Our Mission
The Florida Trail Association develops, maintains, protects and promotes a network of hiking trails throughout the state, including the unique Florida National Scenic Trail. Together with our partners we provide opportunities for the public to hike, engage in outdoor recreation, participate in environmental education and contribute to meaningful volunteer work.

Florida Trail Association
5415 SW 13th St Gainesville Fl. 32608-5037
Phone: 352-378-8823 / 877-HIKE-FLA
Fax: 352-378-4550
email: fta@floridatrail.org
website: www.floridatrail.org
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Sometimes serendipity arrives in your mailbox. In the previous issue of the Footprint I wrote a column about wilderness areas and the importance of getting young people excited about the natural world. I mentioned a seminal experience I had when I was a teenager. In response, I received a very interesting and touching letter.

The writer of that letter, Elizabeth Kunkee, introduces herself as someone who “grew up in the Florida Trail Association”. She now resides in California and is a very accomplished engineer, involved in complicated technology--things like photoelectric semiconductors. Oh, and for fun she hikes and backpacks with her teenagers. She’s also coincidentally the daughter of the late Mary Ann Twyford, former president of the Florida Trail Association (FTA).

Elizabeth states that she, too, “fell in love with the outdoors at an early age”. In her letter and an attached remembrance piece about her mother [shared elsewhere in this issue], she beautifully illustrates how a positive spark of engagement can be ignited in others. Elizabeth also reinforces the deep importance of sharing the passion for nature. She writes:

“In the ’70s, the US Mail would bring an 8 or 10 page newsletter, full with listings of FTA trips. I learned my Florida geography poring over the listings to determine what canoe trips, day hikes, and trail projects were close enough that I could beg my mom for us to go on. Later, in high school, I was allowed to backpack on FTA trips with Margaret Scruggs, which was my introduction to a lifelong interest in backpacking --- I’m now a backpacking leader for my kids’ Girl Scout and Boy Scout troops.”

Margaret Scruggs was FTA’s first employee. I recently spoke on the phone with Margaret. We briefly discussed the impact of Charlie Monson, another veteran FTA volunteer and member. Charlie passed away recently and left FTA a very generous gift. Margaret remembered him as one of the earlier volunteers who would help set things up before FTA meetings, back when all the meetings were statewide and held in places like Highlands Hammock State Park. Charlie was also one of the alumni of a “hikers over 80” cross-peninsular hike in 2007. Charlie will be missed.

Mr. Monson was one of a shrinking circle of FTA veterans who remember what the Florida Trail effort was like in its earliest days. Some of them are still active with FTA. Others are not. Some are gone to their Creator. All of them, in their unique way, have passed on their commitment to the outdoors. (In addition to FTA service, of course, they also accomplished other great things. Charlie, for example, also volunteered with Habitat for Humanity.) All of them deserve our sincere thanks.

We should honor the hard work and dedication of these FTA pioneers, while also ensuring that their efforts weren’t in vain. The continued success of the Florida National Scenic Trail (FNST) depends on new volunteers.
and a wider circle of friends and advocates. The long-term health of hiking trails throughout the Sunshine State rests on public support. Each chapter group of the FTA is charged with ensuring that there are local residents who care about these resources, and who will defend and work for them. The fun stuff, the activities and social events, are the initial draw and hook for potential supporters and a reward for engagement --- but the proper work of FTA is our mission, and we exist as an organization for the ideals behind that work.

One way of honoring the legacy of past volunteers and professionals is to continue their actual hands-on work. But another way to “pay it forward”, to become worthy of that same gratefulness, is by passing on the spark of caring and passion. This can be gifted to family (as Mary Ann Twyford and her daughter Elizabeth have done), or to friends and acquaintances, and even to strangers. The inculcating of passion is a labor of love, certainly, but it’s also a necessary step to ensuring that trails and natural areas continue to provide a quality experience for future generations. It empowers supporters. Without renewed support, the Florida Trail becomes a fading priority in an increasingly crowded and complicated world.

I am asking you all to support the work we do. And to continue to support the work you’ve done --- and the work that others, currently and in the future, will carry on. As Walt Whitman wrote, “The powerful play goes on, and you will contribute a verse”.

One of the odd things about FTA (and other organizations, frankly) is that, even within chapters, so few people really know the background and history of their fellow members and volunteers. Perhaps there is a natural reticence held by many folks who like to be out in nature (like a Thoreau-esque version of Fight Club anonymity), or maybe it’s like an unspoken trekker’s code (witness the long-distance hikers and their nicknames). Maybe some volunteers are in the Witness Protection Program, or are on the lam from an unfortunate enlistment in the French Foreign Legion. Maybe people just never bother to ask.

But this habit hinders the ability of FTA to find volunteers capable of fulfilling various roles, and it also diminishes the vibrancy of our organization. It prevents a full appreciation of the variety and uniqueness of our members, people who believe in the connections we strengthen during our time outside, enjoying the trees and birds and bodies of water and sunshine and wind and rain. The effort to get to know each other is worthwhile. It’s a springboard to widening our circle of friends, of ensuring that hiking trails remain an integral part of the Florida experience.

Leaving behind places where our grandchildren and their children can touch the natural world, and understand their relationship to it, will depend not just on the physical or mental work we do. It will also require that we successfully transfer the passion and commitment for preserving those places to others. That work can only be done by caring yet brave communication.
The Florida Trail Maps and Databook are somewhat invisible to most Florida Trail Association (FTA) members, until users start getting lost. The problem and scope of invalid or outdated data became apparent in the fall of 2013 since there had been no map updates since the summer of 2011. In the spring of 2014, volunteers Dave Costakis and Don Mock, along with FTA staffer Jeff Glenn, teamed up to address a problem that was snowballing with every Florida Trail route adjustment.

Thanks are owed to all those who contributed updates during the revision process. But a special THANK YOU goes to Dave, Don and Jeff for piloting the effort. The scope of the project included 46 maps covering Big Cypress to Ft. Pickens. Dave and Don are two very dedicated, tireless and persistent volunteers. They deserve praise for tackling this task.

Printed versions of the 2014 Florida Trail Maps and Databook are now available at the FTA Store. A PDF version of the data book is available for download from the FTA website under National Scenic Trail/Florida Trail Map and Databook (www.floridatrail.org/fnst/ftmap/).
The Blaze Master - a proven tool for FT blazing

The Blaze Master was developed by Bob Deckert and has been in use on Eglin and Nokuse Sections for several years. It was highlighted at the Trail Skills Session in October. It’s a sponge-type applicator that expedites blazing and produces uniform 2”x6” blazes.

DEMONSTRATION VIDEO at http://vimeo.com/92093818

ORIGINAL VIDEO at http://vimeo.com/92865654

The Orange Blaze on the Florida Trail: http://vimeo.com/91256026

Florida National Scenic Trail (FNST) Gap Closing Alternatives - At the September FNST Summit meeting in northern Florida, Dale Allen from the Florida Greenway and Trails Foundation presented several alternatives to closing major FNST gaps. Of primary focus are three significant gaps: Apalachicola River to Pine Log State Forest (North of Panama City), Suwannee River to St. Marks NWR (Eastern Panhandle), and Deseret Ranch (Southeast of Orlando). The Foundation was tasked with developing routing alternatives and gauging relative partner support of both private and public land managers across the state, but not to make a decision or circumvent the completion of an FNST Optimal Location Review.

This initiative’s purpose is to develop alternatives and is very much a work in progress! FTA members are asked to become involved and participate at all levels.

FTA By-law Changes / Article II - Definitions / Board adopted on May 17, 2014:

Florida Trail - The term “Florida Trail” shall hereinafter mean the continuous route of the Florida National Scenic Trail.

Florida Trail System - The term “Florida Trail System” shall hereinafter mean the system of all other continuous trails, loop trails near population centers, connecting trails, side trails, and cross trails which have been developed and maintained by the Association throughout the State of Florida.

FTA Board adopted motions:


April 14, 2014 - The Florida Trail Association formally adopts orange as the official blaze color for the continuous thru route of the Florida Trail aka Florida National Scenic Trail. Seeing an orange blaze in Florida is synonymous with the Florida Trail.
Please join us in welcoming **Shawn Thomas** as the new Florida National Scenic Trail Program Manager! Shawn comes to us with a wealth of resource management and recreation experience, including time served with the US Air Force and Peace Corps. Some of our Florida Trail Association volunteers may have had the pleasure of working with him in his former position as Fish, Wildlife, and Outdoor Recreation Program Manager at Avon Park Air Force Range. Shawn came on-board to the National Forests in Florida Supervisor’s Office in Tallahassee on November 3rd, 2014. Expect to see him on the FNST soon!

Gearing up for the Trail Maintenance Season

With cooler weather on the horizon, and fewer bugs out and about (maybe), it’s that time of year to start dusting off the trail maintenance tools and Crew Leader Packets if you happened to put them down at all over the summer months (looking at you, Trail Hogs! Even the summer doesn’t slow that crew down). While you are outfitting your volunteer crews, don’t forget to connect with your land managers for pre-season planning meetings. Some good things to discuss with your land managers might include:

- Check-in/check-out procedures
- Priorities for trail maintenance
- Tool/equipment sharing opportunities
- Material & Sign needs

Visit the FNST Website > Land & Management Resources > Resource Management page for tools to discuss trail maintenance standards and funding requests with land managers. Here you will find the FNST Minimum Standards & Guidelines, information on Trail Classes and Design Parameters, example Trail Assessments and the annual Request for Projects application. Projects can be submitted year round; applications are reviewed every June/July depending on the FNST Coalition meeting calendar.

The 7th Annual I-DID-A-HIKE

A Fundraiser for the Florida Trail Association

February 21, 2015

Nature and Heritage Tourism Center
10499 Spring Street
White Springs, FL

on the banks of the beautiful Suwannee River

Registration opens at 8 am
$20 participation fee includes all hikes and shuttles

Bring the whole family.
For the young and the young-at-heart.

