



# Florida Forever Back Country Horsemen, Inc.

Preserving our equine cultural heritage on public lands for today and tomorrow

FFBCH Newsletter June 2008



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## Rails to Trails Now Open to Equestrians

The Withlacoochee State Trail is officially open for equestrian use from the Istachatta General Store south to the Ridge Manor trailhead. There are 10 miles of newly opened and cleared equestrian trail.

The WST can be accessed for day use with parking for horse trailers available at Townsen Regional Park in Nobleton and the Ridge Manor Trailhead just off of SR 50. We have been told by DOF personnel that the paperwork to provide trail access from the Croom forest to the WST is working its way through the DOF system.

FFBCH's first workday to clear the WST was October 2007. We had five official workdays from October to March 2008.

Over 30 different volunteers participated to help us clear the trail. There were numerous other work days when individuals went out and worked on their own clearing the trail. We logged over 300 volunteer hours on this project.

FFBCH is very proud of this effort and proud of all the people who helped make this effort possible.



We would like to thank each of you for your help. We would particularly like to thank Steve Stackhouse,

WST manager for his support and participation in this project.



Steve Stackhouse said, "It was with chain saws, lopers, pole saws, individuals with tractors and gloved volunteers dragging brush that we cleared 10 miles of horse trails that had been mostly unridable for years."

It was a lot of hard work on everyone's part, but the end result has been well worth the effort.

Future plans are to open the trail south to SR 301 and north to Floral City.

## FFBCH Celebrates

Special Notes of Interest:

**General Meeting  
June/July Date To Be  
Announced Soon**

At an Awards Picnic on Saturday, March 22, 2008, FFBCH celebrated its first year in Service. FFBCH also honored our Volunteers and included a Ribbon Cutting Ceremony for a section of RTT equestrian trail that we reopened from Istachatta General Store south to Ridge Manor.



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## Southeastern Equestrian Trail Conference

The Southeastern Equestrian Trails Conference (SETC) is scheduled for July 31 to August 2, 2008 in Charleston, SC.

SETC brings together people who are concerned about the future of the natural and cultural heritage of the trail experience from the back of a horse. The use of saddle and pack stock on trails in wildlands is coming under increasing scrutiny and criticism by natural resource management agencies and non-government organizations

that focus on wildland preservation. Some of these criticisms are deserved; others are the products of misperceptions.

SETC strives for equestrian self-evaluation, learning, and the development of a conservation force that will influence land-use policies at local, state, regional, and national levels. It offers a forum for meaningful communication between natural resource management agencies and trail equestrians.

In this forum, everyone will learn from everyone else. The ultimate goal is to have opinions that are based on the best available information become the platform for trail policy development. While the SETC focuses on the issues surrounding the use of horses on trails in the southeastern United States, the Conference is open to anyone interested in natural resource conservation.

The Conference will include participants from natural resource agencies, non-

government organizations, and individuals representing themselves and/or local saddle clubs. This mix of participants is extremely important to the airing of a wide array of perspectives, values, and knowledge.

We encourage equestrians to participate in these conferences as we all need to understand trail related issues.

For more information visit the website at:

[www.SoutheasternEquestrianTrails.com](http://www.SoutheasternEquestrianTrails.com)

## Tucker Hill Trail Renovation

Have you ridden the new equestrian trail off of the north side of the Tucker Hill Trailhead in Croom forest?

### Do you like it?

In late January 2008, FFBCH brought in the expertise of a Trail Master, Jim Holland, from Georgia.

Working along with Johnnie Arquette from WSF we rerouted the trail so that it would stand up to heavy use and be sustainable. The new trail corridor was flagged and cleared by WSF and FFBCH volunteers.

For years this trail had been suffering significantly from

water runoff erosion. The problem was the layout of the trail – it went straight down the fall line of the hill. The trail now makes two sweeping climbing turns as it goes down Tucker Hill. These turns minimize the impact of the water as it runs off the hill side.

We checked it after a 2 inch deluge that we had in March and there are no signs of erosion whatsoever. Not only has the old "ditch off of Tucker Hill" been replaced with a trail that will hold up to the use – the new trail is quite pretty to ride.

