



Circumnavigation Trail Annual Paddlers' Reunion



A Celebration of the Nation's Longest Paddling Trail

Wekiwa Springs State Park

May 2, 2015





Circumnavigation Trail Annual Paddlers' Reunion



We appreciate public partners through the years who have helped develop, maintain and promote the CT!



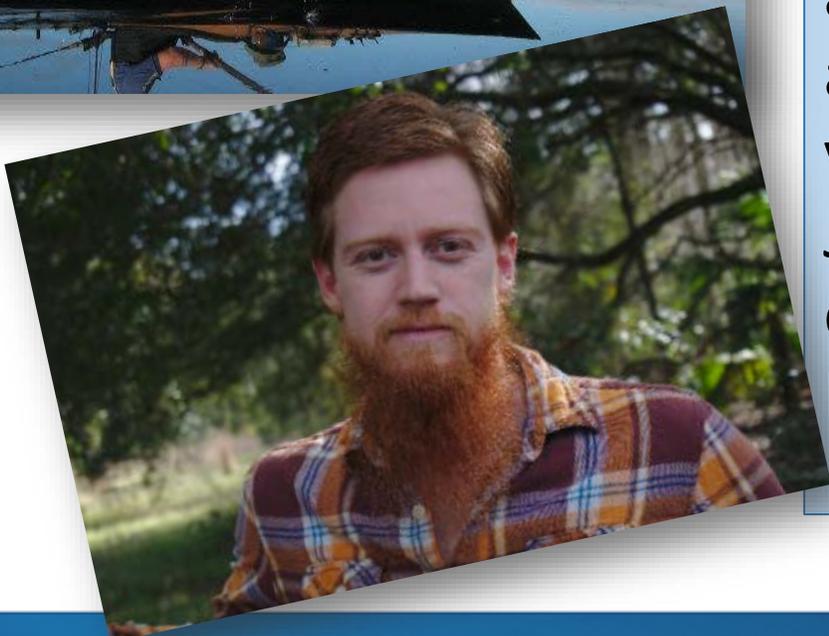


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Some of the paddlers who
Completed all or most of the 1,500 mile Trail since 2008...



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Matt Keene, Clermont, Fl

Matt began Sept 15, 2008 at Ft. Clinch and ended Jan 5, 2009 at Big Lagoon State Park, Pensacola. He was the first paddler to complete the entire trail. He was accompanied part of the way by Jodi Eller and Matt Gallagher. Several FPTA volunteers helped along the way. He and Jodi (now married) then backpacked the entire Florida Trail. Matt is currently the FPTA director for Region K (Space Coast).

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Mike Ruso and Dan Dick

Began their trip on November 12, 2008, at Big Lagoon State Park near Pensacola and finished on March 26 2009. They were the first west to east paddlers to finish the trail.



Charles Ingle, Tallahassee

Charles became the fourth person to complete the entire 1,515-mile Florida Circumnavigational Saltwater Paddling Trail. When he reached Ft. Clinch State Park on January 26th, 2010, he had paddled a total of 63 days, averaging 24 miles per day.

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Jake Stachovak

Jake began a 5000 mile "Portage to Portage Paddling Project" around the eastern United States. He began his journey in early December 2009 on the Wisconsin River in Portage, WI, and paddled down the icy Mississippi to the Gulf. He paddled the circumnavigational trail in 2010 and began his successful return up the east coast and through the Great Lakes back to Wisconsin.



Ian Brown, Orlando

Ian began his journey in November of 2009 at Big Lagoon and, after many stops and starts, finished at Fort Clinch in late summer of 2010. Several FPTA members assisted him along the way.

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Gus Bianchi

Gus began paddling the CT by segments in Apalachicola in December 2009. After 13 trips, ranging from 40 to 212 miles accompanied by a number of different paddling partners, Gus completed all the CT segments at age 66 on September 13, 2013 in Cedar Key.

Gus continues is a tireless 'trail angel' and greets paddlers at the finish line with t-shirts, a big smile, and champagne. He also meets and shuttle paddlers throughout the state.



Warren Johnson, Hoover, AL

Warren completed the CT in two parts, beginning in 2011 at Big Lagoon and arriving at the Georgia border in August of 2012 at age 62. He had already gained notoriety by paddling the Alabama Scenic River Trail both directions in one trip.

