



FROGG

Friends of the River of Grass Greenway



FROGG

Volume VI Issue 4

website: www.evergladesROGG.org

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Summer 2021

Events



FROGG Group Rides will begin again in October so plan ahead to join us for both on and off-road options!

October 9

Everglades City /
Chokoloskee

November 13

Janes Scenic Drive in
the Fakahatchee

December 4

Everglades City to
Port of the Islands

January 8

Loop Road in the
Big Cypress

February 5

Shark Valley in ENP

March 12

Bear Island in the
Big Cypress



Bicycling in South Florida

by Patty Huff

This photo was taken in November 2019 when I joined the East Coast Greenway on their final leg of touring through the Florida Keys. That was the last time I cycled with a large group! Now it's time start our bike tours in south Florida/Everglades again. As a Florida State designated Trail Town, Everglades City has many amenities such as: bike racks at all restaurants and hotels, a bike repair station and Dolphin bike rack at McLeod Park, new street lights, maps and brochures about all the on and off-road touring opportunities, and friendly residents to assist with your needs.

In October we will start our monthly bike tours through our parks and on road so look at the schedule to find a date to join us. The rides start at 9:30 a.m. followed by lunch at a local restaurant. Please email snookcity@gmail.com a week in advance if you wish to join us since the starting location may vary with the ride. There is no charge (except for entrance fees in the Fakahatchee and Shark Valley). All tours will be self-supported so be sure to bring your own water, snacks and repair kits.

For more information about each ride, visit our website www.evergladesrogg.org and click on "Events" to download a brochure. Please wait until September to sign up since I will be traveling (by bike) this summer.

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.

A Soulful Journey by Paul Wood

NOTE: Paul Wood retired with his wife in 2020 to Florida from Seattle to be closer to his children. This article is a condensed version of his bike trip around Florida, starting in Jacksonville, traveling west then south and back up the east coast. His full story with detailed information about this exciting adventure was published in the North Florida Bicycle Club WheelSpeak Special Edition May 2021.

The genesis for this bicycle tour began before I retired from my financial services career in June 2020. In December of 2019 we learned that Michelle and I were to be grandparents which led us to move from our Washington State home to Florida. As we settled into our new home in Florida and studied the bicycling opportunities, we learned that we could make a nice loop around the state, starting and ending at our home in Jacksonville. We began looking into e-bikes as an option since Michelle had discovered a few years earlier that she had atrial fibrillation. We decided on the Koga Signature E-World Traveler with the Bosch Performance CX motor rated at 20-mph.

THE ROUTE: The combination of Adventure Cycling's Florida Connector Route and Legs 6 and 7 of the Atlantic Coast Route enabled us to start and finish the ride from our home in Jacksonville. The first leg took us from Jacksonville to Ft. Myers and included eight overnight stops covering nearly 400 miles. Our overnight stops included: Crescent Beach, Deland, Mt. Dora (Tangerine), Clermont, Lake Wales, Wauchula, Punta Gorda, Fort Myers.

CROSSING CENTRAL FLORIDA: Neither Michelle nor I had traveled extensively through Central Florida, so we looked forward to exploring this region. Our inland route followed the meandering state and county roads. We encountered marshland as we crossed the intercoastal and then traversed into the heavily wooded and sparsely populated countryside and then farmland and pastures as we rode through the heart of Florida's largest expanse of orange groves. About 90% of America's orange juice comes from Florida-grown oranges, and today the citrus industry generates \$9 billion in sales and employs 76,000 Floridians. Cycling through this area, we noted that the orchards gave off a delightful citrus fragrance. We road by many orange groves while traveling through Central Florida and rode along a great bike trail adjacent to Lake Minneola where the popular Horrible Hundred bike ride is held each November. Despite the beautiful landscapes along our route, Michelle and I were both disappointed to see a fair amount of trash along the state and county roads as we traveled from the east coast through Central Florida to Ft. Myers. I did not expect to see litter in the farm country; it was very disheartening. As we traveled from the Keys up the coast to Jacksonville, we were relieved that we did not see much trash along the roads.

THE FERRY TO KEY WEST

After eight successive days of riding, we were happy to arrive in Ft. Myers on schedule. There is limited space for bicycles on the Key West Ferry Express, so we had to book the ferry reservation for the specific date weeks in advance. Reservations for bicycles are required on the ferry since space is limited (<https://www.keywestexpress.net/>). Michelle and I welcomed our arrival at Key West, knowing that we would have a couple of days reprieve from our tour schedule. Neither of us had been to Key West before, so we looked forward to exploring the area. Bicycles or mopeds are the best way to see the sights in Key West. We also made a stop at Mile 0, the start of U.S. Highway 1. This route spans the entire 2,369 miles of the East Coast from Key West, Florida, to Fort Kent, Maine, on the Canadian border. It is the longest north-south highway in the United States.

