



FROGG

Friends of the River of Grass Greenway

Volume I Issue 4

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MARK YOUR CALENDAR

EVERGLADES SEAFOOD FESTIVAL

Everglades City

February 12-14, 2016

evergladeseafoodfestival.com

ANNUAL EVERGLADES RIDE

March 13, 2016

Everglades City

REGISTER NOW

[www.caamevents.com/event/
everglades-ride/](http://www.caamevents.com/event/everglades-ride/)

Tour de Parks A bicycle ride to support the Legacy Trail

March 20, 2016

REGISTER NOW

[www.friendsofthelegacytrail.or
g/2016-registration-testing/](http://www.friendsofthelegacytrail.org/2016-registration-testing/)



*Celebrate March with Florida
Bicycle Association and Alert
Today Alive Tomorrow!*



FROGG participated in the Miami WHEELS event **November 13-14**, at the annual Big Cypress Swamp Festival on **December 5** with approximately 800 hundred people in attendance, and on **January 16** at the Art-in-the-Glades in Everglades City. FROGG will continue to take part in future events: at the Everglades Seafood Festival on **February 13**, the MSD Festival on **February 27**, and the Everglades Bike Ride on **March 13**. If you are in the area for any of these festivities, please stop by and learn more about safe bicycling in South Florida.

Board Member Patty Huff attended the Florida Bicycle Association quarterly board meeting in Ft Myers on January 23 and the Friends of the Literacy Trail meeting in Osprey, FL, on February 2. FROGG is networking with state and regional bicycle advocacy organizations who encourage and support safe bicycling in southwest Florida and throughout our state. Be a part of our mission and join FROGG today. Visit www.evergladesROGG.org to learn more.

ROGG Master Plan and Feasibility Study Update

As discussed in the last newsletter, the Master Plan and Feasibility Study is in its final stage of completion and is expected to be available in March (we will keep you posted as soon as the link to the final plan is posted). The study has taken four years of project team/steering committee work and public meetings. During this time period FROGG has continued to do everything possible to increase public awareness and support for the proposed pathway. In addition to the informational booths at various events, we have been giving presentations to county representatives, organizations and anyone interested in learning more. We have been distributing brochures around south Florida about cycling along the Tamiami Trail. If you can think of anything else we can do, let us know. We will continue to focus on safety and environmental education and stewardship for those hiking, walking, or cycling through south Florida and the Everglades. What can you do? Help to spread the word and grow our membership by forwarding this newsletter to anyone who might be interested. A membership form is included with this newsletter. We look forward to hearing from you!

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.

Along the Trail What's Happening on US41 – west end

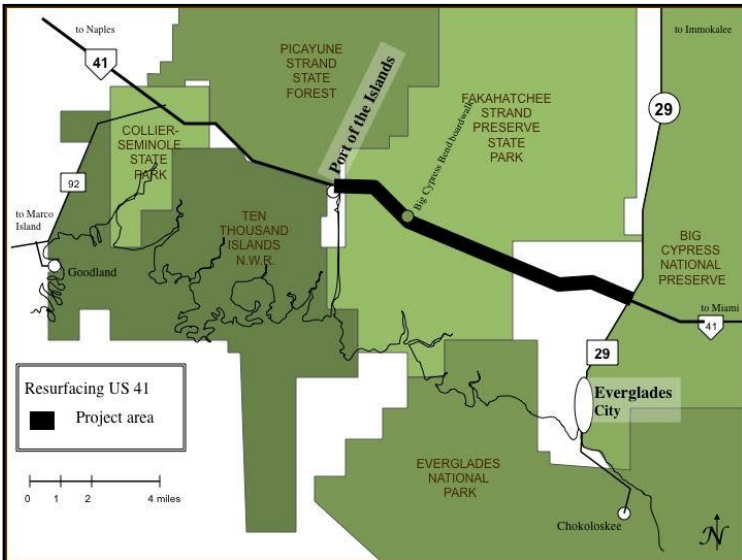


Ribbon Cutting Ceremony

On January 21 a Ribbon-Cutting Ceremony was held at the corner of US41 and SR/CR951 in east Naples. The project realigned the intersection to improve a skew that was a safety concern. It added bike lanes, a sidewalk, and a 10-foot shared use pathway on the east side of Collier Boulevard that connects to other FDOT improvements on US41. *Photo courtesy of the Collier County Communications and Customer Relations Division.*

Resurfacing Project on Tamiami Trail

Currently FDOT is resurfacing 11 miles of US41 between Port of the Islands and Everglades City (SR/CR29). Cyclists should take note there are lane closures and one-way traffic in this area.



