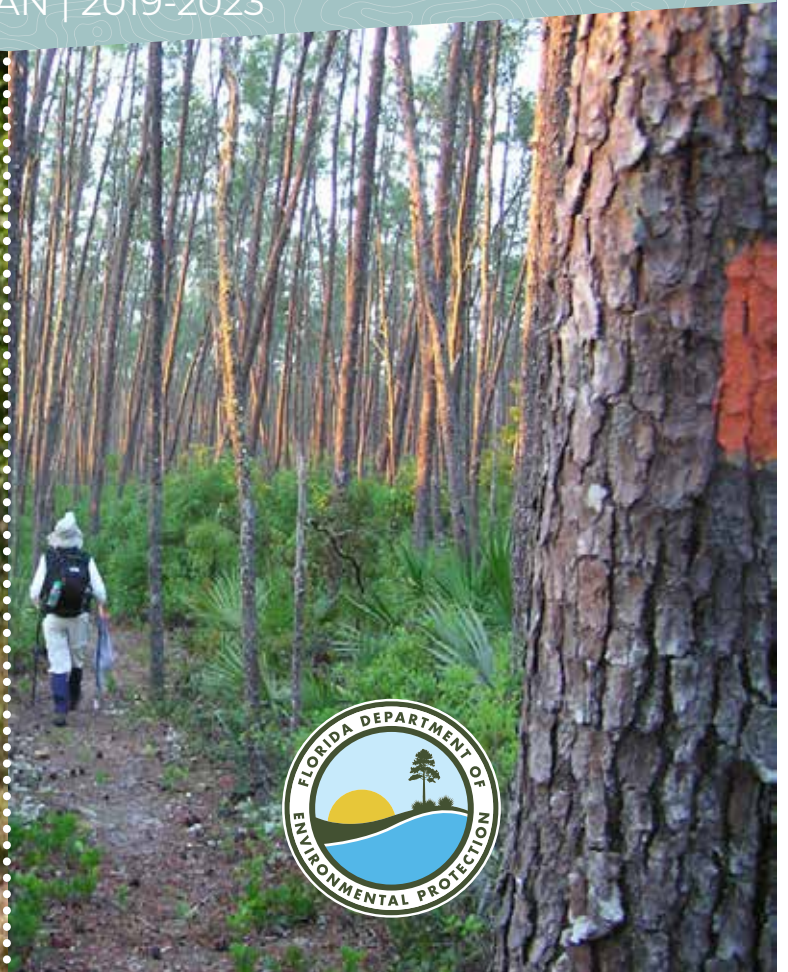


# FLORIDA

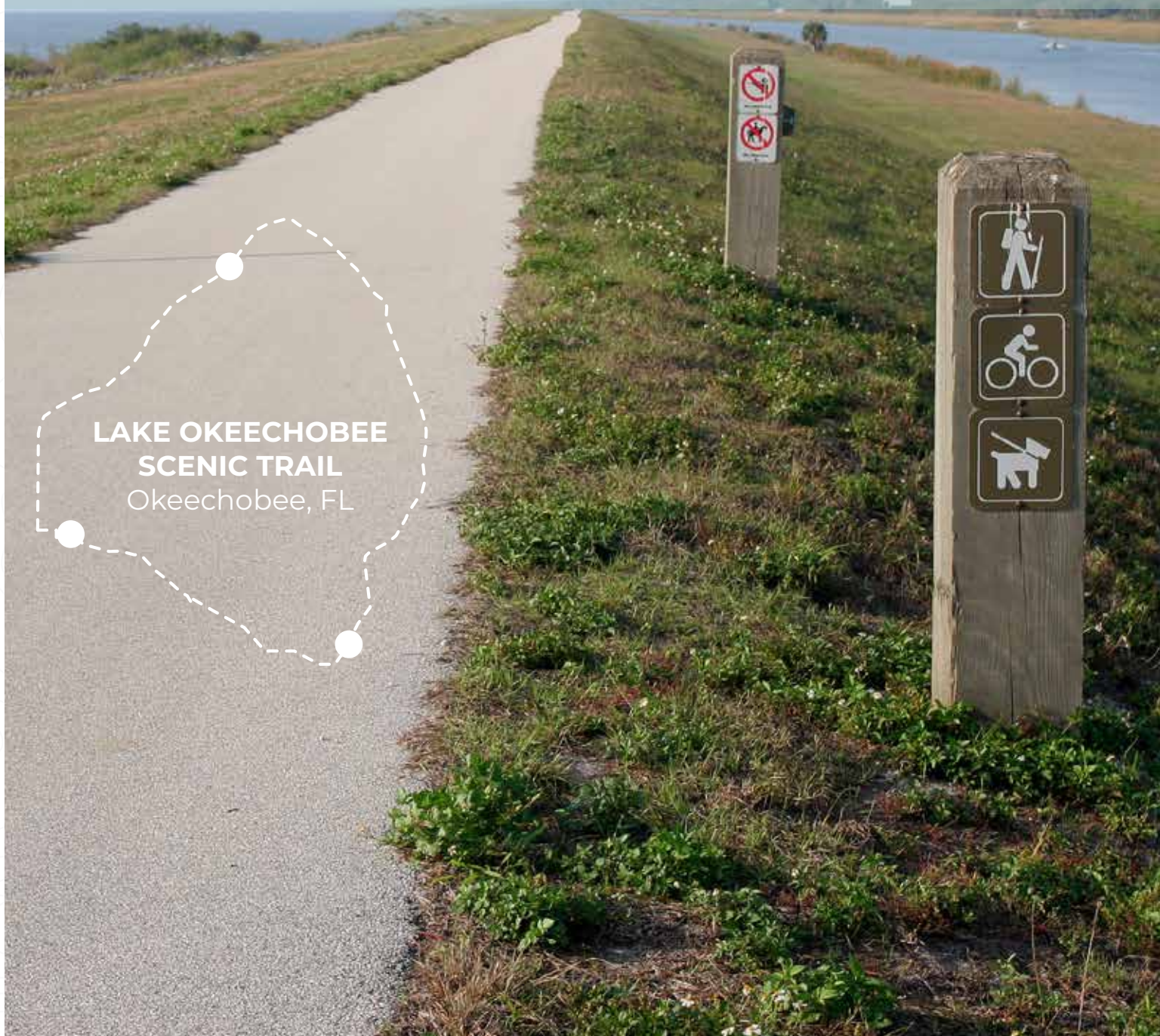
## GREENWAYS & TRAILS

SYSTEM PLAN | 2019-2023



# Outdoor Recreation Creates Healthy Communities

Studies demonstrate that, in addition to economic prosperity, outdoor recreation delivers personal and social benefits on which healthy, happy communities thrive.



## Goal 1

Delineate Regional Systems

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## Goal 2

Strategic Investment of Resources to Advance System Completion

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## Goal 3

Promote and Market the Florida Greenways and Trails System to Residents and Visitors

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## Goal 4

Establish Partnerships and Engage Stakeholders

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## Executive Summary

The Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Division of Recreation and Parks has been given the responsibility by the Florida Legislature, section 375.031(1), Florida Statutes, to develop and execute a comprehensive, multipurpose outdoor recreation plan with the assistance of other public recreation land managers. In addition, section 258.004(3), Florida Statutes, directs DEP to study and appraise the recreation needs of the state, and to assemble and disseminate information pertaining to recreation. To further emphasize the importance of providing outdoor recreation in Florida, DEP has identified as one of its objectives “to plan, promote and provide outdoor recreation opportunities through a network of trails, access and information.”

The Office of Greenways and Trails (OGT) is a bureau within the Division of Recreation and Parks tasked with fulfilling Chapter 260, Florida Statutes, the Florida Greenways and Trails Act. To accomplish this, Greenways and Trails has been given the responsibility of leading, planning and facilitating the development of an interconnected Florida Greenways and Trails System. This takes a coordinated effort with state and local partners to compile local trails data from cities, counties and other land managing entities into one inclusive system. Depicting the trails data on a statewide map helps identify where connections can be made across jurisdictional boundaries.

The Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) is the state’s official document regarding outdoor recreation planning. Because the Greenways and Trails Plan substantially contributes to the identification and implementation of outdoor recreation, it serves as an essential state-level companion to the SCORP.

To implement the Florida Greenways and Trails System, DEP recognizes that Florida State Parks and trails not only complement, but help complete the network. The Florida park system consists of 175 state parks, all are within 20 miles of the Greenways and Trails System. Currently, 82 state

parks are immediately adjacent to or are located within the priority system. State trails managed by the Florida Parks Service, are all located within the priority system and help form its foundation. The trails include the Blackwater Heritage State Trail, Florida Keys Overseas Heritage Trail, Gainesville-to-Hawthorne State Trail, General James A. Van Fleet State Trail, Nature Coast State Trail, Palatka-to-Lake Butler State Trail, Palatka-to-St. Augustine State Trail, Suwannee River Wilderness Trail, Tallahassee-St. Marks State Trail and the Withlacoochee State Trail, for a total of 547 miles. A significant role of Greenways and Trails staff is to identify new opportunities to connect the Greenways and Trails System to the Florida State Park System and incorporate these findings into the individual unit management plans. By doing so we are establishing and encouraging connections between the Greenways and Trails System and Florida State Parks.

Another important function of Greenways and Trails is to facilitate communication, cooperation and coordination among governmental entities, landowners, recreational user groups and other nongovernmental organizations involved in greenways and trails planning, development, management and maintenance. This requires Greenways and Trails staff to establish strong relationships with planners, land managers and other stakeholders at all levels, both public and private.

This plan outlines the vision for the state’s Greenways and Trails System, both on land and water. It defines the role of the system in advancing Florida’s economy, tourism, public health, transportation choices, recreation, conservation and quality of life. This is the second update to the Florida Greenways and Trails System Plan since Connecting Florida’s Communities laid the groundwork in 1998 to implement the many greenways and trails programs and projects that exist today. To view the previous plans and other Florida Greenways and Trails System Plan documents, visit [FloridaGreenwaysAndTrails.com](http://FloridaGreenwaysAndTrails.com).

This plan’s strategies, goals, objectives and actions provide a comprehensive approach to establish partnerships and engage stakeholders and to delineate, fund and promote the system.



**SOUTHWOOD  
DEVELOPMENT**  
Tallahassee, FL

*“Trails add value to new homes and are consistently among the top 4 community amenities sought by prospective homeowners of all ages.”*

National Association of Homebuilders, 2016

## Accomplishments

In 2012, Greenways and Trails completed the first update to the original 1998 plan. The updated **2013-2017 FGTS Plan** established a new vision for the Florida Greenways and Trails System. The goals set forth in the plan provided a comprehensive approach to identify, prioritize, establish, promote and coordinate the FGTS.

The goals of the 2013-2017 Florida Greenways and Trails System Plan included:

- Identifying and prioritizing trails and greenways to facilitate completion of the system.
- Directing resources and programs to establish and connect the system.
- Promoting and communicating information about greenways and trails to advance the system.
- Linking and supporting complementary programs, planning and partnership efforts to coordinate the system.

