



Launching Florida's Trail Town Program

Doug Alderson, Assistant Bureau Chief,

Office of Greenways and Trails

Florida Department of Environmental

Protection





Office of Greenways and Trails

The **Office of Greenways and Trails** was established to fulfill the Florida Greenways and Trails Act...

To ... ***“conserve, develop, and use the natural resources*** of this state for healthful and recreational purposes”

[Florida Greenways and Trails Act \(Ch. 260, F.S.\)](#)





Office of Greenways and Trails - Purpose

Coordinate and Advance the Florida Greenways and Trails System to support Florida's:





Outdoor
Recreation
in Florida

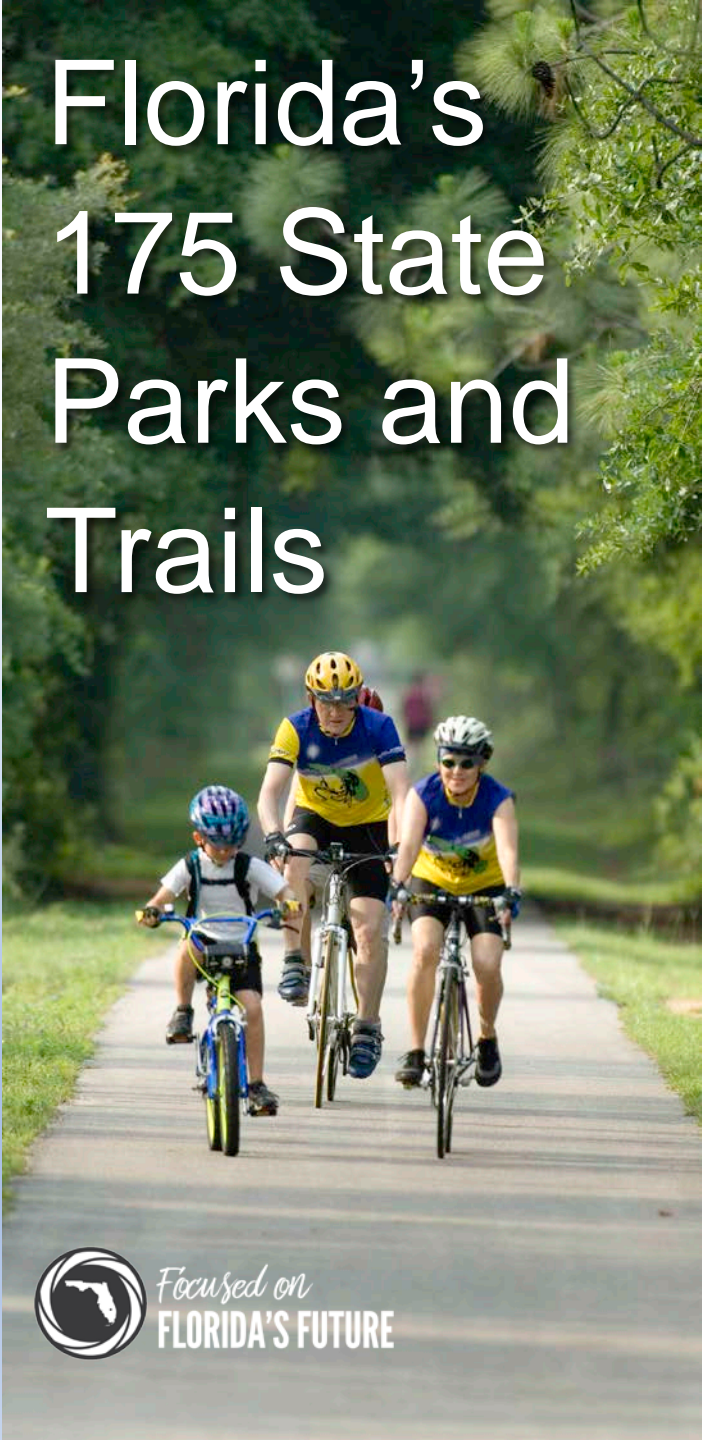
The Big Picture

\$58.6 Billion in Annual Consumer Spending

- 485,00 Direct Jobs
- \$3.5 Billion in State and Local Taxes
- \$17.9 Billion in Wages



Florida's 175 State Parks and Trails



Fiscal Year

16 / 17

\$3 Billion Direct Economic Impact



Attendance:
32 Million



Sales Tax Revenue
\$205 million

Jobs Supported
48,622

Cross Florida Greenway and Florida Keys Overseas Heritage Trail has greatest direct economic impact



2017 Economic Study of Florida Recreational Pursuits

Bicycling
on paved
roads and
trails

\$6 Billion

Bicycling on
unpaved trails

\$2 Billion

Fitness walking
and jogging

\$13.5 Billion

Paddling

\$3 Billion





Trails are among the top 4 community amenities sought by homeowners of all ages

National Association of Homebuilders, 2016





West Orange, Little Econ and Cady
Way Trails in Orange County

Regional Trail Study

- **516 jobs**
- **Annual economic impact of \$42.6 million**
- **Supported 61 jobs in downtown Winter Garden**



