

HEARTLINE

No. 2

Apr. – Jun., 2011

**Heartland Chapter, Florida Trail Association,
Serving Polk, Hardee, Highlands and De Soto Counties**

FROM THE CHAIR:

What an exciting couple of months we in the Heartland Chapter have had. “The Bridge” has been built. You have been hearing about this bridge project for a year now. It was a huge undertaking for volunteers, but with the knowledge and skillful guidance from our chapter member and resident Engineer, Ken Williams, President of the Ridge Professional Group of Engineering and Design, Ken saved the day, literally. He not only put his Engineering skills to work to make sure everything was in its proper place and was assembled correctly, but also drew up a work flow so we could get the maximum work done with a minimum amount of movement to and from the bridge in order to cut down on the possibility of injuries, of which there were none. Due to his skillful supervision the bridge was completed ahead of schedule. David Butcher of the Lake Wales Ridge State Forestry Division was the master planner who managed to get the funds needed to purchase the materials for the bridge and our Section Leaders Jim and Rose Kellermann worked together with David and Ken to put a plan together and get it moving. The call went out to our FTA chapter members and friends throughout the state and you came in masses and you came with your shirtsleeves rolled up ready to work, and work you did, very hard work. As chapter chair I want to say a personal thank you to everyone who had any role what so ever in the construction of this bridge. It is beautiful and will be there for all to enjoy and use, thanks to all of you. We, the members of the Heartland Chapter, and David Butcher are having a grand opening celebration and dedication of the bridge on April 23, 2011 and would like all to come out and join us in this celebration. More information will be coming to you on this event.

In addition to the bridge project during the past couple of months was our Annual Conference. This year it was at the United Methodist Life Enrichment Center in Fruitland Park, FL. What a great place for the conference and what wonderful weather we had. It was a little cool in the AM, but made it enjoyable for the outdoor events and the night walk and star gazing. How nice of Tony Urzi to keep his telescope set up for us to walk by anytime to look at either the Sun (through a filter) or the stars at night. What a treat. The good snakes/better snakes seminar was a smash hit and the walls had to be moved inside the auditorium to make room for everyone wishing to be there. At the annual meeting we witnessed a changing of the guard, as they say. Our outgoing FTA President, Pete Durnell, handed the gavel over to the incoming President, Fred Davis. We also got to meet our new Executive Director, Dennis Miranda, who, by the way, will be visiting our Heartland Chapter at our May chapter meeting, which will be held at the Peace River Mosaic Park in Homeland, FL. I hope all of you will come out and welcome him to Florida and to our chapter of the FTA. Six of our members won awards this year; Ken Williams got a Special Service award for his contribution to our chapter and his work on the bridge project; Rose and Jim Kellermann got the Activity Leader Award for their very hard work organizing and leading the workers during the weeks we worked at the bridge site; Ian Ajac, David Waldrop, and Monika Hoerl received the John Weary Trail Worker award for their continued work at not just the bridge project, but at all the trail improvement projects they work. They are among the most consistent workers we have and we deeply appreciate them. David Butcher also won the Friend of the Florida Trail Award for his assistance in getting the funding, materials and help from his forestry division to get the bridge built at Arbuckle. We thank these people and everyone in our chapter for their dedication to the FTA. Spring is here and we have sprung forward in time. Get outdoors and enjoy the extra daylight. Come see us at the grand opening ceremonies and every chance you get, take a hike.



THANK YOU, KEN WILLIAMS

Thanks, Ken, we would never have done it without you!!!

Ken Williams, Chapter member and engineer, was the planner, director, and benevolent dictator of the successful completion of the 100' span bridge over Reedy Creek on the 20-mile loop trail in the Arbuckle Tract of the Lake Wales Ridge State Forest.

Ken volunteered at least 120 billable engineering hours with studying the bridge plans, phone conferences with the bridge manufacturers and preparation of the work plans and listing of needed materials, etc. Then he followed up with days of supervision as the foundations were laid and site preparations were made. The real work began when he quietly and expertly guided 30 to 40 over-eager, headstrong volunteers in constructing the bridge.

Even when mistakes were made and corrections were needed, he kept his cool and never lopped off anyone's head.

So thanks to you, Ken, we have a magnificent bridge over Reedy Creek and the entire loop can be hiked again.