More info will be posted here:
http://www.meetup.com/NorthFloridaTrailBlazers/events/202632862/
The Florida Trail Association (FTA) is excited to announce that we have hired two seasonal Technical Advisors (TAs) to help support the overwhelming number of trail work events this year on the Florida Trail. Both TAs come to us with a great deal of trail work experience with volunteers and agency partners across the country. Please join us in welcoming Matt Kirk and Mason Floyd!

Matt earned a BA in Journalism and Environmental Studies from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. After graduating in 2004, he worked for three years as a ranger, naturalist and trails coordinator for the South Carolina State Park Service in the Mountain Bridge Wilderness Area. Matt taught science for five years in public schools throughout western North Carolina for grades 8-10. Most recently, he dedicated a year of service through AmeriCorps Project Conserve with the Carolina Mountain Land Conservancy, building trails and leading educational hikes on conserved lands. He is an avid long-distance runner and hiker. Matt enjoys sharing his love for trails with people of all ages and looks forward to a productive maintenance season with FTA.

Mason comes to us from the foothills of the Smoky Mountains where he grew up spending much of his time exploring the natural world. Mason started his outdoor career working for the Student Conservation Association. He has led numerous invasive plant and trail work crews on National Park Service and USDA Forest Service sites throughout South Carolina, New Jersey, Indiana, Arizona, California, and Kentucky. Mason enjoys traveling the country and spending as much time as possible outdoors.

Mason and Matt will be working alongside our Regional Representatives, Jeff Glenn and Alex Stigliano, in the North Florida and Central/South Florida regions. They will be supporting volunteer work parties, teaching trail skills, and leading youth crews throughout their six-month season. Mason and Matt will finish off the season in March by hosting five volunteer projects in the Panhandle Region.

To sign up for FTA work parties, visit the “Volunteer Opportunities” page of our website (www.floridatrail.org/volunteer/volunteeropportunities/). We look forward to working together with you on the trail!
Some of our members may remember a time when hikers could walk from Bull Creek WMA to the Tosohatchee WMA on a footpath through the Deseret Ranch, a large cattle and citrus operation owned by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (the Mormon Church). Nearly a decade ago, however, the Florida National Scenic Trail (FNST) was closed within Deseret. This was due to implications from a court ruling regarding public access on a property owned by the Mormon Church in the western US. That ruling placed encumbrances on the property (prescriptive easements; public access by precedent) that restricted their ability to develop or sell the land. As a result, Church leaders made a move to reduce public access to Church-owned properties nationwide, and our use of their land was suspended.

Since then, hikers looking to hike the entire Florida Trail have been forced to bridge the gap between Bull Creek and Tosohatchee by walking nearly 30 miles along Deer Park Road. Obviously, this lengthy road walk does not meet the nature and purpose of a National Scenic Trail as described in the National Trail Systems Act of 1968. Naturally, many people have been trying for years to close this gap. I’m happy to report that there have been some encouraging developments recently.

Osceola County has been working with the Deseret Ranch to draft a sector plan that will eventually (they estimate the first development happening in 2060!) develop nearly 133,000 acres of the property. The plan has yet to be adopted officially, and reactions to the so called “North Ranch Sector Plan” have been mixed. Nonetheless, we are all heartened to see that this plan includes three conceptual routes for the Florida Trail. While still 40 to 60 years away, the eventual implementation of this proposed plan would put this section of the FNST back onto a foot path.

Still, this plan has not been finalized, and we don’t want to wait 40 years to move the trail off the road! For that reason, the USDA Forest Service has partnered with the Florida Greenways and Trails Foundation to investigate an alternate route that would put the Florida Trail back onto wild lands. This effort has been very successful. We have assembled a team of leaders from FTA chapters, Osceola and Orange County governments, the Saint Johns River Water Management District and private landowners. This team is dedicated to finding a viable route, and is currently examining the feasibility of a path that would bypass the Deseret Ranch to the west.

More research will need to be conducted to determine the most scenic and appropriate areas for this proposed route. It may be up to a year before any on-the-ground changes will be made. But when we are ready to make those changes, you’ll hear it here first!
It was still dark at 5:30 a.m., but over the sounds and smells of eggs and sausage cooking in well-seasoned cast iron, “early risers” could be heard patiently waiting for that first cup of hot coffee and the chime of the breakfast bell letting them know it was officially chow time.

The sun arose and so did the volunteers, lined up for that first and most important meal of the day. They were ready for a full day of training out on the Florida Trail. Backpacks were loaded with lunches and water; everyone was ready to learn or refresh critical skills that enable FTA to field some of the best and most dedicated trail volunteers in the country!

A resounding success, the second annual Trail Skills Training weekend was filled with workshops that increased Florida Trail volunteers’ soft and hard skills. Sessions on day one included: crew leadership, emergency situation management, paint blazing, trail standards, equipment maintenance, and volunteer hours reporting. On day two, the participants were split up into five different trail crews that worked on separate pieces of the Florida Trail. Each crew claimed a two-mile section of trail to maintain using a variety of hand tools and power equipment, and the work session lasted about three hours.

All of the work locations were conveniently located close to the basecamp at the Lake Ocklawaha RV Resort. Near the town of Fort McCoy on the northern edge of the Ocala National Forest, this site offered great accommodations for the attendees, including a large clubhouse and well-manicured grounds. This training event was substantially larger than the one held last year, and it required the FTA Trail Operations Team working in overdrive to put it all together with substantial help from members of Framing Our Community, a non-profit partner of the US Forest Service, and key volunteers and FTA Board members.
The goal of this weekend training event was to empower Florida Trail volunteers to successfully facilitate trail crews with both beginner and experienced members, using a variety of tools, and working in varied environments. The success of the overall statewide Trail Program on the FNST depends on a solid network of skilled volunteers who can safely lead work projects. Necessary skills include properly completing the crew leader packet, mentoring novice crew members, understanding infrastructure and signage needs, maintaining the Florida Trail to the highest standard, care for tools and equipment, and accurately submitting the project report form. This event was just one piece in an annual drive to both meet the needs of the Trail Program and reward the amazing volunteers with training to build their personal skills. Other steps in this process include wilderness first aid training, chainsaw training, and cross-cut saw trainings offered in different regions of the state.

The initial feedback received after the training weekend was overwhelmingly positive! Several long-time volunteers reported that it was the best and most organized training event they had ever attended on the Florida Trail. This reflects highly on the dedication of the trail operations staff, and on the commitment and willingness of volunteers and trainees to learn new skills and new ways of facilitating trail crews. This event was an excellent example of how working together with a plan can achieve tangible results, leading to recruiting new volunteers and members, hosting more projects, and maintaining the entire trail each season.

The combination of this successful trail skills training program combined with other training events throughout the season and a thorough and thoughtful Trail Program put the Florida National Scenic Trail and its volunteers on a path to great success. The hope is that in short order the Florida Trail will rise to national eminence as a well-maintained, well-planned, and well-administered destination for hikers around the country.
The Florida Trail Association had a special place in the heart of my mother, Mary Ann Twyford.

The roots of her love of trails probably started in the late 1950’s, when Margaret Scruggs inspired the young and then unmarried Mary Ann to become one of the adult leaders for Girl Scout backpacking on the Appalachian Trail. Every summer, a group of central Florida girls would backpack for a week. I can assure you the stories of those trips were still being told decades later.

Our family’s first FTA annual meeting was at Highlands Hammock State Park, and even though I was then only 8 years old I can still remember the camaraderie and electric sense of purpose. The FTA only had about a few hundred miles built at that point. Mary Ann got involved, leading canoe trips for the FTA and then joining the Board of Directors.

I recall an exceptionally remote annual meeting on the Peace River in 1974. There was no running water; instead there were ‘water buffalo’ trailers. The exhibitors were in a big rented party tent, the Board members shivered through an outdoor board meeting, and we all had a great time at the many seminars and activities, as well as camping, day hiking and canoeing together.

The FTA kept growing. By now trail work and loading the car with camping gear were a regular part of my life. Mom continued to organize canoe trips, including one on the Missouri River in Montana in 1976, and she helped to organize a 10-day trip on the exceedingly remote Yukon River in Canada’s Yukon Territory.

Her service on the FTA Board had led to her becoming President, and my jobs now included loading both camping gear and several file boxes full of paperwork. She was passionate about the FTA mission and spent many hours on the phone with other FTA leaders. I can’t begin to remember all the names, but these pop into my mind: Montoya, Eichorn, Kern, Scruggs, Baldini, Dunnam, Palmer, Dykes, Fryer, Mulholland, and Pickard.

Well, mom was always organized, and that’s what happened to the FTA once she was elected President. The state was divided up into Chapters. The Vice-President job turned into VP Trails, VP Membership, and VP something-else. Board meetings moved indoors and the Footprint started to evolve into a magazine.

Her greatest passion while serving the FTA was probably the Florida National Scenic Trail. I recall her enthusiasm when she was invited to give a speech to a congressional committee in Washington, DC. I also remember that she reached out to the Appalachian Trail Conference for advice on how to bring about the FNST. And perhaps
as an offshoot to collaborating with the ATC, she became convinced that the FTA needed a salaried executive
director. This last vision was controversial and I remember it as a turbulent time for mom and probably others
in FTA leadership.

After five years as FTA President, Mary Ann returned her focus to her job as a teacher and proprietor of the
110-pupil Leesburg Montessori School. Then, in 1986, with her eldest daughter Elizabeth ‘launched’, and daughter
Dottie going into High School, Mary Ann took a new direction in life, selling the Montessori School and taking a
job for the State of Florida as the state’s first “Trails Planner” for the Department of Natural Resources.

In Tallahassee, Mary Ann threw herself into bringing Rails-to-Trails to Florida, helping convince the State Parks
that, yes, they could manage a linear recreational property with unfenced boundaries; and thus she helped pave
the way for the St. Marks Rail-Trail. She also managed publishing brochures and other concerns related to Florida
Canoe trails and provided support to the Florida National Scenic Trail.

