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.

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Fall 2014

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Sandra Friend
Paul Guyon at Wekiwa Springs S.P.

This page
Paul Guyon
J.W. Corbett WMA

Back Cover
Paul Cummings
Jonathan Dickinson S.P.
In the summer of 1978, at the naïve age of 17, and with very little political forethought, I joined the wilderness movement. I was freshly graduated from high school and full of youthful energy. I correctly figured that traipsing around the woods of Michigan’s Upper Peninsula would be more fun than getting a summer job. The Sierra Club offered a trip of a few weeks of adventure, documenting picturesque northern hardwoods that had been highlighted during something called “RARE II”, the Roadless Area Review and Evaluation of 1977. This was a new nationwide “comprehensive process… to identify roadless and undeveloped land areas…and to determine their general uses for both wilderness and other resource management…” The Sierra Club was interested in preserving many of them. I wasn’t really sure what all that meant, but I was in!

The participants on that trip included a dentist who was also a talented large-format photographer, his microbiologist wife, and their friends who worked on important things like speech pathology (all enormously impressive to a teenager whose entire resume was golf caddying and part-time work at a camping gear store). I learned how to use odd cameras, got teased mercilessly by the adults, and fought off swarms of enormous biting flies and hungry mosquitoes. Mostly I served as a camera gear porter. The experience was a blast, and influenced me in ways that probably still inform me.

I was reminded of that trip recently while looking into this year’s 50th Anniversary of the Wilderness Act. Years and children and jobs separate me from that experience, and it is now just another memory, dragged up infrequently in my mind. But while online, researching the Florida Trail’s designated wilderness areas (that article is elsewhere in this issue), I was gratified to find that some of the beautiful, wild places we catalogued on that Michigan trip have indeed been preserved as wilderness. This includes dozens of small, deep forest lakes of the Sylvania Tract, the waterfalls of Rock River Canyon, and Round Island in the Straits of Mackinac.

The experience reminds me of one of the larger opportunities we are offered at the Florida Trail Association (FTA): to implant a culture of outdoor recreation and stewardship in our younger citizens. It’s an integral part of FTA’s mission. To ensure the long-term viability of the Florida National Scenic Trail (FNST) and other Sunshine State hiking trails, and to partner with the land managers entrusted with these trails, we will need many supporters, maintainers, and users in the years ahead. FTA will need to cultivate new generations of dedicated members and volunteers if it is to continue to play an important role as champion and advocate for hiking in Florida.

It could be argued that there’s a sticking point here--- that the newest generations of Americans are tough to reach and tougher to motivate, whether because of numb devotion to electronic media, separation from nature, or some other perceived flaw. I don’t buy that argument, at least not as a reason to give up. I’m sure that the day tourists. Walking the streets in town, dirty and carrying my Kelty Tioga pack, with a sinister shut eye, I felt like a pioneer, a wilderness scout, an eco-warrior, a character out of an Edward Abbey novel.

During that 1978 trip, hiking around in the limestone-bluff forest on Round Island, I caught a mosquito in my right eye. The eye swelled to glorious proportions. We soon returned to near Mackinac Island, a famous tourist destination and historic landmark. I gleefully imagined that my appearance frightened the day tourists. Walking the streets in town, dirty and carrying my Kelty Tioga pack, with a sinister shut eye, I felt like a pioneer, a wilderness scout, an eco-warrior, a character out of an Edward Abbey novel.

That kind of feeling, earned honestly with sweat and wind and weather, should be made more available to hordes of young people.

Broadening our reach to youth will become a larger area of focus for FTA. It is literally the future. On a national level, existing programs such as the Student Conservation Association (SCA) are being augmented with initiatives like the 21st Century Conservation Service Corps (21CSC). The book Last Child in the Woods highlighted the pitfalls of not connecting children with the natural world, but the reverse of that coin is that we can ensure the future is created by citizens who care about that world. Those of you who have met or worked with our FTA trail staff know that there are dedicated, smart young people following closely behind those who first blazed the Florida Trail almost fifty years ago. The specific challenges and circumstances facing FTA will change, as things always do. But the challenges can be met, as long as a spark is passed on. As we commemorate these milestones--- 2014 is also the 50th anniversary of the Land & Water Conservation Fund (lwcfcoalition.org) --- let us commit to giving our heirs the same opportunity to make some positive history.

It’s not always easy to reach out to different types of people, but it’s often very rewarding. And it’s important. We can ensure the future is created by citizens who care about that world. Those of you who have met or worked with our FTA trail staff know that there are dedicated, smart young people following closely behind those who first blazed the Florida Trail almost fifty years ago. The specific challenges and circumstances facing FTA will change, as things always do. But the challenges can be met, as long as a spark is passed on. As we commemorate these milestones--- 2014 is also the 50th anniversary of the Land & Water Conservation Fund (lwcfcoalition.org) --- let us commit to giving our heirs the same opportunity to make some positive history.

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No Ambulance. No Hospital. Miles from the nearest road. Hours, perhaps days, from help. No rescuers are coming. What are you going to do?

WILDERNESS MEDICINE TRAINING
Wilderness First Aid (WFA) & WFR Recert – 16 hours
Wilderness First Responder (WFR) – 72-80 hours

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www.FloridaOutdoorAcademy.com
The last revision of FNST maps and data book was in 2011. Since then, several significant route changes and numerous minor adjustments have been made. New trail segments have opened and others closed. By late 2013, it became evident that another update was due. In the spring of 2014, Dave Costakis, Don Mock and Jeff Glenn teamed up to revise and update the maps from Big Cypress to Ft. Pickens. While I have been involved from an oversight perspective, it is Dave, Don and Jeff who have examined, researched and performed the multiple contacts and inquiries. The assignment was time consuming and necessitated very close coordination.

In a June E-Blaze, I reported that the revision was well underway (6 of 42 maps). Since then, the initial review and updates of all 42 maps has been completed. Many have been submitted to section leaders for final review and in some cases finalized.

The Orange Blaze for the FNST is important on the maps. Only the FNST will be orange on the new maps. The trails that FTA volunteers maintain, the data book and the FTA maps are primarily for the public to use. Multiple orange blazed pathways either at a trail junction or on a map are confusing. The objective is to eliminate what can be a spider web of orange blazed trails both on the ground and on FTA maps.

FTA, the U.S. Forest Service and FNST Coalition partners have all adopted orange as the blaze color for the FNST. Blue blazes mark FNST side and connector trails to camping, access points, or places of interest. FTA volunteers maintain a number of non-FNST trails. As these trails are re-blazed, they are to be blazed a color other than ORANGE. The goal is for the Florida Trail to have an Orange Blaze identity.

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The selection of a blaze color for non-FNST trails is a land manager choice. Florida Department of Environmental Protection has adopted this policy for non-FNST trails on their lands. That said, my experience is that land managers frequently rely on FTA volunteers for advice, recommendations and implementation of trail related matters. Selecting a blaze color and style for non-FNST trails should be cooperative and both addressed and implemented as soon as possible.

As the FNST maps are revised, it would be helpful for trail users if the trail color on the maps is the actual blaze color on the trail. Bottom line for the map revisions is that those non-FNST trails shown on the new maps will not be orange. Input from trail leaders has been requested, but failing input, those volunteers revising the maps will choose a color and style. The preferred outcome is that land managers and trail leaders work together to select a color.

We fully realize that re-blazing is often undertaken on a 2-3 year cycle. The implementation period for blaze color change should start in the fall, but may require 2-3 years to complete.

Suggested blaze colors for non-FNST trails include yellow, red, green, and white. The 2”x6” vertical rectangle is only one type of trail marker. Other alternatives include diamond shaped painted blazes, and metal or plastic markers.
MEMBERSHIP NEWS

FTA ANNOUNCES STREAMLINING OF EXISTING DUES STRUCTURE. ROLL-OUT SET FOR JANUARY 1, 2015

The FTA Board is in the process of revitalizing all phases and all aspects of the organization’s business practices from fundraising to membership recruitment to our service manuals and other tools of our trade. To this end, the current dues structure has been streamlined to directly reflect our mission.

Please note that there is still a $35 basic dues category. However, you will notice that other former categories have been eliminated including Lifetime Membership. If you already hold a Lifetime Membership, you will be grandfathered into the system. As of January 1, 2015, giving categories will change.

The new dues structure was designed as both a membership recruitment tool and as a means by which members both veteran and new can choose the level at which they wish to contribute. All membership monies go toward the planning, building, maintaining and promoting of our FNST and the Florida Trail System. The new dues structure will give our organization a better opportunity to brand ourselves as a trail maintenance and protection organization.

Become a Member
Our organization is made up of people who love to get outdoors! Our members hail from all over the U.S. and the world. They come from every walk of life and share a passion for trails and stewardship. You can support our mission by becoming a member today!

The new dues structure will look like this:

- Trail Steward - The Trail Steward level of membership is Florida Trail Association’s basic membership and is for individuals willing to contribute $35.
- Trail Builder - Trail Builder membership level is $50 and helps support our stewardship projects across the state.
- Trail Guardian - Trail Guardians become members for $100 and will help with the promotion of our trails in media and protection through legislation.
- Trail Protector - Our valued Trail Protector level is for those willing to contribute $500 to help us sustain the trail and our volunteer programs including youth crews and engage other volunteers of all ages in valuable outdoor stewardship on the Florida Trail.
- Trail Champion - Our Trail Champion level members are those incredible individuals that are willing to contribute $1,000 a year in support of FTA's mission.
- Trail Benefactor - The Trail Benefactor level is for those wishing to contribute an amount greater than $1000 to the mission of FTA.

