



# FROGG

## Friends of the River of Grass Greenway

Volume I Issue 5

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### MARK YOUR CALENDAR

#### Tour de Picayune Saturday, April 23

A cross country bicycle race over old trails through the backwoods and swamps in Florida's 4<sup>th</sup> largest state forest - Picayune Strand State Forest is comprised of 78,000 acres with many cycling opportunities.

*see page 3 for details*

#### Tour de Marco Sunday, April 24

*see page 3 for details*

#### Happy 100<sup>th</sup> Birthday National Park Service Celebrate our Centennial Tamiami Trail Triathlon

*see page 3 for details*

#### Adventure Cycling National Bike Travel Weekend - June 3-5

*see page 3 for details*

#### Save the Date

**April 2, 2017**

*(tentative)*

10<sup>th</sup> Annual

Everglades Bicycle Ride



### 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Everglades Bicycle Ride

The greatest success of this year annual Everglades Bicycle Ride on March 13 was that it was a SAFE event for non-motorized enjoyment of the Everglades near the ROGG corridor. With a record number of participants in the 16-mile route, cyclists toured Everglades City and Chokoloskee including a visit to the historic Smallwood Store. The more adventuresome cyclists rode out to Janes Scenic Drive in the Fakahatchee Strand and continued through east main trail to the Fakahatchee "Hilton" where they were able to view the wildlife. For 62-miles, along the Tamiami Trail and



up through the Big Cypress to Deep Lake on SR29, over 50 cyclists enjoyed a beautiful day cycling in the Everglades (*Deb's energy bars recipe will be in the next issue*). Everyone returned to McLeod Park to enjoy a catered lunch, homemade brownies and calamondin cake (*see recipe on page 3*).

Thanks to all the participants and especially to the Everglades City community. Also, thanks to Fakahatchee Strand Preserve State Park Ranger Tom Mosley and the Friends of Fakahatchee volunteers Linda and Steve Koreny, Dino Barone, and Cathy Hatch as well as Naples Pathways Coalition volunteers Joe Bonness, Jane Cheffy and Jack Calvani; our local volunteers Geri Freiberger, Linda Williams, Sue Evans, Kris Moll, Marlene Sassaman, and Steve Huff; our support vehicle staff from Island Bikes and Big Momma's Bicycles; Skip Riffle and his Bikes for Tykes crew; the Smallwood Store, Sgt. John Wargo with the Collier County Sheriff's Office; and Mayor Sammy Hamilton and City of Everglades City. Pam Hilton and her staff at Triad Seafood Café provided an outstanding seafood lunch. Also, a special thanks to our sponsors: Shurr Adventures, Wooten's Airboat Tours / Captain Jack's and Snook Publications.

ROGG's Mission Statement: The River of Grass Greenway is a safe, non-motorized transportation and recreation corridor across the Everglades between Naples and Miami that provides opportunities for education, stewardship, and preservation of the environmental, historic, and cultural assets of this unique area.

## ROGG Master Plan and Feasibility Study Update

The completion of the three and a half year study for the River of Grass Greenway is close at hand. The publication of the Master Plan and Feasibility Study will be announced and information on accessing it online will be provided on the Friends of the River of Grass Greenway website [www.evergladesROGG.org](http://www.evergladesROGG.org) when available. This process has involved extensive research and public comments. The project team with AECOM as its consultants have worked with the steering committee and held a number of public meetings throughout south Florida in order to complete this portion of the project. Over the past six months FROGG has continued to increase public awareness and gather support for the proposed pathway by speaking to clubs/organizations and setting up informational booths at various south Florida events. Many more steps are required for further evaluation and study of the project as funding becomes available, including Project Development and Environment (PD&E) studies, Cultural Resource Assessment Surveys (CRAS), Environmental Analysis (EA) or Environmental Impact Statements (EIS) and Project Engineering (PE) studies. Stay informed by becoming a member of FROGG!



### Membership News

In addition to the success of our annual cycling event, we increased our membership by 40% including 10 new members from the bicycle ride. We would like to recognize our first LIFETIME MEMBER Theresa Bonness for her substantial donations over the years! Also, following the bike ride Jim Nici of Naples became our second LIFETIME MEMBER with his generous donation. THANK YOU SO MUCH! We would encourage everyone to ask your friends to join FROGG and help support our efforts for safe cycling in south Florida. We are corresponding and meeting with other "Friends" groups in this area to network and coordinate our work. What can you do? Help spread the word and forward this newsletter to anyone who might be interested. Join online at [www.evergladesrogg.org](http://www.evergladesrogg.org) or complete the attached membership form.



