

Happy Hoofers Hoopla

Jan-Feb-Mar 2014
Volume 24, Issue 1

www.hoofers.floridatrail.org

1-877-HIKE-FLA

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Newsletter of the Happy Hoofers
Chapter of the Florida Trail
Association

Hike to Eagle's Nest, DuPuis Management Area

By Dave Griswold

It was a bright, clear morning on February 23, 2013 when we met in the parking area at the trailhead in Dupuis. Deanna Filkins gave us a rundown of what to expect and we started off.

When Deanna halted us to look for the nest we couldn't see any difference in the trail, but in a few moments all of us could see the nest through the trees. With our binoculars we could see the massive structure, constructed over many years. There was also the barely discernible shape of a young eagle, its feathers ruffling in the wind.

Suddenly out of the sky an adult Bald eagle swooped gracefully onto



Though the day was warming up, a constant breeze kept us cooled off as we hiked south among the sparse Slash pines. A brown-infused cloud rose from the far south to cover the sun, and we discerned it was smoke from a distant fire. Within an hour the smoke ceased to rise, like a giant finger had snuffed the blaze out.

the nest, a fish (probably from nearby Lake Okeechobee) in its talons. Though partially hidden by pine boughs, we could see it feed its young.

After a few minutes it flew off to another tree, where the contrast of its white head and tail stood out from the dark brown feathers of the rest of its body.

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Hike to Eagle's Nest

After it went off on another fishing expedition we settled down in the shade for a leisurely lunch in the pines. After lunch we watched the nest for a while, but it seemed that the main act was over.

Hiking north on the west trail was not as easy as the trip south due to the trail maintenance of wild hogs. The ruts, furrows and holes strategically scattered over the trail by the feral pigs demanded our constant attention to avoid tripping. The temperature pushing up past 80° also made the return trip a little harder. But we were a friendly, talkative bunch, so that helped speed the miles (just shy of 9 round

trip).

Participating, besides the writer, were: Robert Rockwell, Gail and Mark Luft, Shelly and Toby Kaye, Barb Johnston and hike leaders Clinton Pell and Deanna Filkins. Plan on going on this annual hike next year!

Where the Buffalo Roam: Nature in Iowa

By Dave Griswold

There they were, the first wild

American Bison I'd seen, grazing on the tallgrass prairie. And tallgrass it was, as the five feet tall beasts appeared as dark humps among the riotous brown stalks. The iconic American symbols grazed slowly, their calves appearing almost as pointillist images below the waving stems.

Iowa is almost one big cornfield, with a large minority of soybeans thrown in. I was there for the first time in September visiting my son, Eric, but I wasn't going to let all that corn get in the way of finding nature on the Great Plains.

Our first trip was to the Neal Smith National Wildlife Refuge in Prairie City, near Des Moines. This is a 5,600 acre park where the pre-farming tallgrass prairie has been restored, and both bison and elk, formerly extirpated from the state, were reintroduced. There's a nature center with displays and information on the prairie, and a few nature nature trails through the habitats in the preserve.

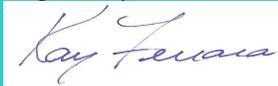
Walking up the rise past the nature center we passed through towering Sawtooth Sunflowers, bobbing in the wind over our heads. Bumblebees, butterflies, moths and wasps hungrily sipped from the numerous flower heads, feasting on the nectar of these late season blooms.

Grasshoppers and locusts clicked, snapped and buzzed from the grass stems, landing on
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Chair's Corner

Time has come to say "thank you" for your support for the past six years that I have served as the Chair of the Happy Hoofers Chapter. And thank the outgoing officers - Tom McDaniel (will serve a 2nd term), Dick Ward and Deanna Filkins. There have been changes in the Florida Trail (FTA) - some good - some not so good. The FTA is experiencing some difficult times and probably will continue to do so due to budget cuts and lack of management. As I have stated before "time is a changing" and with the Chapter's new Officers I am sure that those changes will be good as they take the reins. I will continue to be active in the Chapter as the Chapter Council Representative and Activity Leader, and look forward to seeing you on the trail.

Respectfully,



Kay Ferrara
Outgoing Chair

Kay has done a terrific job for our chapter the last six years, I thank her for her service; it is time to give her a break. I was Chapter Chair from September 1998 through January 2004. I needed a break then, we retired the next year and went off cruising for several years. I've come back to serve again, some things have changed, many have remained the same. I look forward to the opportunity to work with the board to make this the best club it can be. Unfortunately section 2 is temporarily closed due to road construction on I75 until fall 2014. There is no parking allowed at the rest area nor on the shoulder of the road. When construction is finished, we'll have even better facilities at MM63. We have a full slate of new hiking options on the agenda though, so we will continue to have activities available elsewhere.

See you out there

Lynn Thompson

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Upcoming Hikes, Meetings and Other Events, 2014

2/15/14

9:00 AM - 12:00 PM, Fern Forest Nature Center
Fern Forest Nature Center Work Day

201 Lyons Rd. South, Coconut Creek, FL 33063. Our monthly chance to repay Fern Forest for the use of their facilities. Help clean up invasive plants and see parts of the park most visitors never see. For more information: Roland Burrows 954-731-8271.