Keep your eyes open for the new FTA brochures premiering in 2015.

VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

EASY AS 1 - 2 - 3!

The sun is rising, and as you slowly open your eyes to begin the day, you remember you’re outside, bundled up in your sleeping bag, headlamp still on, and a book with creased pages from falling asleep reading the previous night. Your senses perk up to the smell of coffee and bacon, which complements the smell of campfire in your hair. Although you’re a little sore from a long day on the trail yesterday, you eagerly prepare for another day of bending, lifting, brushing, lopping, and hiking. Why? Because being surrounded be like-minded people, working hard, getting exercise, and contributing to meaningful volunteer work on the Florida Trail is awesome.

Now, I’m sure many of you can relate to the experience described. And in my role with the Florida Trail Association, I hope that every new and returning volunteer has that same amazing experience. How can we ensure this across a statewide trail? It’s as easy as 1, 2, 3.

1. Be safe
Safety on a volunteer project is our number one priority. All of the other elements don’t really matter if someone gets hurt. Crew leaders should use the FTA’s Crew Leader Packet and Volunteer Injury Packet to properly prepare for a day in the field. Having an up-to-date communication and emergency action plan can be life-saving. Thoroughly go through your Job Hazard Analysis and tailgate safety orientation for the activity. Always have a good number of first aid kits and make sure they are properly stocked. For volunteers, having proper trail maintenance attire can make or break your experience. Long pants, sturdy boots, and sun block are the key to a happy day. Drink plenty of water and take breaks when you need one. Make sure you have been trained on proper tool use and don’t try anything you don’t feel comfortable doing.

2. Have fun
What’s the point of all of this if you’re not having fun? Take the time to get to know the other volunteers on your project. Take advantage of evening time with good food and a warm campfire. Bring a pack of cards or toast some marshmallows! If you’re hosting or participating on a multi-day project, take an extra day to explore the area! Florida is chock full of springs, rivers and other recreational opportunities. We are completely supportive of projects that add a twist of fun off the trail!

3. Get some trail work done
Grab a pair of loppers and join the crew! There’s nothing more satisfying than seeing that daunting overgrown trail transform into a clear path through Florida’s varying ecosystems. One of the greatest parts of volunteering on the Florida Trail is contributing to something that others will later appreciate. Without you, day users, weekend warriors and thru-hikers won’t have the experience we want them to have. People won’t preserve and protect what they don’t appreciate. Providing the public with a positive experience on the trail is what will bring them back. It’s what will bring their kids out. And it’s what will help keep this unique public resource around for a long time.

So join us this season on the Florida Trail for a safe, fun and productive project! If you have any questions, email Megan at mdonoghue@floridatrail.org.
2014 VOLUNTEER TRAININGS

We are very excited to announce that the Florida Trail Association is offering chain saw and Wilderness First Aid/CPR trainings in all three regions of the state this season. In addition to this, the FTA is hosting its 2nd Annual Trail Skills Training.

Chain Saw Training
The Florida Trail Association is partnering with USDA Forest Service instructors to offer three chain saw trainings and one crosscut saw training to Florida Trail volunteers. These trainings are a great opportunity for sawyers looking to recertify, for novice trail workers to get their first chainsaw card, and for experienced sawyers to improve their skills. At these courses, participants will discover that working with and sharing techniques alongside different instructors and volunteers from other parts of the country can make saw work more effective, efficient, and safe. Florida Trail volunteers must have a current chain saw certification in order to operate a chain saw on the trail. If you already have a current certification, these courses are still a great opportunity to brush up on your skills and prepare for trail season!

Sawyer trainings are being offered at the following locations:
- Panhandle Region Chain Saw Training - Wakulla Work Center, Crawfordville, FL - Nov. 15-16, 2014
- North Florida Region Chain Saw Training - Lake Bryant Work Center, Ocala, FL - Nov. 8-9, 2014
- North Florida Crosscut Training - Ocala OHV Center - Oct. 18-19, 2014
- Central/South Region Chain Saw Training - Pine Jog Environmental Education Center, West Palm Beach - Nov. 1-2, 2014

Wilderness First Aid and CPR
This year, Florida Trail Sawyers also have the opportunity to attend one of three SOLO Wilderness First Aid and CPR trainings taught by the Florida Outdoor Academy (FOA). The Florida Trail Association and FOA have partnered to offer trainings in each region of Florida. These courses are intended to give volunteers more confidence and skills for treating and evacuating a wide variety of injuries that can occur on the trail. Instructors will be teaching participants through practical scenarios and reenacting real life situations.

WFA/CPR courses will be offered at the following locations:
- Panhandle Region WFA/CPR- St. Marks Volunteer Center, St. Marks, FL - Nov. 8-9, 2014
- North Florida Region WFA/CPR- Silver Springs River Museum, Ocala, FL - Sept. 27-28, 2014
- Central/South Region WFA/CPR- Pine Jog Environmental Education Center, West Palm Beach, FL - Oct. 25-26, 2014

2nd Annual Trail Skills Training
FTA staff and volunteers have been working diligently to prepare for the 2014 Trail Skills Training. This is an all-encompassing training that will prepare new and experienced Florida Trail volunteers and land managers to have a safe, productive and fun season on the trail. The two-day, hands-on training will include sessions on leading trail crews, trail corridor maintenance standards, tool education, emergency and communication protocols, and base camp cooking and cleanliness. Join us for a weekend of learning invaluable skills, meeting great people and getting outside on the trail!

Please be aware that space is limited at most trainings and they will fill up quickly. We encourage interested members to keep an eye open for other opportunities as they arise.

VOLUNTEER PROJECTS ON THE FLORIDA TRAIL

This past year we saw an incredible surge in volunteer participation amongst our chapters and other volunteer groups working on the Florida Trail. This upcoming trail season appears to be headed in the same direction. The Florida Trail Association (FTA) is on track to see an unprecedented amount of volunteer work taking place in the 2014 field season.

The FTA prides itself on being the organization that builds, maintains, protects, and promotes the Florida Trail. Our volunteer projects include; general trail maintenance, new trail construction, signage inventory and repair, updating maps, working on threats to the trail corridor, and much more. The FTA is encouraging our chapters to advertise at least one project on the FTA website. As an incentive, the FTA has offered to reimburse our chapters for food and other incidental expenses volunteers incur while working on the Florida Trail.

Multiple chapters are taking advantage of this and have started organizing their own volunteer work parties ranging in length from a single day to an entire week. Many of those chapters have started advertising their events on the FTA website, which is a great way to reach out to new trail maintainers and prospective members.

A list of upcoming volunteer projects can be found on our website and everyone is welcome! Visit our website at www.floridatrail.org to check out the projects and sign up!

2014/2015 Statewide Chapter Projects

2nd Annual Trail Skills Training - Fort McCoy, FL, October 11-12, 2014

Panhandle Region Chapter Projects
- Nokuse Plantation Volunteer Work Party- Chocotawhatchee Chapter – Feb. 6-8, 2015

North Florida Region Chapter Projects
- Suwannee River Volunteer Work Party Series- Florida Crackers Chapter – Nov. 7-9, 2014
- Rice Creek Mid-Week Volunteer Work Party - Rice Creek/Etoniah Creek State Forest - Dec. 1-5, 2014
- Suwannee River Volunteer Work Party Series- Florida Crackers Chapter – Dec. 3-7, 2014
- Buck Lake Mid-Week Volunteer Work Party - Buck Lake Ocala National Forest - Dec. 8-12, 2014

South/Central Florida Chapter Projects
- KICCO Volunteer Work Party- Heartland Chapter – Nov. 17-21, 2014
- Big Cypress Backcountry Volunteer Work Party - Feb. 6-13, 2015

If you are interested in organizing or advertising your project and for more information on or to sign up for volunteer trainings, please contact our Volunteer Program Coordinator, Megan Donoghue at mdonoghue@floridatrail.org.
Being a northerner, the summer has always been my busy work season on trails. Where I come from summer weather is excellent for working and camping, and the long cold winter and the administrative side of trail work is many months away. Summer was always a time for serious outdoor projects, a time when I looked forward to having multiple trail crews of students looking for an amazing summer vacation outside.

With a move a thousand miles away from home, my whole trail world has been flipped on its head and summer is now the indoor time, filled with planning sessions for the coming trail season. Having been with the FTA for a year now, I am acclimating to the heat and I enjoy being able to do trail work twelve months a year, but the stifling heat, humidity, and banana spiders do make the work much more challenging this time of year so most of my time is in the office. Sometimes I wonder how much more work could be done on the trail if students had the equivalent of a summer vacation in the winter time. The north has the advantage on us there.

During time that I have spent out on the trail this summer I have seen no hikers other than the volunteers and land managers that I work most closely with, and my trail eye is busy catching all the work needed in the fall. I think that hikers in Florida are the only mammals that hibernate in the summer. My prediction of rampant growth was correct, and there is some serious work to be done in the fall to get the trail ready for hiker season.

I started my FTA career right before the fall brought cool weather to the state. I was amazed at how the leaves change in Florida too! Seeing the Suwanee River corridor at peak color change was fantastic and eased my fear of losing something I've loved my entire life. This is just one reason I am excited about the transition from summer to autumn on the Florida Trail. It's time to get outside more, sweat less, and enjoy the perfect days under the yellowing cypress with the crunch of oak and sycamore leaves underfoot.

