



# Trail Tales

The Newsletter of  
RAILS TO TRAILS OF THE WITHLACOOCHEE, INC (RTW)  
The Citizen Support Organization for the Withlacoochee State Trail  
*The Friendliest Trail in the Country*

## TDC Votes to Fund Study



*Cyclists stop near the intersection of Norvell-Bryant Road and SR 41 during the most recent Rails to Trails fundraising ride. At the other end of this section of the Norvell-Bryant Rd bike path is where the proposed extension would connect with the Three Sisters Trail.*

From the Citrus County Chronicle

The Citrus County Tourist Development Council (TDC) voted unanimously on Wednesday, August 8 to recommend to commissioners that they take up to \$400,000 from tourist tax revenue to allow the Florida Department of Transportation to do a project development and environmental (PD&E) study advancing the Three Sisters connector multi-purpose bike trail project.

When the connector is complete, the trail would be between Crystal River's Crosstown Trail off Three Sisters Springs Trail, and the State Road 44 intersection with County Road 486, also known as Norvell Bryant Highway. Cyclists will then be able to ride the multi-use trail east along Norvell Bryant Highway toward Hernando and the **Withlacoochee State Trail**, which splits to either the Dunnellon area or Inverness and miles beyond.

The money would come from part of the 6-cent tourist tax, which is a tax on stays at hotels, motels,

campgrounds, RV parks and short-term rentals in Citrus County. The tax is mostly borne by tourists and has no impact on residents.

There is currently \$280,000 in the account, and it is expected to grow to almost \$400,000 by the end of the fiscal year on Sept. 30. This is the first time the TDC has earmarked funds from that capital account.

TDC member Gene McGee said he supports the trail connector because it should attract bicyclists to Citrus County and be a tourism boost, especially during the times of year when manatee and scallop seasons are not in full swing.

However, McGee asked that the board consider a brainstorming session comprised of city, county, hospitality, business representatives and other stakeholders to set long-term goals as to what capital project tax money should be used for in the future. The TDC agreed to hold a planning retreat sometime in the future to discuss what projects are worthy of tax allocation.

Citrus County Commissioner Ron Kitchen said this action shows the state that Citrus County is serious about its commitment to bike trails and could speed up construction, now anticipated to take about 10 years.



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"This is a project that will benefit the county as a whole," said County Commissioner Jeff Kinnard, citing the popularity of cycling. "It will give visitors more things that they can do when they come to our community. This isn't necessarily a major attractor that draws more people to our area, but it is a nice attraction once they get here."

"The goal is to push this thing along as quickly as we can to the (state's) five-year work plan," he said. As it stands now, construction of the bike trail is probably 10 to 12 years out, if not longer," he said.

An August 26 editorial in the Citrus County Chronicle also spoke in favor of the Connector.

It said, in part, "If the county pays for this part of the project and has "skin in the game," the state is more likely to speed up funding of the entire effort. Cycling is another spoke in the wheel of tourism in Citrus County. On the east side of the county, the **Withlacoochee State Trail** bike path winds from Citrus Springs to Dade City."

It's clear our Bike Path is an important element of the plans for the Connector. It's also clear that the Connector would help those of us who enjoy the WST get even more out of it!

### Coming Soon!

Have you registered for the 24<sup>th</sup> Annual Rails to Trails Bike Ride on the Withlacoochee? The deadline to be entered in the door prize drawings is just 28 days from now, on October 3, 2018!

Join us, won't you?

### Opening on the Board of Directors

Please consider joining our Board of Directors. Our regular meetings are held four times per year (September, November, February, and April), the week prior to the membership meetings. Aside from that, you can be as active on other roles on the Board of Directors as you choose.

As a member of the Board of Directors, you have the chance to help guide the direction of our projects for the next two years. This includes, but does not have to be limited to, working on suggestions for trail safety improvements, trail beautification, ADA compliance updates, or any ideas you bring to the Board.

