

Connections

www.FloridaGreenwaysAndTrails.com



Sociability Marks New Bicycle Touring and Training Program

By Herb Hiller

Looking for a new squeeze?

Add to Publix aisles and Starbucks counters Volusia County Road 3, dinner at an arts-and-crafts-era mansion and a spiritualist group-reading at the Cassadaga Hotel.

It helps if the 15 or 20 seekers are spending most of a week together, bettering cycling skills while touring the region of the St. Johns River.

Sociability will be one compelling scenario when Florida's first year-round adult bicycle safety training and touring program launches this fall in the vicinity of Lake Helen, Cassadaga and DeLand, a sub-region of west Volusia County included earlier this year in a *USA Today* report as one of Florida's 10 best off-beat places to visit.

Set to debut November 12, the Florida Discovery Bicycling Center (FDBC) is a three-way partnership among the non-profit Florida Bicycle Association (FBA), City of Lake Helen and the River of Lakes Heritage Corridor.

FBA will manage the program; Lake Helen, known for its devotion to alternative transportation and smart growth, will host FDBC offices in its city hall, while the Heritage Corridor, which is the regional visitor bureau, will provide marketing support.



Lake Helen

Not propelled by romance?

"The idea is whatever motivates you, fine," says FBA Executive Director Laura Hallam, "as long as you propel yourself. "We just want people out on their bikes for all the good reasons we know."

For FBA, the challenge is helping adults feel safe on their bicycles.

"We're all working on trails as effectively as we can," says Hallam. "Until we get many more off-road miles, we're going to have to help people feel safe on neighborhood streets and backroads."

FDBC will train for that in its first six-month season.

Six-day, five-night tours that begin Sunday afternoons and continue through Friday lunch will feature a first day of safety

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“...we’re going to have to help people feel safe on neighborhood streets and backroads.”

**-Laura Hallam
FBA Executive
Director**

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is published quarterly by:

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Environmental Protection
Office of Greenways & Trails
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training. League of American Bicyclist-certified instructors will continue safety training by way of ride critiques.

Tours will mostly cover 20 to 30 miles a day with extra mapped options. They’ll use lightly traveled streets and country roads to reach Blue Spring State Park for winter manatee viewing, Lake Woodruff National Wildlife Refuge for birding, the Pioneer Settlement for Creative Arts, and the Old Sugar Mill Pancake House at DeLeon Springs State Park for “flip-‘em-yourself” flapjack breakfast or lunch.

Other tours will visit horse ranches, ferneries, historic districts and the Stetson University campus.

All tours will be sag wagon supported.

Each day’s tour will begin and end at the Cassadaga Hotel, a country inn from 1929. B&Bs will also be available.

Tours will feature locally prepared meals. Many meals will take place at vicinity homes and farms rarely open to visitors.

For tour details, log onto www.fba.org.

Florida Trail Enjoys Further Protection

By Sandra Friend

On March 14, 2006, Nokuse Plantation founder M.C. Davis and the USDA Forest Service finalized a conservation easement agreement enabling a 15-mile portion of the Florida Trail to relocate onto a wilderness corridor between Eglin Air Force Base and Pine Log State Forest.

“We hope this partnership will serve as a model for future projects throughout the state,” said Marsha Kearney, Forest Supervisor, National Forests in Florida. On an initial scouting trip in late April, Florida Trail Association volunteers and

Riders Take to the Trails on the Cross Florida Greenway

By Shaneen Kohler

Imagine coming across 200 horses while out for a Saturday walk along one of the Cross Florida Greenway trails in Ocala. If you went for a walk on Saturday, February 11, you didn’t need to do much imagining. Participants in the 6th Annual Horses for Hospice trail ride, 190 horses and riders, gathered at the Florida Horse Park to raise money for Hospice of Marion County.

