



FROGG

Friends of the River of Grass Greenway



FROGG

Volume VI Issue 1
website: www.evergladesROGG.org

FROGG, P.O. Box 5031, Everglades City, FL, 34139
email: snookcity@gmail.com

Fall 2020

Fall Events



We continue to advocate safe cycling while Florida is still experiencing Covid-19 positive cases; therefore, our bike tours are still on hold. If you would like more information about future tours in the Everglades, please email snookcity@gmail.com and we will notify you as soon as guided tours are offered again.

FROGG T-Shirts
Long-sleeve bright green t-shirts are available for \$25 for FROGG members (free with \$100 or more donation) and \$35 for non-members.



Celebrate Bicycling in September

Bike to Work Day - September 22

Bike to Work Week - September 21-27

Bike Your Park Day - Saturday, September 26

Bike Travel Weekend – September 25-27



Blue Zones of Southwest Florida is sponsoring a Bike / Ped Safety Campaign event on **Tuesday, September 22**, for Bike to Work Day (see attached flyer). Please join us!

During the coronavirus pandemic, we're encouraged to stay at home or close to home. However, this does not mean we can't get out and ride – every day. It's time to visit our fabulous south Florida parks and preserves. Although FROGG is not yet offering group rides, there are opportunities to enjoy riding on your own or with family members to or in our parks.



Adventure Cycling is sponsoring *Bike Your Park Day* on **Saturday, September 26**, AND a *Bike Travel Weekend* during **September 25-27**. This year these two events are being promoted and encouraged as virtual options due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Participants

can take part in a virtual event or an in-person ride, following safety guidelines. To register and for more information, visit:

<https://www.adventurecycling.org/resources/btw-bypd/register-your-ride/>

FBA Virtual Ride Leader / Ride Marshal Certification

Whether you are leading a community ride, a club ride or a major charity bicycling event over multiple days, FBA has the cycling education program for you. The Ride Leader / Ride Marshal training and certification program is modular to allow the opportunity to focus on needs and ride leader development. For more information, visit: <https://floridabicycle.org/fba-virtual-ride-leader-ride-marshal-certification/>.

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.

Safe Cycling

Collier County Local Road Safety Plan

The Collier MPO is developing a Local Road Safety Plan (LRSP). As part of this effort, the MPO has analyzed motorized and non-motorized crash data from 2014 to 2018. This data, together with input from the public, will form the basis for the plan. The following survey is intended to get your input on how to minimize road fatalities and make our roadway system safer for Collier County residents and stakeholders.

English version: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/F6BDH7H>.

Spanish version: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/F6W98BL>.

Collier County 2045 LONG RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN

View and comment on the same materials the Technical and Citizens Advisory Committees are reviewing. Meeting materials and a link to comment on the interactive map and survey can be found at: www.colliermopo.org/lrtp.

Along the Tamiami Trail

FROGG continues to communicate with FDOT District 1 to improve safety conditions along US41. The narrow bridges and the Raised Pavement Markers (RPMs) are the main concerns for cyclists along this corridor as well as the two-mile gap of a multi-use pathway east of SR951. Look for more information in our next newsletter!

Big Cypress National Preserve announces increased access to the Preserve Campgrounds and the Swamp Welcome Center

Big Cypress National Preserve began increasing access and services in late August. The National Park Service (NPS) is working service-wide with federal, state, and local public health authorities to closely monitor the COVID-19 pandemic and using a phased approach to increase access on a park-by-park basis. Big Cypress National Preserve has reopened access to all 8 park campgrounds and the Swamp Welcome Center. In addition, all park roads, trails and boat launches continue to be available. With public health in mind, the Oasis Visitor Center facilities remain closed.

Big Cypress issued the following: “A safe and enjoyable park experience begins at home. The NPS encourages visitors to plan their visit by checking the park’s website and social media for current conditions and travel tips. The CDC has offered guidance to help people recreating in parks and open spaces prevent the spread of infectious diseases. We ask the public to be our partner in recreating responsibly, by following CDC and state and local guidance, social distancing, and wearing a face covering when social distance cannot be maintained.