If you would like to be considered for the Board opening, please contact Rich Roussel at [vicepresident@rttwst.org](mailto:vicepresident@rttwst.org) or Jim McLean at [director@rttwst.org](mailto:director@rttwst.org).





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### Jerseys and T-shirts! Oh My!

Remember the gorgeous new jerseys that will be available soon from our website (<https://www.rttwst.org/shop-rails-to-trails.php>)?



I'm happy to introduce you to this year's ride jersey!



If you think these are knock-outs, just wait until you see what our artist has created for this year's t-shirt!

These are not quite on the website yet, but when they are, I'll be sending along a special notice to our subscribers! Don't get subscribe? Send an email to me at [secretary@rttwst.org](mailto:secretary@rttwst.org), and I will send instructions on how to remedy that.

### Walking on the Trail

Our trail is a gorgeous place to walk, especially in the cooler parts of the year. There are many great reasons to walk, too. Your heart will get stronger, you'll lower your blood pressure, and your bones will get stronger.

A regular walking program can also:

- Ease stress
- Help you sleep better
- Improve your cholesterol profile
- Lower blood pressure
- Increase your energy and stamina
- Prevent weight gain
- Boost your outlook on life.

American Heart Association recommends that adults get 150 minutes or more of moderate-intensity physical activity or 75 minutes of vigorous activity each week. Even short, 10-minute activity sessions can be added up over the week to reach this goal.

Those who would benefit from lowering blood pressure or cholesterol should aim for 40-minute sessions of moderate to vigorous activity 3 to 4 times a week. You could do this by walking 2 miles briskly (about 4 miles/hour). If that's too fast, choose a more comfortable pace.

The best part is that it's not a costly activity: comfortable clothes and supportive shoes are all you need. Layer loose clothing, keeping in mind that brisk exercise elevates the body's temperature. Shoes designed for walking or running are best. Make sure you have a little wiggle room between your longest toe (½") and the end of the shoe. Avoid cotton socks because they retain moisture and can promote blisters.



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## Volunteers: Please Log Your Hours

Volunteers: Please be sure you remember to log your hours on our VSYS program each month. Here's how if you can't quite remember<sup>1</sup>To do so, go to <https://volunteers.floridastateparks.org/download/03W9725B4S54AQAY> or follow these directions:

- Go to <https://volunteers.floridastateparks.org/>
- Sign in using your User ID (email address) and password.
  - If you cannot remember your password, click **Reset password** and follow the instructions.
- Click **Enter your volunteer hours**
  - Select Job: If you are entering as a Volunteer through RTW, you will select Citizen Support Organization
  - Select how you spent your time: Administration, Maintenance, Protection, Resource Management, or Visitor Service
- Select Location: Parks are in alphabetical order in this dropdown field
- Enter hours daily or in bulk for up to a month.
  - Bulk Hours Entry: Enter date range ("Date" to "Hours end date"). The range must be within the same month.
    - Enter hours by Job. For example, enter all CSO/Administration hours and then enter all FPS/Maintenance hours, etc.
  - Daily Hours Entry: Enter hours for each day that you volunteered.
- Click Save

<sup>1</sup> From the Florida State Parks Volunteer Portal User Guide for Current Volunteers

## New Florida State Parks Website

Have you had a chance to go see the new Florida State Parks website? The URL hasn't changed<sup>2</sup>, but the look is new and bold with a strong visual appeal.



<b>RTW TRAIL TALES</b>	<b>www.rttwst.org</b>
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Rich Roussel	Vice President <a href="mailto:vice-president@rttwst.org">vice-president@rttwst.org</a>
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Don Zutaut Ken Spilios Dennis Reiland Jim McLean Steve Diez Mike Dolan Al Cairns	Board of Directors All Board of Directors members can be reached at <a href="mailto:director@rttwst.org">director@rttwst.org</a>
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<sup>2</sup> (<https://www.floridastateparks.org/>)