



Friends of Wakulla Springs

## **Friends of Wakulla Springs State Park, Inc. Board (FOWS)**

### **Year 2024-26 FOWS Nominating Committee Slate of Proposed Board Members**

#### **Renewing Members:**

- Julie Harrington
- Karen Taylor
- Ming Ye

#### **New Member:**

- Nico Wienders
- Ernest Toole



Friends of Wakulla Springs

**Julie Harrington, Ph.D.**  
**Questions for Prospective Candidates for the Board of Directors**  
**Friends of Wakulla Springs State Park**

- **Briefly describe your historical connection to Wakulla Springs and the Park.**

We began coming often (and bringing guests) to this special place, Wakulla Springs State Park, many years ago, and then I decided to become a Board member (at the initial request of Ron Piasecki, in the late 2000's).

- **Do you feel you have a good sense of the various goals and activities of the Friends or would you like to have more briefing time with current members?**

Having been a Board member for quite some time, I'm very familiar with the FOWS modus operandi.

- **What, and to what extent, are your motivations for participation?**

I'm oriented towards volunteering and assisting in securing improvements for the Park, and supportive of making the Park a high quality experience for visitors and staff. I'm also highly motivated towards resource protection.

- **Please provide us with a bit of your educational, professional and avocational interests and background.**

I have a doctorate in Economics (1995) and an MS in Fisheries (in Water Quality) from Auburn University, and a Bachelor's degree in Fish and Wildlife Management, from Montana State University. As current Director of the FSU Center for Economic Forecasting and Analysis (CEFA), my primary research efforts are in the economic areas of: environmental/natural resources and sustainable energy, education and economic development, among others. Recently, I've been involved with the economic analysis of red tide in Florida, and economic valuation of water resource use in the Everglades, Pellicer, and other watersheds. In the area of the environment, I've conducted research on the economic impacts of climate change and sea level rise in Florida, and assisted to create one Center of Excellence and two Institutes involving other state universities in Florida. Areas of interest include: hiking, fishing, and travel.

- **Can you identify some interest areas, both general or specific, in which you would want to contribute? Examples- administrative support, e.g. financial management**

**and investing, legal, biological research, publicity and other communications, hydrological understandings, historical or biological understanding, facilities or boat maintenance, political advocacy, and the list goes on. Don't select from the above, but please help us define your interests.**

Areas of interest: Where the greatest need is for the benefit of the Friends and the Park. My strengths are in grant writing, and financial areas (e.g., capital campaign, investing/endowment, QuickBooks management/budgeting, strategic planning, etc.) but am happy to step in to support wherever the critical area of need is identified at that point in time.

- **Recognizing fully that we all are engaged in competing time and distance responsibilities, please assess your ability to contribute time, energy, and skills to the ongoing work of the Board.**

Over the last ten years+, I've always contributed time, energy and skills to the areas of priority need. Ideally, since I've served as President these last few years, I'd like to see all Board members equally contributing their time and effort across their respective area of interest in order that there be a balanced FOWS governance, and as a means to minimize member burn-out.

- **Are you on other boards or do you engaged in other civic activities that might conflict with, or complement, your ability to publicly advocate for the goals of our board?**

None that would conflict with the goals of the Board. I was former Chair of the Chiles High School Foundation (and am currently Treasurer), and have served on a number of Boards in the area. I assisted in creating the Wakulla Springs Alliance a number of years ago, and have served on several water resource-oriented committees in Leon County (e.g., watershed protection initiative and OSTDS committee).

- **Have you been sufficiently briefed on the purposes, goals and processes of the board to the extent that you could commit to partner with us or do you feel you would need a bit more time and information about our purposes?**

Yes, am fairly adept on the purposes, goals and processes of the Board and could commit to partner with FOWS at this time.

- **Do you have any business, family, or political obligations that you sense may, from time to time, impede your ability to be an independent advocate for Wakulla Springs State Park? Simply describe any. We all have limitations.**

Am still working full-time. Usually I'm able to juggle both (work and FOWS) but sometimes there are constraints that arise. However, it's more the exception than the rule.

- **Would you like to further engage in a private or small group discussion about any of the above questions, or pose a few of your own to current members, so that you might better evaluate your interest and ability to contribute to our Board? How can we assist you in further evaluating this “opportunity”?**

Thank you. There is a renewed interest these upcoming year(s) to focus on fundraising and building membership. I’m hoping to continue assisting in this endeavor to continue to help build the Friends organization and range.

Please visit [www.wakullasprings.org](http://www.wakullasprings.org) to read our by-laws and Code of Ethics.





