



Florida Greenways and Trails Council (FGTC) Unpaved Trail Guidelines Committee February Meeting Minutes



PUBLIC MEETING: February 11, 2025
TIME: 2:00 pm
LOCATION: Virtual, Microsoft Teams

FGTC Members in Attendance:

- Mike Stephens – (Chair) Governor-Appointed Trail User
- Brooks White – Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Forest Service
- Rep. Cyndi Stevenson – Speaker of the House-Appointed Trail User
- Morgan Wilbanks – Governor-Appointed Greenway User
- Stephanie Wardein – Governor-Appointed Private Landowner

Office of Greenways and Trails (OGT) Staff in Attendance:

- Britney Mulholland, Assistant Chief
- Steven Carter, Regional Coordinator
- John Groves, Regional Coordinator

Other FDEP Staff in Attendance:

- Katie Slattery, Office of General Council

Members of the Public and Presenters in Attendance:

- Tim Baylie – Volusia County Parks, Recreation & Culture
- Joyce Papp – Southern Trailriders Association
- Nancy Stephens – North Florida Back Country Horsemen, Back Country Horsemen of FL
- Ed O'Connor – Cross Florida Greenway Equestrians
- Doug Crenshaw – Advent Health, Bike/Walk Central Florida

Committee Goals/Expectations

Following committee member introductions, *Steven Carter* discussed the committee's role, expectations, and goals in relation to the Florida Greenways and Trails Council. The goal of this Unpaved Guidelines Committee is to review the *2017 Unpaved Non-Motorized Trail Guidelines*

from the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, Office of Greenways & Trails, and provide comments, feedback, updates, and recommendations for the Florida Greenways and Trails Council. This committee is made up of council members and volunteers from multiple agencies and organizations to provide expertise on the variety of areas covered by the 2017 Guidelines in addition to potential new areas to be included.

Sunshine Law

Katie Slattery reminded the Committee that the Florida Greenways and Trails Council is bound by the Sunshine Law (s. 286.011, F.S.), which states that any gathering of two or more Council/Committee members to discuss Council/Committee business must be scheduled and open to the public with proper notice and minutes/recordings taken.

Unpaved Trail Guidelines Discussion:

To keep all discussions, open to the public, the committee chose not to split different guideline topics into breakout rooms; rather, the entire committee held one general discussion. Topics that were addressed include Equestrian Trail Guidelines, rising e-bike popularity and potential issues/mitigation, as well as Trail Safety Guidelines.

Equestrian Trail Guidelines

The Equestrian Trail discussion began with *Nancy Stephens* and *Joyce Papp* going over some of their notes regarding trail maintenance. Specifically, they discussed bridges and similar structures regarding anti-slick design and/or management practices. *Joyce* brought up a conversation about construction materials to achieve this, such as non-slip synthetic wood. *Tim Baylie* joined the conversation by describing ways that Volusia County has achieved this through filling cracks, lines, etc. within these structures with natural materials such as plants.

The Equestrian Trail discussion continued as *Nancy* discussed some additional notes in trail design, including:

- Loop trails are preferred amongst equestrians.
- Single and double-track trail designs should be addressed.
- The US Forest Service has great resources for trail design.
 - Other Committee members agreed that input from other expert groups would be helpful in updating the unpaved trail guidelines.
- The length of trails/rides in the guidelines should be updated for equestrian trails.
- Water availability is a critical aspect of trail design that should be included in the guidelines.

- Step-downs are another thing that should be taken into consideration with equestrian trail design.
- Separate or larger parking areas for equestrian trails is necessary to fit trailers.

E-Bike Issues & Mitigation

The guidelines discussion continued as *Stephanie Wardein* brought up the recent rise in popularity of e-bikes and similar electronic transportation devices among biking and other unpaved recreational trails. *Doug Crenshaw* and other Committee members agreed with this sentiment and continued the discussion.

The e-bike conversation sparked a discussion surrounding trail etiquette, which *Joyce Papp* and *Tim Baylie* continued by suggesting signage at trailheads and along trails. This signage would be meant to educate trail users on rules and etiquette, including speed limits, Trail Courtesy “Yield To...” signs, etc.

Ed O’Conner asked the Committee how e-bikes and similar devices are defined and enforced to limit their access to these trails. Committee members discussed that since they are such a new trend, many current definitions aren’t specific enough to enforce/limit access. To combat this, *Cyndi Stevenson* suggested trail design aspects that would physically limit e-bike access, while *Tim Baylie* suggested separate, paved trails for these devices.

Trail Safety Guidelines

The e-bike (and similar devices) conversation surrounding trail etiquette and speed also sparked a conversation about general trail safety. *Joyce Papp* brought up the topic of trail crossing guidelines, which impact all trail users. *Tim Baylie* suggested that these guidelines should include aspects relating to signal lights, crosswalk standards and brightness/colors of crossings. *Mike Stephens* added that sight-line guidelines should also be included.

Stephanie Wardein asked if the updated *Unpaved Non-Motorized Trail Guidelines* could include pictures and/or examples in sections like these. *Cyndi Stevenson* agreed that references and specific examples would be beneficial to include.

Public Comment

No Public Comment.

Confirm Next Meeting Date

The Committee will meet next, virtually, on Tuesday, March 11th at 2:00 PM EST. The Committee also decided that the next meeting will lay out specific sections of the 2017 Unpaved Non-Motorized Trail Guidelines for review prior to the scheduled meeting. For virtual meeting link and agenda, visit <https://floridadep.gov/parks/ogt/content/florida-greenways-and-trails-council>.

MEETING ADJOURN

Called to adjourn by *Steven Carter*.