Trail Events Boost Local Areas



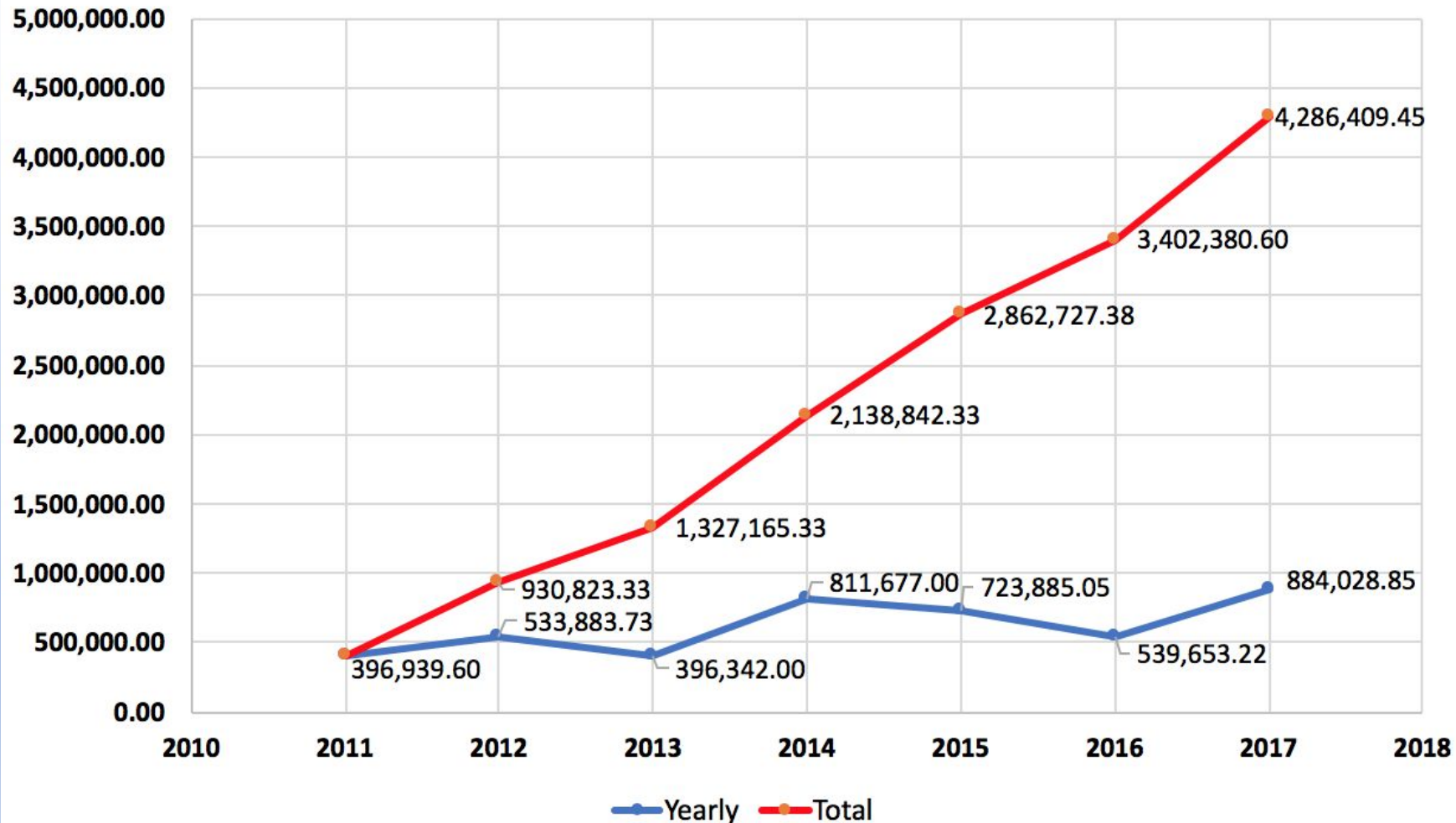
Photos courtesy of Bike Florida

Bike Florida's 2017
Gullah Geechee
7-day Spring Tour
economic impact was
calculated at
\$884,028, the largest
of any year



Trail Events Boost Local Areas

Bike Florida's Total Economic Impact





Every dollar
spent on
walking paths
saves \$3 in
medical
expenses.

American Heart
Association





The Green Exercise Effect: The color green makes exercise feel easier and people are more likely to exercise more often.

Source: University of Essex, Environ Sci Technol. August, 2012





Walking can boost creativity

Source: Journal of
Experimental Psychology, 2014



Green outdoor settings reduce ADHD symptoms in children across a wide spectrum

Source: American Journal of Public Health, Sept. 2004





Getting outside on a daily basis may help seniors stay healthy and functioning longer

Source: Journal of Aging Health, April 2008





Many researchers believe the outdoors simply makes us feel happier





People who live near safe, high quality biking and walking infrastructure tend to get more exercise than people who don't

Source: American Journal of Public Health





Outreach

OGT *Connections* newsletter reached **47,348** subscribers by October 2018.

A 20-fold increase from 2012's 2,305 subscribers.

The newsletter cover features the title "Florida Greenways and Trails Connections" at the top. The main headline is "Winter 2016/17 SUN Trail Program Underway!". Below the headline is a map of Florida showing various trail systems. The cover includes several articles:

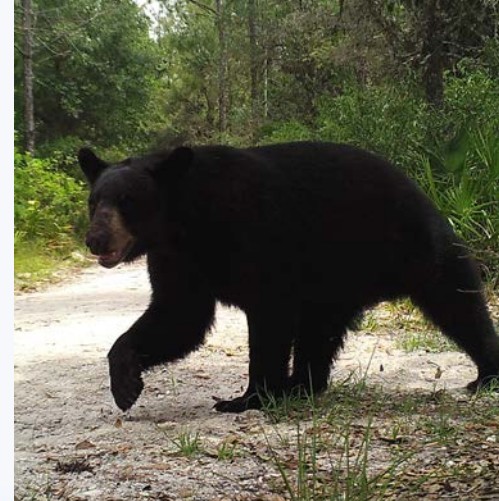
- Family of Five Embarks on CT Trail and More**: Accompanied by a photo of a kayaker. The text describes a family's thru-paddle on the 1,515-mile Florida Circumnavigational Saltwater Paddling Trail (CT).
- Shared Use Nonmotorized (SUN) Trail Program**: A map of Florida showing various trail systems. The text explains that work has begun on paved, multi-use trail projects managed by the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) with planning assistance from the Office of Greenways and Trails (OGT).
- Aaron Carotta, otherwise known as Adventure Aaron**: A text snippet about a canoe journey.
- Scott Warren began his journey October 30 at Big Lagoon**: A text snippet about a paddling journey.



Florida's Greenways and Trails System

- More than 5,500 miles of existing and proposed priority land trails
- More than 4,000 miles of designated paddling trails





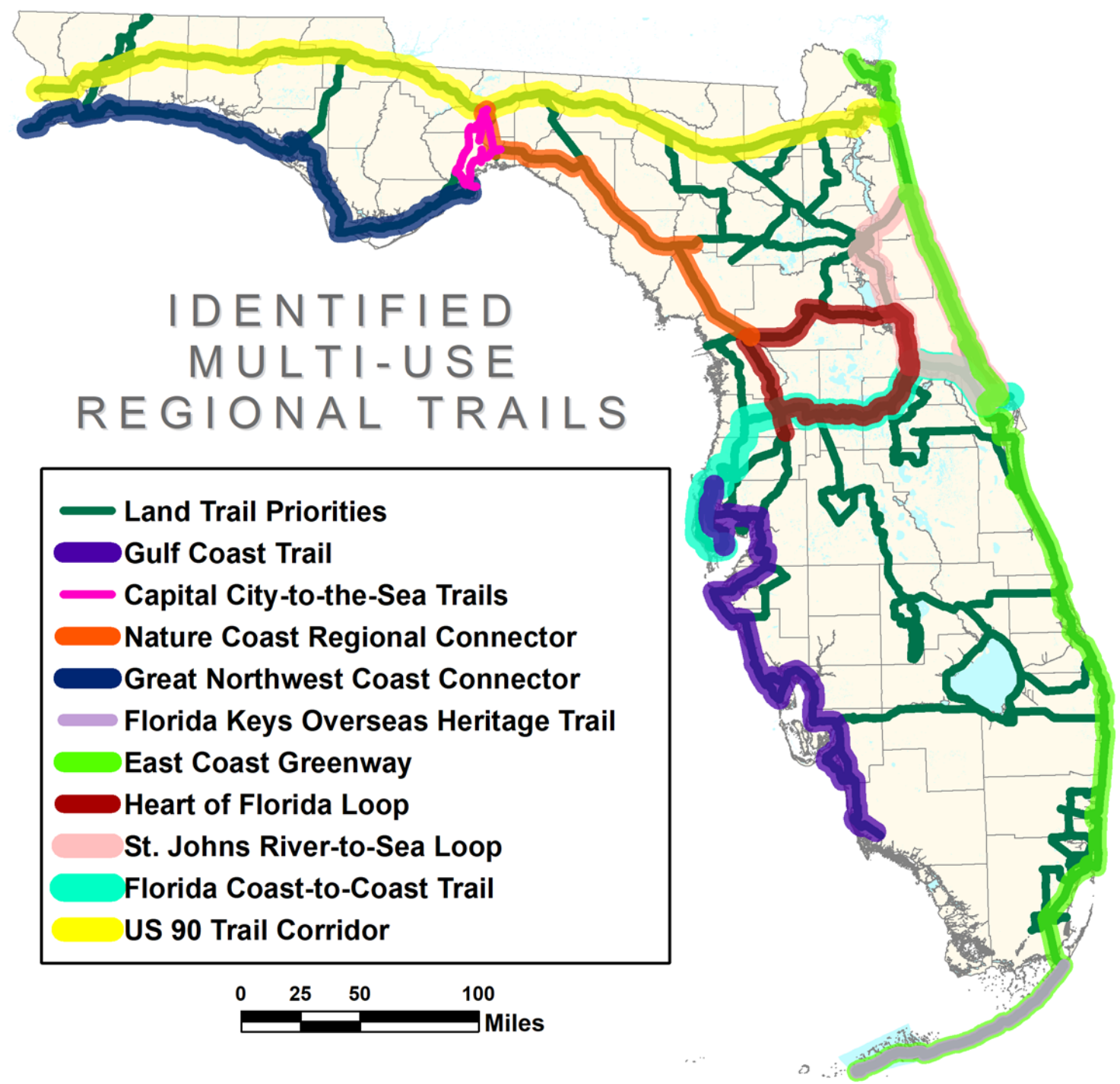
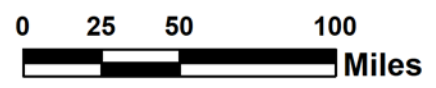
Florida's Greenways and Trails System

