



Office of Greenways & Trails CONNECTIONS

www.dep.state.fl.us/gwt

East Coast Greenway Atlantic Coast Route Ready for Use

Aiming to connect cities and towns of the East Coast with a continuous, traffic-free path, the East Coast Greenway spans 3,000 miles from Calais, Maine to Key West, Florida

By Herb Hiller

Floridians can newly find their state's more than 700-mile portion of the East Coast Greenway—an Office of Greenways & Trails (OGT) Priority Trail—defined on Google maps together with cue sheets posted at www.greenway.org. Florida's portion is the largest of the Greenway's entire almost 3,000 city-connecting miles, now 17 percent complete off-road.

“We expect that once people start riding the Greenway that momentum will build for moving the entire route off-road,” says Greenway Alliance Florida State Chairman Paul Haydt.

The Alliance itself will get people onto the route with a series of invitational rides next fall. The rides will draw on route surveys completed by the Alliance earlier this year. Experienced cyclists can already tour Florida top to bottom on their own.

One fall ride, organized with Savannah Cyclists and a new First Coast Trails Coalition, will cover Nassau, Duval and St. Johns counties. Another, organized with Bike Florida, will tour a 200-mile, five-county loop newly in place after this year's state acquisition of the East Central Regional Rail-Trail corridor. A third, organized with the planning firm of Glatting Jackson, will travel five southeastern counties.

The rides will utilize a portion of the route newly designated by East Coast Greenway Alliance (ECGA) trustees. New designations in Duval, Brevard and Indian River counties are the first by ECGA since official adoption earlier this decade of Flagler County's River-to-Sea Trail, a section of waterfront trail in West Palm Beach, and the Overseas Heritage Trail through the Florida Keys (an OGT managed trail). Additional sections up for designation in 2008 include Nassau, Duval, Volusia, Martin, Broward and Miami-Dade counties. [See East Coast, Page 2](#)



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“It’s a coming of age for the Greenway in Florida,” says Florida Committee Chairman Haydt. “The Greenway coastal route will connect 14 counties including an alternative route through off-coast Putnam. In time, another alternative will loop west to Tampa and back around Lake Okeechobee, incorporating excellent existing trails such as the West Orange. Everybody knows how the Pinellas Trail has helped change the lifestyle of its communities while reviving downtown Dunedin. Imagine what happens next for fitness, for health, for non-motorized transportation, for tourism, for new trail-side business and more as the Greenway fully connects the cities of east coast Florida.”

Also coming, summer will debut the first map-guide to the Greenway through Nassau, Duval and St. Johns counties. The brochure will focus on nature, heritage and cultural sites together with practical user information. Paved off-road sections of the Greenway in this First Coast region include Big Talbot Island, the north shore Jacksonville Riverwalk, a Jacksonville Beach section along Kernan Boulevard, and the wide sidepath west of Highway A1A through Ponte Vedra Beach.

Jacksonville landscape architect Steven Davis is completing the map-guide, funded by Visit Florida, tourism offices of the inclusive three counties and ECGA.

Connections readers interested in joining the invitational tours can contact the writer at hiller@funport.net, P. O. Box 649, Georgetown, FL 32139. Costs are expected to range between \$500 and \$1,000 per person all-inclusive. For additional information about the East Coast Greenway, log onto www.greenway.org.

Award-winning travel writer Herb Hiller currently serves as Southeast Region Program Consultant for the East Coast Greenway Alliance. He is also a member of the board of the Florida Greenways and Trails Foundation, Inc. and a leader in the promotion of sustainable tourism, bicycling and trails.

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Santos Bike Events

The Santos bike trails on the Cross Florida Greenway were a popular gathering place for cyclists over the holiday season. Several highly competitive events, which attracted riders in all age categories, included Gone Riding, Inc.’s Fall Florida State Championship Series Cross Country Race, on November 25. A make-up race for Gone Riding’s Florida State Championship Coconut Cup Series was held at Santos on December 9. To check out the scores and photos for these events, visit www.goneriding.com. On December 16, Red Trail Racing, Inc. hosted the Florida Freeride and Dirt Jump Challenge at Santos; see www.redtrailracing.com.