2/15-18/14

4 Days Cross the Preserve Backpacking
(~44 miles in 4 days)
Limit 10 people

For more information: David Denham 305-667-8643 ddenham@consultant.com Larry Alesi 561-445-9251 larrya1049@yahoo.com

2/23/14

Day Hike to Eagle Nest DuPuis Wildlife Management Area
Approx 7 miles Limit 10 People

For more information: Clint Pell (863)234-9056 pellcd2@aol.com Deanna Filkins (954) 661-5294 dkfilkins@aol.com

3/1/14

9:00 AM - 12:00 PM, Fern Forest Nature Center
Fern Forest Nature Center Work Day

201 Lyons Rd. South, Coconut Creek, FL 33063. Our monthly chance to repay Fern Forest for the use of their facilities. Help clean up invasive plants and see parts of the park most visitors never see. For more information: Roland Burrows 954-731-8271.

3/1-2/14

Crab Fest-Car Camp, day hike in the Big Cypress and enjoy a "Pot Luck" dinner and Stone Crabs

For more information: Lynn and Mike Thompson (954)850-3668 ma12thom@bellsouth.net

3/13/14

7:30PM, Fern Forest Nature Center
Chapter Meeting

201 Lyons Rd. South, Coconut Creek, FL 33063. For more information: Lynn Thompson 954-850-3668 ma12thom@bellsouth.net

3/15/14

Day hike to Gator Hook/ hike through lime stone trail and old logging tram road ~ 4 miles round trip
Limit 15 people

For more information: Esther Muram 954-658-8386 itailusa@gmail.com Robert Rockwell 954-242-6786 rockyhic@hotmail.com

3/22-23/14

Overnight backpacking trip to Fisheating Creek

Limit 10 people

For more information: . David Denham 305-667-8643 ddenham@consultant.com. Robert Rockwell 954-242-6786 rockyhic@hotmail.com

3/29-30/14

Day hike and or backpack Lake Arbuckle at Lake Wales Wildlife Management Area

Limit 15

Kay Ferrara 954-609-4727 kayferrara@bellsouth.net, Esther Muram 954-658-8386 itailusa@gmail.com

Sat 4/5/13

Walk and bird watch at Green Cay

For more information: Lynn Thompson 954-850-3668 ma12thom@bellsouth.net

4/10/14

7:30PM, Fern Forest Nature Center

Chapter Meeting

201 Lyons Rd. South, Coconut Creek, FL 33063. For more information: Lynn Thompson 954-850-3668 ma12thom@bellsouth.net

4/18-20/14

Car camp and day hike. Rodman Campground in Palatka, Florida.

For more information: Mike and Lynn Thompson (954)850-3668 ma12thom@bellsouth.net

4/26/14

Day paddle at Isle of Capri

Limit 12

For more information: Kay Ferrara 954-609-4727 kayferrara@bellsouth.net Vivian Oliva 305-595-1395 snook33172@yahoo.com

5/8/14

7:30PM, Fern Forest Nature Center

Chapter Meeting

201 Lyons Rd. South, Coconut Creek, FL 33063. For more information: Lynn Thompson 954-850-3668 ma12thom@bellsouth.net

**Visit the Happy Hoofers activities page for further updates at:
<http://hoofers.floridatrail.org/activites.htm>**

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Where the Buffalo Roam

the path and hopping back as we came near, almost like a miniature herd. From the oak savannah the high pitched whines of the last cicadas sounded.

As we topped the rise we got our first look at the buffalo herd in the valley. There were at least thirty to forty of them, with the mostly hidden calves making counting difficult. To their left trees clustered around a stream, and as we came nearer the trees two bull Elk trotted away through the grass. I quietly stalked them, hoping for a good photo, but they were wary and drifted away into the shelter of the trees. On the way back up the rise a Great Blue Heron flew up from the trees.

On a second trail through oak savannah we found numerous turkey feathers. Centipedes, termites and worms lurked under logs, and mushrooms and other fungus sprouted from the ground and tree trunks.

The next day we were off to Maquoketa Caves State Park, east of Cedar Rapids. At the trailheads down to the caves a park volunteer gave us a short talk about White Nose Syndrome, a disease that has been devastating bat colonies in the northeastern US. Mats were placed at the starts of the trails to wipe your shoes thoroughly both coming and going, hopefully to

keep the fungal spores from being transported between other caves throughout the country.

Walking down the steep path to the caves we were in a world different than the gently rolling hills and cornfields of most of Iowa. Trees towered overhead, and lush ferns and mosses carpeted the damp walls of the ravine.

We had to bend over to enter the first cave. The darkness ahead was broken by patches of light that shown through cracks in the rock. A shallow rivulet wended through the center of the cave, and as we walked along we heard splashes. Eric pointed the

flashlight at the muddy banks and there we saw small frogs sitting frozen in the light. A quick grab and I had one in hand, and was able to identify it as a Northern Leopard Frog. Out of my hand we watched it swim in the clear water, nestling among the stones to await our passing.

