



## Florida Greenways and Trails Council (FGTC) Public Hearing and Council Meeting



**PUBLIC MEETING:** December 6<sup>th</sup> and December 7<sup>th</sup>, 2022  
**TIME:** 9:00 am  
**LOCATION:** DeBary Hall Stable: 198 Sunrise Blvd. DeBary, FL 32713

### **FGTC Members in Attendance for Council Meeting:**

- *Mike Stephens – Trail User Appointed by Governor*
- *David Glassner (delegate for Sarrah Glassner) - Greenway User Appointed by Governor*
- *Chris Rietow – Apalachee Regional Planning Council*
- *Shawn Thomas – U.S. Forest Service*
- *Jason Lauritsen (only attended 12/6) – Greenway User Appointed by President of Senate*
- *Parks Small – FDEP, Division of Recreation & Parks*
- *Jim Couillard – Marion County Parks & Recreation Director*
- *Wesley Stalnakar (left early on 12/7) – Greenway User Appointed by President of Senate*
- *Jerrie Lindsey – FWC, Office of Recreational Services Director*
- *Stephanie Wardein – Private Landowner Appointed by the Governor*

### **OGT Staff in Attendance for Council Meeting:**

- *Samantha Browne – Bureau Chief*
- *Katie Bernier – Regional Coordinator*
- *Allison Beaty – Regional Coordinator*
- *Anna Hopkins – Outdoor Recreation Specialist/Staff to Council*

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## Welcome

Welcome remarks were given by Karen Chasez, the Mayor of DeBary. She gave an overview of DeBary's history and recent updates.

## Approve Agenda

### FGTC REMARKS:

**MOTION:** *Jerrie Lindsey*

**SECOND:** *Chris Rietow*

### FGTC RECOMMENDATION:

APPROVE MEETING AGENDA

Approve the April 6 & 7, 2022 Meeting Summary

**FGTC REMARKS:**

**MOTION:** *Mike Stephens*

**SECOND:** *Stephanie Wardein*

**FGTC RECOMMENDATION:**

APPROVE MEETING SUMMARY

**FLORIDA GREENWAYS AND TRAILS COUNCIL BUSINESS:**

**Office of Greenways and Trails Update – Samantha Browne**

*The Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) draft has been completed and is currently undergoing review and approval from multiple other departments. The Outdoor Florida Webinar Series will continue through next year, with the next webinar scheduled for December 14<sup>th</sup>. The OGT webpage has been updated with new photos and OGT staff have been attending outreach events. Dates for the rescheduled public meetings regarding the Florida Greenways and Trails System map updates were shared, along with the new date and time for the rescheduled Coast to Coast Alliance meeting. Recent changes to the Trail Town application were discussed. Updated maps for the Circumnavigational Saltwater Paddling Trail were shared.*

**City of Deltona Update – Jerry Mayes**

*Jerry presented a video that gave an overview of the Nature Parks in Deltona- Audubon Nature Park, Thornby Nature Park (which includes the birdability designation), Three Island Nature Park, Blue Heron Nature Park, and the Lake Butler Nature Park and Trail. The city is currently developing a blueways trail on the Butler Chain of Lakes with 25 miles of mapped waterways. There are 3 landings with the plan to eventually have 6, along with primitive camping. Jerry thanked the various stakeholders and partners involved in the project and noted Deltona's Trail Town designation. In the future, they have plans to connect Deltona trails to legacy trails all over the region. FloridaEcoParks.com was created for the Eco parks program, where all the information about the project can be found. A wayfinding program between the parks is in progress, and physical pamphlets about the parks already exist.*

**Volusia County Update – Tim Baylie**

*Tim discussed trail development status for several trails in Volusia County that were gaps in the system. He gave an overview of the county's wayfinding signs, maps, and mile markers which are coordinated to be cohesive through the county. Other trail improvements included completing their trails master plan, obtaining permits for restrooms at three trailheads, and the creation of a new trailhead in DeLeon Springs. The features of the Volusia County Parks & Trails mobile app were highlighted, including a geofencing feature. Lastly, other park developments and improvements were highlighted, including trail and court resurfacing, fishing dock replacements, and boat launch improvements.*

## **City of Winter Haven – Andy Palmer**

*Andy provided a historical background of trails in Winter Haven, and how the city has a long-term lease on the land now know as the Chain of Lakes trail which used to be an old rail line. Today, the Chain of Lakes Trail connects their downtown to Lake Alfred. Once the Old Dixie gap is completed, Winter Haven will be connected to Auburndale and the Coast to Coast Trail. Winter Haven hosts 14 miles of existing trails and connectors, along with a blueway on the Chain of Lakes. Water skiing is very popular in the city and a big part of the outdoor lifestyle and tourism. As part of their Trail Town designation, Winter Haven has several ongoing and future projects. These include the Complete Streets project, the One Water/Sapphire Necklace project, and the Multimodal Transportation Advisory Committee. The city worked with many partners as part of the Trail Town campaign, including Visit Central Florida, OGT, The Bike Shop, and Winter Haven Main Street. After the presentation, the Council voted to approve Winter Haven as a designated Trail Town.*