## AERC Trail Masters Course Offered at WSF

The American Endurance Ride Conference (AERC) in partnership with FFBCH and the Withlacoochee State Forest will offer the AERC Trail Master course in Florida on 11- 14 Dec 2008.

The course is usually held on public land and in this case will be hosted by the Withlacoochee State Forest. The purpose of the course is to train both AERC

members and land managers to be Trail Masters. Graduates of the class are qualified to help lay out sustainable trails and maintain trails in a sustainable manner.

The course will be taught by Mike Riter, a Trail Design Specialist whose mission is to create trails that provide users with the best experience possible, require

the least amount of maintenance, and preserve the environment for future generations.

A significant number of FFBCH members are also AERC members. We are pleased that FFBCH has been given the opportunity to coordinate the effort for the Florida course.

The course will run with 10

students who are AERC members and two land managers. The AERC pays for the cost of the course.

If you are interested in attending this course you must first be member of AERC and then apply for the class through the AERC. We will publish additional details as they become available.

I just returned from my second Back Country Horsemen of America's national board meeting. In 2007, our first year, FFBCH was approved as an affiliate chapter of the BCHA. Every state with an affiliate chapter gets a seat on the BCHA national board.

Last year, while I was overwhelmed, I was also impressed at the BCHA's professional attitude and dedication to their mission. I was also impressed by the speakers from the federal government that BCHA could get to come and address their board meeting. I felt very welcome and decided then that we had made the right decision in organizing under the BCHA.

After a year in BCHA and my second national board meeting, I maintain that my first impression was correct. FFBCH has made the right decision to organize under the national BCHA organization.

### **BCHA A Single Focus**

**BCHA is the only nationwide organization whose sole mission is to preserve and to promote recreational equestrian use on public lands.**

I have a lot of information from the national board meeting that I would like to share with you. I would also like to share with you my impression of the BCHA and the importance

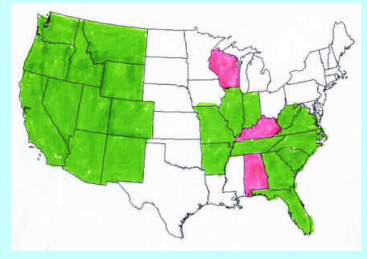
of being backed by a national organization. I've been asked several times by Florida horsemen – "our problems are local what does a national organization do for us?"

Space is limited in this issue of the FFBCH newsletter. Therefore, I will break the national board meeting information and my perspective of why FFBCH benefits from membership in BCHA into a series of articles that will be published in forthcoming issues of our newsletter.

Remember it is up to each of us to keep public lands open for equestrian use. United we Stand but Divided we Will Fall. Working together we will make a difference.

### *Started in 1978 in the West* **BCHA is Growing**

**Now in 26 states  
11 states in the west  
plus Alaska  
14 states in the middle  
and eastern part of the  
country**



**Ride Long - Ride Hard  
- Ride Safe**

*Truman Prevatt*  
President, FFBCH

## **FFBCH Membership for 2008**

Welcome new organization member, Croom Trail Riders. FFBCH currently has two organization members with rumors of several others planning to join. If your organization would like more details

about joining, please contact June Brower at: [browerjune@hotmail.com](mailto:browerjune@hotmail.com).

FFBCH currently has 97 individual and family members plus the two organizations.

We are in our second year of membership with BCHA. As a new organization last year we paid a basic fee of \$150 to BCHA. Starting this year dues to BCHA are based on the number of FFBCH members.

FFBCH will pay BCHA \$10 for each individual member and \$13 for each family membership. An organization is considered an individual membership as they get one vote in the general meetings.

## **FFBCH New for 2008**

FFBCH has a great new brochure available printed in color on glossy paper. This brochure introduces Florida Forever Back Country Horsemen, Inc., states our mission, summarizes who we are and projects on which we are working. It also provides a membership application and contact information.

We thank our sponsors John Mason of John Mason Tractor, Gail Thomas for Hope Children's Home, and John Phillips of Southeast Print Programs, Inc. With their support we were able to publish the brochure at no cost to FFBCH.

Also many thanks to Louise Bower and Becky

Fulcher for designing and laying out the information in the brochure.

As FFBCH members we should each make an effort to educate the public concerning issues we face with equestrian access to public lands for our recreation. The brochure provides us a ready source

of information to hand out to the public.

