



FootNotes *



*** Newsletter of the Highlanders Chapter,
Florida Trail Association
January – February 2018
Volume 19, Issue 1**

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 – Return of the Wild Turkeys



*Osceola Wild Turkey (aka Florida Wild Turkey)
Photo by Tampa Bay Times*

Wild Turkeys (*Meleagris gallopavo*) are continuing to make a remarkable comeback. Their populations had been decimated by over-hunting, along with White-tailed Deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*). But now I see them more and more frequently, and in the most unexpected places.

The first time I was surprised by these large, beautiful game birds, was on a walk through Tavares Nature Park about 6 or 7 years ago. I was coming off the boardwalk that used to go out into Lake Dora and I saw two foraging in a small clearing to my left. They took off as soon as they saw me. Tavares Nature Park is only about a mile from the county court house (as

the crow flies).

My next surprise a few years later was seeing two as I drove to work on SR 19 near Main St. in Tavares. They were foraging right beside that busy road, seemingly oblivious to the traffic passing them during the morning rush. They were near some trees that border the Dora Canal.

The next two I saw in Eustis in an open field just west of the baseball fields on Kurt St. Again, I was on my way to work early in the morning. This location is only about a mile from downtown Eustis.

Most recently (April 20, 2017), I saw a mature hen only two doors from my house in Eustis near Lakeview Ave. It was walking in the street, being watched carefully by a neighborhood cat sitting close by. I almost couldn't believe what I was seeing. It was the first and only time I ever saw one so close to my residence. If someone else had told me they saw one there I would have been skeptical. I live near Lake Nettie, which is only a little more than a mile from downtown; a residential area a few blocks from Eustis High School. There are many oaks in my neighborhood and, perhaps, it was drawn to the acorns. They love to eat acorns.

Before this, I would only see Wild Turkeys occasionally out in the country, while driving around Cassia or Paisley, near the national forest. I would always report them to my old dentist in Eustis, Dr. Smith. He was an avid Turkey hunter and would roll his eyes at me every time I saw some. He rarely saw them during Turkey season. They have the reputation for being very wary, have excellent eye sight and hearing, and are notoriously difficult for hunters to get a shot at. That is why they all go to great lengths to camouflage themselves and remain perfectly still, lest they give away their position. Once a Turkey spots them, they'll be gone in a flash. Hunters resort to using all kinds of other tricks to lure them in, but few are successful. Perhaps that is why these birds are increasing in numbers. They are far more challenging to get than Deer or Wild Hogs (*Sus scrofa*), according to my two younger brothers, who have hunted all three.

And maybe they've learned over the years that they won't get shot at closer to civilization? Hunters say they're smart. Perhaps they've figured out how to out-

smart us. At any rate, they're much more common now than when I first moved here in 1992.

If you'd like to see some, a good place to look is Ellis Acres Reserve, one of the Lake County nature parks in Paisley on CR 42. I've seen a large flock there on more than one occasion. If you're lucky, and quiet, you might catch a glimpse of this majestic and remarkable survivor. —Mike Barnett

Sources:

Sibley, David Allen. *The Sibley Guide to Birds of Eastern North America*. NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 2003.

Tekiela, Stan. *Mammals of Florida Field Guide*. Cambridge, MN: Adventure Publications, Inc., 2010.

Williams, Winston. *Florida's Fabulous Birds*. Tampa: World Publications, 1986.

Path of the Orange Blaze **By Bob Schultz**

Leaving the mangrove and cypress.
Passing the Seminole reserve,
Northward and up Florida's spine,
On a path we vow to preserve.

Long Pine needles soften the path;
Star-shaped leaves dropped by the Sweet Gum;
Fluffs of Deer Moss along the trail,
Give the feeling of a welcome.

The scurrying Armadillo.
The screech of the Red-shouldered hawk.
The sudden flush of a White Tail,
Respond actively to your walk.

Bursting onto an open plain
Where no tree grows save waist-high grass.
A sunken post with orange blaze
Marks well the route for one to pass.

The mighty lake like open sea

Splits your choice around either shore.
Straddling land and water for days,
Until the two trails merge once more.

Past rivers born of a great swamp.
Your feet then pass the many springs
That provide prodigious flows
Adding to the trail's offerings

Cockaded Woodpecker's secrets
Hide within Longleaf Pine stands
As Turkey Oak and Wire grass
Present us to arid scrub lands

Then north to that song-scribed river
Following along its high banks,
Westward into swampland country,
Wading in water, beyond your shanks.

Woods behind, sand beaches ahead
Squawking sea birds reveal trail's end.
Looking back on those many miles,
You now see the trail as your friend.

So much biodiversity,
Viewed in so many different ways
Wait for the many hikers who'll
Hike this Path of the Orange Blaze!

