



Office of Greenways & Trails

CONNECTIONS

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

2000 Miles of Florida Birding Sites

by Nancy Jordan, Florida Game and Freshwater Fish Commission

The Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission (FGFWFC) along with the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) is cosponsoring The Great Florida Birding Trail, a 2000-mile highway trail which unifies existing and new birding sites throughout Florida. Modeled after the successful Great Texas Coastal Birding Trail, this ambitious project combines special highway signs identifying Birding Trail sites with a flipchart map showcasing the wonderful birding opportunities in Florida. The Trail consists of a series of loops, each containing 5-10 sites highlighting communities and special ecosystems.

The foundation of the Great Florida Birding Trail is our state's fabulous birdlife. More than 400 species of birds, including 20 unique species or subspecies, either breed in or visit our state. The reason for this diversity is Florida's unique geographical location, bridging both temperate and tropical climate zones. Both the Gulf and Atlantic coasts are utilized by migratory birds as pathways in the spring and fall. In addition, the peninsular shape of the state has resulted in some species becoming separated from their continental relatives and eventually uniquely adapting to special ecosystems. Finally, Florida occasionally plays host to strays from our southern neighbors in the Caribbean and West Indies.

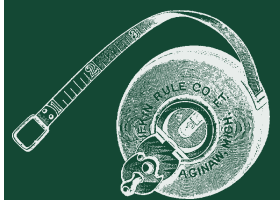
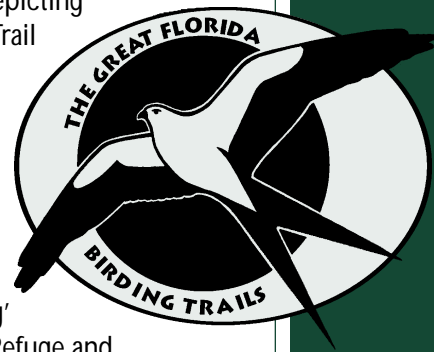
The Trail is being coordinated by FGFWFC's Office of Informational Services and sponsored by FDOT with funds from the Statewide Transportation Enhancement Program. The completed project will have four sections (East Florida, West Florida, Panhandle Florida and South Florida). The Trail starts at the Florida-

Georgia state line on the northeast Atlantic Coast, extending south to South Florida, the Keys and the Dry Tortugas, then travels northward along the Gulf Coast finally ending in Escambia County in the Northwest Panhandle. Additional inward loops, highlighting such unique ecosystems as the Lake Wales Ridge, will be accessible from both the Atlantic and Gulf Coasts.

The first section, the East Florida Birding Trail, with an estimated 190 sites, will be completed during the year 2000. Counties in this first section include: Nassau, Duval, St. Johns, Clay, Putnam, Flagler, Marion, Volusia, Brevard, Lake, Seminole, Orange, Osceola, Indian River, St. Lucie, Okeechobee, Polk and Highlands. Birdwatchers of all abilities will be able to locate a variety of birding sites by using the map combined with beautiful highway signs depicting the Great Florida Birding Trail logo — the American Swallow-tailed Kite.

Traditionally, only local birders knew about the great birding sites in their area. Most publicity went to the federal and state sites, such as J.N. 'Ding' Darling National Wildlife Refuge and Everglades National Park. The Great Florida Birding Trail aims to combine more prominent birding sites with the smaller local sites in driving loops that will spread out casual birdwatchers and their ecotourism dollars into the surrounding communities. FGFWFC is making a special effort to contact all the greenway and trail sites in the 18 county area which comprises

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Dear Friends of OGT,

As most of you know, I have retired from State Government, effective, Dec. 31, 1998. It was a difficult decision, given how much greenways and trails has meant to me.

Having had the opportunity to assist in building a foundation and a future for Florida's Greenways and Trails program, I have been blessed with many challenges and satisfying accomplishments. My time at the Office of Greenways and Trails has been the highlight of an extremely rewarding career.

The huge success of greenways and trails has in most part been because of the creativity, dedication and concern of our wonderful staff. They helped create a family atmosphere that has made our office a little different; they made my job a real pleasure, and I have never been more proud of any team I have worked with.

Another major factor in our success has been our grassroots association with Florida's local governments. The greenways and trails dream has become a reality, largely due to the support of local citizens. From this support, I have gained many lifelong friends, for which I am grateful.

Just as my retirement is a new chapter for me, greenways and trails will also begin new chapters. For visionaries these chapters are quite clear, ensuring the success of the greenways and trails concept beyond the year 2000.

I want to thank each of you, especially my staff for all of your support through the years. You have all made my experience at OGT a memorable and meaningful time.

Yours In Better Government,


Fred/D. Ayer

After 11 years of working with greenways and trails, Fred Ayer, Director of the Office of Greenways and Trails has retired. His work began with the Canal Authority in 1987 and continued through the years as he worked to gain support for Florida's greenways and trails.

