

210: TRAIL RELOCATIONS/FNST OPTIMAL LOCATION REVIEW

USDA Forest Service (USDA-FS) has primary administrative and management responsibility for the Florida National Scenic Trail (FNST). USDA-FS responsibilities include FNST certification agreements with land management units, oversight of FNST relocations and maintaining an accurate record of the FNST's location.

An *FNST relocation or reroute* is broadly defined as any movement or change in the location of the trail corridor. Relocations are further categorized as major and minor.

Major FNST Relocation: A trail corridor relocation of a trail segment that is one-quarter mile or more in length and/or one-quarter mile or more in lateral movement from its existing location.

Minor FNST Relocation: A trail corridor relocation of a trail segment that is less than one-quarter mile in length and less than one-quarter mile in lateral movement from its existing location.

Relocations of the Florida National Scenic Trail

The Florida Trail Association (FTA) Trail Program Director (TPD) and FTA Regional Representatives (RR's) have primary responsibility for coordinating, developing, and submitting *major* and minor relocation proposals and notifications to the FNST Program Manager.

Components of a FNST Relocation

The procedure for relocation of the FNST depends on whether the change in location is major or minor.

Major FNST Relocation

- FTA trail staff submits written proposal to the FNST Program Manager and follow-up coordination as required.
- FTA trail staff transmits approval or disapproval to Land Management Units and FTA volunteers.
- Coordination and collaboration between FTA trail staff, Land Management Units, and FTA volunteers on:
 - Developing relocation proposals
 - Trail infrastructure and construction issues
 - *Notice to Hikers* (see Chapter 205)
 - Obtaining new GPS tracks and *Data Book* information (see Chapter 206)

Minor FNST Relocation

- FTA trail staff informs FNST Program Manager of proposed relocation.
- Coordination and collaboration between FTA trail staff, Land Management Units, and FTA volunteers on:
 - Developing relocation proposals
 - Trail infrastructure and construction issues

- *Notice to Hikers* (see Chapter 205)
- Obtaining new GPS tracks and *Data Book* information (see Chapter 206)

With the concurrence of the FNST Program Manager, both major and minor FNST relocations intended for future FNST certification may be constructed prior to formal FNST certification.

Optimal Location Review (OLR)

The primary objective of an OLR is to identify the best location for the FNST. Relocations may require an OLR. Implementation of an OLR is at the discretion and responsibility of the FNST Program Manager and the impacted land management unit(s). FTA participation in the conduct of an OLR will be coordinated by TPD and RRs. For more information see 305: *Florida National Scenic Trail Optimal Location Review Process Guidelines* [http://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/stelprd3826770.pdf].

FNST Planning Corridor, Certification Requirements, and Routing Standards

The Planning Corridor, Certification Requirements, and Routing Standards for the FNST are broadly defined in the [Florida National Scenic Trail Comprehensive Plan \(1986\)](http://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/stelprdb5356779.pdf) [www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/stelprdb5356779.pdf]. The USDA-FS has the flexibility to move the FNST to any location within the twenty-mile planning corridor.

Certifying Florida National Scenic Trail Segments

FNST certification agreements are formal contracts between the USDA-FS, public land management units and/or private land owners. FTA TPD, RR's and volunteers are not normally involved in negotiating FNST certification agreements.

Adding Florida Trail System Segments

FTA volunteers help maintain non-FT recreational trails in Florida. Periodically, requests for the construction of new trails are received from outside organizations and government entities. Trails generally require many hours to maintain, and poorly maintained trail segments reflect badly on FTA. It is imperative that each chapter carefully evaluate its overall construction and maintenance capabilities before embarking on new trail obligations.

When a chapter submits a trail for inclusion in the Florida Trail System (FTS) they acknowledge and accept future obligation for that trail. In addition to volunteer trail maintenance, these obligations often include financial and volunteer support for trail maps, map revisions, and signage.

With the foregoing in mind, each chapter shall adhere to the following procedure when undertaking the development of new recreational trails:

1. Chapter receives written request for development of a trail. Each proposal shall include:
 - a. Type of trail (hiking, shared-use, nature, etc.)
 - b. Location
 - c. Approximate length
 - d. Land owner/manager written approval or request and notice of consent to build
 - e. Name, address, telephone number of contact person

- f. Any assistance to be provided (equipment, materials, etc.) by land manager
 - g. Description of terrain and reasonable evidence that the terrain will allow for a viable trail
 - h. Identification of the approximate trail corridor
2. Chapter Trail Coordinator reviews request in terms of:
 - a. The chapter's interest in developing and maintaining the trail
 - b. The chapter's ability to undertake the project in light of its current trail building resources and its ongoing/primary maintenance responsibilities for the Florida Trail
 - c. Any other factors deemed relevant or material
 3. For trails to be part of the FTS, the Chapter may consider the proposal and recommend approval or denial. *Chapters may help build trails that are not part of the FTS as a community service.*
 4. For trails to be part of the FTS, the Chapter's recommendation and proposal are submitted by the Trail Coordinator to the VP-Trails for review and approval. VP-Trails may, at his or her discretion, request additional information and/or clarification of the proposal.
 5. At the VP-Trails' discretion he/she may accept or reject the request based on an evaluation of the submitting Chapter's ability to undertake the project and/or long term commitment.
 6. If the request is approved, the VP-Trails will present the request for final approval by the Board of Directors at a regularly scheduled board meeting.