The mouth of the cavern on the other side towered overhead. Native American artifacts have been found in this area, and it was easy to imagine this open space (Dancehall Cavern) hosting gatherings of tribes.

In a hollow of the ceiling of the next cave we explored, Eric spotted a solitary bat. Unlike

other bat species I'd seen on roosts, the Eastern Pipistrelle will roost alone. More leopard frogs sat on the banks of the stream in

this cave, leaping bank to bank to avoid us.

As we hiked the trails up and down the bluffs and along Raccoon Creek we saw chipmunks scurrying about and large millipedes trundling along. Caves only large enough to admit a crawling person peeked out of the rocks. In one narrow crevasse where a huge slab of rock had split from the cliff we found a dead mouse being attended to by several burying beetles (*Nicrophorus orbicollis*). They were moving it down the fissure to bury it as food for their larvae. The mouse must have been large enough to feed a few pairs as normally only one pair will be on a carcass. Unique among beetles, the parents feed and protect their young on their underground larder.

Our final trek was to Port Louisa National Wildlife Refuge on the Mississippi. Just past the parking lot we could look out at the mighty river across to Illinois. We walked down the forested slope to the banks of the river. Evidence of seasonally higher water was all around. A flock of Canadian Geese took off from the water and circled about, honking, to land further out.

Rolling over a log we found a rotund American Toad hunkered down in his form, perhaps thinking about the warmer days of summer past. On our way back up the hill we heard woodpeckers

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Where the Buffalo Roam

hammering and tried to sight them, but they stayed hidden. That was okay, because if all of nature was easy to find it would lose its allure. And even here in

Iowa, we'd winkled out more than a little bit of pure nature.

Chapter Officers and Committee Chairs

Chapter Chair	Lynn Thompson	954 850-3668	ma12thom@bellsouth.net
V. Chair	Tom McDaniel	954 473-8533	gthomasmcdaniel@bellsouth.net
Secretary	Kathy Bonvouloir	954 234-5657	threebons@aol.com
Treasurer	Esther Muram	954 658-8386	italusa@gmail.com
Chapter Council Rep	Kay Ferrara	954 609-4727	KayFerrara@bellsouth.net

Chapter Committees

Activities	Esther Muram	954 658-8386	italusa@gmail.com
Trails	David Denham	305 667-8643	ddenham@consultant.com
Public Relations	Karen Smith	954 263-8109	ksmith623@bellsouth.net
Programs	Tom McDaniel	954 473-8533	gthomasmcdaniel@bellsouth.net
Membership	Susan Seale	954 801-5981	sierrasuz@bellsouth.net
Editor Hoopla	Dave Griswold		dgriswold2001@hotmail.com
Website	Larry Alesi	954 445-9251	LarryA1049@yahoo.com
Volunteer Hours	Lynn Thompson	954 850-3668	ma12thom@bellsouth.net
Historian	vacant		
Hospitality	vacant		

Our Facebook group is:

<https://www.facebook.com/login.php?next=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2Fgroups%2F67137159048%2F>





Florida Trail Association
Building, Maintaining, Promoting, and Protecting
The Florida Trail



YMCA Camp McConnell Annual Conference 2014: Back to Basics -- Fundamentals of the FTA
March 7-9, 2014

REGISTRATION FORM

(Entries in RED are required. Enter 0 if none.)

Registration (select 1 for each participant):

		# People	Total
Adult	30.00	x	0.00
Youth (under 16)	FREE	x	FREE

On-Site Options - Cost is per person (select 1 option for each participant):

Day use site fee (no overnight stay in camp)	16.00	x	0.00
Camping-- one or both nights (tent, camper/RV. Sorry, no hook-ups)	22.00	x	0.00
Bunkhouse--one or both nights: Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/>	35.00	x	0.00

Catered Meals:

Friday Evening Hospitality (bring a dish of finger foods or hors d'oeuvres to share)	FREE	x	FREE
Saturday Morning Continental Breakfast	8.00	x	0.00
Saturday Box Lunch (deli meats and veggie options available)	11.00	x	0.00
Saturday Evening BBQ Chicken Dinner (vegetarian sides available)	13.00	x	0.00
Sunday Morning Continental Breakfast	8.00	x	0.00

TOTAL ENCLOSED: \$ 0.00

Cancellation fee \$35 by February 21, 2014. Deadline for meal orders is February 21, 2014.

Please **PRINT** names of all participants attending as you would like the names to appear on the name badges:

Name(s):

Street Address:

City/State/Zip:

Day Phone:

Email:

FTA Member? Yes No Chapter:

First Timer? Yes No

One registration form per family or individual, please.

Make Check Payable to: FLORIDA TRAIL ASSOCIATION

Mail to: Florida Trail Association, 5415 SW 13th St., Gainesville, FL 32608

Questions about the Registration Form? Call 877-HIKE-FLA or email: fta@floridatrail.org

To pay by credit card, please register on the FTA website at www.floridatrail.org