The challenging rides, as a result of the excellent work of the Ocala Mountain Biking Association in helping develop and maintain the Santos trails, attract riders from throughout the country. As an internationally acclaimed mountain biking venue in a mild-weather state, Santos offers a warm, exciting wonderland for winter competitions.

Biking the Keys

By Monica Woll

For experienced bicyclists, a ride from Key Largo to Key West is one of the best ways to enjoy Florida's Keys. Currently, about half the 106-mile route is along the completed bike path. The other half must be ridden on the shoulder of US 1, often across bridges that are several miles long. Helmets and safety vests are strongly recommended.

Five members of our local bicycling group, Paradise Pedalers, took three days to ride to Key West in November. The weather was perfect: temperature in the 70s and the wind at our backs.

We started at Mile Marker (MM) 90 on Plantation Key due to a pipe-laying project affecting parts of the trail in Key Largo.

In many parts of Islamorada (MM 90-73) there are bike paths on both sides of the highway and you can also bike on sections of the Old Highway. Our first stop was at Midway Café (MM 80), a funky, artfully restored historic building and coffee house.

Next we stopped at Robbie's Marina (MM 77.5) and paid \$3 for a bucket of fish to feed the tarpon. This is an old tourist attraction where a small fee buys a lot of enjoyment.

We stopped a few miles down the road at Angelo's Country Store to get some snacks for a picnic on Anne's Beach (MM 73). There aren't many beaches in the Keys, so this offers trail users a place for a quick swim, a picnic or bathroom stop.

Channel 2 is the first historic Flagler bridge immediately south of Anne's Beach. I explained to the group that locals and tourists have always fished from this bridge, and about the dual missions of dealing with discarded fishing line and educating the anglers about sharing the bridge with cyclists. Farther south we would see the new fishing platforms built for anglers.

We arrived at Long Key State Park around 4:00 p.m. and decided to go for an early dinner at Little Italy. We spent time setting up our tents and relaxing. The no-see-ums



The Paradise Pedalers complete their trip at the Southernmost Point in the Florida Keys. Left to right: Bob Redell, James Hessler, Tom Nelson, Karen Knight and Monica Woll

were a minor annoyance, but the primitive campsites are in a beautiful setting so it was hard to complain.

On day two, we cycled 10 miles to have breakfast at Manatee Bay Café on Grassy Key (MM 59). After breakfast we pedaled on the first official stretch of the Florida Keys Overseas Heritage Trail (FKOHT) bike path. It's a pleasant 4-mile stretch behind a vegetation buffer. It's amazing how much you relax when physically removed from traffic. There is a nice rest stop with an interpretive map, bench and an artistic bike rack.

We took two side trips in the Marathon area: Sombrero Beach, one of the nicest beaches in the Keys and the historic Pigeon Key Bridge, where there is a good chance of seeing stingrays and sharks. On Pigeon Key you can tour the historic railroad buildings.

Once we crossed the Seven Mile Bridge—a bit intimidating, but the shoulder is plenty wide—we were only a few miles from our campsite at Bahia Honda State Park. After showering and setting up our tents, we enjoyed the sunset from the top of the only trestle bridge along Flagler's route, located within the park. For dinner, we shuttled by vehicle to the famous No Name Pub on Big Pine Key for pizza.

A good side trip on Big Pine Key is through the Key Deer Refuge. Start at the refuge visitor center located in the

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shopping plaza and ask about the Blue Hole Nature Trail and recommended roads for seeing deer.

We opted for a leisurely breakfast at Coco's and then took our first side trip to Perky's bat tower on Sugarloaf Key (MM 17). Turn right after passing Sugarloaf Lodge and take the road to the end to find an interesting attempt at mosquito control.

At MM 15, we crossed the highway to visit Baby's Coffee and also catch the beginning of the second stretch of official FKOHT bike path. The Saddlebunch Trail is four miles of landscaped path that crosses five historic bridges.

The trail officially ends (or begins) at Higg's Beach in Key West. Here you can pose in front of both the FKOHT and

East Coast Greenway (ECG) signs. (The ECG is a multi-user trail from Maine to Florida. See page one.) We chose to complete our trip at the Southernmost Point, the most photographed landmark in the Florida Keys.