## **City of Winter Haven Trail Town Designation**

### **FGTC REMARKS:**

**MOTION: Chris Rietow**

**SECOND: Mike Stephens**

### **FGTC RECOMMENDATION:**

**(X) APPROVE TRAIL TOWN DESIGNATION**

## **Paradise Coast & Reynolds Ranch Designations – Allison Beaty**

*Each designation was presented for the council to vote on. Two representatives from Reynolds Ranch were in attendance to answer questions about their application. Both designations were approved by council members.*

## **Paradise Coast Designation**

### **FGTC REMARKS:**

**MOTION: Stephanie Wardein**

**SECOND: Wesley Stalnaker**

### **FGTC RECOMMENDATION:**

**(X) APPROVE DESIGNATION**

## **Reynolds Ranch Designation**

### **FGTC REMARKS:**

**MOTION: Jerrie Lindsey**

**SECOND: Wesley Stalnaker**

**FGTC RECOMMENDATION:**

**(X) APPROVE DESIGNATION**

**Brian Smith Recognition Presentation – Samantha Browne**

*Former council member Brian Smith was presented with a plaque for his nine years of service to the Florida Greenways and Trails Council.*

**Rails to Trails Conservancy – Ken Bryan**

*Ken discussed the mission and vision of Rails to Trails, which is to build a nation connected by trails and reimagine public spaces to create safe ways for everyone to talk, bike, and be active outdoors. Rails to Trails awarded 25 grants totaling \$301,000 in 2022. The Great American Rail Trail was launched in 2019 and aims to connect the east side of the country to the west. Currently, it is 54% complete. The Rails to Trails Conservancy has an online, interactive best practice how-to guide for creating multi-use trail networks.*

**City of DeBary – Carmen Rosamonda**

*Carmen outlined the challenges faced by the City of DeBary in 2019, and how they were addressed in the City’s recent Master Plan. He also reviewed the eco-tourism opportunities in DeBary, including biking, kayaking, and fishing opportunities. A map of DeBary’s trails was shown to highlight the various kinds of trails (paved, unpaved, paddling) and how they interconnect. He discussed the City’s method for focusing on building up Main Street with new developments that were mixed housing/commercial use and the focus on walking paths. The presentation concluded with a closer look at the Riverbend South project, an upcoming riverfront nature trail to be opened in February 2023.*

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

*No public comments were given.*

**ADJOURN:**

**MOTION:** *Wesley Stalnaker*

**SECOND:** *Mike Stephens*

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**12/7/22 – Welcome and Introductions**

**Approve Agenda:**

**FGTC REMARKS:**

**MOTION:** *Mike Stephens*

**SECOND:** *Chris Rietow*

**FGTC RECOMMENDATION:**

APPROVE MEETING AGENDA

**Coast to Coast Update – Allison Beaty**

*The Coast to Coast Alliance meeting has been rescheduled for February 14<sup>th</sup> at Wekiwa Springs State Park. Meeting topics will include planning, maintenance, safety, signage, promotion, and funding for the trail. Allison presented a story map draft of the Coast to Coast trail and received feedback from council. The map will also be reviewed with stakeholders at the Alliance meeting.*

**Seminole County Update – Sherry Williams**

*Sherry gave an overview of the Seminole County Trails Master Plan 2020 update. She reviewed the history of the trail system in the county, how they updated the master plan, a summary of their outreach efforts, and the next steps. Sherry also discussed the different funding sources for trails in Seminole County, including referendums and an infrastructure sales tax initiative. Trails within the county are organized into a hierarchy system, which categorizes them into signature trails, pathways, connectors, wilderness, or destination trails. Today, Seminole County hosts over 140 miles of interconnected trails for residents and visitors.*

**Space Coast Update – Sarah Kraum**

*Sarah discussed the North Brevard Trails and Wayfinding Amenities Plan which is funded and managed by the Space Coast TPO. One of the main goals including developing cohesive wayfinding that recognized the unique character of North Brevard. A branding scheme was created using informed color choices that reflected partner logos, and characteristics of the trails in the area.*

**Recreational Trails Program – Lauren Cruz**

*Sarah highlighted the eligibility requirement for RTP grants and permissible uses for the funding. Allowed uses included development or renovation of trailhead facilities, maintenance of existing trails, purchase of trail construction or trail maintenance equipment, and construction of new trails. The Florida Recreational Trails Advisory Committee (TAC) was created to advise FDEP on matters regarding use of RTP grant funds in the state. Members of the TAC shall be appointed by the Florida Greenways and Trails Council. Two potential member applications were presented at the meeting and the council voted to approve both applications.*