Mary Ann retired from the Department of Natural Resources after four years and lived in a woodsy house on a
large lake north of Tallahassee until Alzheimer’s disease necessitated a move into town; later she lived with me
in Manhattan Beach, California.

Mary Ann passed away as a hospice patient on October 21, 2013, her death caused by Alzheimer’s. She was a
Florida native, born in Cocoa, Florida on June 6, 1932, and is survived by her daughters Elizabeth Kunkee and
Dottie Bawek, seven grandchildren, and one great-grandson.
TRAIL SAFETY AND THE MODERN WORLD

BY CARLOS SCHOMAKER

In early June 2013, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) officers arrested five men in the Little Big Econ State Forest after they discovered them up to no good. The group was stopped for picking hallucinogenic psilocybin mushrooms, which grow naturally in the forest. During the arrest, they also found marijuana in their possession. Then an officer discovered a 2-foot live alligator that had been wrapped in a bandana and stuffed into the backpack of one of the men, a Titusville resident.

That man was charged with felony drug possession, misdemeanor removal of plant life, possession of an alligator, and an unrelated probation violation. The others also received drug charges. The alligator was determined to be okay, so it was returned to a body of water nearby, presumably with a wild story to tell.

Early this year, in what was apparently a very bad interpretation of the ideas in Richard Louv’s book Last Child in the Woods, a couple left their three school-age children in the forest near Punta Gorda and drove off. The children were found in good condition. The parents were arrested and their crystal meth was confiscated.

In even more disturbing news, the bodies of a man and a woman were found in May 2014 near the St. Marks Trail in Leon County, under a trash pile by a tent. Police arrested the alleged murderer, a 33-year-old man, after he confessed the brutal crimes to his ex-wife in a phone conversation. The crime appears to have been related to jealous rage among indigents; the unfortunate victims were dispatched with a hammer. Apparently the male victim thereafter had a foot hacked off. *

These are isolated incidents, but they rudely remind us that the natural world in Florida isn’t completely isolated from the manmade one. Hikers and other recreationalists go to the woods partly to get away from the stresses and demands of modern life, but the woods aren’t always devoid of fools or ne’er-do-wells. Every now and then Mother Nature poses a threat to a hiker in the wilds, but nowadays an equally likely threat comes from other people.

And people can be a danger to themselves, as well. The popular Cheryl Strayed book Wild has been made into a mass-market movie (starring Reese Witherspoon) that is expected to draw many newcomers to the Pacific Crest Trail --- and probably also to many other trails throughout the country. This massive surge in interest could potentially tempt many woefully unprepared people into the mountains, hoping to capture a bit of what they saw or read. The likelihood of subsequent increased rescues and policing is being watched closely by our colleagues in the National Trails community. This issue could potentially impact the Florida Trail, as well. While a movie about thru-hiking can be a positive for the sport of hiking and backpacking, it can also cause problems, if faddish desire and inadequate preparation lead to accidents and injuries.

Recently the FTA’s Long-Distance Hikers’ Committee has been looking at updating their Personal Safety and Awareness Tips. A string of shared emails made clear that there are some disparate opinions about the best safety strategy and tactics on the trails. Early on in its history, FTA strongly discouraged its members from carrying firearms onto trails. This was in part a way of assuring private landowners that our hikers “came in peace”, thereby allowing trail access on these private lands. Now, however, this sentiment doesn’t seem to be universal in the committee’s email discourse. Perhaps it’s a sign of the times.

These days you’ll find that there has been an increase in the number of outdoor recreationalists who carry guns into the woods, or at least admit to it. This isn’t solely about protection from wild animals. (Florida, for example, doesn’t have the grizzly bear problem that western Canada does.) Fear of man now plays a larger role in this decision. The concealed carry movement and increased lawful gun access on public lands, along with a stronger political gun culture, have been instrumental in this shift. Regardless of one’s feelings about this cultural shift,
however, it is important to remember that the most important safety equipment that hikers can possess is the brain lodged between their ears. **

The most effective ways to ensure personal safety along trails or at campsites involve planning, preparation, and an alert, positive attitude. That’s not any different than the best strategies to use in a city or even in one’s neighborhood. In truth, the vast majority of situations and people one will encounter, whether afield or in town, are positive and of no concern. And in a truly uncomfortable or dangerous situation, even a backpack bristling with animal repellants, weapons, and a dozen signaling devices and survival tools will be useless (or worse!) to a hiker with no common sense.

So intuition and awareness are important. Unless you’re generally paranoid or distrustful (your friends and family should tell you!), your ‘gut instinct’ should set off bells when you encounter sketchy characters on the trail. Preparation and mentally rehearsing scenarios should help if you run into a worrisome situation. Often outside help (or cell phone reception) is not readily available miles from civilization, so becoming proficient at wary but polite communication with strangers can be as important as knowing first aid skills. This applies to parking lots at trailheads, road crossings, etc.

There are many other useful practices for personal safety in the wilds: Leave a plan of your travels with others. Hike with others. Become proficient with map and compass and other navigation equipment. These and other skills and ideas can be learned through experienced local hike leaders, or a class at your outdoor retailer. Even websites, books or magazines like Backpacker can teach a great deal. The point isn’t armoring yourself against every bad possibility --- you can be just as likely injured on a ladder in your backyard, and people you know are more likely, statistically, to plot your demise than a stranger on the trail. The point is to be prepared enough to deal with most foreseeable problems, and yet still go out and have fun. Common sense and appropriate caution will carry you far.

On rare occasions, hikers might see behavior on or near trails that, while not necessarily dangerous, is inappropriate or illegal. It’s usually best to avoid confrontation here --- remember details (location, information about the perpetrators, etc.) and report them to local authorities as soon as possible. The Florida Trail Association is currently discussing improvements to incident reporting with the USDA Forest Service and other trail-managing land agencies. Suffice to say, it’s probably better to record and report the license plate of the truck that carried in the illegally-used motorbikes than to try to defeat them like a ninja warrior.

Finally, it’s worth remembering that the vast majority of people out on the trails are there for the same reasons you are, and will nod and murmur something pleasant as they pass you. (Who knows? They may think you’re suspicious-looking!) You’ll also discover a great deal of kind and helpful behavior from your comrades in the wild, especially if you behave in the same way.

Happy trails!

See www.floridatrail.org/hiker-safety/ for more tips on hiker safety.

* Black humor could be used here regarding the improper use of trail building and maintenance tools, but….

** Ultimately, anyone desiring to take a firearm outdoors is responsible for knowing and following local laws and regulations, including those of the specific land managers your travels pass through.
The 2015 Florida Trail Association Annual Conference
April 9 - 12, 2015

Life Enrichment Center
4991 Picciola Road
Fruitland Park, FL 32731

Join us as we celebrate another year dedicated to the building and maintaining of the Florida Trail and our other trails. This year’s FTA Annual Conference will be held at the Life Enrichment Center (LEC) in Fruitland Park, FL. LEC was also the site of our 2011 conference. This is a large, attractive venue situated on the shores of Lake Griffin, centrally located in the Leesburg area. The property features:

- double occupancy motel-style lodgings
- a buffet-style dining room
- tent and RV sites
- auditorium and classrooms
- WI-FI in most locations.

Because this conference will begin with check-in available on Thursday afternoon, April 9, we will enjoy two full days of hiking and workshops on April 10 & 11. Check-out will be the morning of Sunday, April 12. On-line registration will open in February.

The Highlanders Chapter will be offering two guided hike opportunities for both Friday and Saturday mornings and afternoons to Lake County’s PEAR Park and Flat Island Preserve. If you plan to attend our workshops throughout the day, information for an “organize your own” hike/bike/paddle trip will be provided at the conference. Those with their own boats may launch for a paddle around Lake Griffin or rent canoes from LEC for a nominal fee.

This year’s Program Chair, Joan Jarvis, is lining up some enjoyable and fact-filled workshops and programs. Dr. Josh King of the University of Central Florida’s School of Biology will speak on “Insects: We Walk among Them; the smaller majority along our trails.” Dr. Reed Noss, also of the UCF School of Biology, will speak on “Natural Communities along the Trail.” FTA’s own Jeff Glenn will lead a “Leave No Trace” program.

Friday evening will feature two professors from the University of Florida, Dr. David Tegeder and Dr. Steven Noll, who spoke to a workshop-sized crowd at the 2014 conference about their historical research on “The Cross Florida Barge Canal: The Ditch of Dreams.” If you missed them last year, this will be an opportunity to hear these two entertaining and informative gentlemen discussing a hot button topic from Florida’s past.

We are still looking for help with the Raffle and Silent Auction. Mostly this will involve receiving and sorting merchandise, setting up and monitoring the raffle-silent auction room, and selling raffle tickets. To volunteer, contact Eve Barbour at eve828@netzero.net

WWW.FLORIDATRAIL.ORG
Ensure the Florida Trail’s Future.

Remember the Florida Trail Association in your will.

Contact FTA at legacygifts@floridatrail.org or call (352) 378-8823.
How and when did you get involved with the Florida Trail Association (FTA)?
I [Lynn] joined in 1990, and then met Mike and bought him a membership in 1993. We’ve been active ever since.

Why and when did you start volunteering for the FTA?
Shortly after joining, we both became activity leaders as a way to get involved.

As FTA members of the Happy Hoofers Chapter, what do you do?
Mike is a section leader and an activity leader. Lynn is the Chapter Chair and an activity leader. We both participate in work hikes, lead day hikes, backpack trips, paddling trips, and bike trips. We’ve also each been editor of the newsletter, scheduled and given programs, taken minutes, and helped with numerous conferences. We like a bit of everything. We also were on the FTA Board and Chapter Council at one time.

