

FLORIDA

BEST TRAILS STATE



IN AMERICA

INAUGURAL WINNER



~ Presented by American Trails ~



American Trails names Florida as America's Best Trails State!

The Best Trails State Award was presented to the State of Florida-Florida Department of Environmental Protection, Office of Greenways & Trails on November 17th, 2008, during the National Trails Symposium in Little Rock, Arkansas. This first ever "Best Trails State Award" presented by American Trails recognized Florida's success in facilitating an outstanding statewide system of trails.

Following its legislative mandate, the Office of Greenways & Trails (OGT) has played a lead role in working to establish a statewide system of greenways and trails including master planning, legislation, funding and program implementation. OGT has entered into many forms of partnerships to accomplish the planning, acquisition, development and management required to bring greenways and trails projects to reality. For all that OGT and its partners have achieved in furthering the establishment and expansion of the state's trails network during the past two years, Florida has been honored as the inaugural recipient of this award.

American Trails is the only national, nonprofit organization working on behalf of all trail interests. Since 1988, American Trails has made it a part of its mission to promote cooperation among user groups and pursue a national infrastructure of trails and greenways that serves a full range of activities.



CELEBRATING FLORIDA AS AMERICA'S BEST TRAILS STATE

Trails are the trend ...

Prospective home buyers consider trails to be the most important amenity when choosing a place to live. (National Association of Homebuilders, 2008)

Studies indicate that closer proximity to greenways and conservation corridors increases property values. (National Recreation and Parks Association)

52% of Americans would like to bike more and 46% would bike to work if designated trails were available. (America Bikes; Trails and Greenways Clearing House; Bicycling/Moving America Forward, 2008)

Biking four miles round-trip to work instead of driving keeps 51 pounds of carbon monoxide out of the air each year. (Smart Trips; Bicycling/Moving America Forward, 2008)

An estimated \$76.6 billion could be saved on annual healthcare costs if Americans were more active. (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; Bicycling/Moving America Forward, 2008)

The most requested item by visitors to Florida's Official Welcome Centers is information about where to bicycle. (VISIT FLORIDA)

The number of Americans who ride bicycles is greater than all those who ski, golf and play tennis combined. (National Sporting Goods Association)

And Florida is a trendsetter...

Florida is home to more than 5,000 miles of state-owned trails and also features one of only eight congressionally designated national scenic trails. The Florida National Scenic Trail will ultimately extend 1,400 miles from the Gulf Islands National Seashore in the Panhandle to the Florida Keys.

More than four million visitors each year take advantage of the 800 miles of free, multi-use trails included in nine state-managed trails and the Marjorie Harris Carr Cross Florida Greenway.

With nearly 26,000 river miles and at least 25,000 miles of streams and canals, Florida is a paradise for paddlers. Forty paddling trails have been designated into the Florida Greenways and Trails System including the 1,500-mile Florida Circumnavigational Saltwater Paddling Trail which extends around Florida's entire peninsula.

Twenty-nine Florida trails have been named as National Recreation Trails. The DEP Office of Greenways & Trails is responsible for the acquisition and/or management of ten of these trails.

Stretching from the Gulf of Mexico to the St. Johns River is the Marjorie Harris Carr Cross Florida Greenway. Here the State of Florida has preserved more than 83,000 acres of recreation and conservation lands that are home to an internationally recognized network of mountain biking and equestrian trails, as well as America's first land bridge which provides safe passage for trail users across I-75.