“Each year it gets bigger and better,” said Suzanne Reynolds, Director of Development at Hospice of Marion County. “There were also 40 people who came just to watch and have lunch,” added Reynolds. “Last year we had 167 riders.”

The youngest rider, Abigail Reed, was 11. The oldest rider, Peggy Shrader, was 73.

The person who traveled the farthest was Leslie Jablonski, who flew in from Pennsylvania for the ride.

Along with the increased attendance came increased financial support for a worthy cause. The ride earned \$16,500 for Hospice of Marion County.

staff discovered lush creek valleys and steepheads as well as pine plantations and agricultural lands along the easement.

At Nokuse Plantation, the long-term goal is to re-establish the original biodiversity of the Gulf Coastal Plain Ecosystem. As part of the Northwest Florida Greenway, public access along the Florida Trail corridor through Nokuse will enable visitors to understand how human activity has reshaped the land and to appreciate its restoration to wilderness.

Bike Florida 2006



For more information
on Bike Florida visit
www.BikeFlorida.org.

The 13th annual Bike Florida, “Beach & River Ramble, a Tour for Saints N’ Spinners,” took place March 18-24. Florida’s largest weeklong ride attracts nearly 1000 participants. The tour’s leisurely pace, with a rest stop approximately every 15-20 miles, makes the ride a fun and relaxing vacation for cyclists of all ages and abilities.

Bike Florida 2006 started and ended in Palatka. Cyclists rode 40-70 miles daily to cover the route’s 340 miles. The tour featured two layover days—one in St. Augustine and one in Gainesville—to allow riders to explore the towns and their surrounding areas.

Highlights along the route included a peak-season view of azaleas at Ravine Gardens State Park in Palatka, a beachfront ride along A1A, a climb to the top of the St. Augustine Lighthouse & Museum and

a tour of the Florida Museum of Natural History at the University of Florida.

In addition to having fun, the goals of the annual ride include: raising awareness of bicycling’s potential to increase ecotourism in rural Florida, improving driver

awareness for the safety of bicyclists and raising funds to support bicycle safety programs.

Partners with Bike Florida include the Florida Bicycle

Association, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection’s Office of Greenways & Trails and Florida State Parks, Putnam County Chamber of Commerce, St. Johns County Visitor & Convention Bureau and St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce, Rails to Trails Conservancy, St. Johns River Water Management District and the Bicycle Alachua County Alliance.



Florida Greenways and Trails Council

The first meeting of 2006 for the Florida Greenways and Trails Council was held February 23-24 in Tallahassee and focused on the review of projects in OGT’s 2005 acquisition cycle. Several new members have been appointed to the Council in recent months:

Linda B. Crider was appointed by the Governor as a representative of greenway users. A research associate in the Department of Urban and Regional

Planning of the University of Florida, Gainesville, Dr. Crider has been involved in trails for over 25 years, focusing primarily on bicycle and pedestrian issues. Crider helped develop the Florida Department of Transportation’s bicycle program in 1980. Now Executive Director of Bike Florida, Inc., Crider has served as past president of the Florida Bicycle Association and continues to serve on the advisory board. She has also served



Sea the State

Florida Circumnavigation Saltwater Paddling Trail Update



Guides, photos, and maps with GPS coordinates for the Florida Keys and the Panama City Beach/St. Andrews Bay segments of the Saltwater Paddling Trail can be downloaded at FloridaGreenwaysAndTrails.com. Detailed information for other segments will be posted as it becomes available.



DEP Secretary Colleen Castille cuts the ribbon.

Last year, DEP's Office of Greenways & Trails (OGT) embarked on an ambitious project: establish a sea kayaking trail around the state. This year, on February 25, Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Secretary Colleen M. Castille joined OGT Director Jena Brooks, and Monroe County residents and state park officials to officially open the Keys segment of the Florida Circumnavigation Saltwater Paddling Trail. The Florida Keys Overseas Paddling Trail (segment 15, see map) stretches 110-miles from John Pennekamp Coral Reef State Park in Key Largo to Fort Zachary Taylor Historic State Park in Key West.

