



Inside this Issue

Meet us on the Byway Page 1-2

Bear Trappers Page 2-4

Managing Florida's Black Bears Page 4

Trail Along SR 40 Page 4

Meeting Change Page 4

Friends Page 5

Contact Info Page 6

Officers

Mike Woods
Chairperson

Jim Thorsen
Vice Chair

Cathy Connolly
Secretary

Members at Large

Diana Rose
Monso Tatum

THE GREAT SOUTHERN CRACKER ROADSHOW FEB 25

Meet us on the Byway at Pioneer Settlement Barberville

Connecting the Dots... People, Stories, and locations for the Master Plan

By Phil Davis



Jim Thorsen shows us the beauty of purple lovegrass.

Without stories and people, a byway is just another road. You can drive SR 40 through the Ocala National Forest and if you never get out of your car and off the road, you'll never see the beauty and learn the stories. We have absorbed wildlife and forestry information with CME members like Jim Thorsen and Cathy Lowenstein, who have given us great perspective and input along the way. The executive committee has been a strong influence in the shaping of this Master Plan.

Back in July at our public open house in Nuby's Corner, we met the elderly Mr. Counts, the original owner of Counts Store in Scrambletown, up on CR 314 just off the FBBSB. We learned about Counts Store from Dana Ste. Claire, author of "Cracker," who grew up in Ocala and used to listen to the stories from the old-timers on the porch outside Mr. Counts Store. We filmed Dana talking about his dad and Ross Allen and how they built the boys camp in the Ocala National Forest, where Dana spent a lot of his summers.



Phil Davis Shoots video of Dana Ste. Claire



Stephanie Liskey learns how the cow hunters lived with Rick Tonyan

Rick Tonyan, author of "Guns of the Palmetto Plains," researched the cow-hunters and cattle drives that were a part of the area back in the late 1800's. While filming Rick out at the Barberville Pioneer Settlement

cracking his whip and showing us how they marked cattle, we learned that he and Dana were friends.

Because a famous old movie was filmed along the byway, we ordered a copy and watched "The Yearling." It's not every scenic byway that can boast that a Pulitzer Prize winning novel was written on and about the area and that a Hollywood movie was filmed on location on the byway. **Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings** spent two years up around Pat's Island (The Yearling Trail) researching the stories that came together in her novel.

For the last eight months, we have been working with the FBBSB CME as contractors developing a variety of future and current plans for the FBBSB. The public meetings, agency meetings, and people we've talked with are all part of developing the byway story, planning for future improvements, building awareness of the byway project and expanding marketing.

Our team has made presentations to Putnam County, Marion County, Volusia County, Lake County representatives as well as forestry people, and stakeholders along the corridor. With still a few months to go in the project, there will be a few more meetings after the plan is more solid to draw in more support from local government agencies and groups.

The byway presentation and project has been met with interest and enthusiasm each time. The goal has been to build momentum and develop partnerships for economic development and byway awareness. There are well over 100 places of interest along the FBBSB, and we have visited each one to get a feel for the location, its resources and what might interest travelers. The Master Plan document will be over 100 pages of plans, recommendations, and implementation steps, all designed to make the byway more accessible and interesting.

The FBBSB Master Plan project includes the development of a number of items in addition to the report itself. Some of these are:





Cracker Road Show—Meet us on the Byway Con't

- Story of the Byway
- Sign and Kiosk Plans for the Byway
- Site Inventory Document
- A 30-min. Byways Video
- Six Interpretive Panels for kiosks
- Video Display Installation at Ocklawaha Visitor Center
- Two children's games for the website
- Six short videos for the website (Youtube)
- Marketing materials (Bear Facts Brochure, Place-mats for Restaurants)
- A greater Facebook presence for marketing

Social Networking is such a big part of today's marketing. There's no faster way to get the work out than online. For example, the Facebook updates and expansion we've done for the byway in October alone netted over 25,000 hits by visitors.

