

FLORIDA TRAIL ASSOCIATION

HAPPY HOOFERS CHAPTER



HOOPLA

Spring 2024 Volume 34, 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:

Building Fund	1,3-4
2025 Conference	2
Refreshments	2
Officers &	
Committee Chairs	2
Chair Review	4
Chairs Corner	5
Award winners	6
New Program Mgr	6
New members	6
Caesar Weed	7-8

Please help with the Building Fund for the Big Cypress New Testament Baptist Church

Why would I be asking you to help fund a structure at a church on the Seminole Reservation?

Here is the backstory: We have hikers from all over the country and even from foreign lands that come to South Florida to hike the Florida National Scenic Trail every January. It is too cold to hike up North, so they head for South Florida. Most of them start at Tamiami Trail at the Oasis Ranger Station at the South end of Big Cypress National Preserve. They hike north on the Florida National Scenic Trail, hoping to hike over 1100 miles to the beach in Pensacola and end up at Fort Pickens. They backpack and camp out along the way, stopping occasionally to restock supplies, get a shower, etc. along the way. When COVID hit, everything stopped. There was no more camping in the Seminole Reservation. As life continued and things began to open up, there still was no camping allowed on the Seminole Reservation. This meant from Big Cypress Preserve to the SFWMD lands it would be almost 27 miles to hike across the Seminole Reservation with no place to stop to camp. As luck would have it, the Big Cypress New Testament Baptist Church was along the way and they answered the call. They welcomed the hikers onto their property, gave them a place to camp out back, a bathroom and shower inside the fellowship hall to use, and even gave them rides to get supplies at the store down the road. They have been so welcoming and obliging it has been unbelievable!

They had an old bathroom building outside, but the roof was caving in. It needed a lot of work to get it up to code to use again. Kay Ferrara, the section leader for the Seminole reservation section of the Florida National Scenic Trail (FNST) worked with Pastor Payne and FTA trying to get some assistance to help fund the bathroom renovation.

(continued on page 3)

Save the Date: January 3-5, 2025

39th Annual South Regional Conference put on by Fisheating Creek Chapter to be held at Fisheating Creek. Save your \$ and donations for the Wuz-Nu and raffles. Details to come this fall!

Meeting Refreshments are Appreciated

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 this past year, and they are appreciated.

Carmel Hind, Jeff Doren, Al Young, Bill Allison, Dick Ward, Kathy Bonvouloir, Lisa Watson, Viola Lopez, Barb Johnston, Esther Muram, Larry Alesi, Eve Kappler, and Lynn Thompson.

We are now on our summer break. Thank you to those who have signed up to bring us goodies.

Looking forward to more culinary delights this fall. by Lynn Thompson

Chapter Executive Team * and Committee Chairs

Chapter Chair*	Lynn Thompson	954-850-3668	ma12thom@bellsouth.net
Vice Chair*	Larry Alesi	954-445-9251	LarryA1049@yahoo.com
Secretary*	Eve Kappler	954-260-3948	elkappler2@comcast.net
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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 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)



Restroom renovations
Above: Before work began
February 2024

Below: New roof April 2024
Inside in progress



(continued on page 4)

(continued from page 3)

Meanwhile, the Church put the call out to it's membership that they would like to do a renovation to the bathroom and add a laundry room for the hikers. Donations began to roll in. To make a very long story short, we decided we would try to help get donations directly from our members to help fix up the bathroom and add the laundry. They already have a donation of a washer & dryer and several thousand dollars which helped with the demolition.

The demolition of the roof has already taken place and a new tin roof has been installed. The inside work is in progress. See pictures page 3.

If you care to donate, please go to: <http://www.bigcypress.us> There you will see the picture of Rev. Arlen J. Payne Pastor

There is a button for "Online Giving", click there.

You can then choose either a "recurring" or a "One-time" gift. I chose One-time.

Next choose the "Fund" drop down, there is a "building Fund" then fill in your \$ Amount.

You then have the option of Credit Card, Debit Card, Google Pay, PayPal, or your Bank Account.