What has been your favorite volunteer project/event to date?
We love working on the Florida Trail (FNST) and side trails. The FNST is a gateway to nature and it’s important that it be open and inviting to all.

What’s your favorite way to enjoy the Florida Trail?
Hiking out with a backpack to spend the night in the middle of nowhere, listening to the coyotes and owls, watching the stars and tracking satellites overhead. It just doesn’t get any better than that.

Where is the neatest place you’ve ever hiked? The Ocala National Forest is a wonderful section. The hike to Hidden Pond is simply gorgeous.

What’s your favorite section of the Florida Trail and why?
That’s a hard question. We completed the FNST in 2013. Before that, the hike along the Suwannee was our favorite hike, especially in the spring when the rhododendrons and spring flowers are blooming. You walk along the tall bluffs under magnificent oaks following a slow meandering river and watch ducks, hawks, and kingfishers going through their daily routines. This provides a piece of mind that only can be found in nature. As we saw more of the FNST, our list grew. The Big Cypress, the Big “O”, Rice Creek, Aucilla Sinks, Eglin, Nokuse, Apalachicola, Bradwell Bay-- and that’s the short list of our favorite sections. The FNST can offer short urban day hikes to a multi-day wilderness experience. The Florida Trail has a little something for everyone!
If you could have one item while hiking, what would it be and why?
A camera. We love to take pictures of the beautiful flora and fauna. One day when we can’t get out on the trail, we’ll be able to look back and relive our trips.

What’s your favorite volunteer activity on the Florida Trail?
We’ve enjoyed taking people out for their first hike in the Big Cypress Swamp. They learn it is not all alligators and bears, but you do need a healthy respect for the wildlife. There are gorgeous bromeliads, orchids, and wild flowers to see, and the terrain changes from cypress swamp to pine woods to prairie. We like showing them that Florida does have seasons.

What is the best part about volunteering on the Florida Trail?
The friendships we’ve made are lifelong. We’ve met some wonderful people through the FTA.

If you could give advice for someone interested in volunteering on the Florida Trail, what would it be?
Don’t be shy. Join a work hike or become an activity leader or volunteer for a position in your local chapter. You will learn what to do and how to do it, while making wonderful friendships along the way.
Participants at the 2014 Panhandle Gathering had a great weekend at Compass Lake in the hills just southwest of Marianna. Over 52 hikers from all four panhandle chapters came out for the fun. We had several “first timers” join us, some all the way from Valdosta, GA!

The 6 hikes scheduled included the Econfina and Chipola Sections of the Florida Trail, the Hinson Trail (built by the Panhandle Chapter and friends, in partnership with the city of Marianna, during 2 weeks of F-Troops back in 2012) and even a trip to the amazing Florida Caverns State Park.

The weekend’s program mostly focused on hiking the panhandle’s picturesque trails, but we squeezed some time in for a painting class, fly fishing demo, kayaking on the lake and building our FTA friendships!

And we took lots and lots of photos. Check them out on our Meetup page (www.meetup.com/hiking-central-panhandle/photos/25690972/) or Facebook (FTA Panhandle Chapter).

Thanks to all who came out and to those who helped make it a reality! Can’t wait for next year!
The 2014 South Regional Conference was held on a beautiful weekend in the Corbett Wildlife Management Area at the FTA South Regional Gathering.

Friday afternoon’s highlight was a walk on the Hungryland Boardwalk, and the evening included a screening of the film “Ocean Frontiers”, which depicts the many ways that people are helping to save the oceans and the creatures that live there.

Saturday morning we held a python workshop. In the afternoon the FNST land managers in South Florida held a panel presentation on trails, now and in the future. Then it was time for another hike. Saturday’s evening program included a presentation on the Ocean to Lake Hiking Trail.

Sunday morning a light rain didn’t keep a group of walkers from enjoying a hike into the Hungryland Slough.

It was a great weekend. See Facebook (Happy Hoofers) for some coverage of the Python Workshop.
**NEWBIE TRAIL MAINTAINERS HELP MAKE IT HAPPEN**

Volunteers are the lifeblood of all our National Scenic Trails. Working with natural resources and recreation professionals, volunteers greatly multiply what can be accomplished. Volunteers are so central to the success of the FNST and other national scenic trails that their importance was cited in the original documents that launched these trails.

As the primary non-profit volunteer partner for the FNST, it is the Florida Trail Association’s goal to field a strong volunteer cadre for this effort, and to also lead and support such volunteers from outside our ranks (individuals, other organizations, college groups, etc.). It is therefore important to consider how to engage and motivate potential volunteers. Much can be learned from trail maintenance "newbies", as their impressions about their first foray into trailwork will determine whether they will return to volunteer—and whether we can build a strong group of engaged supporters for the future.

Here are two recent first-person accounts from beginner trail maintainers. We hope they will inspire other neophytes to try their hand at volunteering on the Florida Trail—and that experienced trail leaders take to heart the lessons they share about how to “hook” newer volunteers.

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**A Wilderness Experience**

**By Angela Colonna**

I recently volunteered with the Florida Trail Association to perform trail maintenance in the Juniper Prairie Wilderness Area of the Ocala National Forest. As a new volunteer and a University of Florida student participating with the University’s Outdoor Adventure Recreation club, I really didn’t know what I was getting myself into when I volunteered.

Juniper is a federally designated wilderness, so no mechanized means of maintaining the Florida National Scenic Trail (FNST) can take place within it. Instead, clearing brush and cutting back vegetation has to all be done by hand. Armed with only loppers and hand saws, other volunteers and I became the machines that drove the efforts of maintaining this stretch of FNST.

I learned a lot during this October weekend. First, as cliché as it sounds, teamwork is still key. Second, appreciation of volunteers is of paramount importance.

1. **Teamwork**

   My fellow volunteers were technically peers of mine from the University of Florida, but I had never spent time or worked closely with these individuals before. Assigning of duties and communications throughout the trail maintenance event were accompanied by patience and a desire to help one another whenever needed. Because all of the trail maintenance was done by hand, it became evident that each volunteer’s contribution was necessary. These individual efforts added to the overall progress of managing vegetation, so we could easily see the total amount of trail that had been cleared.

2. **Volunteer Appreciation**

   While working in Juniper, we were able to talk to hikers as they were recreating in the wilderness area. Each time we chatted, a ‘thank you’ was conveyed to us. Many of these hikers did not realize that wilderness areas were maintained manually and remarked that the work we were doing made such a positive difference.
As a volunteer, these reminders of the reason for our work impacted me greatly, as each hiker showed genuine appreciation for sticks or branches cleared from hiking areas. The opportunity to share this experience with people that I had initially not known well was increasingly rewarding. I gained a camaraderie I have not encountered in the past.

After this volunteer trip, I have a greater appreciation of manual labor and what it takes to fuel trail maintenance. The rewards I have reaped by having the opportunity to work with new people and see firsthand appreciation is more than enough to justify a weekend working in the wilderness.

**Trail Maintenance Along the Econ River**  
by Andy Mena

After a hike last week, I was really curious about how maintenance along the trail is performed, so I contacted Sandra Friend from Florida Hikes!. She emailed me a link to the Florida Trail Association - Central Florida and Highlanders Meetup page. Looking at the Meetup page, I saw that they were planning on doing some trail maintenance starting at the same trail head that I was at last week. I thought, “What better way to learn about how they do what they do than to volunteer to help ‘em out?” I’m glad that is exactly what I did.

We started the day at 9am with Rachael (front left in the photo) making sure that everyone had their safety equipment and explaining all of the job assignments. She broke us up into two teams – one team went to the Lockwood trail head, and the other team started at our trail head. The plan was to meet in the middle and then head back to where we started.

Most of the folks there were regular members who do this all the time, but there were also a few newbies like me. Two guys were in charge of mowing the trail. The mower was similar to those used by residential lawn mowing services. There were also a couple of guys armed with chain saws. The rest of us were given “loppers” or branch trimmers and told how we were to trim the plants along the trail. (Basically the goal is to keep the walking trail about 18” wide, and then clean up the branches and vines for a 4’ wide area).

As we headed down the trail, I was thinking that this was going to be pretty easy. I won’t kid you, this was hard work, but was also fun to get outside and work with new friends. We made it about a mile down the trail before it was time to head back for lunch, and I think we did a pretty darn good job! I did ask how they do maintenance on the foot bridges, and it was pretty much what you would expect. They carry all of the materials and tools by hand to the spot where they’re needed.

When we got back to the trail head, it was time for a cold drink and a rest. Everyone brought their own lunch but Rachael also had a cooler of cold sodas, fruit and cookies to share. We talked about some of the upcoming work that they had planned – the following Wednesday they’d clean up the trail along the northern path. I told them about a tree that had fallen across the path and showed them a picture. I thought they might need a bigger chain saw for that one, but I was sure they’d figure it out.

If you’ve ever thought about joining these folks to help out maintaining the trail that we all enjoy, I would really recommend it. They are a great group of people and a lot of fun to work with. You’ll definitely walk away at the end of the job with a sense of accomplishment, as well as a new appreciation for the work that they put in to keep the Florida Trail enjoyable for everyone!
When you join the state-wide Florida Trail Association you automatically become a member of your local chapter based upon your zip code. However, members may attend the activities of any chapter and may transfer to any chapter they wish simply by informing the FTA Office.

Florida Trail activities are organized by our local chapters and are led by authorized volunteer activity leaders. Many of our activities are open to the general public so you can get to know us before you join. Activities can be found online at www.floridatrail.org. Click on "About Us" then click on the "Upcoming Events" button on the left. Local activities are usually also listed on the chapter websites, Facebook pages and Meetups. Click on "About Us" then "Our Chapters" for links to local chapter sites.

Participants in activities must sign an Assumption of Risk form and agree to accept personal responsibility for their safety and the safety of accompanying minors. Always contact the activity leader in advance for more information, to let them know you are attending, to find out any special requirements or equipment for the activity, and to check for any last minute changes.
Without the help of FTA members and volunteers, there is no magazine. We strongly encourage your submission of photos and content for every issue.

