



Historical Timeline of the Florida Greenways and Trails System

- Early 1900s - public lands begin to be established in Florida.
- 1930s – Canal Authority of the State of Florida is created to purchase lands for construction of the Cross Florida Ship Canal.
- 1935 – Construction of the ship canal began as part of Franklin Roosevelt’s New Deal. Construction ceased within one year.
- 1942 – Following attack on merchant ships off Florida coast, Congress authorized bill to construct Cross Florida Barge Canal along same route of former ship canal.
- 1964 – President Lyndon Johnson held groundbreaking ceremony for barge canal in Palatka, Florida.
- 1964 – Florida Trail Association is established to oversee volunteer effort to build and maintain the Florida Trail.
- Early 1970s - the Florida Canoe Trail System is established by the Florida Governor and Cabinet.

- 1971 – Barge canal project halted by President Nixon.
- 1979 - The Florida Recreational Trails Act is adopted by the Legislature directing the Florida Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Division of Recreation and Parks, to establish a network of bicycling, canoeing, hiking, horseback riding and jogging trails.
- 1980 - The Florida Department of Transportation hires its first bicycle coordinator (Dan Burden).
- 1983 - The Florida Trail, now known as the Florida National Scenic Trail, is designated by Congress as part of the National Trails System.
- 1984 – The Florida Department of Transportation purchases 16 miles of an abandoned rail corridor from Tallahassee to St. Marks to create the state’s first rail-trail.
- 1987 – The original Florida Bicycle Association is formed. The group disbanded in 1995 and was re-established in 1997.
- 1989 - The Rails to Trails Conservancy establishes a Florida field office.
- January 1991 – Cross Florida Barge Canal officially deauthorized and the Canal Lands Authority is established to determine the fate of the lands.
- 1991 - “The Florida Greenways Project,” a vision for an integrated trails and greenways system, is produced by 1000 Friends of Florida and the Conservation Fund.
- 1993 - The Florida Legislature transfers the former lands for the now defunct Cross Florida Barge Canal to DNR and the newly created Office of Greenways Management (OGM). The barge canal lands would become the Cross Florida Greenway.

- 1993 - Governor Lawton Chiles issues an Executive Order to create a statewide public-private coalition known as the Florida Greenways Commission.
- January 1994 - The Commission, chaired by Lt. Governor Buddy MacKay, issues a report entitled “Creating a Statewide Greenways System.”
- January 1994 - DNR and the Department of Environmental Regulation (DER) merge into the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP).
- 1994 – Bike Florida is created.
- April 1994 - DEP recommends moving the Florida Recreational Trails Program from the Division of Recreation and Parks to the Office of Greenways Management.
- 1994 - The Legislature authorizes the transfer and renames OGM the Office of Greenways and Trails (OGT).
- 1995 - As a result of the Florida Greenways Commission report, the Legislature passes the Florida Greenways and Trails Act in Chapter 260, Florida Statutes. The Florida Greenways and Trails Council is created to advise DEP on trail related issues and provide leadership.
- 1998 - The first Florida Greenways and Trails System Plan, “Connecting Florida’s Communities,” is adopted by the Council.
- 2000 – The first true land bridge in the United States, the Cross Florida Greenway Land Bridge over I-75, is completed.
- 2001 - The Florida Greenways and Trails Foundation is incorporated as a Citizen Support Organization for OGT.

- 2005 - Chapter 260 is amended to authorize OGT to establish the 1,515-mile Florida Circumnavigational Saltwater Paddling Trail around the entire Florida coast.
- 2007 – East Coast Greenway Alliance opens its Florida field office.
- 2007 – With the opening of the circumnavigational trail, OGT is instrumental in launching the non-profit Florida Paddling Trails Association to act as volunteer stewards of Florida’s paddling trails.
- 2007- Paddle Florida is created and hosts its first trip on the Suwannee River.
- 2008 - OGT, on behalf of the State of Florida, receives the first-ever Best Trails State in America award by American Trails.
- 2011 - OGT is merged into the Division of Recreation and Parks. While no longer managing trails, OGT continues to provide leadership and coordination to establish and expand the Florida Greenways and Trails System.
- 2013 - OGT outlines a new vision for the Florida Greenways and Trails System (FGTS) in the first update to the FGTS Plan since 1998.
- 2014 - The Florida Greenways & Trails Foundation launches a statewide “Close the Gaps” campaign to promote a regionally connected trail system, culminating with initial legislative funding to complete the 250-mile Coast-to-Coast Connector.
- 2015 – The Florida Legislature creates the Shared-Use Nonmotorized (SUN) Trail Network as a component of the

FGTS. FDOT receives \$25 million a year to construct paved multi-use trails in the system and works closely with OGT in identifying qualified regional trails.

- March, 2016 – The Florida Greenways and Trails Council prioritizes regional SUN Trail funding. After the Coast-to-Coast Connector, they choose the 260-mile St. Johns River-to-Sea Loop as the next priority regional trail to receive funding.