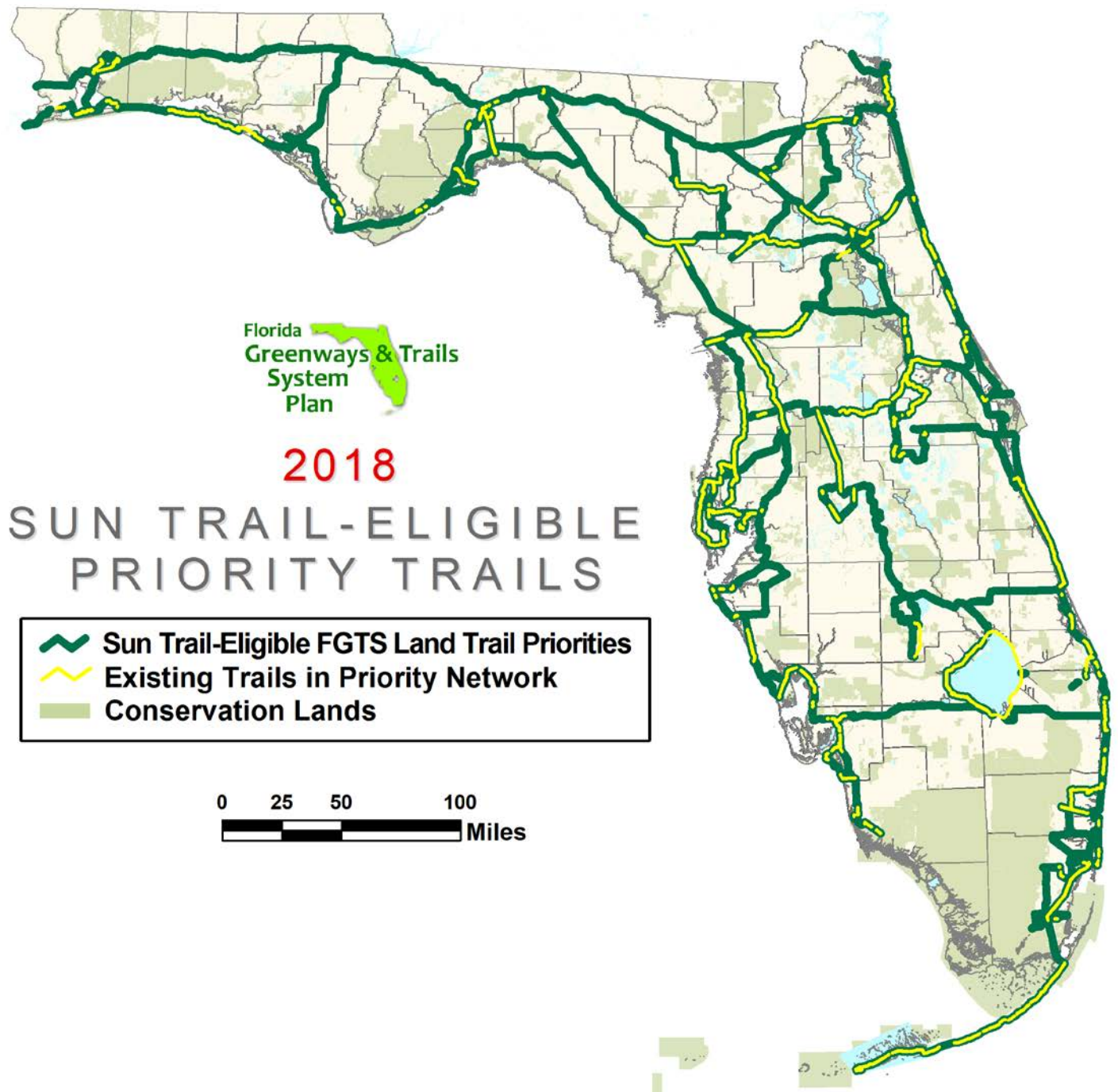
- Includes the 1,300-mile Florida National Scenic Trail
- 1,515-mile Florida Circumnavigational Saltwater Paddling Trail
 - 250-mile Florida Coast-to-Coast Trail
 - 260-mile St. Johns River-to-Sea Loop
 - 270-mile Gulf Coast Trail



IDENTIFIED MULTI-USE REGIONAL TRAILS

-  Land Trail Priorities
-  Gulf Coast Trail
-  Capital City-to-the-Sea Trails
-  Nature Coast Regional Connector
-  Great Northwest Coast Connector
-  Florida Keys Overseas Heritage Trail
-  East Coast Greenway
-  Heart of Florida Loop
-  St. Johns River-to-Sea Loop
-  Florida Coast-to-Coast Trail
-  US 90 Trail Corridor



