

## 106: FLORIDA TRAIL ASSOCIATION TRAIL STAFF ROLES

Our Florida Trail Association (FTA) Trail Staff are tasked with enhancing volunteer stewardship and support for the Florida National Scenic Trail (FNST). One of their prime functions is to promote and support both *volunteer participation* and *volunteer leaders*. Volunteer-led work activities remain the primary source of FNST trail maintenance. While Regional Representatives (RR) often lead work activities, the primary job of the RR is supporting and enhancing volunteer work events and volunteer stewardship.

FTA trail leaders and staff share, and often have parallel, responsibilities. Much of this revolves around annual trail maintenance. Any time two or more individuals have shared responsibility, coordination and frequent straightforward communication are the keys to success. The best example for the Florida National Scenic Trail (FNST) is the annual trail maintenance cycle. When only volunteers were performing trail maintenance, knowing what had and hadn't been completed was often an issue. Then RRs added another layer. RRs and chapter leaders are free to develop and use web-based organizing tools, but the Volunteer Hours Reporting System already records many of the '*what*' and '*when*' aspects of FNST trail maintenance. *Transparency is essential!* Planning, scheduling, coordinating, and advertising of trail work activities are addressed in Chapter 105.

### **Trail Program Director (TPD).**

**Position Summary.** The TPD is responsible for developing a Trail Operations Program focused on volunteer engagement, construction, protection, and maintenance of the Florida National Scenic Trail (FNST). The TPD works with the Board and Staff of the Florida Trail Association (FTA), as well as the administrator of the trail, the United States Department of Agriculture - Forest Service (USDA-FS), to set program goals. The TPD is primarily responsible for setting overall program direction as well as day-to-day management of Trail Operations Program and staff, working in cooperation with, and in support of, the USDA-FS FNST Administrator. Frequently works with other local land manager agencies and private landowners to achieve FNST program goals.

Trail Construction, Maintenance, and Protection:

1. Is responsible for the development, coordination, and management of trail operations on the FNST including trail building, maintenance, training, and volunteer programs.
2. Is responsible for oversight of regional staff and associated field programs.
3. Ensures all necessary agreements are in place.
4. Manages Trail Operations budget and assets.
5. Serves as Liaison to the USDA-FS and builds relationships with federal, state, and local agencies and non-governmental organizations, as well as private landowners.
6. Works with USDA-FS to ensure standards are met regarding FNST.
7. Is responsible for researching, writing, and managing grants for trail program.
8. Prepares updates on accomplishments for FTA Board and compiles a yearly *Trail Operations Report*.
9. Works with the Board's VP/Trails and Trails Committee to develop a Regional Trail Operations Program and set strategic goals.
10. Serves as support for the Trail Operations Staff.

11. Works in the field as needed on optimal trail location reviews, trail protection issues, and volunteer work parties.

Volunteer Program Development and Management:

1. Is responsible for general oversight of the Volunteer Program Coordinator (VPC).
2. Works with the VPC to develop program of work and associated goals.
3. Oversees trail crew work and contracts with other organization crews as applicable.

Financial Management:

1. Is responsible for financial management regarding FNST program of work and timely expenditures accounting.
2. Works with FTA Bookkeeper/Admin Director to ensure timely and accurate reporting.
3. Is responsible for Trail Operations grant management.

**Volunteer Program Coordinator (VPC).**

**Position Summary.** The VPC is responsible for building and improving volunteer programs on the Florida National Scenic Trail (FNST). The VPC position is under general supervision of the Trail Program Director. This position works with the Trail Program Director to set volunteer program goals. The VPC works to ensure volunteer stewardship events on the FNST are well coordinated, engaging, and rewarding. This position will work closely with land managers and volunteers to build partnerships and facilitate communication. The VPC position includes a non-traditional schedule and will include weekend work. Overnight travel throughout Florida as well as the ability to lift up to forty-five pounds and hike up to ten miles a day on the Florida National Scenic Trail may be necessary at times.

Primary Duties:

1. Oversees volunteer program and finds innovative ways of building and improving stewardship events and trainings on the Florida National Scenic Trail.
2. Is responsible for volunteer recognition and tracking of certifications, skills, and hours.
3. Assists RR with implementation of volunteer programs as needed.
4. Engages volunteers in applicable program areas and associated committees.
5. Travels to volunteer stewardship projects throughout Florida to work alongside volunteers.
6. Assists with reporting of volunteer contributions and accomplishments.
7. Coordinates and updates regional stewardship projects yearly on FTA website.
8. Facilitates communication and works to empower and engage volunteers.
9. Works to improve retention rates and volunteer experiences on the FNST.
10. Compiles annual volunteer report for inclusion into the *Trail Operations Report* and conducts annual volunteer surveys.
11. Serves as point of contact for volunteers requesting information on regional work parties.

**Regional Representative (RR).**

**Position Summary.** The Regional Representative focuses on coordinating successful trail management, protection, and volunteer work on the Florida National Scenic Trail within their respective region. This individual will work with diverse groups of volunteers in order to build sustainable trail stewardship

programs. He or she will be responsible for building collaborative partnerships with volunteers and agency personnel within the region. The Regional Representative will need to work closely and communicate proactively with land management agencies and volunteers on a regular basis. It is important for this person to be able to effectively prioritize and follow through on the implementation of regional projects, which may span over multiple years. He or she will identify, engage, and respond to external planning efforts that could have an effect on the trail corridor. The Regional Representative will gather information on the physical trail, local features, and work to ensure optimal routing of the Florida Trail in perpetuity. He or she will carry out tangible work intended to permanently protect the Florida Trail in accordance with the values outlined in the National Trails System Act and the Comprehensive Management Plan.

#### Primary Duties:

1. Develops a regional trail program focused on protection, preservation, and promotion of the Florida Trail and the volunteer programs that support it.
2. Builds and expands volunteer stewardship opportunities on the Florida Trail by developing partnerships between the Florida Trail Association (FTA), volunteers, and agency partners.
3. Monitors, evaluates, and responds to activities that could affect the trail corridor.
4. Serves as a technical resource to agencies in the areas of trail protection, volunteer coordination, and project management.
5. Increases the amount of manpower and the number of well-trained volunteers regularly working on the trail.
6. Ensures volunteers have access to appropriate training, certification, safety gear, tools, and equipment.
7. Is responsible for the oversight and work plan development of FTA's seasonal staff and field crews working in the region.
8. Effectively prioritizes work to meet or exceed FTA's broader trail program goals and yearly program of work.
9. Oversees the planning, replacement, and construction of trail infrastructure.
10. Facilitates proactive communication and meets with volunteers and agency partners as needed to coordinate trail protection and maintenance efforts.
11. Is knowledgeable about the trail within the region and responds to public requests for information.
12. Verifies trail conditions as much as possible and notifies the public about access issues, safety concerns, threats, and changes to the trail.