For more information, or to join us next year, contact: monica.woll@dep.state.fl.us or visit the OGT website: FloridaGreenwaysAndTrails.com.

Monica Woll, as co-owner of Florida Bay Outfitters of Key Largo, founded Paradise Paddlers & Pedalers and now gets to paddle and pedal as part of her job as a Trail Specialist with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection's Office of Greenways & Trails.

Bike Florida "Trail Link" 2008

The fifteenth annual Bike Florida event takes place March 30 – April 4, 2008. This year's ride begins in Clearwater and finishes six days later in beautiful Fanning Springs. Sixty percent of the ride will take place on paved multi-use trails with links on low volume traffic county roads.

The trails in this spring's ride include: The Pinellas Trail, the Suncoast Parkway Trail, the Withlacoochee State Trail, the Withlacoochee Bay Trail, the Marjorie Harris Carr Cross Florida Greenway and the Nature Coast State Trail.

The ride begins near lovely downtown Clearwater and features the beaches of Clearwater and St. Petersburg, Honeymoon and Caladesi islands, Dunedin, Tarpon Springs, Inverness, the locks of the old Cross Florida Barge Canal and the city of Dunnellon. The 2008 version of Bike Florida ends at Fanning Springs State Park.

Daily rides are approximately 40 miles, although shorter and longer loops are available. (The longest ride is 60.8 miles.) Rest stops every 12-15 miles allow riders to get off the bike, rest legs and sore body parts, get refreshments and meet new friends.

At Fanning Springs, the water is a crisp clear 72 degrees year round, as the springs bubble up from deep below the surface. Here the riders will share stories of blisters and cool tent nights with photos of the unparalleled flora and fauna as they dangle their sensitive toes in the cool water and celebrate an experience not soon forgotten.

For more information, call Dave Milliman at (352) 244-0062 or visit www.bikeflorida.org or www.sharetheroad.org.





Benefiting the Florida Greenways and Trails Foundation, Inc.

The “Ride, Roll, Run Relay” Returns to the Cross Florida Greenway!

Back by popular demand, the 2nd Annual “Ride, Roll, Run Relay” on the Cross Florida Greenway is scheduled for February 23, 2008. Florida Greenways and Trails Foundation will benefit from the event as its first fundraiser of the year and welcomes both participants in the relay event and behind-the-scenes volunteer support.

Relay teams composed of one horseback rider, one mountain biker and one trail runner participate in this competition on trails built and maintained by the Ocala Mountain Bike Association, Greenway Equestrians and the Florida Trail Association. The event serves to unite different types of trail users, as well as foster a sense of community and understanding among diverse groups. Sponsored in part by local realtor Joan Pletcher, last year’s relay raised more than \$1,200 for improving recreational opportunities on the Cross Florida Greenway. Please contact Valerie Stalvey at (352)875-3334, or visit www.fgtf.org if you are interested in volunteering or participating in this year’s event.

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Florida Greenways and Trails Foundation Announces New Membership Program

The Florida Greenways and Trails Foundation (FGTF) is making good things happen for greenways and trails throughout the state and has now officially become a membership organization. The FGTF supports the Office of Greenways & Trails in its mission to establish a statewide system of greenways and trails for recreation, conservation and alternative transportation. Through volunteerism, fund-raising, advocacy—and now membership—the FGTF provides a much-needed flexible and targeted source of funding to help maintain, enhance and expand public access to Florida’s recreational and conservation lands.

Membership in the Florida Greenways and Trails Foundation, Inc. is available at several levels of participation and through creative approaches such as planned giving. Membership categories are: Individual: \$30; Family: \$50; Corporate: \$1000. Visit www.fgtf.org to learn more about the Foundation or to join online. To join the Foundation or make a donation by mail, please send your contact information with a check to: Florida Greenways and Trails Foundation, Inc., P. O. Box 4142, Tallahassee, FL 32315. The FGTF is a 501(c) (3) not-for-profit corporation, and contributions are deductible from your taxable income to the extent allowed by law.

We hope you will take advantage of this opportunity to help the Foundation MAKE THINGS HAPPEN.