CONTACT PERSONS: (Area Code 863 unless listed)

Chair: Betty Piper 293-3053 or bpiper2005@aol.com

Co-chair: Melissa Bruneau 605-3587 or melissabruneau@yahoo.com

Treasurer: Monika Hoerl 858-3106

Secretary: Liane Plumhoff 646-2398 or lplum@verizon.net

Activity Chair: Maureen Jones 293-5036 or mjones206@tampabay.rr.com

Membership: Ginger Ramsbottom, 439-0986

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Section Leader/Lake Kissimmee State Park: Betty Piper 293-3053 or bpiper2005@aol.com

Section Leader/Tiger Creek: Melissa Bruneau 605-3587 or melissabruneau@yahoo.com

Section Leader/Kissimmee River: Jim Hernandez 452-6650 or patjim83@embarqmail.com

Section Leader/Willingham: Bob Hummel 471-1814

Section Leader/Green Swamp East: Bob Yost 644-5448 or bobalinks2@aol.com

Section Leader/Southern End of Western Loop of the FNST: Janice Scroggie Anderson 813-245-1609 or scroggie@aol.com

ACTIVITIES: (If you have trouble reaching the contact person listed in the activity description, please contact Maureen Jones. If you can't reach her, please contact Betty Piper. Contact information for both is listed above.)

Date: April 2, 2011 – Sat

Activity: Day Hike, approx. 6 miles

Location: **Colt Creek State Park, Lakeland**

Description: This 5067-acre park within the Green Swamp Wilderness Area is comprised mainly of pine flat woods; cypress domes and open pasture land. This piece of pristine wilderness is home to many animal species including the American Bald Eagle, Sherman's Fox Squirrel, gopher tortoise, white-tailed deer, wild turkey and bobcat.

Bring: Snacks, drinking water, sun and insect protection.

Contact: Janice Anderson, phone 813-245-1609 or email scroggie@aol.com for meet-up time and other information. Also, please RSVP to the chapter online Meet-up page at <http://www.meetup.com/Heartland-FTA/calendar>.

Date: April 9-10, 2011 – Sat & Sun

Activity: Trail Maintenance

Location: **Along Kissimmee River south of Hwy. 60**

Description: Come for the day or camp primitively overnight.

Bring: Anything needed for camping; or for the day, snacks and/or lunch, drinking water, sun and insect protection.

Contact: Jim Hernandez at 863-452-6650 or patjim83@embarqmail.com for location and other details. Also, please RSVP to the chapter online Meet-up page at <http://www.meetup.com/Heartland-FTA/calendar>.

Date: April 16, 2011 – Sat

Activity: Day Hike – approx. 7 miles

Location: **Tiger Creek Preserve**

Group will meet at the Mini Mac Convenience Store, 910 N Scenic Hwy, Babson Park.

Description: Tiger Creek Preserve is located east of US 27 between Babson Park and Frostproof. The trail traverses the rolling hills of the Lake Wales Ridge, including some of the highest hills and oldest land in the Florida peninsula. Botanical diversity is extensive along this trail.

Bring: Snacks and/or lunch, drinking water, sun and insect protection.

Contact: Melissa Bruneau by phone at 863-605-3587, or email melissabruneau@yahoo.com for meet-up time and other details. Also, please RSVP to the chapter online Meet-up page at <http://www.meetup.com/Heartland-FTA/calendar>.

Date: April 23, 2011 – Sat

Activity: Day Hike, approx. 7 miles

Location: **Lake Wales Ridge State Forest, Arbuckle Tract**

Description: To inaugurate and celebrate the recently completed footbridge at Reedy Creek, we will hike to the new bridge, celebrate, and then hike back to the trailhead.

Bring: Snacks, drinking water, sun and insect protection.

Contact: Rose Kellermann at 863-676-2889 or Jrkellermann@hotmail.com for meet-up time, location and other details. Also, please RSVP to the chapter online Meet-up page at <http://www.meetup.com/Heartland-FTA/calendar>.

ACTIVITIES, CONT.

Date: April 30 – May 1, 2011 – Sat & Sun

Activity: Trail Maintenance

Location: **Green Swamp East, north Lakeland**

Description: Come for the day or camp primitively overnight. Meet at the Rock Ridge Rd. entrance.

Bring: Anything needed for camping; or for the day, snacks and/or lunch, drinking water, sun and insect protection.

Contact: Bob Yost at 863-644-5448 or bobalinks3@yahoo.com for meet-up time and other information.

Also, please RSVP to the chapter online Meet-up page at <http://www.meetup.com/Heartland-FTA/calendar>.

Date: May 7, 2011 – Sat

Activity: Chapter Meeting, short boardwalk hike, and potluck lunch.

Location: **Peace River Mosaic Park** (formerly known as IMC-Agrico Peace River Park) on CR 640 (Homeland-Garfield Road), off 17/98 in Bartow, FL

Description: *The Florida Trail Association's new Executive Director, Dennis Miranda, is planning to attend our chapter meeting. Come to the meeting to meet him and get to know him.* The boardwalk winds through a tall cypress forest along the Peace River, the site of an open-pit phosphate mine until the early 1980s. Interpretive signs give background information on the 1,800-square-mile Peace River basin. The forest becomes denser as you draw closer to the river, and watermarks on the trees show how deep this floodplain can flood.

