



# Florida Black Bear Scenic Byway Newsletter

A National Scenic Byway

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#### Marion County

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#### Volusia County

Carol MacFarlane  
Planner, Planning and Development Services



Florida Black Bear Scenic Byway

## Black Bear Sighting

Published in Florida Wildlife Magazine  
January 2001 By Tom Rose

I have camped, hiked, canoed, hunted and fished the waterways and forests of the Great State of Florida for over 50 years. I've had great experiences still-hunting for grey squirrels and offshore big game fishing for grouper, snapper kingfish and sails. I have some great stories of exploring the limestone caves of North Central Florida and the underwater caverns of the freshwater springs. I've experienced the excitement of wildlife sightings of whitetail deer, wild hog, wild turkey, bobcat, fox squirrel, grey fox, and rattlesnake. I've hunted rabbits with beagles and quail with pointers. I've experienced the thrill of a largemouth black bass hitting a top water plug at sunrise on an isolated lake. However, nothing has matched the excitement of coming face to face with a Florida black bear deep in the Ocala National Forest. Here is my story.

After a lot of scouting around in The Ocala National Forest for a good hunting spot I settled on an area off of forest



road 528. I picked this area for squirrel hunting. There were large water oaks, scrub oaks, pine trees, plenty of acorns and palmettos. I found several squirrel nests in the oak trees. Just what I was looking for, some great bushy tail action.

So, the next afternoon with my old 20 gage bolt action shot gun, I headed out about 4:00 PM. I heard some squirrels but they were far away. I did not see a squirrel or any other wildlife except a few birds.

Then it rang out like the bell at the fire-house. Gobble, Gobble, Gobble! I would estimate they were about 1/4 mile away. Again, Gobble, Gobble, Gobble. Loud and clear. It was exactly 5:15. Thirty seconds later, I saw them. Three large wild turkeys flew across the sky about 100 yards to the north. A little too far for a shot, but, very exciting to see this great game bird in the forest. One day I'll bring one of these beauties home for dinner.

A few days later I went back to the same area at about the same time. Again, I heard what sounded like a squirrel far away in the woods. I moved as quietly as I could through the woods. There were lots of brush, dry twigs, and palmetto bushes. It was not easy to be real quiet. It is about 5:30 and only 20 minutes from darkness. I was slowly moving back to the truck, which was parked, on the road.

I had been standing motionless in a clearing for about 10 minutes.

## Black Bear Sighting Con't

I heard what sounded like a person crashing through the woods. I looked in the direction of the sound, expecting to see another hunter.

Then, out into a semi clear area he came, a **BLACK BEAR!** A Florida black bear, walking on all fours, perpendicular to my line of sight.

He stopped, still sideways to me, and turned his head looking directly at me. This was a beautiful, healthy bear. Thick black fur, his ears upright as he stared at me. I would guess that he was about 350 lbs. He was about 20 yards away. The bear and I just looked at each other for 25 or 30 seconds..

I once heard that you should not make eye contact, but it was too late for that. There we were, man and bear. I was the invader, in his home! I know that they do not normally attack humans. But, the thought still runs through your mind. This bear may not have read the book about how docile the Florida Black Bear is supposed to be. What would I do if he headed for me? I had 3 shells in the 20-gage bolt action shot gun, two # 6's and 1 buck shot. I had plenty of time for a perfect shot at this bear. I felt that I could have stopped an attack if it were necessary. There he stood, ears erect, head turned toward me, eyes staring. As dusk fell over the forest, he looked huge to me. My heart was pounding in my chest, as I stood motionless in the approaching darkness. I wondered if the bear would go on his way, or, would he head for me? Suddenly, the huge bruin bounded away through the underbrush. With great relief I walked the quarter mile through the woods back



to my truck. Thirty years ago, when bears were still open game in Florida, this one would have been mine. But, bears are an endangered species now, and protected. I'm glad they are. I want the generations to come to have the opportunity to observe these magnificent creatures. Tonight he continues to wander The Forest while I tell the story and celebrate a great wilderness experience. **Long live The Florida Black Bear!**

The Florida Black Bear, *Ursus americanus floridanus*, is a unique subspecies of the American black bear. It is estimated that some 1,500 Florida black bears live in the state. Some 300 live within the Ocala National Forest's 336,000 acres.

