



Florida Forever Back Country Horsemen, Inc.

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

FFBCH Newsletter February 2009

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Trail Pace Plans

Plans for the Trail Pace are coming together nicely. We appreciate everyone's support and are grateful to all of you who have volunteered to help.

Anke Matthiessen is coordinating the volunteer efforts and looking for sponsors. Please contact her if you would like to contribute. hobbyhorse@mindspring.com

Many of you have suggested that we have lunch after the Trail Pace. Since we didn't budget for lunch, we decided to have a pot luck. If you wish to participate, please bring a dish. We will have hot dogs available for a \$1 charge. Please bring lawn chairs.

Trail for the Pace

We are excited about our trail for the Trail Pace. The Pace will be on trails in a more remote area of our forest. The trail is very pretty and much of it is used less regularly than other trails in the Croom forest.

Some of the trail will be familiar to you, as many of you have ridden pieces of it on your way to the restaurant in Nobleton. What will be unique is how we tie these trails segments together in a way that will give you a whole new experience and a new appreciation of their beauty.

I have ridden this forest for 20 years and I still say, "WOW, what pretty trails we have!"

From the Side Saddle

Thanks, to everyone for the fabulous turn out at our meeting on Tuesday, Jan 27th. With no chairs to spare and some standing, we got down to business and started the meeting quickly after dinner. The installation of our officers, the upcoming Trail Pace and the Trail Monitoring program were our evening's business.

It was so nice to meet lots of new faces and visit with everyone while collecting for the 50/50 raffle that night. We collected \$116.00 to split with the winner Ken Pridgen. Nice going Ken!!

We extend a big welcome to our visitors from Illinois, Ruth and DW Jones. They belong to the BCHA chapter in Illinois and were kind enough to join us for our meeting. They escaped the snow and brought down their horses. They plan to be around to ride and enjoy our weather here in Florida.

We also had a representative from the "Triple B" Riding Club. I was lucky enough to ride with them at Flagler Beach a few years back on a warm Labor Day weekend. Was great fun in the foam.



More detailed information about the Trail Pace and an entry application can be downloaded from our website.

www.ffbch.org Trail Pace

We encourage you to pre-register. This is not a requirement, but will help us in our planning for this event.

Special Notes of Interest

General Meeting
February 26, 2009
Golden Corral
Brooksville, Fl
Dinner 6 PM
Meeting 7 PM

Our Speaker

Gary Macintosh

How to handle medical emergencies on the trail

Many thanks to our speaker, Anke Matthiessen, who explained the "What, Where and When" of the Trail Pace and the importance of monitoring your horse's heart beat.

I am so excited to be able to participate. I have ridden thousands of miles in many different states and this will be my first Trail Pace. Why not make it yours too. So all hands on deck please or should I say "in the saddle".

Thank You,
June Brower, Secretary

From the President's Saddle

It's the beginning of the new year and time to renew your membership. I am asking our current members to "bring one with you." The challenges facing us are great. As Florida land manager's budgets decline there will be pressure to close facilities because they don't have the resources to support these facilities. Recreation is resource intensive. We have seen instances where the closure of horse trails has been an option on some land managers table. If we want our trails, we need to work to keep those trails open. We must engage and we must engage as an organized group.

On a positive note, the horse trails at the Conner Preserve have been dedicated. This culminates a year long effort on the part of horsemen to turn around the decision that there would be no horse trails at Conner Preserve. Check our website for a map of the trails and a direct link to the required permit application.

Working with WSF, Mary Lou Patton and Dave Mackenzie have been very busy improving signage in our forest. The program will evolve as we go. Please let us know if these signs are helpful.

Mary Lou has also been busy orchestrating the Trail Reconnaissance Program that came about when DoF requested our help to monitor and maintain the equestrian trails.

Last year when FFBCH volunteers opened the 10 mile stretch of the equestrian trail on rails to trails, the volunteers not only provided the labor they also absorbed the cost of using their own saws, chain saws, poll saws, tractors and bush hogs to open these trails. For example to tune up a chain saw or poll saw, new chain and sprocket, the cost is about \$75. Fuel is expensive and it takes a lot of fuel to mow and move brush on 10 miles of overgrown trails.

After reviewing the personal expenditures used for that effort and looking forward to other trail projects and areas that we will be supporting, it became clear that FFBCH needs funds to absorb some of these costs. To support our volunteer expenditures, FFBCH established a line item in the budget called Trail Fund.

To raise money for this fund, FFBCH is sponsoring a "Trail Pace" event. Anke Matthiessen, Kathy Thompson and others have been working diligently to organize this fund raiser. We look forward to having some fun while we support our efforts to improve our trails.

