



# FootNotes \*



\* Newsletter of the Highlanders Chapter,  
Florida Trail Association  
March – April 2018  
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## 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 – Tavares Nature Park



Tavares FL - Official Web Site

Tavares Nature Park has been featured in several of my essays before, and for good reason. It remains one of my favorite local parks because of the unique habitat and species I've seen there over the past 9 or 10 years. It is located behind Billy's Café on SR 19 in Tavares and is a city park, unlike most of the others I have visited which are owned by the county.

The list of critters and plants I've seen there is long and varied, but I'd like to focus on one in particular. On one trip back to the white-sand, Florida Rosemary scrub habitat on 6/29/14 I actually saw a flowering

vine called Scrub Morning Glory (*Bonamia grandiflora*). It was the first time I ever saw this and I haven't seen it again (though it is possible it is still there, maybe even more than the one I found). I was with my Family Nature Club and wandering about, looking to see what we might encounter. It had only one large blue flower and the vine was trailing along the white sand in a straight line. None of us knew what it was at the time, but one of the mothers took a photo with her smart phone and sent it to me so I could look it up later.

I discovered, to my amazement, that this plant is endemic to the central Florida scrub habitat along the Lake Wales Ridge. You may remember from earlier essays that "endemic" means it is found nowhere else in the world! It is federally listed as threatened, and the state lists it as endangered. Due to the disappearance of scrub habitat in Florida, converted for development and citrus groves, there just aren't that many places left where this plant can survive.

We all thought it was a real treat to be able to see one right here in Lake County. On subsequent visits we haven't seen it again but we weren't making a concerted effort to find it, either. There's always something interesting to see there, so we get easily side-

tracked. On the last visit it was a Wind Scorpion (*Amotrechella stimpsoni*), a very peculiar looking critter; it was the first and only time we ever saw one of these. On other visits it was Florida Scrub Lizards (*Sceloporus woodi*) or tracks of the Florida Sand Skink (*Plestiodon reynoldsi*), both also endemic to Florida scrub. We have never actually seen a Sand Skink as they live and “swim” under the surface of the white sand, but their tracks are often visible. Then there are the many other native wildflowers to be seen there during different seasons of the year. Many of these we don’t see elsewhere.

So if you haven’t yet been to this park I highly recommend it. You just never know what you might discover. Possibly something you’ve never seen before. Possibly something you never even knew existed! One thing is certain, there’s enough of interest to see

that you won’t leave disappointed. Just look closely and carefully.

–Mike Barnett

Sources:

Gibbons, Whit, et al. *Lizards & Crocodilians of the Southeast*. Athens, GA: The University of Georgia Press, 2009.

Marshall, Sam and G.B. Edwards. *Florida’s Fabulous Spiders*. Tampa, FL: World Publications, 2001.

Taylor, Walter Kingsley. *Florida Wildflowers: a Comprehensive Guide*. Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2013.

## Notes from the Chair

As I conclude my two years as Chair of the Highlanders, I would like to thank all the committee members who have been so diligent in fulfilling their tasks these two years. Without the support of these active members, the Highlanders could not function as an organization. Thank you to the board members for their extra time and thoughtful direction. Whenever I had a problem, Bobbi and Francis were a source of counsel and solution. The continuous work of these two, in organizing our trail work and keeping the chapter records, has made us a successful chapter of the FTA.

I did get two new things started (The Memorial Area and First Day Hikes), but I was not able to achieve my goal of getting more youth and young families involved in the Highlanders. I know that since we are all getting older we need new blood to continue our tradition of volunteer trail work. We need to get young people interested in hiking. To do this, we need to offer more activities at times they are available. Maybe we could offer some hikes during school vacations and weekends. Since we have grown in membership, I hope more of you will help the new Chair by becoming Activity Leaders and offering some new family-oriented activities.

I wish our new Chair and Vice Chair the same enjoyment of serving the Highlanders as I have had.

Keep hiking!

