

# 2021 Florida Greenways and Trails Council

The Florida Greenways and Trails Council (FGTC) was established pursuant to 260.0142, Florida Statutes. Among its duties, the Council serves to advise the Florida Department of Environmental Protection on greenway and trail related issues, promote intergovernmental cooperation and private partnerships for developing the greenways and trails system, recommend priorities for critical links in the system, and provide funding recommendations for developing and managing the system.



Samantha Browne, Chief, Office of Greenways and Trails  
Division of Recreation and Parks, Department of Environmental Protection  
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**Florida Greenways and Trails Council- 260.0142 F.S.**

**Appointed by the Governor:**

(2) Trail Users / (2) Greenway Users / Private Land Owner

**Appointed by President of the Senate:**

Trail User / (2) Greenway Users

**Appointed by Speaker of the House:**

(2) Trail Users / Greenway User

**The 9 Remaining Council Members Include:**

FL Dept. of Environmental Protection  
FL Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission  
FL Dept. of Transportation  
FL Dept. of Agriculture and Consumer Services  
FL Dept. of State  
Water Management District  
Federal Land Management Agency  
Regional Planning Council  
Local Government

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# Brian Smith

Trail User-Appointed by the Governor

Florida Greenways and Trails Foundation

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Brian Smith was the Director of Planning for Pinellas County for 30 years. In that same time period he also served as the executive director of the Pinellas County MPO. He worked with the development of the Pinellas Trail in all phases. He retired with the commitment to continue to be involved in planning work.



Brian has established expertise in all aspects of planning with a focus on livable communities, community involvement, environmental initiatives, historic preservation, transportation planning and management, and trails development. He has stayed involved locally, currently serving as Chairman of the Municipal Planning Organization's Bike Pedestrian

Advisory Committee and Vice Chairman of the County's Historic Preservation Board. In addition, he is a Board Member on the Florida Greenways and Trails Foundation. He is also Chairman of the Florida Greenways and Trails Council.

He has a Master's Degree in Urban and Regional Planning from Florida State University and a Bachelor's in Physics. In 2006 he was inducted as a Fellow of the American Institute of Certified Planners. In 2011 he was recognized by the Rails to Trails Conservancy (RTC) as a National Trails Champion. He is currently the Chairman of the American Planning Association Florida's Sustainability Committee

# Brad Piepenbrink

Trail User-Appointed by the Governor

# Michael Nachef

Greenway User-Appointed by the Governor

# Vacant

Private Land Owner-Appointed by the Governor

## Sarrah Glassner (Chair)

Greenway User-Appointed by the Governor

Florida Sheriffs Association

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Sarrah was appointed to the Greenways and Trails Council in 2015 because of her love of Florida's trails! Ever since she moved to Tallahassee in 2003, she has loved



running and hiking the trails in Leon County.

Over the years, she has started mountain biking and trying to run as many trail races throughout the state as possible. She's a local triathlete and is committed to introducing people to exercising and showing them Florida's secret treasure: our trails.



# Steve Bowler

Trail User-Appointed by the President of the Senate

# Jason Lauritsen

Greenway User-Appointed by the President of the Senate

# Leslie Wheeler

Greenway User- Appointed by the President of the Senate

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Leslie has a BS Biology from Millsaps College, and a Specialist in Blood Banking at Ochsner Hospital in New Orleans. She earned a Master of Healthcare Administration from Tulane



University. She is happily retired from full time work as a Transfusion Services manager but stays employed part time. She works as a validation specialist for a transfusion service software company.

Leslie has been a member of The Florida Trail Association for more than 20 years, serving on chapter and state level leadership roles. She was President from 2017 – 2019. Living in Jacksonville, she also serves on the board for the Friends of Talbot Islands. She completed her Florida Master Naturalist certification in 2020. The connections and experiences from these organizations has taught her the importance of providing access to wild and natural Florida to all its citizens.