OGT began with the original Land Trails Opportunity maps, which included a different map for each of the four distinct user groups - hiking, bicycling, horseback riding and multi-use. These were combined into one overall multi-use map making it easier to visualize the connections and to understand the goals and priorities of each county. The Land Trails Opportunity Map now serves as the state companion to community greenways and trails and bicycle and pedestrian master plans, and encompasses a combination of paved and unpaved, multiple and single-use trails.

OGT staff established clear criteria to help identify priority land trail corridors within the Greenways and Trails System, as opposed to priority segments, which were typically individual local trails. This allowed for the identification of potential long-distance trail corridors and helped clearly identify connectivity across jurisdictional boundaries. The multi-county approach encourages regional planning, allowing projects to be funded and completed more quickly.

To help delineate the unacquired and undeveloped segments within the Priority Trails Map, Greenways and Trails developed a Priority Trails Gap Map that serves as the guide for directing resources to complete Florida's highest priority trail projects.

To assist with consistency of the Greenways and Trails System as it is developed, OGT staff worked with the Florida Greenways and Trails Council to compile updated unpaved trail standards and guidelines as a resource for communities, agencies and organizations establishing the Florida Greenways and Trails System. The Florida Department of Transportation (DOT) provides the standards and guidelines for the paved trail component of the system.

OGT participated in the development of the recently established Shared-Use Nonmotorized (SUN) Trail program administered by DOT. To be eligible for the SUN Trail program, a project must be identified as a component of the Florida Greenways and Trails Priority System. Two regional trail systems, the Florida Coast-to-Coast Trail and the St. Johns River-to-Sea-Loop Trail, were identified by the Florida Greenways and Trails Council and will receive priority funding through the SUN Trail program. Other individual trails throughout the state also have been programmed for funding.

The Florida Greenways and Trails Designation Program helps identify and promote trails and greenways within the Greenways and Trails System. Recently, to assist with recognizing eligible projects, new signage and branding standards were developed. Since January 2013, 59 projects totaling over 225,000 acres and 756 trail miles have been designated in the statewide Greenways and Trails System including state trails and parks, national forest lands and trails, locally managed greenways and trails, blueways and many other areas.

Additionally, communication of information to advance the Greenways and Trails System has increased over the past five years. The Greenways and Trails quarterly online Connections newsletter highlights major trail happenings around the state such as groundbreaking ceremonies, trail openings and other special events taking place on trails within the system. Circulation for the newsletter has risen

*“Getting outside on a daily basis may help seniors stay healthy and live longer.”*

Journal of Aging Health, 2008



### NATURE COAST STATE TRAIL

Chiefland, FL



## Department Of Health

For every \$1 spent on walking trails approximately \$3 is saved in medical expenses (American Heart Association, 2016).



Investments in outdoor recreation infrastructure and programming could significantly lower long-term individual and public health care costs by reducing stress and obesity rates, improving physical fitness and strengthening social bonds with family and friends (Outdoor Recreation Economy 2017, Outdoor Industry Association).

from just over 2,000 in 2012 to more than 45,000 subscribers, a nearly 20-fold increase, underscoring the growing interest in trails and greenways.

Each November, Florida Paddlesports Month celebrates the more than 4,000 miles of designated paddling trails throughout the state. This program was established by DEP and adopted by the Florida Paddling Trails Association. Events are shared on the Greenways and Trails' website and also are promoted via e-mail to more than 1,200 contacts. Regional Planning staff also engage with stakeholders and planners directly to promote the Greenways and Trails System, whether it is through one-on-one meetings or presentations at local, regional, state or multi-state summits.

To bring awareness to the significant economic benefit of trails, OGT staff developed an economic infographic showing the latest figures from studies and surveys relating to trails in Florida. This economic infographic is distributed at trail events and also can be downloaded from the website at:

To link and support complementary programs, OGT staff identified mutual goals and objectives of partnering agencies so that resources could be consolidated and joint meetings and events could be co-hosted to reach common goals. In addition, Greenways and Trails analyzed the existing and planned trails data within individual master plans and identified local projects that when connected could create long-distance regional trails. By tying these efforts together into a comprehensive statewide vision, regional partnerships can be established to support joint projects.

Building on these past accomplishments, this plan provides a foundation from which to substantively advance the Florida Greenways and Trails System. Among this plan's highlights are:

- Delineating distinct long-distance regional trail corridors within the Priority Greenways and Trails System.
- Providing strategies to plan, fund, develop and market Florida's Priority Regional Greenways and Trails to advance Florida's economy, tourism, public health, transportation choices, recreation, conservation and quality of life.

- Establishing partnerships between public and private sectors to provide leadership in the acquisition, development, designation, management and long-term maintenance of Greenways and Trails projects that fulfill the FGTS plan and vision.
- Communicating and promoting the benefits of Greenways and Trails to Florida residents and visitors.

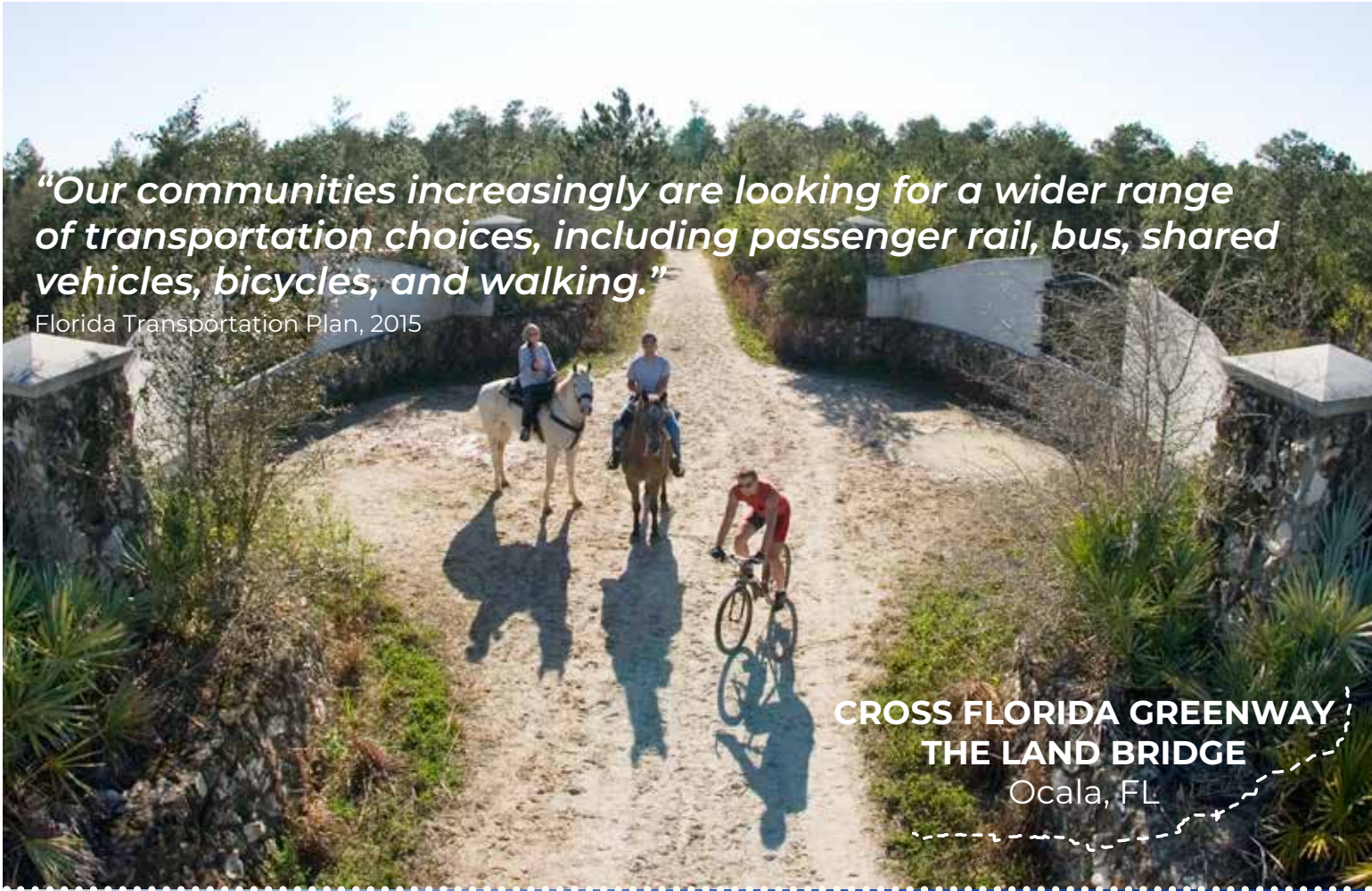
## What are Greenways and Trails?

**G**reenways are natural corridors of protected open space that are vital for functional and healthy native ecosystems. These ecological greenways support our environments and allow wildlife to thrive and migrate from place to place.

Greenways and recreational trails, both paved and unpaved, join populated areas together by linking landscapes such as parks, water features, open space, cultural features and historic sites. Non-motorized trails and waterways provide places for paddlers, bicyclists, pedestrians, hikers, horseback riders and others to recreate and experience the many natural and cultural attractions of our state.

Establishing a connected system of greenways and trails for Florida is an important way to join many aspects of both the natural and human environments. To accomplish this, the Greenways and Trails strategy is to identify and delineate long-distance regional trails within the Florida Greenways and Trails Priority System and facilitate multi-jurisdictional partnerships to support, develop and manage these systems.





*“Our communities increasingly are looking for a wider range of transportation choices, including passenger rail, bus, shared vehicles, bicycles, and walking.”*

Florida Transportation Plan, 2015

**CROSS FLORIDA GREENWAY  
THE LAND BRIDGE**  
Ocala, FL



*“Two-thirds of Americans would like more transportation options so they have the freedom to choose how to get to their destinations.”*

Transportation for America, 2010

**HOLLYWOOD BOARDWALK**  
Hollywood, FL

# Benefits of Greenways and Trails

## *Economic Development and Tourism*

The Florida Greenways and Trails System supports the Five-Year Strategic Plan for Economic Development [www.floridajobs.org/office-directory/division-of-strategic-business-development/florida-strategic-plan-for-economic-development](http://www.floridajobs.org/office-directory/division-of-strategic-business-development/florida-strategic-plan-for-economic-development). It advances the plan's **Quality of Life & Quality Places** and **Infrastructure & Growth Leadership** strategies. These goals include the creation of "vibrant, safe and healthy communities that attract workers, businesses, residents and visitors" and the development of "multimodal, interconnected trade and transportation systems to support a prosperous and globally competitive economy."

Any trail, long or short, is an economic asset to a community. They provide free recreation for people of all ages and fitness levels, and they offer opportunities to study nature or local history. By connecting these local projects together into a larger system, the FGTS has the potential to be a fundamental component of Florida's overall economic development strategy. Long-distance or destination trails not only attract nearby residents, but also visitors from outside the community. These visitors travel specifically to use the trail and are seeking a multi-day experience. Studies show that the longer a trail is, the farther people will travel to visit it, the longer they will stay, and the more money they will spend. A day-user will spend four times the amount of a local is likely user and is likely to make a return trip to the area. An overnight visitor will spend twice the amount of a day-user.

Local businesses, especially those that cater to the needs of the trail users, commonly reap the economic impacts of these destination trails. Service providers include restaurants, grocery or convenience stores, campgrounds and hotels, guide services and gear stores. Direct connections between the commercial centers and the destination trails can be accomplished by trail spurs or indirectly by wayfinding signage or shuttles from nearby trailheads.