**Nancy Stevens Application**

**FGTC REMARKS:**

**MOTION:** Jerrie Lindsey

**SECOND:** Wesley Stalnaker

**FGTC RECOMMENDATION:**

**(X) APPROVE MEMBERSHIP TO TAC**

## **Jeremiah Thompson Application**

### **FGTC REMARKS:**

**MOTION:** Wesley Stalnaker

**SECOND:** Chris Rietow

### **FGTC RECOMMENDATION:**

**(X) APPROVE MEMBERSHIP TO TAC**

*Council member Shawn Thomas abstained from both votes*

## **East Coast Greenway Update – Robert Barto**

*Robert introduced the 3,000 miles East Coast Greenway. It covers 15 states, connects 450 communities, and hosts 50 million annual rides, walks, and runs. Highlights from this year included the first ever thru-run, the 2<sup>nd</sup> annual New York to Philly Ride, a \$50 million federal RAISE grant, and new designations. A short video featuring the thru-runner, Shan Riggs, was shown. Shan ran from Key West to Calais, Maine over the course of 78 days along the greenway. Moving forward, the East Coast Greenway will be focusing on their Impact Series, more signage along the Florida segments, Greenways for All, the International Trails Summit, and new designations.*

## **Lake County Update – Gallus Quigley**

*Several regional trails pass through Lake County, including the River to the Hills Trail, the Wekiva Regional Trail, the Coast to Coast Trail, and the Lake Ridge Trail. Gallus highlighted the current construction phase of each trail and the gaps that remain. Currently, Lake County is updating their interaction maps and physical maps to provide better user output data. They plan to complete the project by summer of 2023. Their Trails Master Plan provides the most up to date information on existing and conceptual trails in the county. They recommended that the Wekiva Regional Trail and the River to the Hills Regional Trail be included in the OGT FGTS priority map update. Lastly, Gallus touched on signage for the various trails in the county and their efforts to make them uniform yet unique to the area through strategic use of color and sign type.*

### **PUBLIC COMMENT:**

*No public comments were given.*

### **CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR VOTE:**

*Vote was moved to agenda for next meeting.*

### **COUNCIL MEMBER UPDATES:**

*Stephanie Wardein: The Babcock Ranch development is in Phase 2. She expressed interest in the trail town program and connecting with nearby agencies.*

*Jerrie Lindsey: FWC is accepting nominations for new trails to add to the Great Florida Birding and Wildlife Trail. The application closes on January 27<sup>th</sup>. The 3<sup>rd</sup> annual Wild Quest will be taking place in April 2023. It is a scavenger hunt that encourages people to explore Wildlife Management Areas and complete virtual missions.*

*David Glassner (delegate for Sarrah Glassner): Enjoyed attending and noted that Sarrah should be able to return for the next meeting.*

*Chris Rietow: Florida Regional Councils Association is having discussions on assisting with projects that receive SUN Trail funding. They recognize that other considerations exist outside of the paving process (the part that is funded by the SNU Trail program), such as signage and facilities, that are needed to complete the trail experience. Personally, Chris recently hiked Mt. Whitney, the highest mountain in the lower 48 states.*

*Mike Stephens: Wekiva Trail was recently completed which tied into several regional trails. The Florida Greenways and Trails Foundation recently held their meeting in Mt. Dora. Lake County is focusing on North/South/East/West trails.*

*Shawn Thomas: The 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the National Scenic Trail is approaching. The USFS will be setting up regional promotional events with the Florida Trail Association. The kickoff for the Spring Creek project is coming up in 2023 at St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge. Funding for the project came from the Deep Water Horizon Oil Spill. There are new projects happening at Big Shoals State Park and Withlacoochee State Forest. FTA has a new representative for Northern Regional Trails and hired a full time Gateways Community Coordinator.*

*Parks Small: The Acquisition and Restoration Council (ARC) is prioritizing Florida Forever projects. The updated Unit Management Plans for Wakulla Springs are soon being presented.*

*Jim Couillard: The recently passed Dunnellon Trail project includes a protected bridge and it is aimed at getting more trail users into downtown. Marion County may be one of the first Gateway Communities on the list for the Florida Trail Association. He would be happy to support Dunnellon becoming a trail town in the future.*

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS/NEXT MEETING:**

*The next meeting will be held between late March and May after the legislative season. Since it is a map update, it will take place in Tallahassee.*

## **ADJOURN:**

**MOTION:** Mike Stephens

**SECOND:** Chris Rietow