



A National Scenic Byway
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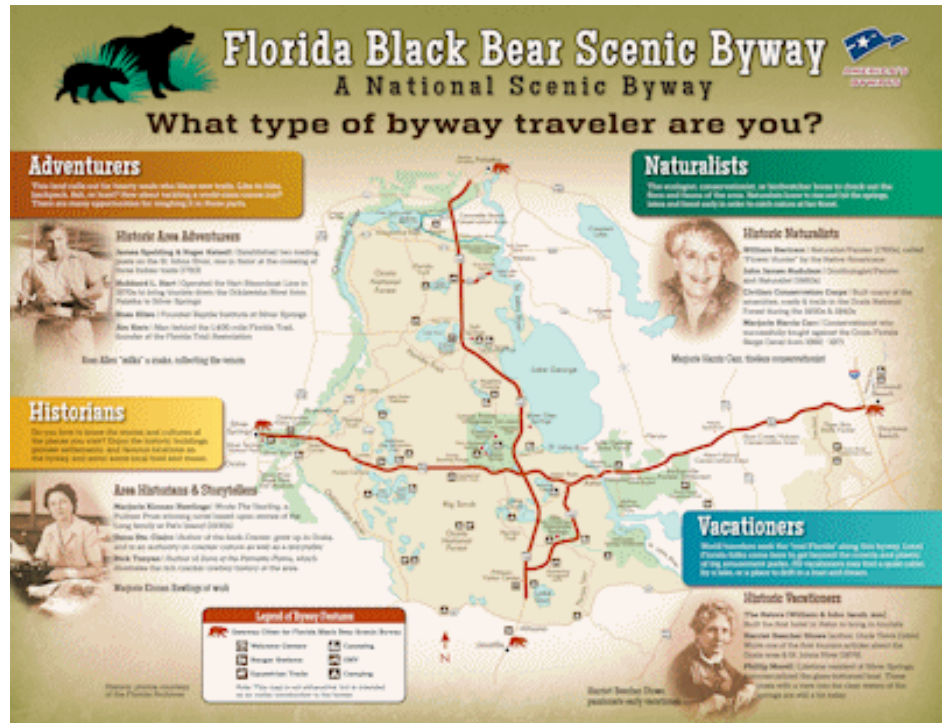
Florida Black Bear Scenic Byway Newsletter



Reasons to Explore the Florida Black Bear National Scenic Byway & The Ocala National Forest

submitted by Nikki Thorsen

The Florida National Black Bear Scenic Byway was created in 2005 by a small group of volunteers who had a vision dedicated to preserving and protecting a 123 mile corridor that makes up a vast area of the Ocala National Forest and neighboring regions starting west to east from Silver Springs to Ormond Beach and north to south from Palatka to Umatilla, FL. Largely due to the efforts of the volunteers, the Byway was designated a National Byway in 2009 gaining the distinction of joining 75 National Scenic Byways across the United States. The volume of visitors to the Ocala averages around 2.2 million a year. Recreation includes swimming, camping, hiking, fishing, hunting, bicycling, ATV trails and lots more.



FACTS:

- There are 154 national forests in the United States totaling over 193 million acres. California claims the most.

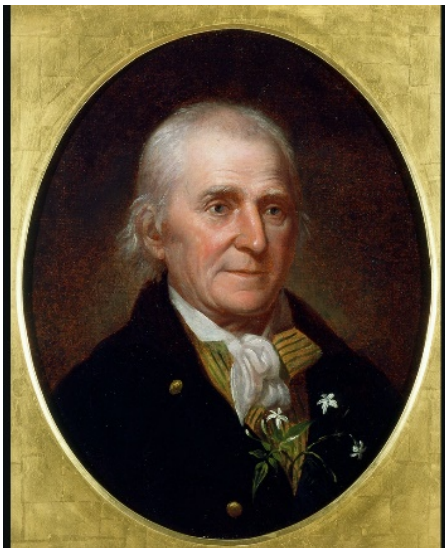
- Florida has a total of 3 national forests: The Apalachicola located in the northern part of the state commonly referred to as The Panhandle; the Osceola located west of Jacksonville and the Ocala National Forest.
- The Ocala National Forest was officially proclaimed a national forest by President Teddy Roosevelt in November, 1908. It is the oldest National Forest east of the Mississippi River in the continental US.
- The Ocala is 383,362 acres. Bordered by the Ocklawaha River to the west and the St. Johns River to the east, it is 30 miles long and 16 miles wide.
- The word Ocala originated from a Timucuan Indian word meaning “big hammock.”
- The Ocala contains 6 unique Springs: There are 4 Magnitude One springs (65-75 **million gallons of water discharged each day** into above ground waterways). The Springs are located on the Ocala and accessible along the Florida Black Bear Byway: Juniper Springs; Silver Springs; Alexander Springs; Salt Springs. Two additional Springs are Fern Hammock and Sweetwater with Magnitude Two Springs that discharge approximately **40 million gallons water per day**. These 6 Springs are unique to the Ocala National Forest.
- There are over **700 Springs in the state of Florida making this state the largest collection of natural springs on the planet.**
- The underground aquifer water flow from all of Florida’s Springs is approximately 8 billion gallons of water every day!
- The Ocala National Forest is home to the Sand Pine scrub ecosystem which is the largest continuous block of sand pine tree stands in the world.
- Everything that grows within the Sand Pine scrub ecosystem is indigenous to the ecosystem as well. This includes Sand Live Oak, Chapman Oak, Myrtle Oak, Scrub Bay, rosemary bush and crooked wood (which is used as the trunk of ornamental fake silk trees sold in stores everywhere)