For more than 20 years, Bike Florida Inc. has created economic opportunities for small towns, rural areas and cities by attracting participants from around the world to experience Florida's natural and historical beauty while engaging in the health-promoting activity of bicycling. Each year, the organization hosts a spring tour to promote bicycle safety and create bicycle touring awareness. These tours host up to 650 cyclists every year, contracting with many local businesses throughout Florida. The route changes every year to highlight different areas of the state.

## *Improved Health*

The Greenways and Trails System supports the Florida State Health Improvement Plan with emphasis on advancing the Healthy Weight initiative, and Goal HW2 to "improve access to and participation in physical activity opportunities across the lifespan to increase healthy weight." This FGTS also provides a return on investment by helping reduce the public health costs of diseases and physical ailments stemming from inactivity and obesity, which in turn can increase the ability of Floridians to live healthy lives.

The Florida Greenways and Trails System provides many opportunities to support active lifestyles and improve overall health by increasing access to outdoor recreation and alternative transportation. A well-designed and managed system of trails and greenways, connecting to and through communities, is an essential way to achieve that. The physical and mental health benefits of walking, bicycling, horseback riding and paddling, including the experience of connecting with nature and community, are well-documented. While many of the active lifestyle related benefits of a connected recreational trail system are not easy to quantify – such as improved mental health, educational development, connection to nature and a sense of place – an increasing amount of research associates trails and greenways to increased physical activity, decreased healthcare costs and improved air quality. (*Benefits of Greenways: Pennsylvania -Pa Greenways Partnership Commission - 2002; The Environmental Benefits of Bicycling and Walking – FHWA 1993*)



**PINELLAS TRAIL**  
Dunedin, FL

## Trail Town Designation



The first Trail Town to be designated is Dunedin. Located along Florida's west coast, Dunedin has long been a mecca for non-motorized paved trail users. Bicyclists, joggers, in-line skaters and those enjoying a leisurely stroll can access the town by way of the Pinellas Trail, which runs through downtown on an abandoned CSX railroad corridor. The multi-use paved trail loop stretches from St. Petersburg to Tarpon Springs. Town officials credit the trail for a sharp rise in the business occupancy rate, from 30 percent to 100 percent. Bike shops, cafes, motels and other businesses cater to trail users.

## ***Transportation Choices***

Trails and greenways are increasingly important in transportation planning and development. Because of Florida's large population and year-round tourism industry, it is important to provide a practical and accessible means for bicyclists and pedestrians to safely travel through and between communities. While trails have long been known for their recreational benefits, they are now an increasingly critical component of bicycle and pedestrian facilities within multimodal transportation systems.

To address the need for a greater focus on walking and bicycling infrastructure, DOT formed the Florida Bicycle and Pedestrian Partnership. The partnership's goal is to improve bicycle and pedestrian mobility and safety by facilitating partnerships and information sharing that supports bicycle and pedestrian policy development and implementation. By incorporating separate multi-use trails into our communities, the potential for crashes between vehicles and vulnerable users is significantly reduced. DEP is an active participant in this partnership and continuously seeks opportunities to provide input to DOT on issues related to bicycle and pedestrian projects.

## ***Outdoor Recreation***

Outdoor recreation is a major driver of tourism in Florida. Because of Florida's climate, diversity of natural landscapes, and award-winning state parks and trails, the state offers a tremendous selection of recreational experiences for residents and visitors. Linking these individual opportunities into a larger recreation and conservation system is essential to maximizing the value of individually planned and managed public lands. The Florida Greenways and Trails System is the needed foundation for connecting and providing access to recreation hubs ranging from sizeable state and national forests to small community parks.

The Florida Legislature gave the responsibility to the DEP to develop and execute a comprehensive, multipurpose outdoor recreation plan with the assistance of other public recreation land managers. The Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) is the state's official document regarding outdoor recreation planning. DEP's Office

of Park Planning, through an extensive public input process, updates the SCORP every five years.

Because the Greenways and Trails Plan substantially contributes to these recreational activities, it serves as an essential state-level companion to the SCORP.

## ***Conservation***

There are numerous environmental benefits provided by greenways and trails that help protect the critical functions performed by our natural environments. Because of their linear nature, greenways and trails not only provide areas for recreation, but also function as corridors for plants and wildlife. Vegetated greenways, as well as paved and unpaved trails with buffers, can assist in varying degrees in protecting our natural resources. Linear corridors provide uninterrupted habitat and contain a high diversity of plant and animal species that inhabit the edges of the corridor. If properly maintained, native habitat on the edges of trails can also suppress the occurrence of invasive plant species.

Often, greenways protect and link fragmented conservation lands and provide opportunities for protecting plant and animal species. When conservation lands become detached, these corridors can function as a conduit or migration route for species to move. This is often critical in preventing inbreeding that can limit genetic diversity. The more diverse the species population, the better chance there is for survival. Greenways in open, sunny areas support naturally occurring wildflowers on their edges, which provide habitat highways for crop and forest pollinators, especially in rural and agricultural areas.

Additionally, greenways and trails contribute to wetland preservation and the improvement of air and water quality in several ways. Recreational trail corridors provide enjoyable and safe alternatives to cars. Ecological greenways and natural landscapes offer protection to large areas of plants that create oxygen and filter air pollutants. The landscapes also improve water quality by creating a natural buffer zone that protects streams, rivers and lakes, preventing soil erosion and filtering pollution caused by stormwater runoff.



**DUNNELTON TRAIL BRIDGE**  
Dunnellon, FL

*“Greenways improve water quality by creating a natural buffer zone that protects streams, rivers and lakes, preventing soil erosion and filtering pollution caused by agricultural and road runoff.”*

Chuck Flink, Greenways, Inc.

*The Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan helps coordinate Florida’s outdoor recreation planning efforts and guides the development of a diverse, balanced system of lands, programs, facilities and opportunities. Goals for this 5-year plan include the promotion of: active and healthy lifestyles in the outdoors; trails, trail connectivity, and the safety of trail users; and the economic benefits of outdoor recreation and ecotourism in Florida.*

As local governments develop innovative ways to address flooding, there are emerging patterns of utilizing green infrastructure (vegetation, soils and natural processes) and open space to complement other water mitigation efforts that help lower flood risks naturally and increase resilience. These green infrastructure projects offer opportunities for greenway and trail connections and can improve migratory wildlife paths. Partnerships with local governments and agencies that are considering green infrastructure as part of comprehensive and land-use plans offer opportunities to create connections within the statewide system.

The Florida Greenways and Trails System also provides opportunities for environmental education. For example, interpretive signage can inform recreational users about water quality issues or species sustainability. In a similar way, a greenway can serve as a hands-on outdoor classroom where people of all ages can experience natural settings, which fosters environmental awareness.

## Goal 1: Delineate Regional Systems

### *Evaluate and Prioritize*

**T**he Greenways and Trails System acts to integrate natural and human environments, both paved and unpaved. Greenways and trails tie communities together by linking features such as parks, open spaces, historic sites and residential areas. Non-motorized trails and waterways provide places for paddlers, bicyclists, hikers, walkers, horseback riders and others to experience the many natural and cultural wonders of our state. Ideally, apart from walkable and bike friendly downtown main streets, these routes will be separate from the roadways.

### *Opportunities*

Land trail opportunities within the Florida Greenways and Trails System are corridors that represent existing, planned and conceptual non-motorized multi-use trails. These corridors form a land-based trail network that cross, or have the potential to cross, jurisdictional boundaries. The corridors on maps are represented as approximately 1-mile wide

to allow for flexibility in the proposed trail locations as they are refined.

The land trail opportunity map is a synthesis of trail planning efforts conducted by cities, counties, transportation planning organizations, nonprofits and other agencies throughout Florida. This map does not include all existing, proposed and conceptual trails in Florida, but focuses on trails that can form a comprehensive connected system when complete. To be recognized as a Land Trail Opportunity, the corridor must meet the following criteria to the greatest extent possible:

- Crosses or has the potential to cross county boundaries.
- Documented evidence of local or regional government endorsement.
- Leads to or connects to a destination that provides natural scenic qualities and diverse experiences.
- Provides access to conservation lands and historic, recreational or cultural sites.
- Supports the **Florida Ecological Greenways Network**.

OGT will further refine the land trail opportunity map to identify “Ready” land trail opportunities. To be recognized as “Ready,” projects within the corridor, for example acquisition, design or construction, should be at a point that when funding is received, managers are prepared to begin projects immediately.

Paddling Trail Opportunity corridors represent the vision for a comprehensive water-based trail system. To be recognized as a Paddling Trail Opportunity, the corridor must meet the following criteria to the greatest extent possible:

- Recognized as an existing or potential tourism destination due to the scenic qualities and diverse experiences.
- Spans at least three miles in length.
- Navigable during most months in an average year.

***“Outdoor recreation activities thrive in Florida because of the year-round climate and available opportunities and in 2016 accounted for \$58.6 billion spent on trips, equipment and other items.”***

Outdoor Industries Association, 2017

A man and a woman are standing on a dirt trail, each with an orange bicycle. The man is on the left, wearing a grey tank top and light-colored shorts, and is looking towards the woman. The woman is on the right, wearing a purple shirt and black shorts, and is looking back at the man. They are both wearing helmets. The background is a lush, green forest with many trees and bushes. A dashed line with two white dots points from the text 'Anastasia State Park' to the top left of the image.

**Anastasia State Park**  
St. Augustine, FL

## **Florida Department of Transportation Advancing Trails to Meet Transportation Needs**

Because of Florida’s large population and year-round tourism economy, it is vital to provide a viable and accessible means for bicyclists and pedestrians to safely travel through and between communities. While trails have been long known for their recreational benefits, they are now an increasingly critical component of bicycle and pedestrian facilities within multimodal transportation systems. Two-thirds of Americans would like more transportation options so they have the freedom to choose how to get to their destinations (Transportation for America, 2010). The Florida Transportation Plan, published in December 2015, includes a new statewide goal for More Transportation Choices. The FTP is available at [www.floridatransportationplan.com](http://www.floridatransportationplan.com).

To address the need for a greater focus on walking and bicycling infrastructure, the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) formed the Florida Bicycle and Pedestrian Partnership Council (FBPPC). The Council’s mission is to promote the livability, health and economic benefits of bicycle and pedestrian activity and provide input to FDOT on issues affecting Florida’s bicycle and pedestrian transportation needs. For more information about the, visit [www.fdot.gov/planning/policy/bikeped/](http://www.fdot.gov/planning/policy/bikeped/).



- Benefits from increased visitation without harm to the natural environment.

## **Priorities**

The Greenways and Trails System Priority corridors are the focused vision for trails in the state and rank higher for implementation than the Opportunity corridors. Priority corridors are comprised of a subset of the Land Trail and Paddling Trail Opportunity maps. To be recognized as a Priority corridor, it must meet these criteria to the greatest extent possible:

- Supports and further establishes national, state or regional trail projects, plans and initiatives.
- Builds on past and programmed state and federal investments in trails, particularly when matched by funding from local and private sources.
- Includes long-distance trails or provides connections between long-distance trails and/or long loops to join multiple counties and population centers.
- Demonstrates broad regional and community support, especially those entities willing to commit to trail management and long-term maintenance.
- Enhances access to nature-based tourism and economic development by connecting natural, recreational, cultural and historic sites.
- Enhances connections to state parks and trails and greenways.
- Coincides with and supports the Florida Ecological Greenways Network priorities.
- Protects public safety by offering non-motorized use that is separated from highways.