The events this fall in the North Florida Region should be excellent! There are many trainings and large volunteer work parties to get involved with and our regional chapters are posting many events on the FTA calendar and their own Meetup pages. If you are from another region of the state, please come spend some time with us this coming trail season. We would love to have you join us out on the trail and around the fire.

Hello from Melbourne, FL!

I recently moved to this breezy Space Coast city to work as the Florida Trail Association’s Central/South Regional Representative — the southern analog of Jeff Glenn, our North Florida Regional Representative. I am entirely new to the organization, and I have been very impressed with the dedication of our members and partner organizations. Everyone has been very welcoming and extremely helpful as I am learning about my region which spans the 600 miles of Florida Trail between the south side of the Ocala National Forest and the Southern Terminus at the Oasis Visitor Center in the Big Cypress National Preserve.

I came to the FTA by way of Portland, Maine. I worked the last three years coordinating travel, food, and equipment logistics for nearly four thousand participants and volunteers per year on Cow Island in Casco Bay. This unique twenty-six acre island is used as the eco-campus for a local non-profit organization for adventure programming designed to develop community leadership and sustainable living.

My work in Maine was preceded by nearly a decade of teaching leadership and outdoor skills to students of all ages in national forests, parks and preserves across North America. I have led adventures in New England, Nova Scotia, the Southeast, the Pacific Northwest, and the US Virgin Islands. Moreover, I'm a huge fan of public wild lands. Naturally, I feel very privileged to be working to care for, protect, and promote use of the Florida Trail.

As FTA’s Central/South Regional Representative, I will be collaborating with land managers and volunteers to organize construction, stewardship, and protection efforts on the FNST. Coordinating with our volunteer chapters, I plan to improve access, increase usage, and close gaps in the trail. Please contact me at alexs@floridatrail.org to discuss safety, connectivity, infrastructure, and land use issues & needs.

A big thanks to Adventure Medical Kits for donating items to the 2014 Trail Skills Training!
WHERE MAN HIMSELF IS A VISITOR ... THE WILDERNESS ACT
BY CARLOS SCHOMAKER

It's time for an anniversary in the wilderness! If you're fortunate enough to hike the Florida Trail through Ocala National Forest's Juniper Prairie Wilderness this winter, or slog through the Bradwell Bay Wilderness, or traverse the St. Mark's Wilderness, take a few moments to think about the dedicated men and women who worked diligently decades ago to preserve the pristine character of this land. Wish them a happy 50th Anniversary.

Ed Abbey's "necessity of the human spirit". John Muir said as much, decades earlier. And Walt Whitman felt that "without enough wilderness, America will change. Democracy, with its myriad personalities and increasing sophistication, must be fibred and vitalized by the regular contact with outdoor growths – animals, trees, sun warmth, and free skies – or it will dwindle and pale."

Upon signing the Act, President Johnson said, "If future generations are to remember us with gratitude rather than contempt ... we must leave them a glimpse of the world as it was in the beginning, not just after we got through with it." The Wilderness Act and its predecessors, previous (local) wilderness preservation successes, were much to the vision and persistence of giants in American conservation: Howard Zahniser, executive director of The Wilderness Society; Aldo Leopold; Sigurd Olson; Olaus and Mardy Murie. The Pulitzer Prize-winning author Wallace Stegner wrote a "Wilderness Letter" that accompanied the Wilderness Act. He wrote:

"Something will have gone out of us as a people if we ever let the remaining wilderness be destroyed; if we permit the last virgin forests to be turned into comic books and plastic cigarette cases; if we drive the few remaining members of the wild species into zoos or to extinction; if we pollute the last clear air and dirty the last clean streams and push our paved roads through the last of the silence, so that never again will Americans be free in their own country from the noise, the exhausts, the stinks of human and automotive waste . . . "

The Act took years to pass. In 1956, Howard Zahniser drafted a bill intended to protect some of the nation's most pristine areas, this time on a nationwide scale. It was introduced to Congress the following year by Sen. Hubert Humphrey (D-MN) and Rep. John Saylor (R-PA); the bill was eventually rewritten 66 times, and discussed in 18 hearings. The final bill passed the Senate, 73-12, on April 9, 1963, and the House of Representatives, 373-1, on July 30, 1964. Zahniser died four months before the Wilderness Act was signed into law by Johnson.

Immediate protection was granted to 54 areas across the nation, totaling just over 9 million acres. Mechanisms were put in place to continue review of pristine areas. The work continues to this day. This wilderness system now includes nearly 110 million acres in 662 wilderness areas. As with all other initiatives of this type, it has sometimes been controversial, subject to Congress and political and economic pressures.

The National Scenic and Historic Trails are another big idea for preserving our American legacy. They form a network that connects Americans to their past, literally and spiritually. These trails pass through many designated wilderness areas. The Appalachian Trail, for example, passes through landscapes as diverse as the Southern Nantahala Wilderness and Vermont's Glastenbury Wilderness. The Continental Divide Trail encompasses 20 designated wildernesses. The Pacific Crest Trail links 34 wildernesses, beautiful places like California's Trinity Alps.

Our Florida National Scenic Trail (FNST) currently runs through three designated Wilderness areas. Florida actually hosts many others, including the Marjory Stoneman Douglas Wilderness in the Everglades and the Chassahowitzka Wilderness near Crystal River. Where does the FNST intersect with the three designated areas? Backpacking the FNST south to north, a thru-hiker would enter the Juniper Prairie Wilderness in the Ocala National Forest first. Congress designated the 14,277-acre Juniper Prairie Wilderness in 1984. It's the largest of four Wildernesses in Ocala National Forest, and probably the most ecologically diverse: prairies, oak-bordered shallow lakes, marsh, pine flatwoods, palms and sawgrass are all here. Eight miles of the FNST pass through here. (Here in the Ocala, the FNST also runs very close to the 3,092-acre Billies Bay Wilderness and the 7,941-acre Alexander Springs Wilderness.)

To the northwest, the FNST traverses the St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge, including the eastern portion of the 17,350-acre St. Marks Wilderness. Congress designated the St. Marks Wilderness in 1975.

Farther west, inside the Apalachicola National Forest, the 1975-designated Bradwell Bay Wilderness holds 24,602 acres. Bradwell Bay is a notoriously challenging section of the FNST, due to the liquid nature of the place: it's a swamp festooned with tib trees, with drier patches of longleaf pine and wiregrass. Rainfall averages 55 inches per year. Hikers who surmount the challenge of Bradwell Bay are justifiably proud of their accomplishment.
THE WILDERNESS ACT (CONTINUED)

According to wilderness.net, a website hosted cooperatively between the University of Montana and Federal agencies, less than 3% of the contiguous United States is officially wilderness (Alaska has much more). The site claims that Americans take between 16 and 35 million trips to wilderness areas annually. Depending on the rules and regulations of these specific areas, recreationalists can partake in numerous non-mechanical, non-motorized activities: hiking, backpacking, camping, paddlesports, climbing, ice climbing, mountaineering, horseback riding, cross-country and downhill skiing, swimming, fishing, hunting, wildlife photography, and more.

The “Leave No Trace” ethic is particularly important in these areas, and restrictions often even apply to management tools, such as trail maintenance. Wilderness is not supposed to be easy, and that applies to working in it. (In the September 2014 issue of Outside Magazine, its chief editor, Christopher Keyes, mentions running into such “no mechanized tools and wheeled vehicles” rules in his youth, working in the Frank Church Wilderness in Idaho. It took spending some time in that mountain fastness before he appreciated the strict rules).

Like most other entry points for outdoor recreation in the Sunshine State (trails, boat ramps and launches, the platform of a dive boat), the Florida Trail encompasses an environment that sometimes reminds us of modernity: parking lots, road walks, multi-use sections of trail, visible structures and the sounds of civilization. This is unavoidable in a state with almost 20 million residents and a reported 90+ million annual visitors. Most of us often feel the need to get away from all that, to decompress in a natural setting. It’s tough to do. Wilderness areas, and their protection, provide a pure opportunity to reach this pressure escape valve. In those areas along the FNST you can find such a conduit to relief and sanity.

Currently there aren’t big pushes to designate more wilderness areas in Florida. In Big Cypress National Preserve (BCNP), wilderness designation has been proposed for a portion of the recently acquired “Addition Lands”, south of I-75’s Alligator Alley. North of I-75, there is also some “eligible wilderness”. According to Bob DeGross of the National Park Service, these lands are normally managed as if they were designated as wilderness. Proposals for FNST routing changes, if implemented, could potentially put the trail through some of these lands. But designation of any wilderness requires some political heavy lifting. And it’s a safe bet to say that we’re not growing any new wilderness these days.

So if this coming season finds you in one of the FNST’s true designated wilderness areas, or along one of the other remote stretches of trail, take some time to align yourself to a slower, more ancient awareness --- one where you can sense the natural rhythms of the planet, and feel yourself a part of them. Thank those farsighted people--- visionaries, statesmen, professionals, volunteers --- who kept a piece of this wilderness available to us all. Happy Anniversary, National Wilderness Preservation System!

Want to help maintain the FNST’s designated wilderness areas? Contact FTA's Volunteer Program Coordinator, Megan Donaghue, at mdonoghue@floridatrail.org, for more information. A Juniper Prairie Wilderness Volunteer Work Party, for example, is scheduled for January 16-23, 2015.

Like to hike in a challenging group event? The 20th Annual Bradwell Bay Wilderness Swamp Stomp event is scheduled for March 7th, 2015. Contact Kent Wimmer at klwimmer2@gmail.com for more details.