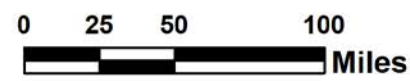


Florida
Greenways & Trails
System
Plan

2018

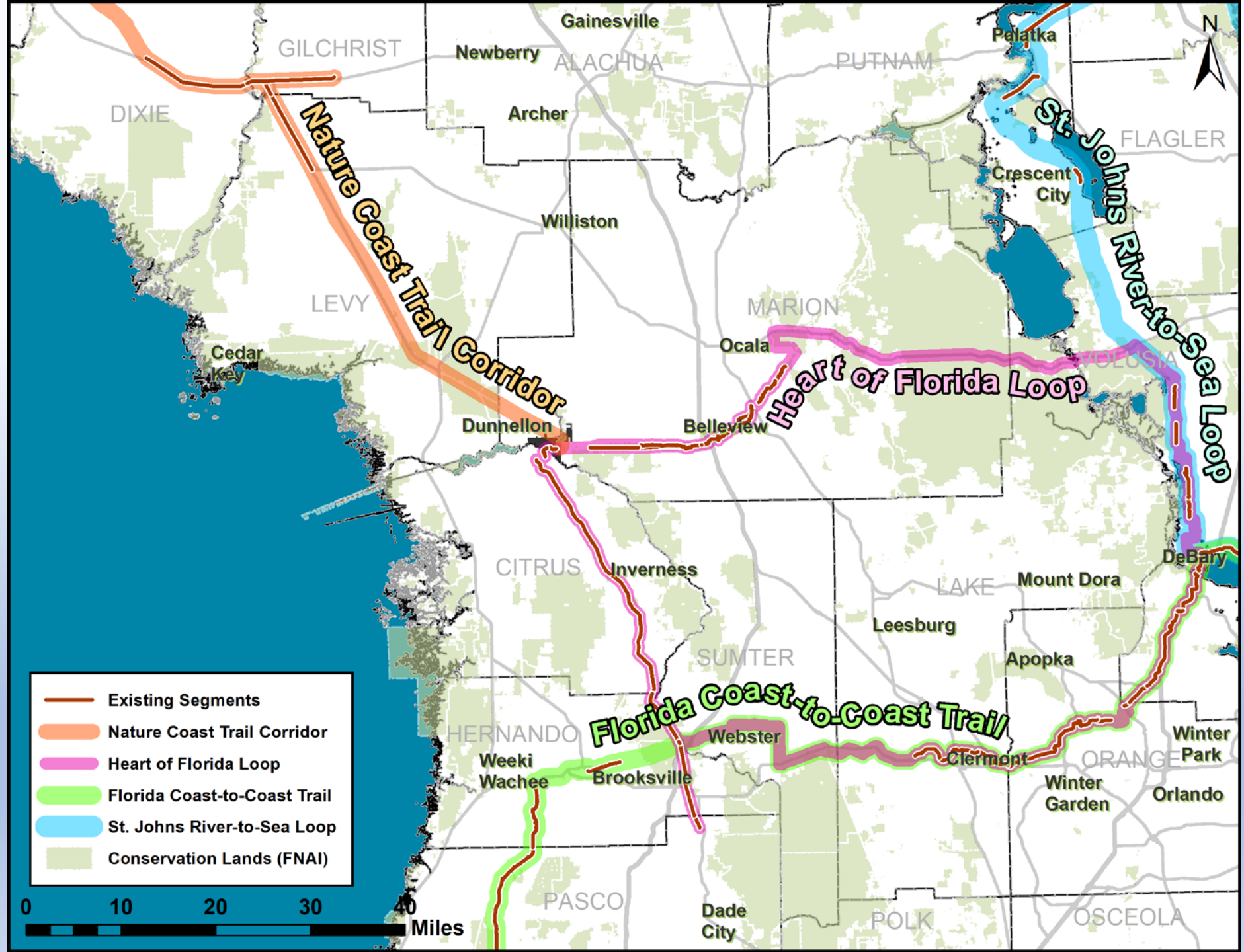
SUN TRAIL-ELIGIBLE PRIORITY TRAILS

-  Sun Trail-Eligible FGTS Land Trail Priorities
-  Existing Trails in Priority Network
-  Conservation Lands



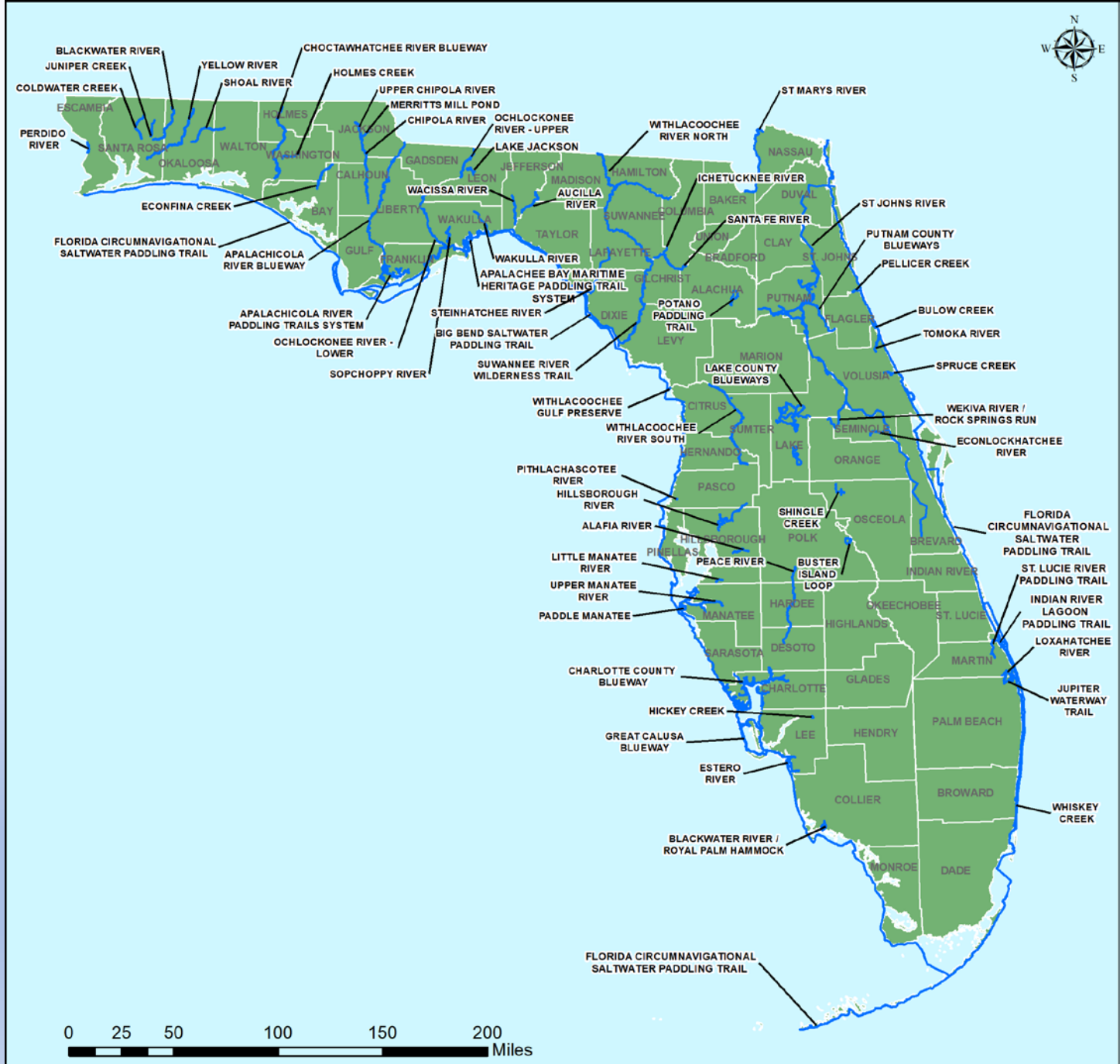


A Sample Look at Existing and Proposed Land Trail Connections





OGT
coordinates
67 State-
designated
paddling
trails,
covering
more than
4,000 miles.





Padding trails include coastline, tidal creeks, rivers and lakes



Keys to Establishing and Promoting A Paddling Trail or Blueways System

By Doug Alderson, Florida Office of Greenways and Trails (OGT), with input from Hank Brooks, Ed Schessl, Carol Sheppard, Jim Wood, Liz Sparks and Betsy Clayton.

Before Beginning

While the purposes of establishing a paddling trail are many fold—raising environmental awareness, creating a sense of place, promoting good health through outdoor recreation, bringing young people outdoors, and boosting eco-tourism—each individual paddling trail has unique qualities. Some are suitable just for day trips while others can feature overnight opportunities utilizing primitive campsites on public lands with little investment or river hubs and developed river camps with a higher investment, such as the [Suwannee River Wilderness Trail](#). If primitive campsites are small, fragile, and in high use areas, composting toilets or port-a-lets may be desired, adding to cost. Creating a vision for a paddling trail and a list of assets and challenges will help determine the budget and tasks required. Also, it may be important to decide whether the trail and associated amenities will be designed for paddlers only or open to other users, such as boaters.



Maps and Guides

- Create clear maps and guides that delineate launch points, distances, amenities such as water and restrooms, camping and campgrounds, nearby motels, restaurants and outfitters, and points of interest. Add waterfront lodging that has kayak-friendly docks and/or kayak launches, and add Great Florida Birding Trail designations. Provide gps points. Ground-truth maps and GPS coordinates.

Guide to
establishing
and promoting
paddling trails
assists local
governments
and groups



OGT Teams with the Florida Paddling Trails Association (FPTA) to Coordinate Annual Florida Circumnavigational Trail Gatherings



“Differences melt away as we share our love for paddling in Florida.” Jill Lingard, FPTA President



OGT Coordinates Bi-annual 3-day Florida Paddlesports Trainings



Participants complete requirements to be an American Canoe Association certified Florida Coastal Kayak Trip Leader.