On the Keys segment, far away from the suit-and-tie, pantyhose-and-pumps world, paddlers can experience the full seduction of life in the "Conch Republic." A short paddle takes visitors to uninhabited islands or down winding tunnels through mangrove forests. Marine life, ranging from manatees and sea turtles to lobsters, fish and stingrays, and an array of birds—migrating hawks, magnificent frigate

birds, brightly colored warblers—add sensory detail to the tropical experience. Civilization in the form of restaurants (think Key Lime pie, fresh seafood), lodging, and evening entertainment is often within easy reach of the water.

Beyond the Keys, the saltwater paddling trail offers 26 additional segments to explore, ranging from the remote Big Bend Coast and Everglades/Florida Bay wilderness to the more populated coastlines of Tampa and Fort Lauderdale.

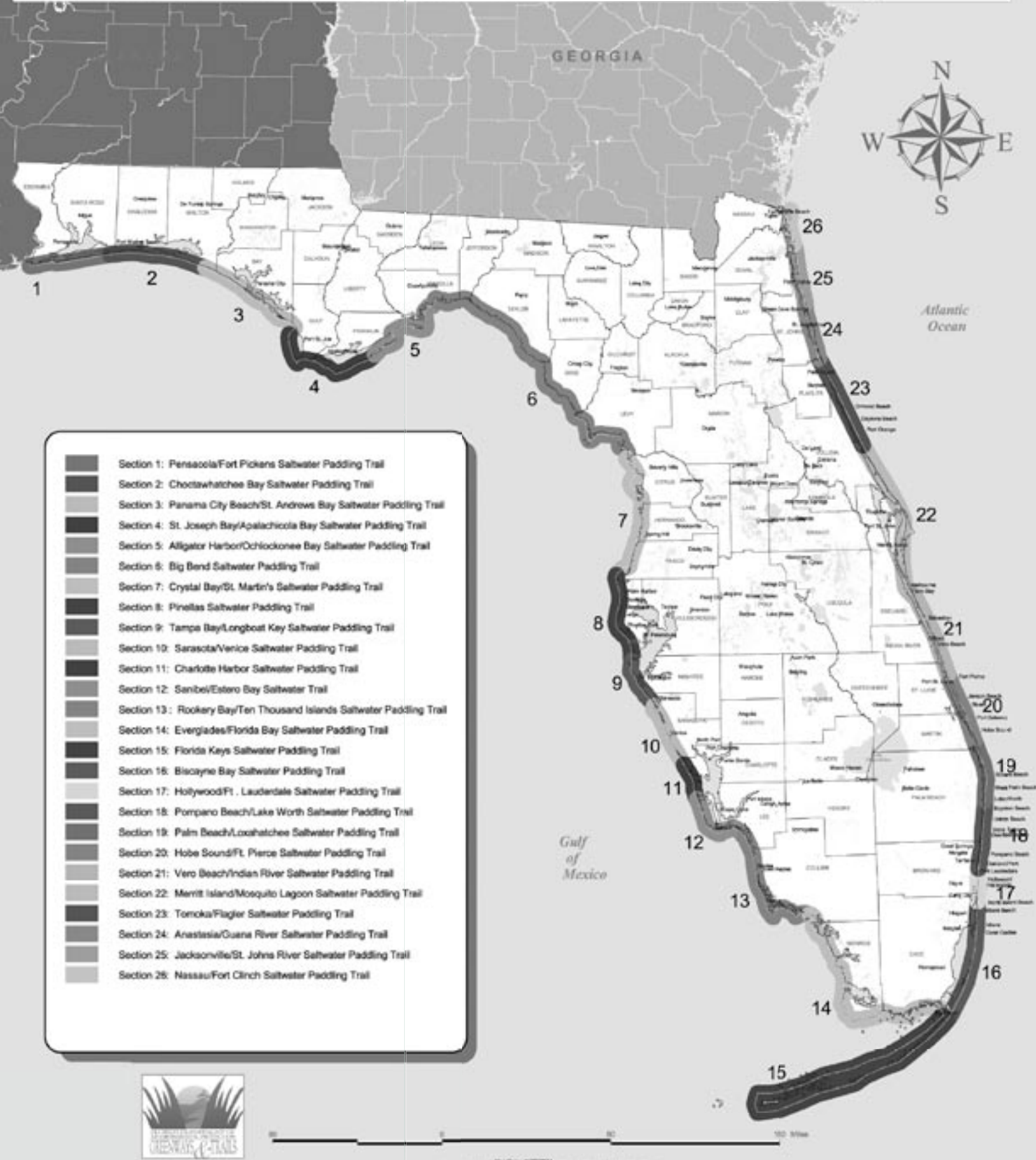
Funded by DEP's Coastal and Aquatic Managed Areas as part of the Florida Oceans Initiative, the trail begins at Big Lagoon State Park near Pensacola, extends around the Florida peninsula and Keys, and ends at Fort Clinch State Park near the Georgia border.

