

HEARTLINE

No. 2

Apr. – Jun., 2012

**Heartland Chapter, Florida Trail Association,
Serving Polk, Hardee, Highlands and De Soto Counties**

FROM THE CHAIR:

Well, it appears that winter has come and gone with little to remind us of cooler temperatures. We normally would be heading into prime hiking season, but with the warm temperatures it makes it a little unpleasant later in the day. With that said, we still have a number of hikes planned in the coming months. We will be kayaking and biking as well, so check out our schedule on Meetup (<http://www.meetup.com/heartland-fta>) and come out and join us.

We will have a special guest speaker at our May chapter meeting at Tenoroc. Robert Connors, Executive Director of the Conservation Trust for Florida will talk to us about his organization's effort to help preserve natural areas in Florida. For more information about this organization, you can go to the following website <http://www.conserveflorida.org/>.

The Florida Trail Association Annual Conference will be the weekend of March 30 – April 1 in Jupiter, FL. It is the Ocean to Lake Hiking Festival and a number of activities are planned for Saturday. The annual meeting and election of executive board members will be Sunday morning.

As always, see you on the trail!!

David Waldrop
Heartland Chapter Chair

Melissa Bruneau
Heartland Chapter Co-Chair



CONTACT PERSONS: (Area Code 863 unless listed)

Chair: David Waldrop 605-3587 or david_lwfl@yahoo.com

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Section Leader/Willingham: Bob Hummel 471-1814

Section Leader/Green Swamp East: Bob Yost 644-5448 or bobalinks3@yahoo.com

Section Leader/Southern End of Western Loop of the FNST: Janice Scroggie Anderson 813-245-1609 or scroggie@aol.com

ACTIVITIES: (If you have trouble reaching the contact person listed in the activity description, please contact Maureen Jones. If you can't reach her, please contact David Waldrop. Contact information for both is listed above.)

Date: April 7, 2012 - Saturday

Activity: Trail Maintenance and Walk the Gardens

Location: **Bok Tower, Lake Wales**

Description: Meet at the Main Gate. Monika Hoerl will lead 8-10 members for this service project to remove Brazilian Peppers from a new hiking trail. Members with chain saws are needed, as well as members to remove the cut pepper plants, and members who can paint the cut stumps with a chemical. A walk in the gardens will be free of charge for those working.

Bring: Hiking shoes, brimmed hat, water, snacks, lunch, sun and insect protection.

Contact: Rose or Jim Kellermann at 863-676-2889 for meet-up time, location and other details. Also, please RSVP to the chapter online Meet-up page at <http://www.meetup.com/Heartland-FTA/calendar>.

Date: April 14, 2012 - Saturday

Activity: Day Hike, approx. 6 miles

Location: **Arbuckle Wildlife Management Area (WMA)**

Description: Located east of Avon Park in Polk County 5 miles south of Frostproof and is part of the Lake Wales Ridge State Forest, which was purchased by the state to protect numerous rare and endangered plants and animals. For this event, Florida State Senator, Paula Dockery, will be at Arbuckle to view the bridge and hike the trail with us, assuming she won't be called back into session after the regular session.

Bring: Hiking shoes, brimmed hat, water, snacks, lunch, sun and insect protection.

Contact: Rose or Jim Kellermann at 863-676-2889 for meet-up time, location, and other details. Also please RSVP to the chapter's online Meet-up page at <http://www.meetup.com/Heartland-FTA/calendar>.

ACTIVITIES, CONT.

Date: April 15, 2012 - Sunday

Activity: Nature Walk

Location: **Circle B Bar Preserve**, SR 540 (Winter Lake Road), Lakeland

Description: Approx. 3 mile walk to view birds and other wildlife at this scenic wildlife preserve, which is home to an oak hammock, freshwater marsh, hardwood swamp and lake shore, a tremendous bird population, including a variety of wading birds, waterfowl, ospreys and bald eagles. Alligators inhabit Lake Hancock and may be observed from a distance. Pets are not allowed.

Bring: Walking or hiking shoes, water, snacks, sun and insect protection.

Contact: Liane Plumhoff 863-646-2398 or lplum@verizon.net. Also, please RSVP to the chapter online Meet-up page at <http://www.meetup.com/Heartland-FTA/calendar>.

Date: April 22, 2012 - Sunday

Activity: Earth Day – Day Hike

Location: **Tiger Creek Preserve**

Description: Group will meet at the Mini Mac Convenience Store, 910 N Scenic Hwy, Babson Park. We will hike the new trail to the observation tower. Tiger Creek Preserve is located east of US 27 between Babson Park and Frostproof. The trail traverses the rolling hills of the Lake Wales Ridge, including some of the highest hills and oldest land in the Florida peninsula. Botanical diversity is extensive along this trail.