Dayna Fendrick (as well as other FROGG members) was instrumental in the decision by FDOT in December to eliminate the raised reflectors along this section of US41 during this resurfacing road project. Dayna is Chair of the Pathways Advisory Committee of the Collier County MPO. Following up on her emails, the FDOT replied **“Our design of the narrow bridge marking treatments for this project will not have any Raised Pavement Markers (RPM) within the shoulder when you approach the bridges. This has been and will be the theme for**



most of the projects along this portion of US 41. We elected to use Audible/ Vibratory Marking instead of the RPM's for these narrow bridge treatments. This Audible/ Vibratory Marking will not be within the shoulders, but along the white edge line.” (see photo right). As resurfacing continues along this corridor, FROGG will continue to campaign for appropriate design to ensure safety along US41.



Fakahatchee Strand Big Cypress Bend

As you drive along US41 between Port of the Islands and Everglades City, in addition to the resurfacing project, you will notice the black silt barrier which is in preparation for work by the FDOT on a deceleration lane. This is to provide a safe turn-off for the boardwalk's new entrance and parking area. The new entrance and visitor center will open up a new trail Boardwalk system. There will be a new parking area, a bridge across the canal and a link to the existing boardwalk. There are no plans to add a bike lane at this time, but cyclists need to be aware of the construction taking place in this area.

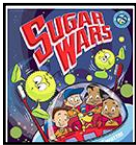


EVERGLADES SEAFOOD FESTIVAL

February 12 - 14

The Everglades Seafood Festival is just around the corner starting with Family Night on Friday night and continuing through the weekend. This annual event draws 30,000 visitors to historic Everglades City with a music fest, arts and crafts booths and lots of seafood. This year's leading artist is American Idol star Nadia Turner. Come have fun and join the festivities. See website for more information:

www.evergladeseafoodfestival.org



National Children's Dental Health Month

Saturday, February 13

FROGG has been invited to participate in the National Children's Dental Health Fair to be held from 10 am to 4 pm at Golisano Children's Museum of Naples. Leslie Paris will provide information about FROGG and its goals of providing healthy alternatives for children in Florida.



A bicycle ride to support the
LEGACY TRAIL
SUNDAY, MARCH 20th 2016

Tour de Parks Sunday March 20

62, 35, & 20-mile scenic, fun rides!

Start and finish at the historic
Venice Train Depot

303 East Venice Ave in Venice, FL

You may register for the Tour de
Parks with one of the following
three methods:

**Register online and pay by credit
card [here](#),**

**Register online at Active.com, or
View the [TDP 2016 Registration
Brochure](#), then print, complete,
and mail in the registration form.**



*Celebrate March with Florida
Bicycle Association and Alert Today
Alive Tomorrow!*

EVERGLADES BIKE RIDE Sunday, March 13, 2016

Everglades City

Join us for a ride in the Everglades!
Cyclists will have an opportunity of
experiencing the ride of their
choice, at their own pace.

In addition to the bicycle ride,
participants will be provided a
continental breakfast, free bike
repairs compliments of Bikes for
Tykes of Naples, SAG support, tour
of the historic Smallwood Store
Museum in Chokoloskee, a seafood
lunch with a special treat of
homemade local calamondin cake.
All rides start/end in "downtown"
Everglades City near City Hall.

For cyclists who wish a short
ride, there is a 16-mile (or 8-mile)
route winding through historic
Everglades City built in the 1920s,
then cycle across the mangrove-
dappled causeway to Chokoloskee
Island which arguably has the most
colorful history in Collier County.

For cyclists wanting a more
challenging ride, you can choose
from two longer distance routes.
The 27-mile off-pavement route
includes Fakahatchee Strand, an
intimate encounter with nature
through pristine cypress forest
famous for its orchids and
bromeliads. The 62-mile paved
route includes 17 miles along US41
in Big Cypress National Preserve
through quintessential Everglades
with scenes of cypress forests
juxtaposed by stunning prairies,
then a stretch along CR29 to view
the wilds of Fakahatchee, then tour
the historic fishing village of
Everglades City and Chokoloskee
Island. For more information, visit
www.evergladesrogg.org and click
on Everglades_Ride for specific
routing information.

Glades Biking in the Morn' at Shark Valley

Feb 28, March 13, April 10

9:30 am to 12:30 pm

Join a Park Ranger for a 15-mile
bike ride out into the Shark River
Slough. Bring your own bicycle or
rent one for \$18.00. For
information, call (305) 221-8776.

Tamiami Trail Triathlon

The Tamiami Trail Triathlon is not
your typical triathlon, nor is it a race
against the clock or other
participants. Normally, participants
can do each leg at their leisure, in
any order, and on any day they
choose. They don't even have to
complete all the legs in one day. But
on specific Sundays, rangers will be
leading visitors on special one-day
events to experience it all! It is a
great way to experience the diverse
habitats and recreational
opportunities offered along the
Tamiami Trail / U.S. Highway 41.
The Tamiami Trail Triathlon is
designed to encourage people to try
different ways to see the diverse
habitats of the Everglades. Ranger-
led events are being offered on
February 21 and March 6.
Reservations required. 695-3311.