Highlights on some of the tangible items to be produced for the project:

- **The 30-minute video and display** installation at the Ocklawaha Visitor Center. The video will show sites and people connected to the byway. We will also make the video available on YouTube for people thinking about coming to the FBBSB/Ocala area.
- **Two volunteer built kiosks.** We will build and install two outdoor Interpretive kiosks with byways map and some byway information. The plan at this time is they will be at Wildcat Lake and near the Astor Bridge.
- **Six Interpretive Panels will be printed and installed.** These will have a variety of byway information including maps, highlights, stories, etc. They will be at the Pittman Visitor Center, Alexander Springs, and Juniper Springs to name a few.

To help promote the Byway and the area culture, we are helping organize "Meet Us on the Byway" at the **Barberville Pioneer Settlement**. We are working with the CME, the Pioneer Settlement, and volunteers to organize bike ride, motorcycle rides (hopefully), educational hikes, and a photography tour all in culminating at the Settlement where Dana Ste. Claire will stage his 2 hours show: "**The Great Southern Cracker Roadshow**" from 2 - 4 on Feb. 25, 2012.

There will be music, dancing, food, an author's table and many other attractions set up at the Main Event area in Barberville. We are trying to fill the byway that day, so be sure to share the information from our flyer and ask people to check out the events on facebook! We encourage everyone who loves the byway to come out and visit the trails,

blueways and greenways before coming for some good cracker food and culture at the Pioneer Arts Settlement after lunch (Or making a day of it at the Settlement!).

Phil Davis is the Master Plan Project Director for Sail Forth Productions, the engineering consulting firm that is generating the Master Plan, with help from Kimley-Horn and Associates, Inc. Their latest presentation to stakeholders was to the Astor Historical Society, which has volunteered to staff a booth at the Meet Us on the Byway celebration and to help erect one of the first of the new kiosks.

A flyer for the celebration is attached to this issue. Please print it out and post it for your friends and associates. Volunteers for this event are welcome; those interested should contact Megan Hunter at mhunter@sfprod.com or 407-608-7231.

Small Flyer—Full flyer please download the attachment



Bear Trappers

*A Central Florida bear story featuring Mike & Cathy Connolly
By Tom Rose*



Mike Connolly



Cathy Connolly

In 2001 it was becoming obvious that the Florida black bear population was expanding in Central Florida. Reported incidents of bear encounters in the populated areas had become common. The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission held a public meeting regarding starting a bear response program.



Bear Trappers Con't

Local residents with a love for area wildlife, Cathy and Mike Connolly attended the meeting. The couple applied and they were interviewed to become contractors for FWC's bear response program. The agency provided a training program of 6 months working hands-on with bears. Cathy & Mike were bear trappers!

It was a perfect fit. Cathy, with a background in criminal justice from Illinois and Mike, a building contractor, were both lovers of the great outdoors, the animals and forests of Central Florida. Mike also worked on the mammal team for FWC back when the Florida Barge Canal was being considered. Cathy became an employee of FWC's Bear Management Program in 2009 and Mike remains an independent contractor for them. The couple has some great stories to tell about their 10 years of work with the Bear Management Division of FWC.

One story involved an adult female Florida Black Bear with two cubs in Longwood, Florida, a densely populated residential community near Orlando. Mike and Cathy received their assignment and set the bear trap at a site where the animals had been seen frequently. It did not take long for mom to enter the trap, enticed by the jelly doughnuts used for bait. Mama bear was then tranquilized. Usually, cubs are quick to join their mother in a trap, however these cubs were more interested in playing and exploring. They would approach the trap, be about to enter, and then scamper away for more juvenile play. As the management team watched for about an hour, they began to wonder if the cubs would ever enter the trap. Finally the cubs joined their mother and the capture was completed. The bear family was relocated in the Lower Suwannee National Wildlife refuge.

Captured bears are fitted with a tag and lip tattoo number. Rehab cubs upon release have a digital chip that identifies where and when they were caught. A database is maintained that has a history of each bear. Bears are trapped for various reasons. Most often it is a situation where a bear has ventured into an area where it is in danger due to nearby motor vehicular traffic or where a bear is creating a concern in a residential community. Bears in a residential neighborhood are not always trapped. Often the Bear Management Team can educate residents on the proper handling of pet food and garbage so that the bears will move on to a more suitable area. When conditions warrant and it has been decided that a bear needs to be relocated, the main areas for relocation are Hopkins Prairie, Big Scrub and Lake Delancy in the Ocala National Forest.

