



FootNotes *



* Newsletter of the Highlanders Chapter,
Florida Trail Association
November – December 2016
Volume 17, Issue 6

Mission of the Florida Trail Association

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.

Highlanders Nature Notes – Books on Nature and the Outdoors

When thinking about great works of outdoor literature many classics come to mind, such as Thoreau's *Walden*, Muir's *My First Summer in the Sierra*, and Abbey's *Desert Solitaire*. And these are certainly great works by great naturalists (though I hate to admit that I had difficulty getting through the beginning of *Walden*, so much so that I had to put it down and haven't gone back to it yet; I'm probably the only American that has ever happened to!). But there are other great works of nature writing that you may not be so familiar with. I'm going to present three of my favorites in hope that you might check them out. In many ways, these authors have given me the inspiration to write about my own natural observations here in these Nature Notes.

The first I happened upon by pure luck in a library book sale. It is *Backtracking: the Way of a Naturalist* by Ted Levin. He is a professional naturalist for the Montshire Museum of Science in Hanover, NH, and teaches natural history at New England College. What makes his book so hard to put down is that he is also a professional writer who has a weekly syndicated news column called "Naturally." Not every scientist or naturalist is trained in the art & craft of writing. Hence, some books are easy to read while others can be tedious, even boring. This book's title may be a little misleading as it isn't much about tracking at

all. It is simply a collection of the author's observations in nature and his reflections on what he sees. He writes about animals in and around his home in New England as well as some he's seen in travels to other locations such as Crystal River, FL and the Everglades. His style is both engaging and down to earth, with very little scientific jargon to trip you up. He writes about everything from salamanders, cicadas and Timber Rattlesnakes, to Manatees, Coyotes and Bald Eagles. I loved it!

The second I had heard about and wanted to buy on Amazon, but then lucked-out and found it in a Leesburg thrift store for a dollar! It is *The Animal Dialogues: Uncommon Encounters in the Wild* by Craig Childs. This is a bit more philosophical, even poetic at times, but also packed with great adventure stories like the time he faced down a western Mountain Lion. Childs is also a professional writer and knows his craft well. But he brings an additional wealth of knowledge about wildlife and nature to every subject that just draws you in to whatever he's writing about. He lives in Colorado. So much of the book is about the western species near him. But there are some we are also familiar with, including Raccoons, Bald Eagles, Coyotes, Praying Mantis, deer, and Great Horned Owls. His writing style is perhaps slightly more polished than Levin's (though that is in no way a criti-

cism of the quality of Levin's book). It just seems to flow a bit easier; another one that I could hardly put down, eager to read about his next adventure. You know you have a good book when you hate for it to end. C.S. Lewis once wrote, "You can never get a cup of tea large enough or a book long enough to suit me." This was one of those books; likewise with the first one.

The last book I'll mention is very much like the first two. *The Curious Naturalist* by Sy Montgomery is equally as enticing and easy to read. Montgomery is another well-trained, professional writer with a regular column in *The Boston Globe* called "Nature Journal." She has also written several other books on broad nature subjects. This book consists of a series of articles about the natural subjects she finds in her area of New England (also lives in NH), such as spiders, fireflies, skunks, Herring Gulls, lichens, worms, Porcupines, and dragonflies, to name a few. This book covers a wider variety of subjects as each essay is brief (3-4 pages), whereas the previous authors devote a short chapter to each animal or plant they cover, going into a bit more depth. There is still quite

a bit of fascinating information in each essay, though, as she consults experts in the field and has an eye for picking out the most interesting details. I learned something in every essay, even on the most seemingly mundane subjects. Montgomery seems to be a little less of a naturalist herself than the previous two authors, but she makes up for it in her engaging, humorous and witty style. Another one I couldn't stop reading and didn't want to finish.

If you enjoy reading my Nature Notes, you'll really enjoy reading these three books. They are all excellent, accomplished writers, compared with my amateur struggles to put thoughts on paper. I highly recommend them all. *–Mike Barnett*

Childs, Craig. The Animal Dialogues. NY: Little, Brown and Co., 2007.

Levin, Ted. Backtracking. Chelsea, VT: Chelsea Green Publishing Co., 1987.

Montgomery, Sy. The Curious Naturalist. Camden, ME: Down East Books, 2000.

Notes from the Chair

Thank you to Kathy Lamb and all who helped her cover the three days at Wings and Wild Flowers. The more we get our name out in public the better our chance of recruiting new members and fulfilling our mission statement. Also thanks to the 26 members who helped on the hot first work hike of the season. It is going to be a lot of work this year to clear all of our trails due to the hurricane. Terry and I scouted our 1.9 mile section of trail this week and counted 52 trees that had fallen across the trail. Maybe you will be there to help on the next work hike as we tackle this and other sections in the Ocala National Forest that have the same tree falls due to the hurricane.