Fred's enthusiasm and commitment in all of his endeavors have been an inspiration. His efforts have resulted in many successful accomplishments for the greenways and trails vision in Florida.

To those of us who have come to know Fred, he has become much more than a leader. He is a father, a grandfather, a conservationist, an outdoorsman, a wildlife photographer, a highly decorated veteran and a patriotic American.

As you can see from the comments of some of Fred's co-workers and colleagues, he will certainly be missed. We look forward to hearing of his relaxing days by Lake Tallavana, fishing and playing with his grandchildren. Good luck, Fred!

Here's one more poem for you:

There once was a man named Fred,
and we listened to all that he said.
Greenways and Trails was his aim to create,
so we could bike, hike and ride all over the state.
Well, during his reign, his goal was achieved,
and people all over really were pleased.
Fred may be retired, and taking a break,
and enjoying some fishing out on his lake.
But don't be surprised if you see him about,
just lift up your hand and give him a shout,
"Thank you Fred for all you have done,
Now relax, enjoy, and have some fun."

— Lorraine Williford,
former OGT employee

I worked with Fred over the last 13 years and found him to be a very dedicated individual. With his cooperation, we formed partnerships which benefited both Marion County and the State of Florida to show how beneficial cooperation can be to all the tax payers. Through Fred's efforts, literally thousands of dollars have been saved, and much red tape was done away with to make sure all citizens could utilize the Greenway properties. I look forward to working with Fred in the future...I'm sure his career in Tallahassee will not come to a screeching halt.

— Jim Lowry,
Marion County Commissioner

Fred had a vision of the grandest recreational park in Florida. Echoing the concerns of the public, Fred had an open mind in allowing recreational opportunities to blossom. Opening the Cross Florida Greenway led to much needed recreational choices fueled by local public interests within the greenways counties. His legacy is a green ribbon across Florida.

— Jim Wolfe, Construction
Projects Administrator II

Fred has the natural ability to lead and the successes of the Office of Greenways and Trails programs is a reflection of his leadership abilities. Floridians present and future will owe Fred a debt of gratitude for his part in being at the forefront of initiating statewide greenways and trails programs. He is very much a 'hands on' person. He cannot wander far from things that he is committed to. I feel a sense of comfort in knowing that Fred is committed to our objectives and will never be far from them.

— Buddy Kinsey, Maintenance
and Construction Supervisor

I began working for Fred back in 1985 with the Department of General Services. The first thing that impressed me about Fred was his attitude of iDo what it takes to get the job done. I have always admired his ability to listen to everyone's opinion and then take a common sense approach. Having worked with Fred for 13 years, I will certainly miss him and his friendly smile, but most of all, I wish for him a happy and healthy retirement.

— Mary Spivey

DEP Welcomes New Secretary

On January 8, 1999, Governor Bush appointed David Struhs to be Secretary of the Department of Environmental Protection.

Struhs has served as Commissioner of the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection since 1995. Prior to his tenure at the Massachusetts DEP, Struhs served as vice president at Canyon Group, Inc., a Los Angeles-based management consulting firm specializing in the electric and gas utility industry. His consulting work included developing innovative, voluntary environmental programs for industry and government.

In 1989, during President George Bush's administration, Struhs served as Chief of Staff to the Council on Environmental Quality.

Struhs holds a Master's degree in Public Administration from Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government. He was a Fulbright Fellow to the Weekly Review and the University of Nairobi, Kenya in 1985. He graduated from Indiana University in 1982 with a Bachelor's degree in journalism and political science and a Certificate of African Studies.

"We are honored to have someone with the impressive background and environmental experience of David Struhs as secretary of DEP," said DEP Secretary Kirby Green. "His leadership and innovation make him an ideal choice." ☺

1999 Project List

by Marsha Messersmith, Planner I

On September 18-20, 1998, the Florida Recreational Trails Council met in Orlando, Florida, for the purpose of recommending and ranking projects proposed for the 1999 Greenways and Trails Land Acquisition Project List. Twenty-two projects were presented to the council, of which 18 were recommended for acquisition. They are as follows:

RANK	PROJECT	COUNTY
1	Lehigh Rail Trail	Flagler
2	Heather Island	Marion
3	West Orange Trail Phase IV	Orange
4	Spring to Spring	Volusia
5	Corbett-Loxahatchee	Palm Beach
6	Winter Springs Town Center	Seminole
7	Archer Linear Park	Alachua
8	Weedon Island	Pinellas
9	Leesburg-Lady Lake	Lake
10	Alford Arm	Leon
11	Cunningham Key	Pinellas
12	Port Tampa Friendship Trail	Hillsborough
13	Savannas Buffer	St. Lucie
14	Tallahassee Junction	Leon
15	Wilton Manors	Broward
16	Spencer Rybovich	Palm Beach
17	Old Dixie Highway	Dade
18	Ombres Trust	Palm Beach