For more information on all the nationally designated wilderness areas, check out www.wilderness.net.
RUTH LAWLER

OCALA NF TRAIL ANGEL, HALIFAX-ST JOHNS CHAPTER

FTA: When did you first learn of the FTA and the Florida National Scenic Trail?
Ruth: After reading A Walk in the Woods by Bill Bryson in 2006, my sister and I decided it would be a great adventure to hike on the Appalachian Trail. It was shortly after joining the Appalachian Trail Club of Florida, based in Sarasota, Florida, when I learned of the Florida Trail from fellow hikers. I had no idea Florida had its own National Scenic Trail!

FTA: Why and when did you start volunteering for the FTA?
Ruth: My husband and I own a log cabin in Ocala National Forest that we purchased in 2003, which had been our weekend getaway. Three years ago, we retired and moved from Manatee County to our cabin full time. I now have time to pursue volunteering with the FTA. The Florida Trail is only about three and a half miles from our cabin.

FTA: You know you are active as a Trail Angel for the long distance hiking community. How did you get involved in this?
Ruth: My sister and I hiked for a month on the Appalachian Trail in 2008, and we were impressed and amazed by the wonderful support of hikers given by perfect strangers as Trail Angels. It meant so much to us as hikers to have a shuttle to supplies, a hot shower and a good meal. I really appreciated this support, and I wanted to offer this to hikers on the Florida Trail. We are fortunate to have a separate, modest guest cottage on our property, which has its own hot shower and bathroom; there is also ample room for hikers to camp on our six-plus acres. The fortuitous location of our property enabled us to assist hikers while we live here year-round. Since 2013, we have assisted and hosted well over two dozen hikers this past season.

FTA: As a FTA member of the Halifax-St. Johns Chapter, what do you do?
Ruth: I now work regularly with Bill and Linda Taylor and the group of volunteers doing trail maintenance in the north half of Ocala National Forest. Bill and Linda are incredibly knowledgeable, dedicated and supportive, and they have been involved in maintaining the Florida Trail in Ocala National Forest for 30 years! This has been very rewarding and I have come to know our section of the Florida Trail better than if I were just hiking it. We, as a Chapter, are also looking at ways we can strengthen and increase our membership, which is a work in process. I have joined a few Volunteer Work Parties, and look forward to participating in more. Volunteer Work Parties are an opportunity to meet people from other geographic areas and participate in trail work with focused effort. I have also had the opportunity to sit in on the FTA Chapter Council meetings a few times as our chapter representative.

FTA: What’s your favorite way to enjoy the Florida Trail?
Ruth: Without a doubt, being a Trail Angel. This is a very rich experience and a way to get to know hikers from all over. We have hosted several Triple Crown hikers, many section hikers from out of State, and "Rainbow," who was hiking her third Florida Trail thru-hike this year. The friendships forged and the tales shared are priceless. I would love to see the day when the Florida National Scenic Trail is referred to as one of the "must do" hikes by long distance hikers, and those dedicated souls are called Quadruple Crown hikers.

FTA: What is your favorite section of the Florida Trail?
Ruth: This is a tough one, as much of it I have not yet hiked. Last year I participated in the Panhandle Trace Hike, which was amazing. I was in awe of the pitcher plants, and thoroughly enjoyed hiking along the Blackwater River, Juniper Creek Trail, and the Gulf of Mexico at the National Seashore to Fort Pickens. Of course I love the Ocala National Forest, which offers great diversity, including Juniper Wilderness in the Ocala National Forest. I look forward to hiking along the Suwannee, as I’ve heard it is an amazing area.

FTA: Where is the neatest place you have ever hiked?
Ruth: : I have had the pleasure to hike on the Appalachian Trail from Amicalola Falls on the approach trail up to Springer Mountain, north on the AT through to just south of Fontana Dam, with several stretches more than once; all of which was amazing and challenging for this flatlander from Florida. I also hiked in Muir Woods north of San Francisco about 15 years ago.

FTA: What other ways have you volunteered with FTA, and how can others become involved?
Ruth: There are so many ways to experience involvement with the Florida Trail Association! One example is when I was asked to assist with fundraising for the 2014 FTA Conference. I had the pleasure to work with Fred Goldstein over a number of months in organizing the fund raising and sponsorships, including the silent and live auction support for the Conference. We set the goal of $10,000, and information that would assist future volunteers who were working in this capacity so that they would not have to “reinvent the wheel” and could build on these efforts. There are numerous FTA activities in which to participate: the New Year’s campout at Doe Lake in southern Ocala National Forest is where FTA members can socialize, relax and network, and has been ongoing for decades; the Big O Hike; the Wednesday Winter Hikes in Ocala National Forest, which Rachael Augspurg has organized for years; the “I Did a Hike” at Gold Head Branch State Park. Just about every Chapter has ongoing hikes and a variety of activities. The regional and State FTA Conferences are invaluable for learning, meeting people and becoming involved. The best place to initially become involved is with your local chapter. There is always a need for your skills and knowledge, whatever those might be. Volunteers and participants are always needed and welcome. Additionally, FTA offers some amazing training. I’m already signed up for Wilderness First Aid, Trail Skills, Cross-Cut Saw and Chainsaw classes, all offered this Fall. These skills will be well utilized while doing trail maintenance in the future...but hopefully I won’t need to use the Wilderness First Aid knowledge!

FTA: What would you like to see in the future with the Florida Trail?
Ruth: One of my dreams is that the majority of Floridians, as well as hikers from far and wide, become more aware of the Florida National Scenic Trail. There are many ways that we as members can facilitate this process. As an example, the community where I live in Ocala National Forest has a Christmas Parade every December. This past winter Jeff Glenn, our North Regional Representative, loaned us the highly visible FTA volunteer trailer to participate in the parade. This brought awareness and visibility of the FTA within our community, where many have lived for years and were not aware that the Florida Trail is within a few miles. I make sure our Civic Center library has copies of the National Forest Visitor Center locally all the FTA brochures. In May, I led a group of 22 local Girl Scouts and their leaders and family members on a several mile hike on the Florida Trail in Ocala National Forest. Many did not know prior to this experience that the Florida Trail was here. Each of us can share the knowledge and beauty of this amazing resource within our own local areas, and really should not keep it a secret.
REMEMBERING PAUL GUYON
BY SANDRA FRIEND

At my very first Florida Trail Association conference, deep in the Ocala National Forest, I stood in the meal line chatting with FTA Treasurer Sunny Piskura when she introduced me to her beau, Paul Guyon. “You have to come hike the Big O Hike with us!” Sunny said. The year I jumped fully into writing about hiking in Florida, I made plans to hike with Sunny and Paul at Jonathan Dickinson State Park and Lake Okeechobee. But as September approached, Sunny’s health failed, and instead of a hike, it was a memorial service under the picnic pavilion at her beloved state park. After the gathering, Paul wanted to take a hike. Five of us joined him in the summer heat, sparking friendships between us.

Paul was that kind of connector, in a quiet, unassuming way. When you joined him for a backpacking trip, or he joined you, along came a new set of friends, expanding Florida’s hiker family.

A veteran of the Vietnam War, he didn’t talk about it much. It wasn’t his idea to be there, but he did his tour of duty and came home. He learned life was fragile, so he lived it on his own terms, on a sailboat in the Keys, motorcycling across the United States, scuba diving in tropical waters. He grew up near Chicago, and referred to his mother as a “political force” in their community. He often mentioned the vast acreage of corn that his family had in Illinois. After his dad moved to the Fort Lauderdale area, he settled nearby. When he found the Loxahatchee Chapter, he became an activity leader and served in various positions with FTA, including on the Board of Directors.

“I think of Paul as the quiet guy, but always willing to help out,” said Paul Cummings.

After losing his soulmate, Paul moved into a fifth wheel and began piling on big miles on the long trails. A search for “Bear Bag Hanger” on TrailJournals.com brings up nine journeys, from his section hikes and thru-hike of Florida’s hiker family.

My last hike with Paul was this spring, scouting a new conservation area in Volusia County with John and our friend Morena Cameron. Morena and I had backpacked the Suwannee section with Paul more than a decade ago. The trail we visited this day was a wet, muddy mess, a poorly drained restoration area where the noises led us down firebreaks that looked like an army of hogs had rooted them up. Still, Paul had a smile on his face. When he was with hikers – especially hiker friends – he was with family.

According to his family, Paul Guyon passed away in late July due to a heart attack. He’d lost his elder brother earlier in July, and his mother and father earlier in the year. He was 66. See a photographic tribute to Paul from his friends at https://www.flickr.com/photos/floridahikes/sets/72157646043778227/

More Memories

A couple of years ago we did a few days with Mary (Aiken) on the Three Lakes section. I think Mary was getting started with hammocks and getting info from Paul. Paul and I came across a trap that had a raccoon in it. Paul was pretty sure the trap was for wild hogs and that no one had checked on it in a while because the raccoon didn’t look too good. He opened up the trap door to let the raccoon escape but it was too starved and freaked to move. Paul found a brick to prop open the door and made sure the raccoon got out. It took a while, and some prodding, but it finally took off. – Phyllis “ShortCut” Malinski

I barely made out the “damn it”, muttered in quiet frustration. We’d missed the turn, lulled by the forest road and all the crazy talk about emus loose in North Florida leaving giant tracks in the sand. “Turkeys”, he’d said, adding no more to the conversation. I was pretty sure he was rolling his eyes, though I didn’t see it. The three of us had spent the last few hours singing every folk song that we could remember, and lots that we only partially remembered. The 90 mile hike had, so far, been nothing but fun. The Auclla Sinks area was magical. Being lost would not have mattered except that we were meeting Gary for a hitch into town. After looking at his maps and then the angle of our increasingly longer shadows, Paul set out at a slightly faster pace. Sharon and I followed. We did, however, come out onto the road just as Gary was passing. Well done, Paul, well done. – Lori “SwampTromper” Burris

Paul very much loved the trails and his hiking community. He once told me that his hiking buddies were more than friends, they were like family. He was instrumental in me becoming a “hammock hanger” – and probably a long distance hiker. Paul was tuned in to anything and everything about hiking and always ready to serve the needs of fellow hikers. Paul’s heart was BIG for the hiking community and will surely be missed. – Mary Aikens

"I think of Paul as the quiet guy, but always willing to help out," said Paul Cummings.

