 Mobility Impaired Person Hunt Program

This year's dates are as follows:

Blackwater Hutton Unit

Jan. 28-30
Feb. 4-6

Dupuis WEA

Nov. 13-14

Ecofina Creek

Nov. 13-14
Jan. 14-16
Jan 21-23
Jan. 28-30
Feb. 2-4

Holton Creek

Oct. 15-17

Oct. 29-31

Nov. 5-7

Dec. 17-19

Ralph E. Simmons

Oct. 16-19

Seminole Forest

Oct. 22-24

Suwannee Ridge WEA

Oct. 15-17
Oct. 29-31
Nov. 5-7
Dec. 17-19

Three Lakes

Nov. 5-7

For more information or to apply, go to www.wildflorida.org/hunting/quota_hunt/default.html or call (850) 488-8573 ext. 2 or visit your regional Fish and Wildlife Department office for applications via mail. Applications will be accepted for first phase July 14 – 30. The third phase for unissued permits will now consist of an initial random drawing from August 28 – September 6.

Note: There is an error on the quotas available on the FWC application. All past quotas remain the same. Also, please note the new Hutton Unit. ♻️

President's Report



David Jones
FDOA President

We have come a long way this year! Last August, a group of volunteers came together and met for our first formal strategic planning weekend. Out of that meeting came an official FDOA Advisory Board. The board has met on a regular basis throughout the year and has assisted in making this year's SportsAbility the most smoothly run to date! This was partly because the plan included a new partnership with TCC and FSU. We are expanding the concept this year and forming several key committees – marketing, fundraising, and volunteer coordination. Anyone that has an interest in helping is welcome! On the back of the newsletter is a membership form that details some of the areas where assistance is needed.

If you have a few minutes of your time to spare, I promise you will gain more rewards than you can imagine.

We have been able to grow and develop because we have been fortunate enough to have Laurie LoRe become our Deputy Executive Director. Her talents, experience and personal belief in our mission makes her a great asset and gives us the tools to make the FDOA a better organization and take us to a higher level into the future.

Our Recreation Action Program for Adults with Disabilities (RAPAD) has a new Project Director, Donna Dickens. Donna stepped back in to assume the management of that very successful program as we transition from a DOE to DVR grant. She helped in the original start up of RAPAD

and brings a great deal of enthusiasm and personal commitment to providing recreational opportunities for people in our tri-county area.

Phil Yon is taking on the role of Fish and Wildlife Commission Liaison for our disabled hunting interest and concerns. Phil has already helped open outdoor access by helping to create the Alternative Mobility Permit (AMP). Also, Dave Sanderson will continue to help in managing our FDOA Hunting Programs as we add several new member hunts for this year. Dave is a great hunt master and brings his many years of experience to the position.

Our FDOA volunteers do a wonderful job and are the only reason we can continue into the 14th year to enhance the quality of life for so many people. 🐾

Breaking Clays to Break Barriers... Third Annual FDOA Shoot to occur in October!

The Florida Disabled Outdoors Association (FDOA) will pair up with the Coon Bottom Gun Club to host this unique fund raiser again on October 1, 2004.

Shooters can come out to help us break clays to break barriers and compete for the title of high shooter. All shooters will have the chance to win great prizes.

There will be a silent auction with many wonderful items to bid on. A \$100 per shooter donation to the FDOA will assist in raising funds to provide more

accessible inclusive recreation for people with disabilities.

This is a fun way for you to be a part of FDOA's efforts to help others.

FDOA sends a thank you to everyone who supported us last year and we look forward to seeing you this year at what is sure to become a FDOA tradition.

For more information, visit www.fdoa.org or call (850) 668-7323. 🐾

"Last year I shot trap for the first time. Even though I was very far from being a top shooter, I had a blast" said Laurie LoRe, FDOA's Deputy Executive Director."





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WWW.FDOA.ORG

Membership Application

How can YOU support the efforts of the Florida Disabled Outdoors Association?

**Become a member
of the FDOA!**

Your assistance is valued and truly appreciated!! When you become a member of the FDOA, you not only support the programs mentioned in this newsletter, but you **ensure their continued success and growth.**

Yes, I want to ensure that FDOA's programs continue! Please accept my support at the following annual dues membership level:

- \$20.00 Individual
- \$50.00 Family
- \$100.00 Sponsor
- \$500.00 Patron
- Please accept my additional donation of \$_____.

Name _____

Organization _____

Address 1 _____

Address 2 _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Home Phone _____

Work Phone _____

E-mail _____

Please indicate any areas in which you would be willing to help.

- Marketing / Promotion
- Fund Raising
- Event Planning
- Finance / Accounting
- Computer Applications / Development Web
- Musician
- On-site assistance at functions
- Other _____

Please mail your membership application to:

FDOA
2213 Tallahassee Drive
Tallahassee, FL 32309

FDOA is a 501 (c)(3) nonprofit organization and gratefully accepts donations and in-kind gifts. All contributions are tax deductible.