

# Connections

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## One Step Closer to Protecting Critical Greenway

During its December 5 meeting, the Acquisition and Restoration Council unanimously voted to officially list the 153,000-acre Camp Blanding to Osceola National Forest Greenway as a Florida Forever land acquisition project, placing it in the 'A' funding category. This is great news for the future protection of this important connection, which is just one component of a much larger network of existing and proposed conservation lands extending from southeastern Georgia to central Florida. "The unanimous acceptance of this project by the council represents an important step forward in our overall effort to protect Florida's ecological greenways," said Office of Greenways & Trails Assistant Director, Jim Wood.

The Camp Blanding to Osceola National Forest Greenway project was brought to the Florida Forever program by the Office of Greenways & Trails, in coordination with the Conservation Trust for Florida. The project has broad support including endorsements by the US Forest Service, Camp Blanding Military Installation, the Nature Conservancy, the

Lake Palestine in Union County will be protected as part of the Camp Blanding to Osceola National Forest Greenway acquisition project.

THIS PROJECT IS JUST ONE COMPONENT OF A MUCH LARGER NETWORK OF EXISTING AND PROPOSED

CONSERVATION LANDS EXTENDING FROM SOUTHEASTERN GEORGIA TO CENTRAL FLORIDA.

Florida Wildlife Federation, the Florida Trail Association and several local governments.

The Camp Blanding to Osceola National Forest Greenway represents one of ten critical ecological linkages identified through the State-wide Greenways Planning Project (for more information about Critical Linkages, see the Summer 2003

Connections newsletter on line). It is part of a large complex of existing and proposed conservation lands that connect the Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge, the Osceola National Forest, Camp Blanding, the

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# Acquisition Projects Approved

In September, the Florida Greenways and Trails Council reviewed applications for land acquisition through the Florida Greenways and Trails Acquisition Program. The council recommended these projects for funding. The Department of Environmental Protection's Secretary David B. Struhs approved the list.



For more information about acquisition, contact Cindy Radford at 850-245-2052 or Cynthia.Radford@dep.state.fl.us

PROJECT	COUNTY	APPROXIMATE ACREAGE	GROUP A or B
<b>Olustee Creek Florida National Scenic Trail Connector</b>	<b>Baker/Union</b>	<b>1,463</b>	<b>A</b>
<b>Marianna Greenway Trail</b>	<b>Jackson</b>	<b>183</b>	<b>A</b>
<b>Bosher Property</b>	<b>Marion</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>A</b>
<b>The Drake Tract*</b>	<b>Marion</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>A</b>
<b>Rex Dull Property*</b>	<b>Marion</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>A</b>
<b>Cady Way Trail Phase II</b>	<b>Orange</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>A</b>
<b>St. Augustine to Lake City Rail Trail/ East Palatka Segment</b>	<b>Putnam</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>A</b>
<b>St. Augustine Rail with Trail</b>	<b>St. Johns</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>A</b>
<b>Ochlockonee Bay Trail Phase 6 / Griffin Willis Trailhead</b>	<b>Wakulla</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>A</b>
<b>Colby Landing*</b>	<b>Marion</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>B</b>
<b>S&amp;P Timber Properties*</b>	<b>Putnam</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>B</b>

*\*Parcels will be added to the Cross Florida Greenway.*

## Connections

is published quarterly by:

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## Acquisition Update

To learn more about OGT's Land Acquisition Program visit [FloridaGreenwaysAndTrails.com](http://FloridaGreenwaysAndTrails.com)

# JEA Lands to Connect Two State Forests in Duval County

September 18, the Governor and Cabinet approved the purchase of 94.91 acres within the West Jacksonville Greenway Connector project. Located in Duval County, the 444-acre project is adjacent to Pope Duval Park and connects the Jacksonville to Baldwin Trail via Jacksonville Electric Authority lands. The land will provide public access and an area for a trailhead with restroom facilities and a parking

area. Recreational opportunities include biking, hiking, equestrian trails and wildlife viewing.

The goal of the project is to provide a continuous greenway from Jennings State Forest to Cary State Forest. The City of Jacksonville contributed 50 percent of the funding and serves as the manager.



