
Donor spotlight:

Turner explains why he wants to nurture environmentalists

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Q. What can others do to help this initiative?

A. The people and communities around the BTYCC are what made it successful. Landowners agreed to share 900 acres adjacent to the youth center for the FWC's Youth Hunting Program, which aims to preserve hunting traditions in Florida for future generations. I challenge all landowners to do the same, on whatever scale they can manage. Not helping kids enjoy the outdoors will bring devastating results. Even if one farmer or rancher would invite one child out to the land to show him where food is grown and livestock are raised, that can make a difference.

Q. What's next for you?

A. Florida's youth conservation center serves as a model. I'll use the model to create others of its type on ranches owned by my family across the country and in South America. Turner land is committed to conservation. In the meantime, I'm planting native longleaf pines and wiregrass on the family's plantation near the BTYCC to restore the wildlife-friendly native habitat it once had – one that supports a lot of different animals.

Q. Any parting advice?

A. In an age where we're competing against video games and computers, it's important that we introduce our children to outdoor activities and that our communities continue to protect natural areas. If children have no place or reason to get outdoors, then we may lose our next great naturalist who respects and loves the land.

Internships geared to guide youth toward conservation careers

Eight students from a Jefferson County high school are the lucky recipients of summer internships at the Beau Turner Youth Conservation Center. A \$10,000 directed gift from the Jane Smith Turner Foundation paid them to work and learn about wildlife and conservation for four weeks, beginning June 28.

The grant is on behalf of Jefferson County Middle/High School. It introduced 17- and 18-year-olds to careers in conservation. The Wildlife Foundation of Florida is making it happen. If the program is successful, Jefferson High Principal Dr. Rodney Ryan may try to steer federal funds into the program, to make it ongoing.

The four females and four males in the program expressed interest in a variety of wildlife-related fields, from fishing and hunting to aquatic plant management, reptiles, law enforcement and forestry.

During their four weeks, they helped with personnel, land and water programs and worked on the 160-acre Beau Turner Youth Conservation Center. They participated in fish-shocking to

restock a pond. They got to see where and how Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission law enforcement recruits train, learn about replanting tall pines and wiregrass to create native habitat, and learn dove-trapping techniques.

One of the field trips was to a wildlife management area, where they discussed public use and recreation, infrastructure maintenance, cultural resources and nuisance bear abatement.

Many conservation agencies conduct

wildlife surveys. Interns learned how scientists survey eagles, wading birds and wood storks. On another day, they had a hands-on experience with snakes.

Who knows? Answering their innate curiosity about these fields may create the next generation of scientists, law enforcement officers, technicians or office personnel dedicated to protecting Florida's wildlife. And in the process, eight young people could find direction and purpose in their lives.



FWC Marketing Coordinator Tim O'Neil poses with the eight students selected to be paid summer interns at the Beau Turner Youth Conservation Center.