OGT will work with partners and stakeholders to identify and delineate distinct regional trails within the Priority network. Regional trails are long-distance or loop trail systems that cross multiple jurisdictions. They are comprised of shorter individual or local trail segments that are linked together to form a unique expansive system. A regional trail can provide a multi-day experience for the more ambitious trail user. Although many individuals may never travel an

entire regional trail, they will enjoy the local sections and connecting trails.

As a leader in the trail movement, Florida is frequently asked by other states to share “lessons learned.” By participating in national summits and conferences with other states, DEP has had the opportunity to share and gain knowledge from others. The national trail movement is exciting and interest is growing. Georgia and Alabama have expressed interest in identifying opportunities for connecting into Florida’s expansive trail system. Other opportunities for connections include the East Coast Greenway spanning from Calais, Maine, to Key West, Florida; the Bartram Trail, an eight-state National Recreation Trail; and the Old Spanish Trail linking St. Augustine, Florida, to San Diego, California. DEP will pursue each of these interstate trail connections.

The Florida Greenways and Trails System Opportunity and Priority maps are available online along with the data resources on [FloridaGreenwaysAndTrails.com](http://FloridaGreenwaysAndTrails.com).

## **Establish and Connect**

The Office of Greenways and Trails takes a regional approach to implementing the statewide system. Regional trails are identified and delineated from within the Priority Corridors. They are multi-county projects and can be either linear or loop trail systems. Because they span long distances, sometimes over 200 miles, these regional trails can provide users with diverse multiple-day experiences.

Long-distance trails provide an alternative means of transportation and help to preserve local character and Florida’s natural environment. By attracting visitors for multiple days, these trails promote tourism and encourage economic development. They also provide access to outdoor recreation, encouraging healthy lifestyle choices.

A local trail can require significant effort to complete, but successfully establishing and connecting several local trails into a regional trail system involves a network of stakeholders, including advocates and decision makers, who are truly committed to a project. Combining multiple trail projects to achieve a





## EAST COAST GREENWAY Titusville, FL

### East Coast Greenway

The East Coast Greenway (ECG) is a developing trail system, spanning nearly 3,000 miles extending from Canada to Key West, Florida, linking all the major cities of America's Eastern Seaboard. It is the nation's most ambitious long-distance urban trail project. At 600 miles, Florida is the longest state segment on the national East Coast Greenway route. With over 200 miles of route already off road, complete and designated the ECG is actively working with local communities, national and state agencies and private organizations to connect existing trails with planned shared-use paths. North to south, the ECG enters the state from Georgia at Fernandina Beach then continues through 13 coastal counties to Key West, the United States' southernmost mainland point. The ECG travels close to the coast, connecting communities and small towns, major cities including Jacksonville and Miami, America's earliest historic sites as well as vast coastal nature preserves and an extensive number of Florida State Parks. The ECG also includes the Florida Overseas Heritage Highway Trail which hops from island to island through the Florida Keys for 100 miles to Key West which provides some of the most recognized iconic vistas and sunsets along the national East Coast Greenway route.

The East Coast Greenway provides Florida residents and visitors of all abilities and ages a consistent high quality, safe and motor vehicle free trail experience wherever the East Coast Greenway logo is encountered. The entire ECG in Florida is within the FGTS Land Trails Opportunity Map and the FGTS Priority Trails Map. For more information about the Florida East Coast Greenway, visit <https://www.greenway.org/states/florida>.

long-distance regional trail system requires advanced coordination and a determined effort. Once complete, regional trails can provide multiple uses including biking, hiking, equestrian and paddling. These systems also link natural communities such as natural areas, parks, beaches, rivers and springs.

To implement the Florida Greenways and Trails Priority System, DEP recognizes that community trail spurs and state parks complement and help complete the system. The role of Greenways and Trails is to identify new opportunities to connect the Florida Greenways and Trails Priority System to the Florida state park system and incorporate these findings into the individual unit management plans. By doing so, we are establishing and encouraging connections between the Florida Greenways and Trails System, state parks, local parks and communities.

### ***Assistance and Resources***

Greenways and Trails regional planners provide technical assistance, planning expertise and coordination of resources to establish the Greenways and Trails System.

Once a regional trail is identified, the regional planner works with multiple counties, cities, metropolitan/ transportation planning organizations and citizen support organizations to establish a regional leadership team. The desired outcome is that they will collectively endorse the regional trail project. The group also will assist in making recommendations to county commissions, tourism development boards, economic development commissions, chambers of commerce and others to focus resources toward the establishment of the regional trail.

To assist regional trail leadership teams, Greenways and Trails maintains current technical assistance information on its website, [FloridaGreenwaysAndTrails.com](http://FloridaGreenwaysAndTrails.com). These resources support all Florida Greenways and Trails System projects and include design guidelines for paved and unpaved trails, and information about economic and health benefits, grant opportunities and much more. To further the technical assistance program, educational materials will be developed and shared at facilitated regional summits. These new resources

will be designed to target specific audiences such as rural communities, private developers or health providers. Greenways and Trails also will develop a series of tools and templates tailored specifically for partners and stakeholders to utilize.

### ***Designation***

The Designation Program was established by Chapter 260, Florida Statutes, to identify and promote greenway and trail projects within the Greenways and Trails System. This program raises public awareness of the conservation and recreation benefits of trails and greenways. Nearly 1.3 million acres of public and private lands are designated, including state trails, state parks, national forest lands and trails, local greenways and trails, blueways and many other areas.

A Trail Town program was developed to encourage and establish trail hubs. Similar to Gateway Communities for hikers on the Florida Trail or Blueway Communities for paddlers, the goal of the Trail Town program is to inspire cities and communities to fully capitalize on the economic opportunities afforded by trails and trail tourism. Successful Trail Towns have embraced the culture and benefits of trails, bringing enhanced prosperity and vitality into their communities.

A successful Trail Town's economy prospers because of trail users, and its community thrives because of engaged citizens. A trail offers the community a safe and scenic means of traveling to work, parks, recreation and shopping areas without getting into a car. The trail can equally be a tourist attraction and a community asset. When you walk or bike through a successful Trail Town, you see a multitude of thriving businesses. The downtown is utilized by recreational users, visitors and residents alike, checking out local businesses and enjoying nearby natural landscapes.



**TOM BROWN PARK**  
Tallahassee, FL

*“Overnight stays are the biggest contributor to total spending. At a mountain bike race in North Carolina, each additional night added \$101 to a visitor’s total spending.”*

*Schiller, A., and J. Whitehead. 2013. Economic Impact of the 2012 6 Hours of Warrior Creek, Mountain Bike Race. Boone, NC*

## Goal 2: Strategic Investment of Resources to Advance System Completion

### Funding

A successful trail project requires sufficient funding for acquisition, development, management, maintenance and marketing. The Office of Greenways and Trails works with public and private partners to identify and strategically focus funding to close gaps within the system. To further assist in identifying and estimating funding needs, case examples of project costs and links to successfully funded projects will be compiled and provided on [FloridaGreenwaysAndTrails.com](http://FloridaGreenwaysAndTrails.com).

One of the many benefits of establishing regional leadership teams is to create a unified commitment to use local funding sources by encouraging local and regional governmental support for projects. Partners and stakeholders also can encourage private developers to incorporate trail projects into their development plans that will close gaps in the Greenways and Trails System. Leadership teams also can encourage the inclusion of trail and greenway projects in any planned unit developments, developments of regional impact, sector plans, etc.

Furthering the state's commitment to improving mobility, the Florida Legislature passed measures in 2014 and 2015 to fund the development of multi-use trails. Specifically, section 339.81, Florida Statutes, established the **Shared-Use Nonmotorized (SUN) Trail program**. Administered by DOT, the SUN Trail program provides funding for the development of a statewide system of paved multi-use trails for bicyclists and pedestrians. The SUN Trail network is the paved component of the Florida Greenways and Trails Priority System. Through a two-tier funding structure, DOT advances the establishment of the trail system by programming the recurring \$25 million allocation to close gaps and complete trails within the Greenways and Trails Priority System. Local sponsors or agencies must secure funding for trailheads, restrooms and other amenities.

In addition to SUN Trail funding, DOT administers multiple funding sources that can be used to

implement trails. These additional state **funding sources** and **federal grants** are available for implementing trails, amenities and trailheads. Coordination with local transportation planning organizations and metropolitan planning organizations can not only be helpful, but sometimes vital in funding paved trails. Local transportation planning organizations distribute Federal Transportation Alternative funds to projects that are specifically for developing bicycle/ pedestrian facilities and multi-use trails. They also develop a priority project list that DOT relies on to select projects for funding.

OGT will continue to coordinate with agencies and other grant programs that support public recreation access. These funding programs include Florida Forever, Florida Recreation Development Assistance Program, Recreational Trails Program and Florida Communities Trust. Another form of assistance includes reviewing acquisition proposals for Florida Forever and providing geographic data analysis to support acquisitions that help complete priority projects.

### Acquisition

The Florida Greenways and Trails Acquisition Program, which historically received 1.5 percent of the Florida Forever funds each year, has not been funded since 2010. Currently, OGT works with the Division of State Lands to identify other funding programs that support the acquisition of greenway or trail projects.

To assist with acquiring strategic priority projects within the Greenways and Trails System, the Division of State Lands developed the Strategic Managed Areas Lands List (SMALL) Florida Forever project, which was subsequently approved by the Acquisition and Restoration Council. This project consists of parcels identified by DEP and other land managing agencies including the Division of Recreation and Parks, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission and Florida Forest Service. The parcels will serve to close gaps in the Priority System or create a more manageable boundary for the agencies.



**EAST CENTRAL  
REGIONAL RAIL TRAIL**  
Brevard, FL

*“The Shared-Use Nonmotorized (SUN) Trail program provides funding for the development of a statewide system of paved multi-use trails (SUN Trail network) for bicyclists and pedestrians. The SUN Trail network is the paved component of the Florida Greenways and Trails System Priority Land Trail Network. For additional information visit [FloridaSunTrail.com](http://FloridaSunTrail.com).”*



In addition, OGT helps identify alternatives to full-fee acquisitions. These alternatives include management agreements, conservation easements, partnerships with private landowners, and locating trails within transportation and other linear corridors. For example, a recreational easement to construct a paved trail on a 40-mile stretch of a future utility corridor was recently negotiated. When complete, this regional trail will connect the 32-mile Nature Coast State Trail in Dixie, Levy and Gilchrist counties to the 110-mile Cross Florida Greenway in central Florida, providing users with an opportunity for a multi-day and diverse recreational experience.

### *Development*

A new effort OGT is undertaking is the Parks and Community Trails (PACT) program. PACT is a proposed technical assistance program to help rural and small communities build new trails linking the Opportunity and Priority Corridors with local and state parks. Mapping is underway to identify these potential connections. Regional planners will work with the Florida Recreational Trails Council, nonprofits, cities, counties, and regional, state and federal governments to help direct resources and secure funding to develop these new trail connections.

