



FROGG

FROGG



Friends of the River of Grass Greenway

Volume VIII Issue 2

website: www.evergladesROGG.org

FROGG, P.O. Box 5031, Everglades City, FL, 34139

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Fall 2023



Upcoming Bike Rides through the Everglades

Free monthly bike tours will begin in mid-December on Saturdays at 9:30 am followed by lunch at one of our local restaurants. Email snookcity@gmail.com or call Patty Huff at (239) 719-0020 for more information.

December 16 – Ride through the Fakahatchee
– off-road bikes recommended

January 13 – Tour historic Everglades City
and Chokoloskee – on-road/bike path

February 10 – Loop Road
off-road bikes recommended

March 16 – Bear Island Tour in Big Cypress

Visit our website

www.evergladesrogg.org/events

for more information and tour details



Annual Meeting
Saturday, October 14 - Noon to 4 pm
Healthy West Orange
1200 E. Plant Street
Winter Garden, FL 34787

The meeting is FREE,
but advance registration is required.

Visit FBA to register

<https://floridabicycle.org/>



Naples Pathways Coalition
The London Bay Homes Iron Joe
Turkey Ride is November 26

Visit

<https://www.naplespathways.org/>

to register

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Along the Tamiami Trail

US41 – West End

Road work continues on US41 just west of SR92 so caution should be taken. The road curves south with barriers separating the road from the construction to install culverts under US41 and restore water flow to the Everglades. The barriers have a protected bike path on the south side of the road. Target date to complete the project is the end of 2024.

US41 – Central

Cycling through the Big Cypress National Preserve in the central section is beautiful but long with less amenities. At the intersection of SR29 & US41 in Carnestown, the only open facility is the Marathon Gas Station which offers Subway sandwiches and snacks/drinks. Take extra water and supplies along this segment. Expect to see wildlife, native trees, and alligators and stop by the various sites along the way: the Big Cypress Swamp (Nathaniel Reed) Visitor Center, the historic Ochopee Post Office, Joanie's Blue Crab Café, Trail Lakes Campground (Skunk Ape Headquarters), H. P. Williams Roadside Park, Kirby Storter Roadside Park, Big Cypress Oasis Visitor Center, Clyde Butcher's Big Cypress Gallery, and the Miccosukee Indian Village. Visit our website for a detailed map/brochure:

<https://evergladesrogg.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/FROGG-Brochure.pdf>.

US41 – East End

Roadway and bridge work along the Tamiami Trail from east of the ValuJet Memorial to just east of S-334 control structure (about 1.5 miles west of Krome Avenue). Operations with lane closures will take place between 7 a.m. and 6 p.m., Monday through Friday. Cyclists should be prepared to stop for up to 10 minutes at a time between 6 a.m. and 9 a.m. and up to 15 minutes at a time after 9 a.m. Please use caution while driving through the area.



CORRIDOR CONNECT

**Ecology + Economy
for a Better Florida**

In 2021 the Florida Wildlife Corridor Act was signed into law after decades of work from conservationists, scientists, politicians, and many others. The Corridor is a statewide network of connected lands and waters that supports wildlife and people.

This month I attended the Florida Wildlife Corridor Summit to give a presentation about Everglades City as part of the breakout session entitled "Trail Towns: Connecting Communities to the Corridor." Everglades City was designated a State Trail Town in 2019 by the Office of Greenways & Trails, and we have provided annual updates on the progress of the specific objectives of our Action Plan. Visit <https://floridadep.gov/parks/ogt/content/trail-town-program> to learn more about Trail Towns.

Senator Kathleen Passidomo spoke to the attendees via video and mentioned connectivity between the Trail Towns. Visit Florida announced that they will be marketing the 18 designated Trail Towns starting in October, especially those in rural communities. Everglades City will certainly benefit from these initiatives.

The Summit was extremely informative and provided everyone the opportunity to connect and network with environmentalists, elected officials, FDOT, university consultants, non-profits, researchers, conservationists, and many more like-minded people interested in preserving wild Florida. For more information about the Florida Wildlife Corridor, visit their website <https://floridawildlifecorridor.org/>.

- Patty Huff

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***Dress in style, go hog wild, me oh my,
oh son of a gun, we'll have big fun
on the bayou***

by Tom DeMarco

Over 70 years after Hank Williams composed the hit song *Jambalaya*, I'm humming its tune, *dressed in style* indeed (my Lycra outfit perfectly matches the colours of my Cervelo bicycle) as I have *big fun* riding a trail along Buffalo Bayou. This is one of four long, paved bike paths that follow the winding banks of Houston's placid bayous. The other three are White Oak, Brays and Sims, all graced with underpasses at every intersection. So, U can *go hog wild* and bike all day non-stop out of traffic on smooth asphalt or concrete...*me oh my oh!*