(To the forever memory of Lou Augspurg)

Bob Schultz

Notes from the Chair

Things are certainly getting better on the trails since hurricane Irma. We had a lot of help from the 12 volunteer firemen from Tennessee. They spent a week cutting out the downfalls through the Ocala Forest. This made our work a lot easier as we did sections of the Florida Trail from FR 30 north 2 miles and south through Farles Lake. We have finished the trail south of Farles Lake past Buck Lake and across RT19 and beyond Alexander Springs to FR 06. Future workday will do the Lake Tracy unit and Clearwater Lake area. The Flat Island area has been opened and Francis has, with small groups, made passable the Seminole State

Forest trails. We will have workdays in the Seminole SF to finish clearing those 10 miles of trail. Steve and Bernice have opened up 2-3 miles of the trail at Hog Island which has been mostly under water. We will have a work day there on February 3rd to help them finish the remaining three-plus miles of trail. Two boardwalks that were damaged will need special work parties to repair them. The chapter still has a lot of trail work to do; so try to get yourself out to help on a couple of the workdays scheduled for January, February, and March.

As I have biked, hiked and canoed since the hurricane I have been amazed at how many other organizations and the County have cleared the debris from the trails and waterways,

We had ten for a bike ride on the Mineola Trail and more than 25 for the hike Mary Ellen and Jon Leavers led at the Sunnyhill Area. I hope to meet many of you on future activities. Please think about becoming an activity leader. If you have an idea for an activity talk to an activity leader and join them as an assistant in setting up and running the activity. This would be

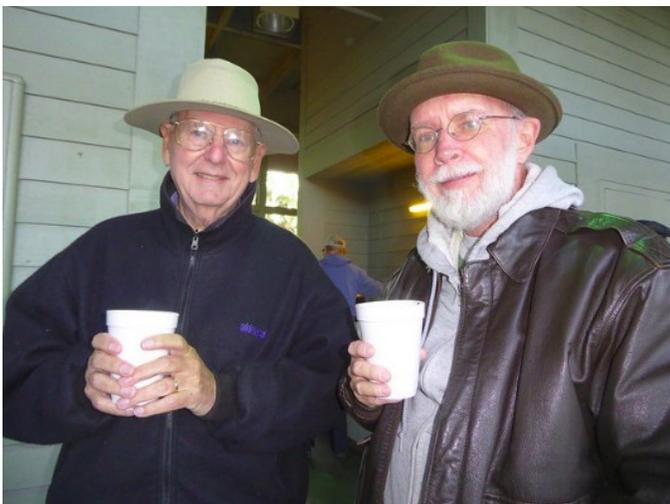
your first step in fulfilling the requirements to become a certified activity leader. We are becoming a large chapter and need the involvement of our new members to provide activities for all.

Happy trails to all in the New Year.

Keep hiking!

–Gene Bouley, FTA Highlanders Chapter Chair

Highlanders Christmas Party (photos by Judy Leavers)





Highlanders Activities for January and February 2018

Monday, January 1, 2018

First Day Hike - PEAR Park - 10:00 AM. Come out with the entire family and join the Highlanders Chapter to begin the New Year in the outdoors together. Start a new tradition. We will finish in time for you to return home for the sedentary life in front of the TV for the football games. Meet at the Nature Center at PEAR Park at 10:00 AM. Easy two-to-four mile hike depending on your condition. Bring water and a snack. Trip leader Gene Bouley Home 352-314-9335 or Cell 352-360-3722. **28.727607 -81.874619**

Directions to PEAR Park

Take Routes 27/441 south towards Leesburg. When 27 and 441 split, stay to right and go straight ahead staying on Route 27. About five miles south of Leesburg at the junction of Route 48 and 27 proceed straight ahead on

route 27 for 1.8 miles. Turn right onto University Ave. Follow about a mile to entrance into PEAR Park. Park and meet at Nature Center (building in park with nature painting).

Note: You will pass a PEAR Park entrance on Route 27, one mile from the junction of 27 and 48. This is for the dog park, Go .8 of a mile beyond to second park entrance at University Ave.

Saturday, January 6, 2018

Work Hike - Seminole State Forest Orange/Blue Trails - Meet Before 9:00 AM. Meet at the Brantley Branch Road entrance to Seminole State Forest in Cassia before 9:00 AM. Please be on time as we will be shuttling to another area to work. Please bring water, insect spray, hats, lunch, etc. Any questions, call Bobbi at 352-787-8654 or email bobbiszoo@yahoo.com. **28.890749 -81.461616**

Friday, January 12, 2018

Hike and Bike at Land Bridge Cross Florida Greenway - 9:30 AM. Join Gene, Terry, and Bruce on a 3.2 mile loop hike to the Land Bridge. Lunch at Land Bridge trailhead parking area and then take an eight mile round trip bike ride over the Land Bridge on the newly paved bike trail to 49th street and back. The new trail is a beautiful ride. We will meet at 9:30 AM at the Land Bridge Trailhead. Bikers must wear helmets. If you wish, you may come only for the hike. Recommend bring water, and a snack. Lunch can be left at the car. Trip leader Gene Bouley Home 352-314-9335 or Cell 352-360-3722. **29.060213, -82.153579**

Directions: I-75 north to exit 341 (towards Belleview) Hwy 484 and turn right at the end of ramp. Go ¼ mile to the first traffic light and then turn left onto Hwy 475A. Proceed for a couple of miles to Land Bridge Trailhead on left (sign for Cactus Jack horse rides). Meet in the parking area near restrooms.