Goals: safer and more enjoyable paddling trips for the public; more trained State Park trip leaders.



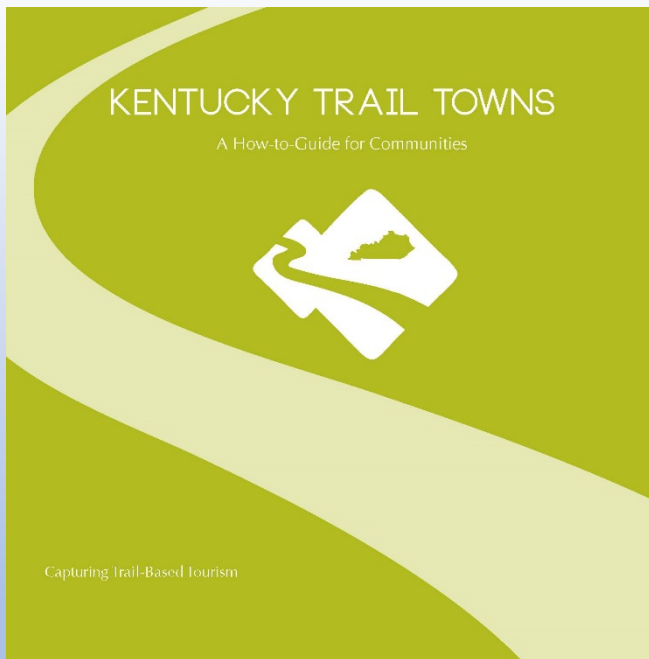
Launching the Florida Trail Town Program

TRAIL TOWNS

— Capturing Trail-Based Tourism —



A GUIDE FOR COMMUNITIES IN PENNSYLVANIA



In 2015, a young planner from our office won a Hulet Hornbeck scholarship and attended the International Trails Symposium where he learned of trail town programs in other states.



Trail Town Program Goals

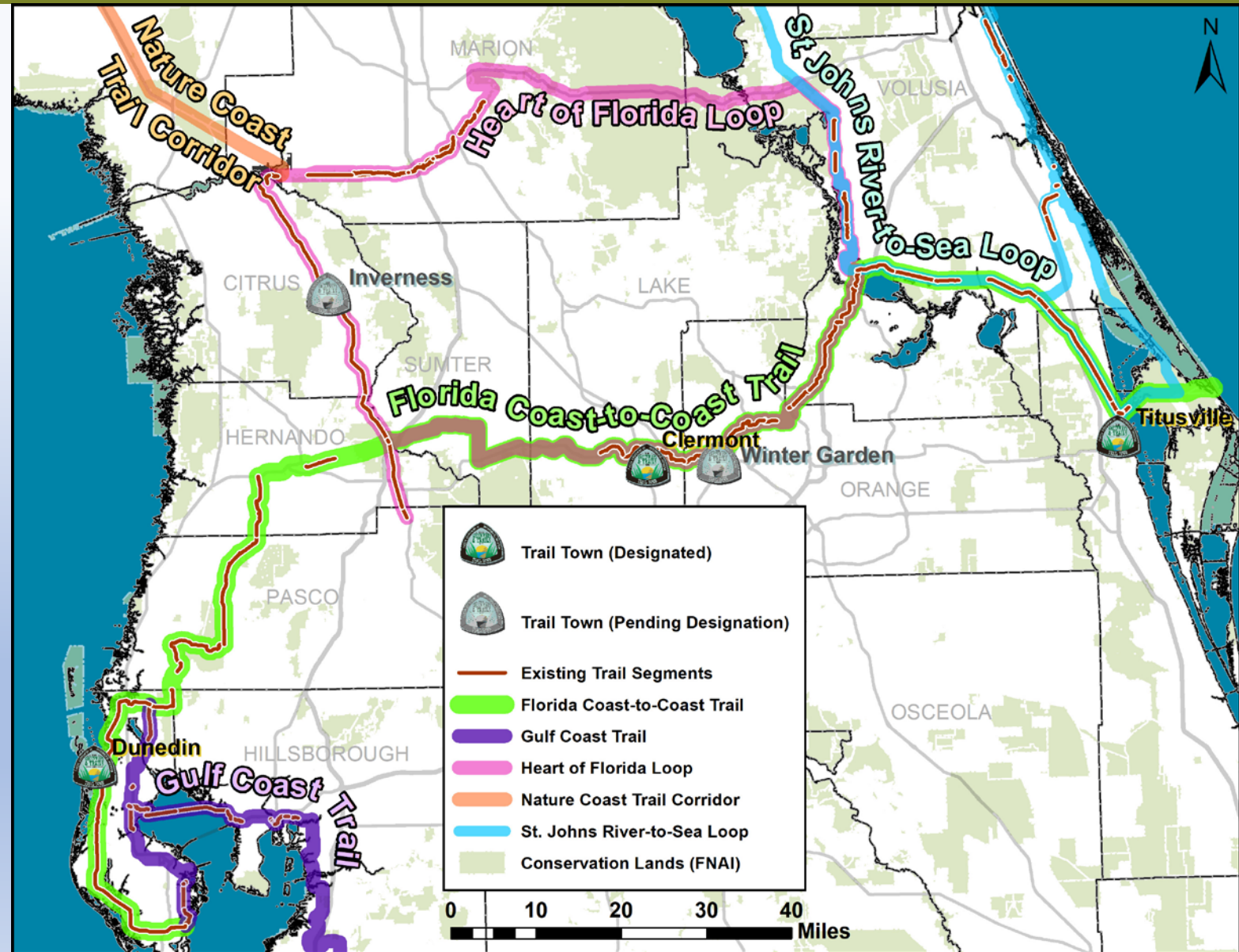
- Enhance the quality of the Florida trail experience
- Promote tourism and growth of Florida's trails
- Increase the amount and frequency of Florida trail users
- Boost a Trail Town's economy via purchases from trail users
- Engage citizens with Florida's trail system through active community participation





What Makes a Florida Trail Town?

- A portal or gateway to a priority trail or trail system





What Makes a Florida Trail Town?

- Have a trails and greenways action plan and shared vision





What Makes a Florida Trail Town?



- Provide trail services such as shuttles, supplies and rentals





What Makes a Florida Trail Town?

- Good signage and trail information





What Makes a Florida Trail Town?



“Trail friendly” with knowledgeable people who interact with visitors



What Makes a Florida Trail Town?

Offer amenities such as food and lodging that can be accessed safely





What Makes a Florida Trail Town?



Feature trail-related special events



What Makes a Florida Trail Town?

Provide a “sense of place”—willing to share culture, history and stories





What Makes a Florida Trail Town?



Is Your Town a Florida Trail Town?

This self-assessment will assist your community in understanding the basic characteristics of a successful trail town, and to help you complete the questionnaire to become a recognized Florida Trail Town through the Office of Greenways and Trails. Visit other links on the Florida Trail Town page for additional information.

Interested communities contact our office and do a self-assessment before submitting an application



What Makes a Florida Trail Town?



OGT staff then does a site visit with local trail advocates and planners



Florida Greenways and Trails Council

Once a trail town application is received, designations are considered for approval by the appointed Florida Greenways and Trails Council, which meets three times a year in different regions of the state. This body is authorized by Florida Statute.