Florida Paddling Trails Association is Launched

More than 70 people recently took part in a history-making event when the inaugural meeting of the Florida Paddling Trails Association was held in Homosassa Springs. Regional representatives and segment “trail keepers” from throughout the state were chosen and a subsequent board meeting adopted by-laws and set up committees to help operate the non-profit group.

The association’s stated mission is to “promote thoughtful use, environmental awareness and volunteer stewardship for the Florida coast and associated river environments while providing an exceptional recreational asset for paddlers.” A primary task is to assist the Office of Greenways & Trails and other local, regional, state and federal entities in managing the Florida Circumnavigational Saltwater Paddling Trail. The 1,550-mile sea kayaking trail stretches from Big Lagoon State Park near Pensacola to Key West to Fort Clinch State Park along the Georgia border. Among other duties, volunteer group members will be monitoring and improving trail campsites and seeking to establish new ones where they are needed.

The new board elected Hank Brooks of Safety Harbor as its first president (paddletrails1@gmail.com). Brooks, a retired business consultant and former president of the Tampa Bay Sea Kayakers, lends a great deal of organizational expertise and enthusiasm to the group.

Officers and board committee chairmen include:
Marketing/Membership: Ray Hetchka of Fernandina Beach (hetchka@mac.com);
Secretary: Fred Borg of Panama City (fred2128@comcast.net); Fundraising (other than dues): Gerry Gaudet of Deerfield Beach (hgg@marketconscious.com).

Other board members are Roy Ogles of Eastpoint, Marv Phelps of Brooksville, Nancy MacPhee of Cape Coral and Mike Beck of Vero Beach. Doug Alderson, field director of the circumnavigational trail for more than three years, will serve on the board as liaison for the Office of Greenways & Trails.

To learn more about the Florida Paddling Trails Association, log onto their website at: www.floridapaddlingtrails.com.



Florida Paddling Trails Association members Fred Borg and Krueger Nicholson paddle from Cedar Key along the Gulf Coast and stop for a break on Snake Key.



The Heritage of a Valued Volunteer

Retiring volunteer Mike Wolfe leaves a legacy of good work for the Blackwater Heritage State Trail

Mike Wolfe has been a member of Blackwater Heritage Inc., a Citizen Support Organization for the Blackwater Heritage State Trail in Santa Rosa County, for more than 12 years. A very dedicated, hard working man, Mike spent many hours of his personal time helping plan and organize the efforts that made this Citizen Support Organization (CSO) successful. As secretary, he coordinated the first meeting of the board at the Mary Street Church of Christ in the summer of 1995. During his tenure, Mike has worn many hats and taken on a lion's share of responsibilities.

Mike's strong sense of duty, and a passion for what he does, make him a very hard man to replace. A modest man, he will be the first person to tell you that he was not the only one working to achieve the many goals set by the volunteer group. Mike pushes hard for recognition of the other volunteers and their accomplishments. He painstakingly tracks volunteer hours and keeps meticulous records. Mike has contributed a record 2,074 hours of his own time during his tenure as a CSO member, of which over 1000 hours were donated in the last two years. As he now turns his time and energy toward the needs of his family, it can surely be said that no two feet will fill Mike Wolfe's shoes, and he will truly be missed.



Photo By John Moran

The presence and support of retiring volunteer Mike Wolfe will be missed by the many users of the Blackwater Heritage State Trail. Mike's daughter is pictured here (in the lead!) among some of the avid cyclists who enjoy this popular trail on the outskirts of Milton.

Governor, Cabinet Approve East Central Regional Rail-Trail Purchase

--Acquisition adds an additional 51 miles of trail in Brevard and Volusia County--

Governor Charlie Crist and the Florida Cabinet approved the acquisition of approximately 671 acres within the East Central Regional Rail-Trail (ECRRT) Project in Brevard and Volusia County. Purchased with Florida Forever money allocated to the Florida Department of Environmental Protection's (DEP) Office of Greenways & Trails (OGT), the property is strategically located on the northeast side of one of the most heavily populated and highly visited regions of Florida, the Orlando metro area. The approximately 51-mile trail purchase from the Florida East Coast Railway L.L.C. is the longest of its kind for the state of Florida, exceeding the 46-mile Palatka to Lake Butler Rail-Trail acquired by OGT in 2001.

