

# FLORIDA TRAIL ASSOCIATION

## HAPPY HOOFERS CHAPTER

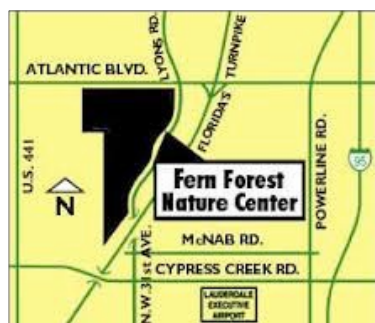


# HOOPLA

Spring 2023 Volume 33, Issue 1

<https://hoofers.floridatrail.org>

The Happy Hoofers Chapter encompasses Broward County. Monthly Meetings Second Thursday of every month@7:00 P.M. Except June/July/August Fern Forest Nature Center 201 Lyons Road South Coconut Creek, FL 33063



### Inside This Issue:

Harper Pass	1,3-4
Refreshments	2
Officers & Committee Chairs	2
Conference	4
Meet the Hikers	5
Prescribed burn	5-6
New members	6
Chairs Corner	7
FYI	7

Membership 6

## HARPER PASS

### A TRAMP OF THE ILL PREPARED

In February 1984 a young girl set out for a 4-5 day backpacking adventure on the Hurunui Pass \*, an alpine pass on the South Island of New Zealand. This girl was poorly prepared for the journey she'd set out on, taking an Aussie "She'll be right mate" approach.

Condition they said: think about what you'll need & how to pack,



practice putting on & taking off your pack, build up to the load you'll be needing to carry. Break in those new hiking boots, you know the cheaper less robust pair, that the experienced sales assistant advised were a less suitable option.

I had done the occasional bush walk with my Dad, I biked or walked to work most days, a 3 mile round trip, did some yoga, and was used to carrying a day pack. In my mind that was enough. My brother would ask have you been practicing, yeah, yeah, I have...

The rude awakening began a few days before we were due to leave on our hike. We sat in the living room, my brother, my brother's friend and his fiancé, dished out what we would be taking, personal items including clothes, then shared supplies. The boys certainly had the heaviest load, but I felt I was carrying more than my share compared to the fiancé who had an oversized day pack. Thankfully we did not carry extra water, as there would be plenty of water available in the creeks, and at the camp huts where we would be spending the night.

On the first day, after taking those initial steps only minutes (continued on page 3)

## Meeting Refreshments are Appreciated

Since we have come out of our cocoon and started having “in person” meetings again, we have, of course, needed a bit of refreshments at our meetings at Fern Forest. We started off in September with an ice cream social. Thank you to Kay Ferrara and Barbara Johnston for getting the supplies and serving everyone a bit of cold refreshment while we all got used to being together again. I think Tom McDaniel brought in homemade ice cream and Barbara T. and Sandy helped serve as well. It was so great to see each other in person for a change.

Each month we like to have two people bring in something to eat and drink for everyone’s enjoyment. Barbara Johnston is our Hospitality Chairperson, she coordinates the refreshments and reminds those who have signed up to bring their goodies. The following people have stepped up and donated their time and efforts to bring us homemade or store bought goodies, and they are appreciated.

Janet Leasher, Kathy Bonvouloir, Susan Seale, Bill Allison, Barb Johnston, Heather Hughes, Jeff Doren, and myself. We have three more meetings before we take a summer break. Thank you to those who have signed up to bring us goodies. by Lynn Thompson

## Chapter Executive Team \* and Committee Chairs

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If you are interested in volunteering for a position or are ready to learn how you can help out, contact Lynn Thompson at [ma12thom@bellsouth.net](mailto:ma12thom@bellsouth.net). We are always looking for help. It takes a lot of work to keep an organization running smoothly, and your help would be greatly appreciated.



(Continued from page 1)

down the trail, I thought, “you’ve got to be kidding, I can’t haul this pack for 15 more minutes let alone 4 more days, it was so heavy & uncomfortable. What sort of nightmare had I conjured into my waking life?” I forced myself to push on.

Wasn't long before we came to our first water crossing. Now it's bad enough crossing one of those wire cable swing bridges, but crossing a tree log high above a creek with a heavy load, that's ridiculous! It scared me, we had several crossing like this, some worse than others. A few of them I actually got down on my hands and knees, & crawled across.