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Amy and Dave Freeman, “North American Odyssey”

On Earth Day (April 22) of 2010 Dave and Amy Freeman began a three year, 11,700 mile journey across North America by kayak, canoe, and dogsled. Their goal was to use their journey as a platform for gaining support and protection for North America’s waterways and wild places, while actively engaging over 100,000 elementary and middle school students in their journey through a website and live school assemblies

They journeyed the length of the Suwannee and ended at Key West in 2012

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Ron & Fran Hoag, Portland, OR
Ron & Fran began at the St Marks Lighthouse in 2012 and ended in Key West. Ron then hiked about 1700 miles to Halifax, Nova Scotia while Fran provided RV support.





Steve Cournoyer, Dunellon

Steve completed half of the CT from Pensacola to the Keys over a period of many years, starting in 2006. Steve is also a wonderful volunteer helping maintain campsites on the Big Bend Saltwater Paddling Trail and is driving force behind the annual Hidden Coast Paddling Festival

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Barbara & Carl W. Anderson, Fernandina Beach
Carl completed the CT in sections, beginning in early 2011 at the lower Aucilla launch, and arrived at Fort Clinch State Park on September 16th 2013 at age 67. Carl paddled most of the trail with his wife Barbara and Gus Bianchi. Barb is still working on completing the CT.



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Daniel Alvarez, Tallahassee

In March of 2013, Daniel completed a nine-month, 4,000-mile kayaking journey from upper Minnesota to Key West called 'Paddling the Heart of America'. The trip included the Mississippi River and Gulf Coast. He surprised everyone (and himself) by continuing his journey up the east coast, finishing the CT and completing a loop through the Great Lakes that same year



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Jodi Eller, St. Augustine
Jodi became the first woman to complete the CT. She paddled most of the trail in 2008 with husband Matt Keene, the first CT thru paddler, and she completed the remaining segments in late 2013 with assistance from FPTA members.



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"The trail is amazing! It goes through so many different ecosystems. How the beaches change along the trail is just incredible. The trail made me a stronger paddler and it also redefined who I am in a way, bringing me back to the essence of being human. It's a powerful experience to go through."

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Marc DeLuca and Jim Windle, Charlotte, NC
These two retired police officers began their journey at Big Lagoon State Park on November 2nd, 2013 and ended on March 1st, 2014. They were greeted at the end Gus Bianchi, Carl Anderson and Ian Brown.



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Sean Bowers

Completed his journey April 3rd 2015. Sean did the west coast in 2014 and came back this year to complete the east coast.



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Mary Mangiapia, completed December 2014. First woman to complete the CT as a through-paddler.

“I have been endurance paddling for 19 years in Florida and can say that this trip is an incredible challenge. Along the way, I have encountered 10’ seas and numerous storms. I even cracked a Kevlar bulkhead while crossing Tampa Bay in big waves. I also have teeth marks in my kayak from a bull shark.”

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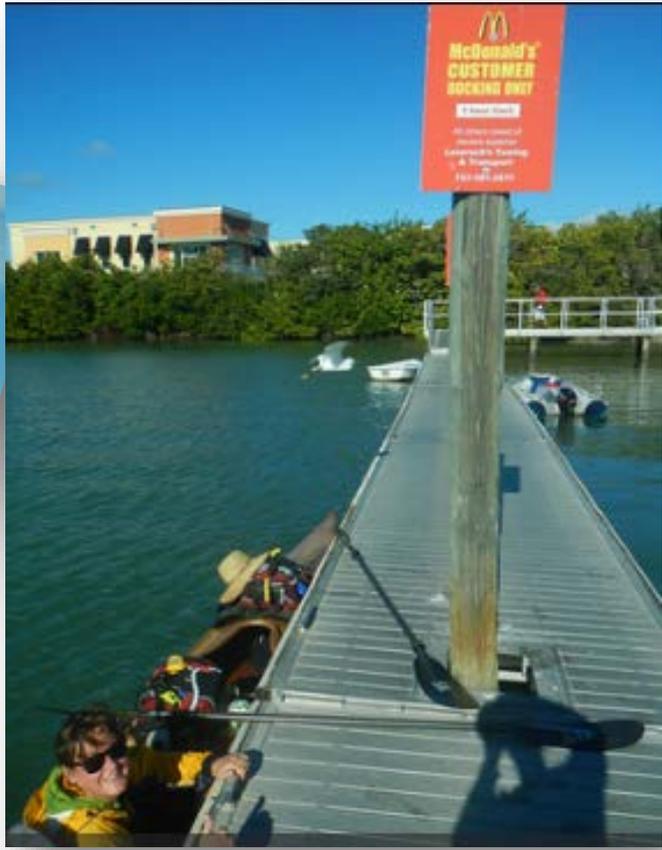


Jeff Buncie at Ft Clinch, February 2015
“This trail, especially attempting a thru paddle, whether it be solo or with others is a truly magical experience.”

