



FootNotes *



* Newsletter of the Highlanders Chapter,
Florida Trail Association
September – October 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 – Biological Balance and the Danger of Selective Eradication



Source: Getty Images/Getty Images News

My previous essay ended with some lyrics to an old song: “All God’s Critters got a Place in the Choir.” It got me to thinking about the topic of biological diversity.

Some years ago, my wife and two of my Nature Club kids were talking about the “reason” or purpose for certain things in nature; “what good are they?” This is a question heard frequently. I was out of the room at first so they decided they would put that question to me when I returned in an attempt to stump me. Unfortunately for them, they picked mosquitoes as

their example. They eagerly challenged me, “Give us one good reason for mosquitoes to exist!” I caught enough of the tail-end of the conversation to know they were questioning the purpose for nature’s diversity. Surely, something as troublesome as a mosquito could be done away with. No one would miss it, and the world would be better off. I surprised them when I just smiled and said, “I’ll give you **FIVE** good reasons for the existence of mosquitoes.” Then I asked them to think of what eats mosquitoes: dragonflies, bats, birds, frogs, and spiders (at the very least). As we talked more about this idea of all things being connected in nature and nothing being without ecological purpose, even if we don’t necessarily like it, the oldest boy added something we hadn’t considered. He said that mosquitoes may also be necessary in the larger scheme of things as a means of curtailing the rampant growth of the human population by infecting us with diseases like malaria. A sobering thought.

I believe it was in a recent article in “Smithsonian” magazine where they proclaimed that science has discovered a means to eradicate mosquitoes from the planet. I don’t recall the details, but think it had something to do with genetic manipulation. The overriding question was, now that we have the ability to do this --

should we? Should we purposely cause the extinction of a species because it harms us? Most of the time we hear about our attempts to prevent extinction. It went on to specify how many human deaths are caused world-wide from mosquito-borne illness, not to mention numerous other mosquito-borne problems. As I recall, the article didn't draw a conclusion but left this for the reader to ponder.

Aldo Leopold, the famous conservationist from the last century (who received a Master of Forestry degree from Yale Forest School in 1909), wrote in his famous book A Sand County Almanac, "The outstanding scientific discovery of the twentieth century is not television, or radio, but rather the complexity of the land organism. Only those who know the most about it can appreciate how little we know about it. The last word in ignorance is the man who says of an animal or plant: 'What good is it?' If the land mechanism as a whole is good, then every part is good, whether we understand it or not. If the biota, in the course of aeons, has built something we like but do not understand, then who but a fool would discard seemingly useless parts? To keep every cog and wheel is the first precaution of intelligent tinkering." He had witnessed first-hand the ecological destruction caused by the extermination of wolves from almost every ecosystem in which they lived in the lower forty-eight states, which was the policy of the U.S. government when he was a young forester. What he learned had a profound impact on his views about nature for the rest of his life.

I agree with this view. Humans always seem to mess things up whenever we try to alter the balance of the natural world. What might fill the void if something becomes extinct? How will that void affect the rest of the creatures living around it? What else might quickly follow it into extinction? We can't possibly know these things because of all that we still have to learn. Albert Einstein once said, "We still do not know one-thousandth of one percent of what nature has revealed to us." OK, he said that in the last century, so maybe we do know one-thousandth of one percent by now. Big deal. We still have a long way to go before we can feel certain about messing with the balance of nature in any profound way. Aristotle even told us, "If one way be better than another, that you may be sure is Nature's way." Nature has been successfully working on this world for a long time. We make big changes to the natural world at our peril.

Now I'm not saying I don't smack a mosquito when "she" lands on me (only the females need our blood to make their offspring). I do believe in defending myself when attacked. But let's try to enjoy all of nature's diversity, whether we can discern its purpose or not. Perhaps if we can learn to do at least that much, we can then learn to appreciate our own human diversity. I believe the world is still big enough that there's a place for all of us, and a purpose.

–Mike Barnett

Notes from the Chairperson

In my last Notes from the Chairman, I discussed insect-borne infection a hiker could encounter while hiking in Florida and briefly mentioned Eastern Equine Encephalitis, EEE, which is uncommon in humans. Since that column, there has been a Florida case that is worth discussing further.

Most cases of EEE occur in mosquitoes, birds, and animals like horses. This year is an active year for the virus. Florida surveillance reports 44 horses and 116 sentinel chickens have tested positive in 31 Florida counties including Lake and Orange. In March, an outbreak of EEE wiped out the chickens and emus of

a farm in Levy County.

There were three human cases of EEE in the U.S. last year. Two cases were in Georgia and one in Duval County Florida. In 2016 there were seven human cases in the U.S., none were in Florida. No vaccines are available.

EEE infection in humans causes brain swelling. About one third of infected humans die while others have persistent profound impairments that may be of cognitive, motor, emotional or sensory functions. Some individuals suffer no lasting impairments. Ac-

According to the CDC the infection is characterized by chills, fever, malaise, and joint and muscle pain.

In May 2018, a human Florida infection occurred in Taylor County, which is adjacent to Levy County. While moving into a new home, a 68-year-old woman fell and could not get up. She thought it was a dizzy spell caused by the stress of moving. The next day she did not answer her phone and when her family went to check on her they discovered she could not move, not even to talk. The woman was airlifted to UF Health Shands Hospital in Gainesville where EEE was diag-

nosed. Her treatment is supportive. She was sedated to manage her brain swelling and was placed on ventilation and feeding tubes and later seizure medications. She is recovering, but continues to have irregular brain activity. It could take six months or longer for her brain to recover from her EEE encephalitis. The best way to prevent infection is to avoid mosquito bites. Wear protective clothing, use mosquito repellents, and empty standing water sources around your home.

