



CONNECTIONS

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Back by Popular Demand

By Cherie Graves

THE SILVER RIVER State Park was home base for the 2nd Annual Cross Florida Greenway Tour. Hosted by the Office of Greenways & Trails and The Trust for Public Land, the tour goal was to familiarize participants with the Marjorie Harris Carr Cross Florida Greenway (CFG), the Office of Greenways & Trails, and its programs.

While last year's tour was limited to bike trails, this year's tour allowed participants to experience the multiple personalities of the trails on the Cross Florida Greenway. Representatives from the FDEP's Division of State Lands and the Division of Recreation and Parks, The Nature Conservancy, Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, Florida Trail Association, and the Governor's Office enjoyed the drama of Santos bike trails, the serenity of a canoe trip along the Ocklawaha River, the adventure of hiking, boating, and birding within the CFG.

The tour began at Inglis Dam on Friday afternoon with options to bird or bike. Birders cruised around spoil islands created from dredging the barge canal, now home to a variety of waterfowl species.



February's chilly mornings segued into warm afternoons as Florida sunshine and physical activity replaced the need for morning's layers of sweats and windbreakers.

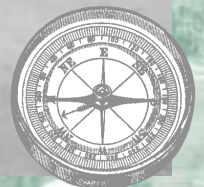
Bikers rode the Withlacoochee Bay Trail along the barge canal to the Gulf of Mexico.

On Saturday, a horse and buggy ride introduced participants to the Land Bridge spanning I-75 to connect the east and west sides of the CFG. Florida Trail Association's Kenneth Smith led hikers along a portion of the Florida National Scenic Trail that runs through the CFG. Others chose to ride the Santos trails where they discovered that spinning 15

minutes a day in the gym does not prepare the body for off road trails where curves, roots and fallen oaks with makeshift ramps demand full attention and immediate reactions.

Sunday options were paddling along the Ocklawaha River or horseback riding along the St. Johns Loop Trail in Palatka.

The weekend slid into Sunday evening, reenactment of see ANNUAL TOUR, page 4



INSIDE:

- 2 Florida Forever Funding
- 3 State Forest Trail Trotter Program
- 5 Hiking the Cross Florida Greenway

The Florida Department of Environmental Protection and the University of Florida have been working to identify landscape linkages necessary to maintain a functional statewide ecological network. Ten critical linkages have been identified. Look for more information in the next **Connections**.

Florida Greenways and Trails Council

By Carol Sheppard

THE FIRST Florida Greenways and Trails Council meeting of 2003 was held in Tallahassee on February 27-28. FGTC Chair Ken Bryan welcomed several new members. (See pages 6 and 7.) OGT staff reported on the status of acquisitions, changes to the acquisition rules and previewed issues of interest in the upcoming legislative session.

With a full business and orientation program, as well as field trips to two important Tallahassee greenways, this meeting created a good foundation for 2003. Council members expressed a spirit of enthusiasm, energy (and endurance!) and look forward to the activities and responsibilities of the coming year.



During a field trip to the Miccosukee Canopy Greenway, FGTC members enjoyed a presentation by Dick Henry of Bellwether Solutions on the use of sheep to control invasive vegetation. Leon County Parks and Recreation Director Paul Cozzie hosted Council members on field trips to both the Miccosukee and J. R. Alford Greenways, two significant properties that were acquired with OGT's support.

Tentative meeting dates and locations for the remainder of the calendar year:
 May 15-16, Ocala
 September 11-12, Tallahassee
 November 20-21, Pasco County

Called to Serve: Recovering Columbia

OGT'S Chris McKendree recently spent two weeks in Texas helping with the recovery efforts of the space shuttle Columbia. A former forest ranger, McKendree maintains his "Red Card," issued to individuals who have the necessary experience and have successfully completed training and the associated physical fitness (work capacity) test that qualifies them to work as a firefighter or as support personnel during emergencies. Military personnel in conjunction with NASA would usually conduct the recovery effort. However, because of the Middle East conflict, mili-



tary personnel are unavailable for the search effort. NASA wanted to find as many pieces of the shuttle as possible before spring, when new growth makes the search more difficult. McKendree was honored to have been selected as part of the recovery team, but was happy to return to Florida. 🐾

Florida Communities Trust

The third Florida Communities Trust Florida Forever grant cycle opened March 27 and will close June 10, 2003.