**Photos:** We are looking for high resolution (300 dpi) photos for publication. Make sure that if they are identifiable photos of people that they have signed the necessary photo release - included on the FTA Release. We are always looking for cover photos, which need to be vertical format and at least 300 dpi.

**Pictures can include:**
- People hiking on the trail
- Trail maintenance/training activities
- Flora and fauna on the trail

**Articles:** We hope for contributions from the various chapters highlighting events and accomplishments, especially those that involve new groups and outreach opportunities. We also look for unique hiking stories from members, and articles regarding anything that pertains to hiking and camping (trail recipes, hiking and safety tips, how-tos, etc.) If you submit a story, please make sure to include photos that you would like to go with it. Word count can be anywhere from 200 to 900 words, depending on photos and page length.

Please do not embed photos within a document - the resolution will be too low for inclusion. Instead submit all photos as separate files.

Please send all submissions to communications@floridatrail.org

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Get ready for the winter trail season in the FTA Store! Show the public you’re working on the Florida Trail. Adult sizes available in short and long sleeves. Perfect for safety and hunting seasons.

What trail tot wouldn’t love our child-sized T-shirt featuring Rob Smith’s FTA Turtle (complete with hardhat) on the front and a big TRAIL CREW on the back. (Makes the kids easy to see on the trail, too!)
Welcome New Members

September through November 2014

Brittney Allgair
Carl Anderson
Charles Anderson
Christine and Paul Andrews
Geri Atkinson-Hazelton
Gerard Ayotte
Diego Bautista
William Beatty
Christine Beeson
Emma Beno
Michelle Berndgen
Brad Beyer
Sheila and "Bibb" Anthon Biblo
Carola Blackwood
Ted Borduas
Susan Bowen
Peggy Bowie
William Britton
Bridget Brooks
Ray and Mary Jo Burdett
Joy Campbell
Chip Cantley
Ricky and Rick Cardona
Valerie and Jeffrey Carter
Debbie Chapman
Phillip Chavez
Kate Ciembro
Amy Clifton
Madeline Clymer
Anette and Brian Coddin
Larry Cohen
Dana and Tommy Coleman
John Collier
Ann Conley
Cameron "Alex" Cook
Tom Cooney
Scott Cousino
Gail Crane
Brendan Crumrine
Charles Culp and Vicki Wells
Judith Cummings
Libby Davis
Van and Elizabeth DelMauro
Frank DePinto
Patricia Detweiler
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Ron and Linda Dorzan
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Graham Elliott
Patrick Ellis
Corey Emerson
David Etherington and Jeff Dunn
Jon and Loree Evans
Melanie Falko
Lawrence Fallo
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Jan Ferrari and Andy Anderson
Phillip Fleming
Stuart Force
Thirteen Fortenberry
Nick Gagnon
William Gardiner
James Gilles
Kenny Girod
Manuel Gomez
Mike Gormley
Peter Grasel and Family
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Wanda Greer
Donald Grudeski
Dennis Gryder
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Richard Harmon
Henry Harrell
Liz Harvey
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Barbara Tonelli
Richard Tonkin
Heather Turrisi
Joseph and Dana Uvanile
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Deadline for articles for the spring issue of The Footprint is March 1, 2015.

Deadline for chapter activities covering April - August to appear in the electronic version of the fall issue of The Footprint is March 15, 2015.

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The Footprint is also available online in full color at: www.ISSUU.com and do a search for FOOTPRINT

OUR MAGAZINE
The Footprint is published by the Florida Trail Association, a volunteer-based nonprofit organization focused on Florida hiking and trail building. Since 1966, the primary mission of our organization has been the care and protection of the Florida Trail, a 1,300-mile footpath across the Sunshine State - Florida's own National Scenic Trail.

OUR GOAL
To provide outreach to our readers through informative articles that express appreciation for and conservation of the natural beauty of Florida; to inform our readers of Florida Trail Association business; and to provide information on Florida hiking and outdoor recreation opportunities.

CONTRIBUTORS
Contributors are welcome to submit items for our various departments as well as trail and association-related news. Please contact the editor at communications@floridatrail.org to discuss ideas for feature stories prior to submission.

MEMBERSHIP
If you’re not already a member, join now. As a Florida Trail member, you receive a subscription to The Footprint magazine, membership in a local chapter, a local newsletter with local activities, opportunities for outdoor skills training, participation in regional and annual conferences and more. Call toll-free 877-HIKE-FLA for more information.

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To order merchandise from the Florida Trail General Store, visit www.floridatrail.org
or call the Florida Trail office at 1-877-HIKE-FLA.
UPCOMING CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

The Florida Trail Association offers activities and events throughout Florida. These activities, led by authorized Activity Leaders, Section Leaders, or staff members are organized by our local chapters. People interested in attending any activity should contact the Activity Leader for more information and for last minute changes.

All activities are open to the general public unless otherwise indicated. Activities submitted by press time are included. For more activities see www.floridatrail.org.

State-Wide Trainings and Volunteer Trail Opportunities

Jan. 9-11 - Suwannee River Volunteer Work Party Series
Jan. 16-23 - Juniper Prairie Wilderness Volunteer Work Party
Jan. 23-25 - Suwannee River Volunteer Work Party Series
Jan. 29-Feb. 5 - Ocala National Forest Volunteer Work Party Series
Jan. 30- Feb. 1 - Suwannee River Volunteer Work Party Series
Feb. 6-8 – Nokuse Plantation Volunteer Work Party
Feb. 6-13 - Big Cypress National Preserve Backcountry Volunteer Work Party
Feb. 20-22 - Suwannee River Volunteer Work Party Series
Feb. 27- Mar. 1 – Aucilla Volunteer Work Party
Mar. 5-8 – St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge Volunteer Work Party
Mar 12-15 – Bradwell Bay East Volunteer Work Party
Mar. 19-22 – Bradwell Bay West Volunteer Work Party
Mar. 26-29 – Apalachicola NF Volunteer Work Party
To sign up or for more info go to http://www.floridatrail.org/volunteer/volunteeropportunities/ or contact Megan Donoghue mdonoghue@floridatrail.org


Apr 9-12, 2015 - FTA Annual Conference - All FTA members and the public are invited to this conference. The long weekend will include nature programs, workshops, auctions, raffles, great food, hiking activities, canoeing/kayaking, and more. It is a chance for you to meet other FTA members from around the state and get to know what is happening in other areas. Methodist Life Enrichment Center, Fruitland Park, (Leesburg). More details in this issue of The Footprint. On-line registration will open in February.

APALACHEE CHAPTER  http://apalachee.floridatrail.org/

Jan. 3 - Aucilla River FNST Hike.
Hike 9.6 miles with us into the Aucilla Wildlife Management Area for a couple miles and the rest of the way along the banks of the mysterious and archeologically fascinating Aucilla River, using the Florida Trail as our footpath through the woods. We'll stop after 4.9 miles for lunch (bring yours!) on the rocks at the rapids and continue another 4.7 miles south to where the river goes underground, ending at the Goose Pasture Road FTA kiosk. This hike requires a shuttle, so bring breakfasty snacks and prepare to socialize while you wait about 30-45 minutes. There will be carpooling from Tallahassee as well as a meeting place at the trailhead. Limit 15 people. To sign up and get details, email the leader, Wendy Dial (941) 320-8470 wbdial@gmail.com, or co-leader Dawn Griffin (850) 509-6103 griffindd@aol.com Call only for last-minute cancellations: (941) 320-8470.

Jan. 5, 12, 26, Feb 2, 16, 23, Mar 2, 16, 23, 30 - Mon. - Monday Brisk Walks. Meet at Thornton or Edenfield Trailheads and walk briskly along the Miccosukee Greenway. Be ready to hike at 5:30 pm sharp. Bring flashlight/headlight and water, dress in layers. Hike with others who want to exercise, eliminate stress
Jan. 7, 14, 21, 28; Feb. 11, 18, 25; Mar. 4, 11, 18, 25 - Wednesday Brisk Walks.

It’s dark early now so we’re walking in areas with lighted sidewalks. The hikes on odd-numbered Wednesdays start at BB&T bank’s parking lot at 102 N. Blairstone Rd, Tallahassee (across from Panera; park in northeast corner of bank’s lot) and may include some steep hills as we ascend the bridge and the field to the abandoned mansion at Governors Park. We’ll also pass a pretty pond. The hikes on even-numbered Wednesdays start at Flag Credit Union at 3115 Conner Boulevard, Tallahassee (just east of Capital Circle; park in grassy area in front of bank) and are a mostly flat hike of 4 miles (one short, steep ascent). Be ready to hike at 5:30 sharp. Bring flashlight (!) and water and hike with others who want to exercise, eliminate stress and meet interesting people! We will maintain an approx. 3.2 mph pace, nonstop. Hikes are 4 or 5 miles. RSVP at http://www.meetup.com/Apalachee-Florida-Trail-Hiking/ or contact Wendy Dial (941) 320-8470 wbdial@gmail.com or Gwen Spivey (850) 528-8695 gwendolyn.spivey@gmail.com clearly stating your name and phone number so we can contact you about last-minute changes.

Jan. 10 - Trekking with Richard.

Hike Fort Braden’s eastern loop, five miles of adventure. Dress for the weather and bring water, lunch, cameras. There will be no bugs. Contact Richard Graham at 850 878-3616 rdgraham@centurylink.net

Jan. 11 - Challenge Day Hike.

