










# 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*

## HAPPY NEW YEAR!

Happy New Year to all of our WST friends, supporters, users, and fellow volunteers! Before we get to this month's news, let's just take a moment to look back:

### 2018 YEAR IN REVIEW

-  In February our magnificent mural was unveiled; I'm still in awe of the talent of Candace McLean, Heather Nagy, and Linda Reiland in being able to design such a gorgeous way to showcase our Trail.
-  In February we also had a chance to hear from Ann and Fred Abeles on their cycling trip through Germany. Read on to discover this year's show!
-  In March, RTW held the delayed 2017 Annual Ride. It was a great success, with a somewhat different set of cyclists based on the difference in the time of year (and so who was in Florida) and in the weather based on the time change.
-  April found us with severe vandalism to the Trail bathrooms at the Floral City Trailhead.
-  In August we learned the TDC had unanimously approved a measure to fund a project development and environmental (PD&E) study advancing the Three Sisters connector multipurpose bike trail project.
-  Our October newsletter announced the finalization for the WST and Dunnellon Trail connector, including overpasses bridging both US 41 and CR 39.
-  October also brought us back to our normal schedule for our annual fundraiser. A great time was had by all – even our fairly exhausted volunteers, who get themselves wiped out by doing a ride once a year, let alone twice!
-  In October we installed our new President, Al Cairns. Many of you know Al from his tireless work (well, except the exhaustion mentioned above 😊) as our Merchandiser. We're lucky and grateful he stepped up to lead us, too!
-  Finally, in November we had our first meeting in our current location, the Masonic Business Center. Due to the changing of the Citrus County Library System Hours, our membership meetings can no longer be held in the Lakes Region Branch. Read on for more information on where we will hold our February and April meetings.



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### February Meeting and A Two-Week Bicycle Tour in Austria



Join us Thursday, February 21, 2019 at 5:30 PM in the Inverness Masonic Lodge, 95 S. Pine Ave, Inverness for our February meeting. Guest speakers for the evening are Ann and Fred Abeles, cycling snowbirds who live in Inverness in the winter. During their talk and slide show, they will take us virtually with them on their recent bicycle tour in Austria.

They started their tour with a couple of free days in Salzburg and then made a loop tour to the south following the Salzach River as far as Zell am See. Their return trip to Salzburg was mostly along the Saalsach River. The tour included visits to the historic salt mine near Hallein, the ice cave at Werfen and a tour of the open air Freilicht Museum, a park that has preserved typical buildings from villages in Austria.

After a "rest" day to visit the Hellbrunn Castle and attend a concert, they continued their tour, cycling up to Lambach and going by train to Lenz on the Danube River. From there they cycled along the Danube, visiting historic towns and passing through the Wachau wine district before catching the train to Vienna at Tullin.

### Florida Park Fit initiative promotes outdoor activity in state parks

The Florida Department of Environmental Protection is kicking off the new year with a new fitness initiative, Florida Park Fit, promoting outdoor activity in Florida's state parks. Visitors can observe interesting plants and rare wildlife, all while burning calories and enjoying Florida's natural spaces.

"Spending time outdoors provides a multitude of health benefits, and I stay fit by walking, bicycling and swimming in parks," Florida State Parks Director Eric Draper said.

Florida is home to more than 10,000 miles of land-based trails, including the WST. There are also 4,000 miles of paddling trails, providing opportunities for visitors to get #FLParkFit by hiking, biking, paddling, swimming, geocaching and more. While using the WST is free, there is a small fee to enter most parks.

### Gerald Clark Award

Each year the Rails to Trails of the Withlacoochee Citizens Service Organization presents the Gerald Clark award during the April membership meeting. Nominations are now being accepted for the 2019 presentation.

Please forward names of people who have contributed time, energy, planning and why they should be nominated for the Gerald Clark Award to any of the Board members listed in this newsletter or send them to Rails to Trails of the Withlacoochee, P.O. Box 807, Inverness, FL 34451-0807. No matter how you send your nomination, please be sure to include all of the information listed on the form on the next page.



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### **GERALD CLARK MEMORIAL AWARD NOMINATION**

This award is given in honor of Gerald Clark, who showed personal dedication and courage in striving to help fulfill the goals and dreams of the Rails to Trails of the Withlacoochee. It was Gerald Clark whose extraordinary efforts on behalf of Rails to Trails were instrumental in meeting many of its earliest goals.

The award is given to an individual, company or entity whose dedication and volunteer service to the Withlacoochee State Trail exemplifies the example set by Gerald Clark during his lifetime.

Nominee: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Reason for Nomination: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Submitted by \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone/Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Mail to: Rails to Trails of the Withlacoochee, P.O. Box 807, Inverness, FL 34451-0807 or send by email to [acairns@tampabay.rr.com](mailto:acairns@tampabay.rr.com)



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## Sponsor Profile





The Crystal Group was established by Steven D. Lamb in 1984 with a single Chevrolet store in Homosassa, Florida. With the help of his wife Jewel, son Justin, and a dedicated staff they have expanded to many locations throughout Citrus, Hernando, Marion and Volusia Counties, The Crystal Group offers sales and service for Chevrolet, Chrysler, Dodge, Jeep, Ram, Ford, Lincoln, Harley-Davidson, Kubota agriculture and construction equipment.

Crystal group is a 4<sup>th</sup>-generation family owned and operated business that prides itself on creating long-term customer relationships that will last for generations. The Lambs, along with their entire staff, continually make a difference in the communities they serve through contributions of volunteering of time and financial resources. We are so glad they have included the WST as one of the organizations they support!

## Help Wanted

The WST is currently looking for volunteers to help with the following tasks:

-  Sponsorship Coordination for the 2019 Ride – Contact previous and prospective sponsors
-  Registration Coordination for the 2019 Ride – Work with the vendor; monitor emailings and snail-mailings of registrations, coordinate with merchandise coordinator on sizes and numbers of shirts, coordinate check-in,

create rider packets, coordinate rider check-in.



Help with the newsletter – write and research articles, gather photos



Help with the website – keep our site up-to-date.



Trail work crews – Our Wednesday Work Crew is at full capacity, but perhaps our Tuesday Crew, led by Chris Conklin, or our Friday Crew, led by Hal Sugishita, would be a great fit for your talents!

Please note that you do not have to be a year-round Florida resident to help with any of those tasks! You do, however, need to complete the State Volunteer application.

Why not head on over to

<https://volunteers.floridastateparks.org/pages/app/INDIV> to start right now?

## RTW Board of Directors

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