Another trapping assignment for the Connolly's involved a

mother bear who was unfortunately killed on the road near Umatilla. Her cub was spotted by residents high in a tree. They reported to FWC and Mike and Cathy were sent to the scene. The little cub had been wandering for more than 3 days. It had to be very hungry. To climb the tree and try to grab the bear was a risky plan. The cub could easily fall to the ground and run off into the woods, perhaps never to be found. As luck would have it the resident had a basket crane (cherry picker). Mike climbed into the basket and was lifted up to the bear cub. The little cub was feisty and ready to fight. Mike grabbed the small bear and held it tight. Once captured, the small female bear nuzzled under Mike's arm as if somehow sensing safety at last. Mike and Cathy took the cub home, fed it pedialyte mixed with honey. The next morning the little cub was taken to the Homosassa Springs Wildlife State Park where they have an outstanding program for rehabilitating animals without human imprint.



The most famous capture of all is the story of Jarhead. Jarhead, who the was the subject of newspaper articles, was the bear cub who got his

head stuck in a jar back in the summer of 2010 and somehow survived for 10 days without food or water. The FWC Bear Management Team worked almost around the clock for those 10 days knowing the little bear, unable to eat or drink, would surely die if it could not be captured and the jar removed. Traps were set and there were numerous sightings of the bear family. They also had two failed attempts using a tranquilizer gun. Finally on day 10, a resident reported the bears were on her property. The bear team rushed to the site and was able to shoot mom with a tranquilizer dart. She gave out a yell and ran into the woods. The dart contained a transmitter so it would be no problem finding her once the tranquilizer took effect. Now, they had to catch Jarhead. One team member was able to grab Jarhead but he was 15 lbs of fury, wiggling and scratching to get free. He did break free once, but they were able to grab him again and finally pull the jar off. The rescue was still far from complete. They followed the beeping transmission to mama bear and placed her in a trap, and then it was just a matter of time until the cubs joined her. Little jarhead was quick to begin nursing on



Bear Trappers Con't

mom. It was evident that he would survive. Cathy Connolly told me it was the most intense 10 days of her life, literally being on call 24 hours a day, she was lucky to get 2 hours sleep a night. It was very fortunate the saga ended with a positive result. The whole team was ecstatic that night and let the homeowner that originally called in the report know that they had found Jarhead. It was outstanding teamwork and they were very grateful for the support of the community.

The Bear Management Program of FWC is one of the great success stories in conservation management. From a Florida bear population of less than 300 in 1971 the population has grown to present day estimates of over 3,000. The key to successful bear management is the education of the public. Most so called "problem bears" are the result of unsecured garbage, pet food left out overnight, animal and bird feeders exposed. The euthanization of bears is done only as a last resort: if a bear has become acclimated to the easy life with a ready food supply by residential neighbors, there may be no other choice.

Mike and Cathy are a perfect fit for the program. Spending a little time talking with them about their work it was evident that they both have a great compassion for the protection and conservation of these magnificent animals and at the same time recognizing the potential danger if we do not follow good bear management practices.

For details on the Florida Bear Management Program: <http://myfwc.com/wildlifehabitats/managed/bear/>

Managing Florida Black Bears

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission has taken the Florida black bear off the threatened list because of the increase in population of the bears in recent years, called "truly a conservation success story" by Nick Wiley, executive director of the FFWC.



Photo By Cyndi Hoxie

The Commission will not lift the ban on killing or harming the bears, but will promote regional management plans to protect the critters and the citizens of Florida. One of the seven bear management units to provide localized bear management and public involvement includes the Ocala National Forest area with its current population of about 1,000 bears. The CME has been asked to participate in the formulation and implementation of the plan.

