

HAPPY FALL TO ALL!!

I hope everyone had a wonderful summer!

Unfortunately we were unable to have our fall get together and Chapter meeting in September due to the rainy conditions at Oak Ridge. Lenny was able to lead his hike on that day and had a great turn out.

Happenings, announcements, that I wanted to pass along to you to keep everyone informed of what our chapter has been up to these past few months and what great events and outings to look forward to in the coming months. The following is listed in no particular order.

- Our chapter has a new sponsor as of June of this year **Trailwalker Gear**, 7910 N. Tamiami Trail, Suite 103 , Sarasota, FL 34243., please check them out when you are in their area or their website www.TrailWalkerGear.com

SUMMER 2015

- Over the summer Gordy Hawkins also lead his infamous **Purgatory on Earth** hikes and had a great turn out!
- **Lenny's** message to everyone: "We managed to maintain a surprising level of activity through the dog days of summer. There were 9 or 10 hikes from June to now. I am looking forward to our chapter getting back to scheduling more frequent and varied hikes as summer gets behind us, the cooler temps arrive and trails dry out. We apparently have a tremendous number of folks wanting to get outdoors and learn about the Real Florida ! And that is good news!!
- **Spring membership drive contest**, Our chapter came in first place for the contest in adding new members! Way to go Suncoast!!

- **FTA Trail Skills Training 2015** This training sponsored by Florida Trail Association was held at Camp La-No-Che, an impressive Boy Scouts of America camp located in Paisley, FL. Wes Calhoun, Ed Shindle, Deb Pierce, Chris Conklin, Ovie and his daughter Anna, and Dan McElroy represented the FTA Suncoast Chapter. About a hundred people attended. We camped in tents or bunkhouses over weekend. Those of us arriving Thursday went on a discovery hike and came across a spectacular zip-line and climbing course. We attended classes on Crew Leading & Feeding, Hand & Power Tools, Community Outreach & Fundraising, Emergency Evacuations, and Blazing & Signage. We spent most of Saturday on the trail maintaining the FNST with tools we had sharpened in class. The FTA staff did a great job feeding us breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Evening entertainment included storytelling and a game night that included an FTA quiz, physical challenges involving cups, rubber bands, straws, and M&Ms, and a quiz show similar to The Newlywed Game. They were educational, interesting, and hilarious. We all made new friends and contacts to help us with trail activities. A little rain and heat couldn't stop us from having a good time. Check the event photos in meetup.

FALL 2015

- The 4th Annual **Western Corridor Hiking Series** begins Oct. 14th. The linear series of 15 segments follows the **Florida Trail** from the Ocala National Forest, through the Cross Florida Greenway, the Withlacoochee State Forest, Richloam Wildlife Management Area and the Green Swamp. The series concludes on March 6, 2016. → Each hike is offered twice: on a weekend day and a week day. These events provide a chance to connect with hikers from other chapters. Leaders and members from 5 **Florida Trail Association** chapters pitch in to make this hiking series possible. Join us in this opportunity to traverse part of the **Florida Trail** and experience the wonder and beauty of the diverse ecosystems in our area. All 30 hikes will be posted on our Meetup.

- The **FTA Board of Directors** meeting will be held in St. Petersburg on October 10th at the Pasadena Community Church's Life Enrichment Center on 66th Street South, just south of Central Ave. .9:00 AM
- **Potts Preserve**- Chapter meeting, trail maintenance and primitive camping the weekend of November 7th—mark your calendars, check for details on meet-up
- **Little Manatee River State Park** November 21st weekend— Thanksgiving celebration and trail maintenance project-mark your calendars,,check for details on meet-up
- **Vote for FTA** on the Michalob Ultra website every day and until October 31, 2015—as of today we are in the lead by about 5,000 votes—you can only vote once per day with a valid e-mail address
BOOKMARK THIS LINK AND VOTE
<http://superiortrails.michelobultra.com/trails/7>
- **March 2016 event** in the planning stage—more info to come soon!

TRAIL UPDATES

- **Little Manatee State Park** is in need of a Section Leader. You will have large opportunity to rebuild,restore and repair several bridges in addition to normal trail maintenance...lot's of available fun !!! If interested reach out to Ralph
- Wes Calhoun is the new Section Leader for the **Croom-to-Citrus Trail**, a newly defined section of the FNST. He became interested in this part of the Florida National Scenic Trail (FNST) after leading hikes from Chinsegut Wildlife & Environmental Area (WEA), through Perry Oldenburg WEA, to Tucker Hill Fire Tower. He and Mitch Almon flagged a new trail through Perry Oldenburg that will reroute the FNST away from the power line right-of-way. The

existing trail had been damaged by logging and burning over the past several years. We is seeking necessary approvals so that the chapter can build and restore the FNST through Perry Oldenburg in an upcoming maintenance project. When agreements between the U.S. Forest Service and the Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission are done, we will start a project to add orange blazes to the trail through Chinsegut WEA. Our long-term goal is to reroute the FNST off of County Roads 480, 481, 581, and into the forests on state and privately managed land.

- Trail report from Gordy Hawkins: **Citrus Tract of the Withlacoochee State Forest** “The trails are rough and ratty looking, but I guess that is good. Means there has been rain and the grass and weeds and flowers and trees had a good season. The controlled burns left a lot of areas with the blazes singed and not visible, so work is to be done. Dan, Thom, Alex, Woody and I are going up Oct 5 - 11 to do the mowing. Then it is going to be fresh and clean looking, just perfect for a weekend of hiking. Stay tuned!” Gordy took over this section of the trail for Neil Fox who stepped down as section leader earlier this summer.
- **Terra Ceia Preserve State Park** in June—our chapter was contacted to come explore their park in the Bradenton area. Quite a few of us ventured down there on a Saturday morning and were treated to a wilderness tram ride through the park hosted by the rangers. George Mesnier and Lynn Meier volunteered to be initial trail contacts for this project. Per Lynn and George: “**I have only been there about a month on Thursdays. The work that I have done for them has been mowing, pulling invasive/ exotic plants, help with spraying invasive grasses with herbicide, picking up trash and some electrical work. This rainy weather has controlled what jobs can be done. The rangers would very much like to get started on the trail marking and clearing. There is an unlimited opportunity for volunteer work there. George will be there on Thursday to get started.**”

OUR MEMBERS

- **Amanda Hus** completed the Pacific Coast Trail, she hiked 2650 miles Began the hike on April 23, 2015 at Mexican border near Campo, CA. Ended the hike Sept. 19, 2015 at Canadian border (then hiked 8 miles into Canada to Manning Park) CONGRATS AMANDA!!
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- **Susan Hanlon** has taken on the position of Membership Chairperson! Thanks Susan!

MISCELLANEOUS:

- Please check our **meet-up site** for upcoming events-see you there!!
- Happy trails! See you soon!!!

Suncoast Chapter Chair
Sue Bunge