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"I think of Paul as the quiet guy, but always willing to help out," said Paul Cummings.
NATIONAL TRAILS DAY AT GOLD HEAD BRANCH S.P.

STORY BY LESLIE WHEELER, PHOTOS BY MIKE WADE

“Between two pines, is the doorway to a new world.”

-- John Muir

The North Florida Trailblazers were honored to have Sandra Friend and Janie Hamilton lead a hike at Mike Roess Gold Head Branch State Park in Keystone Heights, FL on June 7, 2014. One of Florida’s first state parks, Mike Roess Gold Head Branch State Park was developed on a 2,000-acre site by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) during the 1930s. The extraordinary craftsmanship of the CCC is still evident today. Located on rolling sandhills in an area known as the central ridge of Florida, a deep ravine with springs issuing from its sides bisects the area and forms Gold Head Branch. Marshes, lakes and scrub provide a habitat for a wide variety of wildlife. It is truly a unique park, and we love taking care of our section of the Florida Trail there.

We had 24 hikers; some new, some longtime members. It was warm, but most of the trail was shaded. We hiked 5.7 miles according to Mike’s calculation. Both Janie and Sandra instructed us on history, flora, and fauna as we hiked. As I have experienced on many other hikes, everyone got along well, and we all enjoyed chatting while noticing ancient long leaf pines and graceful ferns. Our chapter (and especially Janie) works on these trails every year; but every time I hike, I see something different or in a new way. I might remember a dirpy blaze I made last year, but I had forgotten about the small hidden lake. I recognized a favorite old pine, and this time, I took a moment to walk up to it and scan to the top of its crown. The Trail is always there, but it is always new, too.

National Trails Day is a day to celebrate the work we do all season, and realize how many other people enjoy our efforts. I hope each FTA member had an enjoyable time when public demand and park visitation are reaching record levels. The situation is dire.

VOTE YES ON AMENDMENT 1 ON NOVEMBER 4TH

The Florida Trail Association is an Endorsing Organization of Amendment 1, a measure on this November’s Florida state ballot. This amendment will provide sufficient funding in the Land Acquisition Trust Fund “to acquire, restore, improve, and manage conservation lands including wetlands and forests; fish and wildlife habitat; lands protecting water resources and drinking water sources, including the Everglades, and the water quality of rivers, lakes, and streams; beaches and shores; outdoor recreational lands; working farms and ranches; and historic or geologic sites.” It does this by dedicating 33 percent of net revenues from the existing excise tax on documents for 20 years.

State funds for land and water acquisition and conservation have been dramatically slashed in recent years. Passage of Amendment 1 ensures we can rebuild these programs. This funding is needed to ensure that natural recreational treasures, such as the Florida National Scenic Trail, can be expanded, protected and properly managed. We asked Aliki Moncrief, Deputy Campaign Manager for Florida’s Water and Land Legacy Campaign, to elaborate on the importance of Amendment 1:

Expanding and Improving Opportunities for Public Outdoor Recreation in Florida

Outdoor recreationists, from those who walk or ride in the woods to those who hunt and fish, have a vested common interest in maximizing opportunities to enjoy nature. Amendment 1, Florida’s Water and Land Conservation Amendment, is outdoor recreationists’ best hope for protecting and creating new outdoor recreation opportunities in the future. Amendment 1 is on this November’s Florida ballot, and it needs your support.

Florida is a worldwide leader in outdoor recreation because of the opportunities provided through its land conservation efforts over the past 30 years. In the future, Florida’s rapidly growing residential and visitor populations will place increasing demands on existing recreation areas and facilities. Rising energy and transportation costs will also create demands for additional inexpensive and close-to-home outdoor recreation opportunities. Improved access to public lands via trails and other user-supported facilities are critical to Floridians more fully enjoying their state’s natural legacy.

If current land conversion trends continue, some 2.5 million acres of high-priority conservation lands will be lost to urban development. Without additional well-managed public lands, people will find fewer areas where they can enjoy high-quality outdoor recreation experiences. In recent years, public recreation opportunities on private timberlands and other large privately owned tracts have diminished as they have been leased for private recreation or converted to development. Once a natural outdoor recreation area is lost to other land uses, it usually cannot be reclaimed, except with great difficulty and expense. This loss of public access has had the effect of shifting additional recreational pressure to existing public conservation lands in Florida, or to other states. Additionally, public access to the state’s coastline and waterways has steadily declined by development that only provides water access for private residents and guests.

The need for increased funding to provide more outdoor recreation opportunities is great. At the State level, revenue shortfalls and legislative caps on trust fund appropriations have disproportionately reduced the level of funds available for operations and maintenance, facility repairs and construction, and visitor services— all at a time when public demand and park visitation are reaching record levels. The situation is dire.

Amendment 1 is Florida’s best hope for protecting and enhancing outdoor recreation opportunities in Florida. There are many ways you can help pass Amendment 1: volunteering, making a financial contribution to ensure that Florida voters are informed about the measure, and of course, pledging to vote YES on Amendment 1 this November so we know we have your support! Learn more, volunteer, donate, and pledge your vote at http://voteyeson1fl.org
FLORIDA, NATURALLY

STORY AND PHOTOS BY DEB BLICK

The Little Blue Heron

A frequent sight along estuaries, rivers and trails near marshes is a small heron - about 2 feet tall - wearing a mantle of moody blue. Born white, the Little Blue Heron (Egretta caerulea) adopts adult plumage in the second year. If seen during the molting period, which starts at about 9 months, the birds are an artistic patchwork of white and slate-blue, sometimes called pied or piebald. One of the distinctive characteristics of this member of the heron family is the slender bill that in adults starts pale blue at the base and shades to black at the tip. When the sun strikes their feathers just right, the necks can take on a glossy maroon or purple cast.

It is speculated that Little Blue Herons wear white their first year of life as a protective measure. The immature white birds are better tolerated by ibis and other white egrets that feed in flocks. In a flock's company the immature Little Blues catch more fish and probably are better protected from predators. Herons are also notoriously territorial and if the babies were born blue, adult Little Blues would chase them away from the best hunting grounds. So being born white and morphing to blue upon adulthood works in favor of these stealthy, shore-line hunters.

Little Blue Herons build stick nests in trees sometimes frequented by other nesting and wading birds. In the case of the small colony on the Silver River where these photos were taken, the same nests were used earlier in the year by cormorants with the Little Blues taking over the nests for the summer season.

Little Blue Herons can be found year round in Florida. Their territory extends from southern Maine down the Atlantic coast, around the Gulf of Mexico, and on south into southern Brazil. In the United States their populations have been in gradual decline since the mid-twentieth century due to habitat loss, but they are not yet an endangered or threatened species.

Little Blue Herons are stalkers - slowly patrolling the water's edge and finding their prey by sight. Their diet consists of small fish, amphibians, insects and crustaceans.

If you can get close enough or can observe a Little Blue with binoculars you might see that a row of "teeth" along the Little Blue Heron's middle toe serves as a grooming comb. The bird uses this built-in comb to scratch its head, neck, and throat which cannot be reached with its beak.

The Little Blue Heron is a fairly long-lived bird in the wild, with the oldest banded bird reaching almost 14 years of age.
Get ready for the fall 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!)

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

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

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Deadline for chapter activities covering January - April to appear in the electronic version of the fall issue of The Footprint is November 15, 2014.

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

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ANNUAL FUND
Provides funds to ensure a steady income stream for Florida Trail Association operations. It’s how we keep the lights on and The Footprint coming.

ENDOWMENT FUND
Provides an ongoing endowment to the Florida Trail Association from interest earnings. It is the gift that keeps on giving.

TRAIL PROTECTION FUND
Supports land acquisition and trail construction projects with the ultimate goal of protecting the trail corridor and completing the entire Florida Trail. Independently funds programs like F-Troop, trail crews, and outreach to implement programs wherever they are needed within the Florida Trail System.

MAP FUND
Provides funding for updating the Florida Trail’s maps and databook.
UPCOMING CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

The Florida Trail Association offers activities 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. Activity Level is evaluated as Leisure, Moderate or Strenuous.

