



FROGG

Friends of the River of Grass Greenway



FROGG

Volume III Issue 1

website: www.evergladesROGG.org

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Fall 2017

Action Alert

If you believe ROGG should remain on the **Florida Greenways and Trails System (FGTS) Opportunity and Priorities map**, please attend one of the upcoming public meetings which will be held from 4:00 to 7:00 pm:

North Florida Panhandle –

Port St Joe (November 27)

Milton (December 4)

Tallahassee (November 6)

Live Oak (November 20)

Jacksonville (November 16)

Palatka (November 15)

Central Florida

Temple Terrace (November 9)

DeBary (November 14)

Dunnellon (November 8)

South Florida

Sebring (November 7)

Port St Lucie (November 8)

North Port (October 26)

Miami Lakes (November 6)

For specific locations, visit:

<http://www.dep.state.fl.us/gwt/Rescheduled%202017%20Workshops%20final%20pubic%20schedule.pdf>

If you are unable to participate in person, please send a comment by **December 15** to:

Samantha.Browne@dep.state.fl.us

or by conventional mail to:

Samantha Browne, Bureau Chief
DEP, Div. of Recreation & Parks
Office of Greenways and Trails
3900 Commonwealth MS795
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-3000

The FGTS Plan establishes the vision for implementing a connected statewide system of greenways and trails. The updated plan and maps will guide implementation of the statewide trail system through 2022.

EVERGLADES CITY DEVASTATED BY HURRICANE IRMA

On September 10 Hurricane Irma swept through the State of Florida, leaving lots of mud and muck from the storm surge throughout the homes and businesses in Everglades City, Chokoloskee and other surrounding areas. Many residents lost everything and some cannot afford to rebuild while several winter residents have decided not to return. However, everyone is working very hard to help each other; FEMA and Red Cross and other organizations have provided much needed relief. Things will recover in time; presently the streets are filled with lost possessions and yard trash so we have decided to suspend the monthly bicycle rides for at least the month of October. We hope to resume in November or December, depending upon the recovery effort. Please email info@evergladesROGG.org if you wish to be kept up to date on the bike rides (see page 3 for more information).

FROGG Logo at the Museum of the Everglades

Before the hurricane, the Museum of the Everglades had an exhibit of the art of Jürg (George) Furrer who designed our ‘frogg’ mascot. Sadly, Jürg passed away in May 2014, but he left us a legacy with his design of the frog on the bike. He was a great supporter of our idea for a non-motorized pathway separated from traffic along US41. Jürg understood the importance of educating visitors about the wonders of our area



and advocated for the environment and stewardship. Our FROGG logo was on display in the Pauline Reeves Gallery until the Museum closed on September 10; it is expected to re-open before Thanksgiving. A reception to recognize the art work of Jürg Furrer will be held on **November 11** at a place to be announced. For more information, call the Museum at (239) 695-0008 or visit website www.evergladesmuseum.org.

The inscription next to the logo says “Committed to Conservation – Many of George’s earliest cartoons were political or satirical in nature – dealing with environmental issues in Switzerland like pollution and contamination by pesticides. . . He noted that some colleagues expressed concern that he made dangerous reptiles seem a bit too amiable and that this might result in naïve attempts to interact with native fauna. He later struck a balance between the friendly and forbidding with his representations of wildlife in the Everglades. George met local resident Patty Huff, an avid cyclist and nature lover, while she was serving as President of the Friends of the Fakahatchee. When she established a new organization with the goal of creating a multi-use pathway called the River of Grass Greenway, George created a mascot frog for the project’s friends group FROGG.”

FROGG is committed to establishing the safe use by the general public of US41 across the Everglades between Naples and Miami, focusing on safety and environmental education and stewardship for those hiking, walking, and cycling through south Florida and the Everglades.

Be Safe Along the Tamiami Trail

When hiking or bicycling along the Tamiami Trail, safety is of the utmost importance. The corridor between Naples to Miami can be challenging with many narrow bridges, but it is also very interesting for those who wish to experience the Everglades at a slow pace. The Friends of the River of Grass Greenway (FROGG) continues to communicate and work with the Florida Department of Transportation to find ways to improve conditions.

The 3.5-mile section beginning at the intersection of US41 / CR951 going east has bike lanes, a sidewalk, and a 10-foot shared-use pathway. Many area residents now use these lanes for commuting and 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.

For the next 2 miles (from Greenway Road to 6L Farm Road) there is no separated pathway but is planned for the future when this section is widened to four lanes. Meanwhile, take caution while hiking or biking.

From 6L Farm Road to Collier Seminole State Park at CR92 a new 2.3-mile separated pedestrian/bicycling pathway has recently been completed, providing safety and a link to the Park's 3.5 mile off-road hiking/biking trail along marsh, hammock and pine flat wood. Between CR92 and just west of Port of the Islands Resort, the shoulders have RPMs (Raised Pavement Markers). These markings were placed there by FDOT as a safety measure to notify motorists of the upcoming narrow bridges. However, they can be dangerous for cyclists so take caution in this area, especially at the narrow bridges.