It then asks for your name, billing information, etc. Then click Submit.

We are so grateful to Pastor Payne and his wife, they have welcomed the hikers with open arms. Their generosity knows no bounds.

If you have more questions about the facilities, the renovation, etc. please contact me, Lynn Thompson at 954-372-7480 or email: ma12thom@bellsouth.net

Gear Review: REI Co-Op Flexlite Air chair

A Camp Chair - is it worth the weight?

Hell Yeah!

Weighing 1 lb including the stuff sac, the Air chair was a wonderful addition to my hiking gear. It is light, compact, and for me - comfortable.

I used a nylon poncho/ground sheet to sit on for years, & eyed off my fellow hikers camp chairs. As I got older & the bones began to creek, a chair became even more desirable.

Chairs vary in weight and price. I did a lot of research & testing before I decided on the Flexlite. I considered it expensive, so I waited till the sales, joined the REI co-op & got mine for a much better deal.

Was it worth it, indeed it was.

It is quick & easy to assemble & disassemble, poles are shock corded aluminum, fabric Ripstop nylon. It gets your backside off the ground, a plus, especially if the ground is lumpy or damp

I have enjoyed pulling out my chair & having a sit in the most glorious places. Owned my chair for a couple of years now, it's still holding up nicely.

Carmel Hind.



Chair's Corner



Another year has flown by! We accomplished many things that we set out to do, but we had numerous obstacles. It was a super wet fall, we never did get back to complete all of the trail maintenance that we wanted to do. The spring gave us more cool days than usual, but again, the rain or winds caused us to cancel several activities. I'm hoping for a quiet summer and we can all come back in September ready and rearing to go. The Activity Leaders will be planning another season of great hikes/bikes/paddles/ etc. for the upcoming season. We can always use new Activity Leaders. We are still in need of a newsletter editor (if we had one you could get more than one newsletter per year). We also need a Program chair since that position is now open. Please don't be shy, we can help get you started, just contact me and we can come up with a plan. Have a wonderful summer!

Lynn Thompson
FTA Happy Hoofers Chapter Chair
mal2thom@bellsouth.net 954-372-7480

If you have any fuel bottles that you would care to donate, please let me or Larry Alesi know. We can use them doing trail maintenance this fall.



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

Happy Hoofers Contact info:

Happy Hoofers webpage: <https://hoofers.floridatrail.org/>
Facebook: www.facebook.com/groups/ftaHappyHoofers/
Email: FTA.Happyhoofers@gmail.com

To become a member: go online to:
www.floridatrail.org
and click on Join/renew

Congratulations to our 2023 Award Winners!

Each year FTA asks the chapters to submit award nominations for their members that have given significant contributions to the chapter and FTA in various fields. Our Executive Team met and requested awards for a number of our members. There was not room for everyone to receive an award, we had so many deserving individuals. The following people are our winners for 2023:

Kathleen Bonvouloir	Special Service Award
Carmel Hind	Activity Leader Award
Dick Ward	Chapter Trail Maintainer of the Year Award
Bob & Judy Erdle	Friend of the Florida Trail Award
David Robinson	25 year Anniversary Award

I would also like to recognize our Activity Leaders. Without them, we would have nothing to do on the weekends! They help to entice new and old members to come outside, enjoy some nature, possibly learn a new native plant or see an animal in the wild that they never saw before. Thank you for coming up with new and continuing activities each season. Thank you to:

Larry Alesi, Kathy Bonvouloir, David Denham, Kay Ferrara, Dave Griswold, Carmel Hind, Barb Johnston, Janet Leasher, Esther Muram, David Robinson, Lynn & Mike Thompson, and Dick Ward.

Welcome to our new Regional Trail Program Manager: Tara Smith!

Tara has just come on board May 1st to fill the very large gap that was left when Jenna Taylor left us to take a job with the Forest Service. We will miss Jenna, but we wish her well in her new position. We look forward to getting to know Tara and working with her to keep things running smoothly on the FNST.