The Florida Greenways and Trails Acquisition Program is not a grant program. It is a land acquisition program funded through the Preservation 2000 Act. The Office of Greenways and Trails (OGT) receives approximately \$3.9 million per year for the purchase of lands which meet the definition of a greenway or trail as defined in Section 260.13, Florida Statutes:

"Greenway" means a linear open space established along either a natural corridor, such as a riverfront, stream valley, or ridgeline, or over land along a railroad right-of-way converted to recreational use, a canal, a scenic road, or other route; any natural or landscaped course for pedestrian or bicycle passage; an open space connector linking parks, nature reserves, cultural features, or historic sites with each other and populated areas; or a local strip or linear park designated as a parkway or greenbelt.

"Trails" means linear corridors and any adjacent support parcels on land or water providing public access for recreation or authorized alternative modes of transportation.

When dates for the next funding cycle have been determined, a notification will be sent to all names on the OGT mailing list. The dates will also be published in *Connections* and *Florida Administrative Weekly*. ☺



THE PINELLAS TRAIL

was voted best greenway in Florida by the readers of *Florida Living Magazine*.

This 33.7 mile trail goes from Tarpon Springs to St. Petersburg.

For more information on the Pinellas Trail, call (813) 464-4751 or (813) 393-8909.



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New Greenways & Trails

by Amanda MacKee,
Public Information Specialist

CAPTIONS
WILL
GO
HERE

Several communities throughout the state are celebrating new greenways and trail in their areas. Below are a few recent and upcoming trail openings:

Jacksonville-Baldwin Rail Trail

In November, a ground breaking ceremony was held for Jacksonville's first rail-trail.

Construction has begun on the 12-foot wide paved path which will be part of the Jacksonville-Baldwin Rail Trail. The 14.5 mile trail will also include an unpaved hiking and biking path and an equestrian trail. The paved path is scheduled to be complete in March, and the unpaved paths will open shortly after

that. The equestrian trail will be cleared in time for the grand opening in the spring. The trail is being developed on an abandoned CSX Transportation rail line.

Miccosukee Canopy Road Greenway

After years of diligent efforts, supporters of the Miccosukee Canopy Road Greenway have finally reaped their rewards. On Nov. 14, many gathered to celebrate the grand opening of the greenway. The 501-acre property was purchase by the state last spring, and Leon County Parks and Recreation Department will manage the area. The land was part of

Welaunee Plantation outside of Tallahassee, and offers bikers, hikers and equestrian riders

a beautiful escape from the hectic city. An unpaved trail is currently open for use, and a paved trail and additional unpaved trails are planned.

Marshall Swamp Trail

Located in Marion County, the Marshall Swamp Trail is a unique trail enveloped in history. The trail is on lands that were part of the Marshall Plantation during the Civil War. The lands were turned over to the state when OGT acquired the Cross Florida Barge Canal

lands in 1993. For three years, OGT has been developing the trail through the swamp. Mother Nature has presented several challenges along the way, but the trail is finally complete. Plans are being made for its grand opening early this year. A trailhead with picnic shelters and a kiosk are located at the Sharpes Ferry OGT office and a second entrance point is at the trail's end at 64th street in Ocala.

Blackwater Heritage State Trail

The Blackwater Heritage State Trail was constructed along an abandoned rail bed in Santa Rosa county. The trail begins in downtown Milton at the main trailhead and continues 8.5 miles north where it connects with the trails system at Naval Air Station Whiting Field. The 12-foot wide paved trail crosses seven trestles that ford streams, creeks and wetland areas as it passes through upland pine, hardwood forest and agricultural areas.

The trail is managed by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection's Division of Recreation and Parks. The trail is open to the public, and an official grand opening will be held in the spring. 🍷

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the first phase. Greenway and trail managers are encouraged to nominate their sites. Public meetings to further explain site criteria and the site selection process will be held on the dates and locations listed in the sidebar at right.

Ultimately, conserving our state's incredible birdlife is the main focus of the Great Florida Birding Trail. Impetus for the creation of the Great Florida Birding Trail has evolved directly from the phenomenal public interest in birdwatching--an increase of 155% over the past decade. In fact, in a 1990 survey in Fortune magazine, twice as many vacationers preferred to watch birds than play golf! Florida is rated among the top three birdwatching destinations in the U.S., behind Texas and Alaska, giving communities added economic incentive to preserve quality bird habitat. In addition, the Sunshine State has seen an increase in birding festivals in the past three years. Florida had five birding festivals in 1997 up from two in 1996. The Space Coast Flyway Festival in the Titusville area had 1,050 people in its first year (1997) and 1998's inaugural Florida Birding Festival in

Pinellas county had over 700 attendees. Eleven birding festivals were held around the state in 1998!