The 11-mile section between Port of the Islands Resort and Everglades City (SR/CR29) was re-surfaced in 2016 with smooth shoulders. For safety the FDOT installed white striping with the audible/vibratory markings along the edge of the shoulder and painted with durable paint instead of the "slippery" thermoplastic.

The Everglades City to Shark Valley section is beautiful with many vistas, more birds and alligators. However, there are fewer facilities. The road shoulder is in good condition and lacks the raised markings except where the FDOT re-surfaced the area around the Miccosukee Tribe Reservation area. When questioned about the RPMs, FDOT provided the following response: *"The recently completed project in Tamiami Trail was designed as a Resurfacing, Restoration and Rehabilitation (RRR) project... the project's main objective was to improve and extend the service life of the existing asphalt pavement and add safety-related features along the corridor. The project, as you know, was not to widen the existing bridges to accommodate bicycle lanes."*

The 2016 FDOT Design Standard Index No. 17359 was implemented at each bridge approach and includes special striping, RPM's and signage with the intention of considerably increasing motorist and bicyclist awareness to the narrow bridge approaches. The spacing between RPM's is 14 inches at the narrowest section nearest to the bridge, and the maximum is 19 inches at the beginning of the application of the RPM's. This spacing per is considered sufficient space for a bicycles to travel safely through the entire section.

All state roads are designed and constructed to accommodate every type of transportation mode. The objective is to raise awareness for both bicyclists and motorists at these narrowing bridge sections and ensure the traveling public can use our road systems as safely as possible."

BRIDGE PROJECT: FDOT and the National Park Service are in the process of building two new bridges along the Tamiami Trail from east of Osceola Camp to west of the Airboat Association of Florida (approximately between 8 miles and 11 miles west of Krome Avenue). This project will provide additional freshwater flow within Everglades National Park and improve the ecological conditions. This project has an estimated completion date of December 2018. The following is the latest information regarding the bridge construction east of the Miccosukee Village on the Tamiami Trail: beginning June 13 the project contractor will prepare to place traffic on a newly widened section of the roadway from Everglades Safari Park to east of Osceola Camp; only one travel lane will be open on this section of Tamiami Trail. Once the switch is complete, one eastbound and one westbound lane will be open on the north side of this section of roadway. Allow extra time to reach your destination. PLEASE NOTE THAT THIS SCHEDULE MAY CHANGE DUE TO WEATHER OR UNEXPECTED CONDITIONS.

Additional information is available on the Florida Department of Transportation's website: <http://www.fdotmiamidade.com>. You may also contact Construction Public Information Specialist Heather M. Leslie at 305-905-5876 or email her at Heather@hmlpublicoutreach.com. Drivers/cyclists are encouraged to call 511 before they travel, or log onto www.fl511.com to get real-time traffic and lane closure information.



Schedule of Monthly Bike Rides through the Everglades

2nd Sunday of each month at 9 am

November 12 – Port of the Islands
(on road)

Meet at McLeod Park
in Everglades City

December 10 – Shark Valley in the
Everglades National Park (paved off-
road) – Meet at Shark Valley

January 14 – Everglades City /
Chokoloskee (on-road)

Meet at McLeod Park
in Everglades City

February 11 – Loop Road in the Big
Cypress & ENP (off-road)

Meet at west end of Loop Road

March 11 – Ave Maria (on-road)

Meet at McLeod Park
in Everglades City

April 8 – Bear Island in the Big
Cypress (off-road)

Meet at Bear Island
(end of Turner River Road)

For info: email
info@evergladesrogg.org or
call (239) 695-2397

Visit website:
<https://evergladesrogg.org/events/>



Celebrating 20 years thanks to our members

The Florida Bicycle Association (FBA) was established in 1997, and their vision for Florida is to be a state where bicycling is safe, respected and encouraged as a means of transportation and recreation.

5 Important Reasons to Join the FBA

- 1) FBA is the voice of bicycling for the state of Florida.
- 2) FBA lobbies the legislature for safe cycling legislation.
- 3) FBA works with the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), law enforcement and cycling clubs to make cycling safe.
- 4) The FBA website is relied upon for cycling events statewide and tons of related cycling information.
- 5) FBA relies upon membership fees and proceeds from IBike Florida License Tags to fund its work and needs your support.

For more information about joining FBA, please visit <http://floridabicycle.org/membership-and-sponsorship/>.

Support safe cycling! Visit FBA's website online to learn more about the Florida Bicycle Association and its advocacy programs www.floridabicycle.org.