Continuing the series started in November, hikes will be over more difficult terrain with more hills and steep sections or wet trail. Distances may be less, but the terrain will make them more challenging. Bring water and trail snacks for several hours of hiking. These hikes are also appropriate for anyone training for extended backpacking trips. Bring pack loaded with 60-75% final load. Contact Dawn Brown (850) 668-0091 or (850) 545-0351 dbrown1948@embarqmail.com

Jan. 13 - Chapter Program Meeting

“Ticks and Chiggers and Skeeters, Oh My!” Get geared up for bug season and learn how to prevent and treat mosquito and tick-borne illnesses. Ross Beck, RN, will share tips to make your outdoor adventures safe in a bug-filled world. Early Learning Coalition, Suite 70, Northwood Centre, 1852 North Martin Luther King Blvd., Tallahassee. For information, contact Liz Sparks (850) 570-5950 liz.aparks57@gmail.com

Jan. 17 - Bear Creek Hike in Lake Talquin State Forest.

If you think Florida doesn’t have steep trails, this one will dispel the myth. The Ravine Trail is part of the Terry Rhodes Trail System and is notable for clinging to the edges of a rather large and lengthy steephead ravine, following the topographical contours nicely. You’ll have to put on the brakes on quite a few of the hills. Entrance fee: $2 per person. If desired, we can eat at a local restaurant after the hike. Contact Barry Haber (850) 284-5615 barryjhaber@hotmail.com

Jan. 19 - FNST Backpacking Trip.

Three-day 30-mile backpacking trip on the Florida Trail which runs almost continuously beside the Suwannee River. The terrain varies from flat dirt roads to high sandhills and limestone rock bluffs. Hikers must ford seven small streams and swampy areas. At times the trail passes through head-high bamboo. The river has tea-colored water, stained by cypress trees and oak leaves. It is fed by springs, which are seen as clear blue water where they enter the river. Striking white sand beaches occur on river bends, providing perfect places to camp or swim. Limit 8 people. Contact Louis Brooks (850) 383-0724 louisfbrooks@yahoo.com

Jan 18 - Line’sTract Hike in Lake Talquin State Forest

Enjoy about 6 miles of hiking with great views of Lake Talquin. If desired, we can eat at a local restaurant after the hike. Contact Barry Haber (850) 284-5615 barryjhaber@hotmail.com
Jan. 22 - Weekday Warriors Trail Care.
Join a crew to maintain the FNST. Location to be determined based on need. We will leave early morning and return about mid-afternoon. Wear good boots, dress for the weather, bring personal medications, insect repellant, sunscreen, water, lunch and snacks. Trail work can be tough, so wear clothes you don’t mind getting worn out. We will wear protective gear – your own or provided by FTA/USFS. We will have basic hand tools available. Contact Howard Pardue (850) 386-1494 hpardue@comcast.net

Jan. 24 - Bike & Hike Shepherd Spring-Cathedral of Palms.
Trail bike 2 miles & hike about 1 mile to scenic Cathedral of Palms And Shepherd Spring in St. Marks NWR. Will also bike down to the Wakulla Beach area. Pack a lunch for this 3-hour nature adventure. Contact Lori Gilbertson (850) 420-0132 fta_trails4u.lori@aol.com or Carol Watkins (313) 319-9463 cwatkinsbabcock@gmail.com

Jan. 25 - Challenge Day Hike.
Continuing the series started in November, hikes will be over more difficult terrain with more hills and steep sections or wet trail. Distances may be less, but the terrain will make them more challenging. Bring water and trail snacks for several hours of hiking. These hikes are also appropriate for anyone training for extended backpacking trips. Bring pack loaded with 60-75% final load. Details on specific trail, meeting time and location to be determined closer to event. Contact Dawn Brown (850) 668-0091 or (850) 545-0351 dbrown1948@embarqmail.com

Jan. 31 - Apalachicola National Forest-West, Trail Care.
Clearing brush, limbs and repainting blazes. Contact Al Ingle 850-509-1162 al@captalavionics.com

Feb. 1 - Challenge Day Hike.
Continuing the series started in November, hikes will be over more difficult terrain with more hills and steep sections or wet trail. Distances may be less, but the terrain will make them more challenging. Bring water and trail snacks for several hours of hiking. These hikes are also appropriate for anyone training for extended backpacking trips. Bring pack loaded with 60-75% final load. Details on specific trail, meeting time and location to be determined closer to event. Contact Dawn Brown (850) 668-0091 or (850) 545-0351 dbrown1948@embarqmail.com

Feb. 5 - Weekday Warriors Trail Care.
Join a crew to maintain the FNST. Location to be determined based on need. We will leave early morning and return about mid-afternoon. Wear good boots, dress for the weather, and bring personal medications, insect repellent, sunscreen, water, lunch and snacks. Trail work can be tough, so wear clothes you don’t mind getting worn out. We will wear protective gear – your own or provided by FTA/USFS. We will have basic hand tools available. RSVP by contacting Howard Pardue (850) 386-1494 hpardue@comcast.net

Feb. 7 - Tallahassee Urban Walk.
Learn more about our area’s civil rights history. Walk includes a visit to the Tallahassee’s C.K. Steele bus station where the famous bus boycott occurred, through the Civil Rights in the Sunshine State exhibit at the Museum of Florida History, Black Achieves Research Center and through Smokey Hollow at Cascades Park. Limit 15 people. Contact Adrienne Ruhl (813) 293-1081 adrienneruhl@gmail.com or Dawn Griffin (850) 509-6103 griffinnd@aol.com

Feb. 7 - Apalachicola Bluffs and Ravines Preserve Hike.
Enjoy a 3.75-mile round trip hike through an enchanting area that local legend claims is the original Garden of Eden. Trail eventually opens to a spectacular view at Alum Bluff. At 135 feet above the Apalachicola River, Alum Bluff is the largest natural geological exposure in Florida. Contact Barry Haber (850) 284-5615 barryjhaber@hotmail.com

Feb. 10 - Chapter Program Meeting
“Valentine’s Day for the Rest of the Animal Kingdom.” Explore an array of oddly fascinating and amusing reproductive wonders of the natural world. Join Barb Shoplock, Director of ‘Saturdays at the Sea’ at FSU’s Marine Lab, as she shares her brilliant humor and wry insight into one of life’s most basic functions. Early Learn-
ing Coalition, Suite 70, Northwood Centre, 1852 North Martin Luther King Blvd., Tallahassee. For information, contact Liz Sparks (850) 570-5950  liz.aparks57@gmail.com

Hike the FNST in the Apalachicola National Forest, from SR 319 to FR 321. This a hike in the upland of a pine forest. Dress for the weather and bring water, lunch, cameras. There will be no bugs. Contact Richard Graham at 850 878-3616 rdgraham@centurylink.net

Feb. 15 - Challenge Day Hike.
Continuing the series started in November, hikes will be over more difficult terrain with more hills and steep sections or wet trail. Distances may be less, but the terrain will make them more challenging. Bring water and trail snacks for several hours of hiking. These hikes are also appropriate for anyone training for extended backpacking trips. Bring pack loaded with 60-75% final load. Contact Dawn Brown (850) 668-0091, (850) 545-0351 dbrown1948@embarqmail.com

Feb. 28 - Mar. 11 - Apalachee Transit Relay Hike.
Thru-hike along 136 mi. of our Chapter’s 150-mi. section of the FNST. This will be a fully self-supported backpacking trip; hikers will be responsible for their own equipment and food. We expect to cover 8-12 miles per day (4 trail segments of 2-5 days and 20-45 mi. each). Participants can hike one or more sections if desired. Day hikers or overnighters welcome to join in for any part of the hike; however, those camping in the St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge are required to be thru-hiking the entire Refuge. Shuttles available to/from designated trailheads. LIMIT 8 backpackers per each segment, FTA members only. DEADLINE for sign-up is Feb. 1, 2015. To sign up, contact Mike Tucker (850) 545-3489 tuckems@hotmail.com

Mar. 7 - 20th Anniversary Bradwell Bay Swamp Stomp, Apalachicola National Forest.
Hike about 8 miles beginning from the Bradwell Bay West Trailhead on FR 314 and hiking east to the Monkey Creek Trailhead on FR 329. Depending on the size of the group, we may split and hike from opposite trailheads and meet on the island for lunch. Expect the hike to be wet – wading and mud for about half of the distance through the cool water, but the air will be warm. Contact Kent Wimmer (850) 528-5261  klwimmer2@gmail.com

Mar. 10 - Chapter Program Meeting
“Adventures of an Apalachicola RiverKeeper.” Dan Tonsmeire has served as Riverkeeper since May of 2010. He began his tenure with Apalachicola Riverkeepers in 2004. Dan is passionately committed to saving not only the Apalachicola River, which is truly an American treasure, but to protecting and restoring the Apalachicola Bay, one of the last great estuaries left in America. Early Learning Coalition, Suite 70, Northwood Centre, 1852 North Martin Luther King Blvd., Tallahassee. For information, contact Liz Sparks (850) 570-5950  liz.aparks57@gmail.com

Mar. 15 - Tates Hell Hike.
Explore the High Bluff Coastal Hiking Trail in Tate’s Hell State Forest on a 4-mile hike with interpretive guides. (See: http://www.freshfromflorida.com/Divisions-Offices/Florida-Forest-Service/Our-Forests/State-Forests/Tate-s-Hell-State-Forest.) Contact Lori Gilbertson (850) 420-0132  fta_trails4u.lori@aol.com or Al Ingle (850) 509-1162   al@capitalavionics.com or Carol Watkins (313) 319-9463  cwatkinsbabcock@gmail.com

Mar. 28 - Sopchoppy Hike and Plant ID.
A 5-mile hike (approx. 2.5 hr.) on the FNST along the scenic Sopchoppy River. The hike is scheduled to take advantage of the spring wild azalea blooms – plentiful along the riverbanks. Participants will receive a tree list with key field signs to aid in ID of plant species along the trail. A car shuttle will be arranged to allow for a one-way trip. Limit 20 people. Contact George Weaver (850) 510-3288  weaver@psy.fsu.edu or Melanie Knapp (850) 339-8830  mermelly22@hotmail.com