Friends of Wakulla Springs

**Karen Talyor**

**Questions for Prospective Candidates for the Board of Directors**  
**Friends of Wakulla Springs State Park**

- **Briefly describe your historical connection to Wakulla Springs and the Park.**

My connection to Wakulla Springs State Park began when I first moved here nearly six years ago. Until the pandemic my family visited often and this was a great place to take them. It is also a great place to go alone.

I am a Florida native. I was born and raised in rural SW Florida near Sarasota. I have always loved the original Florida attractions – Weeki Wachee, Cypress Gardens, Gatorland, Silver Springs, Bok Tower to name a few.

- **Do you feel you have a good sense of the various goals and activities of the Friends or would you like to have more briefing time with current members?**

I have attended a few board meetings during the last year and feel that I have a good sense of the goals and activities.

- **What, and to what extent, are your motivations for participation?**

The first time I went to Wakulla Springs I was disappointed to find out that the water was not clear and that the glass bottom boats were not running. I had always heard and have previously read about how far you could see in the clear water. My husband has been to Wakulla Springs before and spoke of the how clear the water is and how deep you could see.

I wanted to know more. Why were the springs so dark? The more I found out the more I wanted to know. Springs are dying across Florida and we need to find interesting and innovative ways to educate the public in order to save the springs.

I really enjoy the boat tours. The tour guides put their heart in it and it shows. I enjoy hearing about and reading the history of the park. I want to be a part of events to showcase the park to visitors.

I would like to support the park in order to enlighten the public and ensure it is here for future generations.

- **Please provide us with a bit of your educational, professional and avocational interests and background.**

I have been a registered nurse for 22 years. I have an AS degree in nursing and a BA in Organizational Management (strategic planning, change theory, human resources). My nursing background is in emergency medicine. I have been a director of an emergency room and have worked at the executive level. Currently, I am the Director of Patient Safety and Risk Management at HCA Capital Regional Medical Center.

I have worked as an educator and love to do presentations. I have worked to obtain a ½ cent sales tax in my home county that benefited the hospital. It was placed on the ballot and we were successful in a local election.

- **Can you identify some interest areas, both general or specific, in which you would want to contribute? Examples- administrative support, e.g. financial management and investing, legal, biological research, publicity and other communications, hydrological understandings, historical or biological understanding, facilities or boat maintenance, political advocacy, and the list goes on. Don't select from the above, but please help us define your interests.**

I have really enjoyed working with other members on recent events for the Friends. I also enjoy working on emails to send out to our membership.

I am willing to do manual labor, work on the grounds, work on the boats. I enjoy doing presentations and education.

- **Recognizing fully that we all are engaged in competing time and distance responsibilities, please assess your ability to contribute time, energy, and skills to the ongoing work of the Board.**

I am generally flexible at work. There are times where I am busier than others and when unannounced state or regulatory surveys occur. Also, as part of risk management there could be a serious event that can unexpectedly cause me to not to be able to attend or possibly late to an event.

I have weekends off, but do occasionally need to work part of a weekend.

- **Are you on other boards or do you engaged in other civic activities that might conflict with, or complement, your ability to publicly advocate for the goals of our board?**

I am not currently on another board. My civic activities will not conflict with my ability to publicly advocate for the goals of the board.

- **Have you been sufficiently briefed on the purposes, goals and processes of the board to the extent that you could commit to partner with us or do you feel you would need a bit more time and information about our purposes?**

I feel that I have an understanding of the purposes, goals and processes of the board.

- **Do you have any business, family, or political obligations that you sense may, from time to time, impede your ability to be an independent advocate for Wakulla Springs State Park? Simply describe any. We all have limitations.**

I do not currently have any obligations that will impede my ability to be an independent advocate for Wakulla Springs State Park.

- **Would you like to further engage in a private or small group discussion about any of the above questions, or pose a few of your own to current members, so that you might better evaluate your interest and ability to contribute to our Board? How can we assist you in further evaluating this “opportunity”?**

I do not have any further questions at this time.

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Friends of Wakulla Springs

**Ming Ye, Ph.D.**

**Questions for Prospective Candidates for the Board of Directors**  
**Friends of Wakulla Springs State Park**

- **Briefly describe your historical connection to Wakulla Springs and the Park.**

As a professor of hydrogeology at FSU, I have conducted research related to Wakulla Spring with my graduate students. I have collaborated with Sean McGlynn and Terry Ryan on several topics related to Wakulla Springs.

- **Do you feel you have a good sense of the various goals and activities of the Friends or would you like to have more briefing time with current members?**

I should be able to work together with current members.