Brochures for Bike Rides through the Everglades

New brochures for cycle tours in south Florida have recently been developed for both on and off-road riding in the Everglades. These tours can be taken on your own or with organized group rides on the second Sunday of each month. We hope to schedule the first ride on November 12. This ride will start at McLeod Park in Everglades City at 9:00 a.m. This is an on-road bike ride along the Tamiami Trail. Participants should wear a helmet and bring your own drinks, snacks and extra tubes.

For information about the individual tours, visit website <https://evergladesrogg.org/events> where you can download individual brochures (see column 1 for additional rides in the Everglades). The Friends of the River of Grass Greenway has published these brochures and will be organizing the free monthly cycle tours as part of its mission to focus on safety and environmental education and stewardship for those hiking, walking, or cycling through south Florida and the Everglades.

Also available online is the recently revised map/brochure listing the amenities along the Tamiami Trail:

<https://evergladesrogg.org/tamiami-trail/> and includes a column dedicated specifically to safety and the road conditions for different segments of US41. Printed copies are available on request.

For more information,
Contact: Patricia Huff
Email: info@evergladesrogg.org
Phone: (239) 719-0020

Cycling along the Tamiami Trail from Everglades City to Port of the Islands

by Patty Huff



Port of the Islands Cycle Tour is 28-mile round trip from Everglades City and 20 miles if you park and leave from the Everglades Area Welcome Center in Carnestown. However, there are many amenities in Everglades City so don't miss this historic Florida village (see www.mulletrapper.com).

Port of the Islands Resort started out as an odd Florida real estate project back in 1963 called the Remuda Ranch, a resort primarily used by Gulf American Corporation to promote Golden Gate Estates and develop Cape Coral. They would fly prospective buyers into Remuda Ranch, entertain them at the resort, show them swamp land they could buy and fly them back. Many people remember the airstrip (now Sunset Cay) that brought in visitors and investors; it then became known as the "Port."

Around 1980 the Remuda Ranch was purchased by Bill Ray of California. In 1984 he began a multi-phased, multi-million dollar redevelopment that included residential living. In 1994 his family auctioned off the remaining property to private individuals and developers who completed dozens of new homes.

Port of the Islands has a county owned marina, a beautiful facility and good restaurant. It is a good jumping off point to exploring the wonders of the Everglades.

To start the cycle tour begin at McLeod Park in Everglades City and cycle 4 miles north on SR29 to Carnestown (named for Barron Collier's wife Juliet Gordon Carnes and son Samuel Carnes Collier). Take a left and head west on the Tamiami Trail (US41). Along this route, you will be traveling on shoulders so be cautious around the narrow bridges. As you ride along the canal, look for gators.

For the first 1½ mile you will pass two airboat facilities. A rest area with picnic tables is located on the south side in just 5 miles.

Approximately another two miles is one of the most popular hikes along the Tamiami Trail - the Big Cypress Bend Boardwalk in the Fakahatchee Strand Preserve State Park. An Indian Village with Native American crafts is located at the entrance to the Boardwalk and well worth a visit.

Cycling is not allowed on the Boardwalk. If repairs have been made (due to the hurricane), please take time to hike through the cypress trees to the alligator pond at the end. You may see wildlife along the way with an eagle's nest high in the cypress dome. The area is a bird-watcher's paradise with red-bellied and pileated woodpeckers, catbirds, osprey, red-shouldered hawks, swallow-tailed kites, blue heron, egrets and wood storks. Future plans include an expansion of the Boardwalk with a new parking area, an interpretative center, shell pathways and an elevated walkway. For more information visit <http://orchidswamp.org/plan-your-visit/the-boardwalk>.

Continue cycling another 3 miles on US41 to reach Port of the Islands and enjoy a pleasant lunch overlooking the garden and swimming pool. On both the north and south side of US41 there are many paved roads throughout the community. Port of the Islands Marina has direct access to the Everglades and coastal waters of Western Florida and is the destination for eco-tours of the Everglades and the 10,000 Islands area. They are known for being one of Florida's largest concentrations of wild manatees; visit the marina and its gift shop. There are boat slips for rent as well as live-aboard houseboats.

As you ride back towards Carnestown, look to the south and enjoy the open prairie land with its nesting birds. Culverts under the road have provided more water to the south side of the Tamiami Trail, allowing for wading birds to return to the area. You also have an opportunity to see roseate spoonbills, egrets, wood stork, ibis and herons. The round trip distance from Carnestown to the Port of the Islands is 20 miles. Turn right for another 4 miles back to McLeod Park.

Life is like a ten-speed bicycle. Most of us have gears we never use. –

Charles M. Schultz

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FROGG Board Members: Dayna Fendrick (Naples) Patty Huff (Everglades City) Scott Shook (Marco Island)

Oscar Rattenborg (Ft. Myers) Kurt Tucker (Miami-Dade)

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