Another initiative is to incorporate connections from the State Park System to the Greenways and Trails System into individual unit management plans. Connections to locally managed parks and trails also will be shared with recreational and transportation planning entities. Maps and content will be provided to help with integrating the information into local and regional plans.

## Goal 3: Promote and Market the Florida Greenways and Trails System to Residents and Visitors

### *Communicate and Educate*

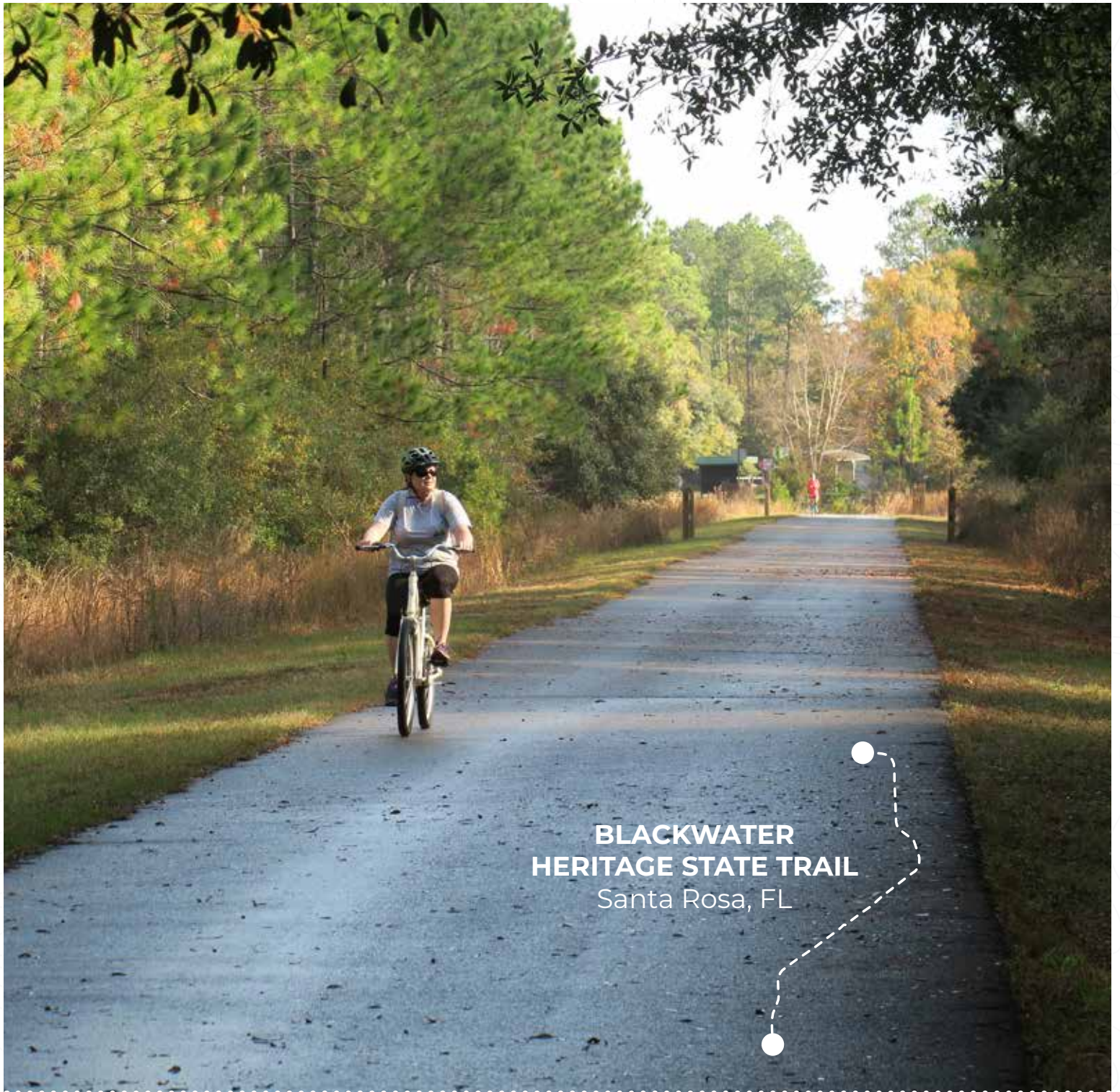
A key component in advancing the Greenways and Trails System is to ensure that its purpose, benefits and values are effectively communicated to the many public and private stakeholders involved in the success of the system.

For purposes of communication, greenway and trail users can be divided into two distinct groups - current and potential users. Current users are those who already use and value trails. Potential users are those who may potentially use trails and greenways but are currently unaware of opportunities.

The Florida Greenways and Trails System has various stakeholders that can be divided into two groups, formal and informal. Formal stakeholders include regional planning organizations, county governments, municipalities, business organizations, and local and regional tourism promoters. Informal stakeholders include recreational user groups, individual businesses, foundations, coalitions, etc.

OGT will develop an integrated marketing and communications strategy that addresses these two target audiences - users and stakeholders. Initially, a base inventory of the current marketing and communication efforts from established state, national and international greenways and trail systems will be created. This inventory will identify the most effective practices and messages to promote greenways and trails among users (current and potential) and stakeholders (formal and informal).

Based on the outcomes of this research, a unified message can be developed for the Florida Greenways and Trails System. A marketing and education strategy will be developed to increase awareness and engagement among the two target audiences. During this phase, tools will be developed to promote continued and new trail and greenway usage, and to encourage current users to become formal partners. Additional strategies will include outreach to local



**BLACKWATER  
HERITAGE STATE TRAIL**  
Santa Rosa, FL

*“Bicycling significantly reduces transportation emissions while also reducing traffic congestion and the need for petroleum”*

Bay Area Bike to Work Day, 2018

governments and their convention and visitors bureaus or tourist development councils, as well as targeted presentations and regional summits to inform potential users and informal partners of the existence and values of trails and greenways. Continuing to actively work with existing partners through individually tailored tools and materials will be crucial.

Branding is an important aspect of successfully promoting the Florida Greenways and Trails System. Having a meaningful, consistent, identifiable brand will help establish an interconnected system of greenways and trails for Florida. A brand style guide will be developed that will provide consistent instructions to those who communicate, now and in the future, the purpose and key values of the Greenways and Trails System.

## Goal 4: Establish Partnerships and Engage Stakeholders

### *Align Complementary Plans and Programs*

**T**hrough collaborative partnerships with agencies and organizations that offer complementary programs, DEP can establish a well-planned, designed and managed Greenways and Trails System. There are many benefits of partnerships, including:

- Lead to improved outcomes through a range of joint services, advice and support being readily available and easily accessible.
- Benefit the understanding of multi-agency activities, enabling them to focus on their core role.
- Build consensus, strengthen partnership voices, break down professional silos and broaden focused perspectives.
- Enhance the scale of coverage when shared budgets, joint projects and events are put into action.
- Establish a cohesive approach when multi-agency programs share responsibilities to address local needs.

- Promote a supportive exchange of ideas between agencies and organizations.
- Increase the fit between the services offered and those desired by users and partners.
- Increase the level of mutual trust between partners by demonstrating that they each can and will deliver results.

The establishment, management and promotion of the Greenways and Trails System is conducted by many agency and organizational partners from the local to the federal level. Though these entities may manage different segments of the Greenways and Trails System, they often have very distinct missions. For example, the Greenways and Trails System extends through areas as varied as remote wilderness in expansive national forests to abandoned rail corridors in highly urban communities. The managers of such places have markedly different purposes and goals. It is important to promote guidelines for safe, accessible trails and greenways while balancing the needs of individual partners to further their own missions. Continued coordination with key federal, state, local governments, metropolitan planning organizations and other entities with the capacity to complete the Greenways and Trails System is extremely important. In coordination with these partners, common goals will be identified and joint workshops and events will be hosted to further establish, maintain, operate and market the Greenways and Trails System.

Volunteers are also critical partners in establishing and maintaining the Greenways and Trails System. Many volunteers and their organizations have made tremendous contributions advancing and providing stewardship of the Greenways and Trails System. Successful trail managers coordinate with, support and recognize the efforts of volunteers from diverse user groups such as hikers, mountain bikers, paddlers and equestrians who donate many hours to help establish and maintain the trails. OGT will further strengthen these partnerships by developing and providing information about how to start a local “friends organization” to assist trail managers with trail maintenance and promotion.



**NATURE COAST STATE TRAIL**

Cross City, FL



*“Trails and greenways help improve air and water quality. For example, communities with trails provide enjoyable and safe options for transportation, which reduces air pollution”*

Rails to Trails Conservancy, Benefits of Trails and Greenways

Many of the regional and statewide trails are represented and advocated for by nonprofit organizations that support the work of managing agencies. These organizations are vital partners whose advocacy can strengthen public support for trails. Nonprofit groups can apply for grants to assist with trail development and sustainability. They can work across organizational boundaries of the many stakeholders whose support is required for continued funding and development of trails. Nonprofit organizations frequently partner with local governments and the OGT to promote, advocate for, and host trail events to help support trail use, management and economic growth.

## Summary

The completion of this Florida Greenways and Trails System Action Plan results from the commitment of many stakeholders and valuable partnerships among multiple organizations. The progress on the statewide system that has been accomplished to date provides a solid foundation for implementing these actions through the Florida Greenways and Trails program. The intent of this plan is to help provide guidance and to encourage many to work together effectively to reach mutual goals. The work that lies ahead will rely heavily on the hard work and support of our many partners.

The completion of the Florida Greenways and Trails System can be accomplished only with participation and involvement from stakeholders at many levels. Success will require that everyone who worked to develop these strategies participate in implementing them and engage others to establish new partnerships. The Florida Greenways and Trails System stands to be an international attraction, providing a safe and unforgettable trail experience for residents and visitors to the state. Florida is positioned at the forefront of an exciting period that will result in economic growth, improved health and wellness, increased alternative transportation methods and outdoor recreation opportunities, more livable communities and increased conservation efforts, all of which all contribute to an improved quality of life.

With the completion of this plan, much work lies ahead. The identified strategies, goals and action steps provide a guide to success. Many actions will be implemented within the next year to continue the momentum and generate more interest. The goals include establishing partnerships and regional alliances for implementation, identifying and securing funding opportunities for development and management, providing technical assistance and outreach and marketing the system. The many actions that follow will help contribute to the success of Florida's Greenways and Trails program. While many greenways and trails already have been established throughout the state, this plan identifies and lays the groundwork for a connected system of regional trails statewide. The table below proposes targets to be met over the next five years, which are organized by the goals described in the plan.

The timeframes for each action step are only suggestions. Understandably, they will rely on many considerations that will be determined through discussion and consensus building among stakeholders and partners. The plan will serve as a guide for these decisions, but the details will be determined as the actions are undertaken. The regional concept this plan proposes will remain the same, but it will be fluid to take advantage of opportunities that emerge as partners work together.