State-Wide Trainings and Opportunities

Sept. 27-28 – North Florida Region WFA/CPR- Silver Springs River Museum, Ocala
Oct. 11-12 – 2nd Annual Trail Skills Training – Oklawaha R.V. Park, Fort McCoy
Oct. 18-19 – North Florida Crosscut Training - Ocala OHV Center
Oct. 25-26 – Central/South Region WFA/CPR- Pine Jog Environmental Education Center, West Palm Beach
Nov. 1-2 – Central/South Region Chain Saw Training - Pine Jog Environmental Education Center, West Palm Beach
Nov. 8-9 – North Florida Region Chain Saw Training - Lake Bryant Work Center, Ocala
Nov. 8-9 – Panhandle Region WFA/CPR- St. Marks Volunteer Center, St. Marks
Nov. 15-16 – Panhandle Region Chain Saw Training - Wakulla Work Center, Crawfordville
To sign up or for more info contact Megan Donoghue mdonoghue@floridatrail.org

Oct. 10-18 – Panhandle Trace Hike - Annual hike from Alabama to Ft. Pickens, Gulf Islands National Seashore. Moderate to Strenuous. Day hiking with car camping in developed area campgrounds. Contact Christine Hale (850) 939-0966 markdart2@mchsi.com

Nov 7-9 – Panhandle Regional Conference - Compass Lake in the Hills, Alford, FL. Leisure, Public invited. The Gathering will focus mainly on hiking in the Chipola and Econfina Sections of our Panhandle Region. We'll have other short activities scheduled for those interested and the Compass Lake campus offers many amenities for your enjoyment including canoeing/kayaking, horseback riding, fishing, swimming and biking. http://www.meetup.com/hiking-central-panhandle/events/185861982/ Charissa Thacker charissa.thacker@yahoo.com

Nov 7-9 – South Regional Conference - Corbett Youth Camp. A fun weekend that includes workshops, informational programs, and hikes. Leisure. Public invited. Kay Clements (772) 463-1448 kayclements@comcast.net

Feb 21, 2015 – IDIDAHIKE - Stephen Foster State Park, White Springs. FTA’s annual hiking fund-raiser along the beautiful Suwannee River. Camping at Stephen Foster is very limited, so if you are interested in camping, make your reservations now. Public invited. More details in the Winter issue of The Footprint.

Apr 9-12, 2015 – FTA Annual Conference - All FTA members and the public are invited to this conference. This weekend will include interesting programs, workshops, auctions, raffles, great food, hiking activities, 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 the Winter issue of The Footprint.

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

Oct. 4 – Bike & Hike Shepherd Spring/Cathedral of Palms. We’ll trail bike 2 miles then hike about 1 mile to the scenic Cathedral of Palms and Shepherd Spring in St. Marks NWR. Pack a picnic lunch for 3+ hour nature adventure. Moderate, Public. Contact Lori Gilbertson (850) 420-0132 fta_trails4u.lori@aol.com or Carol Watkins (313) 319-9463 cwatkinsbabcock@gmail.com
APALACHEE CHAPTER CONTINUED

Oct. 8 - Wed P/M - Leon Sinks Geological Area. Three-mile after work hike along unpaved pathway through rolling hills and beautiful woods (20 different species of hardwoods and pines) over a section of the Woodville Karst Plain. This karst area features sinkholes and underground caverns which connect to the Floridan Aquifer (our water supply) via the longest underwater cave system in the U.S. Bring water and insect repellent. $3 per vehicle parking fee. Moderate, Public. Contact Cathy Briggs (850) 567-0506 / cbrieggs825@gmail.com or James Kimbrel (850) 524-0773 rdgraham@centurylink.net

Oct. 11 - Sat. - Apalachicola National Forest Trail Care. Trail clearing and blaze repainting on a segment of the FNST. Wear sturdy shoes, dress for the weather in "trail work" clothes, bring water, bug spray, personal medications, lunch. No limit. Moderate, Public. To sign up, contact Richard Graham (850) 878-3616 rdgraham@centurylink.net

Oct. 11 - Tue. - Chapter Program Meeting. Early Learning Coalition, Suite 70, Northwood Centre, 1852 North Martin Luther King Blvd., Tallahassee. Leisure, Public. For information, contact Liz Sparks (850) 570-5950 liz.sparks57@gmail.com

Oct. 11 - Tue. - Early Learning Coalition, Suite 70, Northwood Centre, 1852 North Martin Luther King Blvd., Tallahassee. Leisure, Public. For information, contact Liz Sparks (850) 570-5950 liz.sparks57@gmail.com

Oct. 12 - Wed. - Leon Sinks Geological Area Hike. Three-mile after work hike along unpaved pathway through rolling hills and beautiful woods (20 different species of hardwoods and pines) over a section of the Woodville Karst Plain. This karst area features sinkholes and underground caverns which connect to the Floridan Aquifer (our water supply) via the longest underwater cave system in the U.S. Bring water and insect repellent. $3 per vehicle parking fee. Moderate, Public. Contact Cathy Briggs (850) 567-0506 cbrieggs825@gmail.com or James Kimbrel (850) 524-0773 rdgraham@centurylink.net

Oct. 12 - Wed. - Introduction to Backpacking Overnight Trip. A one-night backpacking trip on the FNST within the Apalachicola National Forest. We will start with a moderate 5-mile hike from Porter Lake to Indian Creek campsite, spend the night at Indian Creek and then return to Porter Lake the next day. Limit 6 tents. Moderate, Public. To sign up, contact Louis Brooks (850) 383-0724 louisfbrooks@yahoo.com or Mike Tucker (850) 545-3489 tuckems@hotmail.com

Oct. 14 - Tue. - Chapter Program Meeting. Plan activities for January – March 2015. Location to be announced. Moderate, FTA Members Only. Contact Dawn Griffin (850) 599-6103 griffindd@aol.com

Oct. 14 - Tue. - Early Learning Coalition, Suite 70, Northwood Centre, 1852 North Martin Luther King Blvd., Tallahassee. Leisure, Public. For information, contact Liz Sparks (850) 570-5950 liz.sparks57@gmail.com

Oct. 15 - Sat. - Apalachicola National Forest Trail Care. Trail clearing and blaze repainting on a segment of the FNST. Wear sturdy shoes, dress for the weather in "trail work" clothes, bring water, bug spray, personal medications, lunch. No limit. Moderate, Public. To sign up, contact Richard Graham (850) 878-3616 rdgraham@centurylink.net

Oct. 16 - Sun. - Hike and Plant ID. A five-mile hike on the FNST along the scenic Sopchopy River. Participants will receive a list of trees with key field signs to aid in identification of plant species along the trail. A car shuttle will be arranged to allow for a one-way trip (north to south) which will take approximately 2 ½ hours. Limit 20 people. Leisure, Public. To sign up, contact George Weaver (850) 510-3288 weaver@psu.edu or Melanie Knapp (850) 339-8830 miz_melly@hotmail.com

Oct. 19 - Fri. - Introduction to Backpacking Overnight Trip. A one-night backpacking trip on the FNST within the Apalachicola National Forest. We will start with a moderate 5-mile hike from Porter Lake to Indian Creek campsite, spend the night at Indian Creek and then return to Porter Lake the next day. Limit 6 tents. Moderate, Public. To sign up, contact Louis Brooks (850) 383-0724 louisfbrooks@yahoo.com or Mike Tucker (850) 545-3489 tuckems@hotmail.com

Nov. 1 - Sat. - Tates Hell Hike. Explore the High Bluff Coastal Hiking Trail in Tate's Hell State Forest. Check-out: http://www.fromflorida.com/Divisions-Offices/Florida-Forest-Service/Our-Forests/State-Forests/Tate's-Hell-State-Forest. We’ll do out for lunch after the 4-mile interpretive hike. After the hike/lunch other options could include going to the Ralph G. Kendrick Dwarf Cypress Boardwalk and/or the Apalachicola National Estuarine Research Reserve Nature Center in Eastpoint. Moderate, Public. Contact George Weaver (850) 510-3288 weaver@psu.edu, Lori Gilbertson (850) 420-0132 / fta_trails4u.lori@aol.com or Carol Watkins (313) 319-9463 carolwkns@yahoo.com

Nov. 8 - Sat. - Torreya State Park Trail Care. Hiking the hilly Torreya Challenge Trail, we will clip off encroaching vegetation and remove fallen limbs. Bring water, lunch, and loppers, if you can. We will meet at 7:30 a.m. in Tallahassee for carpooling. Moderate, Public. Contact Jerry Herling (850) 878-3426 or Bob Gilley (850) 557-1536.

APALACHEE CHAPTER CONTINUED

Nov. 9-8 - Sat.-Sun. - Introduction to Backpacking Overnight Trip. A one-night backpacking trip on the FNST within the Apalachicola National Forest. We will start with a moderate 5-mile hike from Porter Lake to Indian Creek campsite, spend the night at Indian Creek and then return to Porter Lake the next day. Limit 6 tents. Moderate, Public. To sign up, contact Louis Brooks (850) 383-0724 louisfbrooks@yahoo.com or Dawn Brown (850) 545-0351 dbrown1948@embarqmail.com

Nov. 11 - Tue. - Chapter Program Meeting. Early Learning Coalition, Suite 70, Northwood Centre, 1852 North Martin Luther King Blvd., Tallahassee. Leisure, Public. For information, contact Liz Sparks (850) 570-5950 or liz.sparks57@gmail.com

Nov. 12 - Wed. - Leonard Sinks Geological Area Hike. Three-mile after work hike along unpaved pathway through rolling hills and beautiful woods (20 different species of hardwoods and pines) over a section of the Woodville Karst Plain. This karst area features sinkholes and underground caverns which connect to the Floridan Aquifer (our water supply) via the longest underwater cave system in the U.S. Bring water and insect repellent. $3 per vehicle parking fee. Moderate, Public. Contact Cathy Briggs (850) 567-0506 cbrieggs825@gmail.com or James Kimbrel (850) 524-0773 rdgraham@centurylink.net

Nov. 15 - Sat. - Apalachicola National Forest Trail Care Trail clearing and blaze repainting on a segment of the FNST. Wear sturdy shoes, dress for the weather in "trail work" clothes, bring water, bug spray, personal medications, lunch. Moderate, Public. No limit. To sign up, contact Richard Graham (850) 878-3616 or rdgraham@centurylink.net