The Florida Circumnavigation Saltwater Paddling Trail crosses 37 aquatic preserves and provides access to nearly all of Florida's coastal state parks, recreation areas and historic sites. The National Park Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, businesses, private citizens, local leaders and community organizations have contributed to the project.



After the ribbon cutting ceremony, attendees enjoyed a paddling excursion.

Florida Circumnavigation Saltwater Paddling Trail



Black History Month on the Cross Florida Greenway

Managed by OGT, the Historic Santos Recreation Area opens from dawn until dusk. Access is free and includes a playground, covered picnic pavilions with grills, restrooms, parking, a basketball court and a baseball diamond.

For more information about the Marjorie Harris Carr Cross Florida Greenway, visit FloridaGreenwaysAndTrails.com.



Calvin Sims, Storyteller of African American Frontier, Black “Cowboys” of the West

Honoring Black History Month, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection’s Office of Greenways & Trails, the Greenways and Trail Foundation, and the Santos Historical Society hosted a celebration on February 18 at the Historic Santos Recreation Area. Festivities included a softball game, a cookout, and entertainment by Calvin Sims.

Located on the Marjorie Harris Carr Cross Florida Greenway near Ocala, the Historic Santos Recreation Area preserves a significant piece of Florida’s black heritage.

Opened in November 2003, the Santos Recreation Area was built on the site of the former town of Santos.

A predominantly African-American community, Santos was a flag station along the tracks of the Florida Transit and Peninsular Railway, which transported cotton, lumber, fruit and vegetables. Before the Cross Florida Ship Canal displaced the town in the mid-1930s, Santos had two general stores, a barbershop, fish market, post office, school, churches and

“juke joints.” The area also boasted a baseball diamond, which was a part of the southeastern circuit of the Negro League Baseball in the 1890s. Today, nineteen historic markers commemorate sites where Santos businesses once stood.

STEP UP FLORIDA!

In February, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection joined the Florida Department of Health in Step Up, Florida – On Our Way to Healthy Living!, a statewide campaign promoting physical activity and healthy lifestyles.

Step Up, Florida! is a month-long relay in which participants pass a “fitness flag” along four different routes through all 67 counties in the state. The event kicked off in Hillsborough and Escambia counties on February 1, with the routes converging in Duval County on February 28.

Step Up, Florida! events on greenways and trails included:

- February 9 – Marjorie Harris Carr Cross Florida Greenway

For the Step Up, Florida! flag relay in Putnam County, participants walked, ran or biked along the Cross Florida Greenway to the visitor’s center at Buckman Lock, to Ravine Gardens State Park, and then to Clay County.