**CHAIRES CREEK PADDLE TRAIL**

Bald Point State Park

*Public lands and waters are the outdoor industry's basic infrastructure, and without them the industry cannot survive. Preserving access is imperative to enhancing the industry's economic and social impact. Access ensures every American's ability to get outside where jobs, health and communities grow.*

Outdoor Recreation Economy, 2017  
Outdoor Industry Association



# STRATEGY

## STRATEGY #1

Coordinate with federal, state and local entities to develop cross-jurisdictional partnerships and regional alliances to increase viability of investment in the development and management of the FGTS

- Delineate Regional Systems
- Strategic investment in resources to advance system completion



# GOALS

- Identify and prioritize opportunities for partnerships, efficiencies, and implementation system-wide
- Identify and engage regional stakeholders to delineate, evaluate, and advance the system
- Recognize the needs of diverse user groups
- Establish connections between the FGTS, State Parks, local parks and communities
- Improve the user experience and economic development without compromising resources
- Identify funding sources for acquisition, design, construction and management of the FGTS



# OBJECTIVES



## STRATEGY #2

Engage federal, state and local stakeholders to facilitate statewide and local promotion of trails and trail segments within the Florida Greenways and Trails System

# STRATEGY

- Promote and market the Florida Greenways and Trails System to residents and visitors
- Establish Partnerships and Engage Stakeholders



# GOALS

- Recognize and encourage excellence through the Trail Town Program
- Develop integrated marketing and communications plan to enhance communication with stakeholders
- Connect events on greenways and trails to people and communities
- Promote the FGTS to advance Florida's economy, tourism, health, transportation, recreation, conservation and quality of life
- Engage stakeholders and partners, both public and private to advance the system
- Collaborate with stakeholders to encourage the development of a local identity and sense of place
- Engage youth to build an understanding of the value of a connected regional trail system



# OBJECTIVES

**\$58.6** *BILLION IN ANNUAL CONSUMER SPENDING*

Florida State Park Visitation Generates \$3 Billion To Local Economies

# QUICK FACTS

**\$3.5** *BILLION IN STATE AND LOCAL TAXES*

The Cross Florida Greenway had the greatest local economic impact totaling \$277 million.

"The West Orange, Little Econ, and Cady Way trails in Orange County supported 516 jobs and an estimated economic impact of \$42.6 million in 2010." (East Central Florida Regional Planning Council 2011)

## WHAT ARE FLORIDA VISITORS AND

### *VIEWING WILDLIFE*

The 2nd most popular outdoor activity for both residents and visitors (SCORP 2017) and brings in almost \$5 Billion annually to the state's economy. Florida's rich diversity of wildlife attracts millions of visitors to public lands such as Florida's 175 State Parks, of which 96 are included as sites on the Great Florida Birding and Wildlife Viewing Trail.

### *TRAILS*

A record 5,775,175 residents and visitors enjoyed healthy outdoor activities on Florida's eight state trails and Cross Florida Greenway in 2016/17.



# ECONOMIC IMPACT OF OUTDOOR RECREATION & TRAILS

**\$17.9** *BILLION  
IN WAGES*

Recreation has long served as an economic driver in Florida, as the state remains a major destination for national and international tourism.

**485,000** *DIRECT  
JOBS*

With more than 1,600 miles of multi-use trails, Florida State Parks receive over 32 million visitors annually, creating 48,622 jobs.

75% of all Florida visitors participate in nature-based activities during their visit. (Visit Florida, 2012)



## RESIDENTS DOING OUTDOORS?

### *EQUESTRIAN ACTIVITIES*

According to the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, the equestrian industry's economic impact on the gross state product is \$6.5 Billion. Florida's State Parks offer 1,889 miles of equestrian trails.

### *BIKING*

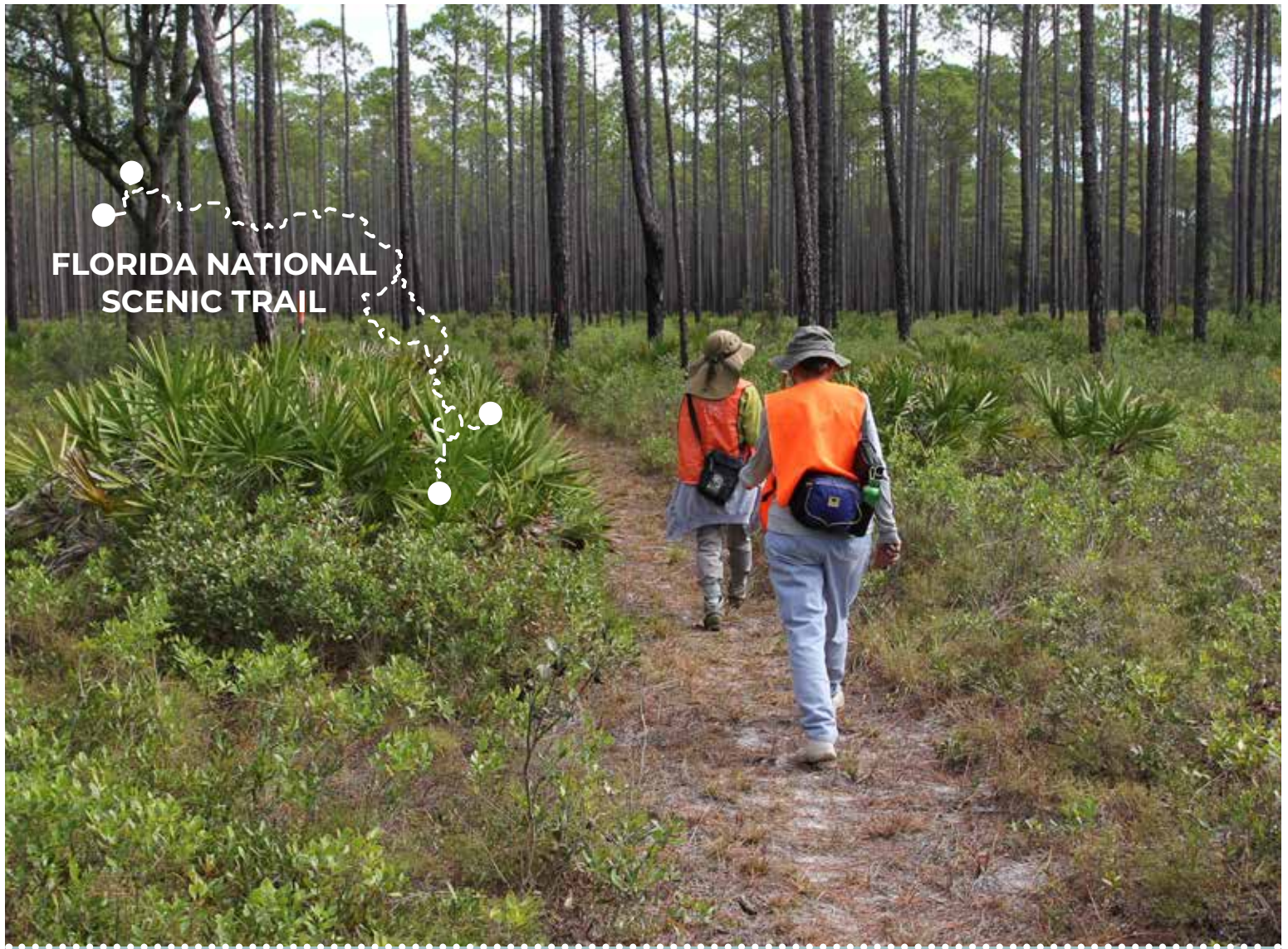
Bicycle riding on paved roads and trails brings in more than \$6 Billion in Florida annually and riding on unpaved trails brings in almost \$2 Billion (Balmoral 2017). Outdoor fitness walking/jogging brings in \$13.5 Billion annually and paddling activities bring in almost \$3 Billion annually.

# Priority Trail Map – Attachment A

The Greenways and Trails System Priority corridors are the focused vision for trails in the state. Priorities build on past investments, join multiple counties and population centers and demonstrate broad regional and community support.







## Florida National Scenic Trail



Florida is home to one of 11 congressionally designated national scenic trails. The Florida National Scenic Trail (FT) is a non-motorized, recreation trail that meanders more than 1,300 miles across some of the most beautiful landscapes in the country and the only national scenic trail within a subtropical landscape. Showcasing Florida's scenic, natural, historic, and cultural character; the Florida Trail offers a world class recreational experience. The U.S. Forest Service is the designated administrator of the Florida Trail. Trail development and management has been a partnership initiative of over fifty years of dedicated work by the volunteers of the Florida Trail Association, and the many local, state, federal and private land managers along the FT who maintain and protect this treasure for Florida residents and visitors.

Providing connections to so many of Florida's state parks, state forests, wildlife and water management areas the Florida Trail is recognized in the Florida Greenways and Trails Act (Chapter 260, F.S.) as "Florida's official statewide non-motorized trail". It is the only land trail delineated in its own class on the FGTS Maps. The entire planning corridor for the FT is within the FGTS Land Trails Opportunity Map and the prioritized single route identified by the U.S. Forest Service through its public process is included on the FGTS Priority Trails Map. For more information about the Florida National Scenic Trail, visit <http://www.fs.usda.gov/fnst>.

# Opportunity Trail Map – Attachment B

The Land Trail Opportunity map is a synthesis of trail planning efforts conducted by cities, counties, transportation planning organizations, non-profits and other agencies throughout Florida. This map does not include all existing, proposed and conceptual trails in Florida, but focuses on trails of that can form a comprehensive connected system when complete.