### Along the Trail ... FDOT Projects

The road improvement project east of US41 & SR951 included adding bike lanes, a sidewalk, and a 10-foot shared use pathway. Many locals now use these new amenities as they commute to work and for shopping in addition to enjoying the recreational benefits of walking, running, and bicycling along this section. Long-distance cyclists and day travelers are also taking advantage of the safety features along this corridor. Signs have been installed to alert motorists to "YIELD TO BIKES" and "BIKE LANE ENDS" where the road narrows 3½ east of SR951.

The re-surfacing of the 11 miles between Port of the Islands and Everglades City (SR/CR29) has been completed with smooth shoulders (without the raised pavement markers). On April 5 the new white striping with the audible/vibratory markings along the edge of the shoulder was being painted with a durable paint, **not** the thermoplastic which is considered to be "slippery" for cyclists.

**FROGG continues to communicate with FDOT about road improvements for cyclists along US41.**



### Big Cypress Bend Boardwalk

The roadway construction at Big Cypress Bend Boardwalk has been completed; this includes a turning lane across from the Indian Village (south side) and a deceleration lane (north side) for the entrance to the new Fakahatchee Strand parking lot. The shoulders are smooth so easy biking along this section of US41.



#### FROGG Board Members

Dayna Fendrick (Naples) Patty Huff (Everglades City) Alan Musico (Marco Island)  
 Oscar Rattenborg (Ft. Myers) Judy Waldman (Homestead)

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## RECIPE



At our recent bicycle event, many participants requested a copy of the recipe for our local homemade dessert so here it is! Enjoy! It's easy; just find someone who has the fruit tree or call Calamondin Café in Ft. Myers to order a box. Telephone 239.288.5535 or visit online at [www.calamondincafe.com](http://www.calamondincafe.com).

### Calamondin Cake

by Patty Huff

Wash calamondin fruit, split in half, remove seeds and put fruit (with skin) into a blender and purée.

Ingredients for cake:

- ½ cup calamondin purée
- 1 pkg yellow (moist) cake mix
- 1 pkg lemon Jello pudding & pie filling
- 1/3 cup milk
- 4 large eggs
- 1 TBS lemon extract
- ½ cup salad oil

Ingredients for glaze:

- 4 TBS butter (softened)
- ½ cup calamondin purée
- 2 tsp lemon extract
- 2 cups confectioners' powdered sugar and pinch of salt

Set oven at 300°.

Combine cake mix and jello; add milk and mix well. Add eggs one at a time. Combine extract, oil and calamondin purée and oil. Add slowly to batter. Bake in a greased and floured bundt pan for 55 to 60 minutes until cake pulls away from sides of pan. Turn out and glaze while hot.

**Glaze:** Combine all ingredients and spread on hot cake (use more powdered sugar if necessary for glaze to make stiff frosting). ENJOY!

## Bicycle Safety

by Alan Musico

Safety is always a concern when cycling; and motorist education regarding Florida Law continues to be an important goal of various cycling advocacy organizations. Over the years, we have seen many more 'Share the Road' and '3 Foot to Pass' signs installed on our roadways.



However, this addresses only half the problem. Cyclist behavior and compliance with the law also plays a significant role in preventing accidents. Most cyclists would be surprised to find out that in nearly half the recorded vehicle/cyclist incidents, the cyclist was at least partially at fault.

Enjoy the many Bike Facilities in Collier County – Bike Responsibly!

- Wear a Helmet at all times
- Use Lights when Riding at Night - Wear Bright Clothing

When Riding in Roadways – Obey the Law, Avoid a Ticket!

- Always Ride with Traffic, Stay Right
- Obey all Stop Signs and Traffic Signals
- Use Hand Signals for Turns

When Riding on Sidewalks or Shared Use Paths

- Bikes must Yield to Pedestrians on Sidewalks & Paths!
- Give Audible Signal (Bell or Voice) when passing

**Be Courteous**

**Remember: "Share the Road" is a Two Way Street!**



Proceeds from the sale of the Share the Road license plates supports the bicycle education and safety missions of Bike Florida and the Florida Bicycle Association. Visit [www.sharetheroad.org](http://www.sharetheroad.org)

## Tour de Picayune Saturday, April 23



We encourage folks to attend (which this year has **free** registration), try the trails or volunteer. Mountain bikes or fat-bikes are recommended and hybrids okay for some sections, but not all. Start at 7:15 a.m. at Sabal Palm Rd in Naples. For information, contact Wes Wilkins at (239) 353-1648.