## Fred Marquis Pinellas Trail Added

The Florida Greenways and Trails Council voted unanimously on September 4 to designate the Fred Marquis Pinellas Trail, a 42-mile multi-use trail, as part of the Florida Greenways and Trails System.

# New FGT Council Members

Meet the newest members of the Florida Greenways and Trails Council:

**Greg Chelius**, Director of The Trust for Public Land, State of Florida, oversees the Trust's land conservation activities in Florida. Chelius has a degree in forestry from Paul Smith College in the Adirondack Mountains of New York and a business degree from Florida State University. Governor Bush appointed him to the Council in May, 2003 to represent trail users. He currently resides in Tallahassee.



Greg Chelius, Director  
greg.chelius@tpl.org

**Frank Terraferma**, a native of Miami, has resided in Tallahassee since 1990. He holds a BA and MS in political science from Florida State University. As an employee of the Republican Party of Florida,

Terraferma directs the State House Campaigns Division. He also serves as an adjunct instructor at Tallahassee Community College. The Governor appointed Terraferma to the Council in July 2003 as a representative for trail users.

**Edward Howlette** was appointed by the House of Representatives to represent trail users on the Council. Howlette is a former member of the New York Police Department and was a practicing attorney in New York for fifteen years. Now a member of House Speaker

Johnnie Byrd's staff, Howlette resides in Tallahassee. As an enthusiastic off-road cyclist and runner, he looks forward to being a member of the Council.



## Heads Up!

### February

February is Florida Hiking Trails Month. Contact the Florida Trail Association 877-HIKE-FLA [www.florida-trail.org](http://www.florida-trail.org)

**Step Up Florida**  
Find out how to participate in this statewide event organized by The Florida Department of Health, Bureau of Chronic Disease Prevention to encourage a healthy and physically active lifestyle as well as to promote the various physical activity opportunities available throughout Florida. Contact: Jennie Hefelfinger or Wes Payne at 850-245-4330 [www.doh.state.fl.us/family/chronicdisease](http://www.doh.state.fl.us/family/chronicdisease)

## Designation

For information about designation contact Heather Pence at 850-245-2052 or [Heather.Pence@dep.state.fl.us](mailto:Heather.Pence@dep.state.fl.us).

# Private Land Designation

In October, the Governor and Cabinet signed a resolution recognizing Plum Creek Timber Company as the first landowner to allow private property to be designated as part of the statewide system of greenways and trails. In this first private landowner agreement under the Florida Greenways and Trails Designation Program, Plum Creek Timber Company agreed to allow public access, at no cost, to a 17.6-mile hiking trail in Union and Baker counties. In exchange, the State provides liability coverage to Plum Creek Timber Company for the designated property.

The Florida Department of Environmental Protection, Office of Greenways & Trails, the Florida Trail Association and Plum Creek Timber Company partnered to accomplish the goal of establish-

ing the trail to add a critical link in the Florida Greenways and Trails System. The trail is also the first on private land to be certified by the United States Forest Service as part of the Florida National Scenic Trail, "Florida's Footpath Forever."

"The designation represents an important milestone in working with private landowners to help create the Florida Greenways and Trails System," says Office of Greenways & Trails Director, Jena Brooks. "The success of a statewide interconnected trail system is dependent on both the public and private sector. Plum Creek Timber Company is to be commended for their willing-

ness to be the first private landowner to allow their property to be designated."

The USDA Forest Service and the Florida Trail Association manage the trail.

PLUM CREEK  
TIMBER COMPANY  
IS ...THE FIRST  
PRIVATE LAND-  
OWNER TO  
ALLOW THEIR  
PROPERTY TO BE  
DESIGNATED.



CONGRATULATIONS  
TO PINELLAS AND  
POLK COUNTIES  
FOR WINNING  
GREENWAYS AND  
TRAILS MONTH  
EVENT AWARDS.