Bring: A chair, drinking water, sun and insect protection and a dish to share at lunch based on last names beginning with A-H Dessert, I-Q Salad, R-Z Main Dish. Contact: Betty Piper at 863-293-3053 or bpiper2005@aol.com for meet-up time and other information. Also, please RSVP to the chapter online Meet-up page at <http://www.meetup.com/Heartland-FTA/calendar>.

Date: May 14, 2011 – Sat

Activity: Kayaking

Location: **Hunter Spring Park**, 101 NE 1st Ave., Crystal River, FL

Description: Kayaking on Crystal River, an area noted for the large number of manatees that populate the waters in and around Kings Bay.

Bring: Kayak, life jacket, brimmed hat, snacks and/or lunch, drinking water, sun and insect protection.

Contact: Val Valachovic at 863-956-2145 or email valwpv@verizon.net for meet-up time and other information. Also, please RSVP to the chapter online Meet-up page at

<http://www.meetup.com/Heartland-FTA/calendar>.

Date: May 21, 2011 – Sat

Activity: Day Hike, Approx. 5-6 miles

Location: **Green Swamp East, north Lakeland**

Description: Meet at the Rock Ridge Rd. Entrance.

Bring: Snacks and/or lunch, drinking water, sun and insect protection.

Contact: Janice Anderson, phone 813-345-1609 or email scroggie@aol.com for meet-up time and other information. Also, please RSVP to the chapter online Meet-up page at

<http://www.meetup.com/Heartland-FTA/calendar>.

ACTIVITES, CONT.

Date: May 27-29, 2011 - Fri-Sat-Sun nights or any no. of nights you choose

Activity: Camping, hiking, kayaking

Location: **Little Manatee River State Park**, 215 Lightfoot Rd., Wimauma, FL

Description: Camping, hiking, and kayaking at Little Manatee River S.P. (See separate listings below for hiking and kayaking which can be attended individually.) A group potluck dinner will be held on Saturday evening. Reservations for camping sites are the responsibility of each camping party.

Bring: Your own camping equipment and food, including a dish to share at the potluck dinner.

Contact: RSVP and submit your campsite number to Maureen Jones at 863-293-5036 or email mjones206@tampabay.rr.com. Also, please RSVP to the chapter online Meet-up page at <http://www.meetup.com/Heartland-FTA/calendar>.

Date: May 28, 2011 - Sat

Activity: Day Hike, approx. 6.5 miles

Location: **Little Manatee River State Park**, 215 Lightfoot Rd., Wimauma, FL

Description: From I-75, the park is located five miles south of Sun City, off U.S. 301 on Lightfoot Road.

Bring: Snacks and/or lunch, drinking water, sun and insect protection.

Contact: Bob Yost at 863-644-5448 or bobalinks3@yahoo.com for meet-up time and other information. Also, please RSVP to the chapter online Meet-up page at <http://www.meetup.com/Heartland-FTA/calendar>.

Date: May 29, 2011 – Sun

Activity: Kayaking 2-3 hrs. on the Little Manatee River

Location: Putting in at **Canoe Outpost**, 18001 US 301 S., Wimauma, FL 33598-4392.

Description: Kayaking will be one-way, down river to Little Manatee River State Park. Rental prices for canoes, kayaks, & double kayaks at: <http://www.canoeingfun.com/pricing.html> (print the page for \$2.00 discount). The outfitter will charge a shuttle fee for the return trip to the starting point. The cost will be dependent on the number of participants.

Bring: Snacks and/or lunch, drinking water, sun and insect protection.

Contact: Eileen Valachovic at 863-956-2145 or eileenvalachovic@hotmail.com for meet-up time and other information. Also, please RSVP to the chapter online Meet-up page at <http://www.meetup.com/Heartland-FTA/calendar>.

Date: June 4, 2011 – Sat

Activity: Annual Dinner

Location: TBD

Contact: Betty Piper at 863-293-3053 or bpiper2005@aol.com for details.

Date: June 11, 2011 – Sat

Activity: Bicycling

Location: The scenic Van Fleet Trail in Polk City.

Description: Meet at Berkley Rd., Polk City trailhead for a 20-mile ride. We will stop for breaks at 5-, 10-, and 15-mile intervals. Snacks and/or lunch and restrooms at the 10-mile break stop.

Bring: Helmet, water, snacks and/or lunch, sun and insect protection.

