



FROGG

Friends of the River of Grass Greenway

Volume I Issue 6

website: www.evergladesROGG.org

ROGG, P O Box 5031, Everglades City, FL, 34139

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Summer 2016

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

see page 3 for details

**Happy 100th Birthday
National Park Service
Celebrate our Centennial
Tamiami Trail Triathlon**

**Bike to Your
National Park Day
September 24**



**4th Annual
Share the Road
Celebration of Cycling
October 28-29
Gainesville, FL**

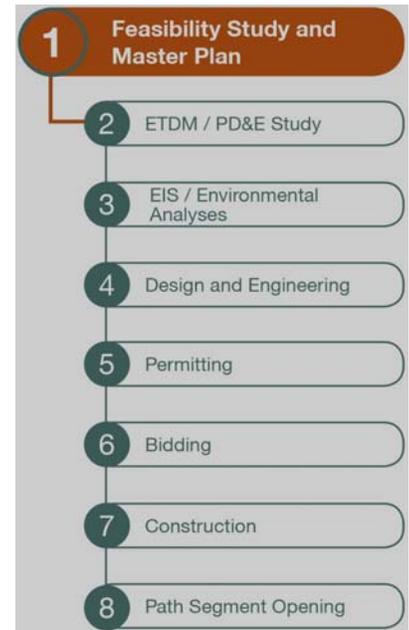
***Save the Date*
April 2, 2017
10th Annual
Everglades Bicycle Ride
same great event – new
route for on road riders**



ROGG Master Plan and Feasibility Study Completed!

After four years of research, public workshops and input, the Master Plan and Feasibility Study for the River of Grass Greenway has been completed! Please visit our website www.evergladesROGG.org to download a copy of the final document. Many more steps are required for further evaluation and study of the project as funding becomes available (*see chart*).

- EDTM = Efficient Transportation Decision Making
- PD&E = Project Development & Environment
- EIS = Environmental Impact Study
- EA = Environmental Analysis



Hiking and Cycling the Everglades



*Amenities along the
Tamiami Trail
U.S. 41
between
Naples and Miami*



For more information, visit website
Friends of the River of Grass Greenway
<https://www.evergladesROGG.org>

Updated Map/Brochure

At the FROGG Board meeting in April it was decided that our Brochure on “Facilities along the Tamiami Trail” developed in 2008 needed an update. The new brochure will soon be available online on our website as well as in printed form to be distributed to various area bike shops, Chamber of Commerce offices and businesses along US41. This light-weight glossy brochure includes a map and provides both hikers and cyclists who are traveling between Naples and Miami a valuable source of information. Please email us if you would like to receive a copy.

Remodeled Website

We have just launched a completely new “remodeled” website with a link to the Final ROGG Master Plan & Feasibility Study, past newsletters, places to visit along the Tamiami Trail, current conditions while cycling on US41 as well as other information regarding both on and off-road trails, and much more!

Take a few minutes to go online and visit www.evergladesROGG.org. We would appreciate your feedback. Also, if you have a story to tell about hiking or cycling the Tamiami Trail, please let us hear from you at info@evergladesROGG.org.

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.

What is the SUN-Trail Program?

The SUN (Shared-Use Non-motorized) Trail program funds the development of a statewide, paved, multi-use trail network for bicyclists and pedestrians. It is the paved component of the Florida Greenways and Trails System (FGTS), and the Florida Department of Transportation Central Office, Systems Planning Office, administers the program. The Office of Greenways and Trails, within FDEP, provides statewide leadership and coordination to establish, expand and promote the FGTS, pursuant to Section 260, F.S., Florida Greenways and Trails Act. The FGTS Plan establishes Florida's vision for a statewide trail network; it includes existing, planned and conceptual trails and ecological greenways. The River of Grass Greenway (ROGG) is listed on the Florida Greenways & Trails Priority Map and the SUN Trail Network Eligibility Map. For additional information visit www.FloridaSunTrail.com, www.FloridaGreenwaysAndTrails.com, and http://www.dep.state.fl.us/gwt/FGTS_Plan/default.htm.