# 67 Counties Host Events for Florida Greenways and Trails Month

For the third consecutive year, Governor Jeb Bush declared October as Florida Greenways and Trails Month, encouraging Floridians and visitors to head outdoors with family and friends. Greenways and trails protect Florida's natural resources, preserve

"Celebrating greenways and trails recognizes their recreational and economic importance and encourages community partnerships that extend and enhance our statewide system," said Mickey Thomason, Cross Florida Greenway Manager. "Dedicating an entire month to the state's trail system is just one way to introduce more people to Florida's public lands."

The Office of Greenways & Trails celebrated the month with two openings on the Marjorie Harris Carr Cross Florida Greenway — a new trailhead at Ross Prairie and the Historic Santos Recreation Area in Marion County. Holmes County elementary school teachers incorporated DEP's activity book, *The Greenways and Trails Journey*, into



Kids Fishing Clinic at John S. Taylor Park in Pinellas County

historical and cultural sites, connect communities, provide recreation, transportation routes and areas for wildlife observation.

To celebrate Florida Greenways and Trails Month, the Office of Greenways & Trails promoted activities throughout the state. Public and private organizations in each of Florida's 67 counties hosted events to open Florida's trails to everyone young and old.

The Office of Greenways & Trails Director Jena Brooks, TPL Florida Director Greg Chelius and other riders from the 3rd Annual Cross Florida Greenway Tour listen as Greenway Manager Mickey Thomason highlight sights at the Inglis Recreation Area in Inglis, Florida. The Tour was held during Florida Greenways and Trails Month.



their lesson plans. Birding and wildlife festivals in several counties highlighted Florida's open spaces where abundant wildlife thrives in natural habitats. Polk County Board of County Commissioners signed a proclamation making October "Polk Unified Greenways and Trails Month." Pinellas County won the Florida Greenways and Trails Month Event Award for the variety of countywide activities they arranged throughout October.

One of three paddling events hosted by Pinellas County to celebrate Florida Greenways and Trails Month



# T.E.A.M. G.R.E.E.N.

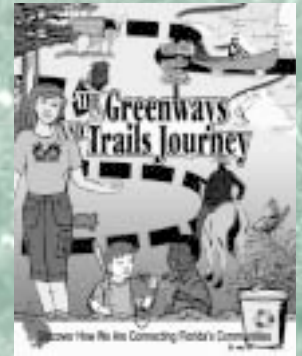
## Teach Everyone Awareness Matters — Greenways and Trails Reconnect Everyone with the Environment and Neighbors

During Florida Greenways and Trails Month, students from the Frenchtown after-school program in Tallahassee walk the St. Marks Trail and learn about plants and

animals from a Park Service Specialist. Later that week, students from Sabal Palm Elementary School in Tallahassee also enjoyed learning about the trail.



Park Service Specialist Kathryn Mears uses the trail as an outdoor classroom.



Teachers! For more information regarding TEAM GREEN and to request copies of The Greenways and Trails Journey activity book mentioned here, visit [FloridaGreenwaysAndTrails.com](http://FloridaGreenwaysAndTrails.com) or call Mary Spivey at 850/245-2052.

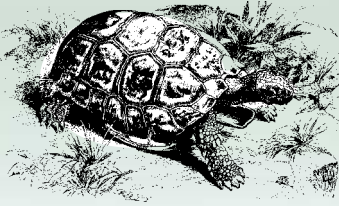


## Flagler Award

OGT poster by Julie Robert wins award.

The Office of Greenways & Trails was selected as a finalist in Visit Florida's statewide hospitality awards program for outstanding tourism marketing achievements. Each year, the Flagler Awards honor those whose skill, commitment, resourcefulness, imagination, creativity and innovative spirit contribute to the success of Florida's tourism industry and, in doing so, ensure the continued prosperity of our state. The 2002 Florida Greenways and Trails Month poster, designed by The Office of Greenways & Trail's Julie Roberts, was submitted in the Out-of-Home Advertising category. Awards were presented in August at the 36th Annual Governor's Conference on Tourism.





# New Trailhead, Camping, and a Past Time Recreation Revisited

## Ross Prairie Campground and Trailhead

Equestrians, hikers and mountain bikers have a new trailhead from which to explore the Marjorie Harris Carr Cross Florida Greenway.