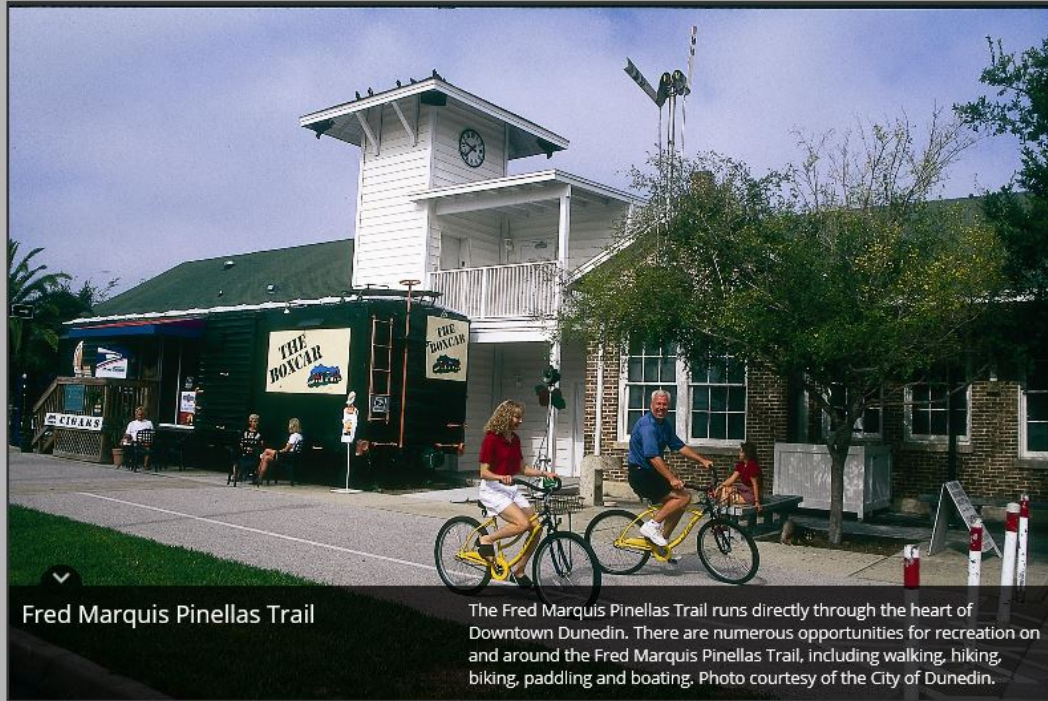


Designated
trail towns
receive
signs,
stickers,
website
presence
and publicity



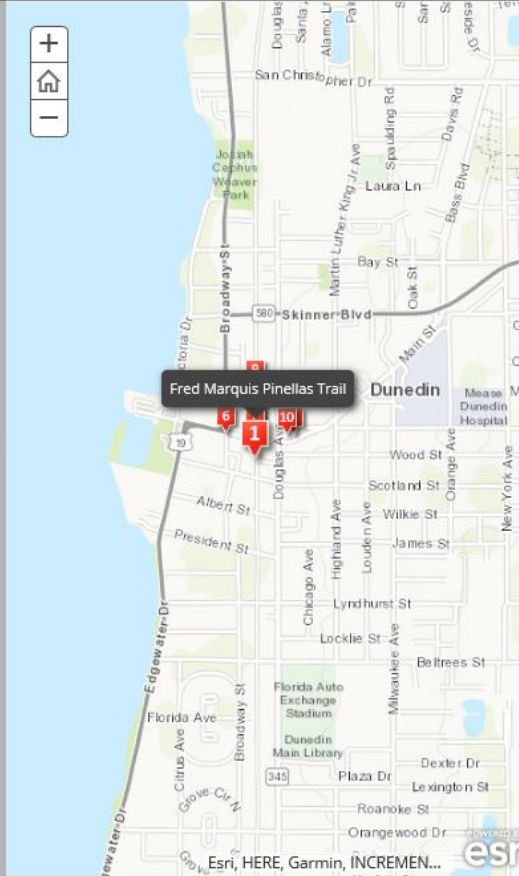
Dunedin: A Florida Trail Town

When you walk the streets of downtown Dunedin, you see a multitude of bike shops, bustling inns, busy cafes and humming businesses. The downtown area is also filled with joggers, bikers, in-line skaters and leisurely walkers, all perusing local businesses and enjoying coastal scenery. Much of the excitement and vitality in Dunedin comes from the Pinellas Trail, which runs through town on an abandoned CSX railroad corridor. Thanks to the Pinellas Trail, downtown Dunedin's business occupancy rate rose from 30 percent to 100 percent.



Fred Marquis Pinellas Trail

The Fred Marquis Pinellas Trail runs directly through the heart of Downtown Dunedin. There are numerous opportunities for recreation on and around the Fred Marquis Pinellas Trail, including walking, hiking, biking, paddling and boating. Photo courtesy of the City of Dunedin.



Story Map
Tours are
developed
for each
town



Fred Marquis Pinellas Trail



Honeymoon Island Causeway



Shared Vision



Dining on the Trail



Wayfinding Program



Pedestrian Crossing



Dining at Night



Festivals



Trail



9 trail towns currently designated



Dunedin: Florida's Inaugural Trail Town

Downtown business occupancy rose from 30% to 100% since the Pinellas Trail came through town

“We couldn't be more proud. Our downtown has thrived around the trail and attracted folks of all ages and abilities. We like to think of the trail as the main artery of our community.”

Dunedin Mayor Julie Ward Bujalski



Dunedin: Florida's Inaugural Trail Town

**Bike shops, cafes, motels and other businesses
all cater to trail users**

“The Trail has been a major catalyst for the revitalization of Downtown Dunedin, bringing in a constant stream of people who shop eat and play in our quaint Main Street area. Embracing and enhancing the Trail has led the effort in making Downtown Dunedin a top destination to visit.”

Dunedin Economic Development and Housing Director Bob Ironsmith



The Dunedin Transformation



Downtown in the early 1980s



Downtown today



The Dunedin Transformation



Downtown in the early 1980s



Downtown today



The Pinellas Trail Loop in Dunedin

Landscaping beautified the trail and raised property values.