FROGG Board Member News



FROGG Board Member Patty Huff has been elected to the Florida Bicycle Association Board of Directors. FBA's vision for Florida is to be a state where bicycling is safe, respected and encouraged as a means of transportation and recreation. This is also FROGG's dream for south Florida. Patty serves on the newly established Legislative Committee with other FBA members: John Komoroske, President of the Sumter Landing Bicycle Club, and Heather Neville with Velofest in St. Augustine. The priority initiative will be a "vulnerable road user" bill and a strategy for the off session to engage FBA members and to educate legislators. What can you do to help make Florida a safer place to walk and cycle? Spread the word and forward this newsletter to anyone who might be interested in joining FROGG (www.evergladesrogg.org) and the Florida Bicycle Association (www.floridabicycle.org).

News Along the Trail ...

FDOT Pathway Project

This FDOT road project is the result of a 2009 Transportation Enhancement grant for the design of a pedestrian/bicycling pathway from 6L Farm Road in east Naples to San Marco Road (CR92). This is an example of how FDOT utilized an existing cleared area behind trees on the far west end and going east was laid out to go around existing trees (*as per photo*). ROGG would do the same, through site-specific design for each segment, minimizing impacts by utilizing existing features & rest stops. This pathway parallels US41 along the boundary of Collier-Seminole State Park. When completed (scheduled for the end of September), it will provide pedestrians and cyclists access to safer transportation and will link to the Park's 3.5 mile off-road hiking/biking trail along marsh, hammock and pine flatwood. The 8.5-mile stretch between Collier Blvd (CR951) and CR92 will have only a 2-mile gap of separated pathway (6L Farm Road west to Greenway Road) which will be constructed when the 2-mile road section is widened to 4 lanes in the future. **FROGG continues to communicate with FDOT about safety improvements for cyclists along US41.**



Monroe Station Destroyed by Fire



On April 9, the historic Monroe Station burnt to the ground as the result of a photography activity whereby one man climbed onto the roof to conduct "Spinning" also known as "painting with light" which involves taking a piece of steel wool that is lit and swinging it in a circular fashion. This produces a photo similar to a giant sparkler. Two additional men from the ground photographed the event. A fire was sparked and the three men tried unsuccessfully to put it out. Monroe Station was one of six way stations constructed in the late 1920s along the Tamiami Trail to service motorists. In 2000 the structure was added to the National Register of Historic Places. Since 2005 the National Park Service had been seeking financial support for the stabilization and restoration of the structure. In the ROGG Master Plan it was listed as one of the historic sites and possible rest stops along the corridor.

Bridge Construction

The next phase of building a bridge on the eastern section of the Tamiami Trail is scheduled to begin this summer with completion anticipated for early 2020. The construction of a new 2.6-mile bridge will advance restoration objectives by allowing additional freshwater flow in the Everglades National Park and improving ecological conditions. The site of the new bridge is about 7 miles west of Krome Avenue, near Everglades Safari Park, about 4 ½ miles west of the one-mile bridge which opened in March 2013; similarly, it will also have 10-ft wide paved shoulders but no separated pathway for pedestrians and cyclists. This is a joint project between the National Park Service and FDOT; cyclists should take note of possible construction zones in this area during the next four years.

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

Deb's Energy Bars

DRY MIX

¾ cup toasted oats
¼ cup toasted sesame seeds
¼ cup apricots, diced
¼ cup dates, diced
½ cup raisins & craisins
1/3 cup coconut flakes
1/3 cup nuts (mostly walnuts),
chopped

HOT MIX

1/3 cup corn syrup
2 Tbsp. brown sugar
3/8 cup peanut butter
(chunk style)
1/8 cup almond butter

Line a 11 x 17 pan with parchment paper. In 325° oven, toast rolled oats for 30–40 min, stir frequently. Toast sesame seeds. Iron skillet recommended. Alt = oven. 5–7 min. In large bowl, combine dry mix. In small sauce pan, bring syrup + sugar to roiling boil, stirring constantly. Remove from heat and stir in peanut and almond butter.

Add hot mix to dry mix and combine until uniform. Put in 11 x 17 pan. Press until it evenly fills bottom of pan. Refrigerate 2 hrs. Cut into bars. ENJOY!

This is the recipe for the energy bars served at the Deep Lake turnaround during our 2016 Everglades Bike Ride. There are endless substitutions that can be made for your preference of dried fruit, nuts, syrup, nut-butter, etc.