- February 21– General James A. Van Fleet State Trail

Both Polk and Lake counties used the trail for their Step Up, Florida! flag relay. Participants walked, ran or biked along one of the state’s most rural trails.

OGT'S Valerie Naylor earns Trails Manager of the Year Award

In April, the Florida Bicycle Association honored OGT's Valerie Naylor with the Trails Manager of the Year Award.

Valerie came to work for the Office of Greenways & Trails in 2005. In her short time with OGT, the Santos bike trails have undergone an amazing transformation. Taking a proactive approach to risk management of the bike trails, Valerie, along with Mickey Thomason, Central Region Manager, worked with the International Mountain Bike Association's Trails Solutions Team, hosted volunteers, and organized resources to complete IMBA's plan to make Santos area biking trails safer and more challenging. From December to January, staff and volunteers worked long days and weekends to complete the trail's extreme make-over. On a daily basis, Valerie follows up with the logistics of managing multiple user groups at Santos—equestrians, hikers, and off road bicyclists. The Office of Greenways & Trails congratulates Valerie on her important award.



Florida Off-Highway Vehicle Recreation Management Workshop

In May, the Office of Greenways & Trails, the Florida Division of Forestry, Lee County Parks and Recreation, USDA Forest Service and the National Off-Highway Vehicle Conservation Council combined resources to conduct an educational forum on off-highway vehicle recreation management.

The workshop was designed for local, county, state and federal land management decision makers, recreation planners, resource specialists, law enforcement personnel, private property owners and leadership representatives from Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) recreation and other stakeholder communities.

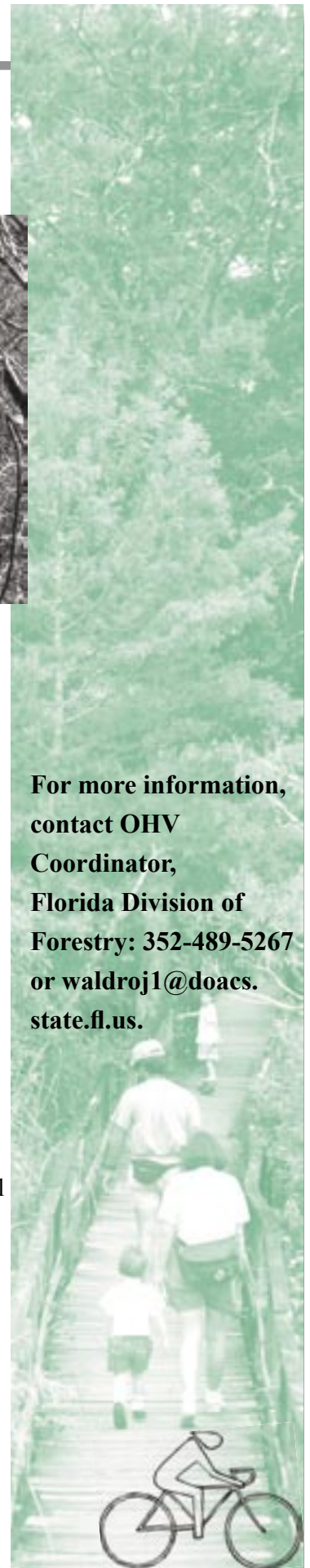
Workshop objectives included:

- Review Florida sales of off-highway motorcycles and all-terrain vehicles, rider demographics, and safety training programs.
- Review general and Florida-specific needs and desires of OHV and other recreational

trail users.

- Review county, state and federal laws, policies, regulations and planning efforts, and State compliance with the T. Mark Schmidt OHV Safety and Recreation Act of 2002.
- Improve the development, planning, design, construction, maintenance and management of OHV trail areas, facilities and systems in order to:
 - Better meet local, county, state and federal requirements.
 - Reduce liability.
 - Minimize impacts and improve conservation of natural and cultural resources.
 - Reduce conflict between recreational, community and environmental interest groups.
 - Better meet the needs and desires of the OHV and other recreational trail users.
 - Expand partnership development between the OHV recreation publics, communities and land management agencies.