## Tour de Marco Sunday, April 24

Ride through the back hills of Marco Island. Bike up the highest hills in Southwest Florida over the hill roads that lie on top of ancient Calusa Indian shell mounds: 5, 15, or 30-mile options. (239) 285-6785.

## Happy 100<sup>th</sup> Birthday National Park Service Celebrate our Centennial Tamiami Trail Triathlon

Complete 100 miles in 2016 of hiking, biking and paddling in at least two of the four National Park units in south Florida to celebrate the NPS 100 years! This triathlon is designed to encourage people to try different ways to see the diverse habitats of the Everglades and experience the many recreational opportunities along US41.

<http://www.nps.gov/ever/planyourvisit/tamiami-trail-triathlon.htm>

## Adventure Cycling National Bike Travel Weekend June 3-5

Bike to your favorite campground during National Bike Travel Weekend. For info, visit:

<https://www.adventurecycling.org/about-us/calendar-of-events-adventure-cycling-association/national-bike-travel-weekend/?month=6&year=2016&categoryID=&relatedID=>

## OFF-ROAD TRAILS

### *Bear Island*

by Dayna Fendrick

*Photos by Tara Saathoff-Wells*



For those who want to get off the beaten path, or off the urban bike lane, Bear Island offers a chance to experience a variety of beautiful Everglades' ecosystems and trail conditions.

Bear Island is 38,000 acre unit of the Big Cypress National Preserve, managed by the National Park Service. There are two (2) access points; one is off of SR 29, 4 miles north of I-75. There is a gate on the east side of the road which is usually unlocked. Pass through this gate, and there is a second vehicular gate which is locked, unless you have a permit. There is a person/bike gate which is always open. Park here, and take care to not block the private driveway. The second access is off of Turner River Road, 21 miles north of US 41 – this is a limerock road, be prepared for dust! There is a Ranger shack at the entry and you can park here – pull off so you don't block the gate.

Primitive camping and hunting is allowed within the Preserve; if you want to do more than a day trip, be sure to fill out a backcountry permit and pay for your campsite, many of which are very scenic and have nice big Live Oaks for shade. Primitive restrooms are also available at the campgrounds. Be aware of the hunting seasons, and be sure to wear high visibility attire if you visit during hunting season! We rode during turkey season and had positive interactions with several hunters (one friendly young fellow found and returned my lost cell phone!). It is recommended that you fill out a backcountry permit even for a day trip of biking – just in case NPS needs to do a sweep of the area in the evening to account for folks who have not returned to their vehicles.

The trails are limerock road, with several alternative sections and routes. You can vary the length of the ride from 10-20+miles depending on which segments you choose to ride. Mountain bikes or hybrids are best suited for this terrain. Your skills for dodging potholes will improve as the day goes on. It is advised to do this in the dry season, as it is quite wet during the rainy season.

The trails traverse a variety of natural ecosystems, with shaded sections of Cypress wetlands & adjacent canals, other areas of open prairies and some Pine Flatwood/Live Oak uplands. Expect to see wildlife – on our first trip, we spotted a Florida Panther on the trail ahead – he saw us and just casually turned around and sauntered off into the woods' edge. Thrilling, as this was the first panther we had ever seen in over 30 years in South Florida!



You probably will also see lots of different birds, as well as gators sunning themselves along the shoulder, some of which you may come upon unexpectedly in which case our advice is to keep on riding! Pass as far away as possible, even though sometimes you don't even know they are there until too late!

The best parts of the trails are the ORV sections, which are really fun! This is where you get to test your mountain biking skills – lots of big wash-outs, gulleys and ups & downs! The ground can quickly switch from mud to hard pack to soft sand, so picking a line, looking ahead, and keeping up momentum are skills that will keep you upright (most of the time). I ended up in the palmettos on one of these gulleys! The easternmost trail includes a big hill, which we think was constructed as an ORV challenge; this provides an excellent vantage point to view miles out over the Glades. We opted not to go down the steep side of the hill; we'll save that for the next trip! All in all, enjoy the beauty and diversity of the Everglades, and you can know that the few people you encounter also value and share the love of this unique environment.

The most up-to-date map of designated trails for all units of the preserve is available at website: <https://www.nps.gov/bicy/planyourvisit/designated-trail-implementation.htm>.

For more information, call the Big Cypress Preserve Welcome Center at (239) 695-4757.