

**Florida Greenways and Trails Council**

**Meeting Summary  
October 13, 2010  
St. Marks, FL**

**Members Present**

Bob Ballard	Charlie Houser	Scott Stroh
Jeff Caster	Susan Kennedy	John Waldron
Debi Crowder	Matt Morris	Kent Wimmer
Greg Golgowski	Ken Reecy	
Chuck Goodheart	Kathryn Starkey	

**Alternates Present:** Kevin Mooney (for Greg Chelius)

**Members Absent:** Jeff Gove, Mike Grella, Deno Hicks, Phil Laurien

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

**Others Present:** Florida Greenways and Trails Foundation President Dale Allen

The meeting was called to order on October 13, 2010 at 8:50 a.m. by Kent Wimmer

**INTRODUCTIONS**

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

MOTION: Kathryn Starkey moved to approve May 5, 2010 meeting summary.

SECOND: Ken Reecy

DECISION: Motion carried unanimously

**ITEM OF INTEREST FROM COUNCIL MEMBER:** Matt Morris recommended getting children and families involved, interested and engaged in trail activities by creating plaster casts of animal tracks. Regardless of whether one lives in a rural or an urban environment, chances are there animal footprints. From his experience, it has also resulted in the children introducing "trails" to new people. Matt shared sample casts and offered to provide additional information. Matt, recently diagnosed with cancer, expressed his appreciation for taking his item of interest early in the meeting. He said that his doctor's allow him one-big event a month. This month he wanted to participate with Council. Everyone expressed their gratitude for his participation.

**CHAIR REPORT**

Kent Wimmer gave an update regarding Florida Trails Association (FTA) and Florida National Scenic Trail (FNST) transitions. Deborah Stewart Kent has moved on from her position as Executive Director. Kent is acting in dual capacity as the Florida National Scenic Trail Liaison-Interim Executive Director with offices in both Tallahassee and Gainesville.

## OGT REPORT

Jena Brooks provided an update on the acquisition activity that had transpired since the May Council meeting. OGT anticipates closing on the Nature Coast State Trail-Trenton to Newberry Extension by the end of 2010. OGT is working with the Trust for Public Land (TPL) on the Jacksonville-Baldwin Trail Extension. Once those projects close, OGT will have spent the majority of the Florida Forever allocations. OGT will continue to work toward conservation easements and work to expand their partners. Kent recommended that Council members continue to voice support for Florida Forever. Florida Forever Coalition has information on their website <http://www.supportfloridaforever.org/>.

Jim Wood provided an update Visit Florida website on Trails ([www.visitflorida.com/trails/](http://www.visitflorida.com/trails/)) that debuted October 4, 2010 and Visit Florida partner opportunities. The website is a new component of VISITFLORIDA.com that brings together descriptions and maps of trails from around Florida with information about lodging, restaurants, outfitters and other travel related services. Visit Florida (VF) is the most visited state tourism site in the Nation. Trails are featured as traveler destinations for Florida visitors, alongside beaches, resorts, golf courses and themed attractions. The project is a partnership of VISIT FLORIDA, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection's Office of Greenways & Trails (OGT) and the East Coast Greenway Alliance. The intention of the website is not to replace existing information but to supplement it. All of the VF information links back to the respective managing trail agency. The Trails website will continue to grow; Trails that meet the Eligibility Criteria are submitted and processed by OGT. OGT desires feedback about the site, VF remains receptive to changes.

Bob Ballard said the new website is a way to facilitate travel planning by utilizing trails and other points of interest to bring tourism dollars to the state and local communities. Kent said the website provides information and allows trail users to make informed decisions about the type of trail they would like to "experience" (urban, wilderness).

John Waldron said it is important to have quality control when presenting information to the public, especially when presenting maps. Chuck Goodheart inquired of how the quality control will occur for the free listing of businesses. Jim reported the business aspect is handled by VF partner development. Chuck asked about broken web links, Jim reported VF is very sophisticated in finding broken links. Dale Allen said if problems are identified, the Florida Greenways and Trails Foundation (FGTF) may be able to assist.

Greg Gologowski inquired if developments such as Harmony would be appropriate. Jim reported that if the development's trails met the Eligibility Criteria, including public access and public parking.

Ken Reecy expressed his appreciation and inquired if it included parks. Jena reported that parks could potentially be included if they include trails over 2-miles in length or if the park is in close proximity to a trail listed on the site the park could be shown as "outdoor" or "sightseeing" opportunities.

Ken inquired if there would be links to Special Events. Jim reported that information varies by trail manager but there is room for future enhancements to the website. Some of the Council had not had the opportunity to view the site.

Everyone expressed appreciation to Herb Hiller for his dedication and foresight.

Jeff Caster recommended the Council do something to officially thank Herb.

