



Florida Forever Back Country Horsemen, Inc.
Preserving our equine cultural heritage on public lands for today and tomorrow.

FFBCH NEWS

March 2015



MARK YOUR CALENDARS !!
The April meeting is scheduled for
Thursday, April 23, 2015

The Old World Restaurant
8370 S Florida Ave, Floral City, 34436
352-344-4443

Dinner 5:30-7:00 business meeting at 7:00 p.m.

Hope to see you there!

Non-Members are WELCOME!
Please come and join us!



LIKE us on Facebook!

FFBCH Website: www.ffbch.org

2014 Volunteer Of The Year Gary Reynolds

Gary contributed almost 170 (reported) hours in 2014 to FFBCH and I suspect that number falls far short of the time he really spent working for FFBCH. Gary is *always* there when needed. He spent a huge amount of time working on our IRS tax exempt problem last year bringing it to a successful conclusion. Every month he presents us with a treasurer's report so we can all be informed. He is always at organized work days and individually has hauled off numerous loads of garbage out of the forest - one requiring his tractor w/loader and dump trailer!

THANK YOU GARY !!

2014 Runner-Up Volunteer Of The Year Fred Fulcher

We don't usually recognize a "runner-up" but this year it just didn't seem right not to acknowledge all that Fred does. He is another volunteer that you can always count on when needed. He spends countless hours in the forest and is always at work days. He organized the Rails to Trails workday and proved to be a very capable "trail boss".

THANK YOU FRED !!

While Gary & Fred exemplify true dedication, it is important to remember that it takes all of us to make this organization the success it is. Some people may only be able to support the club by their membership, some trail work, some by being ambassadors in promoting new members and as evidenced by the accomplishments in 2014 - everyone has contributed with their knowledge and ideas. To better recognize everyone, we will be introducing a new volunteer recognition program for 2015. We will be awarding pins to volunteers at 25-hour intervals. More details will follow.

Thanks to all of you who have made 2014 a success!



Gary Reynolds



Fred Fulcher

2014 Recap

2014 was a busy year for FFBCH. In March, Back Country Horsemen of Florida was formed (State Chapter) as was Nature Coast Back Country Horsemen (Hernando local chapter). FFBCH (Citrus local chapter) will continue to maintain the horse trails in the various tracts of the Withlacoochee State Forest and other projects of interest in Citrus County.

After the organizational changes in March 2014, FFBCH had 29 members. Throughout the year we continued to see interest in our now local chapter and as of March 18, 2015 (annual meeting) we have 75 members! It seems our most difficult task in 2015 will be finding a meeting room that can hold us when the snowbirds are here. What a great problem to have!

Everyone has been active and enthused. It seems that we all meet people on the trail, while shopping and at any variety of functions and inevitably the talk turns to horses and riding. You wanted to have something convenient that could be used to tell folks we meet about our organization, so we came up with a two sided business card that has a place on the back for the referring member's name. It's small, sturdy and has all the information anyone would need about our organization. I think we're all pretty proud of them.



Florida Forever Back Country Horsemen, Inc.
P. O. Box 2213
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ffbch.org@gmail.com

Working for you and future generations to establish, preserve and maintain our horse trails by working with local land managers to ensure that public lands remain open to recreational equestrian use.

Please See Reverse

Florida Forever Back Country Horsemen, Inc. P. O. Box 2213 Inverness, FL
www.ffbch.org or ffbch.org@gmail.com 352.628.2973

Member Name: _____

Join today! Help us continue to trim, sign and provide maps for the Citrus Tract of the Withlacoochee State Forest aka Tillis Hill and maintain Bear Head Hammock/Two Mile Prairie. Even if you aren't able to work on the trails, your membership is important—please, show your support. See our website for membership application and check out our newsletters for details of who we are and what we do.

Please See Reverse

In addition to our cards, you wanted to be recognized while out on the trail, so we have a new FFBCH t-shirt that is pretty snazzy. The red shirt color will really stand out in the forest and will certainly encourage more conversation about who we are and what we do.

