



Gator Gazette

solivitawildlife.com

JANUARY



SWA FUNDRAISER WINE & WILD THING - ALMOST SOLD OUT

We are now about a month away from our first major fundraiser for Solivita Wildlife Advocates. Monday, February 2nd is the date - the Starlite Ballroom is the place. With more than 90% of the tickets already sold we are urging member who wish to attend to go to our website and purchase tickets while they remain available. (<https://solivitawildlife.com/events/>)

The event will be hosted by our club president, Bob Monica who is known throughout the community for his elaborate wine tastings as Wine Guy Bob. Six luxurious wines, charcuterie fare, music and dancing and more are all included in the low price of admission.



Our designated Not-For-Profit Recipient of the year is Central Florida Animal Reserve. CFAR is an outstanding wildlife preserve featuring beautiful big cats that were endanger of being cast aside. The folks at CFAR rescue them and give them a lifelong home and tremendous care. All of the people associated with CFAR are volunteers, including Dr. K. Simba Waltz who is the CEO/ Senior VP. SWA has been supportive of this organization for two years and our members have enjoyed several group trips together. The club will be granting a large donation to CFAR as part of the Wine & Wild Thing event.



Your SWA will also be giving grants to the Florida Wildlife Corridor Foundation, and fStop International for providing nine cameras and expertise that contributes to the wonderful candid Solivita wildlife photography you can view at Solivita Wildlife <https://www.facebook.com/groups/714662673887552>.



There is an ad for the **Wine & Wild Thing!** Party on page 2 of this newsletter. We ask all members to attend if at all possible. If you cannot, please ask at your favorite area hotel, restaurant, or retail venue to donate a GIFT CERTIFICATE for a inclusion in our Silent Auction. All proceeds go to the club due to the donation of all expenses associated with the party by The Accurate Advisory Group (estimated at \$13,000). Please help us help our local wildlife.

We can't do it without your help.

Wine GUY BOB



WINE
& WILD
THING!

- February 2, 2026
- 6:00 pm - 9:00 pm
- Solivita Ballroom

DJ
IRWIN



Wine · Charcuterie · Music · Dancing · Cash Bar

First Annual Wildlife Fund Raiser
Purchase Tickets Online
www.solivitawildlife.com
(minimum donation only \$35 per person)



While Tickets Last!



Accurate
ADVISORY GROUP

GOLD SPONSOR

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SILVER SPONSOR

NEW LEADERSHIP AT SOLIVITA WILDLIFE ADVOCATES

As we begin our sixth year together as a club, we are once again experiencing change in the leadership with our Board of Directors.

2025 saw the departure from our founding Vice President, Bruce Allen and Secretary, Dorothy Schwartz who resigned to pursue other activities. We will always be grateful for the leadership they provided during the initial years of the club. We are who we are, and what we are, in part because of their contributions.



Avid conservation and wildlife supporter, Rick McKelvey joined us as Vice President. Rick is a board member of our PCDD and administrator of the popular Solivita Wildlife Facebook page. Our other new board member is Joanne Bodziony serving as Secretary. Joanne is a retired naval reserve officer who has long been a member of SWA .



More recently our talented Program Director, Barbara McDonald and her able partner, Vivian Aber resigned. Barbara brought great energy and creativity to the role when it was badly needed. We thank these hard working, dedicated women for all that they have done for our SWA. They literally invented our social programs and greatly enhanced our Expert Speaker Program. We will forever be in their debt for their contributions.



At the December meeting two new BOD members were elected, Barbara Elliot and Ali March are taking control as Co-Chairs of the Program Director role. Barbara has extensive experience in this area having served as Program Chair for the Solivita British Isles Heritage Club. Barbara and her hubby, Mark are longtime Solivita residents with a firm commitment to Solivita's wildlife.

Our second new board member is Ali March. Ali is also a longtime Solivita resident who brings an enormous amount of enthusiasm and energy to the effort. She and her partner, Tony Reed are well known throughout the community for their hard work and influence in helping keep Solivita a great place to call home .

The operation of our club and the continuation of its mission depends on members who are willing to donate time, energy and creative talent to the routine activities that drive our goals. Please join me in thanking these two committed individuals for agreeing to put in the time and effort to help make our club a success, and assist them as they transition to their new duties.