I am compelled by a journey that will encompass the next 4 1/2 - 5 years of my existence. Over these years, the goal will be to travel over 16,000 miles by foot and 5,000 miles by kayak.

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Scotia Stein and Zane Blakey started on New Years Day & completed the CT in April 2015 paddling a tandem



Our 'Trail Angels' who make the journey special...



Circumnavigation Trail Angels



Leroy Harmon, Suwannee

Any paddler who has been lucky enough to meet Leroy has a story or two to tell. Leroy loves to share his genuine hospitality and passion for the Hidden Coast with everyone who paddles by the quaint little town of Suwannee

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Leroy offers shuttling with style!



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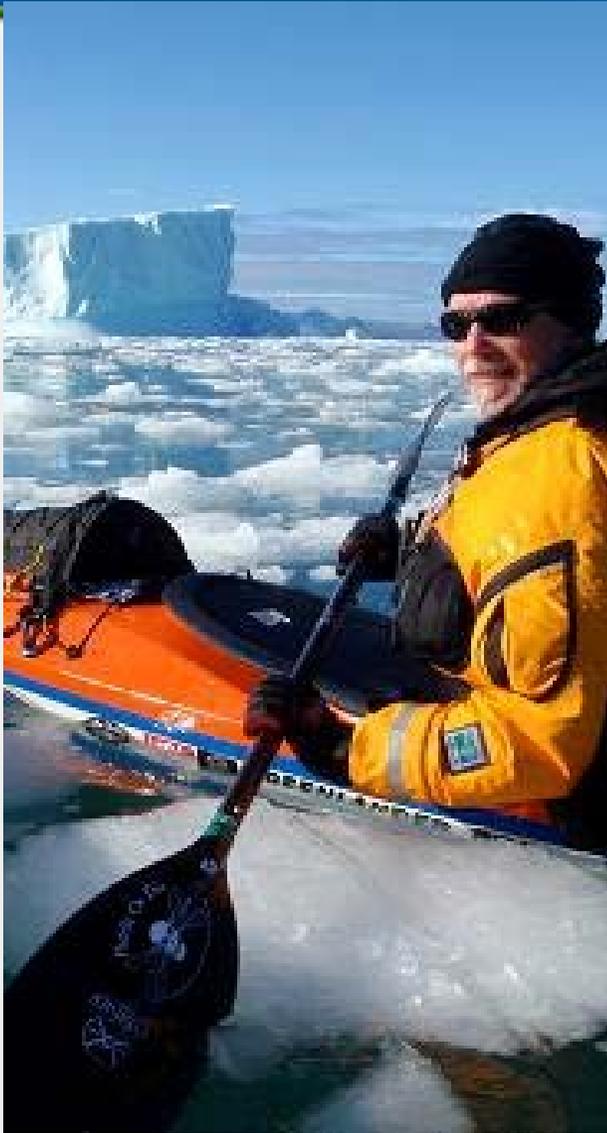
Gus Bianchi, Middleburg

Chances are good that if you have paddled the CT in the past several years that you have been assisted in some fashion by Gus. From shuttling paddlers in the Keys to celebrating with champagne and t-shirts at the end of the trail, Gus is the 'go-to' guy on the CT!

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Russell Farrow, St. Petersburg

- Russell is a global paddler, extreme adventurer and owner of Sweetwater Kayaks in St. Pete. Dodging ice bergs and polar bear is routine for this Florida guy.
- As a 'Trail Angel', Russell and his staff have helped CT paddlers in the Tampa Bay area in many ways.
- Russell is also an ACA and BCU Instructor who is partnering with us to train volunteers who share basic paddling skills and lead nature tours in state parks. Russell shares our agency's vision for getting kids & families connected with nature by offering paddling programs.

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Fred Borg, Eric Tuovila and Len Warren, provide wonderful support for paddlers in the Panama City area

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Monica Woll,
Key Largo

Monica & Frank
own Florida Bay
Outfitters and
are good friends
to all who pass
by the Keys

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Happy CT Paddling!