Mar. 29 - Wacissa River Paddle, Jefferson County.
We will put in at the spring head in Wacissa and paddle 10 miles downstream to our take-out at Goose Pas-
ture. Expect to see a variety of birds. Everyone must bring their own boat and wear a pfd. No dogs please. Contact Gwen Beatty (850) 539-6027 gfbeatty@yahoo.com or Gary Sisco (850) 545-4776 gsisco42@yahoo.com

**FLORIDA CRACKERS CHAPTER**  http://www.meetup.com/Crackers-FTA/

**Jan. 3 at 9 am - Work Hike Lite/Orientation**
If you are new to work hikes and/or would like a shorter and easier day, these work hikes are for you! We'll do scouting, lopping, and remove fallen branches from the trail in the Suwannee and Lake Butler sections. Exact locations and times will be announced shortly before each hike-depending on weather conditions and previous stopping points. These hikes will be about 3 miles total and last about 3 hours. Please bring plenty of food and water and wear comfortable old clothing (it may get torn and/or splashed with paint). Everyone needs to wear a helmet, gloves, and glasses (safety, sunglasses, or prescription.) Long pants and sleeves are recommended. Well-behaved dogs are welcome. Leader: Robin Luger robinannie.luger@gmail.com

**Jan. 6 at 9 am - Work Hike Lite/Orientation**
See Jan 3 for description. Leader: Robin Luger robinannie.luger@gmail.com

**Jan. 8 at 8:45 am - Thursday Hikes - Rails to Trails**
This is a fairly easy hike of about 4 miles. We will walk the rails to trails path from south Main St to the Paynes Prairie parking area just past Boulware Springs. We will probably make a side trip to visit the very interesting Evergreen Cemetery. We may also walk the short loop trail at Sweetwater Preserve along the way. Meet at the Winn Dixie parking lot on South Main St (300 SW 16th Ave, Gainesville, FL) at 8:45. We will have to run a car shuttle which I will try to arrange before hand. Bring water plus snacks, if you like. Leader: Bob Kerkel at tatecitytraveler@yahoo.com

**Jan. 9 at 8:30 am - Jan. 11 at 3:00 pm - Work Hike**
Come help keep the Florida Cracker sections of trail in the Lake Butler and Suwannee sections well maintained. We lop, mow, brush cut, and remove fallen trees from the trail. Exact locations and times will be announced shortly before each hike-depending on weather conditions and where we stopped the weekend before. Each hike will generally cover a section of trail of three miles or less and be out and back, so a total of six miles.

Each Wednesday and Thursday before the scheduled work hike will be prep days where we’ll lop and remove fallen branches from the trail, maybe do some blazing. Please bring plenty of food and water and wear comfortable old clothing (it may get torn and/or splashed with paint). Everyone needs to wear a helmet, gloves, and glasses (safety, sunglasses, or prescription.) Long pants and sleeves are recommended. Ear protection is required for working around machinery. No special experience is required, but please attend a scheduled work hike orientation. Leader: Robin Luger robinannie.luger@gmail.com

**Jan. 14 at 9 am - Kayak Wednesday - Santa Fe River**
Monthly week-day kayak day trip. Join us for a mid-week kayak trip. We’ll be kayaking one of my favorite sections of the Santa Fe River, Rum Island to SR 47. We’ll take our time on this 6-mile paddle, exploring lots of springs along the way. Meet at the Gilchrist Santa Fe River Park at 9 am. (Where State Rd 47 crosses the Santa Fe River near High Springs.) Bring a shady hat, lots of water, sunscreen and snacks. This is a good trip for beginners. Dress for the weather. We won’t cancel except in case of all-day downpours or thunderstorms. Leader: Deb Blick dblick@windstream.net

**Jan. 15 at 8:45 am - Thursday Hikes - Mill Creek.**
This hike is a combination of several of the trails that will total 4 to 5 miles. Please meet in the Mill Creek Preserve parking area at 8:45. Bring water and a snack if you like. Leader: Dot dotlesslou@aol.com

**Jan. 15 at 6 pm - Monthly Chapter Meeting**
Brasingtons Adventure Outfitters, Outdoor Center in Gainesville. Mitch Sapp mesapp1941@gmail.com
Jan. 17, 9 am to 2 pm - FTA Activity Leader Training
For everyone interested in leading activities for FTA and for current Activity Leaders who need an update. This is a REQUIREMENT for EVERYONE who leads people on “hikes” for FTA - whether work or pleasure (except Section Leaders). Bring camp chair, bag lunch, pen/pencil and Activity Leader Guide - available for download here: www.floridatrail.org/activity-leader-resources/
This “class” is a combination of group discussion and group games. Come prepared to share your experience and ideas. You MUST sign up in advance with Deb or via Meetup so we know how many to expect. Location will be announced in December. Details and location will be sent to everyone who signs up. Leader: Deb Blick dblick@windstream.net

Jan. 18 at 9 am - Kayak Day Trip - Silver River
Meet up at Ray Wayside Park (9560 NE 28th ln, Silver Springs, FL) at 9 am. We’ll concentrate kayaks and people into fewer vehicles and shuttle up to Silver Springs State Park for a great paddle back to Ray Wayside. About a 5.5 mile trip, this is one of the best rivers in Florida for viewing birds, gators, and (if we’re lucky) monkeys. It’s also a great trip for beginning kayakers. Consider this more of a float than a paddle since it’s all downstream with a nice current. We’ll take plenty of time to admire the birds, look for sunken boats, and take photos. Bring a shady hat, lots of water, sunscreen and snacks. Dress for the weather. We won’t cancel except in case of an all-day downpour or thunderstorms.
Note: There is a $5 parking fee at Ray Wayside for the vehicles we leave there. At Silver Springs State Park there is the normal state park admission fee + $4 launch fee per kayak. Kayak rentals are available at Silver Springs State Park. Make your own arrangements if you wish a rental. We’ll be done by around 1:30 pm. which makes the rental rate about $35. If you are renting, go directly to SSSP and make your arrangements and we’ll meet you at the canoe launch about 9:30 am. Rental fee includes your shuttle back to SSSP. Leader: Deb Blick dblick@windstream.net

Jan. 22 at 8:45 am - Thursday Hikes - Paynes Prairie Preserve State Park
This is a medium difficulty hike on Cone Dike from the park headquarters to the east end of the Prairie. We will exit the park at the Camps Canal. This will require a car shuttle. The hike is about 5 miles and should be finished by around noon. If conditions are wet there is a chance of wet feet on this one. Also there is a chance of wildlife encounters. We had to share the dike with buffalo last year. Leader: Bob Kerkel tatecitytraveler@yahoo.com

Jan. 23 at 8:30 am - Jan. 25 at 3:00 pm - Work Hike
See Jan 9 for description. Leader: Robin Luger robinannie.luger@gmail.com

Jan. 29 at 8:45 am - Thursday Hikes - San Felasco Hammock.
Join Dot for an 8-mile thru-hike of San Felasco. She’ll be hiking from the south end to the north. Shuttle will be arranged. Leader: Dot at dotlesslou@aol.com

Jan. 30 at 8:30 am - Sunday, Feb. 1 at 3:00 pm - Work Hike
See Jan 9 for description. Leader: Robin Luger robinannie.luger@gmail.com

Feb. 3 - Work Hike Lite/Orientation
See Jan 3 for description. Leader: Robin Luger robinannie.luger@gmail.com

Saturday, Feb. 7 at 9:00 AM - Work Hike Lite/Orientation
See Jan 3 for description. Leader: Robin Luger robinannie.luger@gmail.com

Feb. 7 at 9:00 am - Alachua County Forever - Phifer Flatwoods
Continuing our cooperative agreement with Alachua County Forever, this year we are offering 4 hikes on land not yet open to the general public. This month join FTA and Susanne Kettrick, land manager for Alachua County Forever, for a 2.5-mile interpretive hike of the Phifer Flatwoods. Located between Gainesville and Hawthorne off State Rd 20, the land is a mosaic of flatwoods interspersed with cypress domes, bayheads, and
blackwater creeks, including Little Lochloosa Creek. This hike is through hilly terrain, a treat in flat Florida. Wear good shoes/hiking boots, bring water and a snack, hat and bug repellent. We should be finished by around noon. There is no hunting on the property but hunting is allowed nearby - wear brightly colored clothing. Exact meet up location will be set in Jan. Leader: Deb Blick dblick@windstream.net

Feb. 12 at 9:30 am - Thursday Hikes - Oleno Natural Bridge
This hike is a little longer than most Thursday hikes - about 8 miles. There's a small chance of wet feet, but probably not. We will hike from Oleno State Park parking area to the rise of the Santa Fe River. I especially like this hike for the beautiful woods and the different forest types along the way. We will cross the Old Bellamy Rd. Brings snacks and water, we'll take a lunch break at the River Rise. Leader: Bob Kerkel tatecitytraveler@yahoo.com

Wednesday, Feb. 11 at 9:00 am - Kayak Wednesday.
Monthly week-day kayak day trip. Join us for a mid-week kayak trip. Our destination will determined in January, but save the date now. Bring a shady hat, lots of water, sunscreen and snacks. Dress for the weather. We won't cancel except in case of thunderstorms. Leader: Deb Blick dblick@windstream.net

Feb. 14 at 8:30 am - Kayak Saturday.
Come celebrate Valentines Day with a kayak day trip on the Rainbow River with your FTA friends. Meet up at K.P. Hole County Park (9435 SW 190 St, Dunnellon, FL) at 8:30 am. We'll unload our kayaks then shuttle a few cars down to the takeout. This is about a 7-mile paddle starting with a moderate 1.5 mile upstream to Rainbow Springs then a lazy float down to the takeout at CR 484. We'll take plenty of time to admire the birds and turtles and take photos. If the weather is nice bring your snorkel gear. Bring a shady hat, lots of water, sunscreen and snacks. Dress for the weather. We won’t cancel except in case of thunderstorms. Note: There is a $5 admission fee at K.P Hole. Kayak rentals are available at K.P. Hole. Make your own arrangements if you wish a rental. Leader: Deb Blick dblick@windstream.net