## Bear Sighting Feature

Have you seen a black bear in the Central Florida area. We want to record and track sightings in the newsletter and on the website. Report where, when and other details of the sighting to Bear Sighting Report [tomrose43@gmail.com](mailto:tomrose43@gmail.com).



## Member Profile



Photo Courtesy of Diana Rose

**Monso Tatum** - became a volunteer for the Pioneer Settlement for the Creative Arts in Barberville in 2001. He was the primary grant writer for the Settlement and served as a docent for tours and demonstrator for school field trips. One year he was even the Santa Claus at their Old Fashioned Christmas Celebration.

From Marilyn Breeze, then director of the Pioneer Settlement, he learned of the special SR 40 Collaborative Task Force that had been formed by the Florida Department of Transportation (DOT) District 5. The purpose of the Task Force was to analyze issues and potential solutions in an ecosystem context for roadway improvements to SR 40 from Silver Springs to US 17. The Task Force had representatives from various governmental, business, environmental, and local stakeholders.

In 2005, the Task Force recommended that SR 40 between Silver Springs and Ormond Beach be designated as a Florida scenic highway and that, in accordance with the procedures of the Florida Scenic Highway Program, a Corridor Advisory Group (CAG) be formed to pursue this goal. The CAG was formed in 2005 with Jim Thorsen as chairman and Burns Consulting was hired to generate a designation-eligibility application for state scenic byway status.

At its second meeting, Monso joined the CAG as the representative of the Pioneer Settlement. When Cathy Lowenstein took over the chairmanship, he became vice chair and played a key role in the conduct of

corridor surveys and compilation of field resource inventories. He served as field trip interpreter and provided much information on the historical and cultural intrinsic resources in the corridor.

He continued these efforts after eligibility was established and the CAG began work on the application for Florida Scenic Byway designation, helping with the long and grueling process of developing our goals, objectives, and strategies. During this period, the Byway was expanded to include portions of SR 19 in Marion and Putnam Counties and the Alexander Springs loop road, CR 445.

After the corridor was designated by the state as the Florida Black Bear Scenic Byway in

2008, he continued to serve as board member, liaison with the River of Lakes Heritage Corridor, and on several committees. Monso authored a grant application to the National Scenic Highway Program for a master plan, for which the CME was awarded \$305,000 in 2009. He conceived the idea of a Visitor/Interpretive Center to be run in partnership by the FBBSB and the Pioneer Settlement and is currently working with the Settlement to develop this facility.

Born in DeLand, Monso is a fifth-generation Floridian on his mother's side and ninth generation on his father's side. He graduated from DeLand High School and Emory University and earned a Masters Degree in chemistry at Georgia Tech, where he was also enrolled in the doctoral program.

For twenty years, seventeen of them in Houston, Texas, he worked as a synthetic chemist making specialty isotope-labeled, organic compounds. He was an adjunct faculty member at the University of Houston and is proud to be considered a native Houstonian under Texas law, having lived there for more than fifteen years, as well as a native Floridian.

While in Houston he was an organizing member of its Cultural Arts Council, an Advisory Board member, and a member of the Grants Allocation Review Committee. He was also a Board Member of the Houston Harpsichord Society, managed its concert series for ten years and co-founded the baroque music ensemble *Musica Viva*.

### Member Profile *Monso Tatum Con't*

After moving back to this area in 1983, Monso was an organizing member of the Cultural Arts Center (CAC) of DeLand, later its vice chair, fundraising chair and part of the team that raised \$2M for construction of the CAC Building. For six years he was technical director for the Sands Theater Center and designed and built sets for their productions.

In preparation for this profile, we asked Garry Bologh, Scenic Highway Coordinator for DOT District 5, to comment on Monso's contribution to the FBBSB. In response, Garry wrote, "Monso Tatum understands the mission of the Byway program, which is for educating the public, including our own residents, about the unique attributes of our area. Particularly, the information teaches the public about the things we have done to protect our natural features and our heritage. Monso also promotes the idea of the program to spur future leaders to continue this stewardship and for visitors to respect our resources."