–Gene Bouley, Highlanders Chapter Chair



**Hike at Ferndale Preserve  
(photos by D. Dammiller and H. Pospesel)**



## In Remembrance of Gordon Johnson By Howard Pospesel



Gordon Johnson (1935-2017) was the eighth child of Finnish immigrants in the tiny community of Embarrass in northeastern Minnesota. Embarrass happens to be the coldest spot in Minnesota. It is also surrounded by natural beauty being located on the banks of the Embarrass River near lakes, state and national forests, and the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness. It is no accident that all his life he loved the wilderness or that his favorite pastime was walking in the woods. He began life in a Finnish-American community and his life concluded in a nursing home in the Finnish-American community of Lake Worth, Florida. He was proud of his heritage.

Gordon was a member of the FTA for the last 40+ years of his life, and a member of our chapter for several years late in his life. He served as our program chair and worked hard as a member of our Logo Committee. Long before he became a Highlander he made many contributions to the Florida Trail. One of the two contributions for which he was most often applauded was founding the Big O Hike in 1992. Lake Okeechobee covers 730 square miles; Big "O" hikers take nine days to complete the 109-mile circuit of the lake. The second noted contribution was writing the

"The Florida Trail Song" in 1989; it was adopted by the Association as its official song. He was justly proud of these two creations.

Being fluent in Finnish from childhood it made sense for Gordon to visit Finland, which he did in 1969. He liked the country so much that he stayed for the next seven years. He supported himself by creating and presenting multimedia shows (before that term had been coined), working as a tour guide, and giving English lessons to Finns. In 1976 Gordon returned to the states and settled in south Florida where he worked for many years as a court stenographer. Soon he discovered the Loxahatchee Chapter of the FTA and began volunteering his services as an activity leader and as a promoter of the Florida Trail. He never stopped contributing.

Gordon was a gentle, friendly, unassuming, creative, and artistic man. He thought "outside the box," as they say. Once, when he was our program chair, he proposed this idea for one meeting: dispense with having a speaker and devote the program hour to sharing stories about the best trail experiences we have had. None who heard the suggestion saluted it,

so he dropped the idea. Looking back, I think the rest of us were too staid, too set in our ways, and too timid to open up in front of people we might not know well. Gordon was not like that.

One thing is clear: Gordon did a lot for the FTA. Recently the chapter board voted to honor him with a brick in our chapter's PEAR Park Memorial Garden.

It is the least we can do for a real champion of the Trail. Sandra Friend has written an excellent four-page article about Gordon and his contributions. It appears on pages 8-11 of the Fall 2017 issue of "Foot-print Magazine." I recommend it to you.



## Highlanders Activities for March and April 2018

### Saturday, March 3, 2018

**Work Hike - Ocala National Forest and La-No-Che BSA Camp.** We will be working in two separate teams meeting in different locations. It is essential to contact us between Wednesday through Friday before the hike to join a team and get information on the meeting place. Please be early, before 9:00 AM, at your meeting place as we will be shuttling to other areas to work. Bring hat, gloves, sunscreen, bug repellent, lunch, and lots of water. Please call Bobbi at 352-787-8654 (leave message) or email [bobbiszoo@yahoo.com](mailto:bobbiszoo@yahoo.com).

### Tuesday, March 13, 2018

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

### Friday, March 16, 2018

**Seminole Forest - Cassia Trailhead - Brantley Branch Rd in Cassia (off SR44).** Join Dennis and Melodie Hardy and Francis and Bobbi Keenan (co-leaders) for this Pre "St. Patty's Hike". Hike starts at 9:30 AM. Wear your green as we trek this four to five mile hike in the Seminole Forest to Moccasin Springs. Bring your lunch, snacks, and water. Contact Melodie at 207-450-5736 or Dennis at 207-289-8841 for additional information.  
**28.890749 -81.461616**

### Thursday, March 22, 2018

**Highlanders Chapter General Meeting.** We meet at the Leesburg Public Library, 100 East Main Street in the meeting room at the front of the library. Meeting starts at 6:00 PM. Come earlier for social time. Please bring

your aluminum cans to recycle in non-dripping plastic bags and a snack to share. Open to the Public. Program: Bill and Mary Ellen Milton - Highlanders at Devil's Fork South Carolina. Open to the Public. **28.811093 -81.874858**