Happy 100th Birthday National Park Service Celebrate our Centennial Tamiami Trail Triathlon

Complete 100 miles of hiking, biking and paddling in at least 2 of the 4 National Park units in south Florida! NPS encourages people to see the diverse habitats of the Everglades and experience the many recreational opportunities along US41. Visit website: <https://www.nps.gov/ever/planyourvisit/tamiami-trail-triathlon.htm>



Marco Island Bike Pathways News

by Alan Musico

Some of you may have noticed the marked Bike Lanes along 951 that were put in as part of the Route 41 interchange improvement. Follow Collier Blvd. South over the Jolley Bridge onto Marco Island, and you will also notice a newly installed **Shared Use Path** along Tigertail Court onto Hernando Drive to Tigertail Beach; a great place for bikers to stop for some rest and relaxation to break up a day on the road. For those coming from the South over the Goodland Bridge, also completed this year is an extension of the **Shared Use Path** along San Marco Road, which now runs the width of the Island from Barfield Drive to Collier Blvd. Plans are in already place to extend this Pathway to the bridge where it will connect to the Goodland Pathway; and hopefully, with the help of Collier County, it will extend all of the way to Route 41 where it will connect to the River of Grass Greenway.

Al Musico is Chairperson of the City of Marco Island Bike Pathways Committee, a volunteer committee that was established in 2006 to promote safe and convenient bicycle access to all parts of Marco Island.

Bike to Your National Park Day September 24

Explore your parks and public lands by bicycle with thousands of people across the country on the same day. Join the celebration of the National Park Service's Centennial, Adventure Cycling's 40th, and National Public Lands Day (free entrance day in some parks). Visit: <https://www.adventurecycling.org/about-us/40th-anniversary/bike-your-park-day/>

Share the Road Celebration of Cycling "Healthy Communities / Healthy Economies" October 28-29, Gainesville

Program

Jim Sayer, Executive Director
Adventure Cycling
Global Bicycle Tourism On The Rise. What Can Florida Do?

Sara Petyk, Owner, Bike the GAP
What Florida can learn from the success of the Great Allegheny Passage

Nelson Mongiovi, Director of
Marketing Operations, Visit Florida
Leveraging Visit Florida's Global Reach for Cycle Tourism.

Herb Hiller, Travel writer, father of
Florida cycle tourism
Connecting Cycling to Florida's Natural, Historical and Cultural Assets

This event is co-hosted by the Florida Bicycle Association (FBA) and Bike Florida who will facilitate the morning session on Friday with a focus on bicycle tourism. FBA will facilitate the afternoon session called "Trails and Streets Summit." For more information, visit website: <http://www.sharetheroad.org/celebration-of-cycling-2016/>



10th Annual Everglades Ride April 2, 2017

Save the Date!! We are thinking of new routes for the 16-mile course and the possibility of the 62-mile route going west to Port-of-the Islands (instead of north on SR29). We would appreciate your feedback; just email us. FDOT eliminated the raised markers on the shoulders and the route is safer. The 27-mile on/off-road route will continue through the Fakahatchee Strand Preserve with the option to ride to the "Fakahatchee Hilton". To register and more information, visit Race Roster at <https://raceroster.com/events/2017/9232/everglades-bike-ride>

Biking the Fakahatchee and Picayune Strands by Craig Woodward

(*excerpts from the Coastal Breeze News* www.coastalbreezenews.com)

For several years, I have joined members of the Naples Mid-Day Optimist Club on rides through the Picayune. We started at Sabal Palm Drive off of SR 951 (just north of Verona Walk), biked east about 4 miles, turning to the left on a meandering road that was in very poor shape and continued through open prairie which was quite desolate, with few trees and miles of open brush and some scrub pine. The dirt road continued to get worse with many potholes and washout areas, including large sections of sugar sand that was impossible to bike through, and places with voids that had been filled with small boulders the size of cauliflower heads. Everyone was riding mountain bikes or hybrids as the route would have been virtually impassable for a road or touring bike. The road started to loop to the south and then east, ending up connecting with one of the old platted, but unpaved, streets—78th Avenue SE— which would lead us into Miller Blvd, a north-south major artery in the old Southern Golden Gates Estates which, in its day, was planned to be the “largest subdivision in the United States” – an area covering over 57,000 acres!

