



FROGG

Friends of the River of Grass Greenway



Volume III Issue 2
website: www.evergladesROGG.org

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Winter 2018



Schedule of Monthly Bike Rides

Meet each month at 9 am

February 18 – Loop Road in the Big Cypress & ENP (off-road)
Meet at Monroe Station site at the west end of Loop Road
(see page 4)

March 11 – Ave Maria
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)

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

Other Fun Bike Rides

Tour de Marco

Sunday February 25

<https://www.marcoymca.org/event/tour-de-marco/>

Fakahatchee Off-Road

Sunday, March 11

For more information, call Mike Duey at (239) 695-4593.



BIKE RIDES CONTINUE

We have resumed our monthly bike rides after having to cancel several planned rides due to recovery efforts from Hurricane Irma.

In early December on a cold windy morning we began our cycle tour at the Fakahatchee Strand Headquarters and had a beautiful cool ride on Janes Scenic Drive and East Main to the Fakahatchee “Hilton” and lake (with only a few flat tires!). Everyone enjoyed seeing the alligators before heading back to enjoy a delicious lunch and camaraderie at Triad Seafood.

In January we again started off with a crisp breeze as we cycled around historic Everglades City, stopping at the Everglades National Park before heading out over the bridge to Chokoloskee. After a short break for hot chocolate and coffee at Havana Café, we biked through old Chokoloskee to the Smallwood Store & Museum (see above photo). Again, we finished the tour with lunch at Triad.

Please join us for our upcoming February ride which was postponed a week due to a conflict with the annual Everglades Seafood Festival. Our ride will start at the west end of Loop Road (site of the old Monroe Station) at 9:00 am on Sunday, **February 18**. There are several options for distance so please call 695-2397 if you are interested in this tour. Again, it is self-supported; bring snacks and water and please wear a helmet. Look forward to seeing you!! Please email info@evergladesROGG.org if you have any questions about our Everglades Bike Rides.

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.

Along the Tamiami Trail

West End



Trail. It is wonderful to view this spectacular display of wildlife: Egrets, Wood Stork, Ibis and even the Roseate Spoonbills are plentiful on both the north and the south side of the Trail. Come bike through the state and national parks. For sites to visit along the Tamiami Trail, see our website at <https://evergladesrogg.org/places-to-visit/>.

East End of Tamiami Trail – Bridge Construction Continues

The bridge work by the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) and the National Park Service (NPS), which started construction in November of 2016, continues along SW90/US41/SW8 Street/Tamiami Trail from east of Osceola Camp to west of the Airboat Association of Florida (approximately between eight miles and 11 miles west of Krome Avenue). This project will provide additional freshwater flow within Everglades National Park and improve the ecological conditions in the park and in the central Everglades, north of Tamiami Trail. The project's maximum allowable contract time is through February 2019 but please note this date could change due to weather or other unexpected conditions. In the meantime, one lane may be closed during non-peak daytime and nighttime hours. Flaggers will be used to help guide drivers through the work zone.

Additional information is available on the SW8 St/Tamiami Trail page of the department's website. You may also contact Construction Community Outreach Specialist Heather M. Leslie at 305-905-5876 or email her at Heather@hmlpublicoutreach.com.

Miami-Dade County KROME AVE Construction Update

Work continues along the Krome Avenue corridor from just north of SR90/US41/SW8 Street/Tamiami Trail to SW 136 Street. These roadway and safety projects will widen Krome Avenue to a four lane divided roadway and includes a new multi-use trail for walking and biking south of Tamiami Trail. The segment from Tamiami Trail to SW 88 Street/Kendall Drive is anticipated to be completed by the end of March 2018. The area from Kendall Drive to SW 136 Street is anticipated to be completed by the end of February 2018, but these dates may change due to weather or other unforeseen conditions. At least one northbound and one southbound travel lane will remain open at all times. Please note the multi-use trail is still within an active construction zone and not yet open for bicyclists and pedestrians.

Additional information is available on the Krome Avenue corridor page of the department's website. You may also contact Construction Community Outreach Specialist Heather M. Leslie at 305-905-5876 or email her at Heather@hmlpublicoutreach.com.

For both of the above projects in Miami-Dade, drivers are encouraged to call 511 before they drive, or log onto www.fl511.com to get real-time traffic and lane closure information. Follow this project on Twitter @MyFDOT_Miami.

Also, there are plans for more cycling opportunities in Miami-Dade (read the latest article in Rails-to-Trails magazine; website <https://www.railstotrails.org/magazine/>).



FROGG President
elected

President of the Florida Bicycle Association

At the October 2017 Florida Bicycle Association Board of Directors meeting, Patty Huff was elected President. She commented that she is looking forward to continuing her commitment to promoting safe cycling in south Florida and throughout the State. Since her first bicycle tour across the United States, Patty has been an advocate for bicycle safety and education for both bicyclists and motorists. These are consistent with the goals of FBA.