**Tuesday, April 10, 2018**

**Chapter Board Meeting – 1018 Monterey Drive, Leesburg FL - 3:00 PM.** Everyone is welcome to attend the next board meeting. **28.799582, -81.865812**

**Saturday, April 14, 2018**

**Firefly and Pot Luck Hike Lake Norris Conservation Area.** Meet at Lake Norris trailhead at 6:00 PM. Bring a dish to share and we will transport the food and your chairs to the camp by car while we hike the 1.5 miles in. We'll enjoy the sunset, watch the birds soar over the lake, and have dinner around the fire. Then after dark, around 8:45 PM, we'll hike back and see the fireflies along the trail. This is a very easy level hike along a forest road and a lot of fun for kids too. Bring a chair, flashlight, bug spray, jacket, something to drink, and your dish to share with serving spoon. We will provide plates and silverware and lots of fun under a new moon. No pets allowed. Call or email Diane with your RSVP and what you plan to bring. Leave a message on landline phone: 352-589-2721. Please only use my cell on the day of the hike if needed cell: 352-205-9620. Email: dammiller@aol.com. Directions to Lake Norris Trailhead: <http://goo.gl/maps/ibpAO>. **28.913943, -81.544539**

### **Directions**

From I-4 and SR 46 Exit (Sanford Mall) go west on SR 46 for about seven miles. Just over the bear bridge there is a traffic light, veer to the right onto SR 46A. Go about 5.5 miles on SR 46A until it dead ends at SR 44. Turn left (west) on SR 44 and go 1/2 mile. At the light, turn right onto CR 437 and go 1.7 miles. Turn right onto CR 44A, also known as Burlington Avenue, and go about 1/2 mile. Take the second left onto Lake Norris Road and go about 2.5 miles. Turn left into the Lake Norris Conservation Area trailhead which is right before the sharp 90 degree turn in the road. If you reach the bridge – you've gone a bit too far.

**Thursday, April 19, 2018**

**Interpretive Hike at Lake Griffin State Park – 7:00 to 10:00 AM.** Meet at 7:00 AM (an hour before normal opening hours) for a short short hike - less than two miles. Park personnel will accompany, explaining the flora and fauna of the area. Because the trail is new and the walkways are narrow, park personnel asks that we group be limited to around 20. State Park Entrance Fee: \$2.00 per person. Any questions, call Michael A. Tamburino on cell at (303) 809-3284. **28.857409, -81.902248**

**Thursday, April 19, 2018**

**Highlanders Chapter General Meeting – 6:00 PM. Note:** We are meeting the 3rd Thursday due to the library being closed on our regular date for the Bike Festival. We meet at the Leesburg Public Library 100 East Main Street in the meeting rooms at the front of the library. Meeting starts at 6:00 PM. Come earlier for social time. This month's speaker is Patti Hope Huizing- Climate Reality. Please bring your aluminum cans to recycle in non-dripping plastic bags and a snack to share. Any questions, call Bobbi at 352-787-8654 or email bobbis-zoo@yahoo.com. Open to the Public. **28.811093 -81.874858**

**Saturday, April 21**

**Earth Day PEAR Park.** Planting and weeding at the Highlanders Memorial Garden from 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM.  
**April 21<sup>st</sup> to April 28<sup>th</sup> 2018**

**Georgia - Alabama Camping Trip.** We would like to invite FTA members to join us on the first two stops of our great 2018 Alaskan & Canada Adventure. From April 21<sup>st</sup> to the 24<sup>th</sup> we'll be at Florence Marina State Park in Georgia. We'll do a paddle trip one day and the other day travel about 1/2 hour to hike Providence Canyon State Park, Georgia. On the 24<sup>th</sup> through the 28<sup>th</sup>, we'll be at the highest point in Alabama, Cheaha State Park,

which has lots of waterfall hikes for us to explore. Both parks have cabins available for those who don't want to camp. We are in site S7 on the campground loop 1 at Cheaha. Campground loop 1 is at the top of the mountain and closest to the cabins. Sites are not assigned at Florence Marina - you just make a reservation for a campsite and then pick your site when you get there. There are no boat rentals at the parks. If you make a reservation let us know what site you are in. Email: dammiller@aol.com or phone: 352-205-9620.

