

# NO BARRIERS

*A Publication of the Florida Disabled Outdoors Association*



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

**Special points of interest:**

- SportsAbility Ocala
- Inclusive Recreation

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## SportsAbility Ocala



Adam Hood of Lakeland, FL Sit-skiing

## FDOA Miracle Program

On November 5, 2008, Tallahassee dedicated its Miracle League Field. The inaugural season began in Tallahassee with two teams: the Braves and the Rays.

Two and a half years ago, FDOA president, David Jones, witnessed a Miracle League grand opening in St. Petersburg, Florida. "I had read about Miracle League before," said Jones, "but you cannot grasp how much it will touch your heart until you see it."

He was thrilled that the children in the St. Petersburg area would have this opportunity and wanted the same opportunity for children in the Big Bend. The field in Tallahassee opened this year with the hard work of Kiwanis of the Big Bend and many partners.

There are over 200 Miracle League organizations in the United States including

Puerto Rico and 100 completed rubberized fields and 100 fields under construction. There are many




Aerron Williams & buddy Cameron Sims

Miracle Fields located in Florida. Pensacola leagues are enjoying their 8<sup>th</sup> season and Delray Beach Miracle League is in the process of fundraising for a Miracle Field of their own, but that does not stop them from

playing games at a local field. Jacksonville just had their opening day on March 28<sup>th</sup>. We continue to see Miracle Leagues formed not only in Florida, but across the nation.

At the first game in Tallahassee, each player went out on the field like they had been born to play the game of baseball! Each player was able to pick the name and number on the back of their jersey and received a team hat as well. Having the community come out and volunteer their time to be a player's buddy or just play baseball really shows the importance of inclusion. The program will also include Miracle kickball, power soccer, volleyball and more. Inclusive recreation opportunities are endless.

For further information, contact FDOA at [info@fdoa.org](mailto:info@fdoa.org) or (850) 201-2944. 

## The next SportsAbility will be held in Ocala.

**Venues:**

- **Friday, October 2, 2009: 10 am - 3 pm**  
ED Croskey Center, Hampton Aquatic Center  
MLK Recreation Complex, 1510 NW 4th Street, Ocala  
*Indoor Accessible, Inclusive Recreation Experiences and EXPO*
- **Saturday, October 3, 2009: 10 am - 3 pm**  
Carney Island Recreation & Conservation Area  
13275 SE 115th Avenue, Ocklawaha  
*Outdoor Accessible, Inclusive Recreation Experiences*

This event is for people of all abilities, their families or friends. Professionals, providers and students of recreation, technology, healthcare, rehabilitation and social work are invited to network and share their products, programs and services. Show your support for the disability community by participating in the Resource Expo!

## Executive Director's Report



Laurie LoRe Gussak  
Executive Director

### Ever Thought about Traveling to South America?

FDOA met with ECUADOR FOR ALL who provide a way to discover the culture, nature, and landscape of the Highlands, Coast, Amazon, and Galapagos regions in Ecuador. They offer accessible tours for people with disabilities. They focusing on making it fun, affordable, and safe. For more info: [www.ecuadorforall.com](http://www.ecuadorforall.com) or [info@ecuadorforall.com](mailto:info@ecuadorforall.com).

Each week we receive calls and e-mails from people across Florida asking what types of recreation are available for people with disabilities in their area. We are working with the Department of Health Brain and Spinal Cord Injury Program to compile this information for people with brain and spinal cord injuries.

What we tend to forget is that ALL recreation in Florida includes people with disabilities. Most of us are aware that the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was passed in 1990 – almost two decades ago. The ADA extends to recreation. It is the right of each person to be able to participate. Some people may need to use assistive technology or adaptive equipment but they can and should experience the benefits of recreation and active leisure.

According to an article from the National Center on Physical Activity & Disability (NCPAD) titled, *Recreation Access Rights Under the ADA* by John N McGovern, JD, “The recreation consumer with a disability has the right to participate in the most integrated setting. This is defined in the U.S. Department of Justice guidelines as the setting in which interaction between people with and without disabilities is provided to the maximum extent feasible. In effect, every single recreation and sport opportunity that is offered for people without disabilities is also available to the consumer who has a disability. With a reasonable accommodation, he or she will be able to participate alongside neighbors, relatives, friends, and others without disabilities in the pursuit of exciting, rewarding, and challenging sport and recreation

opportunities. While separate programs, designed just for people with disabilities, are permissible and may in certain instances be preferred by the recreation consumer, the integrated opportunity must be provided.”

Inclusion benefits everyone. Each person in our beautiful state has something to share. In addition to the health benefits of active leisure, recreation is a bridge that brings people together and builds relationships.

Next time you hear about that fishing trip or that pottery class that sparks your interest, inquire about how YOU can participate. Let's all have fun!

Thank you for the opportunity to work for and with you!

For more information, contact FDOA at 850-201-2944 or [info@fdoa.org](mailto:info@fdoa.org).



## Inclusive Recreation

Thanks to the inclusive recreation project funded through the Florida Developmental Disabilities Council, the Capital Region YMCA in Tallahassee now has a ramp, which provides increased accessibility for persons with disabilities who want to use the pool.

The ramp was dedicated on Friday, March 27<sup>th</sup> at the YMCA – Parkway Branch with community partners in attendance. Everyone planning to swim in the pool can benefit from the ramp, from the individual with a disability to participants in the senior programs. These

types of reasonable accommodations always increase participation in recreation programs. An active leisure lifestyle, which includes inclusive recreation options, has many benefits, including:

- Enhanced self-esteem and self-image
- Increased development of fundamental motor skills necessary for participating in activities
- Increased physical independence and/or mobility.