Welcome to New Members January 2023-April 2024

Lucia Abreu, Alice Acosta, Leilani Baumanis, Mark Benoit, Amber Bost, Paul Cabines, Adam Carlson, Diego Castaneda, Kevin Cox, Michelle Cunningham, Barbara Curtis, Mary-Elizabeth Dean, Michael Dean, Emi DeGouveia, Joseph Delazzaro, Cristina Diaz, Alfredo Donate, Jill Duckstein, Laura Geselbracht, Haley Greco, Thomas Hallen, Heather Harrison, Katharine Huddleston, June Kernaghan, Candy Lapish, Viodelda Lopez, Rochell Maier, Graham Martin, Shirley Mathurin, Michael McAuliffe, Christopher Miller, John Moxon, Teresa Nales, Casey Neville, Robert (Ted) Newsome, Marianne Norwood, Dawn Pappous, Jennifer Perry, Shawn Powell, Aaron Powell, Robert Powell, Christina Reichert, Andrea Riffle, Myriam Rojas, James Saba, Alexie Sabala, Kyle Schroeder, Hank Schultz, Sonja Sherman, Steve Usrey, Brendan Walton, Alex Weisberg, Mary Jean Zamora, Ana Ziegler.

The Battle of the Happy Hoofers and the Caesar Weed by Kathleen Bonvouloir



Happy Group of Volunteers!

We (Happy Hoofers) have an arrangement with Fern Forest that we do 4 workdays a year to remove invasive plants and they in turn allow us to use the hall free of charge for our meetings. This is a wonderful partnership that has created more memories, laughs and friendships than any of us could have imagined.

During the first 2 of our workdays we worked in the south prairie areas removing Caesar Weed. Each work day we bagged enough plants to fill the dumpster. Even still, it's hard to believe that we have only made a small dent, the prairies are over flowing with these pests. The last 2 work days we worked in the north prairie areas removing our favorite pest the Caesar Weed. At the end of the work day, we would gather and assist each other in removing the nettles from the Caesar plant off of each others clothing. It was quite the task. Next year I promise no more Caesar Weed!!

Caesar's Weed – *Urena Lobata* – invasive and non native
Native to Africa, Asia, and South America

Where native it is used for jute, locals make extracts to treat colic, gonorrhea, malarias, fevers and wounds. It can be useful for erosion control. In Africa it is eaten as a famine food.

It is a shrub that can reach to 10 feet, burr like seeds get caught on animals and clothing and this is the mechanism by which it is spread. The nettles can live in the ground for up to 5 years. It drives out native species and takes over fields.

(continued on page 8)

(continued from page 7)

I would like to thank all my wonderful volunteers. Each time they put in 3 hours in the hot Florida sun, working hard removing these plants.

Barb Johnston *
Bill Allison
Candy Lapish
Carmel Hind
Christine Lee *
Dan Reifer
Dave Griswold*
David Rodgers

Dick Ward
Dolores Smith **
Esther Muram
Jackie Fisher
Janet Leasher
June Kernaghan
Kathy Bonvouloir **
Laura Rodgers

Lisa Stark-Watson *
Lyndall Urquhart
Lynn Thompson
Mary O'Brian
Mike Thompson
Rene Bonvouloir
Robert Grosswald **

Total of 23 people Total of 150 volunteer hours

On April 27, I held my 2nd Annual Appreciation Dinner and Awards Party. This is a chance for me to thank all the people that volunteered at the Work Parties. I handed out 4 Awards for perfect attendance *(Fern Forest Patch) to Christine Lee, Lisa Stark-Watsons, Barb Johnston and Dave Griswold. And there were 2 individuals that worked all 4 days this year and also last year. Dolores Smith and Robert Grosswald **(Fern Forest Buff) have shown up for the last 8 work days, and next year I'm hoping that they will make it 12 work days in a row. These 6 individuals have shown us the heart and soul of what volunteering is all about. Thank you, the forest loves you!

To all the volunteers this year, A Big Thank You. The chapter appreciates your efforts and the Fern Forest personnel are so thankful for your hard work. The prairies have never looked so good.



Dick you can't hide!