

## **101: FLORIDA TRAIL**

### **Florida Trail Manual**

This manual serves as a guide to Florida Trail Association (FTA) volunteers and staff while engaged in trail development, trail construction, and trail maintenance related activities for the Florida Trail (FT) and the Florida Trail System (FTS).

### **Florida Trail Advocacy**

It is often said that the Florida Trail is the best kept secret in Florida. While this isn't true, it is true that it is in our mission to change that perception. The FT isn't a secret pathway nor is the FTA a secret society. FTA members are the prime promoters and advocators for both the Trail and FTA. Simply put: Individuals make a difference and if not us, who? If not now, when?

### **The Florida Trail's Most Valuable Resource: Volunteers!**

From the Big Cypress to Fort Pickens the Trail can vary tremendously. In places it is a very primitive single track footpath while elsewhere it is on a dike or wide pavement. In multiple locations the path remains on road shoulders. Yes, much has been accomplished in forty plus years but much is left to do! The Trail is a work in process of closing gaps and finding optimal locations. While closing current gaps is, and will continue to be, a priority, searching for the optimal location for all trail segments should never cease.

Advocating for the Trail, identifying new routing opportunities and influencing doors to open are vital functions for FTA volunteers and staff. Local volunteers working on the Trail are wonderful, but those who work with an eye to the future of the Trail are GOLDEN! Volunteering for the Florida Trail includes being at the local, state and federal tables when long-term and local management plans are being developed. If FTA volunteers are not there to advocate for a woodlands trail, then those with very different visions will prevail.

FTA volunteers and staff are building and maintaining a legacy that is the **Florida Trail**, but individually we can only secure a small piece of that legacy. We share it with those very committed FTA volunteers and staff who came before us and we build on their accomplishments.

Trail work is important but recruiting like-minded individuals to carry that legacy into the future is essential.