2500 brochures were printed. We will have them available at our next meeting. Please grab a handful and pass them out to the public. Let's keep the public informed about our issues.

# FFBCH Celebrates 1st Annual Volunteer Award Picnic Shindig

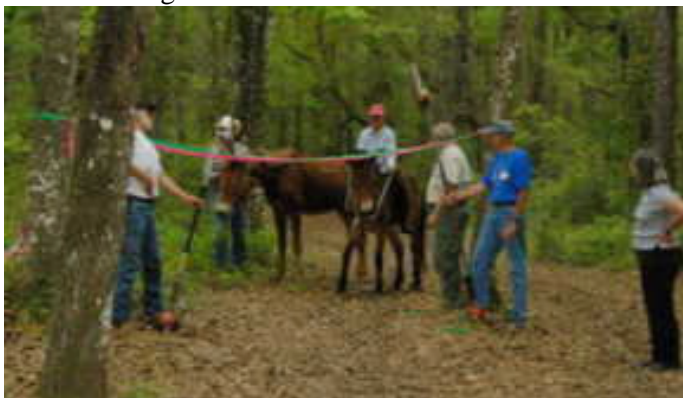
(Continued from page 1)

Although much of the organizing of this function was in the preparations done ahead of time, the day went off without a hitch. The weather cooperated by holding off the rain until our party was over but did provide a nice breeze all day. There were close to 75 folks at our Shindig and a good time was had by all.

Many of our guests brought delicious homemade goodies to share with the group and others made cash donations for future projects. Thurman cooked up some great tastin' Pork and Taters, southern style of course! We also had, voted on beforehand, our local favorite cole slaw from the Riverside Restaurant in Nobleton, which was also generously donated. Follow that with the most beautiful and yummy specialty cakes baked & decorated to the nines by Divine Designs by Diane. After everyone greeted one another, got their raffle tickets and signed in they then settled into position to chow down. Our member, Gary MacIntosh gave a lovely blessing for all of us and our newly re-opened trail and our bounty of food we would share together.

Then we got onto the business at hand and our prestigious award for "Volunteer of the Year" was presented to Dave Mackenzie. All of his efforts, hard work, big equipment operation and waking up thinking of ways to better the trails, made our first year choice easy. Congratulations, Dave. The rest of all of our hard working volunteers were presented with gifts and a big thank you from all of us because, as we all know, without them none of this would have come together for our first big & successful project. Thank you again to all of you!!

Also thanks to MaryLou Patton, Kathy Thompson and June Brower for their hustle to solicit our local merchants and gather a generous amount of gifts to present to our volunteers and also to make our Raffle a huge success. Included is a list of business's that generously gave donations for our big day. If you don't already, please try and shop our at listed merchants wearing your FFBCH hats and find a way to make yourself known to them. They appreciate our business too!



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## Many Thanks to our Sponsors

**Avon**

[www.youravon.com/trule](http://www.youravon.com/trule)

**Tracey Batchelder** 352-592-7673

**Brooksville Natural Foods**

7324 Broad St., Brooksville, FL.

**Candlelight Hair Design and Spa** (Rachael )

962 Candlelight Blvd. Brooksville, FL

**Capricci's Healing Waters**

6230 Spring Lake Hwy, Brooksville, FL.

**Divine Designs by Diane**

[www.divinedesignsbydianeonline.com](http://www.divinedesignsbydianeonline.com)

Specialty Cakes email

[divinedesigns@wildblue.net](mailto:divinedesigns@wildblue.net)

**Dixie Feed Farm and Pet**

28343 Cortez Blvd, Brooksville, FL.

**Essential Healing** massage by Becky Ryan

10443 N. Broad Street, Brooksville, FL.

**Golden Corral,**

940 S. Broad St, Brooksville, FL.

**Publix Grocery Store,** Lakeland, FL.

**Ranch Hand Feed Depot**

21029 Cortez Boulevard, Brooksville, FL.

**Riverside Restaurant**

CR 476 (Lake Lindsey Rd), Nobleton, FL.