Contact: Maureen Jones, 863-293-5036 or mjones206@tampabay.rr.com for meet-up time and other information. Also, please RSVP to the chapter online Meet-up page at <http://www.meetup.com/Heartland-FTA/calendar>.

ACTIVITIES, CONT.

Date: June 18, 2011 – Sat

Activity: Kayaking

Location: Reedy Creek on Rucks Dairy Rd., Frostproof, FL at the bridge.

Bring: Kayak, life jacket, brimmed hat, snacks and/or lunch, drinking water, sun and insect protection. No kayak rentals are available.

Contact: Bob Yost at 863-644-5448 or bobalinks3@yahoo.com for meet-up time, directions and other information. Also, please RSVP to the chapter online Meet-up page at <http://www.meetup.com/Heartland-FTA/calendar>.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!!!

The officers and current members of the Heartland Chapter of the Florida Trail Association are pleased to welcome the following new members, who are listed in alphabetical order by last name(s):

Ken Black, Lakeland

Vivian Cintron & Lem Gonzalez, Auburndale

Bobbi Freeman, Haines City

Kurt Harvey, Lakeland

Michael Kensinger, Lakeland

Kyle Pochcial, Lakeland

Kenneth Thiele, Winter Haven

Bienvenido Torres, Lakeland

All members are appreciated and we thank you for your membership.

SUMMER 2011 HEARTLAND CHAPTER MOUNTAIN CAMPING TRIP

Join us Sat., Jul. 9 – Sat., Jul. 16, 2011 at Mortimer Campground, Grandfather District of Pisgah Nat'l. Forest. The campground is reached by Rt. 90 which heads northwest from Lenoir, NC. More detailed directions available upon request, and will be sent to confirmed participants.

In answer to those all important questions: YES! There are hot showers and flush toilets and YES! RV parking is allowed, but no hook-ups.

The cost will be approx \$10 per night per tent/RV. We can discuss camping fees further when we arrive at camp. As always, each person attending will need to put \$35 into the food kitty, and then "volunteer" with one or two other folks to cook for the group one evening. Each camper is responsible for their own breakfast, lunch, and snacks.

The area where we are camping is in the Wilson Creek area, and is secluded and quiet. It is about 15 minutes from the Blue Ridge Parkway, and near Linville Falls and Gorge. We will visit Moses Cone Park, Julian Price Park, Lynn Cove Viaduct, and tour the quaint mountain village of Blowing Rock. For those interested Linville Caverns and Grandfather Mountain are nearby. We will be a few miles from Brown Mountain and we may be able to see the mysterious "Brown Mountain lights". There are numerous creeks nearby, so plan to spend some time splashing in a mountain stream.

The hikes will be shorter and less strenuous than last year, so come prepared for a relaxing week and enjoy the cooler mountain air. The \$35 food fee should be given to Monika by the end of June. Please feel free to contact me for questions. Nanspath@aol.com or call me at 828-696-0732. Looking forward to seeing you all at camp! Until then, happy trails!

Nancy Needs

OUR CHAPTER'S WEBSITE ADDRESS

Our chapter's new website address is <http://heartland.floridatrail.org> and our chapter's online photo gallery can be found at <http://fta-heartland.smugmug.com>. For directions for submitting photos to smugmug, please email David Waldrop at david_lwfl@yahoo.com.

WHAT TO BRING ON A DAY HIKE

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|--|----------------------|
| Water or other beverage (at least 2 quarts) | Sunglasses and hat |
| Insect repellent | Sunscreen |
| Small first aid kit | Personal ID |
| Snacks and/or lunch, depending on length of hike | Rain gear, if needed |
| Sit upon or folding stool for lunch on the trail | |
| Plastic bag & at least 1 glove, if desired, to pick up & bring trash out | |

Be sure to tell someone at home where you are going and when you expect to return!

Florida Trail Association
Mission Statement

The mission of the Florida Trail Association is to develop, maintain, promote, and protect a continuous public hiking trail the length of the state of Florida, called the Florida National Scenic Trail, and other loop and side trails, together called the Florida Trail System; and to educate the public by teaching appreciation for and conservation of the natural beauty of Florida; and to provide opportunities to hike and camp.

RISK ASSUMPTION:

There are certain risks, which are inherent in any hike or other Florida Trail Association Activity. Each FTA member, guest, or non-member hiker agrees to accept personal responsibility for his or her safety and the safety of minors accompanying such persons. The Association cannot ensure the safety of any participant on hikes or activities. When participating in Association activities, each person agrees to hold harmless and free from all blame the activity leaders and the Florida Trail Association... it's officers and members... for any accident, injury or illness, which may be sustained from participating in Association activities.