Details and updates on park operations will continue to be posted on our website www.nps.gov/bicy and social media channels. Updates about NPS operations will be posted on www.nps.gov/coronavirus.”

“The Bicycle is a Simple Solution to some of the World’s Most Complicated Problems” Author Unknown

FROGG Board Members:

Dayna Fendrick (Naples) Patty Huff (Everglades City) Scott Shook (Marco Island) Oscar Rattenborg (Ft. Myers)

website: www.evergladesROGG.org

email: snookcity@gmail.com

Cycling our Parks

by Patty Huff

Every summer for the past 20 years, my husband and I have taken a “biking” holiday - somewhere around the U.S. or in Europe. This year it was to be Wales! Instead we drove to north Florida (with our bikes) to find some remote country roads. We packed up a week’s worth of groceries for the road and our bike touring. My sister generously offered her unoccupied vacation home as a safe haven and, fortunately for us, it was close to the 18.6-mile Timpoochee Trail which parallels the Gulf of Mexico shoreline and Scenic Highway 30-A. The first day we wanted to explore as much as possible so we biked east through tree-lined Rosemary Beach as far as the trail would take us, then returned and cycled on a bike path along South County Highway 395, continuing north across SR98



for one mile to Eden Gardens State Park with its beautiful 165 acres of moss-draped live oaks and historical 1897 mansion. The land was originally purchased by William Henry Wesley who built his family home there (now known as the Wesley House). After Mrs. Wesley passed away in 1953, the house remained vacant for 10 years until the wealthy New York publisher Lois Maxon purchased it and the surrounding 10.5 acres for \$12,500; she said “I have found my Eden.” When her health began to decline, Ms. Maxon donated the property and the 5,500 sq ft



home with its elegant white columns and imposing wrap-around porch to the State of Florida. We enjoyed cycling around the grounds and a picnic lunch overlooking Tucker Bayou. We spent the afternoon biking around Point Washington on backcountry roads.

The next day we drove 31 miles north on US331 to the picturesque town of DeFuniak Springs. One of the



greatest things about biking through our small quaint towns is how much we learn about old Florida. DeFuniak Springs was built as a gated campus for teachers, known as “The Education Resort of the South.” At its height, the town welcomed up to 4,000 visitors a day arriving by train to attend the Florida Chautauqua Assembly meetings, held annually from 1885 to 1927. Chipley Park is the centerpiece of DeFuniak Springs with historic homes situated around the perfectly-round spring-fed lake. We cycled around Circle Drive before heading north of the city along rural roads to Juniper Lake and Lake Stanley for about 20 miles, then returned to town to lunch under a gazebo at the park.

The following day we biked 19 miles east to Conservation Park in Panama City Beach. This route took us back on the Timpoochee Trail to the end, then a short bike path on SR98 and a 7-mile section of SR98 with a bike lane to reach Griffin Road; then just a few more miles north to the park with its 24 miles of hiking/biking trails in 2,900 acres. Many of the trails are gravel rock and others sandy; there is also over a mile of boardwalks under beautiful cypress trees. Riding our hybrid bikes we stayed on the packed-dirt circular 9.5-mile trek with its impressive rows of towering pine trees. Public restrooms are available at the Trail Head building as well as a covered picnic area where we enjoyed another homemade lunch.



Wanting to experience more of our state parks, we cycled west on our last day to Grayton Beach and beyond.



We were able to avoid the crowds in Seaside by cycling through the neighborhood in the Watercolor community until we reached the Timpoochee Trail again on the far west end of Seagrave with its boardwalks overlooking the lakes and views of the wetlands. We cycled through the historic district of Grayton Beach before visiting the state park in Santa Rosa, featuring pristine beaches and four miles of trails in 2,000 acres! Continuing west to the end of the Timpoochee Trail, we reached Topsail Hill State Park which is named for its pure white dunes resembling tall ship sails. We had a wonderful ride all through the preserve and found a quiet picnic area close to the shoreline to have our

lunch. Although the Timpoochee Trail can be crowded at times with runners, walkers, and other cyclists, it’s nice to have a separated pathway connecting the various parks. Stay safe while you get out and explore!