- **What, and to what extent, are your motivations for participation?**

The Wakulla Springs and the park are facing several issues of hydrology and hydrogeology. As a groundwater hydrologist, I may be able to contribute my expertise and collaborate with the members to address the issues.

- **Please provide us with a bit of your educational, professional and avocational interests and background.**

I received my Ph.D. degree in hydrology from the University of Arizona in 2002, and have been working as a professor at FSU since 2007.

- **Can you identify some interest areas, both general or specific, in which you would want to contribute? Examples- administrative support, e.g. financial management and investing, legal, biological research, publicity and other communications, hydrological understandings, historical or biological understanding, facilities or boat maintenance, political advocacy, and the list goes on. Don't select from the above, but please help us define your interests.**

With my training in hydrology and hydrogeology, I may be able to help advance hydrological understanding of the spring and its environment. For example, I am working with a doctoral student on developing a model to simulate spring discharge. There may be other topics that I can help such as delineating the springshed and monitoring spring water quality.



- **Recognizing fully that we all are engaged in competing time and distance responsibilities, please assess your ability to contribute time, energy, and skills to the ongoing work of the Board.**

Since I have a full-time job at FSU, my time contribution may be limited. But, I may supervise students working on projects that are useful to the Friends of Wakulla Spring State Park.

- **Are you on other boards or do you engaged in other civic activities that might conflict with, or complement, your ability to publicly advocate for the goals of our board?**

No.

- **Have you been sufficiently briefed on the purposes, goals and processes of the board to the extent that you could commit to partner with us or do you feel you would need a bit more time and information about our purposes?**

I have a good understanding on the purposes, goals, and processes of the board.

- **Do you have any business, family, or political obligations that you sense may, from time to time, impede your ability to be an independent advocate for Wakulla Springs State Park? Simply describe any. We all have limitations.**

No.

- **Would you like to further engage in a private or small group discussion about any of the above questions, or pose a few of your own to current members, so that you might better evaluate your interest and ability to contribute to our Board? How can we assist you in further evaluating this “opportunity”?**

I do not think so.

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**Nico Wienders, PhD**  
**Questions for Prospective Candidates for the Board of Directors**  
**Friends of Wakulla Springs State Park**

- **Briefly describe your historical connection to Wakulla Springs and the Park.**  
I moved to Tallahassee 23 years ago and -as a birder- shortly after came to visit the park for the first time. Then I would come regularly, about once every 3 months. In 2012, I started volunteering at the park and in 2013 started partaking in the wildlife surveys. Then I started to get involved with the hydrological aspects of the springs, as part of my professional activity.
- **Do you feel you have a good sense of the various goals and activities of the Friends or would you like to have more briefing time with current members?**  
I always keep a close eye on the activities of the friends. At times attending meetings of via the different publications or interacting with board members.
- **What, and to what extent, are your motivations for participation?**  
Wakulla Springs is a place dear to my heart and where I spent most of my free time. Volunteering, interpreting, or for my own pleasure (I biked to the park from Tallahassee on New Year's Eve and spent the night there so I could wake up in Wakulla Springs on the first day of 2024). My main motivation is to protect the park and the springs. My second main motivation is to educate about the park and the spring which will raise awareness and bring more protection (eventually, hopefully).
- **Please provide us with a bit of your educational, professional and avocational interests and background.**
- **Can you identify some interest areas, both general or specific, in which you would want to contribute? Examples- administrative support, e.g. financial management and investing, legal, biological research, publicity and other communications, hydrological understandings, historical or biological understanding, facilities or boat maintenance, political advocacy, and the list goes on. Don't select from the above, but please help us define your interests.**  
Interpretation, hydrology research and understanding, biology research, history, interactions with the park staff and the Lodge, wildlife surveys, facilities and boat maintenance, organization of lecture series, accounting, publicity, web administration, system administration, scientific instrumentation in the park, organization of events (in collaboration with the park and the lodge),

- **Recognizing fully that we all are engaged in competing time and distance responsibilities, please assess your ability to contribute time, energy, and skills to the ongoing work of the Board.**

I spend about two full days each month at the park. I can likely commit to about 10 to 15 hours of work for the friends each month.

- **Are you on other boards or do you engaged in other civic activities that might conflict with, or complement, your ability to publicly advocate for the goals of our board?** I am not involved with any other group at the moment. I used to be an ambassador at the Saint Marks National Wildlife Refuge but somehow the program seems to have faded down. I was recently contacted to join the Sierra Club Board.