One of the strategies will be the development of "Bear Smart Communities" which would involve residents, local governments, businesses, and schools in changing people's behaviors to reduce human-bear conflicts. In 2010, the FWC received more than 4,000 calls from citizens about bears. In the past 10 years, more than half of those calls were related to bears rummaging through garbage. State officials are asking for public input on how to manage the bears that roam in many parts of the Sunshine State. Suggestions on the proposed bear management plan can be submitted through Jan. 10, 2012, at MyFWC.com/Bear

Trail Along SR 40

FDOT is planning to design and acquire right-of-way for a 12-foot multi-use trail along portions of SR 40 east of Barberville in conjunction with the 4-laning of the Byway.



The trail will accommodate both hikers and bikers and will be landscaped by FDOT. Volusia County has agreed to maintain the paved surface. The trail will be a convenience for citizens from the Ormond Beach area travelling west to the Pioneer Settlement and for many biking tourists going eastward.

Meeting Changes for CME

The CME has traditionally met on the second Thursday of each month with locations alternating between the Lake George Ranger Station and the Pioneer Settlement. At the last CME meeting, several changes to this arrangement were discussed.

Meetings in the future will be held at other locations as well, including Ocala, Palatka, Ormond Beach, and, Umattilla. This will cut down on travel requirements for some CME attendees and may also encourage other people who don't usually participate to attend our meetings when the location is nearer for them.

It was also decided to alternate between meetings with the traditional CME agenda and workshops, so that every other meeting will be devoted to a workshop. This will facilitate the work of the various committees by allowing them two full hours for their deliberations.

Further refinements of these concepts will be made at the next CME meeting, which will be held at 10 a.m. on Thursday, January 12th at the Lake George Ranger Station.



Unusual Bear Sightings

Bear Visits Umatilla High School

By Tom Rose

The job of principal of a high school is often demanding and challenging. Mike Elchenko, principal of Umatilla High School, never knows what to expect when he goes to work, he only knows to expect the unexpected.

On Monday morning, October 31st about 7:30 AM, he arrived on campus to definitely face the unexpected. **Bear on campus!** The campus was placed on "lock down", local law enforcement and the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission were notified. The bear roamed athletic fields east of the school for almost two hours, by 9:30 he had left for parts unknown and the lockdown was lifted. There were no further sightings and the bear has not returned.

A bear that wanders into an urban area will usually return to the woods if left alone. He certainly created an exciting start for the day of students, staff and Principal Mike Elchenko at Umatilla High.

Visit our Friends and Sponsors

Bob Cat Business

- Dam Diner**
- Defenders of Wildlife**
<http://www.defenders.org/habitat>
- Gilchrist Sausage Co**
- Ocala/Marion County Visitors and Convention Bureau**
<http://www.ocalamarion.com/spring-and-summer-savings.asp>
- Save Our Big Scrub, Inc**
<http://www.saveourbigscrub.org>
- Smitty's Design LLC**
<http://www.manta.com/c/mtmq5p/smittys-designs-llc>
- Green bank**
<http://www.greenbank.com>
- Casey's Cracker Cottage**

Florida Panther Business

- American Land and Leisure**
<http://www.american.com>
- Inwood Consulting Engineers, Inc**
<http://www.inwoodinc.com/>
- Olde Mill Stream & Charlie Johnson Builder**
<http://www.oldemillstreamrvresort.com/>
- Pinnacle Creative Group**
- Umatilla Chamber**
<http://umatillachamber.org/>
- Umatilla Kiwanis**
<http://www.umatillakiwanis.org/>

Sand Skink Individuals

- | | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Karin Fleischhaker Bobbi and Francis Keenan Dr. Vasudevan Kidamgi Rick and Pam Rintz Stacy Stader Lynn & Mike Woods Kristee Booth Sheri L. Miller | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Warren Meyer Monika Rodriguez Chris Calabrese Don Jacobovitz Elizabeth (Beeg) Carnarota Cap't. Emie Brundage Stephan Harris Debbie Fisher |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