Congratulations to one of our members, Frank VanEvers. Frank has been selected by BCHA to attend the Leave No Trace Master Trainers Course at the Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics training center at the US Forest Service Nine Mile Training Center in Montana in May.

The BCHA is the official equestrian trainer for Leave No Trace. We look forward to Frank sharing what he learns in the course.

Finally, there have been requests to open the equestrian trail on rails to trails south of Ridge Manor. We plan to support that effort in the near future.

I am proud of FFBCH's accomplishments this past year. Our momentum continues to grow and I feel confident that we are preparing to meet our challenges in the future.

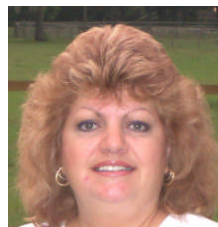
Happy Trails,
Truman Prevatt



Welcome our newly elected Officers & Board Members



**Vice President
Rhonda Culver**



**Secretary
June Brower**



**Board of Directors
Gary Macintosh**



**Board of Directors
Becky Swerdloff**

Sharing the Trail

During Anke's talk about the Trail Pace at our meeting last week, someone brought up a concern about the Leisure Division starting before some of the other divisions that may be moving along at a quicker pace. We scheduled the start that way so that everyone might finish by 1:00 PM. However, it brought up a good point about "Sharing the Trail".

Anke wrote down a couple of trail use guidelines that came to mind for to the Trail Pace.

The most important of these is **"this is not a race"**.

We have four different ride divisions. There will be all types of riders and all types of horses on the trail. Riders may be seniors or juniors. Some may ride fast and some may ride slow. Horses may be gaiting, trotting, or walking. Some horses may be spooky, others will be experienced.

Good trail etiquette is of utmost importance.

1. When approaching slower riders from behind, slow down, and announce yourself.
2. Ask if it is okay to pass.
3. After passing speed up again carefully and make sure the rider has control of the horse left behind.
4. It is often helpful to give other trail users information such as, "Two more behind me."
5. If you are approached from behind, move your horse to the right side or move them to a safe, open place off the trail.
6. If you are riding in a group, avoid blocking the trail.
7. If your horse kicks, please tie a red ribbon in their tail.

Our goal is for everyone to enjoy themselves and to be safe. It is every trail user's responsibility and right to ensure their own safety and expect safe practice from other trail users.

Please ride responsibly and most of all,

Enjoy the trail!



The Polite Way to Use Trails

Basic Trail Etiquette

Trail use is a privilege.

It should not be abused or disrespected. Making trail etiquette a priority allows everyone to enjoy the outdoors and have a good time while being safe and courteous. Remember everyone is out there for the same reasons, to enjoy nature and to enjoy what they are doing.

Trail users should follow the rules of the trail and conduct themselves in an appropriate manner with respect for the environment and respect other users. By keeping safety and etiquette in mind, the trails will stay in good condition and the privilege will remain accessible for everyone.

Safety on the Trail

It is every trail user's responsibility and right to ensure their own safety and expect safe practice from other trail users.

Exercise caution at all times, follow guidelines and rules of the trails. Preventing accidents or injuries is the first step. Acting responsibly if something does happen is the second. Always think clearly!

If you have an emergency or problem in the WSF, this is the number to call.

Emergency Dispatch Number for the
Withlacoochee State Forest

352-754-6757

Tools of the Trade for Trail Work

Using the right tool for the job makes the job much easier to do.

FFBCH purchased two of each of these trail tools with money from our Trail Fund. These tools are specially designed for clearing, building, or maintaining trails.

Kathy says, "These tools would have been very helpful last year working on the RTT."

If you have a trail project and would like to sign these tools out to use, contact us at:

ffbch@earthlink.net

Pulaski: Combines an axe bit with an adz-shaped grub hoe on a fiberglass handle. Loosens dirt, cuts through roots, or grubs brush. The Pulaski is a sharp-edged tool that should not be used in rocky soil.

Safety tip: *Work with Pulaski in front of you. Never swing above shoulder level.*



McLeod: The McLeod has a large hoe like blade on one side and tined blade on the other. It was originally intended for raking fire lines with the teeth and for cutting branches and sod with the sharpened hoe edge. The McLeod is useful for removing slough and berm from a trail and tamping or compacting tread. It can also be used to shape a trail's backslope. Because of its shape, the McLeod is an awkward tool to transport and store. Carry it with the tines pointing toward the ground, ideally with a sheath over the cutting edge.

Safety tip: *Stand the McLeod on its head instead of flat on the ground when you need to put it aside while working.*



TIP: Do you have an annoying sandy area in your yard or driveway?

