



FROGG

Friends of the River of Grass Greenway

Volume I Issue 1

FROGG, P O Box 5031, Everglades City, FL, 34139

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MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Trail Opening on US 41
***“National Wildlife
Refuge Trail Dedication”***
October 10
**FROGG will have a table
with information**
Volunteers Welcome
See Page 3 for more info

Joint Lee / Collier MPO
Friday, Oct. 16, 9:00 am
Bonita Springs City Hall
Decision on Grant Priorities
**Show your support
for ROGG**

ROGG Meeting
Thursday, October 22
4:30 pm
Cracker Barrel at 951 & I-75

2010 Scenic Ride
in
Everglades City
Stay Tuned for More
Information
Scheduled for the Spring

ROGG applies for Transportation Enhancement Grants

ROGG, partnering with the National Park Service, has submitted applications for the funding of two projects:

- 1) Design Study of 2.3 miles of pathway along US 41 west of CR 92 (near Collier-Seminole State Park); and
- 2) Feasibility Study of 15.8 miles of pathway between CR 92 and CR 29 (crossroad to Everglades City).

The applications were submitted for FDOT Regional Transportation Enhancement Grants. In order to be awarded the grant money, our applications must be ranked as **top priority** by the joint Lee/Collier Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), followed by funding decisions by FDOT at the state level.

There are three committees that make recommendations to the MPO. ROGG did a presentation to the Pathways Advisory Committee on Sep 15, and received unanimous support, ranking our projects #1 and #2! We will do presentations for the other committees in early October.

The joint Lee/Collier MPO will meet on **Friday, October 16**, to decide on ranking priorities. If you can, please attend the MPO meeting at **9:00 am at Bonita Springs City Hall**, 9101 Bonita Beach Road. The Lee County MPO website <http://mpo-swfl.org> and the Collier County www.colliercountympo.net both have a list of MPO members which include all County Commissioners, plus various mayors and councilmen. Their decision is very important! Contact your MPO members to encourage them to prioritize our projects.

Tamiami Trail Modifications: Next Steps

At the meeting on Aug 19, ROGG worked to convince organizers and stakeholders that new bridges constructed on Tamiami Trail for Everglades restoration should include a multi-use pathway. Everglades National Park and the Army Corps of Engineers were receptive to this concept. The challenge will be coming up with a bridge design that includes the pathway, yet does not significantly increase bridge cost.

It is our job to provide them with examples of bridges with multi-use trails. **PLEASE HELP.** Do you know of any examples? If so, please contact ROGG (maureenb@evergladesROGG.org).

TTM Project info: www.nps.gov/ever/naturescience/nessrestoration.htm
Bruce_Boler@nps.gov, Project Manager for TTM: Next Steps Project

Riding the Trail by J.J.(John) Castner

One August Sunday morning my wife and I couldn't sleep. So, rather than roll-out of bed, make a cup of coffee, and go for a walk on the beach at Marco Island, we decided to drive to Miami for breakfast. During that drive, I enjoyed the sights to be seen on the Tamiami Trail through the Everglades, and so spawned the idea....."I think I'll ride my bike from Marco to Miami on my 35th birthday."

About as far as you can get from what could be called an avid cyclist (the farthest I have ever ridden is 30 miles, and I really only bike a couple of times a month), I did a little research in preparation for the day. By most accounts, the simple answer was--- "Don't do it" ! However, with the stubbornness of my father, I resolved that I was going to go for it, no matter what was said about the dangers of the road. To be honest, being a Southern Californian for most of my life, I was less concerned about the cars and more concerned about getting eaten by a gator!

And so it was that at 7 a.m. on the morning of Sept. 3rd, I waved goodbye to the Gulf of Mexico, hopped on the Trek 420 that I've had for 17 years, and headed East to Miami.

For those of you who plan to ride from the west, I suggest you go at dawn, as the sunrise over the Goodland Bridge and the Everglades is spectacular. The first 25 miles of the ride or so, from Marco to Port of the Islands was really quite easy and stress-free. The shoulder on 41 is about 4-foot wide and smooth. I stopped to snap a few photos of the sites and the landmarks, many of which are detailed at "Places to visit on the ROGG" on www.evergladesrogg.org . From Port of Islands to the entrance of Big Cypress Preserve, at about 25-35 miles, was a bit rough and the shoulder has lots of bumps/grates. Still the scenery here has a wide open view of the Everglades and many beautiful birds.