Check with your local church, YMCA and your Parks and Recreation Department for inclusive programs in your area or contact Kristy Carter at [kcarter@fdoa.org](mailto:kcarter@fdoa.org) or 850-201-2944 x3.



Pam Jameson and Jordan Smith enter the pool while using the ramp

Photo by Tallahassee Democrat

## Big Changes in Mobility Impaired Hunt Program

FDOA President, David Jones, has been working with an appointed workgroup and the FWC Commissioners and staff to make several changes and improvements to the Mobility Impaired (MI) hunt program.

After many months of research, discussions, debates, many meetings of the workgroup and after taking public input around the state, the Commission made some major changes in the application process and in the hunt process. The two major changes are (1) making all permits non-transferable and (2) allowing the permitted hunter to have a guest permit to allow an option to invite someone to accompany and participate in the hunt. This will enable a permit holder to have a hunting companion if needed

or so desired.

The Holton Creek hunts will not, however, have these changes for this season due to some administrative complications and timing issues.

Another change to improve the system is to add a second permit opportunity in the second phase drawing. After the first phase random drawing, everyone is able to apply for a second permit, again by random drawing. Third phase will remain on a first come basis, but an individual can only be issued up to five MI permits.

This new system will make for a more fair distribution of permits. Because they are non transferable, there is no need to stockpile permits. The process begins

on June 1<sup>st</sup> and runs through June 30, 2009 for first phase. Go on-line to [www.myfwc.com/hunting](http://www.myfwc.com/hunting) and click on limited entry hunts for an application worksheet and more information on the hunts and the process.

We are happy to report the addition of a new quality area in the South West Region. An additional opportunity in this area of the state has been needed for several years. The new Babcock Ranch MI hunt will come on-line this season and be offered on Oct. 23-25, 2009.

Also different this year is the application process for the St. Marks MI hunt to be held on Dec. 12-14. This will now be a special opportunity

hunt application process with FWC. You may apply beginning on June 15<sup>th</sup> at the [www.myfwc.com/hunting](http://www.myfwc.com/hunting), limited entry hunts, special opportunity hunts. The cost is \$5 to apply.

There are no reported changes for the Eglin hunt. For an application, call 850-882-4165 and apply before the Jan.1 deadline.

It is important to note that MI certified hunters can also apply for all of the same hunts as the general public. The FDOA will continue to work for you to provide accessible and inclusive hunting and outdoor recreation opportunities for people with disabilities.

### 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 Not-for-Profit
- \$200.00 Business
- \$1,000.00 Patron
- \$2,500.00 Trustee
- Please accept my additional donation of \$\_\_\_\_\_.

FDOA is a 501 (c)(3) Not-for-Profit organization and gratefully accepts donations and in-kind gifts. All contributions are tax deductible.

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Organization \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address 1 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address 2 \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_  
 State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
 Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
 Work Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
 Cell 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 / Web Development
- Musician
- On-site assistance at functions
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

Please mail your membership application to:

FDOA  
 2475 Apalachee Parkway  
 Suite 205  
 Tallahassee, FL 32301



*SportsAbility Ocala*  
*October 2-3, 2009*

Non-Profit  
U.S. Postage  
**PAID**  
Tallahassee FL  
Permit #834

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## Active Leisure for Life!

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2475 Apalachee Parkway, Suite 205  
Tallahassee, FL 32301

Phone: 850-201-2944  
Fax: 850-201-2945  
Email: info@fdoa.org

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CHECK US OUT AT:

**WWW.FDOA.ORG**

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### President's Report



*David Jones, FDOA President*

The FDOA reaches this mid-year mark with many amazing accomplishments. I cannot begin to name them all, but certainly the one that stands out is the completion on the

Miracle League Baseball Field and creation of our Miracle Sports Program. This project began about three years ago as a vision and a dream. I had no money, no plans, no means to re-create what I had witnessed at another Miracle Field opening — or so I thought. What I did have was a sincere desire and a fearless personal commitment to “go for it”. While approaching our Leon County Commission with my proposal, I hit the Jackpot. Not the money that I needed, but something much more valuable—partners. As I acquired the offer of seed money from the Commissioners, we lucked into the thing that was needed most, a strong equally committed partner, Jim Wiley, who recruited his Kiwanis Club, other Tallahassee Kiwanis chapters, then eventually the entire Big

Bend District. We then easily picked up our next partner with the City of Tallahassee and then the Parks and Recreation and Neighborhood Affairs. Then it was Genesis Engineering. Next on the developing team was David Lowe, one of our Advisory Board Members who offered to manage the construction project. Before David and I could complete our pitch for help with construction cost to Sandco Inc, the owner, Steve Ghazvini, became our next partner and offered to do all the work. He recruited a business associate in Roberts Paving to join us, and then Jack Wilder offered to do the parking lot, then another and

another. As we worked on the field, we had youth baseball leagues and players step up to the plate to raise money, we had schools and churches do fundraisers. Jim Wiley and the Kiwanis efforts brought out many individuals and organizations in our community that helped with donations large and small. The Miracle League Field and our Miracle Sports Program would not have happened without this powerful team. A sincere thank you, to all of our very valuable past, present and future partners. The FDOA was built and has been so successful for the past twenty years by utilizing the strength of collaboration and the power of partners.