We have a totally new and re-designed website which we control and keep current and up to date. We post the minutes for our meetings along with our regular monthly newsletters so everyone can stay informed. There are slide shows of our Resale Events, Work Days and the Christmas Social; links to local trails and maps with more coming soon. It is an excellent way to publish all that we do. In addition to our new website, we established a great Facebook page which has been very active and enjoyed by all and was instrumental in getting the word out about our Resale Events.

We also held two successful fund raising events in 2014 inside the beautiful and climate controlled Crystal River Mall. The Horse, Barn and More Resale Event in August was timed to coincide with the grand opening of our new Rural King. For those of you who don't know - Rural King is like a Tractor Supply on steroids with Bass Pro, WalMart, Ace Hardware and just about anything else you can imagine thrown in. We generated a lot of interest in our organization and our local newspaper gave us some really great publicity with a wonderful front page article on all we have done over the last few years. In the week immediately after the August event we had 12 new members join! Who says social media doesn't rock?!

Enough about the fun stuff, now let's talk about the real work we accomplished.....

2014 Recap Continued

Citrus Tract - Withlacoochee State Forest

We continue to provide maps for the Citrus Tract at a cost of approximately \$375 per year. We will also continue to provide signs for the horse trails. When we signed the trails, we made a concerted effort to place them as high as possible to discourage thieves and to protect them from control burns. We've lost some to both causes and have been able to replace them out of spare inventory. Going forward, that will be an additional expense on an annual basis.

While we didn't have any large planned work days in the Citrus Tract, a lot got accomplished. We donated several 75-foot never kink hoses, a set of cross ties and three feed troughs to the Tillis Hill barn. We replaced five feed troughs that were broken and worn out and replaced nails with hex head screws & washers in others. We have a core group of workers who spend a good deal of time picking up trash, installing signs and trimming trails. With the huge effort that was put forth in 2012 and 2013 to get the trails in shape, we've been able to focus on maintaining the trails on an as needed basis. This core group, on a month to month basis, donated 126 labor hours (about 2/3 labor and 1/3 sawyers). The group traveled 430 miles and 36 hours to get to the various work sites.

Bear Head/Two-Mile Prairie

It also appears that we have firmly adopted Bear Head Hammock/Two-Mile Prairie (also part of the Withlacoochee State Forest system) having had three very productive work days there. We had two very productive work days in 2014. The April workday consisted of 18 people in six groups who trimmed overhead and encroachment from the 8.5 mile loop.

The June workday consisted of ten hardy seniors armed with pole saws and beaver blades who attacked the overhead growth, huge vines and underbrush in the trail head, camping area and access roads. Pictures of before and after of the June workday are on the website. The two Bear Head work days donated 122 labor hours (about half laborers and about half sawyers). The group traveled 760 miles and 35 hours to get to and from the site.

Withlacoochee State Trail - Floral City to Istachatta

In late December we also committed to clear the horse trail that runs beside the Withlacoochee State Trail from Floral City to Istachatta. That project was successfully completed by 16 volunteers with pole saws, chainsaws and beaver blades on January 13. I dare say this will become an annual event.

Total value of volunteer hours for 2014:
\$39,993.16



Florida Forest Service Reports Illegal Equestrian Activity at Dames Caves



The following is a copy of an email to Lita Hart, Recreation Director

There seems to be a growing issue in the Dames Cave Complex area with horses in closed areas. On two occasions now since the end of January, I have come across horses at Dames Cave and have had to talk to the owners about authorized riding areas on the Withlacoochee State Forest. As soon as I can I will check the area and see if these are local horses coming from a residence along our boundary or horses coming from Tillis Hill Trailhead. I feel the Dames Cave Complex needs to remain closed to horses for safety reasons not only for the horses and riders but also for the sensitive karst environment in the area. I believe the person I have come across twice now is a repeat offender. The next time I come across horses at Dames Cave Complex I will obtain more information from the individuals. If you have questions please call me.

The following is a copy of Lita's Response

Thank you for the verbal and email follow-up. I am going to share with our FFBCH Group and as long as Mike has no objection, I am going to have Cindy forward you an NOV book. That way if you run across repeat offenders you can issue an NOV and we will have documentation, then FWC will be able to cite them sooner and/or possibly apply more stringent penalties.

