

Charles Lee

Summary

Employed for 42 years by the Florida Audubon Society & Audubon Florida, the state's oldest and largest environmental organization. Knowledgeable and accomplished in the management of non-profit organizations concerned with protection of the environment and natural resources. Known and respected by political figures, government officials, and business leaders both within Florida and at the national level.

Experience

2000–Present Audubon Florida Maitland ,Florida

Director of Advocacy (Audubon of Florida) Florida Audubon Society

- Helped facilitate the transition of the Florida Audubon Society into Audubon Florida, a program of the National Audubon Society.
- Served as the organization's principal spokesperson to media on public policy issues.
- Represented the organization in all phases of government relations at the state level and occasionally at the federal level.
- Managed Litigation for the organization; coordinated policy issues with attorneys. Represented the organization directly as a qualified non-attorney representative in administrative proceedings.
- Maintained contacts with the organization's key donors; aided development officers with fundraising proposals and solicitations.
- Managed key physical plant facilities, and sanctuary lands.
- Solicited and obtained major grants in aid to support the organization's development of a major nature center.

1984 – 2000 Florida Audubon Society Maitland, Casselberry &

Senior Vice President Winter Park Fla.

- Represented the Florida Audubon Society in all phases of government relations, lobbying at the state and federal level.
- Principal media spokesperson for the organization.
- Developed and recommended policy to the organization's Board of Directors.
- Communicated with the organization's 45 local chapters in the development and implementation of environmental advocacy efforts.
- Managed the Society's Sanctuary Properties.
- Managed litigation by the organization through both pro-bono and paid legal counsel; recruited pro-bono counsel; represented the organization directly in administrative proceedings as a qualified non-attorney

representative.

- Assisted the President in day-to-day management of the organization, including formulation and implementation of fundraising efforts, fiscal and personnel management.
- Delegated as chief executive decision maker to act in absence of the President.

1976–1984 Florida Audubon Society Maitland FL.

Vice President - Conservation

- Directed the organization's environmental advocacy activities and Represented the organization before the Legislature, Congress, and Executive Branch Agencies.
- Managed the organization's sanctuary properties.
- Assisted the President in the management of litigation and recruitment of pro-bono counsel. Represented the organization directly in administrative proceedings.
- Served as acting CEO during vacancy in President's office.

1974–1976 Florida Audubon Society Maitland, FL.

Field Representative

- Carried out specific assignments under the direction of the President to implement environmental advocacy activities.
- Served as organization lobbyist in Tallahassee and Washington.
- Assisted in managing relations with the organization's chapters.
- Assisted in management of organization's sanctuary properties.

1972–1974 Florida Audubon Society Maitland, FL.

Administrative Assistant

- Primary assistant to the President. Prepared letters, speeches and briefing materials for the President.
- Represented the President at meetings in Tallahassee and Washington.
- Served as organization lobbyist in Tallahassee and Washington.

1971 Youth Conservation Corps Everglades National Park

Assistant Director

- Assisted in the operation and supervision of a field camp for over 50 disadvantaged young people in Everglades National Park.
- Managed the transportation and work program of participants, including the design and implementation of projects.
- Coordinated the day-to day activities of the youth camp participants with the Park Superintendent.