BARBARA ELLIOTT



ALI MARCH



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To learn more, join us for a free Wine Guy Bob wine tasting.
Contact: bob@wineguybob.com

A CLOSER LOOK AT THE FLORIDA WILD TURKEY

Now that Thanksgiving has passed, it seems once again safe to take a look at Florida's Wild Turkeys. As we celebrate the 250th Anniversary of our nation, did you know that founding father Ben Franklin once wrote a letter criticizing the Bald Eagle as, "... a *Bird of bad moral Character. He does not get his Living honestly...[he] is too lazy to fish for himself.*" The turkey, said he, "*is a much more respectable Bird, and withal a true original Native of America...He is besides, though a little vain & silly, a Bird of Courage.*"

Regardless, these magnificent creatures are easily recognizable by their striking plumage, which features iridescent greens, browns, and reds. Males, also known as toms, boast impressive beards and colorful wattles that make them a sight to behold, especially during the breeding season when they perform elaborate courtship displays.



Florida wild turkeys thrive in a variety of habitats, from lush hardwood swamps to open pine forests. They are incredibly adaptable, finding food in diverse environments. Their omnivorous diet includes seeds, berries, insects, and even small reptiles. These foraging habits are vital, not just for their survival but also for the health of the ecosystems they inhabit, as they help disperse seeds and maintain plant diversity.

Once on the brink of extinction due to habitat loss and overhunting, the Florida wild turkey has made a remarkable comeback, thanks to dedicated conservation efforts. Various organizations advocate for sustainable hunting practices, such as implementing seasonal regulations and limiting harvest quotas, while also working to protect critical habitats like longleaf pine forests and wetlands that support these birds. The Federation is committed to conserving and restoring essential habitats across Florida, from the Ocklawaha River Basin to the Everglades to Gulf Conservation Area. Through land conservation initiatives in the Ocklawaha area, FWF is actively working to restore these habitats, benefiting the wild turkey population and supporting vibrant ecosystems. Responsible wildlife management remains essential to ensure future generations can continue to enjoy these magnificent birds and the unique landscapes they call home.

FUN FACTS TO GOBBLE

- Did you know that wild turkeys can fly short distances at speeds of up to 55 miles per hour? They are also excellent runners and can run at speeds of 25 miles per hour!
- Turkeys have incredible eyesight, allowing them to detect motion from almost a mile away... this adaptation helps them avoid predators.
- A Turkey has around 5-6,000 feathers covering its body. The Osceola turkey's feathers are darker and more iridescent feathers compared to other wild turkeys, with a characteristic green and purple sheen.



MINUTES FROM DECEMBER CLUB MEETING

President, Bob Monica called meeting to order at 5:00 pm at Palms. BOD present: Leo Mills, Rick McKelvey, Vivian Aber, Barbara McDonald, Joanne Bodziony.

PRESIDENT’S REPORT

- Minutes of last meeting were approved. No new members.
- Modified meeting - Holiday potluck party. Next meeting date is - January 12 , 2026 at **Mosaics**. Future dates on the SWA website.
- The gator report for December 2025 indicates no gators removed. Two gators trapped in Solivita YTD.

• Leo Mills, Treasurer —

Total Income	Month	\$990.61	Year	\$12,253.00
Total Expense	Month	\$155.94	Year	\$ 3,382.00
Total Balance	Month	\$834.67	Year	\$ 8,871.00
Cash On Hand				\$11,717.00

- SWA ends 2025 with 233 total members.
- Our fundraising event has sold 187 Tickets. The wine theme for the event celebrates the 250th American Anniversary with American and French wines.
- Barbara McDonald, Program Director — Stated that there are no events schedule for 2026 thus far. She and Vivian Aber thanked everyone for making their tenure a success.
- Special BOD election conducted. Barbara Elliott and Ali March were elected Program Co-chairs.
- Rick McKelvey reminded everyone that there are 9 cameras from fSTOP providing images for the Solivita Wildlife Facebook page.
- First 50/50 raffle was conducted with Barbara Kaiser winning \$85.



PHOTOS FROM 2025 CLUB EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

2026

Happy New Year!