An estimated \$66 million will be available to local governments for land acquisition projects that help implement their comprehensive plans.

The Florida Communities Trust Board will meet on October 2 and 3, 2003, in Tallahassee to select projects for funding. Additional information is available on the FCT website at www.dca.state.fl.us/ffct/

Connections

is published quarterly by:

Department of Environmental Protection
 Office of Greenways & Trails
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 3900 Commonwealth Blvd.
 Tallahassee, FL
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Florida State Forest's Trailtrotter Program

FOR EQUESTRIANS unfamiliar with the hundreds of miles of trails in Florida's state forests, saddle up and enjoy towering pines, ancient oaks, wildlife, and as much solitude or as much company as you like. The Division of Forestry (DOF) has established the Trailtrotter program to invite riders to introduce themselves to Florida's thirty state forests.

Here's the deal:

1. The goal is to ride a total of 8 trails in at least 4 state forests, selecting trails from the Trailtrotter's Trail List at

www.fldof.com/Recreation/Trailtrotter/trail_list.html. At the trailhead, obtain one pre-paid postal survey card. Fill in the card and mail it after completing the ride.

2. Using the Trailtrotter's Log (www.fl-dof.com/Recreation/Trailtrotter/log.html), record your rides. As you send in your postal survey cards, the DOF will send you a sticker to affix next to the entry for each trail you ride.

3. When you have ridden and logged 8 trails, complete the Trailtrotter's Log and

mail it to DOF. You will receive a patch that can be sewn on a shirt, jacket, hat or any other item your needle can penetrate. In addition, you'll receive a certificate signed by Agriculture Commissioner Charles Bronson commemorating your achievement.

Riders can reach beyond Trailtrotter status by riding towards two more levels – Trailsaddler and Trailwrangler – an opportunity for equestrians to improve riding skills without the pressure of competition. Visit the Division of Forestry's website at www.fldof.com/Recreation/Trailtrotter/index.html for more information. 🌿



Move for Health

THE WORLD Health Organization (WHO) recently launched Move for Health as an annual global initiative to promote physical activity as essential for health and well being. In 2002, the World Health Report listed physical inactivity among the main risks contributing to global chronic disease mortality.

WHO proposes member states celebrate the annual Move for Health Day on May 10 this year. In connection with this initiative, WHO is encouraging a wide range of activities, from formulating local and national policies and strategic plans to increasing public participation in physical activity. Move for Health Day activities can include organizing walking, cycling and leisure sport activi-

ties in the community where you live. The campaign can continue with the development of parks and open spaces where people can enjoy physical activity.

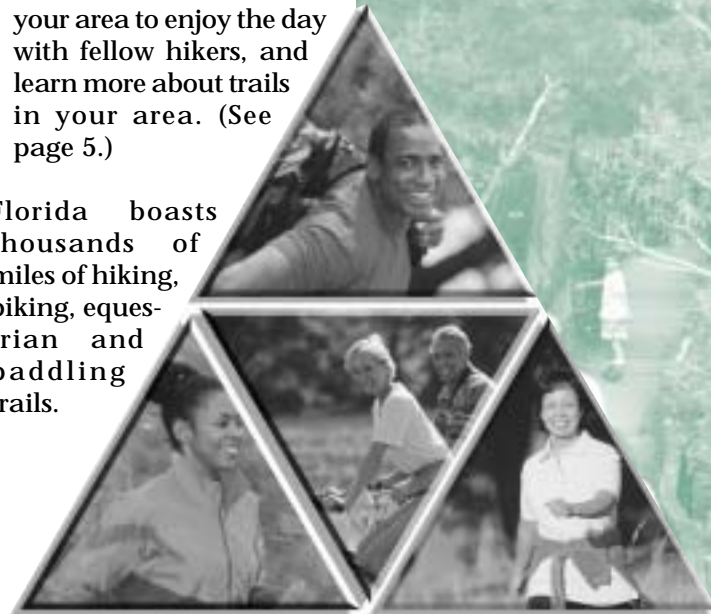
If you are looking for motivation, here are some opportunities in the Sunshine State.