On Sunday January 1st, I would like to try a new tradition. In many parts of the country hiking clubs begin the New Year by holding a First Day Hike. It is

a means of getting families and us old guys out together to start the year with an easy physical activity. I would like to set up several local short hikes led by our Activity Leaders to begin at 10:00 AM on New Years Day at different locations. If we can get good publicity we might get some new people interested in hiking. Let me know if you are interested in helping me with this project.

We have seventeen Activity Leaders in our chapter, we can always use more. Begin your process of becoming a leader by offering to co-lead an activity with an Activity Leader. Happy Trails to all.

–Gene Bouley

Highlanders Activities for November and December 2016

Saturday, October 29, 2016

FTA Plaque Dedication – 11:00 AM. There will be a dedication of the FTA plaque for the 50th anniversary of the trail at Clearwater Lake.

Saturday, October 29, 2016

Golden Blaze Hike. Join us on a hike to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Florida Trail at the spot where the trail was begun. The FTA and the Forest Service will hold a ceremony dedicating the FT historical marker at 11:00 AM at the Clearwater Lake trailhead. Our pre-hike meeting will begin at the conclusion of this ceremony (perhaps around 11:45). We plan to do a four mile hike on the Florida Trail with shorter hikes also available. (Note that abnormally warm conditions that day could affect the length of the longer hike). Bring a hat, water, snacks or lunch (if you are doing the four mile walk), and insect repellent. No pets, please. Arlene Beal 612-202-5224 or bealak59@gmail.com, Howard Pospesel hikeft@embarqmail.com, and Cathy Leavers cjleavers@yahoo.com.

Directions : From Altoona drive 6.4 miles east on CR 42 to Clearwater Lake Recreation Area. Meet in the parking lot on the right side of the entrance road before you reach the entrance station. **28.97672, -81.55020**

Saturday, November 5, 2016

Trail Maintenance Workhike - Ocala National Forest. Meet before 9:00 AM in the parking lot on the west side of Hwy 19 that is 2 1/2 miles north of the turnoff to Alexander Springs (Hwy 445). Please be on time as we will be shuttling to another area to work. If you have further questions call or email bobbiszoo@yahoo.com 352-787-8654. Bring hat, gloves, sunscreen, bug repellent, lunch, and lots of water (must carry two quarts of water). **29.073833 -81.629374**

Tuesday, November 8, 2016

Chapter Board Meeting - PEAR Park - 3:00 PM. Everyone is welcome to attend the next board meeting.

Tuesday, November 15, 2016

Trail Maintenance Workhike Seminole State Forest. Meet in Cassia at the Brantley Branch Road entrance before 9:00 AM. Please be on time as we will be shuttling to another area to work. Please bring insect spray, hats, lunch, etc. and lots of water (must carry two quarts of water). If you have further questions call or email: Bobbi Keenan bobbiszoo@yahoo.com 352-787-8654 **28.890749 -81.461616**

Thursday, November 17, 2016 - Note Date Change Due to Thanksgiving

Chapter Meeting - Leesburg Public Library, 100 E Main Street – 6:00 PM. Glacier National Park- Tribal House presenter Jacob McLaughlin. This year, a tribal house was inaugurated on the day of Glacier National Park's centennial. This marks the return of the native Tlingit to their ancestral homeland and is the first such cooperative effort between native groups and the Park Service. Jacob was very involved in this project. Use the entrance on Main Street. 6:00 PM. Meeting room just inside the entrance to the library. Bring a snack to share and your aluminum cans to recycle. Questions? 352-787-8654 or email Bobbi Keenan bobbiszoo@yahoo.com **28.811093 -81.874858**

Tuesday, November 22, 2016

Winter Warm-up Walk at Flat Island Preserve – 9:00 AM. Meet at Flat Island for a 3.5 mile hike on the Daubemire Trail or come early (8:30 AM) for coffee and socializing. After the hike join us for lunch at Yalaha Bakery. Bring water and insect repellent. No pets, please. Howard Pospesel - hikeft@embarqmail.com or 352-589-2543. Flat Island Preserve is southwest of Leesburg. GPS coordinates: **28.778647, -81.900262**

DIRECTIONS, DRIVING SOUTH ON US 27: From the intersection with Florida 25A (about .6 miles south of the intersection of US 27 and SR 44) drive southwest on 25A 1.1 miles to Owens Rd. Turn right (west) and follow this clay/sand road to the end. Turn right into the pasture for parking.

DRIVING NORTH ON US 27: From the intersection with Florida 25A (about 1.3 miles north of Hawthorne Blvd.) drive northwest on 25A 0.5 miles to Owens Rd. Turn left (west) and follow this clay/sand road to the end. Turn right into the pasture for parking.

Note that US 27 meets Florida 25A twice. When traveling from the north use the northern intersection, etc.