During my 6-day visit to Southeast Texas, I'll also enjoy the faster pace of road bike team rides, similar in nature to those of any of my 3 bike clubs back in Broward County. But I'll also participate in another group event unlike anything I've ever experienced in Florida, or anywhere else for that matter. Its unique character can best be defined in terms of numbers...Of the estimated 350 cyclists, maybe 10 others bear helmets. The average value of the bicycles is maybe 1/20th that of mine. The average speed that I record is 9 miles/hour. The age range of participants: 7 to 77. The number of decibels generated by the sound system pulled on a trailer behind an e-bike: 125. The total number of stops made at red lights: zero. Total number of honks by irate motorists: also, remarkably zero. The number of other riders wearing Lycra: again zero. But respecting Hank's lyrics, many do dress in style, including one member in a full astronaut suit, presumably a NASA employee, who looks like he just got home from outer space. (This reminds me of a recent personal milestone: my lifetime bike mileage would now take me from earth to the moon.)

Maybe most extraordinary of all, this parade is not even an event. I'm told this slo-mo peloton invades downtown Houston after dark several nights per week, year-round!

Leafy, car-light bike havens that they tend to be, I always target university campuses when biking US cities. At Rice University, I again ride in the company of Owls, but this time in broad daylight. These riders too are *dressed in style*, sporting the blue jerseys of the school's varsity road bike team, the Rice Owls. Like the previous night's ride, no motorist overtakes us because this training run takes place in a PARKING LOT! Finally, I have met other riders who have discovered something I have known for over 50 years...big empty car parks provide EXCELLENT car-free cycling habitat! For any Broward County resident reading this, I highly recommend FLA LIVE arena's facility...acres and acres of smooth asphalt landscaped with slopes and trees! Kind of like a paved golf course, it reminds me of another cycle secret...many of Florida's golf courses provide brilliant nocturnal cycling opportunities with their miles of paved cart paths. But before you *go hog wild*, be sure to *dress in style*...even if the moon is out, don a light rain vest in case you need to ride through water curtains of active sprinklers! Unlike downtown Houston, you are not likely to be accompanied by 350 other riders on your night rounds. And unlike here in Whistler, you are also not likely to meet many bears either. (I have seen as many as 9 in 90 minutes here in BC, as the cart paths are open daytime to all comers before the golf season begins in mid-May!)

As much as I enjoy the Dr Jekyll side of Houston's bike culture, I quickly learn there's also a very conspicuous Mr. Hyde. I'd rank the city 9/10 for recreational riding but only 1/10 for utilitarian cycling as most roads that lead anywhere tend to be too narrow, too bumpy, too busy and are lined by thin, uneven sidewalks that

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come and go randomly! I understand why most local bikers prefer the security of their nocturnal herds!

Transit here is equally disappointing. On the Metrobus, it took me over 2 hours to cover the 22 miles between the airport and my downtown hotel! But even worse, I learn there's no transit or regular coach service at all to Galveston, just 60 miles away! Against my principles, I take a taxi most of the way to the Gulf Coast. The next day I'll bike all the way back to Houston, miraculously stumbling upon a wide smooth clean paved bike lane along Highway 3, one of the few I'd find in over 500 miles of biking Southeast Texas.

Forever in quest of good cycling ops during the long Canadian winter, *me oh my oh*, I've biked dozens of destinations across the southern USA, Hawaii, the Caribbean and Latin America. After this latest trip, the conclusion remains...from November to March, *son of a gun*, Florida is simply the best place to have *big fun* on a bicycle anywhere in the Western Hemisphere, regardless of your style of dress...



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Your support can save lives

HANDS FREE FLORIDA

LEARN MORE AT:
HandsFreeFlorida.org

Footnote on the Summit

by Patty Huff

During the last day of the Florida Wildlife Corridor Summit, a film was shown about John Francis, the Planet Walker, who stopped talking for 17 years just to listen to others, and for 22 years did not travel in any motorized vehicle. He walked across the US, earning three university degrees along the way.

It's a fascinating story about a man who never planned on making a difference in this world, but he did. After the film, John spoke to us about his life's adventures. He said he decided to talk on Earth Day in 1980 after arriving in Washington, D.C., when he believed he finally had something to say after listening to people during his long journey. John's story has been published many times over the past 40 years, but if you haven't heard about him or it's been a while, check out his website: <https://planetwalk.org/about-john/>, or watch the film. I think you will enjoy it: <https://planetwalk.org/2016/01/02/walking-man-cbs-story/>.



EVERGLADES CITY CENTENNIAL

MUSIC FESTIVAL

Saturday, November 4, 2023
Rod & Gun Club, Everglades City
12:00 noon - whenever?

GREAT LOCAL PERFORMERS
AUCTIONS * ARTS & CRAFTS

EVERGLADES SOCIETY FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION, INC.
ESHPI@hotmail.com • www.ESHPI.org
For info, call Marya at (239) 451-0265

“Life is like a ten-speed bicycle, most of us have gears we have not used.”

Charles M Schulz

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