Bring: Walking or hiking shoes, water, snacks, sun and insect protection.

Contact: David Waldrop at 863-605-3587 for meet-up time and other details. Also, please RSVP to the chapter online Meet-up page at <http://www.meetup.com/Heartland-FTA/calendar>.

Date: April 28 & 29, 2012 - Saturday & Sunday

Activity: Trail Maintenance (come for the day or camp primitively overnight)

Location: **Green Swamp, Lakeland, FL** Meet at Rock Ridge Rd. gate.

Description: From US-98 in north Lakeland turn east on Rock Ridge Rd., at fork bear left and continue 4.2 miles to gate on your left. From SR-33 in Polk City travel north, turn left (west) on Dean Still Rd., turn left on Rock Ridge Rd., after 2 or 3 miles gate will be on your right.

Bring: water, snacks, lunch, sun and insect protection, and camping gear if camping.

Contact: Bob Yost at 863-644-5448 or bobalinks3@yahoo.com for meet-up time and other information. Also, please RSVP to the chapter online Meet-up page at <http://www.meetup.com/Heartland-FTA/calendar>.

Date: May 5, 2012 - Saturday

Activity: Chapter Meeting, short hike and Pot Luck Lunch

Location: **Tenoroc Fish Management Area, Lakeland, FL**

Description: Meeting will be held at the Picnic Lake pavilion; meet in the Picnic Lake pavilion parking area for the short hike before the meeting; Pot Luck lunch will follow the meeting. We will have a special guest speaker, who is Robert Conners, Executive Director of the Conservation Trust for Florida. He will talk to us about his organization's effort to help preserve natural areas in Florida. This former phosphate mining area consists of lakes, marshes, grasslands and wooded hills, and is an important refuge for wildlife.

Bring: Sun and insect protection, snacks, water, and a dish to share at lunch based on initial of last name and last name beginning with A-H Dessert, I-Q Salad, R-Z Main Dish.

Contact: For Chapter Meeting, David Waldrop at 863-605-3587 or email: david_lwfl@yahoo.com. For hike, Brett Stoltz at 863-800-0743 or email: brett.stoltz@gmail.com. Also, please RSVP to the chapter online Meet-up page at <http://www.meetup.com/Heartland-FTA/calendar>.

ACTIVITIES, CONT.

Date: May 12 & 13, 2012 Saturday & Sunday

Activity: Trail Maintenance (come for the day or camp primitively overnight)

Location: **Green Swamp, Lakeland, FL** Meet at Rock Ridge Rd. gate.

Description: From US-98 in north Lakeland turn east on Rock Ridge Rd., at fork bear left and continue 4.2 miles to gate on your left. From SR-33 in Polk City travel north, turn left (west) on Dean Still Rd., turn left on Rock Ridge Rd., after 2 or 3 miles gate will be on your right.

Bring: water, snacks, lunch, sun and insect protection, and camping gear if camping.

Contact: Bob Yost at 863-644-5448 or bobalinks3@yahoo.com for meet-up time and other information. Also, please RSVP to the chapter online Meet-up page at <http://www.meetup.com/Heartland-FTA/calendar>.

Date: May 19, 2012 Saturday

Activity: Trail Maintenance

Location: **National Scenic Trail at Boney Marsh**, Bluff Hammock Rd., Lorida, FL (just south of Sebring.)

Bring: water, snacks, lunch, sun and insect protection.

Contact: David Waldrop at 863-605-3587 for meet-up time and other details. Also, please RSVP to the chapter online Meet-up page at <http://www.meetup.com/Heartland-FTA/calendar>.

Date: May 20, 2012 - Sunday

Activity: Nature Walk

Location: **Circle B Bar Preserve**, SR 540 (Winter Lake Road), Lakeland

Description: Approx. 3 mile walk to view birds and other wildlife at this scenic wildlife preserve which is home to an oak hammock, freshwater marsh, hardwood swamp and lake shore, a tremendous bird population, including a variety of wading birds, waterfowl, ospreys and bald eagles. Alligators inhabit Lake Hancock and may be observed from a distance. Pets are not allowed.

Bring: Walking or hiking shoes, water, snacks, sun and insect protection.

Contact: Liane Plumhoff 646-2398 or lplum@verizon.net. Also, please RSVP to the chapter online Meet-up page at <http://www.meetup.com/Heartland-FTA/calendar>.

Date: May 25, 26, & 27 - Friday, Saturday, & Sunday

Activity: Memorial Day Weekend Camping Trip, Kayaking, Bike Ride, and Potluck Dinner

Location: **Hillsborough River State Park**

Description: 9 miles north of Tampa and 6 miles south of Zephyrhills on US Highway 301.