- Florida State Parks Month is in May, visit a state park near you to hike, bike or paddle towards fitness. (See page 8.)
- If you are feeling really athletic, check out the 4th Annual Florida Coast to Coast Adventure Race on Memorial Day weekend. (See page 7.)
- National Trails Day is June 7, 2003. Visit a National Trails Day event in

your area to enjoy the day with fellow hikers, and learn more about trails in your area. (See page 5.)

Florida boasts thousands of miles of hiking, biking, equestrian and paddling trails.

Take one daily to improve health. To find trails near you, visit the online trail guide at www.FloridaGreenwaysAndTrails.com. The link to Move for Health can be found at the World Health Organization website at www.who.int.



2003 IMBA Report Card

For the third consecutive year, the International Mountain Bicycling Association (IMBA) has rated Florida's off-road trails with a B+.

With number, mileage, and type of trails, weather, and riders' attitudes factoring into the equation, Florida's mountain bike community continues to thrive. The annual Report Card attributes Florida's B+ to the many strong clubs that build and maintain trails within the sunshine state. The IMBA Report Card is one way to monitor the progress and trends of mountain biking to make sure opportunities keep moving in a positive direction, although there's not much to be done about the sand that keeps Florida from achieving an A+.

The IMBA is a non-profit organization that creates, enhances and preserves trail opportunities for mountain bikers worldwide. The 2003 IMBA Report Card is posted at www.imba.com.



OGT Field Manager Mickey Thomason

Wild Orchids on the Cross Florida Greenway

By Paul Martin Brown

AS PART of the Rare Plant Survey, Paul Martin Brown is documenting all the species and occurrences of orchids

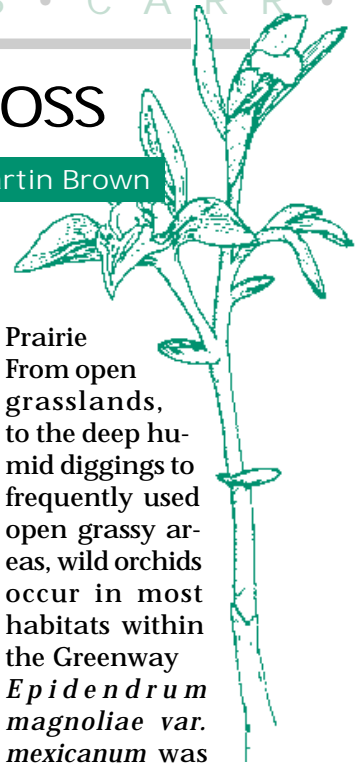


hoary leafless beaked orchid

throughout the Cross Florida Greenway (CFG) where wild orchids comprise one of the most significant plant elements. Brown has found 29 species – about 25% of the orchid species known in Florida. Equestrians and Florida Trail hikers have willingly shifted trails to protect the plants.

Current findings:

- 15 of the 29 species are listed as either endangered or threatened
- 5 species occur in the largest known populations in the world: *Habenaria quinqueseta*, *Spiranthes tuberosa*, *Triphora trianthophora*, *Sacoila squamulosa*, and *Corallorhiza wisteriana*
- 1 species, *Sacoila squamulosa*, is known only from this site in North America north of Mexico
- *Triphora trianthophora forma rossii* was named for Ross



Prairie

- From open grasslands, to the deep humid diggings to frequently used open grassy areas, wild orchids occur in most habitats within the Greenway
- *Epidendrum magnoliae* var. *mexicanum* was first documented for the United States from the CFG area
- Some areas are especially rich in orchids, with 14 species present

To report orchid sightings, please contact Brown at naorchid@aol.com.



Paul Martin Brown is a research associate at the University of Florida Herbarium at the Florida Museum of Natural History in Gainesville, Florida. Brown has discovered several new species of orchids, many of which are found in Florida.