- Dawn Piers
- Larry Miller
- Elizabeth Black

Sand Skink Business

- Brecht's Quality Meats**
<http://www.brechtssausage.com>
- Ormond Hay and Feed**
- Putnam County Commissioners**
<http://www.putnam-fl.com/boccc/>
- Sierra Club of Volusia and Flagler**
<http://florida.sierraclub.org/volusia/>
- St. Johns River Tours**
<http://stjohnsriverstours.com/>
- Volusia County MPO**
<http://www.volusiaatpo.org/>
- Eustis Chamber of Commerce**
<http://www.eustischamber.org/>

Gopher Individuals

- Emory and Jean Lusk
- Clara Lea Place
- Elaine and Paul Renick
- Cindy Roberson
- Steve and Laura Strawn
- Celine M Sullivan
- Dana Venrick
- Robert Wynn
- Toni Yoder
- Karen Peters
- Joan Carter

- Libertad Acosta-Anderson
- Marilyn Breeze
- Glen Campbell
- Bill Carpenter
- Nadine Foley
- John D. Grob
- Robbie Hardbarger
- George & Judy Hemingway
- Cyndi Hoxie
- Jo Ann Joslyn
- Jody Freeman
- Tim Larue

FIRESTORM MARINE LLC

Mike Dickens
USCG LICENSED CAPTAIN

Vessel delivery and movement
Operational training
Diving services
Marine and Aircraft recovery services



1000 PALMHIKE LANE
ASTOR
FLORIDA 32102

Phone: 407-463-8961
E-mail: FM31397@AOL.com

Manatee Business

- First Green bank**
<http://www.fristgreenbank.com>
- Recreation Resource Mgmt, Inc**
<http://camprrm.com/>
- Greenway Bicycles**
<http://www.greenwaybikeshop.com>
- Winn Dixie**
<http://www.windixie.com>

Gopher Business

- Fountain of Youth ECO/History Tours**
- Old Spanish Sugar Mill & Griddle House**
- Walgreens**
<http://www.walgreens.com>

Scrub Jay Business

- Astor Family Market**
- Lake/Sumter MPO**
<http://www.lakesumtermpo.com>
- United Southern Bank**
<http://www.unitedsouthernbank.com>

Florida Panther Individuals

- Dr. Fred Costello
- Mike Palozzi
- Carlos A Pendola
- Linda Stewart
- Scott & Carol Bayer

Bob Cat Individuals

- Mike and Nancy Barnett
- Cathy Connolly
- Bob and Rennie Finck
- Patricia Griffiths
- Bob Hillenbrand
- Connie Hunkapiller
- Fran Shanaver
- Stephanie Liskey
- Phil Davis
- Tom Hays



Friends Application

The Friends of the Florida Black Bear Scenic Byway (FBBSB) is part of a community based group formed to promote awareness and appreciation of the FBBSB and to take and inspire action to restore, promote, and protect the byway as a natural and community resource.

Company/Individual Name

Mailing Address

City State Zip

Contact Person Title

Phone Number Fax

Email Website

Black Bear Benefactor \$5,000

- \$10.00 Gopher
- \$25.00 Sand Skink
- \$50.00 Bobcat
- \$75.00 White Tail Deer

Bald Eagle Corporate\$2,500

- \$100.00 Florida Panther
- \$250.00 Scrub Jay
- \$500.00 Manatee

Friends Membership

You will be listed as a friend of the byway on the website, and annual meeting

Sponsors

Friends benefits plus business card link on website, 1/4 page add in our quarterly newsletter, logo on membership board

Mission Statement

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

For More Information

Chairman: Michael Woods, Email: mwoods@lakesumtermpo.com, **Phone:** 407-314-4499

Website: <http://www.floridablackbearsenicbyway.org>

Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/FloridaBlackBearScenicByway>

Membership Application: <http://floridablackbearsenicbyway.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/07/Membership-Application.pdf>

National Florida Scenic Byways: <http://www.byways.org/explore/states/FL>

Staff

Anthony Ehrlich
Editor

Tom Rose
Contributing Editor

Diana Rose
Photographer

Joan Bernat
Production Editor

Give us your thoughts on our newsletter and what would you like to see in future newsletters. Email comments/suggestions to: anthonyehrich@earthlink.net