Nov. 15 - Sat. - Bike, Seek & Destroy Invasive Plants! Various City of Tallahassee parks: E. K-Phips Park, Lafayette Heritage, or Tom Brown. 8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. Get great exercise and education during these monthly events co-organized by local chapters of the FTA & Florida Native Plant Association, plus The Nature Conservancy and the City of Tallahassee. Earn your place to hike (or ride or run) as well as a great lunch & beverages PLUS other prizes afterwards! You earn these great things by learning from experts about invasive plants, particularly Coral Ardisia, and removing as many pounds of them as you can. Bring water, bug spray, gloves, and clippers if you own them (we will have extras). Moderate, Public. Contact Karen Berkley (850) 570-5740 (can text) kjberkley@gmail.com or Susan Tanski (850) 891-5314

Nov. 16 - Sun. - Challenge Day Hike in the St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge. This series of hikes is designed primarily for hikers who would like to increase their endurance on the trail. We will start with an 8-mile hike and gradually increase to 12-14 miles by the end of winter. We will hike over flat ground and maintain a relatively brisk pace. Bring water and trail snacks for several hours of hiking. This activity is also appropriate for anyone wishing to train for overnight backpacking trips—especially the 150-mile FNST Relay in February/March 2015. Bring your pack loaded with 50-60% final load to start with. We will maintain a different pace for this group, if necessary. Moderate to Strenuous, Public. Contact Dawn Brown (850) 545-0351 dbrown1948@embarqmail.com

Nov. 22- Sat. - Spring Canyon (Gadsden County) Nature Hike. Enjoy an inspiring walk through Spring Canyon, a 100-acre private slice of heaven near Torreya State Park owned by Helen and Tom Roth. Helen will be our interpreter as we learn about the history of this paradise, her restoration efforts, and the fauna & flora—including several endangered species found along the ravines and in the long leaf pine forests. Hike distance will be about 3-3.5 miles and about 4-5 hours as we hike with some steep climbs while treading carefully to avoid damage to the sensitive ecosystems. Bring water, bug spray, lunch and the most expensive camera you can afford! Moderate, Public. Contact Mike Tucker (850) 545-3489 tuckems@hotmail.com
APALACHEE CHAPTER CONTINUED

Nov 23 Sun. - Challenge Day Hike in the St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge. This series of hikes is designed primarily for hikers who would like to increase their endurance on the trail. We started with an 8-mile hike and will gradually increase to 12-14 miles by the end of winter. We will hike over flat ground and maintain a fairly brisk pace. Bring water and trail snacks for several hours of hiking. This activity is also appropriate for anyone wishing to train for overnight backpacking trips—especially the 150-mile FNST Relay in February/March 2015. Bring your pack loaded with 50-60% final load to start with. We will maintain a different pace for this group, if necessary. Moderate to Strenuous, Public. Contact Dawn Brown (850) 545-0351 dbrown1948@embarqmail.com

Dec. 6 Sat. - Torreya State Park Trail Care. We will clip off encroaching vegetation and remove fallen limbs from the Torreya River Bluff Loop Trail. Bring water, lunch, and loppers, if you can. We will meet at 7:30 a.m. in Tallahassee for carpooling. Moderate, Public. Contact Jerry Herting (850) 878-3426 or Bob Gilley (850) 557-1536.

Dec. 6 Sat. - Day Hike in the St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge. A 12-mile hike on the Deep Creek Trail on the Florida National Scenic Trail within the refuge. The refuge was established in 1931 and encompasses 68,000 acres of longleaf pine, freshwater marsh and saltwater marsh. Must see! Strenuous, Public. Contact Gary Sisco (850) 545-4776 gsiscy042@yahoo.com

Dec. 7 Sun. - Challenge Day Hike in the St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge. This series of hikes is designed primarily for hikers who would like to increase their endurance on the trail. We started with an 8-mile hike and will gradually increase to 12-14 miles by the end of the winter. We will hike over flat ground and maintain a relatively brisk pace. Bring water and trail snacks for several hours of hiking. This activity is also appropriate for anyone wishing to train for overnight backpacking trips—especially the 150-mile FNST Relay in February/March 2015. Bring your pack loaded with 50-60% final load to start with. We will maintain a different pace for this group, if necessary. Moderate to Strenuous, Public. Contact Dawn Brown (850) 545-0351 dbrown1948@embarqmail.com

Dec. 9 Tue. - Chapter Program Meeting: Holiday Party & Potluck. Celebrate the season by joining our annual holiday potluck and gift exchange. Bring a dish to share (turkey/ham provided by the Chapter) and a wrapped gift to participate in the exchange. The gift should be trail or outdoors related if possible, and can be purchased-but-inexpensive, a white elephant, or hand-made. If you're feeling extra festive, write a short poem/limerick describing the gift! Early Learning Coalition, Suite 70, Northwood Centre, 1852 North Martin Luther King Blvd., Tallahassee. Leisure, Public. For information, contact Liz Sparks (850) 570-5950 or liz.aparks57@gmail.com

Dec. 13 Sat. - Fun Hike in the L. Kirk Edwards Wildlife Management Area (FWC public lands east of Tallahassee). About a 5-mile hike on tire tracks, starting in an open field before entering upland woods. Will stop at the St. Marks River where the bridge used to be, pass food plots and see Mud Sink, which drains the area. Bring water and lunch. If the group wants, we can drive to another entrance and walk to canal. Moderate, Public. Contact Wendy Dial (941) 320-6470 / wbiddle@gmail.com or Adrienne Ruhl (812) 293-1081 adriellenruhl@gmail.com and provide your full name, email address and best phone number.

Dec. 14 Sun. - Challenge Day Hike in the St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge. This series of hikes is designed primarily for hikers who would like to increase their endurance on the trail. We started with an 8-mile hike and will gradually increase to 12-14 miles by the end of winter. We will hike over flat ground and maintain a relatively brisk pace. Bring water and trail snacks for several hours of hiking. This activity is also appropriate for anyone wishing to train for overnight backpacking trips—especially the 150-mile FNST Relay in February/March 2015. Bring your pack loaded with 50-60% final load to start with. We will maintain a different pace for this group, if necessary. Moderate to Strenuous, Public. Contact Dawn Brown (850) 545-0351 dbrown1948@embarqmail.com.

FLORIDA CRACKERS CHAPTER

http://www.floridatrail.org/about-us/chapters/floridacrackers/

Oct. 4 Sat - Work Hike Lite. 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. 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 hard hat, gloves, and glasses (safety, sunglasses, or prescription.) Long pants and sleeves are recommended. Well-behaved dogs are welcome. For exact location contact Robin Lugar 352-284-3319, robinannie.lugar@gmail.com

Oct. 7 Sat. - Work Hike Lite. 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. 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 hard hat, gloves, and glasses (safety, sunglasses, or prescription.) Long pants and sleeves are recommended. Well-behaved dogs are welcome. For exact location contact Robin Lugar 352-284-3319, robinannie.lugar@gmail.com

Oct. 14 Sat. - Kayak Tuesdays - Juniper Run. Meet at 8:30 am at the canoe-kayak launch at Juniper Springs Recreation Area. Admission fees apply - $6, I think. We'll unload the kayaks there, then shuttle a few
FLORIDA CRACKERS CHAPTER CONTINUED

cars down to the take-out. Because of the twisting nature of the creek this trip will take about 5 hours on the water - approx. 6 hours including shuttle time. Bring lots of water, insect repellent, sun screen, shady hat, and snacks. Rather than a lazy float, Juniper is more like a fun roller coaster ride with many twists along a narrow way and low hanging vegetation at the start. It's a little different each time you run it, so just relax, go with the flow and expect a little adventure. Note: Juniper Creek has NO DISPOSABLE CONTAINER rule. Be prepared. NOTE: This trip is best done with short kayaks and short paddles! For more info about kayaking Juniper please http://fs-fl-yankeepake.places-to-explore/juniper-creek/ Rentals are available at Juniper Springs Rec Area / get there early and make your own arrangements if you need a rental. Deb Blick leading, ftcricket@windstream.net

Oct. 17 - Fri. - Work Hike. Come help keep the Florida Cracker sections of Florida Trail in the Lake Butler Forest and along the Suwannee well maintained. We lop, mow, brush cut, and remove fallen trees from the trail. 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. For exact location contact Robin Lugar 352-284-3319, robinannie.lugar@gmail.com

Oct. 24 - Fri. - Work Hike. Come help keep the Florida Cracker sections of Florida Trail in the Lake Butler Forest and along the Suwannee well maintained. We lop, mow, brush cut, and remove fallen trees from the trail. 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. For exact location contact Robin Lugar 352-284-3319, robinannie.lugar@gmail.com

Nov. 1 - Sat. - Work Hike Lite. 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. 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 hard hat, gloves, and glasses (safety, sunglasses, or prescription.) Long pants and sleeves are recommended. Well-behaved dogs are welcome. For exact location contact Robin Lugar 352-284-3319, robinannie.lugar@gmail.com

Nov. 4 - Tue. - Work Hike Lite. 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. 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 hard hat, gloves, and glasses (safety, sunglasses, or prescription.) Long pants and sleeves are recommended. Well-behaved dogs are welcome. For exact location contact Robin Lugar 352-284-3319, robinannie.lugar@gmail.com

Nov. 7 - 9 - Suwannee River Work Party Series. Come help keep the Florida Cracker sections of Florida Trail in the Lake Butler Forest and along the Suwannee well maintained. We lop, mow, brush cut, and remove fallen trees from the trail. Come for the day or the entire weekend. For more info contact Robin Lugar 352-284-3319, robinannie.lugar@gmail.com