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# Kevin Sweeney

Trail User-Appointed by the Speaker of the House

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Kevin was born and raised in St. Augustine, FL. He graduated from St. Augustine High School in 1987 and the University of Florida in 1992. He currently serves on the Board of Trustees of the St. Augustine Lighthouse and the ARC of St. Johns



County and is Chair of the Code Enforcement Board for the city of St. Augustine Beach. An avid runner, Kevin has qualified for the prestigious Boston Marathon every year since 2003. He also is a trail runner and has won many trail races throughout the state and the south, including running nonstop across the Grand Canyon, as well as, the Presidential Traverse Trail in New Hampshire. He has also hiked and climbed multiple “14ers” in Colorado. He is a Greenway User Speaker’s selection to the Florida Greenways and Trails Council. When not running or hiking, he enjoys hanging out at the beach with his wife, Beth (a running superstar herself) and daughter Wellesley, as well as plotting with his cat, Tallulah.

# Faron Boggs

Trail User-Appointed by the Speaker of the House

Faron Boggs Consulting

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Growing up in St. Augustine, Faron developed a love of the outdoors while hiking, camping, and paddling in northeast Florida and the Panhandle. Whether it was trips



with his family or the Boy Scouts, he spent countless weekends enjoying and witnessing the "real" Florida. As a student at FSU and a resident of Tallahassee, Faron took up biking and mountain biking which furthered his appreciation of our natural resources and the importance of our trail system. "Being on the Florida Greenways and Trails Council will allow me to play an active role in protecting and expanding our trail system and ensuring it's use by my children and all future Floridians," he said.

# Ralph Lair

Greenway User-Appointed by the Speaker of the House

Pasco County- Government Affairs Officer

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Ralph Lair is the Government Affairs Officer for Pasco County, Florida. He communicates information about programs and services provided by Pasco County



government to the county's citizens, members of the U.S. Congress, the Florida Legislature, and other local elected and appointed officials. The Government Affairs Officer also develops and coordinates State and Federal Legislative Programs on behalf of the Board of County Commissioners and the County Administrator, and represents the Board of County Commissioners and the County Administrator to the Governor, the Cabinet, the Florida Legislature, and the United States Congress.

With over 22 years in state and local government, Ralph previously was the Chief Legislative

Assistant to Florida Speaker Will Weatherford. Mr. Lair was also the Chief Legislative Assistant to Representative Ken Littlefield, Speaker pro tempore Sandra Murman, and Senior Legislative Assistant to Representative Carl Littlefield. Ralph has also worked for the Southwest Florida Water Management District as a Senior Community Affairs Coordinator, the Florida Public Service Commission as a Senior Analyst and Chief Advisor to a Commissioner, and Florida-Stop Lawsuit Abuse as the Executive Director.

Ralph is a native Floridian, and holds a Bachelor of Science in Political Science from Florida State University. He enjoys geocaching, hiking, biking and experiencing the real Florida the state park system has to offer.

# PARKS SMALL

FL Department of Environmental Protection

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# Jerrie Lindsey

FL Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

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Jerrie Lindsey is the Director of the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation



Commission's Office of Recreation Services where she is responsible for developing wildlife viewing-related recreation opportunities on Florida's wildlife management area system and facilitating wildlife-viewing tourism on public lands statewide. During her career, Ms. Lindsey has worked in environmental education and recreation programs for the Legislature, Florida Department of Natural Resources and the Florida Recreation and Park Association. Her professional interests focus on developing recreational learning experiences that lead participants to take positive actions for fish and wildlife habitat. She is an avid paddler and enjoys hiking and birding.



# Robin Birdsong

FL Department of Transportation

Shared Use Non-motorized (SUN) Trail Program- Statewide Coordinator

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Robin joined the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) team in August 2015 as the Trail Program Manager for the Shared-Use Nonmotorized (SUN) Trail



Program. In this capacity, she is working with stakeholders to implement the SUN Trail Program and further FDOT's mission. SUN Trail projects will improve the intermodal connectors by closing gaps in the statewide paved trail system to increase the reliability of Florida's transportation system.

Previously, Robin worked for 11 years as a Regional Trail Coordinator with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection's (FDEP) Office of Greenways and Trails. For approximately a year, she worked as Florida's Recreational Trails Program Coordinator in DEP's Office of Operations. Prior to joining the FDEP she worked

with the Florida Department of State. She has extensive experience in team collaboration and advocacy. She moved to Tallahassee from Virginia to attend Florida State University. In her spare time, Robin enjoys exploring cultural and historical sites, bicycling and hiking, and relaxing at the beach with her husband.