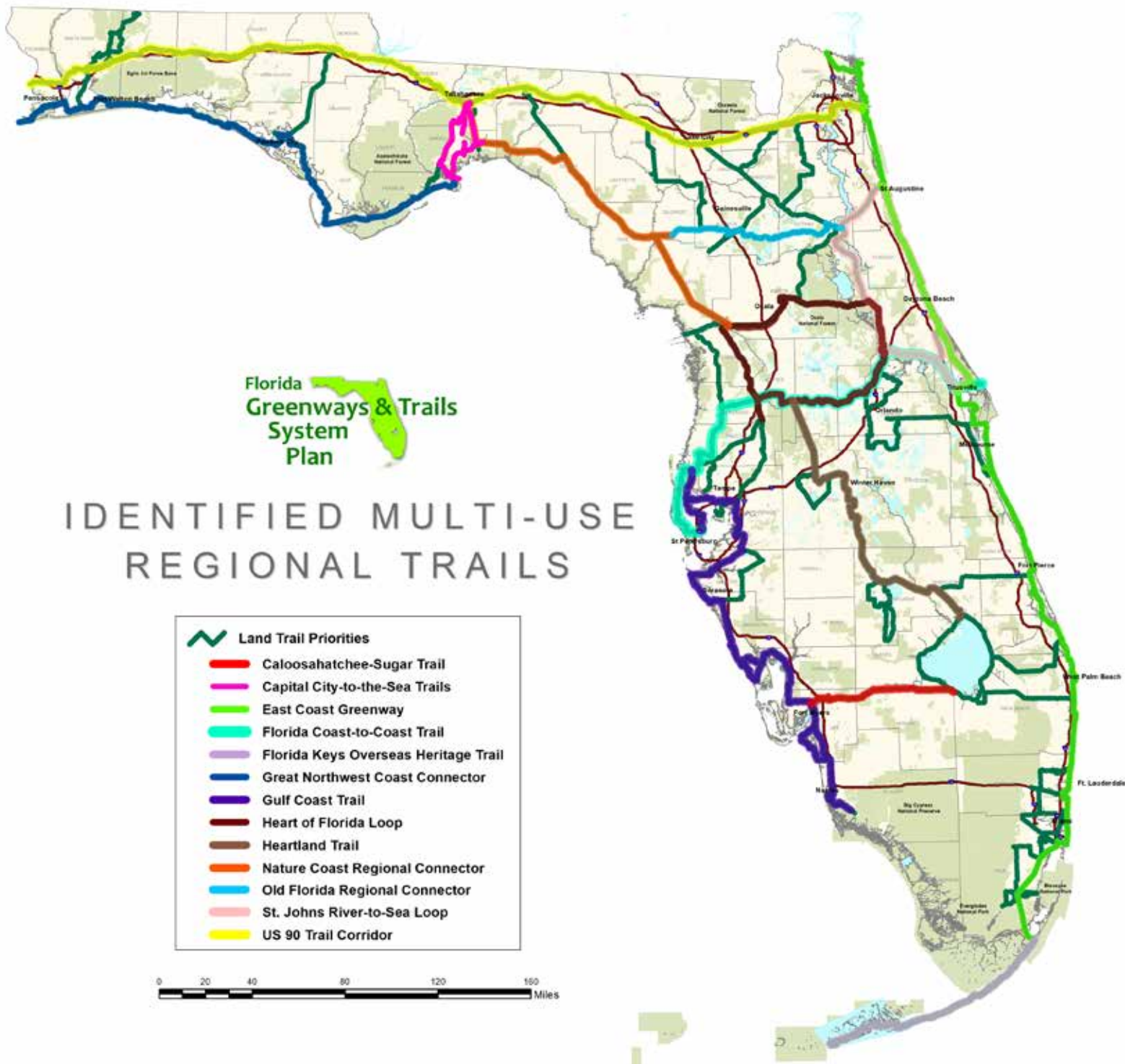




**OLETA RIVER STATE PARK**  
North Miami Beach, FL

# Regional Trail Map – Attachment C

Regional trails are identified and delineated from within the Priority Corridors. They are multi-county projects and can be either linear or loop trail systems. Because they span long-distances, sometimes over 200 miles, these regional trails can provide users with diverse multiple day experiences.





**WEKIWA SPRINGS STATE PARK**  
Apopka, FL

## Florida State Parks – Attachment D

The Florida Park System consists of 175 State Parks and all are within 20 miles of the Greenways and Trails System. Currently, 82 State Parks are immediately adjacent to or are located within the priority system. The State Trails, managed by the Florida Parks Service, are all located within the priority system and help form its foundation. For learn more about Florida State Parks or to find a park near you, visit [floridastateparks.org](http://floridastateparks.org)





**ROCK SPRINGS RUN TRAIL**  
Sorrento, FL

# Strategies, Goals, Objectives and Action Steps

<b>Ongoing</b>	Actions that are currently underway and will continue throughout the course of the Plan
<b>Years 1-2</b>	Actions that will begin immediately with a final product within year 1-2 of the Plan
<b>Years 3-5</b>	Actions that may begin immediately with a final product within year 3-5 of the Plan

**Strategy: Coordinate with federal, state and local entities to develop cross-jurisdictional partnerships and regional alliances to increase viability of investment in the development and management of the Florida Greenways and Trails System (FGTS)**

## Goal 1: Delineate Regional Systems

### Objective 1.1: Identify and prioritize opportunities for partnerships, efficiencies and implementation system-wide

Actions	Ongoing	Years 1-2	Years 3-5
1.1.1 Identify and delineate distinct regional trails within the FGTS Priority Corridor		✓	
1.1.2 Work with the Florida Greenways and Trails Foundation and Florida Greenways and Trails Council members to establish and facilitate alliances and leadership teams for each regional trail	✓		
1.1.3 Coordinate with local partners to assess the gaps within the FGTS Priority corridor and develop a status map		✓	
1.1.4 Support and assist rural counties to identify potential corridors and establish working groups	✓		
1.1.5 Identify routes connecting state and local parks and other publicly managed lands to the FGTS Opportunity and Priority Corridors		✓	
1.1.6 Engage local communities and identify regional significance of existing state parks	✓		
1.1.7 Implement the Parks and Community Trails program by closing gaps between state parks and the FGTS	✓		
1.1.8 Identify Land Opportunity Corridors that may be ready to receive funding for development and assist with identifying resources	✓		
1.1.9 Evaluate and identify paddling corridors with the potential to be long-distance destination paddling trails	✓		

### Objective 1.2: Identify and engage regional stakeholders to delineate, evaluate and advance the system

Actions	Ongoing	Years 1-2	Years 3-5
1.2.1 Coordinate joint meetings with partners to encourage cross-jurisdictional trail projects	✓		
1.2.2 Develop a coalition plan and strategy for each established regional alliance		✓	
1.2.3 Delineate distinct regional trails within the FGTS Priority Corridor and identify beginning and end points for each	✓		
1.2.4 Conduct a statewide review of regional trail completion in preparation for next Five-Year System Plan			✓
1.2.5 Identify routes that would provide access to underserved communities			
1.2.6 Develop working group with DEP, Department of Transportation, Metropolitan Planning Organization, local governments and private partners to discuss and identify ways to assist with the management of trails within the FGTS			



Objective 1.3: Recognize the needs of diverse user groups			
Actions	Ongoing	Years 1-2	Years 3-5
1.3.1 Using the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP), identify groups that have been traditionally underrepresented as visitors to Florida’s Greenways and Trails system, establish working groups to understand recreation trends and develop plans for inclusion in the FGTS		✓	
1.3.2 Identify demographics within the stakeholder groups to encourage more diverse involvement		✓	
1.3.3 Expand the presence of greenways and trails in rural and urban Florida through education and innovative partnerships to drive economic impact to these areas		✓	
1.3.4 Reach out to underserved groups and regions to understand the barriers, needs and preferences of current and potential user groups		✓	
1.3.5 Work with partners and stakeholders who have developed programs for underserved populations and include successful strategies when implementing the FGTS		✓	
1.3.6 Communicate effective solutions to unmet needs through the division’s website, newsletter, social media and other available methods		✓	
1.3.7 Support and assist counties of greatest need to identify potential corridors		✓	
Objective 1.4: Establish and encourage connections between the FGTS, state parks, local parks and communities by implementing the Parks and Community Trails Program			
Actions	Ongoing	Years 1-2	Years 3-5
1.4.1 Identify new opportunities to connect the Florida Greenways and Trails Priority System to the Florida state park system and incorporate findings into the individual unit management plans	✓		
1.4.2 Increase connectivity statewide by identifying Florida state parks that may be appropriate for providing connectivity across local jurisdictions	✓		
1.4.3 Work with local and regional partners to develop initial trail master plans or integrate trails into existing plans		✓	
1.4.4 Encourage local and regional partners to include PACT projects on metropolitan planning organization or appropriate priority lists		✓	
1.4.5 Identify opportunities to connect the Florida Greenways and Trails Priority System to urban and rural trails, transit systems and practical destinations such as employment, commerce and population centers			
Objective 1.5: Improve the user experience and economic development without compromising resources			
Actions	Ongoing	Years 1-2	Years 3-5
1.5.1 Coordinate with partners and stakeholders to identify and inventory significant natural and cultural resources within the FGTS		✓	
1.5.2 Coordinate efforts by identifying common goals to develop appropriate interpretive plans for natural and cultural resources within the FGTS			✓
1.5.3 Coordinate with partners and stakeholders to identify and develop best management practices for trail design to minimize impacts to wildlife		✓	
1.5.4 Provide outreach and education about the importance of natural and cultural resources by highlighting successful historic, cultural, and environmental preservation/conservation projects near or in proximity to the FGTS		✓	
1.5.5 Encourage relationships with educational institutions to offer mutually beneficial citizen/student research and interpretive opportunities			✓

1.5.6 Highlight agency efforts and communicate local and regional conservation-related efforts by sharing successful natural and cultural resource protection stories within the FGTS through the website, newsletters, social media, interpretive programs and other available methods			✓
<b>Goal 2: Strategic investment in resources to advance system completion</b>			
<b>Objective 2.1 Identify funding sources for acquisition, design, construction and management of the FGTS</b>			
<b>Actions</b>	<b>Ongoing</b>	<b>Years 1-2</b>	<b>Years 3-5</b>
2.1.1 Coordinate with DOT to implement the Shared-Use Nonmotorized Trail program	✓		
2.1.2 Coordinate with local, state and federal agencies to identify and secure available funding sources appropriate for greenways and trails	✓		
2.1.3 Establish public and private partnerships to identify funding needs for trail management, maintenance and facilities development	✓		
2.1.4 Identify, engage and assist local, state and federal partners to develop specific agreements to fund and manage trail segments	✓		
2.1.5 Work with other areas of DEP to direct grants to specific trail development and management needs		✓	
2.1.6 Work with the Florida Greenways and Trails Council to recommend regional trail funding priorities to DOT, as requested	✓		
2.1.7 Provide education to local and regional partners about funding opportunities		✓	
2.1.8 Encourage local governments to identify local sources of funding for trail development and management and include these items in their budget requests		✓	
2.1.9 Encourage recreational grant programs to provide additional points to projects identified in the Florida Greenways and Trails Priority System	✓		
<b>Strategy: Engage federal, state and local stakeholders to facilitate statewide and local promotion of trails and trail segments within the Florida Greenways and Trails System</b>			
<b>Goal 3: Promote the Florida Greenways and Trails System to residents and visitors</b>			
<b>Objective 3.1: Recognize and encourage excellence through the Trail Town Program</b>			
<b>Actions</b>	<b>Ongoing</b>	<b>Years 1-2</b>	<b>Years 3-5</b>
3.1.1 Recognize hard work and commitment by identifying and designating Trails Towns	✓		
3.1.2 Coordinate with appropriate entity to monitor and document the economic impact of a successful Trail Town	✓		
3.1.3 Provide education and guidance to local communities to assist with understanding the basic characteristics of a successful Trail Town	✓		
3.1.4 Provide education to VISIT FLORIDA, tourist development councils, chambers of commerce, etc., to assist them with understanding the benefits of being a successful Trail Town		✓	
3.1.5 Provide signage and decals to communities to assist with identifying participating trail-friendly businesses		✓	
3.1.6 Communicate actions and programs that contribute to being a successful Trail Town through the website, social media, outreach events and any other available methods		✓	
<b>Objective 3.2: Develop and implement an integrated marketing plan and strategy to enhance communication with stakeholders</b>			

Actions	Ongoing	Years 1-2	Years 3-5
3.2.1 Work with other areas within DEP to identify target audiences and increase outreach to partners and stakeholders		✓	
3.2.2 Develop educational tools relating to the benefits of trails with regards to conservation, health, recreation, economic growth, alternative transportation, historic preservation, etc.		✓	
3.2.3 Develop educational tools for working groups based on lessons learned to help establish successful regional trails		✓	
3.2.4 Encourage partnership engagement for trail development by facilitating educational programs, workshops, webinars and summits to share strategies and provide targeted information to partners		✓	
3.2.5 Develop a FGTS brand style guide		✓	
3.2.6 Identify and engage stakeholders to encourage participation in multi-day events celebrating regional trail projects		✓	
3.2.7 Publish a quarterly newsletter and utilize the website to celebrate local accomplishments and events		✓	
3.2.8 Promote greenways and trails on social media, targeted campaigns, etc.		✓	

