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**GOVERNOR CRIST SIGNS PROCLAMATION MAKING MARCH
FLORIDA BICYCLE MONTH**

~Ride like the wind down a Florida biking trail ~

TALLAHASSEE – In recognition of March being Florida Bicycle month, Governor Charlie Crist and the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) are reminding residents and tourists to enjoy some of the best biking weather the state has to offer.

In proclaiming Florida Bicycle Month, Governor Charlie Crist signed a proclamation recognizing how the bicycle plays an important role in the lives of millions of Floridians by providing a means to travel to work, school and parks, and as a popular form of recreation, helping to motivate eco-tourism. The proclamation highlights that increased bicycle usage can help reduce motor vehicle emissions and thereby reduce global climate change impacts.

“Florida has many great places to ride a bike, enjoy the fresh spring air and get some exercise,” said Jena Brooks, Director of DEP’s Greenways and Trails. “In addition to the many great paved trails, you might want to experience Florida’s nationally recognized mountain bike trails and March is the perfect time to take on a new adventure.”

American Trails recently named Florida as the “Best Trails State in America,” recognizing DEP’s Office of Greenways and Trails for its vision and leadership. Of the eight state trails, six are rail-trails, which are railroad corridors converted to recreational trails for hiking, biking, skating, equestrian activities and alternative transportation.

Florida, known for coastal beauty not only provides bike enthusiasts with a chance to ride on the hard sandy surfaces of the east coast beaches such as those found at Amelia Island State Park, but also some mountainous trails most people don’t necessarily associate with the Sunshine State. Carved out of former quarries Florida bike enthusiasts can enjoy riding on a mountainous terrain offered at the Santos Bike Trail East and Alafia River State Park south of Tampa. Two state parks in South Florida also offer exciting bike trails, Oleta River State Park in North Miami and Jonathan Dickinson State Park in Hobe Sound.

- Cross Florida Greenway - Santos Bike Trails East- Stretching from the Gulf of Mexico to the St. Johns River, the Marjorie Harris Carr Cross Florida Greenway occupies much of the land formerly known as the Cross Florida Barge Canal. The Santos Bike Trails East portion of the greenway is best known for mountain bike trails. More than 30 miles of trails with three levels of difficulty are available to accommodate beginners to experts. The Santos trailhead draws riders from all over

the state and country to experience an Epic Ride, an elite list of 43 trails throughout the country described by the International Mountain Bicycling Association (IMBA) as “the best in mountain biking.”

- Alafia River State Park offers many challenging off-road mountain bicycle trails, Florida’s other claim to the famed Epic Ride designation, and horseback riding trails. Bikers can also go for a hike to one of the many lakes and enjoy a day of fishing, relaxation or bird-watching.
- Oleta River State Park has approximately 15 miles of mountain-bike trails ranging in skill level from novice to advanced. The park is home to many activities that you would not expect in the center of Miami. In addition to biking, park visitors can also rent kayaks and canoes.
- Jonathan Dickinson State Park is located just south of Stuart, bikers can enjoy paved and off road trails that run near Florida's first federally designated Wild and Scenic River, the Loxahatchee River.

DEP recently launched *Rediscover Florida: 100 Ways in 100 Days* — a campaign highlighting 100 different ways to experience Florida in 100 days. The campaign aims to increase awareness of all the activities Florida’s public lands offer – from the traditional (hiking, biking, camping) to the unique (festivals, historic reenactments and museums). Opportunities extend beyond the state’s 160 state parks – there are also eight state trails, three National Estuarine Research Reserves, plus many aquatic preserves and education centers. With all of these options, opportunities for fun and educational recreation are vast, affordable and close to home. Visitors to the *Rediscover Florida* Web site can explore an interactive list of 100 activities and track how many of the activities they can complete.

To view the *Rediscover Florida: 100 Ways in 100 Days* web site visit www.dep.state.fl.us and click on *Rediscover Florida*.

For more information on Florida’s greenways and trails, visit www.floridagreenwaysandtrails.com

To view Governor Charlie Crist’s, “March is Florida Bicycle Month Proclamation,” visit <http://www.dep.state.fl.us/secretary/news/2009/03/files/fbm.pdf>