Accomplishments

- **Media Relations** – Positioned Audubon of Florida, and formerly the Florida Audubon Society as the state's leading environmental organization in terms of media recognition. The overall frequency and favorable placement of the organization's name and activities in print and on the air is unsurpassed in the state.
- **Everglades** - Assisted Audubon in developing and implementing campaign to secure support and approval of the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP) by the State of Florida and Congress. Worked to develop consensus to support major Everglades land acquisition projects necessary to support the restoration, including a \$133.5 million purchase of the 52,000 acre Talisman Sugar Company property.
- **Preservation 2000 Land Acquisition Program** – Proposed and developed consensus in support of “Preservation 2000”, the state’s \$300 million per year environmental land acquisition program. Proposed establishment of the program as a member of the “Governor’s Commission On the Future of Florida’s Environment” in 1989. Worked with legislative leaders to win necessary political backing to obtain 10 annual increments of funding during the 1990’s. Successfully recommended support for the program to three governors (Martinez, Chiles & Bush) and was instrumental in securing Governor Bush’s decision to extend the program for an additional decade as the “Forever Florida” program.
- **Protection of the Wekiva River** – Developed strategy for creation of special regulatory provisions protecting this unique Central Florida river. Obtained legislative support and community consensus to establish regulatory “protection zones” and a major land acquisition effort. These activities resulted in federal legislation to designate over 40 miles of the Wekiva as Florida’s second “Wild and Scenic River” in October, 2000.
- **Preservation of North Key Largo** – Oversaw and directed litigation that halted real estate development activity. Developed a consensus that resulted in acquisition and preservation of the remaining undeveloped lands covering an 11 mile long segment of North Key Largo, creating the largest preservation area of tropical hardwood hammock ecosystem in the continental United States. Successfully negotiated an end to more than a decade of controversy between environmental groups and landowners, resulting in joint activity by former opposing parties to seek state and federal funding for land purchase and management.
- **Preservation of “Walker Ranch” as Disney Wilderness Preserve** – Negotiated the acquisition and preservation of this ecologically significant 8500 acre Osceola County tract that was formerly proposed as the site of a major land development project. Convinced the Disney Development Company to acquire it for environmental mitigation purposes. Promoted the concept to Disney & The Nature Conservancy, which now owns and manages the “Disney Wilderness Preserve”. Developed consensus among regulatory agencies, environmental groups, and Disney Development Company to utilize the property as the exclusive mitigation

site for development of Disney's major resort complex.

- **“Farmton Plan”, Brevard and Volusia Counties** – lead successful environmental group advocacy for the establishment of a long term plan for properties owned by the Miami Corporation. Result is over 40,000 acres in permanent conservation easements.
- **“Save the Manatee” license plate** – Proposed the concept of the “Save the Manatee” license plate, which was established by the Florida Legislature. Developed support for the tag concept, and resolved opposition by the Department of Highway Safety & Motor vehicles. This was the forerunner of specialty automobile license tags supporting wildlife causes which have gained widespread acceptance throughout the nation.
- **Establishment of the “Everglades Coalition” in 1985** – Suggested and facilitated the establishment of the “Everglades Coalition”, a working group of over 40 state and national organizations focused on preservation and restoration of the Everglades Ecosystem. Convinced leaders of major state and national organizations to revisit and resolve issues that had resulted in abandonment of an earlier “Everglades Coalition” efforts that formed in the late 1960's and disbanded in the early 1970's.
- **Wildlife Sanctuaries** – Solicited and obtained donation of major wildlife sanctuary properties, including over 600 acres in the Wekiva River Ecosystem, the Turkey Creek Sanctuary in Brevard County (now site of a major publicly funded boardwalk and nature center) and over 700 acres of marshlands in the St. Johns River system.

Appointments

- **Fundraising** – While fundraising has been an ancillary function to specified duties, in excess of \$1 million personally solicited and raised in contributions and grants in the past 7 years.
- Century Commission for a Sustainable Florida by Senate President Tom Lee 2005
- Wekiva River Basin Commission, by Governor Jeb Bush 2004
- Wekiva River Wild & Scenic River Commission by Interior Secretary Gail Norton 2005
- Wekiva River Basin Task Force & Coordinating Committee, by Gov. Jeb Bush 2002-2003
- Growth Management Study Commission, by Gov. Jeb Bush 2000-2001
- Partners for a Better Florida Advisory Commission, by Senate President Ander Crenshaw, 1992
- Commission on Future of Florida's Environment, by Governor Bob Martinez, 1988

Awards

- National Audubon Society Staff Nature Photography Award, 2002
- “Charles H. Callison Award 1996”, professional category, National Audubon Society
- Conservationist of the Year, Florida Audubon Society, 1989
- Everglades Coalition Conservation Award, 1988
- Florida Wildlife Federation Award, 1986
- American Motors Conservation Award, Professional Category, 1978
- Conservationist of the Year, Youth Category, Florida Wildlife Federation, 1966

Education

- 1979 - Invited Participant, Harvard University School of Public Health, Executive Program in Environmental Policy & Management (non-degree)
- 1972 Miami Dade Community College, A.S. Degree, Debate Team Honors
- 1969 Miami Norland High School, Debate Team Honors

Personal & Interests

- Born May 15, 1950, Miami, Florida
- Married to Carole Joy Barice, Attorney
- Accomplished & Published nature photographer
- Kayaking Florida Rivers
- Frequent Backcountry travel in Alaska for wildlife observation and photography