**TomKat Feed and Farm Supply, Inc.**

2491 W C 48, Bushnell, FL.

**Tractor Supply**

18741 Cortez Blvd., Brooksville, FL.

**Uniquely Equine,** Cathy Osborn

[www.UniquelyEquine.com](http://www.UniquelyEquine.com) (352) 688-9468

**US Rider Equestrian Motor Plan,**

[www.usrider.org](http://www.usrider.org)

**Wagon Wheel Feed and Hardware, Inc**

25410 Cortez Boulevard, Brooksville, FL.

**Western Stampede Feed & Seed**

1100 Broad Street, Masaryktown, FL.

## New Personnel Assignments for WSF

We would like to welcome two new faces to the roster at Withlacoochee State Forest. Ken McLaughlin has been selected to head the position of Recreation Director, replacing Joe

Tyberghein who resigned in January. We understand that Ken retired from the National Forest Service and was working for WSF for several years in Resources before this new assignment.

Also new is Mark Good who has been selected to replace recently retired Ken Barthelette as the head of Croom forest. Mark's previous job was with the Goethe state forest.

We wish them both well in their new assignments and look forward to working with them.

## Conner Preserve Management Plan to be Revised to Include Equestrian Trails

March 31, 2008

*Fellow Equestrians,*

*After continued efforts and careful consideration from the Land Resources Department of the Southwest Florida Water Management District, we have been informed by Assistant Director Eric Sutton that there will be some equestrian use on the Conner Preserve. We want to thank the Land Resources Department for their continued efforts in evaluating the 3000k acre Conner Preserve and continuing to work with and*

*provide opportunity for the equestrian community.*

*We would also like to thank the Coastal Rivers Basin Board for volunteering their time and their willingness to listen as well as County Commissioner Pat Mulieri.*

*Respectfully,*

*Michael Bradley*

*Representing:  
Suncoast Trail Riders  
The Florida Whips  
TripleB Riding Club  
Croom Trail Riders  
Pasco Trail Riders  
Florida Forever BCH*

It was with much dedication and with the support of the local equestrian riding clubs including FFBCH that Mike Bradley persevered and in the end convinced SWFTMD to reconsider their original decision to exclude equestrians from the Conner Preserve. Mike accomplished this with numerous phone calls, letters, and emails which stated the positive reasons why equestrians should have access to the Conner Preserve along with the hikers and bicyclers. We thank Mike for his efforts and for his persistence.

**If the answer is 96.97 acres, what is the question?**

How many acres is a trail 100 miles long that is an average of 8 feet wide?

100 miles = 528,000 feet  
528,000 length X 8 feet width = 4,224,000 square feet

There are 43,560 square feet per acre.

**Conclusion:  
100 miles of 8' wide trail uses less than 100 acres of land.**



On Wednesday early in May, two trucks with horse trailers were parked at the Smith Prairie trailhead (Croom Road and Trail 7). Both trucks had their rear passenger windows smashed and contents were stolen. They stole Debbie Shaughnessy's purse with lots of cash and credit cards,

a saddle and a GPS navigator. From Becky Swerdloff's truck they stole a GPS navigator, a saddle, and a backpack.

This is the first known or reported incident of a break in to an equestrian vehicle. Previously we heard of break ins to the bicycler's

vehicles parked at Croom Road and RTT's. Debbie and Becky's advice is to leave all valuables at home and to hide all wires and cell phone chargers.

Recently we read an article that said GPS navigators are the hot item for theft from vehicles these days.

## Greenways and Trails Volunteer Day

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**Received from:**  
**Bre Ximenes, Trails Coordinator, Greenways and Trails (352) 236-7143**

In celebration of National Trails Day on June 7th, 2008, beginning at 8:00 a.m., the Office of Greenways and Trails will join with volunteers from around Florida for a work party on the Cross Florida Greenway. With the help of dedicated volunteers and support of trail user groups,

much can be accomplished at the targeted areas of Coyote Corner and a former cow corral south of the Land Bridge corridor.

In the past the group has had close to 70 volunteers who participated in the trail work party consisting of bikers, equestrians and hikers. They would love to exceed that number this time. At the end of the morning's activities, everyone will gather for a "volunteer appreciation" lunch with a

special menu. You don't want to miss this one!

Please meet us at 8:00 a.m. at the Land Bridge Trailhead before breaking up into groups. Bring some work gloves, sun block and wear some closed toe shoes. Mosquitoes are out so bring bug repellent too.