"This acquisition marks an important milestone in the establishment of the Florida greenways and trails system," said Cynthia Radford, Land Acquisition Administrator for the Office of Greenways & Trails. "Once developed, this trail will serve as a critical connection within the developing trails network in East Central Florida."

For more information, visit FloridaGreenwaysAndTrails.com

Horses for Hospice

Hospice of Marion County, Inc. will hold its 8th annual trail ride on Saturday, February 9, 2008, at the Florida Horse Park on the Cross Florida Greenway in Ocala.

Riders travel from as far as Jacksonville and Tampa to spend 2-3 hours on the trail. Following the ride, participants can enjoy lunch by Tommy's BBQ, entertainment by Shane Wooten and a demonstration by noted equestrian trainer Lynn Palm. More than 50 door prizes will be distributed to participants.

Proceeds from this event will benefit patient care programs. The minimum donation to ride is \$25.00. Horse lovers who are unable to ride may purchase a ticket to enjoy lunch and the entertainment. For more information or to register, call (352) 854-5218 or visit www.hospiceofmarion.com



The Office of Greenways & Trails (OGT) participated in Ocala's Annual Christmas parade on December 1. An enthusiastic group of hiking, biking, paddling and equestrian trail users joined OGT in this community event to express their appreciation for the recreation they enjoy year 'round on the Cross Florida Greenway.

“Over 80 Across Florida” Journey

The Fall 2007 issue of *Connections* featured the story of longtime Florida Trail Association (FTA) volunteer Ken Smith and his ambitious plan to lead a group of 80-year olds in a hike all the way across the state. This dream became a reality as an energetic group of six hikers, each boasting 80 years of age and then some, began this journey on October 26 at Flagler Beach. Two members of the group, Loretta Copeland and Ernest Baldini, reluctantly withdrew from the trip after a few days due to health issues (although they haven't given up hiking!). Four men, ranging in age from 80-90 years old, went on to traverse the Marjorie Harris Carr Cross Florida Greenway and portions of the Florida National Scenic Trail to complete the 132-mile journey. Al Kisarewich, Cliff Moody, Charlie Monson and Ken Smith reached the Gulf of Mexico in just 14 days and celebrated their achievement in a victory dinner with family and friends.



“Over 80 Across Florida” hikers (left to right):
Cliff Moody, Al Kisarewich, Ken Smith and Charlie Monson

Leader Ken Smith said he planned and organized the trip to demonstrate that “age is not terribly important or a tremendous limitation to outdoor activity.” Al Kisarewich said the hikers took on this challenge to inspire people of all ages to go out and get exercise. ninety-year-old Cliff Moody, who had only taken up hiking three years ago, planned next to participate in the Florida Trail Association's “Big O” hike around the 112-mile Lake Okeechobee Scenic Trail. Not to be outdone, Charlie Monson of Savannah, Georgia, says he would like next to hike Denali in Alaska and Kona in Hawaii.

When the hikers reached the Gulf of Mexico on November 8, the Office of Greenways & Trails congratulated these remarkable men and presented them with a Department of Environmental Protection, Office of Greenways & Trails patch in recognition of their extraordinary achievement and significant effort to promote physical fitness through the use of Florida's greenways and trails.

Florida Greenways and Trails Month Highlights

Floridians took advantage of the beautiful fall weather to enjoy Florida Greenways and Trails Month. More than 150 events took place in 60 Florida counties during the month of October.

The 13th Annual Withlacoochee State Trail Bike Ride, coordinated by the Rails to Trails Withlacoochee (RTW) Citizen Support Organization, reported a record-setting attendance of 1,614 cyclists.

Participation in this annual event has nearly tripled over the last seven years, making it one of the largest single day bike rides in the Southeast. The RTW raised nearly \$25,000 in support of enhancements and improvements to the 46-mile Withlacoochee State Trail, such as the 1925 red caboose they restored as an appropriate landmark for Florida's longest rail-trail.

Take a Kid Mountain Biking Day, organized by the Ocala Mountain Bike Association (OMBA) and the OMBA Bike Patrol, brought parents and children to the Santos trails near Ocala for a day of trail riding and skills practice. Take a Kid Mountain Biking Day is an annual event promoted nationally by the International Mountain Bicycling Association (IMBA) in cooperation with local bike clubs.