So I survived the first day, the cabin was large & well catered for. My muscles were sore, the night was cold, and to add salt to the wounds, it was raining the next morning. I thought unconvincingly, surely we would not continue to hike in the wet, but we did.

Each step was a trial, taking breaks was sheer ecstasy. What got me through the trip was a healthy dose of family stubbornness, "as Stubborn as a Hind", home made scroggin \*\* that we ate along the way, and the absolute Beauty and Majesty of the land we toiled through.

We wandered into magical forests, met the wild things that called them home. Drank from fresh mountain streams, enjoyed soaking in natural hot springs. Walked through soft meadows, bathed in icy streams, traversed scree slopes., and on the last day out, we walked for miles down a river bed, over boulders, river rock, & stone.

We Made it!

We were met at the end of the trail, took our packs off for the last time. We drove to a country diner, where a burger and milkshake never tasted so good. After stopping, and getting back to civilization, for the next few days I could barely move, but what an amazing adventure! The struggle was real, but made for some damn good memories. by Carmel Hind

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\*The Hurunui Pass or Harper Pass as it is called today - is the lowest pass in the region & crosses two major rivers, the Taramakau, & the Otira. The pass has an elevation of 972m (or 3,156 feet), & spans approximately 76km between Canterbury and the West Coast of New Zealand.

\*This mountain pass was the most important crossing for Māori to obtain "pounamu", a beautiful green stone, highly prized by the people & crafted by artisans.

\*\*Scroggin - is a mixture of oats, nuts, dried fruit & Chocolate. Similar to today's commercial trail bars.





### 38th Annual South Regional Conference Huge Success

January 13-15, 2023 the Alligator Amblers hosted our annual conference at Camp Miles Scout Camp in Punta Gorda. After three years of being in isolation, everyone was excited to see our fellow chapters again. There were more used tents, backpacks, and sleeping bags in the Silent Auction than I've ever seen before! The Wuz Nu tables were brimming with all manor of used camping gear.

The line up of speakers was extraordinary, everyone enjoyed the presentations. There was a short paddle on the lake and a hike around the property for those wishing to get outdoors in the cold. Sunday morning we awoke to frost on the tents and windshields, but we still had a great time. Some enjoyed the campfire in the evenings.

After all was said and done, each of the 6 chapters and the State FTA office received a nice check from the profits after all the expenses were paid. This is our only big fund raiser for the year, and this check will go a long way to help pay for more tools and equipment to maintain the trail.

I want to thank all of the Happy Hoofers who helped with setting up, taking down, manning tables, selling tickets, leading the paddle, helping with registration, and numerous other jobs throughout the conference. I want to recognize all of you for a job well done:

Kay Ferrara, Kathleen Bonvouloir, Barbara Tschimpke, Esther Muram, Bill Allison, Robert Grosswald, Jeff Doren, Dick Ward, Mike Thompson, Tom McDaniels. Thank you again, Lynn Thompson

## Meet the Hikers 2023

Every year the Florida Trail Alliance stages a “Hiker Kickoff” for 3 days in January off Tamiami Trail for the thru hikers to meet and start off in the Big Cypress swamp together. They try to space them out so that no more than 10 hikers a day start out, because the campsites will not hold a larger group out there in the swamp.

Three days later, I schedule 3 days of “Meet the Hikers” event for the Happy Hoofers at MM63 on the South side of I-75 from 9 am-4 pm each day. We meet the hikers as they emerge from hiking 33 miles from the Oasis Ranger Station through the swamp in 2-3 days to the I-75 rest area. We set up a canopy, provide a few chairs and some salty, sweet, and fruit refreshments for them, as well as cold water and gatorade. We applaud and congratulate them on surviving this unique experience. This year helping me were: Alan and Joelyn Holdsworth, Mike Thompson, Jeff Doren, Bill Allison, and Melanie Parmelee.

Since DOT cut off the water spigots at the rest area, Alan brought 2 five gallon buckets and plenty of gallons of water to change out the water in the buckets. The hikers were able to wash out their muddy, sandy shoes and socks. The water had to be changed after every couple of hikers because the water became pretty disgusting. Alan also brought a charging bank so the hikers could recharge their phones. What a treat! We ended up seeing about 26 hikers over the three days and they were super appreciative of the refreshments, wash station, and charging station.