For more information, contact OHV Coordinator, Florida Division of Forestry: 352-489-5267 or waldroj1@doacs.state.fl.us.





The *Greenway* Educational Hike



October

is Florida Greenways and Trails Month. To register your event or for information about planning an event, visit FloridaGreenwaysAndTrails.com, call 850-245-2052, or email Julie.N.Roberts@dep.state.fl.us.

“Ms. Barbara, will we see a bear today? A deer? What animals will we see?”

These are questions students asked before we left for our educational hike onto the St. John’s Loop Trailhead – North, around the Marjorie Harris Carr Cross Florida Greenway Visitor’s Center – East.

“We probably won’t see animals today,” I say. “However, we will see signs that animals are present on the Greenway.”

We see large and small deer tracks, gopher tortoise burrows, and other small animal tracks on the sandy trail. We use a map to show our travels. “How do we know we are not lost?” I ask. The young students answer, “We have a map!”

Today we learn about animal classification.

Our map tells us we are going to the Country Trail where the students find amphibians that live in burrows and under leaf litter. “Will you two students find an amphibian that shares a burrow with the gopher tortoise?” The students think about the question, then they spring into action. After looking around our small country setting, the children find a burrow that is marked with a sign reading “Gopher Tortoise Burrow.” After reaching into the burrow and collecting the laminated gopher frog, the children are asked to return the amphibian back to its habitat inside the burrow.

We travel to the Wilderness Greenway where the students learn about a reptile, the gopher tortoise, and also match animals to their tracks.

Hiking further, we talk about mammals along the Rail Trail. From mammal

pictures, I ask students to choose a mammal that has body hair, one that feeds milk to its young, and one that is warm-blooded.

When we travel toward the City Greenway, the students can see Florida backyard birds in trees and shrubs. Binoculars help students identify the birds. A display of a blue jay on a tree limb near its nest of eggs prompts students to choose three of the six words describing birds.

On the Motorized Trail, we see pictures of Florida Endangered and Threatened wildlife. We read: “When we share our land and waters that means we do our part to make sure our land and waters are clean and healthy for us, as well as for our birds, fish, plants, and animals.” I speak of reasons why the Southern bald eagle, the Florida manatee, and the leatherback sea turtle are threatened and endangered. “If we do not protect our wildlife, what will happen to our animals?” I ask, while showing students the word “extinction.”

I give them ideas of how they do their part to keep our land and water clean.

Our last stop is the Water Trail. We have pictures of Florida fish and wading birds.

Activities also include a wagon ride and an animal habitat-building session.

When the field trip ends, students better understand their environment and the species within it.



National Multiple Sclerosis Society Bike Event

Busch Gardens to Sea World April 29-30, 2006

Did you know that the distance from Busch Gardens in Tampa to Sea World in Orlando is 86 miles? Well, that's the distance if you participate in what has to be the most fun way to get there--on a bike!

The National Multiple Sclerosis Society uses biking events as a major fundraising event for their cause. I joined Team Florida Forever from the Central District Office of DEP (great folks, of course -- about 25 of us) and we had a blast! We met Friday evening in Tampa and had dinner at a restaurant near Busch Gardens, got up EARLY the next morning, and the big peloton was off by 7:30 with about 1400 riders!

There were mechanics, food and live music at every SAG stop. The stops were at least every 11 miles (most were only 8 miles apart). All the riders were very encouraging to everybody and we had all ages and degrees of ability. Bright, festive balloons covered the entries to the SAG stops, (no way to miss them!). We had staff volunteers everywhere helping with

traffic when needed, even holding bikes when tired legs had trouble standing.