No action was taken

### **East Central Florida Regional Impact Study**

The East Central Florida Regional Planning Council (ECFRPC) is working with Orange County, the City of Winter Garden, the U.S. Forest Service, OGT and the Florida Greenways and Trails Foundation (FGTF) to determine the economic impact of trails in Orange County and Winter Garden. Currently Phase 1 is a follow-up to the 1990's Trail study. The Study should be complete by early 2011; it is utilizing the REMY Model for quantitative and qualitative impacts for 3-trails.

Jena welcomed the new members Greg Golgowski and Debi Crowder to the Council. Greg is the Conservation Director for the Harmony Development, prior to Harmony Greg worked with the ECFRPC. Debi, an avid trail user, is a retired educator and Administrator. Debi began hiking the Appalachian Trail (AT) in 2005; she is 60% complete. Ken expressed his appreciation for the diversity of the Council members.

### **Florida Greenways and Trails Foundation (FGTF)**

Dale Allen reported on the preliminary discussions between FGTF, Kathryn Starkey and John Waldron regarding exploring non-traditional funding sources. Dale said the FGTF is looking at the mechanics of different fundraising strategies and working to identify, prioritize and fund projects. Dale invited FGTC to the next FGTF meeting in Tampa, December 4-5, 2010. Kathryn said she may be able to participate. FGTF may want a FGTC member to serve as a voting member. Dale will try to attend all FGTC meetings. Debi requested that OGT staff share the FGTF calendar and meeting minutes with FGTC. Kent said this is a great nexus for growth of the partnership between FGTC and FGTF. Dale requested that he be included in future FGTC agenda so that he can report on FGTF activities and his trail experiences in mid-west. Both Wisconsin and Ohio are using non-traditional fund raising techniques. Scott Stroh reported that the Friends of Mission San Luis, a 501(c)3 corporation raised money by naming of the buildings at the Mission. Information about the Mission and the Friends is available at [www.missionsanluis.org](http://www.missionsanluis.org).

### **FLORIDA NATIONAL SCENIC TRAIL – STRATEGIC PLANNING**

Susan Matthews reported on the twelve to eighteen month review of the Florida National Scenic Trail (FNST) program. The FNST is unique as it is the only one, of eleven, congressionally designed Trails that is contained within a state. FNST also has diversity of uses and experiences. The changes are to expand FNST's appeal, while focusing on the long-term mission of the Trail. September 21, 2010 was the first meeting of the FNST Coalition. The Coalition includes major interest groups such as: Florida Division of Forestry (DOF), Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC), OGT, Water Management Districts (WMD), Florida Division of Recreation and Parks, Get Outdoors Florida, Plum Creek, Seminole County, University of Florida, Eglin Air Force base, National Park Service (NPS), United State Forest Service (USFS) and FTA. Currently Phase 1 includes the focus of branding the trail, visitor services and visitor experiences. USFS is actively involved in oversight of the Trail and consistency of Trail experiences. An "Expert" workshop will occur January or February, 2011. The second Coalition meeting will occur March, 2011. The third Coalition meeting will occur before the end of 2011. Jerrie Lindsey reported that both Liz Sparks and Rich Mospens were pleased with the first meeting and extend their assistance with the development of a unified interpretation plan.

Susan also reported that in addition to Kent acting in dual capacity as the FNST Liaison-Interim Executive Director, Jim Schmid is the Interim FNST Program Manager. Michelle Mitchell accepted a USFS promotion in Atlanta.

## **FLORIDA TRAIL GATEWAY COMMUNITY PROGRAM**

Kent Wimmer provided information about the Florida Trail Gateway Community Program <http://www.floridatrail.org/options/Communities/> and reported that on June 5, 2010 Florida Trail and partners celebrated the Designation of the new Gateway Communities: St. Marks, Sopchoppy and Wakulla County. Currently twenty-two communities are designated and Umatilla is the next scheduled designation. Jim reported that the Program is becoming a national model for promoting local businesses that compliment trails, as trails increase the visibility of small towns and OGT actively promotes the program. Kent said their goal is to have fifty to sixty designated Gateway Communities.

### **Additional Items from Council members**

Bob Ballard reported on budget reductions at the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) are now proposed at 15%. The Governor will sign a budget in January, 2011. Kathryn and Kent requested that FGTC stay involved in the political process. Several members requested staff resend the signed Resolution of the Florida Greenways and Trails Council Recognizing the Economic Value of Trails and Greenways to Florida. Council members also requested information related to the Economic Impacts of trails and greenways. Bob reported that agencies that receive Florida Forever funding allocations by the legislature are anticipating spending down all allocations by July 1, 2011.

Ken Reecy reported the Florida Communities Trust's (FCT) Parks and Open Space Florida Forever grant program will announce an open cycle to close on February 23, 2011.

**NEXT MEETING DATE was determined: Thursday, December 2, 2010** (conference call)

The formal meeting was adjourned for the day.

**Greenways and Trails month event at Tallahassee-St. Marks Trail** to celebrate the re-opening of the southern 2.7-miles of the Tallahassee-St. Marks State Trail (TSMST). The TSMST was the first rail-trail in the State trail system to be paved during the resurfacing project the trail is being widened to 12 ft.

**Lunch at Riverside Café**