Friends of Florida Trail Award

AT THEIR 2003 Annual Conference, the Florida Trail Association presented OGT Field Manager Mickey Thomason the Friends of Florida Trail Award for outstanding contributions to the design and construction of the Florida National Scenic Trail across the Marjorie Harris Carr Cross Florida Greenway (CFG). Thomason is a driving force in addressing user concerns regarding

routing, construction and maintenance of the various trails. He is available to resolve any user conflicts, thereby promoting harmony among the various user groups. According to Kenneth Smith, Section Leader for the Greenway West segment of the Florida National Scenic Trail, "Mickey is a fine administrator and leader, as well as an excellent 'hands on' manager in the field. He is truly a friend of the Florida Trail." 🌿

ANNUAL TOUR, from page 1

childhood's lively days admitted field trippers into the absolute sleep reserved for those with no regrets. Monday morning found them with deeper appreciation for Florida's efforts to preserve natural areas-habitats for the uncomplicated joy of playing outside on a Saturday morning. 🌿

Hiking the Cross Florida Greenway

By Rachael Augspurg

EACH WEDNESDAY in January 2003, the Florida Trail Association's Winter Hike Series covered a portion of the 30+ miles of hiking trail on the Marjorie Harris Carr Cross Florida Greenway.

This hiking trail was built by Florida Trail Association (FTA) volunteers under the leadership of Ken Smith, the Section Leader for the Greenway West segment of the Florida National Scenic Trail (FNST). Ken and crew began developing this area for hikers in 1997 as a part of a Western Loop Trail to be an alternate route through Central Florida for FNST thru-hikers. The trail is complete from the Marshall Swamp Trailhead near the Ocklawaha River to the Pruitt Trailhead near Dunnellon and the Withlacoochee River. This interesting and beautiful trail provided us with a very pleasant hiking experience.

During the four hikes we traveled through swamp, open prairies, old growth live oaks, pine flat woods, sand hills and shady hardwood forests. We passed tall concrete pilings, intended to support a highway over the barge canal had the project been completed, and large granite boulders scattered during canal excavation. We were duly impressed by being able to cross Interstate 75 on the Land Bridge, which was completed in 2000 and dedicated on September 30th of that year.

As we hiked through some of the historic diggings along the trail, we went over "hills" which were actually mounds of dirt and rocks left from the construction, now covered in vegetation and appearing to be a natural part of the terrain.

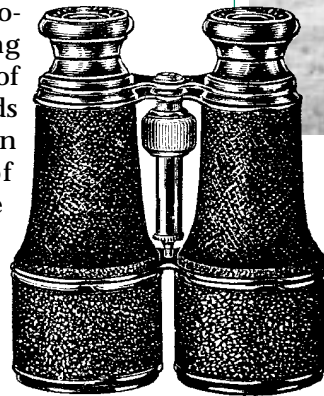
Part of the trail is located along the ridges of the mounds with open views of where the canal would have been. We really enjoyed having to climb a "switch back" – a rarity on Florida trails. The trail crossed eroded gullies and meandered along terraced areas – a result of changing from a ship canal to a barge canal, which meant making the canal wider, but not as deep. The entire series of hikes was a walking history lesson thanks to the Section Leader, Ken Smith, and trailmasters Sandy Friend and Will Reed kept us informed about what we were seeing along the way.

Each Wednesday we averaged 50 hikers, with over 75 people joining us for one or more of the hikes. Someone said we looked like a multi-jointed snake as we made our way through the forest in a strange looking conga line.

Everyone enjoyed being in a new area and agreed that



Hikers gather on the Cross Florida Greenway for a day of fun, fitness, and a walking history lesson.



this trail is a great place to hike. We extend our thanks to those FTA volunteers who built and maintain it. 🌿

Rachael Augspurg and her husband Lou are activity leaders for the Florida Trail Association and are members of the Central Florida Chapter of the FTA.

National Trails Day

June 7, 2003 marks the 11th year that the American Hiking Society has promoted National Trails Day throughout the United States, Puerto Rico, Guam and the Virgin Islands. "Healthy Trails, Healthy People" is the theme for this year's activities to encourage the public to use trails to improve health. Events include trail dedications, educational exhibits, gear demonstrations, instructional workshops and trail work projects. Since its inception in 1993, National Trails Day has grown to nearly 3,000 events nationwide. Millions of participants are experiencing the beauty and benefits of trails.

