

## Florida Greenways and Trails Council

### Meeting Summary December 3, 2009 Tallahassee, Florida

#### Members Present

Jeff Caster  
Chuck Goodheart  
Charlie Houder  
Deno Hicks

Susan Kennedy  
Phil Laurien  
Clay Smallwood  
Ken Reecy

John Waldron  
Kent Wimmer

**Alternates Present:** Paula Allen (for Bob Ballard), Jim Schmidt (for Susan Matthews), Becky Nielson (for Greg Chelius)

**Members Absent:** Sara Fain, Jeff Gove, Mike Grella, Linda King, Jerrie Lindsey, Clay Smallwood, Kathryn Starkey

**Office of Greenways and Trails (OGT) Staff:** Jena Brooks, Jim Wood, Cindy Radford, Robin Turner, Lisa Galocy

**Others present:** Florida Greenways and Trails Foundation member Herb Hiller

The meeting was called to order at 9:10 a.m. by Kent Wimmer.

#### **INTRODUCTIONS**

#### **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

**MOTION:** John Waldron moved to approve the agenda.  
**SECOND:** Deno Hicks  
**DECISION:** Motion carried unanimously.

#### **APPROVAL OF MEETING SUMMARY**

Two minor changes to meeting summary

**MOTION:** Susan Kennedy moved to approve September 30, 2009 meeting summary.  
**SECOND:** Deno Hicks  
**DECISION:** Motion carried unanimously.

#### **CHAIR REPORT**

Kent Wimmer stated that Howard Pardue is retiring from the Florida Trail Association (FTA) at the end of the year. Dan McKeague, who is already on staff with FTA, will take over Mr. Pardue's position as Acquisition Planner for Florida National Scenic Trail (FNST).

## **OGT REPORT / Status of Acquisition Workplan**

Cindy Radford provided an update on the acquisition activity that had transpired since the September Council meeting. Jim Wood explained that last year in session there was a provision put in place to have a minimum amount of Florida Forever funds allocated to capital improvement projects. There are significant needs for remediation on the East Central Regional Rail Trail so these funds may be directed to this project. Status of specific projects was provided:

- The Mussallem Trailhead for SR 207 Rail Trail was approved by the Governor and Cabinet in August and closed at the end of October, a very quick closing.
- The first parcel in the Santos Gap, the Hanks Parcel, was acquired in October. The next parcel should go to the Governor and Cabinet in February. Mickey Thomason and staff will talk to landowners to see who is still interested in the most connected direct route and take negotiations from there.
- All offers have been made on the Shingle Creek project. All are less than fee. Negotiations are continuing.
- Contract for the Jacksonville-Baldwin extension has been sent out to TPL/CSX and it is hoped that that will wrap up soon.
- Newberry to Trenton project is ongoing.

These are the active projects and it is hoped that Florida Forever will receive funding in the upcoming session so that other projects on the list can be pursued.

Kent Wimmer inquired about the progress of Lake Butler to Lake City. Cindy Radford explained that we have met and had several follow up calls and emails with Norfolk Southern asking them to provide OGT with a Willing Seller Certificate. OGT has yet to receive the requested document, and cannot proceed with acquiring the project without it. Ms. Radford assured the Council that this is a priority project. Jena Brooks shared that Norfolk Southern did re-map another area of interest for a trail in Putnam County. Robin Turner will follow-up with Putnam County regarding status of that area.

Also included was a current list of all projects that have been acquired.

Jim Wood added that the management plan for the East Central Regional Rail Trail located in Volusia and Brevard Counties has been submitted to the Acquisition and Restoration Council (ARC) for approval at their December meeting. Volusia County has secured enhancement funding, and construction can begin as soon as the plan is approved. John Harper with Volusia county indicates that both Volusia and Brevard are slated to receive additional funding from FDOT for future trail development.

## **Wekiva Parkway**

Jim Wood presented on the Wekiva Parkway, a new limited access roadway that will occur in Lake, Orange and Seminole Counties. He shared that there has long been a desire to incorporate a trail as part of the project, like the Suncoast Trail along the Suncoast Parkway. DEP, DOT and