# Marti Miller

FL Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services

Florida Forest Service- State Recreation Coordinator

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Marti Miller is a fourth generation Floridian that has combined family heritage and education to develop a career in Natural Resource Management. Currently employed as a Recreation Specialist for the Florida Forest Service, Marti has 20 plus years of experience in Nature Based Recreation and recently completed the University of Florida's Graduate Certification in Natural Resource Policy and Administration. Past employment has included ten years with the Florida Park Service and ten plus years with the Florida Forest Service. An additional responsibility includes Deputy Finance Section Chief on the FFS Wildfire/All Hazard Incident Management Gold Team.

Outdoor adventures are a priority in her personal life also. Camping, horseback riding, water sports, hiking and biking are all a part of family and friend activities balanced with a goal of being a lifelong learner.

## Timothy Parsons, Ph.D., RPA

FL Department of State

Division of Historical Resources- Director

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Dr. Timothy Parsons is a cultural resources management professional and archaeologist who has worked in the field since 2003. He completed his Ph.D. and M.A. in Anthropology at Florida State University, and received an undergraduate degree in Sociology and Anthropology at Millsaps College. Dr. Parsons is a Registered Professional Archaeologist and a member of the Society for American Archaeology and the Southeastern Archaeological Conference. Before his appointment as Division Director and State Historic Preservation Officer, he served as the Division's Deputy SHPO and Supervisor of Federal and State Compliance and Review. Prior

to joining the Division, he spent six years with the National Park Service Southeast Archaeological Center, and previously worked as the cultural and historical programs manager for the Blue Ridge Center for Environmental Stewardship in northern Virginia.

Vacant

Water Management District: Southwest FL Water Management District

## Shawn Thomas

Federal Land Management Agency: United States Department of Agriculture.  
(USDA) U.S. Forest Service

FL National Scenic Trail- Program Manager

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Shawn Thomas manages the congressionally designated Florida National Scenic Trail which spans 1,300 miles from Big Cypress National Preserve in the Everglades to Gulf Islands National Seashore in Pensacola. Shawn has a degree in Natural Resource Management from Ohio State University and served 3 ½ years as a Protected Areas Resource Specialist in the U.S. Peace Corps. Prior to joining the National Forests in Florida, Shawn was a Wildlife Biologist with the U.S. Air Force, managing a Fish and Wildlife Program in Central Florida. An avid hiker and outdoor enthusiast, he enjoys spending his free time exploring Florida's natural areas with his wife, daughter and son.

# Chris Rietow

Regional Planning Council: Apalachee Regional Planning Council

Executive Director

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Chris Rietow has served as the Executive Director of the ARPC since October of 2013. The ARPC's nine-county region includes Jackson, Calhoun, Gulf, Gadsden,



Liberty, Franklin, Leon, Wakulla and Jefferson along with 27 municipalities. Chris has lived in Tallahassee since 1992. He holds a Bachelor of Science in Biology (1997) and a Master of Science in Planning from Florida State University (2000).

He began at the ARPC as an economic development/growth management planner before transitioning to emergency management planning. He currently serves on the Board of the Capital Region Transportation Planning Agency (CRTPA) and the National Association of Development

Organizations (NADO). When away from work, he enjoys camping, mountain biking, kayak fishing, hiking and spending time with his wife and two daughters.

## Jim Couillard, PLA, ASLA

Local Government: Marion County Parks and Recreation

Director

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Jim Couillard serves as Director of the Marion County Parks and Recreation Department and the county's landscape architect overseeing the management of 50



unique parks and trailheads. Marion County covers 1,652 square miles with 36-percent of the county classified as Conservation (380,621 acres) and is home of the Cross Florida Greenway, state forests, water management lands and the largest portion of the Ocala National Forest. Jim has a robust vision for outdoor recreation with a goal of making Marion County the ecotourism hub of the southeast through partnerships with federal, state and local land managing agencies and the private sector. Jim

works closely with FDEP and FDOT in a joint effort to close gaps and find ideal alignments for shared-use trails in Marion County as part of the state-wide paved trail vision. Jim's experience with these agencies and his park design expertise will be beneficial to the Greenways and Trails Council. When he is not working, Jim enjoys spending time with his family, long distance backpacking, camping, fishing and watching his son play baseball.