



Florida Greenways and Trails Council (FGTC)
Public Hearing and Council Meeting



PUBLIC MEETING: October 21st and October 22nd , 2021
TIME: 10:00 am
LOCATION: Tallahassee, DEP Carr Bldg., Rm 170 & Zoom

FGTC Members in Attendance for Council Meeting:

Brian Smith, Appointed by the Governor-Trail User; Marti Miller, Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services; Shawn Thomas, US Forest Service; Jerrie Lindsey, Florida Fish & Wildlife Commission; Chris Rietow, Florida Regional Councils Association; Steve Bowler, Appointed by the President of the Senate – Trail User; Michael Nachev, Appointed by the Governor – Greenway User; Jason Lauritsen, Appointed by the President of the Senate – Greenway User; Leslie Wheeler, Appointed by the President of the Senate-Greenway User; Parks Small, Florida Department of Environmental Protection; Faron Boggs, Appointed by the Speaker of the House – Trail User; Chip Birdsong, Florida Department of State; Robin Birdsong, Florida Department of Transportation; Kevin Sweeny, Appointed by the Speaker of the House – Trail User

OGT Staff in Attendance for Council Meeting:

Samantha Browne, Bureau Chief; Britney Moore, Assistant Bureau Chief; Katie Bernier, Regional Coordinator; Justin Baldwin, Regional Coordinator; Lindsey Gelman, SCORP Coordinator; Kari Baasch, Graphics and Design Coordinator; Mikayla Panariello, Outdoor Recreation Program Assistant; Allison Beaty, Regional Coordinator

Welcome

Welcome and introductions from Eric Draper, Director of Florida Park Service

Approve Temporary Chair:

FGTC REMARKS: Nominate Chris Rietow

MOTION: Robin Birdsong

SECOND: Jerrie Lindsey

FGTC RECOMMENDATION:

☒ (X) APPROVE TEMPORARY CHAIR

☐ () APPROVE WITH MODIFICATIONS:

☐ () DEFER

☐ () WITHDRAW

☐ () NOT APPROVE

☐ () OTHER:

Approve Agenda:

FGTC REMARKS:

MOTION: Brian Smith

SECOND: Jason Lauritsen

FGTC RECOMMENDATION:

☒ (X) APPROVE MEETING AGENDA

☐ () APPROVE WITH MODIFICATIONS:

☐ () DEFER

☐ () WITHDRAW

☐ () NOT APPROVE

☐ () OTHER:

Approve the June 23, 2021 Meeting Summary:

FGTC REMARKS:

Motion: Jerrie Lindsey

Second: Brian Smith

FGTC RECOMMENDATION:

☒ **APPROVE MEETING SUMMARY**

☐ **APPROVE WITH MODIFICATIONS:**

☐ **DEFER**

☐ **WITHDRAW**

☐ **NOT APPROVE**

☐ **OTHER:**

FLORIDA GREENWAYS AND TRAILS COUNCIL BUSINESS:

Office of Greenways and Trails Update – OGT Staff

Update including introduction of new staff, their positions and upcoming work, Outdoor Recreation Webinar Series, monthly campaigns, Office of Outdoor Recreation, FGTS, upcoming presentations and regional news

Office of Outdoor Recreation – Samantha Browne

Discussed the directive for looking into a possible OOR, the timeline of the project, the methods of gathering data for the report and next steps for moving forward.

SCORP Update – Justin Baldwin and Lindsey Gelman

Discussion of the creation of the City of Palatka's blueway and greenway trails physical maps and story maps. Adding QR codes to physical maps to link online story maps. Introduction of Lindsey Gelman as the new SCORP Coordinator and update including a SCORP survey during

the pandemic, forward progress on the participation study, working on county relevance for the new plan, drafting and condensing the chapters within the plan, starting up the monthly meetings again, and finalizing next steps.

Florida Bicycle Association Update – Becky Afonso

Update including the quarterly newspaper, The Messenger, 2020-2025 Strategic Plan, the pedestrian and bicycle safety coalition, on-road and off-road cycling clubs, e-bike legislation, Move Over Law and the education component of FBA.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

N/A

ADJOURN:

MOTION: Brian Smith

SECOND: Marti Miller

10/22/21 - Welcome

Welcome from Christ Rietow, Temporary Chair

Amend Agenda:

FGTC REMARKS:

MOTION: Brian Smith

SECOND: Jerrie Lindsey

FGTC RECOMMENDATION:

(X) AMEND MEETING AGENDA

() APPROVE WITH MODIFICATIONS:

() DEFER

() WITHDRAW

() NOT APPROVE

() OTHER:

Planning Tool App Discussion – Alli Jones

Discussion of the Florida Greenways and Trails System update planning tool application.
Demonstration of how the app works, who it will be available to and when it will go live

FGTS UPDATE DISCUSSION:

OGT Staff/Overview:

As we have in the past, we would like to focus on our plan's goals, strategies, objectives, and tasks. As we go along in developing the details of the plan, we would like to continue to delineate the regional systems where we can develop regional task forces to collectively work on trails, look at previously funded projects and build on those, promote and market greenways and trails and outdoor recreation and establish partnerships and engage stakeholders. These goals are up for discussion to modify or stay the same.

Council Comments:

Jerrie Lindsey – We have done a great job where it concerns the trails, but our greenways possibly need more attention. Greenways act as natural corridors, are vital for healthy ecosystems and allow wildlife to thrive. Missing the mark when it comes to these concepts. Goal one touches on it, but our thinking is focused on trail corridors and not expansive greenways. Greenways are not narrow paved trails. One possibility is that if there isn't going to be any funding or acquisition, maybe greenways shouldn't be a part of this. Another possibility is that we put more emphasis on and advocacy for natural greenways. There's an opportunity to really educate and describe what a greenway is. We should also have information and education regarding SMALL and other similar funding opportunities. We could perhaps work on an objective or goal that could strengthen communication and collaboration on this topic. Would love to bring out in the plan all of the different opportunities besides paved trails.