From 1-75, take the Fowler Ave. exit #265 east to Hwy. 301 and travel north for 9 miles. The park will be on your left-hand side. Come to camp or come for bicycling on Saturday and/or kayaking on Sunday, as day trips.

If camping, you are responsible for making your own reservations, at

<http://www.reserveamerica.com/campgroundDirectoryList.do?contractCode=fl> for the number of nights you will be camping. According to State law, children must wear helmets.

Bring: Camping gear and/or bicycle and accessories and/or kayak and accessories and any snacks or food needed for the activity(ies) in which you will be participating.

Contacts: Camping site #, bicycling on Saturday, and pot luck dinner to Maureen Jones at 863-293-5036 or mjones206@tampabay.rr.com, also for meet-up time and other information. For Kayaking: Eileen Valachovic at 863-956-2145 or eileenvalachovic@hotmail.com for meet-up time and other information. Also, please RSVP to the chapter online Meet-up page at <http://www.meetup.com/Heartland-FTA/calendar>.

Activities, Cont.

Date: June 2, 2012 - Saturday

Activity: Day Hike, approx. 5 miles

Location: **Arbuckle Wildlife Management Area (WMA)**

Description: Arbuckle Wildlife Management Area (WMA) consists of 13,531 acres east of Avon Park in Polk County 5 miles south of Frostproof. Part of the Lake Wales Ridge State Forest, this area was purchased to protect numerous rare and endangered plants and animals. Arbuckle occupies a high ridge of ancient sand dunes and contains fast disappearing pine and oak scrub, home to Florida scrub jays and gopher tortoises. Arbuckle WMA is part of the Great Florida Birding Trail. Scrub jays inhabit the oak scrub along the road into the area. Short-tailed hawks may be observed on the Paula Dockery Trail, and at Lake Arbuckle are wading birds, bald eagles, limpkins, and ospreys.

Bring: Sturdy walking or hiking shoes, water, snacks, brimmed hat, sun and insect protection.

Contact: Melissa Bruneau, phone 407-460-1388, or email ftamelissa@gmail.com for meet-up time and other details. Also, please RSVP to the chapter online Meet-up page at <http://www.meetup.com/Heartland-FTA/calendar>.

Date: June 9, 2012 - Saturday

Activity: Day Hike, approx. 5 miles

Location: **Saddle Creek Park, Lakeland, FL**

Description: This former phosphate mining area consists of lakes, marshes, grasslands and wooded hills, and is an important refuge for wildlife. Meet at the trailhead near the restrooms.

Bring: Hiking shoes, brimmed hat, water, snacks, lunch, sun and insect protection.

Contact: Monika Hoerl at 863-858-3106 for meet-up time and other details. Also, please RSVP to the chapter online Meet-up page at <http://www.meetup.com/Heartland-FTA/calendar>.

Date: June 16, 2012 - Saturday

Activity: Kayaking or Canoeing

Location: **Reedy Creek** on Rucks Dairy Rd., Frostproof, FL at the bridge.

Bring: Kayak, paddle, life jacket, water, and lunch

Contact: Bob Yost at 863-644-5448 or bobalinks3@yahoo.com for meet-up time, directions and other information. Also, please RSVP to the chapter online Meet-up page at <http://www.meetup.com/Heartland-FTA/calendar>.

Date: June 17, 2012 - Sunday

Activity: Nature Walk

Location: **Circle B Bar Preserve**, SR 540 (Winter Lake Road), Lakeland

Description: Approx. 3 mile walk to view birds and other wildlife at this scenic wildlife preserve which is home to an oak hammock, freshwater marsh, hardwood swamp and lake shore, a tremendous bird population, including a variety of wading birds, waterfowl, ospreys and bald eagles. Alligators inhabit Lake Hancock and may be observed from a distance. Pets are not allowed.

Bring: Walking or hiking shoes, water, snacks, sun and insect protection.

Contact: Liane Plumhoff 646-2398 or lplum@verizon.net. Also, please RSVP to the chapter online Meet-up page at <http://www.meetup.com/Heartland-FTA/calendar>.

Activities, Cont.

Date: June 23, 2012 - Saturday

Activity: Tubing

Location: **Kelly Park at Rock Springs Run**

Description: Carpool from Posner Shopping Center at Junction of I-4 and Hwy. 27, in front of Dick's Sporting Goods.

Bring: Water, snacks, lunch (food also available at park concession), swimsuit, water shoes, bug and sun protection, large tube suitable for river floatation (tube rental available from roadside vendors near the park entrance, cost: approx. \$5).

Contact: Eileen Valachovic at 863-956-2145 for meet-up time and other information. Also, please RSVP to the chapter online Meet-up page at <http://www.meetup.com/Heartland-FTA/calendar>.

