

HEARTLINE

No. 1

Jan. – Mar., 2011

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

FROM THE CHAIR:

The week of Jan. 31 – Feb. 6, 2011 affords the Heartland Chapter a great opportunity to demonstrate our best volunteering spirit. We will team up with the famous F-Troop and the State Forest Service to assemble a pedestrian bridge over Reedy Creek in the Arbuckle Tract of the Lake Wales Ridge State Forest.

A little more than three years ago we successfully worked with the F-Troop of the Forest Service to build a 65' bridge at Tick Slough. Now we have taken on the challenge of assembling a much-needed 100' bridge replacing the structure wiped out by the hurricanes. Like the one at Tick Slough this will be a fiberglass truss structure assembled piece by piece like a full-size erector set project. No cutting, drilling or nailing will be required.

This is a unique opportunity for all of us to pitch in because there are jobs for everyone. We need hands to transfer the large number of light components from the delivery truck to smaller vehicles that can move them to the bank of the creek. Other crews of volunteers will unload the smaller vehicles at the site, sort the parts and check for completeness. Scaffolding has to be erected and the small pieces carried onto the scaffolding. Two crews will move ahead aligning and fitting the correct pieces together before other crews follow up tightening the bolts. Other site, campground and crew support activities also require volunteers throughout the process. If you can't work even a day or two in this period there are opportunities before hand to prepare the site and bridge abutments. No special skills or heavy lifting are required, just a positive team work attitude and a desire to participate in an enjoyable and rewarding activity.

All Chapter members need to call Betty Piper, (863) 258-5907 or (863) 293-3053, as soon as possible to schedule their workdays and obtain more details. Those planning to work and/or camp out with the F-Troop Feb. 3-6 **must** also sign up on the F-troop's website at <https://www.eventville.com/catalog/eventregistration1.asp?eventid=1007469>. Registration at this website should be self explanatory.

"Wilderness Adventures" is the theme for the 2011 annual conference. The location is the Methodist Life Enrichment Camp, Fruitland Park, FL. This is a wonderful lake front facility with more than enough room for RV camping with hookups and a shaded tent camping area. There are plenty of lodge rooms available as well. All at very reasonable rates this year.

Our Friday night guest speaker is Kelly Savage. Kelly is the St Johns River keeper. She studies the history and water quality of the St Johns River. The Keynote speaker Saturday is Jim Kern. He has photographed rare and endangered birds and mammals around the world for 50 years. He has stories to tell and some of his favorite photographs to show us.

The committee is working hard to put together an interesting and fun weekend for everyone. Our goal is to encourage all our FTA friends to come out and enjoy their conference once again.



CONTACT PERSONS: (Area Code 863 unless listed)

Chair: Betty Piper 293-3053 or bpiper2005@aol.com

Co-chair: Melissa Bruneau (407) 460-1388 or melissabruneau@yahoo.com

Treasurer: Monika Hoerl 858-3106

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Section Leader/Tenoroc: Monika Hoerl 858-3106

Section Leader/Lake Kissimmee State Park: Betty Piper 293-3053 or bpiper2005@aol.com

Section Leader/Tiger Creek: Melissa Bruneau (407) 460-1388 or melissabruneau@yahoo.com

Section Leader/Kissimmee River: Jim Hernandez 452-6650 or patjim83@embarqmail.com

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 Betty Piper. Contact information for both is listed above.)

Fri., Dec. 31, 2010

New Years Eve Campout

Arbuckle Wildlife Management Area (WMA)

Overnight camping, bean soup supper and hiking at Lake Wales Ridge State Forest Arbuckle Tract (between Frostproof and Avon Park). \$3.00 fee for camping, no hookups but picnic tables, portable potties, and fire rings. Camping at Lake Arbuckle camp group campground with hook ups is available about 3 miles from the Forest campground. Set up campsite anytime after noon on the 31st. The bean soup will begin cooking about 5:30 so have your beans there by that time. New Years Day we will hike about 5 miles before breaking camp.

Bring: beans, drink, and snack to share around the campfire and at midnight. Bring all of the water you will need, a lantern and camping equipment.

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>

About Arbuckle WMA – The area 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.

Sat., Jan. 1, 2011

New Years Day Hike, approx. 8 miles

Arbuckle Wildlife Management Area (WMA)

See description above for New Years Eve Campout at Arbuckle WMA on Fri., Dec. 31, 2010

Bring: Sturdy walking or hiking shoes, water, snacks, dress in layers for comfort against cold weather that may warm as the day progresses.

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>

Activities, Cont.

Sat., Jan. 8, 2011

Chapter Meeting and potluck lunch.

Home of Dave Waldrop's parents, John and Barbara Waldrop, 1599 Cypress Lake Road, Lake Wales, FL 33589
Bring: a dish to share for potluck lunch based on last names beginning with A-H salad, I-Q main dish, R-Z dessert.
Contact: David Waldrop at (863) 605-3587 or david_lwfl@yahoo.com.

Sat. & Sun., Jan. 15 & 16, 2011

Overnight Hiking/Trail Maintenance

Arbuckle, a part of the Lake Wales Ridge State Forest

Come for the day or stay overnight.

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>

Sat., Jan. 22, 2011

Hiking/Trail Maintenance

Lake Arbuckle – Willingham trail on Avon Park Bombing Range

Contact: Bob Hummel, Phone: 863-471-1814

Sat., Jan. 29, 2011

Bicycling 20 miles (approx. 3 hours)

Van Fleet Trail, Berkley Rd, Polk City

This is a rails-to-trails paved trail, running through farm and woodlands. Lunch at a local restaurant, “The Other Place” in Polk City. Cost: your own lunch.