Trail under construction



After construction



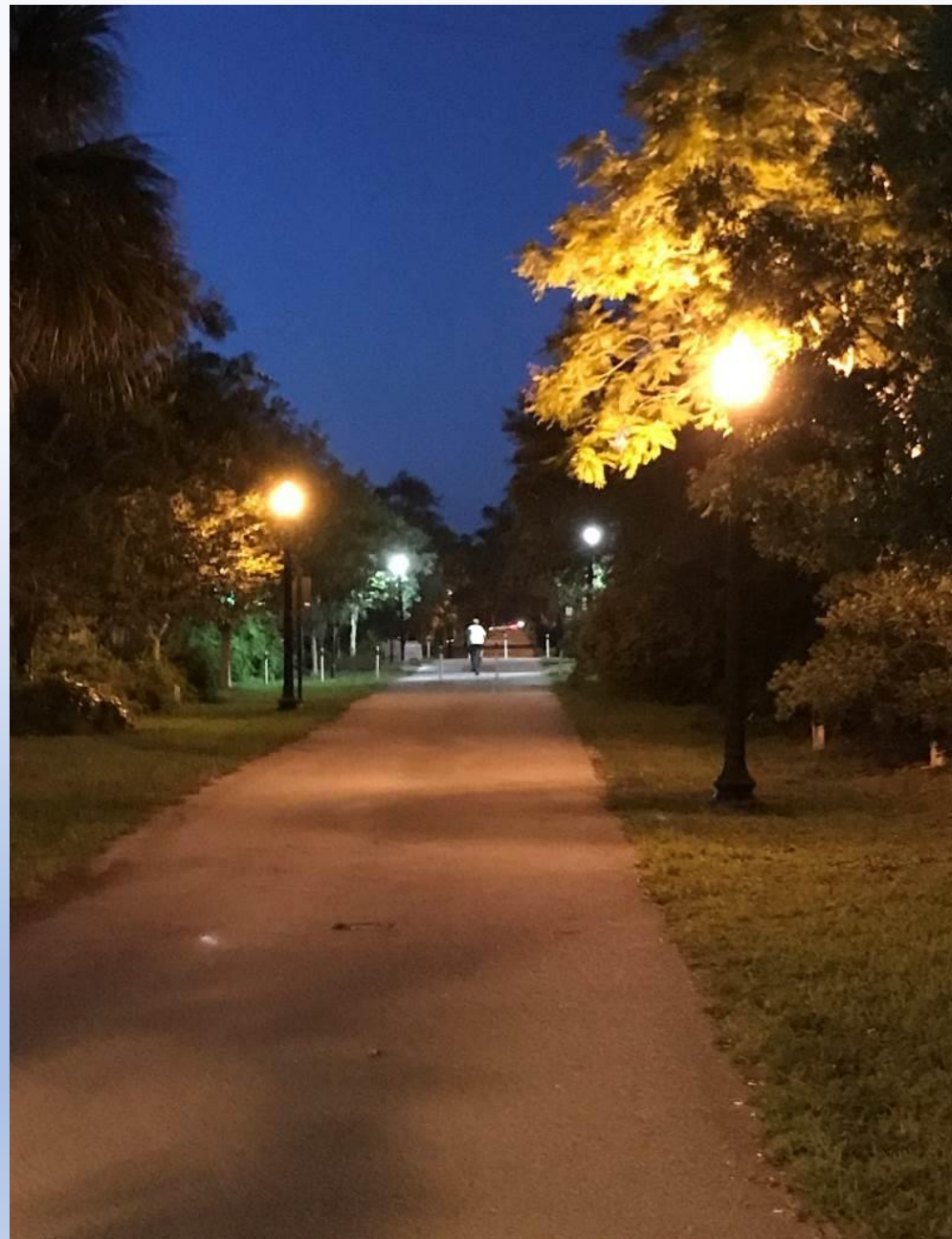
Dunedin's Strategy



- Embrace the Pinellas Trail
- Foster adaptive reuse
- Slow traffic – pedestrian is #1
- Beautify, beautify, beautify!
- Build a sense of place
- Do small projects every year



Dunedin
installed lights
on the trail so
users could
safely enjoy
the town's
night life.



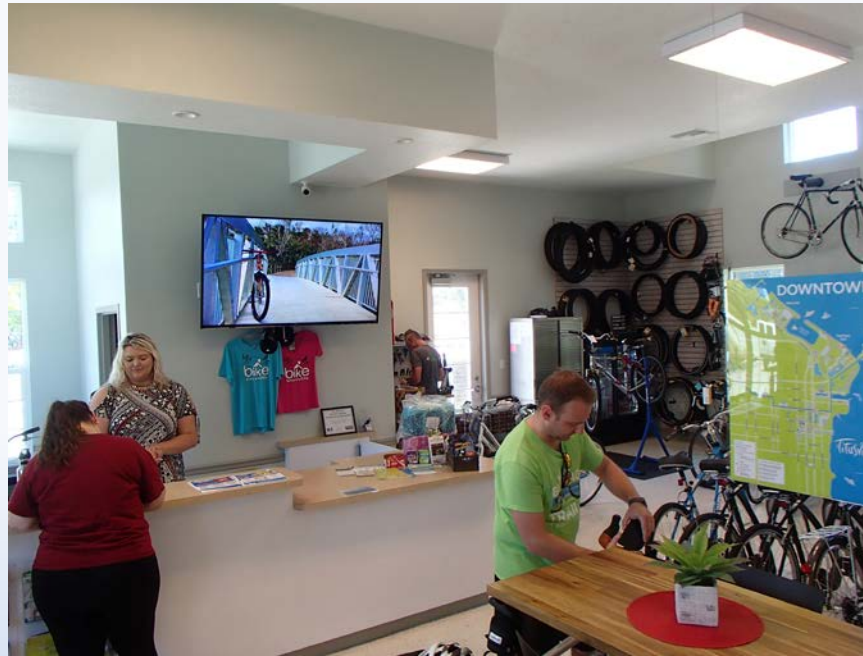


**Dunedin
special
events
expose
non-
traditional
users to
the trail**

[FOX 13 News Report](#)



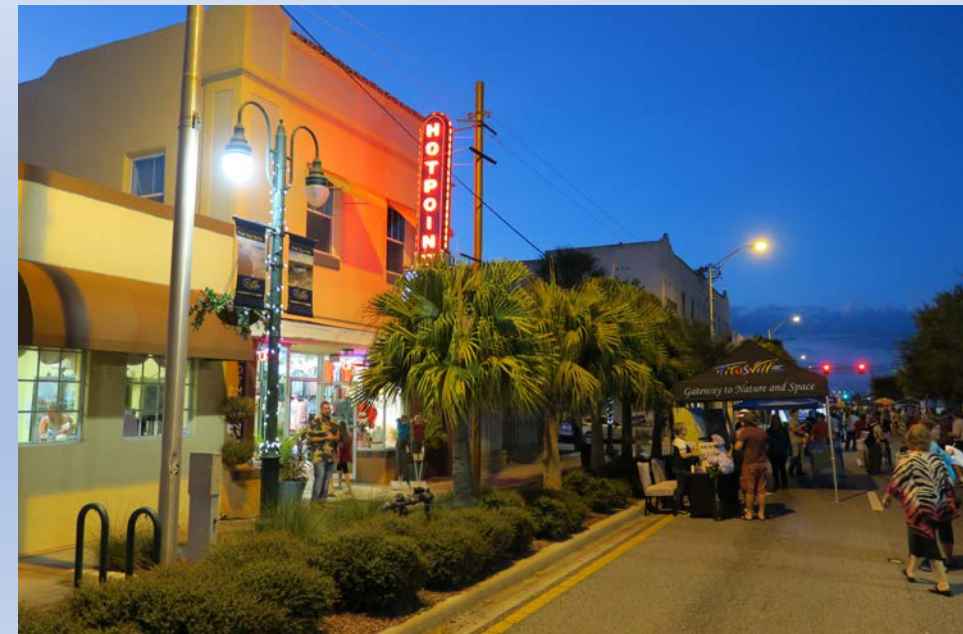
Titusville, Florida's Second Designated Trail Town



[Titusville Video](#)



Easy bike access to downtown and special events and the only Florida town welcome center with a bike shop inside!





Titusville, Florida's Second Designated Trail Town



Good directional signage, safe access to downtown, bridge over busy highway. Town is on the East Coast Greenway, Florida Coast-to-Coast Trail, and East Central Regional Rail Trail