– Bill Leach, Highlanders Chapter Chair

Hickory Point Picnic on June 28th
(photos by Judy Leavers)



Highlanders Activities for September and October 2018

Thursday, September 27, 2018

Highlanders Chapter General Meeting: 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. Please bring your aluminum cans to recycle in non-dripping plastic bags and a snack to share. Open to the Public. Program: Linda Willinski - Nature Photography **28.811093, -81.874858**

Friday-Sunday, September 28-30, 2018

6th Annual Florida Trail Association Trail Skills Training Event: BSA Camp LaNoChe, Paisley, Florida. Technical Trail Skills course or Wilderness First Aid course. Limited enrollment. Free camping and meals. To Register contact: Francis Keenan at fkeenan@embarqmail.com or 352-787-8654 . **28.954416, -81.536625**

Friday-Sunday, October 5-7, 2018

Florida Trail Association Annual Conference: Wayne G. Sanborn Activity Center in Earl Brown Park, DeLand, Florida Celebrating the 50th Anniversary of the National Trails System. FREE EVENT. Learn about America's important trails and opportunities to enjoy, traverse, and volunteer on them. Check out various presentations, demos, and displays and meet a variety of outdoor leaders. Hear from compelling guests, including our Friday evening speaker, outdoor diversity advocate and author, Audrey Peterman and on Saturday night, well-known speed-hiker and author, Jennifer Pharr Davis.

Other exciting guests from the outdoor community will also be present Sandra Friend and John Keatley's official book launch and book signing for the new, full-color Third Edition of 50 Hikes in Central Florida. Attend an FNST Coalition Meeting (Saturday., October. 6, 9:00 – 11:30 AM). Live music and exciting gear raffle. Register for this event on the Florida Trail Website!

Friday-Sunday, October 12-14

Florida Trail Association Work Crew Event - Seminole State Forest Trail Re-route: Register on the FTA Web Site for this special event for free camping and meals and further information. Our Highlanders Chapter is sponsoring this event which will be led by Kelly Weiner, Regional Program Director. We will need volunteers to support the event for set up, cooking, clean up, transport, etc.

Chapter members not camping can come on Friday, Saturday and/or Sunday as for a regular chapter work hike. 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). If you have further questions email or call Bobbi Keenan at bobbiszoo@yahoo.com or 352-787-8654. **28.890749 -81.461616**

Tuesday, October 16, 2018

Highlanders Chapter General Meeting - NOTE: DAY AND DATE CHANGE: We are meeting on Tuesday due to the conflicts with the library schedule. 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. Please bring your aluminum cans to recycle in non-dripping plastic bags and a snack to share. Open to the Public. Program: Patti Hope Huizing - Climate Reality. **28.811093 -81.874858**

Tuesday, October 23, 2018

Work Hike Ocala National Forest - Farles Prairie Forest Road 30 – Highway 40: Meet before 9:00 AM in the parking lot on the west side of Highway 19 that is 2 1/2 miles north of the turn off to Alexander Springs (Highway 445). Please let us know if you plan to attend so that we can plan teams and equipment. Please be on

time as we will be shuttling to another area to work. Bring hat, gloves, sunscreen, bug repellent, lunch, and lots of water (must carry two quarts). If you have further questions email or call bobbiszoo@yahoo.com or 352-787-8654. **29.073833 -81.629374**

Saturday, November 3, 2018

Work Hike Ocala National Forest - Farles Prairie Forest Road 22 Buck Lake: Meet before 9:00 AM in the parking lot on the west side of Highway 19 that is 2 1/2 miles north of the turn off to Alexander Springs (Highway 445). Please let us know if you plan to attend so that we can plan teams and equipment. Please be on time as we will be shuttling to another area to work. Bring hat, gloves, sunscreen, bug repellent, lunch, and lots of water (must carry two quarts). If you have further questions email or call bobbiszoo@yahoo.com or 352-787-8654. **29.073833 -81.629374**

Additional Highlanders Hikes

Highlanders Activity Leaders who live in The Villages typically lead hikes on Wednesdays. All chapter members and guests are invited to participate in these activities. Leaders post notices of activities the weekend prior to the hike. To view new and old postings go to www.groups.yahoo.com/group/thevillageshikingclub . Once accessed, click on "Conversations" under the banner.

<h3>Chapter Officers and Committee Chairs</h3>
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Chapter Chair, Bill Leach, wwleach@hotmail.com or 352-728-6438
Vice Chair, Mike Tamburrino, miketamburrino@yahoo.com or 303-809-3284
Secretary, Mary Ring, momring@yahoo.com or 352-250-1426
Treasurer, Diane Roesch, cattail3638@gmail.com or 407-469-3638
Trail Coordinator, Francis Keenan, fkeenan@embarqmail.com or 352-787-8654
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Trailmasters and Activity Leaders

Trailmasters: Arlene Beal, Sandy Bell, Dee Bender, Gene Bouley, Stuart Force, Dennis and Melodie Hardy, 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, Dennis and Melodie Hardy, Brad Hoopes, Bobbi and Francis Keenan, Jon Leavers, Bill and Mary Ellen Milton, Steve Nemeth, Diane Paul, Howard Pospesel, Bob and Suzanne Sippey, Mike Tamburrino, Don Valcheff, Wade Williston, and Bruce Zollner.

Links

Florida Trail Association:	http://www.floridatrail.org
Highlanders Chapter, FTA:	http://www.highlanders.floridatrail.org
Meetup for Highlanders:	https://www.meetup.com/Florida-Trail-Association-Central-Florida-Chapter/
Highlanders Photos:	https://www.flickr.com/photos/highlandersfta/albums/
Previous Newsletters:	http://highlanders.floridatrail.org/NewsletterArchives.htm