For those of you who don't know, NOV is a "Notice of Violation". The Dames Cave Complex is indeed a sensitive area and all trails and roads leading to it are closed to vehicles and horses. If you want to visit the caves, please do so legally and hike in. Riders who continue to access this area will likely receive a NOV - at a minimum. We hope everyone will represent our equestrian community in a positive way by staying out of this area and off the hiking trails.

**PLEASE
STAY OUT
OF THE
DAMES CAVE
COMPLEX**

CLOSE THE GAP

Assessment of the Sumter County Study Area for the Coast-to-Coast Connector Trail

Date: Thursday, May 7, 2015

Time: 4:45 pm to 6:30 pm Open House;
Presentation at 5:00 pm

Location: Florida Grande Motor Coach Resort
9675 SE 49th Terrace
Webster, FL 33597

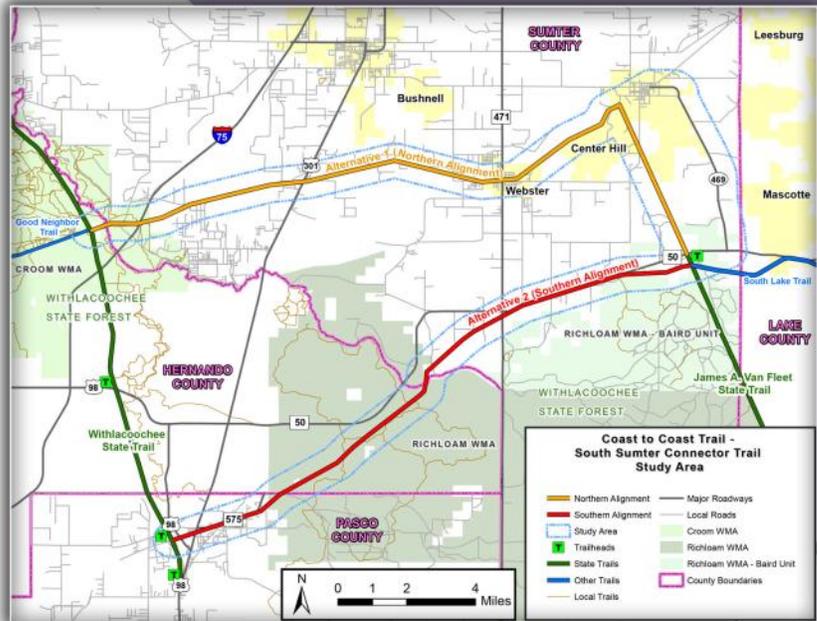
The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), District Five, is holding a Public Kick-off Meeting for the South Sumter Connector Trail Study. The study is evaluating potential alignments for a proposed 20-mile multi-use trail facility known as the South Sumter Connector Trail, which will connect the Withlacoochee State Trail to the west and General James A. Van Fleet State Trail to the east through Sumter, Hernando, and Pasco counties.

The purpose of the study is to engage the community as part of the identification and development of a common vision leading to the viable alternatives to be evaluated. The analysis will consider engineering factors, potential environmental effects, cost, and other unique elements. The objective is to establish consensus among projects stakeholders and lay a solid foundation for the future development of a trail alignment that provides the best balance of current and future needs.

This meeting is being held to introduce the study and allow participants an opportunity to express their views concerning the study. The meeting will be an informal open house and participants are welcome to attend at any time between 4:45 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. There will be an overview presentation at 5:00 p.m. Attendees may ask questions or make comments either before or after the presentation. Display maps illustrating the study corridor, the study schedule, and other information will be available for public review and comment. Project representatives will also be there to discuss the study, receive input, and answer questions.



You Are Invited to a Public Kick-off Meeting



CONTACT INFORMATION

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Study Team Coordinator
Natalie C. Suñer

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We encourage you to share this information with anyone who may be interested in this study. Public participation is encouraged and solicited without regard to race, color, national origin, age, sex, disability or family status. Pursuant to the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act, any person requiring special accommodations, including translation services (free of charge), to participate in this meeting is asked to advise FDOT at least seven (7) days before the meeting by contacting Natalie Suñer by telephone at 407-965-0590 or by email at nsuner@vhb.com. If you are hearing or speech impaired, please contact FDOT using the Florida Relay Service 1-800-955-8771 (TDD) or 1-800-955-8770 (Voice). For additional information concerning the study, please contact John Moore, FDOT Project Manager by telephone at 407-482-7882 or email at john.moore@dot.state.fl.us.



