



trail tales



Loxahatchee Chapter, Florida Trail Association

Volume 24, Issue 3: Bi-monthly Publication

May/June 2014

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 Okeehlee 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!!



2014 Ocean to Lake Hike Report

By Fred Davis

The weather gods were both kind and cruel for the February 15-20 Ocean to Lake Hiking Trail backpacking hike. Twenty hikers enjoyed sunny and mild days and clear, cool nights with brilliant moonlight. However, rainy weather from December through February left the well groomed trail extremely wet resulting in miles of ankle deep water. Fortunately, hikers accepted the conditions with high spirits.

Unfortunately, several hikers could not complete their hike due to physical and equipment issues. We were very lucky to be able to get all distressed hikers off the trail with the help of a land manager employee (James Elmore) in DuPuis and a good Samaritan couple in Corbett. Scott Lunsford, who organized all shuttles, also retrieved hikers from DuPuis on Saturday and Corbett on Sunday.

Nine hikers, including myself, who completed the entire 62 miles from Lake Okeechobee to Hobe Sound Beach were Rick Byrnes, Sally Davies, Bill Detzner, Nancy Frey, Suzanne Niemann, Barbara Quinn, Rich Quinn, and Judy Steinbicer.

Others who completed parts of the hike were Mary Aikens, Jim Baxter, Bill Herr, Andrea Lowery, Kaye Moore, Jim Moore, Bobby-Jo Sargent, Nadine Troll, Rosa Torres-Tumazos, Elaine Zumsteg, and Paul Guyon.

Thanks to the hikers and friends of the FTA, we raised over \$500 in donations to the Loxahatchee Chapter. I will ask the chapter to use these funds to improve our social media sites, produce a good comprehensive map and trail guide for the OTLH trail, and continue to improve the trail with additional bridges and boardwalks.

Special thanks go to all our shuttle drivers and support people including the trail maintainers. We could not do this hike without you.

Finally, if anyone believes that there are not challenging but rewarding backpacking opportunities provided by the FTA in South Florida just ask any of the hikers who participated in the 2014 hike.

(See picture, page 4)

Chapter Meetings & Events

Monthly Meeting

May 5

TO BE ANNOUNCED

June 2

TO BE ANNOUNCED

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Earth Day at the Okechee County Park Nature Center

By Paul Cummings

Earth day was celebrated Saturday, April 12, at Okechee County Park from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. The free event was set up to educate and inspire the public to preserve the natural environment and engage in eco-activities.

I set up the Loxahatchee chapter display booth and was joined by the following chapter volunteers who helped staff the booth: Val Johnson, Winnie Lo, Pat Torso, Earl Sulzbacher, and Daisy Palmer. We entertained Earth Day visitors with tales of the trails, gave out information about the trails and the Florida Trail Association, and informed them about Loxahatchee chapter activities.

As it was the 2nd Saturday of the month, the usual volunteers for the nature center's information desk, i.e., Marion Finck, Alan Collins, and Gail Irwin, were on hand to do their part.

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Barley Barber Swamp Tour

By Sarah Fisher

Sunday morning, March 6th, fourteen members of the Loxahatchee chapter of the Florida Trail Association toured the Barley Barber Swamp. This beautiful natural area, named for the original homesteader, is part of the Florida Power and Light property and preserved by FPL and the Treasured Lands Foundation.

The group met Chuck Barrowclough, executive director of Treasured Lands, at the Seminole Inn in Indiantown. A video during the short bus ride provided an introduction to the swamp.

Chuck led us on a stroll along the loop boardwalk, pointing out many features of the swamp. We learned about the bug bite protection qualities of cypress cones and bay leaves. We viewed a thousand year old bald cypress, and maples, strangler figs, palms, and the blooming of early spring flowers. Chuck explained the great effort Treasured Lands Foundation is expending to preserve the swamp as well as its history.

We saw an eagle, red shoulder hawks, including babies in the nest, a raccoon, a red rat snake, and several great blue herons.

Afterward, we enjoyed a delicious brunch at the historic Seminole Inn.

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Chapter Officers

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Went Walkin'

By Dean Drake

"Come walk with me, out in the woods, out where the wild ones still roam. There's an owl out there hootin', calling to you and deep in your heart, you know that it's true."

Yesterday I parked in the picnic parking at Jonathan Dickinson State Park and walked to the Kitching Creek Overlook and along the fire road to its junction with the Ocean to Lake Hiking Trail. On the way a barred owl hooted. It was in the swamp somewhere; I always get a thrill hearing them. Another talked back. I've been on that road many times, sometimes wading. This time it was dry.

I walked the trail towards Scrub Jay Campsite and walked to Powerline Road.

I made two rest stops on the way. The first where there are benches on the trail close to the creek and another on a large, dead, fallen pine tree that provided a comfortable seat.

At Powerline Road, I had to decide which way to go. I had walked about 4 2/3 miles and based on the map in my head, how tired I was, how much my feet and legs hurt, and my rule that it's my job to get me back to the truck, I chose my route. I hiked Powerline Road to Park Road and walked the paved bicycle trail back to the parking area. I was a bit disappointed because I had wanted to do over 8 miles, and it turned out to be only 7 1/4 miles. My feet and legs were happy!

The trail took me through one wetland with about 6 inches of water. Otherwise it was dry.

(from column 1)

I enjoyed flowering candy weed, yellow star grass, sabatia and rhexia, hat pins, sneeze weed, sundew, pond lillies, and yellow flowers that I've forgotten the name. There was a cypress tree with a lot of character because the limbs in the crown had grown in an odd pattern. One small cottontail rabbit ran off. (A roaming wild one!?)

