



Historical Timeline of the Florida Greenways and Trails System

- Early 1900s - public lands begin to be established in Florida.
- 1930s – Canal Authority of the State of Florida is created to purchase lands for construction of the Cross Florida Ship Canal.
- 1935 – Construction of the ship canal began as part of Franklin Roosevelt’s New Deal. Construction ceased within one year.
- 1942 – Following an attack on merchant ships off Florida coast, Congress authorized bill to construct Cross Florida Barge Canal along same route of former ship canal.
- 1964 – President Lyndon Johnson held groundbreaking ceremony for barge canal in Palatka, Florida.
- 1964 – [Florida Trail Association](#) is established to oversee volunteer effort to build and maintain the Florida Trail.
- Early 1970s - the Florida Canoe Trail System, now the [Florida Paddling Trails System](#), is established by the Florida Governor and Cabinet. It is eventually managed by OGT.
- 1971 – Barge canal project halted by President Nixon.

- 1979 - [The Florida Recreational Trails Act](#) is adopted by the Legislature directing the Florida Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Division of Recreation and Parks, to establish a network of bicycling, canoeing, hiking, horseback riding and jogging trails.
- 1980 - The Florida Department of Transportation hires its first bicycle coordinator (Dan Burden).
- 1983 - The Florida Trail, now known as the [Florida National Scenic Trail](#), is designated by Congress as part of the National Trails System.
- 1984 – The Florida Department of Transportation purchases 16 miles of an abandoned rail corridor from Tallahassee to St. Marks to create the [state’s first rail-trail](#).
- 1987 – The original [Florida Bicycle Association](#) is formed. The group disbanded in 1995 and was re-established in 1997.
- 1989 - The [Rails to Trails Conservancy](#) establishes a Florida field office.
- January 1991 – [Cross Florida Barge Canal](#) officially deauthorized and the Canal Lands Authority is established to determine the fate of the lands.
- 1991 - “The Florida Greenways Project,” a vision for an integrated trails and greenways system, is produced by 1000 Friends of Florida and the Conservation Fund.
- 1993 - The Florida Legislature transfers the former lands for the now defunct Cross Florida Barge Canal to DNR and the newly created Office of Greenways Management (OGM). The barge canal lands would become the [Marjorie Harris Carr Cross Florida Greenway](#).
- 1993 - Governor Lawton Chiles issues an Executive Order to create a statewide public-private coalition known as the Florida Greenways Commission.

- January 1994 - The Commission, chaired by Lt. Governor Buddy MacKay, issues a report entitled “Creating a Statewide Greenways System.”
- January 1994 - DNR and the Department of Environmental Regulation (DER) merge into the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP).
- 1994 - [Bike Florida](#) is created.
- April 1994 - DEP recommends moving the Florida Recreational Trails Program from the Division of Recreation and Parks to the Office of Greenways Management.
- 1994 - The Legislature authorizes the transfer and renames OGM the [Office of Greenways and Trails \(OGT\)](#).
- 1995 - As a result of the Florida Greenways Commission report, the Legislature passes the [Florida Greenways and Trails Act in Chapter 260](#), Florida Statutes. The [Florida Greenways and Trails Council](#) is created to advise DEP on trail related issues and provide leadership.
- 1998 - The first [Florida Greenways and Trails System Plan](#), “Connecting Florida’s Communities,” is adopted by the Council.
- 2000 – The first true land bridge in the United States, the [Cross Florida Greenway Land Bridge](#) over I-75, is completed.
- 2005 - Chapter 260 is amended to authorize OGT to establish the 1,515-mile [Florida Circumnavigational Saltwater Paddling Trail](#) around the entire Florida coast.
- 2007 – East Coast Greenway Alliance opens its [Florida field office](#).
- 2007 – With the opening of the circumnavigational trail, OGT is instrumental in launching the non-profit [Florida Paddling Trails Association](#) to act as volunteer stewards of Florida’s paddling trails.
- 2007- [Paddle Florida](#) is created and hosts its first trip on the Suwannee River.

- 2008 - OGT, on behalf of the State of Florida, receives the first-ever [Best Trails State in America](#) award by American Trails.
- 2011 - OGT is merged into the [Division of Recreation and Parks](#). While no longer managing trails, OGT continues to provide leadership and coordination to establish and expand the Florida Greenways and Trails System.
- 2013 - OGT outlines a new vision for the Florida Greenways and Trails System (FGTS) in the [first update to the FGTS Plan](#) since 1998.
- 2014 - The initial legislative funding is authorized to complete the 250-mile [Florida Coast-to-Coast Trail](#).
- 2015 – The Florida Legislature creates the [Shared-Use Nonmotorized \(SUN\) Trail Network](#) as a component of the FGTS. FDOT receives \$25 million a year to construct paved multi-use trails in the system and works closely with OGT in identifying qualified regional trails.
- March, 2016 – The Florida Greenways and Trails Council prioritizes regional SUN Trail funding. After the Florida Coast-to-Coast Trail, they choose the 260-mile [St. Johns River-to-Sea Loop](#) as the next priority regional trail to receive funding.
- January, 2018 – After 14 public workshops and months of public input, OGT completes the final draft of the 2018-2022 opportunity and priority trail maps to help guide trail development and funding. They are approved with some modifications by the [Florida Greenways and Trails Council](#).
- January, 2018 – Dunedin is designated Florida’s first trail town under a new [trail town program](#) administered by OGT.
- September, 2018 – The final [2019-2023 Florida Greenways and Trails System Plan](#) is adopted by the Florida Greenways and Trails Council.
- January, 2019 – Four new trail towns are designated, making for a total of 9 Florida trail towns.

- April, 2019 – A celebration is held for the closing of the Hastings Gap, the last gap in the [Palatka-to-St. Augustine State Trail](#).
- 2019 – OGT expands its role by promoting the overall benefits of outdoor recreation and taking on the five year update of the [Florida Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan \(SCORP\)](#).
- April 2022 – The Florida Greenways and Trails Council adopts [DeBary as Florida's 12th recognized trail town](#).