We learned in the Trail Master class that a favorite trail hardening technique is the use of Kitty Litter. A generic, low-grade kitty litter has a substantial clay content which will act as a binder to help keep the sand together. The cheaper the kitty litter the better.

Mix kitty litter 50/50 with the sand. The trick is to mix it thoroughly and at least 6-8" deep. After it is mixed in and smoothed, soak the entire area with water or do it just before a good chance of rain. The moisture will cause it to pack firmly together.

Try it and see if it works. We scattered some on our driveway and let the vehicles mix it in. It seems to be helping.

On our website

Our website has been updated to include a map of Conner Preserve and a direct link to the **On-line Permit Application**.

www.ffbch.org

Maps

Croom Trail Map Available

As Mary Lou has been setting up the Trail Reconnaissance Program, she has been creating and up-dating a map with the current Croom equestrian trail system. The map is still in draft form, but she is willing to email copies to people who would like to use it.

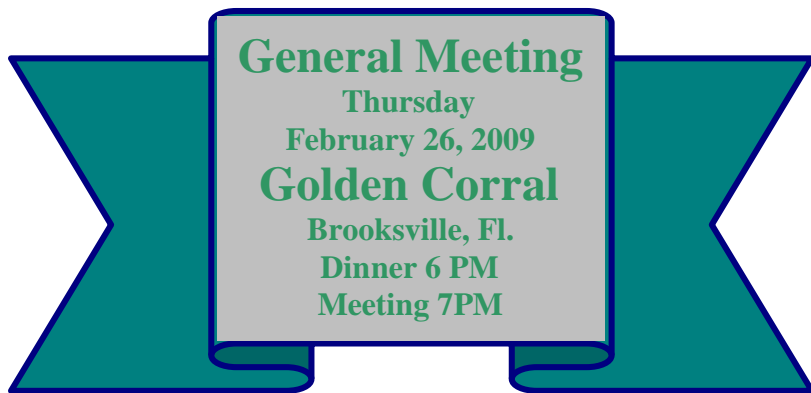
To get a copy of the map contact her at:

mamma_lu@yahoo.com

Southeastern Equestrian Trails Conference

**GAINESVILLE, FL
July 9-12, 2009**

www.southeasternequestriantrails.com



From the St. Pete Times January 16, 2009

Conner Preserve dedication draws a crowd

LAND O'LAKES - More than 100 people gathered today at the dedication ceremony for the Conner Preserve, near the new Connerton development 3½ miles east of the intersection of U.S. 41 and State Road 52.

The 2,980-acre property had been a ranch before Swiftmud purchased it in 2003. Swiftmud describes the property as featuring "a landscape of steep sandhill ridges, expansive marshes, dense cypress sloughs and pine flatwoods."

The reserve is part of a wildlife corridor envisioned by Pasco County and the water district that will eventually connect the Starkey Wilderness Preserve to the Cypress Creek Preserve, creating a continuous corridor of several thousand acres across the region.

Conner Reserve offers bicycling and equestrian trails, birdwatching, hiking and picnicing, and there are plans to add camping facilities in 2010. A field managed by Bay City Flyers can also be used by remote control airplane hobbyists.

Lisa Buie, Times staff writer



Equestrian Use

5.2 miles of designated or marked trails from SR 52 access point. Day-use permit required to access equestrian parking area. Riders are required to stay on marked trails. Each rider must carry proof of horse's current negative Coggins test.

On-Line Permit Application

<https://www5.swfwmd.state.fl.us/applications/Campingpermits.nsf/Permit?OpenForm>

FFBCH Membership Application

Renewal ()

Individual Membership -- \$20 ()

Family Membership -- \$25 ()

For Organization Membership please contact us for more details.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State___ Zip_____

EMAIL _____

Phone _____

*Members will receive quarterly newsletter from Back Country Horsemen of America

If Family -- list additional family member (spouse or partner)

Name _____

Email _____

Phone _____

*Family membership gets two votes at general meeting

Make checks payable to
FFBCH

PO Box 815
Brooksville, FL 34605

Phone: (342) 796-9272

Email: ffbch@earthlink.net

Web Site: <http://www.ffbch.org>

We Thank You for
Your Support!

FFBCH

**The FFBCH Newsletter is Published
for Members and Friends of
Forever Florida Back Country Horsemen, Inc.**

Newsletter Editor
Kathryn Thompson

Officers

Truman Prevatt, President
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Board of Directors

Gary Macintosh
Mary Lou Patton
Gail Thomas Pridgen
Becky Swerdloff

Email: ffbch@earthlink.net

**P.O. Box 815
Brooksville, Fl. 34605
(352) 796-9272**

**We are on the web!
www.ffbch.org**

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.