Visit the American Hiking Society's website at www.americanhiking.org to find an event near you. 🗺️

April 22, 2003
Earth Day
www.earthday.net



April 27-May 3, 2003
30th Annual National Volunteer Week
Celebrate the efforts of volunteers at the local, state and national levels. This year's theme is "Celebrate Volunteers - The Spirit of America!"
www.pointsoflight.org

April 29-May 1, 2003
The Nature Conservancy Natural Areas Training Academy
"Working Across Boundaries to Protect Ecosystems"
Gainesville, FL

May 10, 2003
Move for Health Day
www.who.int/en

May 10-18, 2003
National Tourism Week
www.tia.org/tourism

May 23-26, 2003
Florida Coast to Coast Adventure Race
www.floridaraces.com

June 1, 2003
Deadline to submit applications to the 2003 Kodak American Greenways Awards Program
www.conservationfund.org

June 7, 2003
National Trails Day
www.americanhiking.org

June 10, 2003
Deadline to submit applications for Florida Communities Trust Florida Forever Grant
www.dca.state.fl.us/ffct

July 17-20, 2003
Southeastern Equestrian Trails Conference
www.southeasternequestriantrails.com

December 6-9, 2003
National Public Land Conference
Amelia Island, FL

Resource Management on the Cross Florida Greenway

Rare Species Inventory

THE OFFICE of Greenways & Trails (OGT) has contracted with the Florida Natural Areas Inventories (FNAI) to survey rare plant and animal species on the Cross Florida Greenway.

The Greenway is known to harbor rare plants and animals and includes a wide diversity of natural communities that potentially support many rare species. FNAI will report on the status and management needs of populations of rare, threatened and endangered plant species and the major natural communities. Some of the target plant species include Florida Bonamia (*Bonamia grandiflora*), Pygmy fringe tree (*Chionanthus pygmaeus*) and Lewtons polygala (*Polygala lewtonii*).

FNAI zoologists will also develop survey schedules and identify potentially suitable habitats for each of the rare animal species on the Greenway list. Some of the species on the target list in-

clude the eastern indigo snake (*Drymarchon corais couperi*), Florida burrowing owl (*Speotyto cunicularia floridana*), scrub jay (*Aphelocoma coerulescens*) and the Florida mouse (*Podomys floridanus*).



Phase I of the inventory will be complete by June 30, 2003.

Rodman Campground

Rodman Campground reopened in February with power and water available at 15 of the 39 campsites. Six



Wildlife viewing platforms at Inglis.

picnic pavilions, a wetlands boardwalk, and boat launches have also been added to the site.

The Florida Trail runs from Buckman Lock adjacent to

the campground and across Rodman Dam into the Ocala National Forest. Hiking trails in this area total approximately nine miles.

Inglis

The boat ramp at Inglis Dam reopened in February with a new paved boat ramp, paved parking, and three covered wildlife viewing platforms complete with picnic tables.

Ocklawaha Canoe Trail

The St. Johns River Water Management District, the Florida Freshwater Fish and Conservation Commission, and OGT are establishing a canoe trail along the lower Ocklawaha River from Rodman Dam to Highway 19.

Workers are clearing and marking the side trails (we are using the tiny tributaries, not the main channel).

The next workday is scheduled for May. Trail maintenance will be conducted quarterly. Once cleared, the paddling trail will be marked with upriver and downriver signage. 🛶

Introducing the newest members of the Florida Greenways and Trails Council

Bill LaMee is a University of Florida graduate and former publisher of the *Bradenton Herald*. With a Florida family heritage that dates back to 1768, Mr. LaMee has a strong interest in preserving the state's natu-

ral resources for future generations. In 1998, he became one of the three founders of "The Great Outdoors Conservancy," a national land trust. He currently resides in Bradenton.

Jerrie Lindsey is serving on the Council as the agency representative for the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission. In her position as

see MEMBERS, page 7

MEMBERS, from page 6

Nature-based Recreation Coordinator, Ms. Lindsey is responsible for planning, design and implementation of recreation opportunities focused on wildlife viewing for Florida's wildlife management system. She has a particular interest in integrating recreation with interpretation.