Thank you to all those that helped “Meet the Hikers”, it’s fun hearing their stories. They come from all over the U.S and some from abroad as well. Alan & Joelyn really stepped up our “trail angel” duties. (a trail angel is someone who helps out a hiker with a ride or refreshments). Come join us next year, it’s lots of fun! by Lynn Thompson

## Prescribed fire in Big Cypress

In January of this year Big Cypress started a prescribed fire in Big Cypress National Preserve north of I-75. This included the Florida Trail. The Preserve had brought in machinery in December to clear the roads and make firebreaks to help them control the fires. Prescribed fire is a way to control the build up of the excess underbrush, it helps the pine cones open up to let loose seeds to begin new trees, and it brings out new green shoots of grass and flowers in the prairies. The fires are set intentionally when the air temperature is low and the humidity is high, and the wind is blowing in the correct direction. This helps them control the fire burn within limits. They can then control excessive fuel buildup, which could result in a extremely hot, catastrophic fire that may damage soil and prevent native plants from regenerating. A prescribed fire reduces fuel buildup and its effects are selective and predictable, releasing nutrients back into the ecosystem.

Once the fire was out, we went out to survey the trails to be sure they were safe for hikers to use. On four separate occasions, we went out to survey the orange, blue, red, and yellow trails north of I-75 up to the boundary with the Seminole Indian Reservation. We repainted blazes where they had burned or melted off. Eleven trees are down across the trail, but they can all be safely stepped over or walked around. When Big Cypress gives us permission, we will have crews go in with chain saws and cut the trees up and move them off the trail. Meanwhile, the landscape looks so much different! The prairies are full of new green shoots from the grasses. This fall our maintenance work party will be a lot easier, thanks to the clearing with the machines and the fires. Walking up Nobles road, you can now see the canal again. (Several large alligators have their favorite spots staked out.) Before the machine clearing, it was getting difficult to even see the canal due to the build up of trees and brush. Thank you to Dick Ward, Robert Grosswald, Mike Thompson, Esther Muram, Kathy & Rene Bonvouloir, and Carmel Hind for assisting me with surveying and repainting the blazes. by Lynn Thompson





Carpenter Camp, Panther camp, and Nobles camp after the prescribed burn. Pine Hyacinth after the burn.



## Welcome to New Members July 2022-January 2023

Chris Bassett, Michele Benjamin, Karie Brook, Diego Castaneda, Noelle Collins, Claudia Fournier, Neil Kuritzky, Mia Laurenzo, Joseph Leto, Luis Luciani, Raymond McElroy, Lark Napier, Andrea Noncentini & Claudia Silver, Allegra Nolan, Lisa Rischar, Carl Rischar, Jennifer Shipley, Brooke Silva, Sharon Simon, Dan Singer, Inbal Terer, Patricia Thaler, Janis Trubic, Richard Wichmann, Max Wyman, and Renee Yousefi



## Chair's Corner



It is hard to believe I've been chair for over a year already, time sure does fly by. We've had a good year, lots of great activities and good speakers. We're still working out the kinks for holding hybrid meetings (in person and on zoom), but we're learning, things will get smoother. We had to cancel a few activities due to hurricanes and storms, but we persevered. In August we will plan another season of activities for the next year. Please let Kathy or myself know if there is someplace you would like to go for an activity and we'll try to get an activity leader to scope it out. If you have a desire to become an activity leader, let us know and we will get you trained. If you are interested in joining the leadership team, let me know, we will be glad to have new ideas and participation. We have a wonderful group of volunteers that keep this chapter afloat. No one person can run all the things we do alone, it takes a group of talented leadership and we all keep adapting to new technology and circumstances. We can always use new ideas, please don't be shy, step up and be part of the solution. It will be appreciated! I'm still looking for someone to take over as editor for this newsletter. I would love for it to come out two or three times a year. If you have an article to submit, just let me know. We have a few more activities coming up March thru May, then we will take the summer off. Hope to see you on an activity or at a meeting!

Lynn Thompson  
FTA Happy Hooper Chapter Chair  
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## Our Mission

The Florida Trail Association builds, maintains, protects, and promotes the unique Florida National Scenic Trail (Florida Trail), along with a network of hiking trails throughout the state of Florida. Together with our partners, the Association provides opportunities for the public to contribute to meaningful volunteer work, engage in outdoor recreation, and participate in environmental education.  
[www.floridatrail.org](http://www.floridatrail.org)

## Happy Hoofers Contact info:

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