Date: June 30, 2012 - Saturday

Activity: Off-road Bike Ride

Location: **Alafia River State Park**, 14326 South County Road 39, Lithia, Florida 33547

Description: A State park in Hillsborough County with some of the most challenging off-road bicycling trails in Florida. Located on what was once a phosphate-mining site, the unique topography of the reclaimed land offers some of Florida's most radical elevation changes. Alafia River State Park is home to 17 miles of bike trails, with levels ranging from beginner to advanced. The Trails were constructed by volunteers from the Southwest Association of Mountain Bike Peddlers (SWAMP). According to State law, children must wear helmets.

Bring: Bicycle with all terrain (wide) tires, helmet, water, snacks, sun and insect protection.

Contact: Teresa Newgent at 813-882-9558 or newgt@msn.com or newgt7@yahoo.com for meet-up time, directions and other information. Also, please RSVP to the chapter online Meet-up page at <http://www.meetup.com/Heartland-FTA/calendar>.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!!!

The officers and current members of the Heartland Chapter of the Florida Trail Association are pleased to welcome the following new members, who are listed in alphabetical order by last name(s):

Beth Baumez, Winter Haven

Rachel Renne, Nocatee

Douglas Bohannon, Winter Haven

Brian Rogers, Davenport

All members are appreciated and we thank you for your membership.

ARE YOU INTERESTED IN BUTTERFLIES?

Many of you probably don't know that we have a new member in our chapter who is very knowledgeable in butterflies. Ken Heffner knows which butterflies prefer which plants, how to attract them, and how to keep them in your yard all year long. Ken lives in Lakeland. For more information, call him at 863-602-8202. If you're lucky, he might even share a plant or two with you free of charge.

IN AN EFFORT TO CONSERVE THE ENVIRONMENT

When feasible, please bring environmentally safe drinking cups/glasses, plates, bowls, utensils, etc., meaning non-disposables, instead of throw-away items to chapter meetings, Sat. night dinners on camping trips, and anyplace else it's feasible. Thank you for your participation.

RECAP OF LAST QUARTER'S ACTIVITIES

Dec. 16, 17, & 18, 2011: On our camping trip at Lake Kissimmee State Park, we started with 16 people on the hike on Sat. morning, some of whom were camping, others who were not. We ended with only 13, as 3 turned around early and didn't complete the hike as the rest of us did. It was a beautiful day for an almost 7-mile hike, which we completed in about 4 hours. Sat. p.m. we had our group dinner and gag gift exchange around the campfire and we had a great time. Teresa Newgent

Dec. 18, 2011: For the nature hike at Circle B Bar Reserve, the day started out cool, in the 60's, with a beautiful blue sky. Eleven participants enjoyed a leisurely hike on the Shady Oak Trail, then Alligator Alley to Heron Hideout and back to the parking lot. All the participants were new from Meetup.com and a family of 3 was a new membership in our chapter. We saw a lot of birds, ducks, and baby 'gators sunning themselves. We enjoyed the hike. Liane Plumhoff

Jan.15, 2012: For another nature hike at Circle B Bar Reserve, 3 of us hiked about 2.5 miles along the Alligator Alley Trail. It was cold, 50-60 degrees, and a little windy, but the sky was a beautiful and clear blue. We saw lots of birds, but the 'gators were snug in their holes and we didn't see any. Liane Plumhoff

OUR CHAPTER'S WEBSITE ADDRESS, ETC.

Our chapter's new website address is <http://heartland.floridatrail.org> and our chapter's online photo gallery can be found at <http://fta-heartland.smugmug.com>. For directions for submitting photos to smugmug, please email David Waldrop at david_lwfl@yahoo.com.

WHAT TO BRING ON A DAY HIKE

Water or other beverage (at least 2 quarts)	Sunglasses and hat
Insect repellent	Sunscreen
Small first aid kit	Personal ID
Snacks and/or lunch, depending on length of hike	Rain gear, if needed
Sit upon or folding stool for lunch on the trail	
Plastic bag & at least 1 glove, if desired, to pick up & bring trash out	

Be sure to tell someone at home where you are going and when you expect to return!

Florida Trail Association
Mission Statement

The Florida Trail Association develops, maintains, protects and promotes a network of hiking trails throughout the state, including the unique Florida National Scenic Trail. Together with our partners we provide opportunities for the public to hike, engage in outdoor recreation, participate in environmental education and contribute to meaningful volunteer work.

RISK ASSUMPTION:

There are certain risks, which are inherent in any hike or other Florida Trail Association Activity. Each FTA member, guest, or non-member hiker agrees to accept personal responsibility for his or her safety and the safety of minors accompanying such persons. The Association cannot ensure the safety of any participant on hikes or activities. When participating in Association activities, each person agrees to hold harmless and free from all blame the activity leaders and the Florida Trail Association... it's officers and members... for any accident, injury or illness, which may be sustained from participating in Association activities.