Monday, January 15, 2018

Work Hike - Ocala National Forest Duck Pond to FT 06 - Meet Before 9:00 AM. Meet at the intersection of CR 445 and FR 69 (Paisley Rd) just south of Alexander Springs. 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). Any questions, call Bobbi at 352-787-8654 or email bobbiszoo@yahoo.com. **29.074541 -81.586344**

Tuesday, January 16, 2018

Chapter Board Meeting - PEAR Park - 3:00 PM. Everyone is welcome to attend the board meeting. **28.729307, -81.87477**

Thursday, January 25, 2018

Highlanders Chapter General Meeting - 6:00 PM. We meet at the Leesburg Public Library 100 East Main Street in the meeting rooms at the front of the library at 6:00 PM. Come earlier for social time. Rachel Nunlist, Ranger at Lake Griffin State Park, will present a program about "Lake Griffin State Park." Please bring your aluminum cans to recycle in non-dripping plastic bags and a snack to share. Open to the Public. Any questions, call Bobbi at 352-787-8654 or email bobbiszoo@yahoo.com. **28.811093 -81.874858**

Saturday, February 3, 2018

Work Hike - Withlacoochee SF Croom-Hog Island - Meet Before 9:00 AM. Go south on Interstate 75 to exit 309 (Old 62). Turn right (west) go 1/4 mile on Hwy 476B, turn left (south) onto dirt road. Please be on time as we will be shuttling to another area to work. Please bring water, insect spray, hats, lunch, etc. Any questions, call Bobbi at 352-787-8654 or email bobbiszoo@yahoo.com. **28.601498 -82.209488**

Friday, February 9, 2018

Ferndale Preserve – 9:30 AM. Join Gene, Terry and Bruce on a 3-4 mile hike at the County Park Department Ferndale Preserve 19220 CR 455, Ferndale FL (sign at entrance). The park has restrooms, but no picnic tables.

After the hike we will go down the road to Green Mountain Trailhead for lunch. The hike has great views of Lake Apopka. The terrain has hills to walk up and down and is a bit rough in places due to sand and hogs. I suggest hiking boots for foot wear. Bring water and a snack. You do not need to carry lunch. We will meet in the parking lot at 9:30 AM. Trip leader Gene Bouley Home 352-314-9335 or Cell 352-360-3722. **28.625758 -81.700303**

Monday, February 12, 2018

Work Hike - Ocala National Forest Hwy 42 to Duck Pond - Meet Before 9:00 AM. Meet at the Clearwater Lake Trailhead just off Hwy 42 south of Paisley. 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. Any questions, call Bobbi at 352-787-8654 or email bobbiszoo@yahoo.com. **28.974889 -81.549956**

Tuesday, February 13, 2018

Chapter Board Meeting - PEAR Park - 3:00 PM. Everyone is welcome to attend the board meeting. **28.729307, -81.87477**

Saturday, February 17, 2018

Chili Party at Trimble Park – 11:00 AM or before. The weather should be nice for our annual Chili Party. Bring your canoe/kayak, hiking shoes, bicycle, or just sit and visit. You might want to bring your own lawn chair. Trimble Park is located in the Tangerine Area off US 441, south of Mt. Dora. The park is between Lake Beauclair and Lake Carlton. This year we have Pavilion #1 on the point. Highlanders Chapter. No Pets. Activity Leader: Arlene Beal, 612-202-5224 or bealak59@gmail.com and assisting Cathy Leavers, cjleavers@yahoo.com. We need chili, salads, and desserts. The address is 5802 Trimble Park Road, Mt Dora. **28.769171, -81.656442**

Thursday, February 22, 2018

Highlanders Chapter General Meeting – 6:00 PM. 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. Any questions, call Bobbi at 352-787-8654 or email bobbiszoo@yahoo.com **28.811093 -81.874858**

April 21 to 28, 2018

Georgia - Alabama Camping Trip. We would like to invite FTA members to join us on the first two stops on our great Alaskan and Canada 2018 adventure. We plan to be at Florence Marina State Park in Georgia on April 21st through the 24th. We will do a paddle trip one day and the other travel about ½ hr to hike Providence Canyon State Park, Georgia. On Tuesday, April, 24th we will relocate about two hours north to Cheaha State Park in Alabama (April 24th to the 28th). Cheaha State Park is the highest point in Alabama and has lots of waterfalls hikes for us to explore. Both parks have cabins available for those who don't want to camp. Please contact me before making your reservations or for more details. Diane and Ken: dammiller@aol.com 352-589-2721.

Chapter Officers and Committee Chairs
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Vice Chair, Bill Leach, wwleach@hotmail.com or 352-728-6438

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, Karen Harrington, Francis Keenan, Kathy Lamb, Bill and Ginger Leach, Jon and Judy Leavers, Mary Ellen Milton, Steve and Bernice Nemeth, Howard Pospel, 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 Pospel, 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/>