Paddle: The first segment starts at
Everglades Gulf Coast Visitor
Center in Everglades City. Canoes
will be provided or bring your own.
<http://www.nps.gov/ever/planyourvi/sit/gcdirections.htm>

Hike: Drive to the second segment,
at the Big Cypress Oasis Visitor
Center in Ochopee. Visit website:
<http://www.nps.gov/bicy/planyourvi/sit/directions.htm>

Bike: Drive to the final segment, at
the Shark Valley Visitor Center
(\$20.00 entrance fee, per vehicle,
and a bike rental fee if needed).
<http://www.nps.gov/ever/planyourvi/sit/svdirections.htm>

For more information, go online:

Everglades:

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

Big Cypress:

<http://www.nps.gov/bicy/planyourvi/sit/tamiami-trail-triathlon.htm>

OFF-ROAD TRAILS FIRE PRAIRIE TRAIL

by Dayna Fendrick



The Fire Prairie Trail is an off-road trail accessible for hiking, biking, and birding in the Big Cypress National Preserve. The trailhead is located off Turner River Road, 14 miles north of US 41, on the west side, with a yellow gate. Parking is informal; you can just pull off the road and park along the grass shoulder.

The trail is 2.5 miles out and back on the same path for a 5-mile round trip. The first mile or so meanders through shady Cypress wetlands, with water on both sides. During the rainy season, this area can be muddy & a little slick. After that, the vegetation opens out into sawgrass prairie, with long vistas across the grasslands to surrounding Cypress hammocks. Limited pockets of Sabal Palms, Slash Pines and Palmetto occur wherever there is slightly higher ground. The open prairie is sustained by fire (hence the name) which keeps the prairie from being overtaken by Willows and other tree species. Evidence of fire was noticeable on the trunks of several Sabal Palms along the road. Like many trails in the Big Cypress, the raised road bed is a remnant product of past oil exploration; through adaptive re-use, the roads have become trails (provide access to remote areas without causing additional damage) and are used for maintenance by NPS. At the terminus of the trail you can discern the squared-off area where a drilling rig was once situated.

On a recent Ranger-led trip, we enjoyed the descriptions of the various ecosystems and their defining characteristics. If you arrive early in the morning, you may spot a range of wildlife and birds - our group found several different tracks and some old panther sign. We also came across a couple of snakes; one red rat snake and a water moccasin who was all coiled up and not too happy with the attention. Keep an eye out for fire ants which also seem to appreciate the high & dry trail area.

For serious cyclists, the length of the trail is a bit short to go to the trouble of loading up the bikes, unless you want to combine the trip with a joint trip to Bear Island or just ride along TRR itself. It is a good length for families biking with young children and is a level and easy hiking trail. There is a restroom facility at about the one-mile mark. For tourists who are in the area for a few days, or locals who venture out on a regular basis, Fire Prairie Trail offers another facet to explore the rich diversity of the Everglades. Two more ranger-led trips will be February 13 and March 12 at 10:00 a.m. Call (239) 695-4758 to reserve.

OTHER FLORIDA TRAILS The Legacy Trail

by Patty Huff

What a pleasure it is to ride on a separated bike trail through Florida's wetlands and back roads. This is how my husband and I spent our anniversary and New Year's Eve. Although we were both born in Florida and have lived in southwest Florida for over 20 years, we still enjoy finding new places in this wonderful state to bike safely in rural areas. The Legacy Trail offers the opportunity to cycle leisurely from Venice north to the south end of Sarasota, following the former CSX railroad corridor. I like the sign at the top of the north end which states "extend the legacy - next stop downtown Sarasota."

One of the benefits, and beauty, of this 12-mile trail is that it is situated among several county and city parks so there are lots of access points to stop in towns or preserves to enjoy the amenities. The seven trailheads begin at the historic Venice Depot and continue north to Patriots Park, Nokomis Park, Laurel Park, Oscar Scherer State Park, Bay Street Park and finally Potter Park in Sarasota; all have free parking. In addition there are many other rest stations along the route, some designed to represent a train stop. Signs along the trail point out various sites of interest: wetlands, historical facts and buildings, pioneering families, prescribed burn area, etc.

Though it is not part of the Legacy Trail, the Venetian Waterway south of the Venice Depot has a multi-use path on both sides and offers 10 miles of beautiful scenery. We biked one day to Shamrock Park where we stopped to enjoy the wildlife and explore the natural environment. The following day we bicycled the other side to Caspersen Beach which is considered one of the best shelling beaches in this area. If you're in the Venice/Sarasota area, don't miss this well-planned rails-to-trails adventure.