### Award Winning Environmental Documentary Coming to DeLand

**Division Street**, a documentary about wildlife underpasses, will be screened at the Athens Theatre in DeLand at 6:30 p.m. on May 23<sup>rd</sup>. The Athens Theatre, a historic and recently refurbished building, is donating the use of the facility for the screening, which is free.

Kristee Booth saw a first cut of the movie in September 2009 at the International Conference on the Environment and Transportation in Minnesota. Since then, it has won Best Nature Documentary at the Orlando Film Festival, among other awards.

Kristee believed in the film and its message and bought the rights to show it. She said, "I wanted to involve the Central Florida community, since a lot of the movie pertains to this area. I also wanted to involve Stetson University so local students could get the environmental message."

Go to <http://www.divisionstreetmovie.com/> to see the trailer for this great nature documentary film. Also on YouTube, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0mPnUu84osE>.

### Photo Contest Winner

Congratulations to **Diana C. Rose** who won second place in Florida Wildlife Magazine 2009—2010 photo contest. The category was "Natural Scenes" it appeared in the January—February 2010 issue.

#### *Cool in Cattails*



Photo was captured early of a foggy morning on a lake in Umatilla, Fla. I am a citizen volunteer photographer with the FBBSB CME attending monthly meetings with my photo gear. Anyone who needs a picture taken relative to CME staff and/or wildlife I am at the ready.

Please visit her website for more photos.

<http://digidi2.zenfolio.com>

### Elections 2010

Elections for 2010 were held at the CME meeting on January 14, 2010 at the Pioneer Settlement in Barberville. Officers for two open positions were elected: **Cathy S. Connolly as Secretary; and Joan Bernat as Executive Committee Member-At-Large.**

The 2010 Executive Committee is now as follows:

**Chairman** - Tony Ehrlich, **Vice Chairman** - Monso Tatum, **Treasurer** - Mike Woods, **Secretary** - Cathy Connolly

**At-Large-Members** - Jim Thorsen, Linda Stewart, Joan Bernat

Gopher Business/Agencies

Fountain of Youth ECO/  
History Tours, Old Spanish  
Sugar Mill &  
Griddle House, Walgreens

Gopher Individuals

Marilyn	Breeze
Nadine	Foley
John D.	Grob
Robbie	Hardbarger
Bobbi & Francis	Keenan
Emory and Jean	Lusk
Neuman Glen	McVey
Clara Lea	Place
Elaine and Paul	Renick
Steve and Laura	Strawn
Dana	Venrick
Robert	Wynn
Karen	Peters

Bobcat Individuals

Mike & Nancy Burnett, Cathy Conolly, Patricia Griffiths, Bob Hillenbrand, Fran Shanaver

Sand Skink Business

Brecht's Quality Meats  
Ormond Hay and Feed

Sand Skink Organizations

Sierra Club of Volusia/Flagler  
Counties

Sand Skink Agencies

Putnam County County  
Commission  
Volusia County MPO

Sand Skink Individuals

Karin	Fleischhaker
Don	Jacobovitz
Rick and Pam	Rintz
Bob Cortelyou	& Family

Bobcat Business

Gilchrist Sausage Co  
Lake Magazine  
Pinnacle Creative Group  
Smitty's Design LLC

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Bobcat Agencies

Ocala/Marion County Visitors  
and Convention Bureau

Florida Panther Business

Winn Dixie Silver Springs  
Umatilla Kiwanis  
American Land and Leisure

Florida Panther Agencies

Umatilla Chamber

Scrub Jay Business

Astor Family Market  
Inwood Consulting Engineers,  
Inc

United Southern Bank

<http://www.unitedsouthernbank.com>

Florida Panther Individuals

Dr. Fred	Costello
Carlos A	Pendola

Scrub Jay Agencies

Defenders of Wildlife  
Lake/Sumter MPO  
Save Our Big Scrub, Inc

Manatee Business

Recreation Resource Management, Inc



FLORIDA BLACK BEAR  
SCENIC BYWAY