When we arrived in Sea World Saturday night we had a big banquet, with delicious food, fun door prizes and a \$3,000 bike for a lucky raffle winner. Everyone had received free entrance passes to both theme parks for groups/families of up to four, so many people had taken advantage of the passes both days. After 50 miles of riding through the beautiful scenery of the Green Swamp, I hit the hay early.

Sunday, with the wind at our backs we returned home for a big barbeque and medals to take home. I am definitely signing up next year!

They have a North Florida MS150 in October too --- anyone want to join me?

Eva Armstrong,
Director, Division of State
Lands FDEP

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as a board member of Rails to Trails Conservancy and as executive director of the Florida Governor's Council on Physical Fitness.

Crider works with the Gainesville/Hawthorne Trail Citizens Support Organization in her local area and is an avid trail advocate. Having piloted a research project under Education Commissioner Frank Brogan on "Safe Ways to School," Dr. Crider continues to promote trail connections to schools as a part of this program. She also employs her creative talents to write and perform songs

about trails and cycling.

Recently appointed by the Governor to represent trail users, **Deno A. Hicks** is the director of business development for England-Thims & Miller, Inc., an engineering and professional services firm located in Jacksonville. He is responsible for business development and marketing, with emphasis on public sector growth throughout the Southeast. Hicks holds an interdisciplinary degree in environmental science and policy from the University of Florida and currently



Team Florida Forever 2006





Save the Date!

18th National Trails Symposium



October 19 – 22, 2006

For more information on the Quad Cities contact the Quad Cities Convention & Visitors Bureau at 800-747-7800 or www.visitquadcities.com.

The Quad Cities will host the 18th National Trails Symposium in 2006 on October 19 – 22 at the RiverCenter in downtown Davenport, Illinois. The Symposium provides an opportunity for greenways and trail advocates, managers, planners, users and outdoor product providers, as well as conservationists, private landowners and tourism and business interests to come together to communicate and participate in an educational conference. The Symposium addresses both non-motorized and motorized trails issues.

The National Trails Symposium is held every other year and is sponsored by American Trails - a national, nonprofit organization working on behalf of all trail interests, whose members want to create and protect America's network of interconnected trails. Florida hosted the 16th National Trails Symposium in 2002 in Orlando. The Symposium will feature educational sessions, mobile workshops, exhibits, recreational opportunities and more. Outings will showcase many of the best trails and natural lands in the region and provide examples of how trails and greenways are an integral part of economic development. The theme for the 2006 Symposium is "Trails for America: Every Where, Every Way, Every Day." Major sponsors are John Deere, US DOT Federal Highway Administration, and Riverboat Development Authority.

Sponsor/Exhibitor Opportunities:

The 18th National Trails Symposium is currently offering sponsorship and/or exhibitor opportunities. There are many

sponsorship levels to choose from and all provide recognition for companies/organizations. The Symposium exhibit hall will feature over 125 exhibits representing trail-related businesses, agencies and organizations from all over the country. For sponsor/exhibitor packets or more information go to www.americantrails.com or contact American Trails at (530) 547-2060.

The Quad Cities is located on the Mississippi River and is made up of the cities of Davenport and Bettendorf in Iowa, and Moline, East Moline and Rock Island in Illinois. It is the largest metropolitan area on the Mississippi River between Minneapolis and St. Louis. The area is a 2.5 hour drive from Des Moines, Iowa, and Chicago, Illinois, and is easily accessible via I-80, I-74, I-88 and several major state highways. The area is also served by the Quad City International Airport (MLI) in Moline, Illinois - which provides direct flights from many major U.S. Airports.

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serves as a planning commissioner for the City of Jacksonville and was elected state committeeman for the Republican Party of Duval County.

Named an "Up & Comer" in the City of Jacksonville, Hicks is a trustee and member of the Military Affairs and Government Affairs task forces with the Jacksonville Chamber of Commerce and holds various board positions with the Better Business Bureau, Dreams Come True, Society for Marketing Professional Services, and National Association of Industrial and Office Properties. Hicks has served on the City of Jacksonville Charter

Revision Commission and is former state treasurer of the Florida Association of Environmental Professionals.