Already the project boasts such partners as U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, U.S. Forest Service, Florida Park Service (DEP), Florida Audubon Society, Division of Forestry (DoACS), U.S. Air Force (Avon Park Bombing Range), St. Johns River and the South Florida and Southwest Florida Water Management Districts.

Broad-based support and grassroots community investment will make the Great Florida Birding Trail a success for Florida and for our feathered friends. If you would like to receive updates on the progress of the Great Florida Birding Trail and be involved in the site nomination process please send your name, address, phone number and e-mail address to:

Nancy E. Jordan,
Birding Trail Coordinator, FGFWFC,
620 S. Meridian St., Tallahassee, FL 32399-1600,
phone (850) 922-0664, SC 292-0664 or e-mail
her at: jordann@gfc.state.fl.us



FEBRUARY 8TH
Ravine State
Gardens
Putnam County

FEBRUARY 11TH
North Florida
Community
College,
North Campus
Duval County

FEBRUARY 15TH
Wekiwa Springs
State Park
Orange County

FEBRUARY 18TH
Environmental
Learning Center
Indian River
County

5-Yr. Plan Available Soon

The five-year implementation plan for a statewide system of greenways and trails will be available at the end of this month. Connecting Florida's Communities Through Greenways and Trails outlines the process for formally designating lands and waterways as part of the system and includes recommendations for

acquiring and managing components of the system, for involving public and private partners and for educating Florida's residents and visitors about our natural systems, cultural and historic features and recreational opportunities.

To receive your copy of the plan, please complete the coupon below and return it to Office of Greenways and Trails 2600 Blair Stone Road, MS 795 Tallahassee, FL 32399-2400; fax number (850) 922-6302; phone number (850) 488-3701; e-mail radulovich_t@dep.state.fl.us

Yes! Please, send me my copy of the Five-Year Implementation Plan.

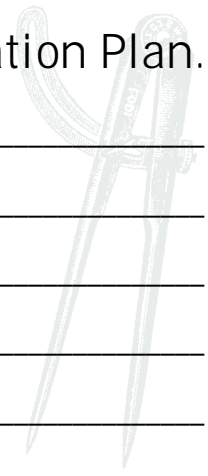
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Street Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____

e-mail address (if available): _____



News Notes & Events

NATIONAL
TRAILS DAY
is June 5, 1999.

For help in planning
your celebration event,
please contact the
American Hiking
Society at
(301) 565-6704
ext. 112 or at
ahsbrad@aol.com.

In November, the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) was recognized as the "Exemplary Achievement by a State Agency" at the tenth annual Davis Productivity Awards Luncheon in Tallahassee for its Ecosystem Management Program. The Awards recognize and reward state government employees whose work measurably increases productivity and promotes innovation. DEP's ecosystem management approach is recognized nationally and is now being exported to other states and abroad.

The Annual Conference of the Florida Trail Association will be held March 5-7, 1999 at Camp Ocala in the Ocala National Forest. Marsha Kearney, Supervisor of the National Forests in Florida will be the keynote speaker. For more information, please contact the Florida Trail Association at (800) 343-1882.

The Second Annual Suwannee River Birdfest will take place April 3, 1999 to celebrate the arrival of the Swallowtail Kite from Central and South America. The festivities will be held at Fanning Springs State Recreation Area in Fanning Springs, opens to the public at 6 a.m. and continues throughout the day with recreational activities for hikers, bikers and paddlers. Over 20 exhibitors will be on site with food, ecocrafts, music, demonstrations and a Kids Corner. For more information,

contact the Suwannee Basin GEOPark at 11650 NW 115th Street Chiefland, FL 32626 ATTN: Danielle Judd; by phone at (352) 493-6736; e-mail at ppds@svic.net or on the web at <http://originalflorida.org/birds/welcome.html>.

Eastman Kodak Company is the new sponsor of the American Greenways Awards Program. The Kodak Awards Program will continue to provide small grants (\$500 to \$2500) for greenway and trail projects. New grant guidelines will be issued in early 1999 and grants will be awarded in early fall 1999. Any applications previously received for consideration under the DuPont Awards Program will be held for consideration along with any new applications. The new deadline for submission of applications will be June 1, 1999. For more information, contact Denise Swol, American Greenways Coordinator at (703) 525-6300 or e-mail at dswol@conservationfund.org.

In 1998, President Clinton launched the American Heritage Rivers Initiative. Among the rivers honored through the program is Florida's St. John's River. This initiative is designed to focus federal resources and services on riverfront communities as they work to restore their rivers, revitalize local economies and preserve their historic and cultural heritage.



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