We're in for a fun-filled morning of working together to help our trails look great and then celebrating our good work

with some great food! Bring plenty of WATER for yourself.

Please call Bre Ximenes, (352) 236-7143, if you will be able to attend or if you have an estimate of how many volunteers from your group will be able to participate. Bre is looking forward to seeing each of you out on the trails.

Please contact Bre Ximenes at (352) 236-7143.

**We would like to have a group from FFBCH going to the volunteer day. If you would like to join us and carpool, please contact Kathy Thompson at [kathoms@gate.net](mailto:kathoms@gate.net)**

## Annual Day Use Entrance Pass for WSF

Some Withlacoochee State Forest sites have day use fees for vehicle passengers, walk-ins, bicyclists, and equestrians. Day use fees can be paid daily by depositing fees in the honor fee envelopes and displaying the tear-away tab on the vehicle windshield or rear-view mirror. **Tucker Hill Trailhead** in Croom forest and **Tillis Hill Equestrian Day Use** parking lot in Citrus are locations requiring fees.

Day Use is \$1.00 per person, children under 6 admitted free.

**Annual Day Use Passes** are available for \$30, valid for one year. This pass allows the driver and up to seven passengers entry into any Florida State Forest (where a fee is routinely required) for an unlimited number of visits (\$1.00 for each additional person). To obtain an Annual Day Use Entrance Pass contact

Withlacoochee Forestry Center  
Recreation Visitors Center  
15003 Broad Street  
Brooksville, FL 34601-4201  
352-754-6896 Phone

Members of the [Friends of Florida State Forests](#) can purchase the Annual Day Use Pass for a discounted fee of \$20.00.

The easiest way to join/renew FFSF memberships and receive

the annual day use pass discount is by renewing on the DOF website. The site is [www.fl-dof.com](http://www.fl-dof.com). Select "State Forest Recreation" then "FFSF" and "Join." On-line purchasers may use credit cards.

FFSF members can obtain the Annual Day Use Passes at the Recreation Visitors Center. By showing a current FFSF membership card at the time of purchase, the price is reduced to \$20.

## What do I do if attacked by African Bees?

**Do run.** Run away as fast as possible. Get into a building or vehicle if you can.

**Do** try to cover your face and head as you run. Do call 911.

**Do** start removing stingers from your skin once you are away from the bees. You can remove them by scraping, pulling, or using sticky tape. Do not leave the stingers in any longer than

necessary, as they will continue to pump venom.

**Don't** stop to remove stingers until you are safely away from the attacking bees.

**Don't** jump into water. This only works in cartoons. The bees will see you and wait for you to come up for air.

**Don't panic.**

The **FFBCH** Newsletter is  
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**We are on the web!  
[www.ffbch.org](http://www.ffbch.org)**

# FFBCH

An equine trail advocacy group representing the interests of equestrians who depend on Florida's public lands for their recreation opportunities.

We address current and future issues that face equestrians in their access to and the use of their equines on Florida's public lands.

Our mission is:

- ① To perpetuate the common sense use of and enjoyment of our cultural heritage of using horses on public lands.
- ① To work to insure that public lands remain open to recreational equestrian activity.
- ① To assist the various Federal, State and private agencies in their development, maintenance, and management of said resources.
- ① To educate, encourage, and solicit active participation in the use of the public land resources for equestrian users and the general public commensurate with our cultural heritage.

## Why join **FFBCH**?

FFBCH is an affiliate of the Back Country Horsemen of America, a national organization established in 1973 and active in 25 states. By joining, you will add your voice to those of more than 15,000 of your fellow American horsemen and horsewomen who are interested in improving our equine recreational opportunities on public lands. The number of FFBCH members is all-important as we work to maintain the privilege of using and enjoying our equines on Florida's public lands.

## What does **FFBCH** do?

We are primarily a service organization. We work with public land managers to enhance the equine recreational opportunities in the state of Florida. We do this by providing suggestions for possible trails and assisting with the physical work of maintaining trails.

## How can I help?

Volunteers make trails happen. FFBCH members from across Florida volunteer their time to do trail work in their local public lands. Contact us for more information on how you may volunteer your time and skills.

