



# Trail Tales

The Newsletter of

**RAILS TO TRAILS OF THE WITHLACOOCHEE, INC. (RTW)**

The Citizen Support Organization (CSO) for the Withlacoochee State Trail (WST)

*The Friendliest Trail in the Country*

## CONGRATULATIONS ON A GREAT "2017" ANNUAL RIDE!

Regular readers of our newsletter know that our annual fundraising ride takes place on the first Sunday in October. Of course, in 2017, Hurricane Irma let us know that she wasn't so happy about that timing. The havoc she caused to our trail made us postpone the ride until the first Sunday of March of 2018.

On that bright and sunny – and chillier than we're used to for the fundraiser! – morning, 675 riders showed up to have a safe, fun day. Most riders started at the Apopka Trailhead, where our Caboose and Mural are located.

SAG stops, supported by our amazing volunteers, dotted to the trail to offer riders a snack, a beverage, and a chance to catch their breath. Lunch was provided at Apopka as well.

We were able to raise a nice amount of funds to help with our efforts to add more benches to the trail, continue to fund our efforts to keep the trail safely paved and freshly trimmed, and to add other amenities to continue to keep it the nicest – and friendliest! – trail in the country!

If you missed the ride, great news! You don't have to wait an entire year before you get the chance to join us! We will return to our fall schedule this year, and plans are already under way for our 2018 ride on Sunday, March 7!





# Trail Tales

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## SAFETY FIRST

It has been brought to our attention that riders are not obeying the stop signs on our trail.

PLEASE BE AWARE OF THE FACT THAT CARS ON THE CROSS ROADS DO NOT HAVE STOP SIGNS AND DO NOT HAVE TO STOP.

On March 10, two riders did not stop, and they crashed into an automobile. One rider went the hospital. During our fundraising ride, staff witnessed an instance where a pickup truck fishtailed to be able to stop in time to not hit a cyclist who broke the law and sped across the street without stopping.

Don't become a fatality. Stop at all stop signs. Use caution on the Trail. Be aware of illegal motorized vehicles on the trail. If you have a cell phone with you, feel free to call in when you see motorized vehicles on or crossing the trail in non-designated locations. The numbers are at the kiosks; please put them in your phones.

## APRIL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Members, please join us at 5:30 p.m. on Thursday, April 19 at the Lakes Region Library for our quarterly membership meeting.

Our guest speaker will be John Pricher, new director of Visit Citrus/Crystal River!

Our business meeting will include information on our Board of Directors terms of office. Watch the Citrus Chronicle for a more detailed agenda.

If you are not a member, but considering becoming one, come to the meeting and meet some of the other members, and then join through our website at <http://www.rttwst.org/join-rails-to-trails.php>

## How to Prevent Blisters

"An early morning walk is a blessing for the whole day." - Henry David Thoreau

Though we tend to focus on cycling in this newsletter, the Withlacoochee State Trail is a great place for a walk. Whether you're working yourself back into shape or slowing down to enjoy the scenery, the benefits of getting out and moving in nature are profound and multifold.

However, if you're just getting started few things can stop you in your tracks more quickly than blisters.

Courtesy of the good folks at TRAILS.com, here are some common sense tips to keep your feet intact:

- Wear well-fitting shoes
- Break in new shoes before tackling a long hike
- Wear moisture-wicking socks made of synthetic materials
- Use an athletic foot spray or powder to keep your feet dry

So regardless of fitness level, know that with a little caution and common sense everyone can enjoy the beauty of our wonderful trail. As always, please contact your physician before embarking on any exercise program.

Full article can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/yc9llgdr>



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### WALKING – AND OTHER THINGS – FOR YOUR HEALTH

Most of us who use the WST on a regular basis are likely trying to keep ourselves as healthy as we can. If you fall into that category, you might have heard about The Blue Zones, which are areas of the world where people live far beyond the current life expectancy.

Recent news from The Blue Zones newsletter (<https://bluezones.com/2018/02/drinking-glass-wine-taking-walk-may-be-key-to-longevity/>) says that drinking a glass of wine and taking a walk daily might be one key to longevity.<sup>1</sup>

Dr. Claudia Kawas and her team from the University of California are not the first group of researchers who have come to this conclusion, just the most recent ones (to my knowledge).

Dr. Kawas's study, begun in 2003, was conducted to find a reason for why some people live longer. It followed 1,700 90-year-olds and examined their daily habits.

Some of these habits included drinking coffee, talking to neighbors, getting out of

<sup>1</sup>Please note:

**The Withlacochee State Trail is a State Park, and as such, alcohol on the trail is strictly prohibited.**

This article in no way indicates I or anyone else who is a member of the RTW CSO advocates drinking. Standard disclaimers apply: Do not drink alcohol if you take a medication where it is contraindicated. Do not drink alcohol and drive ANY motorized vehicle, including boats. Do not drink alcohol and cycle, blade, or use any machinery. Do not drink alcohol if you have a medical history that indicates drinking does not suit you. This article is included in this month's newsletter for informational and entertainment purposes only.

the house, having a positive attitude, getting 15 minutes of exercise a day, and drinking wine.

Dr. Kawas spoke about her findings and the keys to longevity at the American Association for the Advancement of Science annual conference in Austin, Texas.

She discovered that nonagenarians who consumed approximately two glasses of beer or wine a day were 18 percent less likely to experience a premature death than those who abstained. That's higher than the people who exercised moderately daily (between 15 and 45 minutes), who had an 11 percent lower risk and less than those who had a 10 percent lower risk from drinking two cups of coffee daily.

Anyway, it's just nice to know that what we enjoy can help us live longer, so will let us do what we like for longer!

So feel free to hit the Trail for half an hour and then have some wine after you're back home safely from your walk!



## NATIONAL BIKE CHALLENGE: MAY 2018

Our more serious cycling readers might be interested in knowing about the National Bike Challenge, coming in May 2018.

Riders can start a team, join an existing team, or ride solo. Teams can have up to 8 riders, and can be made-up of anyone – colleagues, friends, family, etc.

Teams will compete against 9 other teams in a **Pool**. Because of the Pools, teams are not competing on one giant leaderboard; Pools mean that each team has a good chance of getting into 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, or 3<sup>rd</sup> place in their Pool.

Each individual and team will earn points as follows:

- 🚲 1 mile = 1 point
- 🚲 1 day = 20 points
- 🚲 Existing rider encouraged = 50 points
- 🚲 New rider encouraged = 100 points

After the 3rd week of the Challenge, the top teams from each Pool are put into an additional leaderboard called **The Final Sprint** where they'll face all the other top teams from each Pool to see which team is the best of the best! Only the points earned the last 7 days count on this additional leaderboard. Your team will still compete in its Pool the whole month of May. There will be three Final Sprint leaderboards:

- 🚲 Total Points
- 🚲 Rider points
- 🚲 Encourager Points

For more information, go to <https://www.lovetoride.net/usa/pages/info>



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