Nels Parson is the Council's new representative for Water Management Districts. A fourth generation Floridian, Mr. Parson holds a degree in Park Technology and enjoyed a long career with the Florida Park Service prior to joining the St. Johns River Water Management District staff. As Land Use Coordinator for SJRWMD, he oversees recreational development and public use for more than 40 conservation areas that encompass over a half-million acres in Northeast Florida.

Bob Richardson is a Real Estate Developer who has resided in Sarasota since 1962. He is a past Chair of the Manatee-Sarasota Group of the Sierra Club and a former Member of the Board for the Big City Mountaineers.

Home base for Kathryn Starkey and her husband, J. B. (Trey) Starkey III, is in Pasco County where she serves on the Pinellas Anclote River Basin Board and the Pasco Builders Association Board. Ms. Starkey also participates in committee work for Citizens for a Scenic Florida, the Pasco County Citizens Ordinance Review Committee, the Citizens Advisory Committee to the Comp Plan, Scenic Pasco and All Children's Hospital Guild.

A complete list of FGTC members may be found on our website at www.FloridaGreenwaysAndTrails.com.

**The 2003 St. Johns River Summit**

THE 2003 St. Johns River Summit was held January 2003, with the Office of Greenways & Trails as an active participant. The summit attracted over 600 people on day one, which was dedicated to blueways, greenways and trails. Alex Weiss of OGT organized and presented the session focusing on the benefits of trails, greenways and blueways. Among benefits discussed were resource conservation, economic development, improved water quality, linked conservation areas, parks and open areas, increased community connectedness as well as improved personal health.

The second breakout session provided information on the nuts and bolts of developing a trail system. A group of county planners from throughout the St. Johns River watershed led the informative session.

A third session was designed to provide public comment on the concept of developing a regional trail network to be named after the river. Jena Brooks, OGT Director, opened the session discussing OGT's role in establishing a statewide system of trails and ecological corridors. Participants examined maps depicting existing and proposed trails, greenways and public lands within the watershed. The audience commented as to the maps' accuracy and concerns surrounding the need for additional river access, safety and education.

Coast-to-Coast Adventure Race

By Shelton Ansley

MEMORIAL DAY Weekend 2003 will mark the fourth year that the demanding Coast-to-Coast adventure race will be held in Central Florida. The Coast-to-Coast (C2C) continues to grow in popularity and is gaining recognition as one of the best. *Florida Sports* magazine awarded the C2C the Best Event with fewer than 500 participants in Florida for 2002 and the Fort Lauderdale *Sun-Sentinel* named it the Best Long Course Adventure Race in Florida for 2002. The C2C is gaining international recognition as well. *Adventure Sports Magazine* listed the C2C as one of the best multi-day adventure races in the world.

This year's race is described by race promoters as "longer and tougher than ever!" Beginning in Ormond Beach and ending in Cedar Key, racers will be challenged by various terrains including swamps, grasslands, oak meadows, lakes and rivers. As in previous years, portions of the race will be located on the Marjorie Harris Carr Cross Florida Greenway. Participants will paddle, hike, and cycle over 200 miles in Memorial Day heat and humidity. Those who compete in the elite division will be racing for spots in the 2003 United States Adventure Racing Association Long Course Adventure Racing National Championship and for cash awards.

For details and information on registration, visit Adventurous Concepts, Inc. at www.floridaraces.com.

This month, the Florida Education Association, the largest teachers' union in the southeast, included a story in their newsletter about OGT's Greenways and Trails Journey activity book, recommending it to their nearly 122,000 members as a teaching tool.

To reserve your copy, contact Mary Spivey at Mary.L.Spivey@dep.state.fl.us or call OGT's toll free number: 877-822-5208.

Visit FEA's website at www.feaweb.org for more references and resources for teachers.



May is Florida State Parks Month

Take the opportunity to visit a state park on May 17 (Armed Forces Day), when entrance fees at state parks will be waived. Over 150 parks cover more than 600,000 acres in one of the largest, most diverse state park systems in the country. Florida's state parks provide venues for camping and fishing along a river, for horseback riding under a canopy of oaks, for sunbathing along a sandy beach, for releasing restless energy, for quiet meditations. Visit www.FloridaStateParks.org to find a state park that meets your outdoor venue needs.



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