Nov. 18 - Tue. - Kayak Tuesdays - Silver River. Meet up at Ray Wayside Park at 9 am. We'll concentrate on kayaking Silver Springs State Park for a great float back to Ray Wayside. About a 6 mile trip, this is one of the best rivers in Florida for viewing birds, gators, and (if we're lucky) monkeys. Bring a shady hat, lots of water, sunscreen and snacks. 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 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. Deb Blick leading, ftcricket@windstream.net

Dec. 2 -Tue. - Work Hike Lite. 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. These hikes will be about 3 miles total and last about 3 hours. Please

FLORIDA CRACKERS CHAPTER CONTINUED

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 hard hat, gloves, and glasses (safety, sunglasses, or prescription.) Long pants and sleeves are recommended. Well-behaved dogs are welcome. For exact location contact Robin Lugar 352-284-3319, robinannie.lugar@gmail.com

Dec. 5-7 - Suwannee River Work Party Series. Come help keep the Florida Cracker sections of Florida Trail in the Lake Butler Forest and along the Suwannee well maintained. We lop, mow, brush cut, and remove fallen trees from the trail. Come for the day or the entire weekend. For more info contact Robin Lugar 352-284-3319, robinannie.lugar@gmail.com

Dec. 12-14 - Suwannee River Work Party Series. Come help keep the Florida Cracker sections of Florida Trail in the Lake Butler Forest and along the Suwannee well maintained. We lop, mow, brush cut, and remove fallen trees from the trail. Come for the day or the entire weekend. For more info contact Robin Lugar 352-284-3319, robinannie.lugar@gmail.com

Dec. 16 - Tue. - Kayak Tuesdays - Rainbow River. Hopefully, the construction work at K.P. Hole County Park will be over by then. We'll paddle up to the head spring (1.5 miles) then float back down. Bring sunscreen, lots of water, a shady hat, and snacks. After the paddle we can share a late lunch together at a local eatery. K.P. Hole has kayak rentals available. If you need to rent, get there early and make your own arrangements. (If the park has not re-opened we'll still do Rainbow, we'll just meet at CR 484 - Dunnellon Blue Run parking area and paddle an up-and-back. No rentals available for this option.) Deb Blick leading ftcricket@windstream.net

INDIAN RIVER CHAPTER  http://www.floridatrail.org/about-us/chapters/indianriver/

Oct. 4 – Sat. - Trail Maintenance Hike. Three Lakes/Prairie Lakes - Meet at 7:30 a.m. at Sam's Discount Club, 4255 W New Haven Ave, Melbourne. Joe Allen 321-223-2769

Oct. 6 – Mon. - Monthly Chapter Meeting. Meet at 6:30 p.m. at the Melbourne Public Library on Fee Ave- nue in Melbourne – Socializing, Program (TBD) followed by a business meeting. Richard Louden-321-638-8804

Oct. 11 – Sat. - Leisure Hike at Wekiwa Springs. Meet 6:30 a.m. at Viera MacDonald's. Must call Activity Leader: Tony Flohre 321-723-6339 for information

Oct. 18 – Sat. - Kayak & Canoe on Econ River. Paddle from SR 419 to Snow Hill Rd. Meet at SR 419 bridge at 9:00 a.m. You must contact activity leader to participate and for additional details. Richard Louden 321-638-8804 lindaglouden@cfl.rr.com

Oct. 20 - Mon. - Bi-Monthly Planning Meeting. Meet at 6:45 p.m. at the Melbourne Public Library on Fee Avenue in Melbourne. Leader: Richard Louden 321-693-3820 lindaglouden@cfl.rr.com

Oct. 31 – Fri. - Halloween Hike – Bull Creek Cemetery – Meet at 8:00 p.m. at Sam's Discount Club, 4255 W New Haven Ave, Melbourne. Please call Tony Flohre 321-723-6339 for information

TROPICAL TREKKERS CHAPTER  http://www.floridatrail.org/about-us/chapters/tropicaltrekkers/

Oct. 8 - 17 - Tue. - Thur. - FNST Kicco to Christmas Backpack - Join us on a 10 day backpack trip start- ing at Kicco just south of River Ranch and ending at Christmas, Florida. Strenuous, FTA Members Only, Limit 6. Lori Burris 772-679-9378 lori.burris.swamptromper@gmail.com or Louise Cunha lcunha2@comcast.net
TROPICAL TREKKERS CHAPTER CONTINUED

Oct 13 - Mon. - Chapter Meeting - Palm City Recreation Center - This month's program will be a presentation by Wayne "Krispy Kritter" Petrovich, Chair of the FTA Long Distance Hiking Committee. He will discuss long distance hiking the Florida Trail. Leisure, Public. Bridget Kean, 850-212-2262, bridgek@comcast.net

Oct 14 - Tues. - Seabranch Trail Work - Now that we have finished the North Loop we will work on the South Loop. We will start at 4:00 pm. Leisure to Strenuous, Public. Audrey Minnis, 521-4964, aminnis@bellsouth.net

Oct 18 - Sat. - Oak Hammock Park Hike - Port St. Lucie. Short Hike - Come with us to enjoy this short hike in a beautiful little park in Port St. Lucie. Leisure. Kay Clements, (772) 463-1448, kyclements@comcast.net

Oct 19 - Sun. - Activity Leader's Workshop - All current activity leaders and those wishing to be activity leaders are encouraged to attend this workshop. It will give you important information on becoming an effective activity leader. A hamburger cookout is planned after the meeting so bring your spouse. Leisure. FTA Members Only. Kay Clements, (772) 463-1448, kyclements@comcast.net or Tom Clements thomasc09@comcast.net

Oct 25 - Sat - Hungryland/Pal Mar East Hike - Meet at the trail head 4 miles south of Bridge Road on Pratt Whitney Road(Rt 711) Gate #8, on the EAST side of the road. We will walk about 4 miles along a loop trail, first mile is a shared equestrian path among pine flats. We then follow a less marked trail through knee-high grasses passing two very pretty ponds. We may be walking through some wet areas, depending on the summer rains. Additional information will be provided closer to walk date. Moderate, Public, Limit 15. Jeanne Couillard, 772-546-0754, jsc7@bellsouth.net


Nov 1 - Rafael Sanchez Memorial Trail Work - Come help us clear one of the most interesting trails in our area. This trail follows the original shore line of Lake Okeechobee before the dike was constructed. Moderate to Strenuous, Public. Tom Clements 772-463-1448 thomasc09@comcast.net

Nov 10 Mon. - Chapter Meeting - Palm City Recreation Center. This month's program will be a presentation by Carlos Schomaker, FTA President. Leisure, Public. Bridget Kean 850-212-2262 bridgek@comcast.net

Nov 12 - Annual FNST Work Hike - This is our annual FNST trail work where we spend 5 days getting our section of the trail in good condition for the winter hiking season. As before we will camp at Kissimmee Prairie Preserve SP and work all of our sections of the FNST. Also, as usual, there will be a delicious Saturday night supper for anyone staying over. Leisure to Strenuous. Tom Clements 772-463-1448 thomasc09@comcast.net

Nov 15 - Bluff Hammock Canoe/Kayak Trip - Camping over at the S65C lock campground. Starting at Bluff Hammock and ending at the S65D access road, on the West side of the Kissimmee river. About 14 miles the first day and 13 the second. You must have your own equipment. Moderate to Strenuous. FTA Members & their guests Only. Limit 8 Boats. Lori Burris 772-879-9378 loriburris.swamptromper@gmail.com and Claudet Benton claudet1564@hotmail.com

Nov 18 - Tue. - Seabranch Trail Work - Come help us start clearing the East Loop. We will start at 4:00 pm. Leisure to Strenuous, Public. Audrey Minnis 521-4964 aminnis@bellsouth.net

Nov 29 - Sat - Jonathan Dickinson S.P. Hike - We will hike approximately 6 miles through Jonathan Dickinson State Park. Moderate, Public. Kay Clements (772) 463-1448 kyclements@comcast.net

TROPICAL TREKKERS CHAPTER CONTINUED

Dec 7 - Sun. - Christmas Party - We will celebrate Christmas and the past year with fun, food and good friends. Come join us at Halpatiokee Park. Leisure. FTA Members and their guests. Bridget Kean 850-212-2262 bridgek@comcast.net

Dec 9 - Tue. - Seabranch Trail Work - Come help us finish clearing the East Loop. We will start at 4:00 pm. Leisure to Strenuous, Public. Audrey Minnis 521-4964 aminnis@bellsouth.net

Dec 21 - Sun. - Observe Winter Solstice Sunrise - Watch the Winter Solstice Sunrise then walk on the beach if you wish and/or go to breakfast after the sun has risen. Jensen Beach Oceanfront Boardwalk Leisure, Public. Jon and Louise Hillen 772-335-8269.

Dec 27 Sat. - Work Off the Christmas Weight Hike - Rafael Sanchez Memorial Trail. We will hike approximately 6 miles along the original shore line of Lake Okeechobee before the dike was erected. It is mostly shaded with a few small ups and downs. Moderate, Public. Kay Clements (772) 463-1448 kyclements@comcast.net

Jan 1, 2015 - Observe New Year's Sunrise. Watch the New Year's Sunrise then walk on the beach if you wish and/or go to breakfast after the sun has risen. Jensen Beach Oceanfront Boardwalk. Leisure, Public. Jon and Louise Hillen 772-335-8269.