the Expressway Authority met and discussed a concept to provide a bicycle and pedestrian connection in this corridor. The Expressway Authority proposed the use of a service road to provide such a connection. The service road will be a 35 mph two way road with 10' paved shoulders on each side for bicyclists and pedestrians. This would help link up the Seminole, Orange and Lake county trail systems. This was considered to be a compromise as the Expressway Authority has not been supportive of developing a separated trail. Kent Wimmer and Phil Laurien expressed concerns about this solution because it does not provide a separation. Jena suggested that maybe a local effort could help and to contact Rich Dunkel who has been involved in this issue as well. Phil Laurien expressed that he and Tara McCue would get in contact with Expressway Authority to see what they can do to intervene. He would also like to update their council on this issue and see if they can do better. Mr. Wimmer suggested a resolution from the FGTC. John Waldron suggested that the Council see a presentation on this project to get more details prior to signing a resolution. Mr. Laurien said that Ms. McCue will pull together a presentation for the FGTC to be presented at the next scheduled Council meeting. Mr. Laurien also noted that the Wekiva Parkway is overseen by the Wekiva Parkway Commission which was created by an act of legislation, and the Commission is chaired by Senator Lee Constantine. The Regional Planning Council is required by law to be the staff for the Commission. The project will not move forward without approval of the Commission.

#### **St. Lucie/Crosstown Parkway Mitigation – Savannahs Recreation Area Trail**

Jim Wood discussed the Crosstown Parkway Mitigation Project. The City of St. Lucie has proposed various alternatives for the Crosstown Parkway bridge over the St. Lucie River. The project will impact state lands (State Parks & Coastal and Aquatic Managed Areas properties). The City has negotiated a package with DEP to mitigate the impacts to state lands. This package includes many elements, one of which is provide public recreational benefit by funding and constructing a 2.5 mile long paved multi use trail through the Savannahs Recreation Area, managed by St. Lucie County. This trail connection is included in the local trails master plan, the statewide trail opportunity maps and the East Coast Greenway corridor.

#### **VISIT FLORIDA Trails Website**

Jim Wood discussed the Visit Florida (VF) trails website. OGT staff, Herb Hiller, and others have met with Visit Florida twice on a concept for a greater presence for trails on the VF website. The intent is to link information about trails to other information of value to tourists, such as where to stay, eat, etc. The target date to launch a new web presence for trails on the VF site is October 2010, Florida Greenways and Trails Month. Questions remain as to who will fund and what it will look like but VF feels that there is great value in doing this because of trail demand and visitation. Herb Hiller added that he was recently at the Visit Florida Marketing Retreat and on numerous occasions the chief marketing officer and others referenced trails in very positive ways. John Waldron asked if the Nature Based Tourism committee was still active. Herb responded that the CHRN (Cultural Heritage Rural Nature) Committee has replaced that. Mr. Waldron indicated that the Division of Forestry as a state partner used to be on the old committee and he is interested in being on the new one. Jena Brooks shared that OGT was also not placed on the new committee at the beginning, but has since been added so Forestry may be able to do the same.

### **Trails & Economic Development Workshop**

Jim Wood reported that the Economic Development and Trails Workshop took place on November 6<sup>th</sup> at Debary Hall. Bob Ironsmith, Economic Development Director for the City of Dunedin, is heavily involved with the integration of the Pinellas Trail into the revitalization of that town. He presented on how it has flourished since the trail was built. Mr. Wood provided an abbreviated copy of a Powerpoint presentation “National and State Trail Trends: Meeting Public Demand and Transforming Communities” which contains information, statistics and studies on the value of trails.

### **Capital City to Sea Loop Trail**

Robin Turner described the Capital City to Sea Loop Trail as a 120 mile corridor and is a Wakulla County directed initiative. It will connect Leon, Wakulla and Franklin counties. Wakulla County, City of Carrabelle and the Apalachee Regional Planning Council passed a resolution supporting the concept. This project is about filling in the gaps to connect existing trails and trails that are underway.

### **NEW BUSINESS/ANNOUNCEMENTS**

John Waldron mentioned a national report “Get Outdoors Florida” that he found very interesting and he will do a presentation at the next Council meeting.

Susan Kennedy announced the upcoming annual Oceans to Lake Greenway Celebration will be held February 26<sup>th</sup> -28<sup>th</sup>, 2010 for more information, visit [Evergladestrails.org](http://Evergladestrails.org)

Kent Wimmer announced that the Florida Trail Days along with the Florida Trails Association annual conference will be held March 26<sup>th</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup>, 2010 in Haines City at the FFA Leadership Training City. For more information, visit [FloridaTrail.org](http://FloridaTrail.org).

Jim announced that Susan Kennedy was recently re-appointed and there are other outstanding appointees that OGT is working on getting re-appointed and/or filled.

### **MEETING DATE/LOCATION**

The next meeting will be in Altamonte Springs at the East Central Florida Regional Planning Council office on February 11<sup>th</sup> & 12<sup>th</sup>, 2010.

The meeting was adjourned.