Thanks to OMBA, IMBA, Primal Wear Jerseys and Market of Marion the event brought families out to enjoy healthy, active, outdoor fun.

Polk County kicked off their Trek Ten Trails program on October 6 with the first in a series of ten hiking events that will continue through September 2008. The opening event, located on the Fort Fraser Trail, featured hiking, geocaching, demonstrations, prizes and refreshments.

Sarasota County registered a dozen Florida Greenways and Trails Month events including six that showcased the county's environmentally sensitive lands.

Paddling events this year included a 108-mile paddling trip on the Apalachicola River, guided canoe and kayak tours in several state parks, a Harvest Moon Dinner paddle from Panacea and nine days of festivities along the Great Calusa Blueway.

State forests provided scenic locations for hikes and learning opportunities in Jennings and Lake Talquin State Forests. Equestrians enjoyed the trails in Goethe.

The Office of Greenways & Trails thanks all those whose dedication and hard work contributed to an outstanding 2007 Florida Greenways and Trails Month.

Florida Greenways and Trails Month Event Winner

Congratulations to Polk County and the Friends of the Parks Foundation for organizing the winning Florida Greenways and Trails Month Event—the Trek Ten Trails kick-off held at Fort Fraser Trail. The Friends group did an outstanding job of getting community support for the first of ten hikes planned for the year.

The Trek Ten Trails program is designed to get Polk County residents and visitors outside on the trails and to promote physical fitness through healthy outdoor activity.

Polk County has more than 125 miles of paved and unpaved trails. Trek Ten Trails will highlight ten trails for trekking between October 2007 and the finale in September 2008.

For more information on Trek Ten Trails, visit www.FriendsOfTheParks.net.



The opening event was a great success and 350 hikers have registered for the Trek Ten Trails program.

Sarasota County Celebrates its Community Spirit

Legacy Trail connects past and present

The cities of Sarasota and Venice were historically linked by a rail line that served the area for nearly seventy years. The two cities are soon to be linked by the same corridor through a multi-use nature and recreation trail. The 10.6-mile rail-trail runs from just south of Clark Road in Sarasota to the City of Venice, connecting to the Venetian Waterway Park which offers another 10 miles of non-motorized trail.

The Legacy Trail was popularly named to recall its rich history, from the days when the railway's notable passengers included the U.S. Army during World War II, the Kentucky Military Institute and the Ringling Brothers' Barnum and Bailey Circus, which wintered in Venice for a time. In 2004, after more than a decade of planning, the county's \$11.75 million purchase of the scenic CSX railroad corridor was accomplished in partnership with The Trust for Public Land and celebrated on April 4, 2005.

Under Phase I of the project, a 14-foot trail width was cleared and a shell base added. The primitive trail has been in use since 2006. Phase II, which is now under construction, includes the addition of an asphalt base, signal crossings and trailhead connections. The trail will provide connectivity to Historic Downtown Venice and Oscar Scherer State Park, as well as many area attractions and several county parks including Caspersen Beach Park which connects to the Gulf of Mexico. Still in design, though not yet funded, is the replacement of the trestles over Dona Bay and Roberts Bay.

The Friends of the Legacy Trail (FLT), a chapter of the Friends of Sarasota County Parks, is working hard to raise funds for the enhancements to the trail as this long awaited gift of significant historical and environmental land comes to fruition. The Sarasota County community has great cause and big plans as they prepare to celebrate the opening of the Legacy Trail in March.

The Legacy Trail (Sarasota to Venice Rail-Trail) Preview of Grand Opening

March 28-30

Hosted by
Sarasota County, Friends of The Legacy Trail (FLT)
and SpringFest 2008

March 28
Ribbon cutting at Oscar Scherer State Park
Trail Trek
Evening at the Historic Venice Train Depot,
and more!

March 29
SpringFest (a two day community celebration
benefiting the Child Protection Center and in
support of the FLT) Nature and Kayak Tours,
Trailhead Open Houses, FLT Trail Appreciation/
Education Tent and more!