Tuesday, November 29, 2016

Informational Talk by Gene Bouley at the Leesburg Public Library – 2:00 PM. Informational talk about our Highlanders Chapter, the FTA, and local hiking trails.

Wednesday, November 30, 2016

PEAR Park walk – 9:00 AM. A 3-4 mile walk in PEAR Park with Gene & Terry Bouley. Meet at the Nature Center at the end of University Ave of of Rt. 27 south of Leesburg. This is the second entrance to the park south of Leesburg off Rt. 27. (GPS 4800 University Ave, Leesburg) **28.727607 -81.874619**

Saturday, December 3, 2016

Trail Maintenance Workhike, Hog Island Recreation Area – 9:00 AM. Meet at the entrance to the Withlacoochee State Forest before 9:00, exit 309, off I-75 head west 1/4 mile. Please be on time as we will be shuttling to another area to work. Contact Steve Nemeth at 352-242-3876 or email nematode23@gmail.com. Bring hat, gloves, sunscreen, bug repellent, snacks, and lots of water. **28.601498 -82.209488**

Wednesday, December 7, 2016

Bike Ride at Minneola Trailhead – 10:00 AM. Take a bike ride with Gene & Terry Bouley for 14 miles round trip on the Lake Minneola Trail. Meet at the Trailhead at 10:00 AM and bring lunch, water, and wear a bike helmet. Trailhead is south off of Hwy 27 towards Clermont. At traffic light turn left onto Washington St. (old Rt. 50) (7-11 store on the left at light). Follow Trailhead signs which take a right onto Bloxam Ave off Washington St. and then a left onto Madison St. Entrance to park on the right is where we will meet. **28.573496 -81.742911**

Thursday, December 8, 2016

Annual Christmas Pot-Luck at PEAR Park Nature Center – 2:00 to 6:00 PM. We request donations for the Food Pantry. **No alcohol.**

Monday, December 12, 2016

Warm Up Hike at the Green Mountain Scenic Overlook and Trailhead – 9:00 AM. Meet at 20700 County Road 455, Ferndale. The Trailhead and Scenic Overlook includes a 130-foot elevated boardwalk leading to a 20x20 foot overlook offering exceptional views. The facility also boasts a covered pavilion with picnic tables, restrooms, and a switchback trail from the parking area to the railroad bed. More details later. Activity Leaders, Arlene Beal, bealak59@gmail.com and Mary Ellen Milton, mem32735@aol.com

Tuesday, December 13, 2016

Trail Maintenance Workhike, Hog Island Recreation Area – Before 9:00 AM. Meet at the entrance to the Withlacoochee State Forest before 9:00 AM, take exit 309 off I-75 and head west 1/4 mile. Please be on time as we will be shuttling to another area to work. Contact Steve Nemeth at 352-242-3876 or email nematode23@gmail.com. Bring hat, gloves, sunscreen, bug repellent, snacks, and lots of water. **28.601498 -82.209488**

Trail Maintenance Hike – Photos By Judy Leavers



The Safety Lecture



First Day on the Job



The Crew Returns



Enjoying the Great Food!



Is it Quitting Time Yet!!



The Bountiful Kitchen

Chapter Officers and Committee Chairs

Chapter Chair, Eugene Bouley, etbouley@embarqmail.com or 352-314-9335
 Vice Chair, Bill Leach, wwleach@hotmail.com or 352-728-6438
 Secretary, Mary Ring, momring@yahoo.com or 352-250-1426
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 Trail Coordinator, Francis Keenan, fkeenan@embarqmail.com or 352-787-8654
 Activity Chairs, Mary Ellen Milton, mem32735@aol.com or 352-357-3723 &
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Trailmasters and Activity Leaders

Trailmasters: Arlene Beal and Mary Ellen Milton, Dee Bender and Kathy Lamb, Gene Bouley, Stuart Force and Karen Harrington, Francis Keenan, Bill Leach, Jon and Judy Leavers, Steve Nemeth, and Diane Roesch, Howard Pospesel, Mary Ring and Jane Williams, and Bruce Zollner

Activity Leaders: Mike Barnett, Arlene Beal, Gene Bouley, Diane Dammiller, Ken Dammiller, John Grob, Bobbi Keenan, Francis Keenan, Jon Leavers, Bill Milton, Mary Ellen Milton, Steve Nemeth, Howard Pospesel, Bob Sippey, Suzanne Sippey, Bruce Zollner, and Brad Hoopes

Thanks to All Who Participated



A Long Day - Well Done

Links

Florida Trail Association: <http://www.floridatrail.org>
Highlanders Chapter, FTA Meetup for
Highlanders Chapter: <http://www.meetup.com/Florida-Trail-Association-Central-Florida-Chapter>
Highlanders Photos: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/highlandersfta/albums>