### Objective 3.3: Connect events on greenways and trails to people and communities

Actions	Ongoing	Years 1-2	Years 3-5
3.3.1 Promote programs and events and encourage participation by inviting elected officials, surrounding community partners, stakeholders and media to participate in greenways and trails events and volunteer opportunities		✓	
3.3.2 Coordinate with recreational user groups to develop maps and multi-day itineraries for hiking, paddling, equestrian and bicycle trails		✓	
3.3.3 Work with tourist development councils and visitor and convention bureaus to coordinate local and regional events on greenways and trails.		✓	
3.3.4 Continuously update and maintain statewide greenways and trails events calendar and share events on the website		✓	

### Objective 3.4: Promote the Florida Greenways and Trails Priority System to advance Florida's economy, tourism, health, transportation, recreation, conservation and quality of life

Actions	Ongoing	Years 1-2	Years 3-5
3.4.1 Communicate the value of connecting recreational resources with multi-use trails by developing a summary of economic, health and alternative transportation benefits locally and regionally	✓		
3.4.2 Engage local businesses and communicate the economic value of regional trails to local businesses and encourage them to provide goods and services that appeal to trail users		✓	
3.4.3 Improve health outcomes for Floridians by partnering with state and local organizations to support and promote health and wellness education programs and activities		✓	
3.4.4 Advance the Florida State Health Improvement Plan, in coordination with the Department of Health, by increasing access to and awareness of the FGTS		✓	
3.4.5 Coordinate with local health agencies and organizations to encourage implementation of the FGTS as a strategy to improve community health	✓		

3.4.6 Organize a statewide summit in partnership with the Florida Greenways and Trails Foundation, Florida Greenways and Trails Council, and VISIT FLORIDA to educate local tourist development councils		✓	
3.4.7 Partner with entities from other states to facilitate interstate trail connections	✓		

#### Goal 4: Establish partnerships and engage stakeholders

##### Objective 4.1: Engage stakeholders and partners, both public and private to advance the system

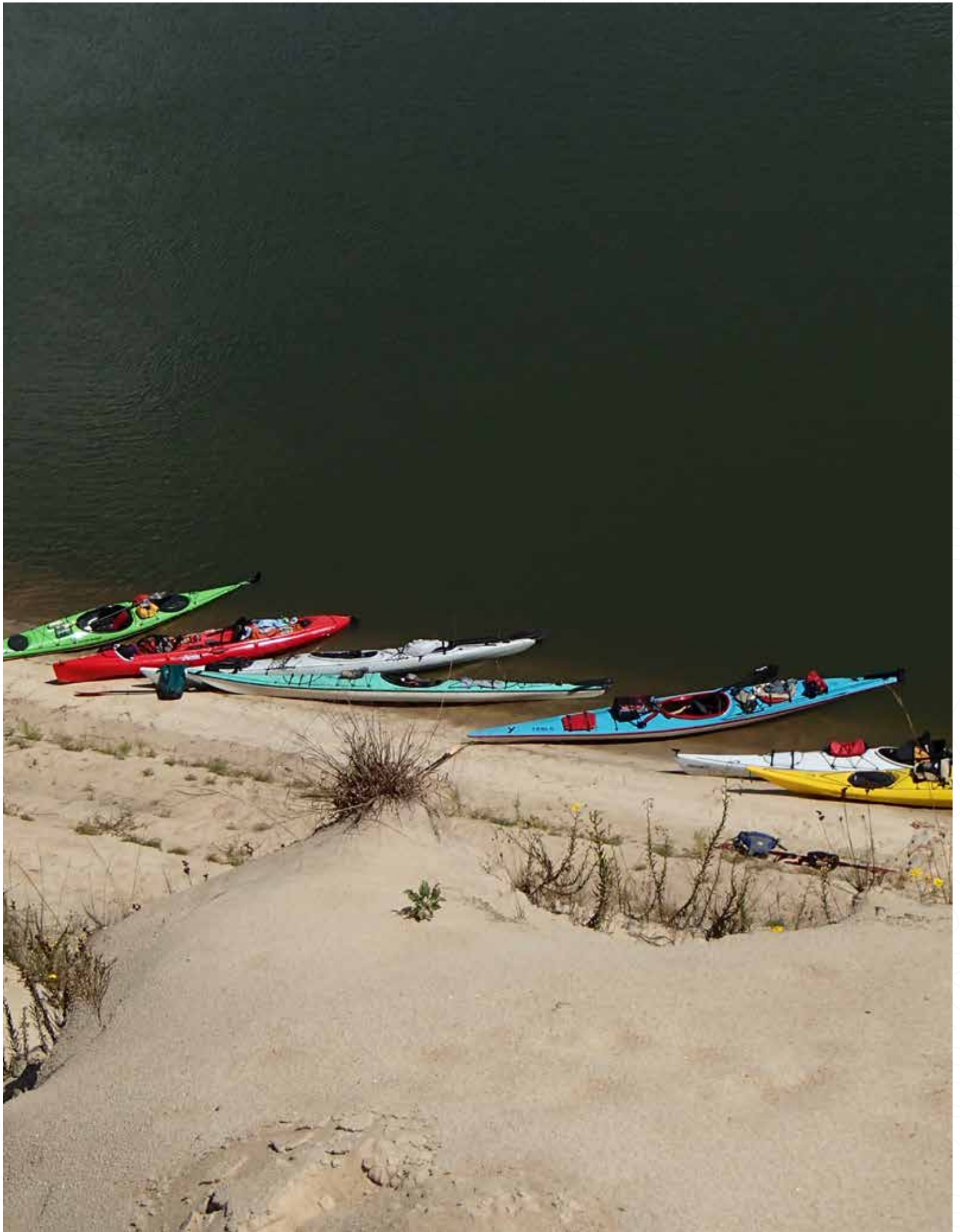
Actions	Ongoing	Years 1-2	Years 3-5
4.1.1 Identify common goals with local, state and federal partners and establish partnership agreements to accomplish these goals		✓	
4.1.2 Host workshops and events in coordination with local, state and federal partners		✓	
4.1.3 Work with DOT, metropolitan/transportation planning organizations and others to develop guidelines for facilities, signage and amenity development on multi-use trails	✓		
4.1.4 Enlist VISIT FLORIDA and other partners to promote trail use		✓	
4.1.5 Increase outreach and identify resources for regional trails by establishing partnerships with local advocacy groups, organizations and other entities		✓	
4.1.6 Work with partners and stakeholders to Identify greenways and trails projects to implement jointly	✓		
4.1.7 Increase recognition of partner and stakeholder efforts at events and through media	✓		

##### Objective 4.2: Collaborate with partners and stakeholders to encourage the development of a local identity and sense of place

Actions	Ongoing	Years 1-2	Years 3-5
4.2.1 Encourage communities, businesses, and other local partners to identify community attractions, landscapes, events, businesses, etc., that contribute to a unique sense of place		✓	
4.2.2 Establish partnerships with local advocacy groups, businesses and organizations to encourage enhancement of visitor experiences by featuring local cultural and historic resources		✓	
4.2.3 Assist with development of promotional materials highlighting greenways and trails and the surrounding recreational, cultural and historical resources		✓	

##### Objective 4.3: Engage youth to build an understanding of the importance and value of a connected regional trail system

Actions	Ongoing	Years 1-2	Years 3-5
4.3.1 Collaborate with local schools and youth-serving organizations to provide opportunities to develop interactive, interpretive and educational programs that communicate and encourage the importance of active transportation and greenways and trails	✓		
4.3.2 Participate with partners and stakeholders to promote and cultivate educational programs and youth volunteer opportunities that support greenways and trails		✓	
4.3.3 Engage youth in producing “benefits of trails” marketing messages in support of the FGTS for the division (e.g., creating blogs, testimonials, etc.)		✓	



## **Public Outreach and Input**

The public outreach and input process for this plan was extensive, including participation by the Florida Greenways and Trails Council, several agencies, local governments and organizations, and hundreds of Floridians who attended public meetings and open houses, and provided comments online. The 2017 and 2018 open houses and meetings included the following:

### **Public Open Houses**

Marianna, Jackson County Citizens Lodge, Sept. 5, 2017  
North Port, Morgan Family Community Center, Oct. 26, 2017  
Miami Lakes, Miami Lakes Optimist Park Clubhouse, Nov. 6, 2017  
Tallahassee, Florida DEP, Nov. 6, 2017  
Sebring, Bert J. Harris, Jr. Agricultural Center, Nov. 7, 2017  
Port St. Lucie, St. Lucie Transportation Planning Organization, Nov. 8, 2017  
Dunnellon, Historic Train Depot, Nov. 8, 2017  
Temple Terrace, Florida DEP Southwest District, Nov. 9, 2017  
DeBary, DeBary Hall Barn, Nov. 14, 2017  
Palatka, Ravine Gardens State Park, Nov. 15, 2017  
Jacksonville, Ed Ball Building, Nov. 16, 2017  
Live Oak, Suwannee River Water Management District, Nov. 20, 2017  
Port St. Joe, St. Joseph Bay State Buffer Preserve Center, Nov. 27, 2017  
Milton, Blackwater Heritage State Trail Visitor Center, Dec. 4, 2017

### **Florida Greenways and Trails Council members**

Sarah Glassner, (Chair) Florida Sheriffs Association  
Becky Afonso, (Vice Chair) Florida Bicycle Association  
Brian Smith, board member Florida Greenways and Trails Foundation  
Colleen Kruk, Southwest Florida Water Management District  
Sam Carr, Greenway User  
Timothy Parson, Florida Department of State  
Marti Miller, Florida Forest Service, Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services  
Robin Birdsong, Florida Department of Transportation  
Gil Hidalgo, private landowner  
Kasey C. (KC) Mullen, trail user  
Charles Barrowclough, greenway user  
Jim Couillard, Marion County Parks and Recreation  
Parks Small Florida Department of Environmental Protection  
David Rathke, trail user  
Faron Boggs, trail user  
Ralph Lair, Pasco County  
Jerrie Lindsey, Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission  
Shawn Thomas, U.S. Forest Service  
Chris Rietow, Florida Regional Councils Association

## **Florida Greenway And Trails Council (FGTC) Meetings**

FGTC Full Council, June 15, 2017

FGTC Full Council, Jan.11, 2018

FGTC Full Council, June 27, 2018

FGTC Full Council, Sept. 14, 2018

## **Department of Environmental Protection**

Noah Valenstein, Secretary

**David Clark, Deputy Secretary, Land and Recreation**

## **Division of Recreation and Parks**

Eric Draper, Director

Parks Small, Assistant Director

Chuck Hatcher, Assistant Director

Bryan Bradner, Assistant Director

## **Office of Greenways and Trails**

Samantha Browne, Chief

Doug Alderson, Assistant Chief

Christine Small, Regional Coordinator

Britney Moore, Regional Coordinator

Katie Bernier, Regional Coordinator

Daniel Diaz, GIS Coordinator

Eric Hand, GIS Assistant (part-time)

Peter McFarland, Graphic Designer, Office of Marketing & Creative Development



# FLORIDA GREENWAYS & TRAILS

