



trail tales



Loxahatchee Chapter, Florida Trail Association

Volume 28, Issue 4: Bi-monthly Publication

July/August 2018

CHAPTER MEETINGS

First Monday of every month

Topics of interest to hikers, outdoor enthusiasts and naturists held at:

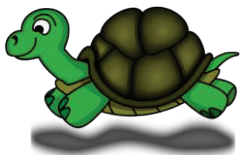
OKEEHEELEE NATURE CENTER

Social 7:00 p.m.
Program 7:30 p.m.

Located in Okeeheliee Park on Forest Hill Blvd. east of the turnpike. Follow the main park road for about a mile, turn left at the Nature Center sign and continue to the building.

EVERYONE IS WELCOME

Happy Hiking!!



Ultra Runners Tackle 63 Miles On The Ocean To Lake Hiking Trail

By Ashley Hecllo, FTA member and Ultra Runner



Nervous chatter was punctuated by the slapping of skin and the death of another mosquito. It was early Saturday, June 2nd at the east side of Lake Okeechobee and race director Dusty Hardman got everyone to pipe down long enough to remind them of really the only thing to remember when running the Lake 2 Ocean 100k. "Follow the *!%!**orange blazes. Not the blue, not the white. With a countdown begun crews wished their runners luck and runners started thinking about the long 15 miles through the Dupuis Management Area before they would see their crews again.

"GO!" 6:00am had struck and we were off. L2O starts off innocently enough for the first timer who doesn't know what's coming. A few miles of farm roads lead you into the Dupuis Management Area. From here you hop over a couple yellow water management gates and prance along merrily thinking, "This isn't so bad, I wonder what all that pre-race chatter was about. The early

conversations overheard revolve around, "My only goal is to not get lost", "I want to make the Riverbend cutoff this year", "I'm only hoping I don't crap my pants." True story. Oh but the water. We're any of us really prepared for the water? And how much would there be? Roughly five miles in and we started getting a taste of what the rest of the day was going to deliver. Dupuis lulls you in early and then becomes very remote, very quickly. Especially when water is everywhere and the area has recently had a controlled burn which had dulled some of the blazes. The fastest runners splashed their way through Dupuis and into the first crew stop in under 3 hours. The first 15 miles of L2O might be the longest 15 miles in trail running. It seems so simple on paper and then you start wondering if maybe you've missed

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something somewhere. Surely around this next bend, behind this next palm tree, are those power lines, but just water and more water. Ah, finally I heard talking ahead and then suddenly popped out of the woods and into the arms of my waiting, cheering crew. Like a pit stop crew at NASCAR the crews get right to work. Before you know it they have filled you up, given you a pep talk and pushed you down the road to the right hand turn into the back gate of Corbett. "This is a very runnable section!" I personally heard as I made my way back onto what appeared to be dry trail for the moment. Lies, all of it just lies.

It was seven miles to the next stop at Grade Road. I've heard that there were some panicky moments for the crews waiting at Grade Road, and waiting. and waiting! What the crews didn't realize was that Corbett was under water, totally under water that was knee deep or deeper. Seven miles that felt like twenty. When I say it felt like it was uphill the whole way that is not an exaggeration. The Cypress strands would have been easily navigable by kayak and I think I speak for all of us when I tell you how incredibly frustrating it was to be moving so slowly and how impossible it was to move any faster. What a sight it was. Here we are in 2018, the world is angry at each other for everything and sometimes the most amazing place to be is in the swamp in south Florida where all you can hear is the sound of yourself sloshing down the trail. The bromeliads

were everywhere, orange and yellow milkweed cheering us on in the waves we were creating. Cypress trees gave us something solid to lean on when we needed a few seconds to catch our breath. And finally, we arrived at Grade Road. We made it, somehow, some way we made it. Twenty two of sixty three miles completed.

Our crews had worried about us and wondered what took us so long but they pushed all that aside and put us back together for nine more miles through Corbett and into Hungryland. During the stretch through Corbett, more than a few of us who were still in this thing started doing the math. There was a hard cutoff at mile 48 in Riverbend of 7:30pm. For all of us left, any pace charts have gone out the window hours ago and all were in survival mode. And still, actual running comes in fleeting moments as we cross hammocks that dot the wet landscape. Good miles are taking 17-18 minutes. Bad ones take over 20. Riverbend cutoff is the conversation now. "Do you know what time it is?" "About how many miles to Hungryland do you think?" "When we get to the pond it's roughly a mile from there." "If my hamstring will hold up, I'm running down the road." "I wonder how wet Hungryland is."

This adventure is continued on the website at www.loxfltrail.org in the documents section

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- Lake Okeechobee: Paul Cummings, 561-596-4423, cummingsps@att.net

Dean Drake's Birthday message.

May 11 Dean Drake, our mighty founder of the Ocean to Lake Hiking Trail, celebrated his 90th birthday. In honor of the special occasion, Dean received many lovely birthday messages, but he said this was one of his favorites. We wanted to share this with you.