A backdrop of live oak hammock and pine scrub set the scene for viewing gopher tortoise, indigo snake, deer, raccoon, turkey and scrub jay as visitors wind

their way along scenic trails. In October, The Florida Department of Environmental Protection's Office of Greenways & Trails opened the Ross Prairie Campground as part of the statewide Florida Greenways and Trails Month celebration. The Ross Prairie Campground provides access to trails within the Cross Florida Greenway, the Ross Prairie State Forest and the Halpata Tastanaki Preserve. Showers, restrooms, picnic pavilions, potable water, power and water hookup for RVs and campers make the Ross Prairie Campground and Trailhead an excellent location for a day trip or an extended stay. The campground features a fenced horse pasture and grooming stations. Campsites are available on a first-come, first-served basis. The campground is located on SR 200, approximately 13 miles west of I-75 (Exit 350) in Ocala.

## Historic Santos Recreation Area

Over 100 Marion County residents celebrated the much-anticipated opening of the Santos Historic Recreation Area on November 1.

Locals fired-up grills at 6:00 a.m. to make sure the chickens were golden brown by noon. Country cooking along with cakes, pies, watermelon, and boiled

peanuts provided fuel for those who came to enjoy a day of festivities at the new recreation area.

The Office of Greenways & Trails and the Santos Historical Recreation Committee have been planning the recreation area for several years. In the late 1800s, the site was the predominantly African-American township of Santos. Santos was a flag station along the tracks of the Florida Transit and Peninsular Railway and shipped cotton, lumber, oranges, and vegetables. By the mid 1920s, Santos had two general stores, a Masonic Lodge, a barber-shop, a fish market, a post office, a two-room school, a train depot, three "juke joints," three churches, and a baseball diamond.

The Santos baseball diamond was on the southeastern circuit for the Negro League Baseball teams in the late 1890s, after baseball teams became segregated. The original diamond is overgrown and on privately owned property, but Santos area baseball fans plan to continue the tradition and play ball on the restored diamond located on the Cross Florida Greenway.

Though the town's businesses no longer stand, the diamond dust won't stay long settled on weekends when the sun shines and every crack of bat against a ball honors the memory of those who worked and played on the fields of Florida's history.

Amenities include parking, a playground, restrooms, park benches, covered picnic pavilions with grills, a basketball court, and a baseball diamond. The recreation area is located at 3550 SE 80th St. in Ocala.

OGT staff and members of the community cut the ribbon to officially open the Historic Santos Recreation Area.



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Ross Prairie Campground and Trailhead



A BACKDROP OF LIVE OAK HAMMOCK AND PINE SCRUB SET THE SCENE FOR VIEWING GOPHER TORTOISE, INDIGO SNAKE, DEER, RACCOON, TURKEY AND SCRUB JAY AS VISITORS WIND THEIR WAY ALONG SCENIC TRAILS.



# 3rd Annual Cross Florida Greenway Tour

Atlantic East Coast

In October, bikers geared up for the Third Annual Cross Florida Greenway Tour. Hosted by the Office of Greenways & Trails and The Trust for Public Land, the tour goal was to familiarize first-time participants with the Cross Florida Greenway and to show tour veterans improvements along the Greenway.

An added challenge was issued by TPL's Greg Chelius: Bike from St. Augustine to the Gulf of Mexico via the Cross Florida Greenway. Seven riders possessed



1. Left to right: Greg Chelius, Jena Brooks, Ian Smith, Susan Grandin, Lynn Lisenby, Doug Hattaway.

2. Dunnellon Main Street and the Masonic Lodge provided a Sunday morning breakfast of pancakes and omelets.

3. Riders splash into the Gulf of Mexico at the west end of the Cross Florida Greenway.

4. Riders gather at the Cross Florida Greenway visitor center near Buckman Lock in Palatka.

the audacity to attempt the feat. Seven riders proved that stubborn determination and well-placed sag support are as important as physical fitness in completing such a ride.

Options to the 3-day bike tour included an airboat tour of Rodman Reservoir, equestrian rides, and paddling excursions.