This area is all flatwoods interspersed with wetlands and Cypress strands and "domes." The pine are slash pine and somewhat scattered. The trail is well blazed and easy walking.

This is the first time I have done this loop. Others were out with the horse concession that was transporting people in a wagon.

Central Florida Trip

By Dave Cook

Five enthusiastic hikers met me the morning of March 11 where we headed for Vero Beach and the Sunset Cafe.

Breakfast was followed with a woods walk through Oslo Riverfront Conservation Area. We saw more wild coffee than ever before. After a short stop at a new native area along Indian River Drive and lunch at the 3 Dog Deli, it was on to Wabasso and the lovely Environmental Learning Center.

Next it was Captain Hiram Foster Preserve Park and a main trail that comes out of the woods at a deserted stretch of beach along the ocean.

(from column 2)

Then back to Wabasso for motel check-in followed by dinner in Fellsmere at Marsh Landing.

The next morning started like the first in the pre-dawn hours, a country breakfast at Roadside Family Restaurant was followed by a trip along the Jungle Trail to Pelican Island National Wildlife Refuge and the Centennial Trail.

Then a stop at McLarty Treasure Museum followed by the nearby hammock trail in preparation for lunch at Sebastian Inlet State Park. A trip through Honest John's Fish Camp for the fishing enthusiasts among us was followed by the lovely Maritime Hammock Sanctuary Trail.

Then across the bridge in Melbourne to the mainland and the precious Turkey Creek Sanctuary in Palm Bay.

A brief stop at North Sebastian Conservation Area and then on to Fort Pierce for a waterfront ice cream stop. Great way to end a fun-filled two days.

Life is like a landscape. You live in the midst of it, but can describe it only from the vantage point of distance.

-Charles A. Lindbergh, aviator and author (1902-1974)

≡ Monthly Activity Calendar ≡

May/June

Date	Description
5/3	JOHN PRINCE PARK WALK. Take this exercise walk in the park with breakfast afterward at TooJay's. 7:30 a.m. Contact: Paul Cummings, 561-963-9906. Public/Leisure
5/4	HIKE IN JONATHAN DICKINSON STATE PARK. Bring two bottles of water; meet at 8:00 a.m. at the JDSP gate. Contact: Mary Miller at 561-391-7942. Public/Moderate
5/5	MONTHLY CHAPTER MEETING. Social: 7:00 p.m. Program: 7:30 p.m. To be announced. Contact: Sherry Cummings, 561-963-9906. Public/Leisure
5/10	TRAIL MAINTENANCE. Check emails for announcements. Public/Leisure-Moderate
5/11	MOTHER'S DAY NATURE WALK. Meet inside the gate in Jonathan Dickinson State Park at 8:30 a.m. for a leisurely walk to observe the native habitat. Lunch together afterward at a local restaurant. Contact: Sherry Cummings, 561-963-9906. Public/Leisure
5/17	OKEEHEELEE PARK STROLL. Join a lively group for fun and adventure in the park – a great way to exercise. 7:30 a.m. Breakfast afterward. Contact: Daisy Palmer, 561-439-5780. Public/Leisure
5/24	LONGER HIKE IN APOXEE. Join Joe Rosenberg at 8:00 a.m. for a 9-mile hike to enjoy this beautiful area off Jog Rd. Plenty of water is a must. Contact: 561-859-1954. Public/Moderate
5/25	SHORTER HIKE IN APOXEE. For those who want to hike in Apoxee, but want a shorter hike, this one is for you: 4-5 miles. 7:30 a.m. Breakfast afterward. Contact: Alan Collins, 561-586-0486 or 954-681-2100. Public/Leisure
6/2	MONTHLY CHAPTER MEETING. Social: 7:00 p.m. Program: 7:30 p.m. To be announced. Contact: Sherry Cummings, 561-963-9906. Public/Leisure
6/7	NATIONAL TRAILS DAY. Observe the national event by walking in John Prince Park. Set your own pace. 7:30 a.m. Breakfast afterward. Contact: Paul Cummings, 561-963-9906. Public/Leisure
6/8	HIKE IN JONATHAN DICKINSON STATE PARK. Meet at 8:00 a.m. at the gate for an invigorating hike. Bring plenty of water. Contact Mary Miller at 561-391-7942. Public/Moderate
6/14	TRAIL MAINTENANCE. Check emails for announcements. Pubic/Leisure-Moderate.
6/15	WALK IN FRENCHMAN'S FOREST. Access the natural-surface hiking trails, one with a 500-foot boardwalk through a cypress swamp. Lots of summer shade in the pines. 7:30 a.m. Breakfast afterward. Contact Sherry Cummings, 561-963-9906. Public/Leisure
6/21	OKEEHEELEE PARK STROLL. Talk with your hiking buddies as you meander the trails in Okeeheelee Park, 7:30 a.m. Breakfast afterward. Contact: Daisy Palmer, 561-439-5780. Public/Leisure
6/22	JUPITER RIDGE HIKE. Discover five native Florida ecosystems: scrub, scrubby flatwoods, mesic flatwoods, depression marsh, and mangrove swamp as you walk the ridge. 7:30 a.m. Breakfast afterward. Contact: Alan Collins, 561-586-0486 or 954-681-2100. Public/Leisure
6/28	HIKE IN APOXEE. Join Joe Rosenberg at 8:00 a.m. for a 9-mile hike. Enjoy the wetlands and boardwalk over the water catchment area. Contact: 561-859-1954. Public/Moderate