The Governor appointed **Kathryn Starkey** of New Port Richey to represent the greenway user community. Starkey previously served on the FGTC as a Senate appointee and has maintained an active involvement with the Council in serving as an alternate member. An elected member of the Pasco County School Board, Starkey also serves on the Pinellas Anclote River Basin Board and is a board member of the Tampa Chapter of the American Red Cross.

Starkey participates in committee work for Citizens for a Scenic Florida, the Pasco County Citizens Advisory Committee to the Comp Plan, Scenic Pasco and All Children's Hospital Guild.

Susan Kennedy, of Palm Beach County, was appointed by the President of the Senate to represent trail users. Kennedy practices law in her hometown of Jupiter, specializing in the areas of land use, environmental and municipal government. She also conducts public policy advocacy work for several area non-profit organizations and has led local non-profit groups in advocating for the public purchase of natural areas and green spaces, and the connectivity of those green spaces through trails.

Kennedy enjoys equestrian, paddling and hiking activities and her advocacy work has focused on the Loxahatchee River and Northeast Everglades watershed. In association with the Jupiter Farms Environmental Council and the Loxahatchee River Coalition, Kennedy supported the designation of the Ocean to Lake Greenway and helped organize its inaugural 2-day equestrian event, which attracted over 250 participants and volunteers.

The Speaker of the House appointed **Kent Wimmer** of Tallahassee to represent the

trail user community. Wimmer has acted as the Florida National Scenic Trail Liaison for the Florida Trail Association (FTA) for the past six years. Prior to becoming a staff member, Wimmer was a volunteer for the FTA and co-editor of the Hiking Guide to the Florida Trail.

With a master's in environmental planning from Florida State University, Wimmer has been involved in planning and advocating for trails and greenways in Florida for 19 years. In addition to his active participation in several former greenways and trails advisory bodies and his work with the Office of Greenways & Trails as staff for the Florida Greenways Coordinating Council, Wimmer has served as an alternate member of the Florida Greenways and Trails Council for the past three years. He has staffed the Florida Greenways Commission as a Greenways Planner with 1000 Friends of Florida, served as an Outdoor Recreation Planner for the National Park Service, USDA Forest Service and the City of Ocala and is a member of the American Institute of Certified Planners.

The President of the Senate appointed **Michael J. Grella**, AICP, to represent greenway users. Grella is Executive Director of the Jupiter Inlet District, an independent taxing district, which is responsible for the maintenance and preservation of the Jupiter Inlet and Loxahatchee River and the operation and maintenance of Jupiter Beach Park. With a Master's in Urban and Regional Planning from Florida State University, Grella has extensive experience in comprehensive planning, intergovernmental coordination and long-range transportation planning in Martin and Palm Beach counties. Grella resides in Jupiter and has served on a number of planning and growth management advisory councils in Palm Beach County, as well as the Governor's Commission on Local Government.

Thanks!

The Office of Greenways & Trails would like to thank outgoing members Helen Koehler, Alvin Jackson, Edward Howlette, Bill LaMee, Bob Richardson and Frank Terraferma for their service and contributions to the Florida Greenways and Trails Council over the past several years. We acknowledge their continuing interest and support.



Post Cards

The Withlacoochee Bay Trail traverses 5 miles west from the Felburn Park Trailhead to the Gulf of Mexico along the south side of the former Cross Florida Barge Canal.

The twelve-foot-wide multi-use paved trail runs adjacent to the barge canal for the first 2.5 miles and then switches its path to the south side of the berm created by the canal's excavation. The westernmost 2.5 miles of the trail runs through maritime hammocks and salt marsh. Bicycling, walking or skating on the trail provides opportunities to observe wildlife, picnic or bank fish along the route.



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