

Office of Greenways & Trails

Working to establish a statewide system of greenways and trails for recreation, conservation and alternative transportation purposes.



Cross Florida Greenway, Photo by John Moran

The Office of Greenways & Trails (OGT), a division within the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), provides statewide leadership and coordination to establish, expand and promote Florida's Statewide System of Greenways and Trails.

Originally established in 1993 to manage the Cross Florida Greenway in north-central Florida, OGT's programs have expanded to include management of State greenways and trails, land acquisition funding, trail development funding, formal designation of lands and waterways, planning assistance and public information. Our activities are governed by the Florida Greenways and Trails Act (Chapter 260, Florida Statutes).

State Greenways and Trails

OGT is responsible for managing the Marjorie Harris Carr Cross Florida Greenway, eight state trails and other lands as key components of the greenways and trails system.

Greenways and Trails Land Acquisition Program

The Office of Greenways & Trails Land Acquisition Program is a component of the State of Florida's *Florida Forever* program. At \$300 million annually, *Florida Forever* is America's preeminent state-level conservation land acquisition program. OGT's annual allocation is 1.5% of Florida Forever funding (\$4.5 million). Proposals for property acquisition originate with local entities and are brought before OGT for evaluation. No local matching funds are required. Any appropriate project may be considered, regardless of estimated property value. Title to property acquired through this program is retained by the State of Florida; the property is subleased to the local managing entity for trail development, operation and maintenance.

Funding to Develop Trails and Trail Facilities

OGT administers the Recreational Trails Program (RTP), a federally funded competitive grant program providing financial assistance to approved local entities. RTP provides reimbursement for the development and maintenance of recreational trails and related facilities, both non-motorized and motorized. Maximum award amounts are announced annually. A local match is required.

Designation of Lands and Waterways

OGT administers a program for formally designating public and private lands and waterways as part of the Statewide System of Greenways and Trails. The Designation Program helps to ensure an inclusive and interconnected system of greenways and trails; encourages voluntary partnerships in conservation, development and management of system components; provides recognition for individual components of the system and those partners involved; and raises public awareness of the conservation and recreation benefits of the Greenways and Trails System. Private landowners who agree to allow public access to their designated properties are provided liability protection by the State through a voluntary designation agreement.

Planning and Technical Assistance

OGT provides planning and technical assistance to local governments, developers, state and federal agencies, private landowners, and other interested citizens/advocates regarding the acquisition, establishment and management of greenways and trails projects. This assistance is provided by regional staff assigned along geographic lines.

Developing the Vision for the Statewide System of Greenways and Trails

Through close collaboration with local governments and trails advocates, OGT plans and refines the visioning maps that collectively comprise the Statewide System of Greenways and Trails. These maps display preferred routes for future trails and greenways, known as 'opportunity corridors.' These visioning maps include multi-use trails, hiking trails and paddling (canoe-kayak) trails. On behalf of OGT, the University of Florida's GeoPlan Center maintains a website (www.floridatrailnetwork.com) service where local planners can view the alignment of each opportunity corridor in detail and also upload the latest data for their own existing local trail networks.

Public Information

OGT provides information to educate and inform Florida's residents and visitors about the benefits of greenways and trails through special events, press releases, specialized media outlets and both print and online resource materials.

To view the latest OGT *Connections* newsletter, please visit www.FloridaGreenwaysAndTrails.com. To be notified about new issues of *Connections* by email, contact Carolyn.G.Thompson@dep.state.fl.us.



The Office of Greenways & Trails has partnered with Visit Florida and other organizations to create the Florida Bicycle, Hiking and Paddling Trails Guides. To download these brochures and other information about greenways and trails throughout Florida, visit our trail guide at www.FloridaGreenwaysAndTrails.com.



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