Bring: sun and bug protection, snacks, water, and helmet.

Contact: 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>

Mon. – Sun., Jan. 31 thru Feb. 6, 2011

Bridge Construction

Lake Wales Ridge State Forest Arbuckle Tract Bridge Construction Project

Chapter members are asked to volunteer starting Jan. 31 for pre-bridge construction. Volunteers are needed for all aspects of bridge construction & for support of the volunteers. Meeting place will be at the campground off of Rucks Dairy Road. Signs will be up. The F-troop will be there Feb. 3 – 6. If you plan to work with the F-troop all 4 days, you will need to sign up through F-troop's website at <https://www.eventville.com/catalog/eventregistration1.asp?eventid=1007469> **AND ALL VOLUNTEERS MUST** contact Betty Piper at 863-293-3053 or bpiper2005@aol.com to schedule your work hours.

Sat., Feb. 12, 2011

Day Hike, approx. 6-7 miles

Tenoroc Fish Management Area, Lakeland, FL

This former phosphate mining area consists of lakes, marshes, grasslands and wooded hills, and is an important refuge for wildlife.

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

Contact: Monika Hoerl at 863-858-3106 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>

Sat., Feb. 19, 2011

Hiking/Trail Maintenance

Lake Kissimmee State Park

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

Contact: Betty Piper at 863-293-3053 or bpiper2005@aol.com for more information. Also, please RSVP to the chapter online Meet-up page at <http://www.meetup.com/Heartland-FTA/calendar>.

Activities, Cont.

Sat., Feb. 26, 2011

Day Hike

Big Cypress National Preserve, U. S. Highway 41 (Tamiami Trail), south of Naples, FL

The entire trail is under water. The freshwaters of the Big Cypress Swamp, essential to the health of the neighboring Everglades, support the rich marine estuaries along Florida's southwest coast. Protecting over 720,000 acres of this vast swamp, Big Cypress National Preserve contains a mixture of tropical and temperate plant communities that are home to a diversity of wildlife, including the elusive Florida panther. It is recommended that you drive down on Fri., so you can be on time for the morning meeting at the trailhead. It may be in your best interest to stay overnight the 2nd night as well. It's a long drive to Big Cypress and back home.

Contact: Participants **MUST CONTACT** Ralph Rice at (863) 899-4865 or ralph.rice@lrnc.com. Also, please RSVP to the chapter online Meet-up page at <http://www.meetup.com/Heartland-FTA/calendar>.

Sat. – Sun., Mar. 5-6, 2011

Overnight backpack hike, approx. 12 miles total hiking distance for both days.

Green Swamp East

Experienced hikers only.

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>.

Sat., Mar. 5, 2011

Chapter Meeting and potluck breakfast.

Green Swamp East

Meet at entrance gate on Rockridge Rd. (turn right on Rockridge Rd. from northbound lanes off Hwy. 98 in north Lakeland)

Bring: a dish to share for a potluck breakfast.

Contact: Betty Piper at 863-293-3053 or bpiper2005@aol.com for more information. Also, please RSVP to the chapter online Meet-up page at <http://www.meetup.com/Heartland-FTA/calendar>.

Fri. – Sun., Mar. 11-13, 2011

Annual Conference at Life Enrichment Center, Fruitland Park, FL. See your Footprint and other information from the State FTA office for details and registration.

Sun., Mar. 19, 2011

Day Hike, approx. 7 miles

Withlacoochee River Park (off Hwy 98 in Dade City)

Meet at the canoe launch area.

Bring: water, snacks and pack a lunch to enjoy in the picnic area following the hike.

Contact: Pam Williams at 863-701-3465 or 863-686-1818 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>.

Sat., Mar. 26, 2011

Hike/Trail Improvement

Tiger Creek Preserve

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

Contact: Melissa Bruneau, phone 863-(407- 6650, or email melissabruneau@yahoo.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>.

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):

Arbogast, Sheri & Mike, Lakeland
Bingham, Barbara & Charles, Lakeland
Connolly, Colleen & Frank, Sebring
Conti, Carol, Winter Haven

Heavner, Harold, West VA
Nugent, Karen & David, Davenport
Vaughn, Troy & Trevor, Lakeland
Wnuk, Laurie, Lakeland

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

RECAP OF LAST QUARTER'S ACTIVITIES

Paddle at Saddle Creek Park on Oct. 23, 2010

Our planned paddle on the Peace River was changed to Saddle Creek Park due to low water levels. There were four of us on a very enjoyable paddle around the beautiful interlocking ponds at Saddle Creek. After the paddle, we enjoyed barbeque at Pebbles for lunch. Val Valachovic

Bike or Hike at Trout Creek on Nov. 20, 2010

I led the off road bike ride and 4 bikers participated, including me. It was a great ride in a beautiful area. There was 1 biker who rode the top of the dike from Trout Creek to the paved trail at Flatwoods, rode the paved trail, then back to Trout Creek on top of the dike. There were 10 or 11 hikers. I only spoke to the leader of the hike when the hikers returned to Trout Creek after the bikers had already returned and she enjoyed it and said the area was beautiful. Teresa Newgent

OUR CHAPTER'S WEBSITE ADDRESS

Our chapter's 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, if applicable	
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 mission of the Florida Trail Association is to develop, maintain, promote, and protect a continuous public hiking trail the length of the state of Florida, called the Florida National Scenic Trail, and other loop and side trails, together called the Florida Trail System; and to educate the public by teaching appreciation for and conservation of the natural beauty of Florida; and to provide opportunities to hike and camp.