- **Have you been sufficiently briefed on the purposes, goals and processes of the board to the extent that you could commit to partner with us or do you feel you would need a bit more time and information about our purposes?**

I feel I have been sufficiently briefed, over the years.

- **Do you have any business, family, or political obligations that you sense may, from time to time, impede your ability to be an independent advocate for Wakulla Springs State Park? Simply describe any. We all have limitations.**

I don't think I have any limitations. My wife is usually volunteering with me at the park. I sometime partake in running and cycling competitions and therefore have to be away during some weekends.

- **Would you like to further engage in a private or small group discussion about any of the above questions, or pose a few of your own to current members, so that you might better evaluate your interest and ability to contribute to our Board? How can we assist you in further evaluating this "opportunity"?**

I do not think I would need to further engage in group discussions to evaluate my interest in joining the board. I have for a very long time considered applying, if I must say. It started when I was each year winning photographs of the park when placing at the Friends of Wakulla Springs 5K running race that used to be organized in the park (I would be happy to start it again). Many of my good friends (Madeleine, Trudy) are/were members of the board and we have for long discussed the activities of the board. If I may conclude with mentioning some issues I would really want to work on or get addressed: 1- The PVC pipe that runs to the beach from the lodge needs to disappear, once for good. We are losing animals species at a catastrophic pace on/in the river. I could present you with the list and data. This needs to be mentioned, publicized, studied, understood. 3-The riverfront building exhibits and displays, the organization of the room, needs to be revisited and improved. For instance, the fish tank is usually just empty and dirty, plain sad, while occupying a big portion of the room. 4 - Many of the rangers leading boat tours have little scientific knowledge about the river, its dynamics, the fauna, the flora... This is not their fault. But I think they could benefit from more education, interactions. For instance, I found a roseate spoonbill today during our wildlife survey. It was later reported by one of the rangers as a "flamingo" ... I really appreciate your consideration of my application.



**Nico Wienders**



**Ernest Toole**  
**Questions for Prospective Candidates for the Board of Directors**  
**Friends of Wakulla Springs State Park**

- **Briefly describe your historical connection to Wakulla Springs and the Park.**  
Historical connection – By road I have lived 10 miles from from Wakulla Springs (By the way the crow flies 4 miles), for 35 years. I have volunteered in the park in various categories for many years.
- **Do you feel you have a good sense of the various goals and activities of the Friends or would you like to have more briefing time with current members?**  
I have a pretty good understanding of the efforts and goals of the Friends of the springs.
- **What, and to what extent, are your motivations for participation?**  
My motivation is to serve the organization in it's efforts to maintain, improve, and perpetuate the experience of people visiting Wakulla Springs State park.
- **Please provide us with a bit of your educational, professional and avocational interests and background.**  
My education includes BA from University of North Florida, Post graduate work at University of Southern MS. Noting as Mark Twain did, I finally got over it. Spent many years Diving all the rivers in the southeast United States. Geneology and Archaeology, Florida History, Music.
- **Can you identify some interest areas, both general or specific, in which you would want to contribute? Examples- administrative support, e.g. financial management and investing, legal, biological research, publicity and other communications, hydrological understandings, historical or biological understanding, facilities or boat maintenance, political advocacy, and the list goes on. Don't select from the above, but please help us define your interests.**  
My interest's include helping make business and effort decisions for the Friends organization.
- **Recognizing fully that we all are engaged in competing time and distance responsibilities, please assess your ability to contribute time, energy, and skills to the ongoing work of the Board.**

I'm old that itself limits my time and due to other volunteer commitments to a number of other organizations I have to plan careful.

- **Are you on other boards or do you engaged in other civic activities that might conflict with, or complement, your ability to publicly advocate for the goals of our board?**

I don't have any other commitments that would conflict with any commitment to The Friends organization.

- **Have you been sufficiently briefed on the purposes, goals and processes of the board to the extent that you could commit to partner with us or do you feel you would need a bit more time and information about our purposes?**

I understand the Friends purposes, goals, processes..

- **Do you have any business, family, or political obligations that you sense may, from time to time, impede your ability to be an independent advocate for Wakulla Springs State Park? Simply describe any. We all have limitations.**

I don't have any business, family, or political obligations that might impede my my ability to advocate for Wakulla Springs State Park.

- **Would you like to further engage in a private or small group discussion about any of the above questions, or pose a few of your own to current members, so that you might better evaluate your interest and ability to contribute to our Board? How can we assist you in further evaluating this “opportunity”?**

No further discussion concerning the matter of accepting this opportunity.



**Ernest Toole**