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## **Additional Highlanders Hikes**

Highlander Activity Leaders that live in The Villages typically run hikes on Wednesday. All Chapter members and guests are invited in our activities. Leaders post activities the weekend prior to the hike. To view new and old postings go to [www.groups.yahoo.com/group/thevillageshikingclub](http://www.groups.yahoo.com/group/thevillageshikingclub) . Once accessed, click on "Conversations" under the banner.

<h2><b>Chapter Officers and Committee Chairs</b></h2>
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Chapter Chair, Eugene Bouley, [etbouley@embarqmail.com](mailto:etbouley@embarqmail.com) or 352-314-9335  
Vice Chair, Bill Leach, [wwleach@hotmail.com](mailto:wwleach@hotmail.com) or 352-728-6438  
Secretary, Mary Ring, [momring@yahoo.com](mailto:momring@yahoo.com) or 352-250-1426  
Treasurer, Diane Roesch, [cattail3638@gmail.com](mailto:cattail3638@gmail.com) or 407-469-3638  
Trail Coordinator, Francis Keenan, [fkeenan@embarqmail.com](mailto:fkeenan@embarqmail.com) or 352-787-8654  
Activity Chairs, Mary Ellen Milton, [mem32735@aol.com](mailto:mem32735@aol.com) or 352-669-3628, Bobbi Keenan, [bobbiszoo@yahoo.com](mailto:bobbiszoo@yahoo.com) or 352-787-8654, and Mary Ring, [momring@yahoo.com](mailto:momring@yahoo.com) or 352-250-1426  
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Outreach Coordinator, Kathy Lamb, [kalamb1950@gmail.com](mailto:kalamb1950@gmail.com) or 352-383-1950  
Newsletter Editor and Meetup Coordinator, Wade Williston, [wwillist01@gmail.com](mailto:wwillist01@gmail.com) or 407-584-7431  
Program Chair, Ginger Leach, [gingerleach@hotmail.com](mailto:gingerleach@hotmail.com) or 352-728-6438  
Chapter Council Representatives, John Grob, [johndgrob@gmail.com](mailto:johndgrob@gmail.com) or 352-750-0341 & Mike Tamburrino, [miketamburrino@yahoo.com](mailto:miketamburrino@yahoo.com) or 303-809-3284  
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Chapter Photographers, Judy Leavers, [jvleavers@yahoo.com](mailto:jvleavers@yahoo.com) or 352-360-1717 & Diane Dammiller, [Dammiller@aol.com](mailto:Dammiller@aol.com) or 407-832-1214  
Grant Writer, Dee Bender, [deebender829@gmail.com](mailto:deebender829@gmail.com) or 352-460-7085  
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Calendar Editor, Jane Williams, [glenandjane@eastlink.ca](mailto:glenandjane@eastlink.ca) or 352-633-3248  
Memorial Committee Chair, Stuart Force, [stuart.force@comcast.net](mailto:stuart.force@comcast.net) or 352-303-5623  
Recycling Coordinator, Bill Leach, [wwleach@hotmail.com](mailto:wwleach@hotmail.com) or 352-728-6438

## Trailmasters and Activity Leaders

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

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

## Links

Florida Trail Association:	<a href="http://www.floridatrail.org">http://www.floridatrail.org</a>
Highlanders Chapter, FTA:	<a href="http://www.highlanders.floridatrail.org">http://www.highlanders.floridatrail.org</a>
Meetup for Highlanders:	<a href="https://www.meetup.com/Florida-Trail-Association-Central-Florida-Chapter/">https://www.meetup.com/Florida-Trail-Association-Central-Florida-Chapter/</a>
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