



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

The Good Neighbor Trail Inaugural Ride: A Sister Trail Event

The inaugural Brooksville Good Neighbor Trail (GNT) Bike Ride will take place Sunday October 14. This first ride celebrates the completion of the eastern portion of the Brooksville GNT, part of the 220 mile Coast-to-Coast Trail. The GNT is a 10-mile stretch of paved trail that connects to the Withlacoochee State Trail (WST).



The ride begins and ends at the Historic Brooksville Train Depot located at 70 Russell Rd, Brooksville, Florida. Walk-up registration and check-in for pre-registered participants is from 7:30 a.m. to 9:00 a.m.

You can determine your own ride distance. They are offering a 10 mile "Out and Back" family ride, a 20 mile ride (10 miles out to the WST and back), a 38 mile ride (10 miles to the WST + 9 miles on it and return to the Train Depot), and a 64 mile ride that will take riders up into Citrus County on the WST and return to the start/finish at the Train Depot. All routes are exclusively on paved rail trails.

What's Included?

The day begins with a continental breakfast from 7:30 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. at the Train Depot Trailhead. Along the trail, they will have four SAG stops with water, sports drinks, and snacks. Restrooms will be available at all SAG Stops. A free catered lunch will be provided between 11:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. at Coney Island. All pre-registered riders as of 3:45 PM, October 1st, will receive a T-shirt.

To Register, go to: www.gntbikeride.com

This is a CAAM Tour Series Event: http://www.caamevents.com/event/good-neighbor-trail-bike-ride/?instance_id=1792

The GNT Citizen Support Group hopes to make the Good Neighbor Trail Ride an annual event, so join them for a fall ride through the Brooksville and Hernando County countryside!



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Coastal Connector On Hold

The Coastal Connector project has lost the support of the Citrus County Commissioners.

Support for the Connector, which threatened to wind over the Withlacoochee State Trail in some of the proposed paths, has now been revoked, and the Commissioners told the state they should stop the parkway at State Road 44.

Additionally, on June 14, U.S. District Judge James S. Moody Jr. issued a (two week) temporary restraining order stopping construction to protect the area of the Etna Turpentine Camp, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

On June 30, the Citrus County Chronicle and on July 1, The Tampa Bay Times published articles indicating the FL DOT called an "indefinite" halt to the Connector.

All proposed routes run the Connector through parts of Marion's county's horse farm region. Marion officials don't want the state agency to continue studying any of the routes through that region, much less begin construction; because of that, FLDOT has turned its attention back to other ways to alleviate congestion problems on I-75.

For the complete article from the Citrus County Chronicle, please see https://www.chronicleonline.com/news/state-puts-halt-to-coastal-connector-routes/article_0b33c82a-7c72-11e8-899e-b793051bf05b.html

For the complete article from the Tampa Bay Times, please see http://www.tampabay.com/news/growth/Marion-County-s-horse-farm-owners-say-Whoa-to-proposed-toll-road_169540232

Trail Safety and Automatic Vehicles



The League of American Bicyclists recently posted information regarding concerns about automatic vehicles and cycling safety. Due to the number of times the WST crosses a surface road, we felt you should know about this.

The Senate hopes to pass SB1885: The AV START Act this Summer. The bill will tenfold increase the number of automated vehicles being tested on our streets without requiring the vehicles to pass a federal safety standard proving they can "see" bicyclists and pedestrians. Because bill supporters hope to pass the bill before August, the League is asking for help now.

When human drivers apply for a driver's license, we have to pass a vision test. The League believes that all automated driving systems should first have to pass a "vision test" as well — a safety performance standard determined and regulated by the National Highway Traffic Safety Association — proving their ability to recognize and respond to people bicycling, walking, and using wheel chairs, before they are on community streets.

Right now the Senate is considering S. 1885: AV START Act to set guidelines for automated vehicle manufacturers to test their vehicles on our streets.

To join the League in asking Senators to require AVs to pass a vision test proving they can see bicyclists and pedestrians, complete the form you find on <https://p2a.co/Oy2UjKv>.



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Coming Next Month: Some History of the RTW CSO



OK, so those of you readers who are newer to the area, perhaps reading this from one of the Trail's kiosks,

might be scratching your head wondering why you would care about the RTW CSO; if you've not read the masthead of this newsletter, you might be wondering what the RTW CSO even is!

That's why next month we will be highlighting some of what the RTW (Rails to Trails of the Withlacoochee, Inc) CSO (Citizen Support Organization) does through the year.

Most of you are likely familiar with our annual fundraising event, the Annual Bike Ride on the Withlacoochee State Trail, especially because last year's October ride took place in March of this year because of Hurricane Irma.

But we do a lot more, too, and would like to give you some information on that. It might give you more a reason to consider joining us – or even give you an idea for a suggestion you'd like to pass along to us.

Are you one of our long-term members? Do you have a great memory of something that you'd like to share? If so, please send it to secretary@rttwst.org. We welcome pictures, too.

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Volunteers

Be sure to log your hours by the 5th of each month!

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