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THE KEYS: After a two-day break in Key West, it was time to get back on the road. We would be using the Atlantic Coast Route for our trip home. While our journey across Central Florida opened our eyes to the varied inland terrain and its natural beauty, we looked forward to the ride up the coast from Miami to Jacksonville, where the ocean would be an almost constant companion. However, first, we took two days to get across the Keys before reaching Miami. There are 42 bridges from Key West to Key Largo. The longest bridge was the Seven Mile Bridge leading into Marathon, which would be our overnight stopping point as we biked through the Keys. We rode along U.S. Highway 1 from Key West to Miami, and we periodically popped back onto it as we made our way back to Jacksonville. Although it is a heavily traveled road, it has an ample bike lane, so we never felt uncomfortable while riding U.S. 1.

EAST COAST: The ride into Miami was a breeze because a bicycle trail paralleled the bus route into the city. We followed the trail for 30 miles from Homestead into the southwestern side of Miami. While there were numerous intersections where we had to stop for traffic, the bicycle trail was quite safe. As we entered the city, we connected with some designated bicycle routes with bike lanes which also felt very safe for cycling. We found Miami to be an incredibly beautiful city. The city lies at the edge of Biscayne Bay. The water was as blue as it had been in the Keys. Skyscrapers seem to jump right out of the bay, creating a picturesque skyline. We rode over the bridges and causeways to Miami Beach, which was our overnight destination.

THE GOLD COAST: Having safely navigated our way across Miami and out to the beach, I assumed that the dangerously congested traffic was behind us. We could easily handle the rest of the journey northward. We would now be able to focus on really enjoying the coastal scenery and lifestyle as we rode on. From Miami Beach to Fort Lauderdale, the Adventure Cycling Association's route took us right through some of the most opulent neighborhoods in the southeast. We had never seen so many multimillion-dollar homes and yachts. Along the Gold Coast, the beach activity was quiet, which I attributed to the pandemic. However, as we left the country-club lifestyle of the Gold Coast and entered the spring-break mecca of Fort Lauderdale, we encountered beach environments similar to Jacksonville Beach near our home. There were numerous small beach towns with quaint downtowns with upscale coffee shops, appealing outdoor cafes, and unique restaurants.

AT JOURNEY'S END: Our last overnight stop was St. Augustine, the oldest continuously occupied settlement of European origin in the continental United States. To make the last night special, we opted to splurge for a bed and breakfast guest house which was appropriately named "At Journey's End" B&B.

A SOULFUL JOURNEY ENDS: Conducting our ride during the Lenten season helped us reflect upon our gratefulness for the many positive things that had recently happened in our lives. Seeing Florida up close by bicycle, including both the interior and coasts, was an eye-opening experience for us. Florida offers such a variety of scenery and lifestyles. The many people we met and their accompanying stories added to our memorable experience. Michelle and I have much to be thankful for in our lives, including this memorable bicycle tour. This trip reinforced that something special about bicycle touring, and the moniker rings true "***four wheels move the body, but two wheels move the soul!***"! We are looking forward to our next "soulful" journey.

Postscript by Patty Huff: I loved this story about cycling opportunities in Florida and encourage everyone to read the full account: www.flipsnack.com/WHEELSPEAKTEST/2021-may-nfbc-wheelspeak-special-edition.html.

Also, I have invited Paul to explore more of Florida with a trip through the Everglades!

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FROGG Board Members:

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

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**BIKE YOUR PARK DAY
SEPTEMBER 25, 2021**

Adventure Cycling posted this notice:

As you're planning your summer rides, remember it's not too early to sign up for Bike Your Park Day on **Saturday, September 25!**

Explore your parks and public lands by bicycle when thousands of others throughout the world ride to and through parks and public lands on the same day. Ride any distance on roads, paved bike paths, or single track. Stop to enjoy a spectacular view, treat yourself to your favorite ice cream, cool your toes in a lake, or learn something new at an historical site. You'll be elbow bumping your friends and feeling a sense of accomplishment for discovering your public lands in a new way-- by bicycle.

In conjunction with National Public Lands Day, we want you to celebrate the power of parks! For more information and to register, visit <https://www.adventurecycling.org/resources/bike-your-park-day/register-for-bike-your-park-day/>.

Rides are already popping up on our interactive map—keep your eyes open for rides near you, or get planning and register your ride, whether heading across state lines or across town.



Join the Florida Bicycle Association (FBA)

“Our Vision is for bicycling to be safe, accepted and encouraged in Florida.”

www.floridabicycle.org

FROGG Biking 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.

Front:
FROGG Friends of the River of Grass Greenway

Back:
Across the Everglades For All



This is a good time to renew your membership!

Annual membership levels:

Individual	\$25	Family	\$35
Business	\$50	Donor	\$100
Partner	\$250	Sponsor	\$500
Life Member	\$1000		

Please send check payable to FROGG and mail to P.O. Box 5031, Everglades City, FL 34139

or pay online with paypal at:

www.evergladesROGG.org/memberships/

Please call 239-719-0020 or email snookcity@gmail.com if you have any questions about your membership or t-shirts!

“A bicycle ride around the world begins with a single pedal stroke”

– Scott Stoll

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