Malabar Trail Town



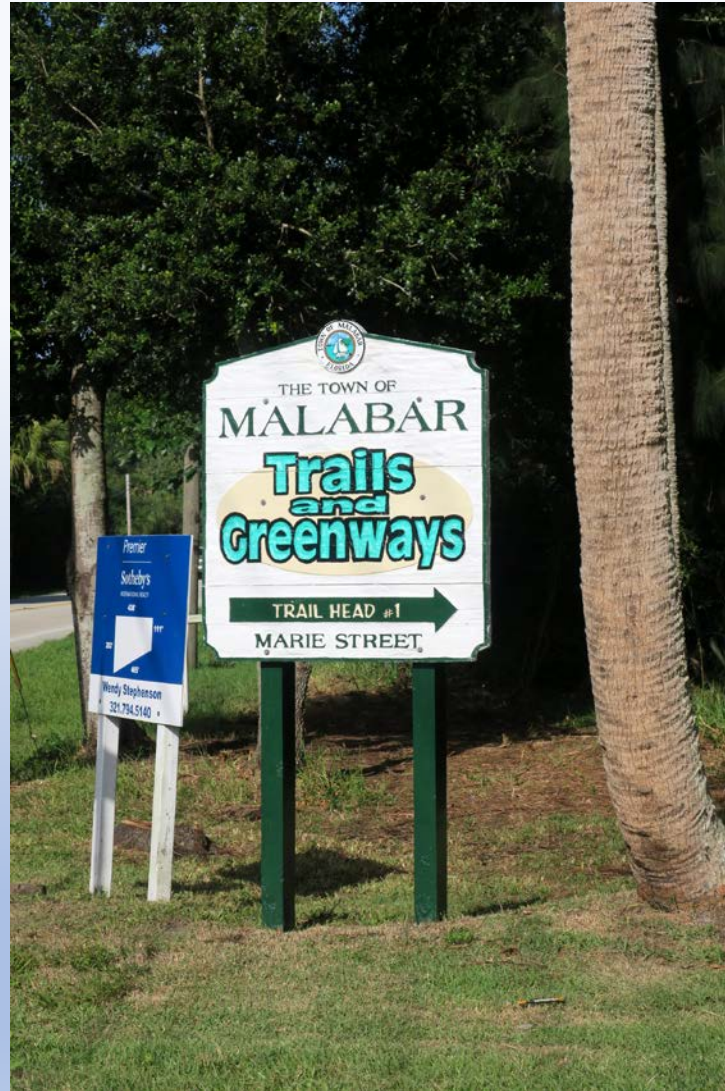
Trail welcome center is part of the Malabar City Hall. Maps and website provide good trail information.





Malabar Trail Town

Good directional signage and
citizen-built trail shelter

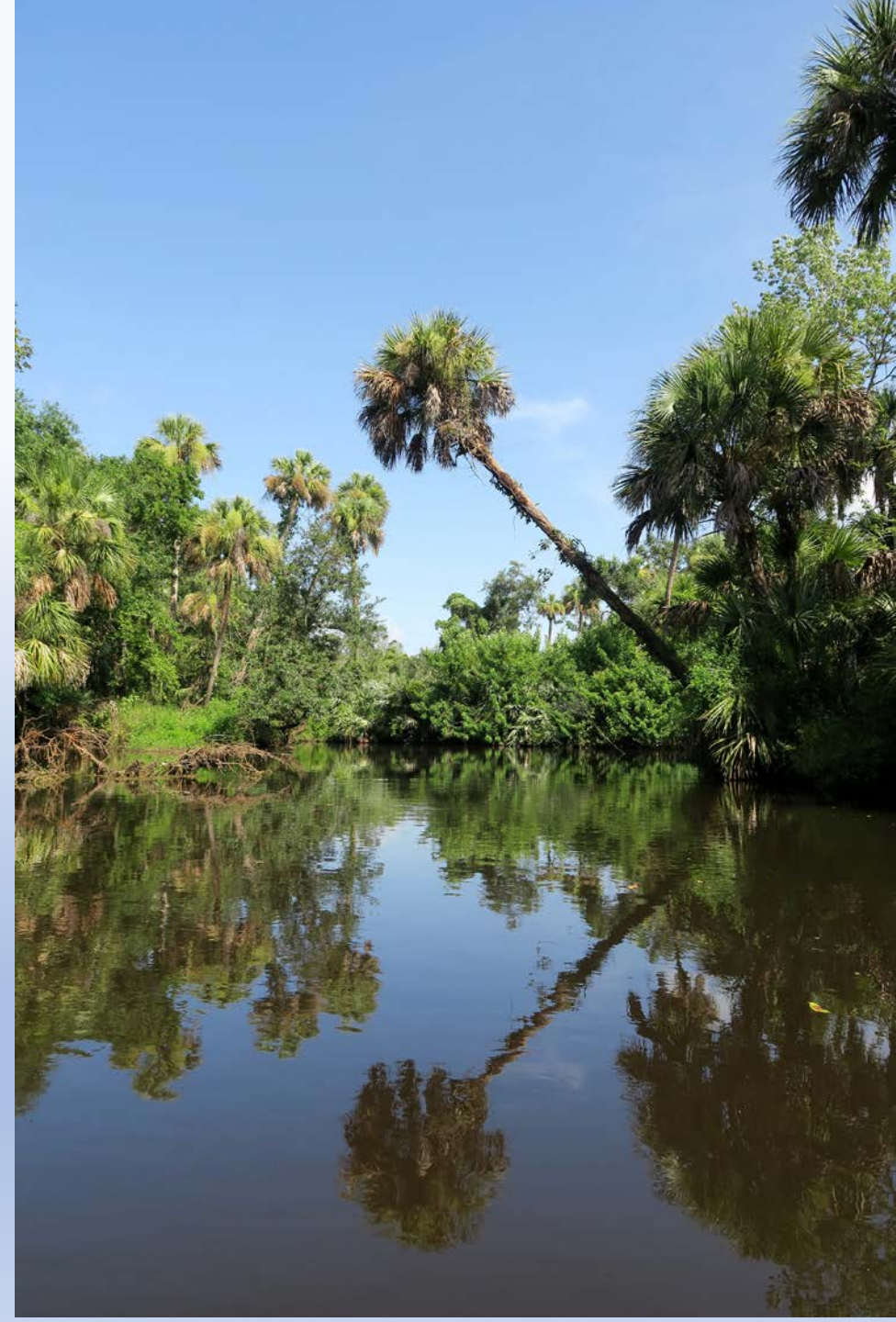




Malabar Trail town



Access to Turkey
Creek Paddling
Trail





Malabar Trail town



Access to Grapefruit Trails, a top mountain biking destination.



Vilano Beach Trail Town

Wide paved trails along main boulevard



Signage on every block



Easy bike and pedestrian access to public pier



Mixture of vintage and modern motels and other amenities

Vilano Beach Trail Town



Access to the Florida
Circumnavigational
Saltwater Paddling
Trail



Vilano Beach Trail Town



Pedestrian overpasses across A1A for
safe beach access



Clermont Trail Town



The midway point on the 250-mile Florida Coast-to-Coast Trail! City parks along the trail have restrooms and showers, freshwater beach access, and the entire trail in the city limits is lighted and will soon have wi-fi access.





Clermont Trail Town



DOWNTOWN WATERFRONT STREETSCAPES



Side trails are being built to downtown, and there is a side trail leading to the town library, motels, restaurants, grocery store and the National Training Center for triathletes and Olympic athletes. A large bike shop that has rentals is on the trail.





Clermont
Trail
Town's
"Meet Us
in the
Middle"
Trailhead
is being
built





Inverness Trail Town



Inverness Trail Town





the DEPOT BIRDSEYE VIEW



INVERNESS CAPITAL ACTION PLAN 2016

Inverness Trail Town

the DEPOT ACTIVITY CENTER MASTER PLAN



VERLANDER Landscape Architecture, LLC

INVERNESS CAPITAL ACTION PLAN 2016



the DEPOT INTERIOR MARKET VIEW



VERLANDER
Landscape Architecture, LLC

INVERNESS CAPITAL ACTION PLAN 2016

Inverness Trail Town





the DEPOT TRAIN STATION • BIKE TRAIL VIEW



VERLANDER
Landscape Architecture, LLC

INVERNESS CAPITAL ACTION PLAN 2016

Inverness Trail Town





Palatka Trail Town





Palatka Trail Town





Palatka Trail Town





Palatka Trail Town





Deltona Trail Town



[Deltona Trail Town Video](#)



Deltona Trail Town





Everglades City Trail Town





There are many more prospective trail towns. A trail town needs to ask: What do we want to showcase to the world?





Trail Towns are a Win-Win for Both the Towns and Trail Users



<https://floridadep.gov/parks/ogt/content/florida-trail-town-program>

