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MISSION STATEMENT:

To enhance, encourage and promote the preservation and protection of the outstanding natural, ecological, cultural and historic resources of the Florida Black Bear Scenic Byway for its' residents, inhabitants, visitors and future generations

RIBBON-CUTTING CELEBRATION:

We expect approval for official designation as a National Scenic Byway in August. Mark your calendar for the big Ribbon-Cutting Celebration to be held October 24th at Camp Ocala on State Road 19 in the Ocala National Forest. This will be a full day celebration to include visiting dignitaries, a key note speaker, lunch, entertainment, exhibits, water activities and field trip tours.

Further details will be made available through the web site, local media and future newsletters.

THE CENTENNIAL OF THE OCALA NATIONAL FOREST:



This old time forest camp circa 1908 was one of several interesting displays at the Ocala National Forest Centennial Celebration.



District Ranger Rick Lint and Forest Supervisor Susan Matthews listen as President Teddy Roosevelt addresses the Centennial Celebration gathering.

The Ocala National Forest was established in 1908 when President Theodore Roosevelt designated 160,000 acres of the Big Scrub as the



first National Forest east of the Mississippi. A Centennial Celebration was held on December 13th 2008 at Camp Kiwanis/Mill Dam. The well attended public celebration included folk crafts, historical displays, entertainment, comments from visiting dignitaries, food, a birthday cake and a living history lesson from none other than Teddy Roosevelt himself!



U.S Army soldier accompanies President Roosevelt on visit to The Ocala

The Forest is located in central Florida between the Ocklawaha and St. Johns Rivers. It consists of 383,000 acres rich in water resources with more than 600 lakes, rivers, and springs. Four major natural springs of crystal clear water are located in the Forest, Juniper Springs, Salt Springs, Alexander Springs and Silver Glen Springs Recreation Areas. The Forest hosts a variety of major recreation, scenic and historic areas. The recreation activities are as diverse as the environment, from canoeing in wilderness waterways, swimming in crystal clear constant 72° springs, year-round camping, picnicking, fishing, birding, hiking, bicycling, horseback riding and four-wheeling.

CURRENT NEWS:

With just 3 short months remaining until the October 24th Ribbon Cutting Ceremony the CME (Corridor Management Entity) is busy working out the details for a memorable ceremony. At the same time work continues on designing a trail head on SR 40 near Juniper Springs and the ongoing issues of attracting sponsorships, grants and membership.

The CME meets monthly on the 2nd Thursday of the month at several locations along the byway. The meetings are open and interested citizens are invited to attend. Details of time & location are available on the web site or by calling Chairman Tony Ehrlich.



MEMBER PROFILE:



(photo by Diana Rose)

Tony Ehrlich, Chairman

Tony Ehrlich was elected as Chairman of The Florida Black Bear Scenic Byway in May 2008. Under his leadership the organization has continued to grow. A native New Yorker, Tony & his wife moved to Ormond Beach in 1982 and to Barberville in 2002, where they live on their daughter's organic farm on SR 40. When he and his family learned of plans to four-lane the road, they attended meetings of the Corridor Advisory Group.

They were so impressed with the goals and objectives of the group that they became members. When the state designated the corridor as a scenic byway in April, 2008, the CAG became the Corridor Management Entity. Tony is inspired by the dedication and enthusiasm of the CME members, Byway stakeholders, county liaisons, and technical support folks from the Florida Division of Forestry, Department of Transportation, Department of Environmental Protection, U.S. Forest Service and others. He is especially pleased by recent outreach efforts of the CME: Power Point presentations to local government and civic groups, an expanded website with multilingual features, and the founding of this Newsletter.

In addition to farming and the environment, he enjoys the outdoors, photography, and visiting family in New York and New England, the Southwest, California, and Germany.



FRIENDS OF FLORIDA BLACK BEAR SCENIC BYWAY:

If you love the natural resources of Central Florida the way we do you can be a part of the preservation and enhancement of those resources by becoming a Friend of Florida Black Bear Scenic Byway. An application is included with the newsletter.

We are pleased to welcome the following new friends:

Karin Fleischhaker of Ocala

John D. Grob of The Villages

Bob Hillenbrand of Daytona Beach

Bobbi & Francis Keenan of Leesburg

MORE INFORMATION (VISIT OR GET INVOLVED):

Fla Black Bear Scenic Byway - www.floridablackbearsenicbyway.org

Board Chairman Tony Ehrlich - ehrlight@hotmail.com - tel 386-749-3642

Florida Scenic Highway -

<http://www.dot.state.fl.us/emo/scenicwy/default.htm>

National Scenic Byways - <http://www.byways.org>

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Editor: Tony Ehrlich

Contributing Editor: Tom Rose

Photography: Diana Rose