Feb. 19 at 6 pm - Monthly Chapter Meeting
Brasingtons Adventure Outfitters, Outdoor Center in Gainesville. Mitch Sapp mesapp1941@gmail.com

Feb. 20 at 8:30 am - Feb. 22 at 3:00 pm - Work Hike
See Jan 9 for description. Leader: Robin Luger robinannie.luger@gmail.com

Feb. 27 at 8:30 am - Mar. 1 at 3:00 pm - Work Hike
See Jan 9 for description. Leader: Robin Luger robinannie.luger@gmail.com

Mar. 3 at 9 am - Work Hike Lite/Orientation
See Jan 3 for description. Leader: Robin Luger robinannie.luger@gmail.com

Mar. 7 at 9:00 am - Alachua County Forever - Lake Alto South
Continuing our cooperative agreement with Alachua County Forever, this year we are offering 4 hikes on land not yet open to the general public. Each hike we'll be accompanied by a land manager who will show us what is special about the property.
Join FTA and Susanne Kettrick, land manager for Alachua County, on a 2.0-mile interpretive hike of Lake Alto South (17000 NE 132 Ave, Waldo, FL). Located between Hawthorne and Waldo off US 301, the land features pine flatwoods, a small cypress swamp, some fine old oaks and a walk along the old Santa Fe Canal. Wear good shoes/hiking boots, bring water and a snack, hat and bug repellent. We should be finished by around noon. Leader: Deb Blick dblick@windstream.net

Mar. 11 at 9:00 AM - Kayak Wednesday.
Monthly week-day kayak day trip. Join us for a mid-week kayak trip. Our destination will determined in January, but save the date now. Bring a shady hat, lots of water, sunscreen and snacks. Dress for the weather. We won’t cancel except in case of thunderstorms. Leader: Deb Blick dblick@windstream.net
Mar. 12 at 9:30 am - Thursday Hikes - Santa Fe Lily Hike  
Everyone loves this one! We’ll hike up the Santa Fe River to enjoy the wild lilies blooming. About 4 miles round-trip. Wear old shoes - trail may be wet depending on river level - and bring insect repellent, water, snacks, and a camera. We’ll meet at the Santa Fe River County Park, State Road 47, Fort White, FL at 9:30 am. This is about 12 miles from High Springs and about an hour from Gainesville. The date of this hike is subject to change / we want to do it when the lilies bloom! Leader: Bob Kerkel tatecitytraveler@yahoo.com

Mar. 13 at 8:30 am - Mar. 15 at 3:00 pm - Work Hike  
See Jan 9 for description. Leader: Robin Luger robinannie.luger@gmail.com

Mar. 14 at 9:00 AM - Kayak Saturday  
Monthly weekend kayak day trip. Join us for a Saturday kayak trip. Our destination will determined in January, but save the date now. Bring a shady hat, lots of water, sunscreen and snacks. Dress for the weather. We won’t cancel except in case of thunderstorms. Leader: Deb Blick dblick@windstream.net

Mar. 19 at 6 pm - Monthly Chapter Meeting  
Brasingtons Adventure Outfitters, Outdoor Center in Gainesville. Mitch Sapp mesapp1941@gmail.com

Apr. 2 at 9:30 am - Thursday Hikes - Oleno Wild Azalea Hike  
This is a pretty easy hike or about 4 miles at Oleno State Park. It will include the River Sink. The date of this hike is subject to change because we want to do it when the wild azaleas are in bloom. We’ll meet at the Oleno State Park parking area at 9:30 and should be finished by around noon. Leader: Bob Kerkel tatecitytraveler@yahoo.com

Apr. 4 - Work Hike Lite/Orientation  
See Jan 3 for description. Leader: Robin Luger robinannie.luger@gmail.com

Apr. 4 at 9:00 AM - Alachua County Forever / Balu Forest  
Continuing our cooperative agreement with Alachua County Forever, this year we are offering 4 hikes on land not yet open to the general public. Each hike we’ll be accompanied by a land manager who will show us what is special about the property. Join FTA and Susanne Kettrick, Alachua County land manager, for a 4.0-mile interpretive hike of Balu Forest. Located between Gainesville and Orange Heights off State Rd 26, the land features pine flatwoods, longleaf pine and wetlands. Wear good shoes/hiking boots, bring water and a snack, hat and bug repellent. We should be finished by around noon. Exact meeting location will be posted in March. Leader: Deb Blick dblick@windstream.net

Apr. 7 at 9:00 AM - Work Hike Lite/Orientation  
See Jan 3 for description. Leader: Robin Luger robinannie.luger@gmail.com

Apr. 8 at 9:00 AM- Kayak Wednesday.  
Monthly week-day kayak day trip. Join us for a mid-week kayak trip. Our destination will determined in January, but save the date now. Bring a shady hat, lots of water, sunscreen and snacks. Dress for the weather. We won’t cancel except in case of thunderstorms. Leader: Deb Blick dblick@windstream.net

Apr. 11 at 9:00 AM- Kayak Saturday  
Monthly weekend kayak day trip. Join us for a Saturday kayak trip. Our destination will determined in January, but save the date now. Bring a shady hat, lots of water, sunscreen and snacks. Dress for the weather. We won’t cancel except in case of thunderstorms. Leader: Deb Blick dblick@windstream.net
Jan. 7 at 8:30 am - Western Corridor Hiking Series #8
Mutual Mine thru Radar Hill to Rd 24
Meet up at the Lake Lindsay Store, 14351 Snow Memorial Hwy, Brooksville at 8:30 am
This hike brings us into one of the many areas along the Western Corridor of the Florida National Scenic Trail maintained by the Suncoast Chapter. The Citrus Tract of the Withlacoochee State Forest features hills, sinks, limestone caves, hammocks and pine forests. This area is home to all manner of wildlife including deer, quail and a dense population of red-cockaded woodpeckers. The Citrus Tract has the largest population of red-cockaded woodpeckers in peninsular Florida. There are forty-eight clusters of woodpeckers in the forest. The forest is upland sandhill scrub, oak thickets, sand pine and longleaf pine. See info and nesting map here. We’ll also venture into the Radar Hill area. There is very little shade for the last 2 miles of the long hike. You will be rewarded with great open vistas and some caves :-)
Long hike: 11.5 miles thru Radar Hill to Rd. 24
Short hike: 7.5 miles to S. Brittle Road
We’ll meet at the Lake Lindsay Store then run the shuttle and go to our starting point at the Mutual Mine TH. We’ll need to know whether you’ll be hiking 11 miles or 7.5 miles when you arrive - to do a proper shuttle. Be prompt.
What to Bring:--> 2 liters or quarts of water. Lunch and snacks. The water is not a guideline. It is a requirement for this hike. Snacks and Lunch. Sunscreen is optional.
Leader: Linda Dawson lindadawson60@yahoo.com

Jan. 11 at 8:30 am - Western Corridor Hiking Series #8B
Mutual Mine thru Radar Hill to Rd 24
Repeat of Jan 7 hike for weekenders. Leader: Linda Dawson lindadawson60@yahoo.com

Jan. 14 at 8:30 am - Western Corridor Hiking Series #9
41 Kiosk to Croom Trailhead
Meet up at the Tucker Hill Fire Tower in the Croom Tract of the Withlacoochee State Forest (26414 Croom Rd., Brooksville, FL , Brooksville , FL) at 8:30 am
Long: 10 miles; Short: 3 miles
The hike will go around the three mile Chinsegut Nature Trail. The three miles crosses a prairie on a boardwalk, goes by a bird blind and a small sink hole - who knows, you may want to get up very early some morning to show the kids/grandkids a bird blind. We will then hike along Deer Run dirt road for a few miles before entering Perry Oldenburg Wildlife area. From Perry O we will take the infamous 13-Barking Dog (Willow St.) section and trail that connects to Croom A loop and then the mile south to Tucker Hill Fire Tower.
What to Bring:--> 21 1/2 - 2 quarts of water, snack to eat en route, sandwich for when we break, sunscreen, insect repellent.
Leader: Mike Nelson mikenelson2000@hotmail.com

Jan. 18 at 8:30 am - Western Corridor Hiking Series #9B
41 Kiosk to Croom Trailhead
Repeat of Jan 14 hike for weekenders. Leader: Mike Nelson mikenelson2000@hotmail.com

Jan. 21 at 8:30 am - Western Corridor Hiking Series #10
Tucker Hill Trailhead to Silver Lake
Meet up at the Silver Lake Recreation Area in the Croom Tract of the Withlacoochee State Forest at 8:30 am
For Hike #10 we pick back up in Croom and hike past the Willow Street turn on the A Loop. The FNST continues on the B Loop to the Hi-Low Trail to Silver Lake. The Croom area is home to several hiking loops as well as mountain bike trails and horse trails. There are a couple of hiking campsites and a horse camp in the area. The hike is 9 miles.
We will meet at Silver Lake and run the shuttle down the road to our starting point at Tucker Hill Trailhead.
When you enter the Silver Lake Recreation Area stay to the left (the Day Use Area) and park at the end near the water. Meet at the Pavilion at 8:30a.
What to Bring: --> 1-1.5 liters water, lunch, snacks. Leader: Bob and Sue Sippey wagdog47@gmail.com

Jan. 25 at 8:30 am - Western Corridor Hiking Series #10B Tucker Hill Trailhead to Silver Lake
Repeat of Jan 21 hike for weekenders. Leader: Bob and Sue Sippey wagdog47@gmail.com
Dates to Remember!

Footprint Article Deadline  March 1, 2015

January Board Meeting - Jan 24

January Chapter Council Meeting - Jan 31

I-Did-A-Hike - Feb. 21, 2015

Annual Conference - April 9-12, 2015