We headed south down Miller Blvd which, considering it was paved in the early 1960's, is still in pretty good shape. Fortunately, someone had wisely painted on the road surface the names of the avenues we were crossing as almost all of the street signs are gone. Which makes sense as almost all of the lateral streets now have the asphalt removed, but even with small, new growth vegetation the old corridors remain mostly clear. I was particularly interested in seeing this, as for well over ten years, a title company I co-own – First Title and Abstract – represented the State of Florida in their repurchase of the literally thousands of 2-acre lots sold to 17,000 unsuspecting buyers in the early 60s. It was interesting to speculate – how many of these buyers ever really saw the land they purchased? We had heard stories over the years of people given plane rides and the pilots dropping small bags of sand to show them the location of their lot. Fortunately, I had no time to go exploring for old worthless bags of sand! We made good time heading south as we counted down streets looking for our left turn at 100th Ave South – also known as Stewart Blvd. After about 6.5 miles, we spotted the spray painted sign on the road and headed due east.

As we crossed each of the three old concrete bridges, we looked north and south at the long dredged canals which had been constructed in the early 60s to drain the land and create thousands of residential lots; it made one feel rather sad. Fresh water, by the millions of gallons, the lifeblood of this unique ecosystem, is continuing to flow slowly south through these artificial waterways, as it has been moving day and night for 50 years into the confluence of the canals, located just north of the old Remuda Ranch, then pouring over the weir adjacent to U.S. 41, under the bridges at Port of the Islands, down the long straight Faka-Union canal, and finally completing its journey thru the Ten Thousand Islands into the Gulf of Mexico. The environmental damage to the Picayune can only be truly understood by comparing it to the Fakahatchee.

As we continued east on Stewart, we hit the point where the government has now removed the asphalt surface and the road turned to gravel again, as it is being converted from a road to an access corridor. Bulldozers were seen working to the south where De Soto Blvd had once been. The most eastern Golden Gate canal is now totally removed, replaced with fill sections and small ponds or lakes, with the bridge also gone – giving one a glimpse into the future restoration of the Picayune. This massive construction project is designed to restore the sheet flow of water over 85 square miles of land, so that it will flow again south into the Ten Thousand Islands National Wildlife Refuge and

southwest into Collier Seminole State Park. They are removing 227 miles of roads and plugging 83 miles of canals as part of this extensive project. The most important feature is that it should reduce the freshwater flowing into the Faka-Union Canal and thus improve the salinity levels in the estuaries.



At the end of Stewart we stopped and had lunch at the informational sign describing the Picayune and Fakahatchee Strands. We entered the Fakahatchee Strand Preserve through the western entrance of Janes Scenic Drive. What a relief it was to immediately bike under the shade canopy of large cypress trees, looking to each side of the road and see dark standing water and view a short distance into what can only be described as a primeval jungle. The evaporation of all of this standing water dropped the temperature even more in sharp contrast to the dry, hotter Picayune Strand. The roadbed improved to hard packed sand with a small gravel surface – ideal for biking – while the heavy vegetation gave us a relief from the wind.

While both the Picayune and the Fakahatchee had been logged for cypress in the 1940s and 50s, only the Picayune was drained for development – the huge environmental impact is obvious and one wonders how many decades it will take for it to be truly restored? We biked east and south winding through this State Preserve and it was clearly the highlight of the trip. As we got closer to Copeland, we crossed the beautiful open prairie running north and south that lies just west of SR29 and white tailed deer could be spotted.

While biking through Lee Cypress, the old logging camp constructed by the Lee Tidewater Cypress Company in the late 30s and early 40s, it reminded me of the first time I had been in this town in 1968. In those days, there was a small sign at the entrance to the town that was painted with two arrows- one pointing left and one right – and above the arrows it said “Blacks, Whites” – so things have changed!! The houses were all cypress wood, mostly unpainted: the residences of the loggers who worked the area; today most of the residences are mobile homes and the old railroad tracks in the back of the town along with the locomotive used for logging is gone, certainly changing the old charm of the town. That railroad engine can now be seen at the Collier County Museum in Naples. We biked south on SR 29 crossing U.S. 41 at Carnestown and the rest of the ride was like going home for me, as my wife and I have a weekend house in Everglades City. We arrived around 2 pm after a just over 4 hour bike trip, covering about 38 miles. Most of the group took off early Sunday morning to ride back to Naples, but it was a one way trip for me. This bicycle trip is well worthwhile and highly recommended for those who plan properly, travel in a group, and want to spend a day experiencing the “real Florida.” There is no better way to see how the restoration of the Picayune Strand is progressing than to see it first hand and at a slow pace.

**Note: Two of the four canals are now filled (photo of Merritt Canal by Maureen Bonness).*