March is Florida Bike Month

Celebrate Florida Bike Month with a ride through the Everglades with many on and off-road options through our various state and national parks and preserves:
Collier-Seminole
10,000 Islands Refuge
Fakahatchee Strand
Picayune Strand
Big Cypress Nat'l Preserve
Everglades National Park



Save the Date – April 21

Florida Bicycle Association (FBA), the state-wide advocacy organization dedicated to bicycle safety and education, is coming to southwest Florida! On **Saturday, April 21**, the FBA Board of Directors will hold its quarterly meeting at the Collier County Regional Public Library located at 650 Central Avenue in Naples with presentations from 1:00 to 4:00 pm and open to the public (*Disclaimer: "The Collier County Public Library does not sponsor or endorse this program"*). We welcome your attendance and participation! Please share this invitation with other local bicycle advocates in your organization who may be interested in attending.

The Florida Bicycle Association was established in 1997 with a vision for Florida is to be a state where bicycling is safe, respected and encouraged as a means of transportation and recreation. Currently, FBA is working with other advocates in Tallahassee to pass the No Text & Driving bill and the Move Over Law.

Support safe cycling! If you are not a member, please consider joining FBA; visit: <http://floridabicycle.org/member-ship-and-sponsorship/>.

Page 3

Collier MPO Bicycle & Pedestrian Master Plan

Now is the time for you to get involved with the planning of the bike/ped network for our county.

Please review the information below and respond as soon as possible since the **deadline for comments is the first week in February**.

The Collier Metropolitan Planning Organization has a dedicated page for the Bicycle & Pedestrian Master Plan <http://colliermmpo.com/index.aspx?page=45>.

The vision of the plan is to provide a safe, inviting and convenient bicycle and pedestrian network throughout Collier County that delivers mobility, economic, recreational and quality of life benefits for all residents and visitors. **The plan is expected to be completed in June, 2018.**

There are several ways for the public to make comments on the plan:

- 1) Interactive map – <http://wikimapping.com/wikimap/Collier-MPO-Bicycle-Pedestrian-Master-Plan.html#.WjQyjmWzGg>
- 2) Surveys: English - <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/CollierBPMP2017>
Spanish - <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/CollierBPMP-Spanish>
- 3) Comment forms <http://colliermmpo.com/modules/showdocument.aspx?documentid=10075>

Comments and questions may also be sent directly to Eric Ortman, Senior Planner, Collier MPO, 2885 South Horseshoe Drive, Naples, FL 34104 or email: Eric.Ortman@colliercountyfl.gov

Bicycling Loop Road

by **Patty Huff**

One of the all-time great bike rides in south Florida is located in three separate counties: Collier, Monroe and Miami-Dade. Loop Road, south of the Tamiami Trail. This area has an interesting history in itself but the beauty of the environment is one of its outstanding features. You will see lots of wildlife as you bicycle through this rural area just 4 miles west of Shark Valley (another great bicycling destination) in Miami Dade County. We started on the far western section at the former Monroe Station site in Collier County, 17 miles east of Everglades City.

Last spring a friend of mine and I arrived at Loop Road around 1:45 pm which turned out to be an ideal time with the bald cypress, slash pine and sabal palm trees providing shade from the afternoon sun. Just a little over two miles of cycling, Gator Hook Trail has a picnic area (with toilets). If you decide to take a walk, you can hike for 5 miles into the swamp along the historic logging road.

Staying on Loop Road the first 4-5 miles will be rough (like a washboard) along a gravel lane until you reach Monroe County; then the roadbed will smooth out. You will pass by the southernmost point of the 1,400-mile long Florida National Scenic Trail which extends north to the Big Cypress Oasis Center and continues through the entire state of Florida. There are many culvert crossings in this area where you will find wildlife to photograph. We saw lots of alligators alongside the road, great white and blue herons, egrets and one roseate spoonbill; a real treat for any nature enthusiast!



At 15.6 miles there is the last public trail: Tree Snail Hammock. We didn't venture out onto the trails but it's a good opportunity to get off your bike here and take a short hike into higher ground to find the tree snails which attach themselves to the trunks of trees. As you bike along the paved section of Loop Road (at mile 16.5) you will be cycling through the old town of Pinecrest where Al Capone had a home, a hotel and a brothel. Gator Hook Lodge was once a bar and dance club serving as the social center for Loop Road. The fascinating history of this location includes fiddle-player Ervin Rouse whose famous "The Orange Blossom Special" would entertain the guests. After nearly 20 years the lodge closed in 1977, shortly after Big Cypress National Preserve was established. Many people still live in Pinecrest and members of the Miccosukee Tribe of Indians have homes along the eastern end of Loop Road so please be respectful of the property owners when you bike or hike here.

Rather than go to the end of the 24-mile Loop Road and cycle on the heavy traffic area of US41, we turned around at mile 17 and enjoyed a peaceful ride back through Big Cypress National Preserve. If we had gone another five miles we would be at the boundary line where Everglades National Park is to the south and east and Big Cypress Preserve is north and west. All part of the greater Everglades ecosystem and a wonder to behold!

For detailed information about Loop Road, visit the National Park Service website: <https://www.nps.gov/bicy/planyourvisit/upload/bicy-loop-road-scenic-road-final-2.pdf>

"Nothing compares to the simple pleasure of a bike ride."

- John F. Kennedy

Page 4

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