Subject: Lake 2 Ocean trail

I wanted to personally thank you on your 90th birthday for creating the most beautiful and horribly brutal trail I have encountered. Twice now I have competed in the Lake2Ocean 100k distance race and both times your trail chewed me up and spit me out! I cried at some point out there and as terrible as I felt I wanted you to know you have created something so amazing! One day I will beat your trail and on that day I will have a beer in your honor! There are many of us who can't thank you enough.

Forever grateful
Barbara Neel

Monthly Activity Calendar

July/August

Date **Description- *Please arrive early to check in***

7/2 MONTHLY CHAPTER MEETING, OKEEHHEELER PARK NATURE CENTER, 7715 Forest Hill Blvd, West Palm Beach, FL Talk about your latest hiking adventures while you have refreshments at: 7:00 p.m. Program at 7:30 p.m. Topic to be announced Contact: Roy Moore 561-307-7792. Public is invited.

7/7 JOHN PRINCE PARK WALK. 2520 Lake Worth Rd, Lake Worth, FL. Walk 2 to 4 miles at your own pace. Perfect outing for beginning hikers. 7:30 a.m. Contact: Paul Cummings, 561-596-4423. Public/Leisure.

7/8 HIKE IN JONATHAN DICKINSON STATE PARK. 16450 S.E. Federal Highway, Hobe Sound, FL. Meet at the front gate of the park at 8:00 a.m. Bring plenty of water for this 7 to 12 mile hike. Contact: Mary Miller, 561-213-2189. Public/Moderate.

7/14 CLIP & WALK. Meet at Tomato Field Grade on South Grade at 6:30 AM or at the north entrance to Corbett at 6 AM. Contact Paul 561-596-4423

7/15 BLOWING ROCKS: 7:30 at the parking lot south of it. Contact Paul Cummings 561-596-4423. Public/Leisure

7/21 OKEEHHEELER PARK WALK. OKEEHHEELER PARK SOUTH, 7500 Forest Hill Blvd, West Palm Beach, FL Take a walk in this expansive park. Meet at Okeehheeler Park South's new parking lot. 7:30 a.m. Contact: Bruce Brown, 772-333-1837. Public/Leisure.

7/22 YAMATO SCRUB HIKE. For south county hikers this area is located off Clint Moore Rd. Hike, then join fellow hikers for breakfast. 7:30 a.m. Contact: Alan Collins, 561-586-0486. Public/Leisure.

7/28 HIKE ON THE APOXEE WILDERNESS TRAIL, 3125 North Jog Road, West Palm Beach, FL. Meet at 8:00 a.m. at the trailhead for this minimum 9 mile hike in West Palm Beach's urban wilderness off Jog Rd. Plenty of water is a must. Contact: Joe Rosenberg, 561-859-1954. Public/Strenuous.

8/4 JOHN PRINCE PARK WALK, 2520 Lake Worth Rd, Lake Worth, FL. Stroll in the park for about one hour. 7:20 a.m. Contact: Paul Cummings, 561-596-4423. Public/Leisure.

8/5 HIKE IN JONATHAN DICKINSON STATE PARK, 16450 S.E. Federal Highway, Hobe Sound, FL. This is a fairly rigorous outing (around 7 to 12 miles) in JDSP Meet at 7:50 a.m. at the front gate. Bring lots of water. Contact: Scott, 561-441-1251. Public/Moderate.

8/6 MONTHLY CHAPTER MEETING, Okeehheeler Park Nature Center, 7715 Forest Hill Blvd, West Palm Beach, FL. Talk about your latest hiking adventures while you have refreshments at: 7:00 p.m. Program at 7:30 p.m. Topic to be announced. Contact: Roy Moore 561-307-7792. Public is invited.

8/11 CLIP & WALK, Meet at the Southern entrance to Corbett WMA at 630 AM for a clip and walk from the entrance in a westerly direction. Contact Paul 561-596-4423

8/12 STROLL BEHIND THE OKEEHHEELER NATURE CENTER, 8:00 a.m. Contact: Paul Cummings, 561-596-4423. Public/Leisure

8/18 OKEEHHEELER PARK WALK, 7500 Forest Hill Blvd, West Palm Beach, FL. Enjoy a walk in the natural area of the park.. Meet at Okeehheeler Park South, Hiking/biking Trails New Parking lot. Walk then have breakfast at Pete's Place. 7:30 a.m. Contact: Bruce Brown, 772-333-1837 Public/Leisure.

8/25 HIKE ON THE APOXEE WILDERNESS TRAIL, 3125 North Jog Road, West Palm Beach, FL. Joe Rosenberg will take you through Apexee 9-12 mile hike. 7:50 am. Plenty of water a must. Contact Joe: 561-859-1954. Public/Strenuous.

8/26 FRENCHMAN'S FOREST STROLL, 12201 Prosperity Farms Road, Palm Beach Gardens, FL 33410. Alan Collins will walk about an hour on trails that traverse shady pined areas off Prosperity Farms Rd., 7:20 a.m. Contact Alan: 561-586-0486. Public/Leisure.

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Florida Trail Association
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*For all FTA information: www.floridatrail.org
Chapter Web site: <http://loxfltrail.org/>*