Please visit our website at: www.cflroads.com

March 2015 FFBCH Annual General Meeting

3/18/2015

Old World

Meeting called to order @ 7 PM

Introduction of guests and new members: Paul and Bonnie Bechtel, Bonnie & Jim Scott, Jim Chaffer, Lillian and Michael Goeschel, Cindy and Gary Cyphere and Holly Brockman

If anyone needs more of the business cards, see Sally. Tee Shirts are available. To date, we have 75 members.

Motion to approve Jan 7 minutes by Greg Murphy, 2nd by Calvin McDavid and group approved.

Gary Reynolds gave the treasurer's report: Motion to approve by Dave Van, 2nd by Barb Porch and group approved.

Thirty members in good standing attended the meeting and 25 members in good standing were represented by proxies for a total of 55 members represented. With membership at 75 the two-thirds (50) required for a quorum for by-law revision was reached. By laws revision: Motion to approve by Janet Day, 2nd by Fred Fulcher and group approved.

Elections: VP- Fred Fulcher, Secretary-Becky Fulcher, Directors-Tom Allen and Calvin McDavid. There were no nominations from the floor. Motion to approve by Jean Damron, 2nd by Barb Porch and group approved.

Volunteer of the year was presented to Gary Reynolds with runner up being Fred Fulcher. For 2015 and going forward, we will be awarding service pins for hours volunteered in 25 hour increments to everyone who volunteers their time. Please e-mail Sally with the work you are doing and she will tally the hours.

Future meetings: Christmas @ Stumpknockers on the River. No meeting during Shindig month. FFBCH Annual meeting at Tillis with FFBCH furnishing the food. Most large meetings at Old World. Summer meetings at Angelotti's, Joe's or Sonny's.

Past year accomplishments: Business cards to pass out on the trails or wherever you meet other horse people. Tee-shirts that made a great showing at the Shindig. Two Bear Head Hammock work days.(One for trails and the other for parking area.) RTT work day. Multiple mini work days in the forest. Two Crystal River Mall resale events. Face Book page and redesigned web site. Lots of accomplishments in 2014. We need input from the group on how to make things better or for improvements.

50/50 drawing \$59.50 won by Greg which he donated back to FFBCH. Thank you Greg!

There was a question about the Shindig. Jean thought it was only for people who worked on the trails so she didn't come – it is open to everyone.

Organized trail rides are a liability. That's why we don't sponsor rides.

Motion to Adjourn by Janice Reynolds and 2nd by Tom Allen, group approved.

Meeting adjourned at 8 PM.



Want to help? Can't find the time to work on the trails? Can't always make the meetings? That doesn't matter! You can show your support by joining Florida Forever Back Country Horsemen (FFBCH). Individual memberships = \$20 and Family memberships = \$25. Or, make a donation!

Every member of a local chapter is automatically a member of the Back Country Horsemen of Florida AND Back Country Horsemen of America. Not in the Citrus County area? Then join Back Country Horsemen of Florida as an at-large member until a local chapter is developed in your area. Don't forget Nature Coast Back Country Horsemen serving Hernando, west Sumter and northeast Pasco Counties.

There are many issues facing equestrians today. Help us to preserve the trails we have. Add your voice to those of more than 15,000 of your fellow American horsemen and women. **You only have to look at the Croom and the Citrus Tract of the Withlacoochee Forest as an example of what can be accomplished when we work together and with our land managers!**



Current Officers and Directors

President—Sally McDavid
Vice President—Fred Fulcher
Secretary—Becky Fulcher
Treasurer—Gary Reynolds
Janet Day - Director
Tom Allen—Director
Barb Porch—Director
Cal McDavid—Director

Florida Forest Service
Emergency Phone:
352-797-4100

FFBCH Website: www.ffbch.org
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