The Big Cypress Preserve was the most desolate part of the ride, and has only about a 1-foot shoulder, but it was a very smooth road, and

really was quite peaceful during a mid-week morning ride. To keep myself feeling safe I checked over my shoulder frequently and then rode into the middle of the road and waved my hands like a wild banshee to get the attention of cars coming from the rear. It seemed to work, because I never really felt that the cars got too close. I even got a good Florida rain shower to cool me off after about 3 and half hours in the saddle. Some of the best parts of the Preserve were the bridge crossings, with crystal clear water and a look back deep into the mangrove and cypress trees emerging from the water.

I don't know whether it was because my arms, legs, neck, and back were aching so much, or whether it was just the change of the land, but once I exited the Big Cypress Preserve and started to get into Miccosukee territory, I did find the beauty of the sites to diminish a bit. That being said, after a long, desolate journey, it was good to get back to "civilization", and I must say I was tempted to stop and hop on an airboat tour instead of finishing what I had started.

Nonetheless, with my wife now usually driving about 10 miles ahead of me and acting as a check-point, I did push on. Overall, this section of the ride was the busiest (maybe it was the time of day or the location), but with some new road construction that is going on, the shoulder was pretty wide. I did stop at the Miccosukee Indian Village, Safari Airboat Tours, and Coopertown (where one of the workers chatted to me about his adventures cycling the trail) for a rest and to see what the hub-bub was all about. After about 7 hours and 90 miles, I pulled into the Miccosukee Indian Casino and my wife drove me the rest of the way into Miami. At first I had planned on riding that section, but after driving it, I would suggest that perhaps this be avoided. There is a LOT of traffic and no shoulder at all.

So there you have it. Although I did see a gator and lots of snakes, I made it through unscathed (besides not being able to walk for a day or two). And the birthday beers have never tasted quite so good!



Come Celebrate National Wildlife Refuge Week!

The Marsh Trail Grand Opening will be held on Saturday, October 10, from 7:15 am to 1 pm. The Refuge will host a ceremony and free activities for the community. The new Marsh Trail parking lot is located on U.S. 41 (Tamiami Trail), about 2.8 miles east of Collier-Seminole State Park and County Road 92. If traveling from the east, the facility is 2.8 miles west of the Port of the Islands community.

Schedule of Activities

7:00 am Parking available at Port of the Islands
Free shuttle to events all day
7:15 - 9:00 am Guided Bird Walk
8:00 - 9:30 am Guided Kayak Tour
9:00 - 1:00 pm Exhibits / Partner Showcase
10 - 10:30 am Grand Opening Ceremony
11 - 11:30 am Fly Fishing Demonstration
11 - 12:30 pm Guided Hike
Guided Kayak Tour

Please contact 239-353-8442 x 222 or Email:
refugeevents@gmail.com for more information
about the events!

Follow the journey of the Pedouin family www.pedouin.org on their Journey of Discovery! They plan to pedal 7,000 miles on a quint bicycle from Kentucky to Alaska across the North American Continent. The journey to Alaska will provide limitless opportunities for discovery about nature, people and the United States.



MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Welcome to the following members who have become a "FROGG":

Fred Rice (Minneapolis, MN) **GOLD** Member

Mack Cycles
Maureen Bonness (Naples)
Patty Huff (Everglades City)
Leslie Paris (Naples)
Michelle Avola (Lehigh)
H C Rackley (Everglades City)
Buzz Victor (Naples)
GeorgeAnn Victor (Naples)
L B Friedrichs (Ft. Myers)
Dale & Judy Simonson (Naples)
Christine Lee (Hollywood)
Jane Cheffy (Naples)
Mel Jacobs (Naples)
Mary Jane Mark (Miami)
Carol Conrad (Sarasota)
Linda McVey (LaBelle)
Larry Mutter (Naples)
Andrew Dickman (Naples)
Theresa Bonness (Naples)
Robert Melucci (N. Smithfield, RI)

**FROGG membership
now available online through
active.com**

Click on www.evergladesrogg.org

then "join FROGG now"

Everglades Scenic Ride 2010

We are now organizing the 2010 Spring ride through the Everglades. This next year we will be starting (and ending) at McLeod Park in the center of Everglades City with food and fun available at this site. If you would like to help with the planning or participating during the Event, please contact Patty Huff at 239-695-2397. Date to be announced.

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