## Gulf West Coast



### Blanding, from page 1

Ocala National Forest and the Wekiva River basin north of Orlando. This represents a distance of almost 200 miles and well over one million acres of connected conservation lands. Closing the gap between Camp Blanding and the Osceola National Forest is essential in making this network of public and private conservation lands a reality.

As part of the proposed acquisition project, some lands will be placed under a conservation easement, which will allow timber production to continue in certain areas while

managing the land as a wildlife corridor. This is an ideal partnership, allowing private landowners to continue management of their lands while providing important public benefits. The connection between Camp Blanding and Osceola National Forest would not be possible without this conservation option.

As a Florida Forever project, the state will negotiate with the landowners to acquire lands in the project. Following negotiations, the Governor and Cabinet will review the project for approval prior to the State's actual purchase.

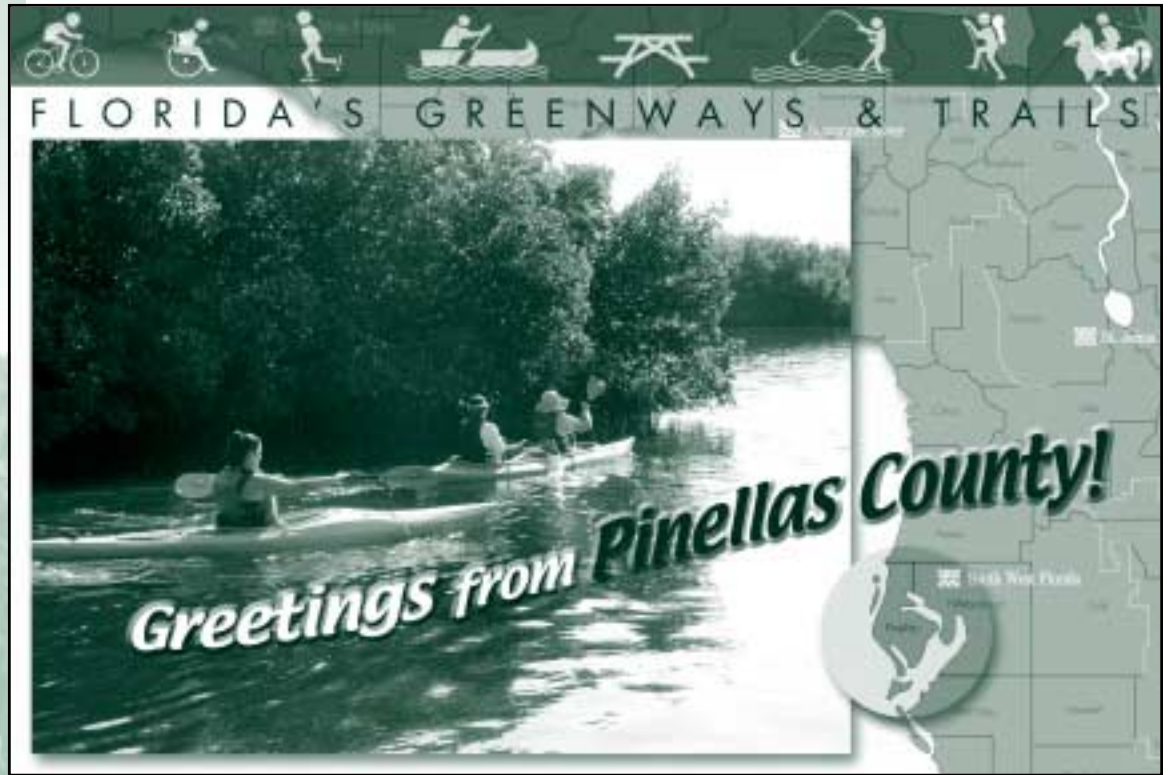


# Post Cards

A R O U N D • T H E • S T A T E

Congratulations to Pinellas County for organizing an outstanding Florida Greenways and Trails Month celebration.

Events throughout the county promoted greenways and trails with guided nature hikes, equestrian rides, a kids' fishing day, paddling tours, and a Spud Busters event where volunteers removed pounds of invasive air potato vines from Lake Seminole Park.



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