



Publisher FBBSB, CME • Volume Number 1 • Issue Number 2 • Date 10/1/09

RIBBON-CUTTING CELEBRATION CEREMONY:

This grand celebration is set for Saturday October 24th from 10 AM to 4 PM at the 4-H Camp (Camp Ocala) on SR 19, 4 miles south of SR 40 in the Ocala National Forest.

The day's activities will include free lunch, visiting dignitaries including Smokey Bear, forest tours, boat tours, exhibits, horse rides, water activities and more! Musical entertainment by Woods & Bridges Bluegrass.

Further details will be made available through the web site and local media. Event Chair Jim Thorsen will be interviewed on radio WNZF (Flagler County) 1550 AM and 106.3 FM about the event in early October.

THE FLORIDA BLACK BEAR:



(photo courtesy of Linda Stewart)
Florida Black Bear mother with cub



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It is estimated that 12,000 bears once roamed the area that is now Florida. Today's state wide population is between 2,000 and 3,000, with 600 to 1000 in the area of the Ocala National Forest and the Byway. A healthy bear population needs at least 400,000 acres to survive. To protect an area of this size in Florida often requires preserving connections between habitats. The black bear is listed as a threatened species by the state of Florida. It is a candidate for listing as endangered or threatened under the federal Endangered Species Act.



The Florida Black Bear (*Ursus americanus Floridanus*)

- ▶ The Florida Black Bear is black with a brown muzzle. Some have a white blaze on their chests.
- ▶ An average male weighs 350 pounds, a female averages 150 pounds.
- ▶ The average home range for an adult female is 11 square miles, while a male can range up to 66 square miles.
- ▶ The Florida Black Bear's diet is 80% vegetarian. Foods include berries, acorns, insects and palmetto hearts. Occasionally they eat armadillos and carrion.
- ▶ The leading threats to bears include land development, highway construction and roadkills. More than 50 bears are killed on Florida roads each year.

(source for the bear facts above is the Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission)



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CURRENT NEWS:

With just 3 weeks remaining until the October 24th Celebration 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 e-mailing Chairman Tony Ehrlich.

MEMBER PROFILE:



(photo by Diana Rose)

Sandra Friend, Webmaster

Sandra Friend has worked with the Florida Black Bear Scenic Byway CME and CAG since 2006, setting up the initial website for our organization in December 2006. She has taken the website through three major renovations since its launch, and can be found at www.floridablackbearsenicbyway.org or via a short URL at www.flbbb.org. While much of the content is derived from our corridor story documents, Sandra has added her own photography and maps and has written articles to accentuate what the byway has to offer visitors.

Sandra came to the CAG as a representative of the Florida Trail Association, where she served as Communications Director for five years. Previously and since, she's a freelance writer and author with 22 published non-fiction books, the most recent, "Exploring Florida's Botanical Wonders," debuting this month from University Press of Florida. It's a travel guide to botanical beauty, and hits the hot spots along the byway. Sandra is currently working on another book, Ocala Adventures, in conjunction with author Lucy Tobias, and this book will include a full chapter on what the Florida Black Bear Scenic Byway has to offer.

A member of the Florida Outdoor Writers Association, the Society of American Travel Writers, and the American Society of Journalists and Authors, Sandra lives in Ocala and loves to hike—she's written eight books about Florida hiking, and runs a popular website for hikers, www.floridahikes.com. She runs a consulting firm, Genuine Florida (www.genuineflorida.com), providing written and visual content to businesses as well as creative consulting and website development. She is married to editorial cartoonist Rob Smith, Jr.

CME MEMBER RECOGNITION: We would like to recognize Joanna Emanuel from the St. John's River Water Management District and Cathy Connolly from Friends of Wildlife representing their agencies on the CME. Welcome, Joanna and Cathy!

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

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. The Byway is a volunteer organization funded by gifts and grants. We need your help at this time to sustain our projects and pay for the opening celebration.

We are pleased to welcome the following new friends and sponsors. Thank you for your support. :

*Mayor Fred Costello, Ormond Beach • Gilchrist Sausage Company, Ocala
Friends of Wildlife, St. Petersburg • Mike & Nancy Barnett, Eustis
Hitchcocks' Family Market, Astor • Inwood Consulting Engineers, Oveido
Lake/Sumter County MPO, Leesburg • Neuman Glen McVey, DeLand
Ormond Hay & Feed, Ormond Beach • Putnam County Commission
SaveOurBigScrub, Salt Springs • Smitty's Design LLC, Eustis
United Southern Bank, Eustis • Volusia County MPO, Daytona Beach*

MORE INFORMATION (VISIT OR GET INVOLVED):

Fla Black Bear Scenic Byway - <http://www.floridablackbearsenicbyway.org>

Board Chairman Tony Ehrlich - antonyehrich@earthlink.net

- tel 386-749-3642

Florida Scenic Highway -

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

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

The Florida Black Bear Scenic Byway Newsletter is published quarterly.

Editor: Tony Ehrlich

Contributing Editor: Tom Rose

Photography: Diana Rose