March 30
SpringFest, FLT Trail Appreciation/Education Tent
and more!

For more information, please call (941) 861-5000,
or visit:
<http://scg.co.sarasota.fl.us/rails-to-trails/>
http://foscp.org/new/?page_id=18
<http://springfest2008.com/>

FLT is an all-volunteer non-profit 501(c)(3)
organization founded in December 2006 as a chapter
of Friends of Sarasota County Parks, Inc. (FOSCP).
The FLT exists to promote, support, protect and
enhance the Legacy Trail. For more information
see www.foscp.org, call (941) 485-4921 or email:
legacytrailfriends@gmail.com.

Florida Greenways and Trails Council News

Meeting Notes

The Florida Greenways and Trails Council (FGTC) once again joined with the Board of the Florida Communities Trust to conduct a meeting in association with the Public Lands Acquisition and Management Conference in Sarasota on December 5, 2007. The setting of a statewide conference provided an opportunity to raise the visibility of two advisory groups that help administer Florida Forever funding and promote a greater awareness of the programs' similarities and distinctions.

In addition to the conduct of regular business, the FGTC voted to approve the designation of the Palatka-Lake Butler State Trail as part of the Florida Greenways and Trails System. This 45-mile trail is currently being developed by the Office of Greenways & Trails with the first phase officially opening to the public in 2008.

The next meeting of the FGTC is scheduled for February 22 in Tallahassee. For more details, contact Tammy Salmon at tammy.salmon@dep.state.fl.us.

In Memoriam

David Burr, Executive Director of the Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council, and member of the Florida Greenways and Trails Council, passed away unexpectedly on September 27, 2007. Mr. Burr had served on the Council since 2005 as the representative for the Regional Planning Councils of the State. Through his considerable knowledge and experience, David Burr brought valuable insight to his work with the Florida Greenways and Trails Council. His astute observations and ability to speak "on point" contributed significantly to the Council's discussions and helped guide them toward productive outcomes. FGTC members have extended their sympathies to David Burr's family for their personal loss and will continue to miss his professional friendship and commitment to environmental issues.

New Member

Phil Laurien, Executive Director of the East Central Florida Regional Planning Council, was appointed to the Florida Greenways and Trails Council by the Department of Environmental Protection, in consultation with the Department of Community Affairs. Mr. Laurien holds a Master of Science degree in Community Planning from the University of Cincinnati. His thirty years of experience includes planning, town management, real estate development and design of over 350 developments. He has authored numerous white papers, comprehensive plans and zoning codes in four states and has been a guest lecturer at as many universities, including the National Business Institute. He led the "How Shall We Grow?" project which won awards from the American Planning Association, the Collins Center for Sustainable Florida and from Governor Crist. As Executive Director, Mr. Laurien is responsible for a six-county agency which reviews Developments of Regional Impact, local emergency planning, oversight of environmentally sensitive areas, and planning assistance on projects of local and regional scale. He has been appointed to the FGTC to fill a vacancy in a two-year term as the representative for Florida's Regional Planning Councils.

Opportunity Maps

The Office of Greenways & Trails (OGT) will be revising the Recreational Trails Opportunity Maps this year. These maps delineate the long-term vision for Florida's connected trails network and are also used to determine eligibility for funding under the Florida Greenways and Trails Acquisition Program. OGT will be working with trails organizations, user groups and agencies to revise these maps to reflect the future vision for Florida's Greenways and Trails System. For more information, contact Heather Pence at (850) 245-2052 or heather.pence@dep.state.fl.us.

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- 1) I would like to continue to receive this publication in hard copy format.
- 2) I prefer to receive an email when this publication is available electronically.
(If you select this option, please set your email filters to receive our messages.)

You may either email Carolyn.G.Thompson@dep.state.fl.us **OR** leave a message on our toll free line: (877) 822-5208.

Subscribers who do not respond by March 1, 2008 will be automatically removed from our mailing list. Thank you to those who have already responded!

Note: Per Ch. 283.55, Florida Statutes, we are required by law to purge this mailing list periodically and obtain an active response from subscribers. Since many loyal *Connections* readers may have been distracted by the busy holiday season and missed this announcement in the last issue, we have extended the deadline for reply.



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