FROGG Board Members:

Dayna Fendrick (Naples) Patty Huff (Everglades City) Scott Shook (Marco Island) Oscar Rattenborg (Ft. Myers)

website: www.evergladesROGG.org

email: snookcity@gmail.com

Southwest Florida's Hidden Gems

by Patty Huff

On the last Sunday in July my husband Steve and I drove 20 miles from Everglades City to Collier Seminole State Park with our bicycles. We paid the \$5 entrance fee at Collier-Seminole so we could park securely. It was the closest place to begin our bike trip to Marco Island along San Marco Road/CR92 (a 7-mile two-lane highway with no shoulders so take caution). Cars passed us with plenty of room; and all drivers, except one, were very courteous (there's always one in every crowd). As we crossed over the Goodland Bridge we considered cycling through the small historic fishing village of Goodland but decided to first explore Key Marco just a mile ahead.

Key Marco, now a gated community with a small entrance fee, was settled by the Native Americans and is home to some of the oldest burial grounds along the eastern coast of the United States, dating back 5000 years; the famous Key Marco cat and other artifacts were found on the island. In 1877 John Foley Horr established a pineapple plantation and lived there with his family until 1920 while he served as a U.S. Marshall under President McKinley and President Roosevelt. As the plantation prospered, families moved to the island and a school was built. Horr eventually sold the island for \$10,000 in 1923 and moved to Ohio. What remains of his home is now an historic site; this was one of the reasons we decided to cycle the island. We thoroughly enjoyed riding 5 miles through the rolling hills (Yes, hills! The highest point is 43 ft above sea level which is rare in South Florida). There are many lavish homes on the island, but this time of year



we saw more Gopher turtles than residents.

Returning to San Marco Road, we continued to the first stoplight and turned left to bike along South Barfield, a dead-end street through a quiet neighborhood (this time of year) so it was a pleasure to ride. We then returned to the little community of Goodland (you can't miss it with its wildlife mural just under the bridge); the center of town is located just a mile off San Marco Road. You'll bike on a separated bike path and pass by a condo development and Safe Harbor Marina on your right. When you reach the popular Stan's Idle Hour Bar and Restaurant, bear right on 892, then left on Pear Tree Avenue. Just a few blocks on your left is Collier County's Mar-good Regional Park which has an interesting history. It was originally a fish camp and resort built by two retired circus



performers, Reckless Rex Johnson and his wife Reckless Ruby, who offered one and two-bedroom cottages completely furnished. The recreation hall, erected during WWII, was used by the military. The building also served as a local movie theater and entertainment hall; now it is a museum housing the original movie projector as well as artifacts from a time gone by. Other amenities now include a kayak/canoe launch, picnic tables, water fountain, gazebo, playground and pedestrian walk-way. In addition to Stan's, there are several other restaurants in Goodland: Little Bar, the Crabby Lady and Paradise Found. Hours and days open may vary so just bike around; you can't miss them!



After our tour of Marco, we cycled back to Collier Seminole State Park (<https://www.floridastateparks.org/parks-and-trails/collier-seminole-state-park>) which is the site of the last existing Bay City Walking Dredge, built in 1924, and used to build the Tamiami Trail Highway (U.S. 41) through the Everglades and Big Cypress Swamp, linking Tampa and Miami and opening southwest Florida to travelers. Barron Gift Collier originally created the park to preserve the royal palms, and later the park was donated to the county to serve as a memorial to Barron Collier and to those who fought on both sides of the Seminole Wars.

Interesting history and cycling throughout south Florida! Come see for yourself!

FROGG Board Members:

Dayna Fendrick (Naples) Patty Huff (Everglades City) Scott Shook (Marco Island) Oscar Rattenborg (Ft. Myers)

website: www.evergladesROGG.org

email: snookcity@gmail.com