Marti Miller – Also supports promoting the greenways more and trails to our visitors. We should also work to educate our visitors on our trails and outdoor resources.

Jason Lauritsen – There was a recent update to the 2016 FEGN. The priority three is now included in the Florida Wildlife Corridor. There have been some significant changes to the FWC, especially in the Panhandle and Central Florida. Trails allow for more community investment and would love to see more involvement in rural communities. There's a nexus of using trail value to drive conservation. How can we marry and leverage the ecological corridors and trail corridors? How can we include habitat loss as a FGTS indicator? Recognize ecological hubs as connections. How do we identify connections that will remain constant and not change? Promote and market FGTS to rural and urban communities. Provide more information on funding initiatives. Provide more education to Visit Florida and tourist developments councils

Steve Bowler – First meeting and a lot to take in. You all are doing a great job though.

Brian Smith – A lot of things have already been accomplished in the goals and objectives, but there still are a healthy list of things that still need to be done. Need more information on what has been completed in the chart. The Trail Town Program should be expanded upon and identify community leaders. We should work to create support groups/regional alliances for trail systems, including the C2C that encompasses people from all relevant backgrounds. Need to create vision statements for these groups. Also, would be great to have regional status maps. Is the Green Swamp connected to the C2C? More focus on regional connectivity is needed.

Chris Rietow – Agree with Jerry. Other comment is under objective 2, is possibly increase more education to legislators so that we could possibly generate more funding for projects down the road.

Parks Small – We have narrowed our message and have been incredibly successful, but we do need to broaden the message to all the different values that greenways and trails systems touch on. How can we diversify the message? In addition to focusing on building more trails, we need to focus on having consistent management for new trails and long term.

Chip Birdsong – Approaching from a historical resources point of view, the Trail Town Program really helps promote local historical and culturally significant areas. A continued emphasis on the program is important. What else could we do with the program, as well as trails in general, within a historical context. Likes the historical trail aspect of trail town mapping project. Is there a way to secure local funding for maintenance through trail town program?

Robin Birdsong – Really liked the 2018 plan's objectives and strategies. DEP has made huge strides in accomplishing those objectives and strategies. Perhaps we could do something to highlight the last five years. Also, it's important to have consistent

vocabulary across the board so that we don't confuse users. Continuing education component is key for stakeholders. There will not be a new priority regional trail to replace C2C or SJR2S Loop anytime soon. Some sections of the FGTS are providing excellent ecosystems services, such as the JR Alfred Greenway in Tallahassee. Can Tom Hocht give an update to the council at a future meeting?

Leslie Wheeler – New members should read the plan as part of onboarding for the Council. In agreement with Jerrie Lindsey that more attention needs to be paid to greenways. More focused goal would be welcoming new users to trails and become more accessible to all people. Educational materials for users new to trails, nature, and Florida in general. Promote urban trails to rural trails and state parks. Possibly have the Council serve as a connection for people who want to volunteer on the trails and its management. Also agrees with educating the legislature. Make sure materials are accessible to all users.

Shawn Thomas – Agrees with Leslie's comments on a welcoming strategy to new people and people from different demographics that represent all of Florida. Overall, all the goals are still relevant and still apply. How will the Office of Outdoor Recreation impact OGT and will it impact this plan? We should consider collaboration between Trail Towns and Gateway Communities. Emphasize outdoor recreation and trail towns.

Capital Region Transportation Planning Agency – Jack Kostrzewa

Update regarding the CRTPA's work on the Capital City to Sea Trail including the connection and work to the coastal trail. Working to build and expand upon the regional trail system in Leon and Wakulla Counties. Discussion also included maintenance and work to existing trails.

COUNCIL MEMBER UPDATES:

Jerrie Lindsey – Request for a joint meeting with the scenic byway advisory council.

Marti Miller – Florida Forest Service has training programs for kids to promote safety and environmental education. That deadline is coming up

Jason Lauritsen – Florida Wildlife Coalition partnered with the National Geographic Society and Carlton Ward to help educate decision makers on the value of the Florida Wildlife Corridor from an economic standpoint.

Steve Bowler – No update but did talk with Samantha and look over the plan. Looking forward to future meetings

Brian Smith – Trail building continues on the east side of Pinellas County and will hook into the Pinellas Trail to make a county-wide loop.

Chris Rietow - No Update

Parks Small – No Update, but deferring to Eric Draper for comments

Eric Draper – Would like to thank everyone on Council for their service. Retiring as Director of the Florida Park Service

Chip Birdsong – New program that's a collaboration with historical resources and the Florida Public Archaeology Network called the Historic Cemetery Inventory. FPAN.US/HCI

Robin Birdsong – Recently adopted the 5-year work plan and update regarding projects around the state

Leslie Wheeler – The new Florida Trail calendar for 2022 is out and they are currently working with lots of volunteers on different sections on the FT.

Shawn Thomas – Shared the story map for the FNST. Just updated their sustainable recreation strategy and how they interact with each state. Has used OGT and the FGTC as a model for collaboration. USFS is currently reviewing e-bike rules.

Kevin Sweeney – No update

PUBLIC COMMENT:

N/A

ANNOUNCEMENTS/NEXT MEETING:

Spring meeting in the St. Petersburg area. Will send out Doodle Poll for exact dates.

ADJOURN:

MOTION: Brian Smith

SECOND: Jerrie Lindsey