One of the many goals of the Florida Black Bear organization is to protect the Florida Black Bear whose



headcount was down to a seriously low number of approximately 100 bears in 1989 and is back up to almost 1,000 bears living on the Ocala National Forest. One of the committee goals is to educate the public about the importance of protecting and preserving the wilderness that the Black Bear and countless other species of wildlife call home on the Ocala. Additionally, creating wildlife crossings along the highways that run through the Ocala and along The Byway – State Route 40 and State Route 19 is paramount in reducing road kill of wildlife trying to cross these very busy roads. Please feel free to visit our website and become a member or become a volunteer or just give a donation! Membership and/or donation dollars will go toward generating funds needed to create valuable access alternatives for wildlife in the Ocala National Forest and all of the natural resources that are everyone's responsibility to protect.

Florida Black Bear National Scenic Byway website: www.fbbsb.org



William Bartram 1739 – 1823 Bartram was featured in our April newsletter. Here are some additional facts regarding his Florida adventures. As Bartram made his travels up and down the St. Johns, he wrote about his adventures. One of the most memorable events was when a wolf stole his fish as Bartram slept. That may have been his breakfast the next morning! It was common that he was jostled and threatened by alligators from his boat. Historians say that he had a “little sailboat.” While exploring Paynes Prairie, he wrote that the alligator population was so fierce that one could “walk” the prairie “stepping” across gators!!

During his great adventures, Bartram experienced many different moments with Native American Tribes. While describing the flora and fauna, he encountered a Seminole Indian in the forest. Of course, Bartram was frightened and really did not know what to do. So he extended his hand in friendship and this unexpected strange tension subsided. As Bartram explained in his words, the Seminole Indian said, “white man, thou art my enemy, and thou and thy brethren may have my power. Live; the great spirit forbids me to touch thy life; go to those compassionate.” Both men went their separate ways. In fact, Bartram noted in his writings that the American Indians might not benefit from European civilization in America. As history has shown, he was actually right. Bartram always felt responsible for the Indians' needs. Mr. Bartram gained respect from many of the Native American tribes. He was given the name *Puc-Puggy*, which means “Flower Hunter” in the Seminole language.

In history, William Bartram is known as an American botanist, ornithologist, natural historian and explorer. However, he was much more than just a naturalist. He was compassionate, concerned for the environment and a person ahead of his time. We think William Bartram would

be proud of our National Scenic Byway and the values of maintaining a healthy ecosystem and educating travelers on our rich flora and fauna.

As a quote from William Bartram, “if we bestow but a very little attention to the economy of the animal creation, we shall find manifest examples of premeditation, perseverance, resolution, and consummate artifice in order to affect their purpose.”



Do you know the byway? Be the first to answer our byway question and **win a Florida Black Bear Scenic Byway T-Shirt**. Email your answer to tomrose43@gmail.com

What do the letters CCC stand for relating to the byway?

Email your answer to tomrose43@gmail.com. Be sure to include your mailing address.

NOTE FROM OUR CHAIRMAN... ..Jim Thorsen



Our Byway continues to prosper and stay active in promoting eco-tourism and public education. We recently received a \$6000 grant from the West Volusia Tourism Advertising Authority (WVTAA) to purchase FBBSB revised brochures and update our website. We want to thank the WVTAA Board for awarding this grant to us to advance our mission to educate the Byway travelers on the importance of conservation and the unique resources. Also, a big thanks to our FBBSB Board member Georgia Turner and Mike Palozzi, an FDOT

contractor, for initiating this grant. It is wonderful to have great support and amazing team members.

One other item, on August 14, we will have our FBBSB exhibit at the North Central Florida Outdoor Expo. Please join us at this event which will be held at the World Equestrian Center in Ocala. You can check out our displays, obtain information and become a member. Hope to see you!! Enjoy your summer travels!!

Jim Thorsen, Chair contact email: thor1505@aol.com

Barberville Pioneer Settlement & Florida Black Bear Partnership a BIG Success



During the first weekend of April, the Barberville Pioneer Settlement held their 18th Annual Spring Frolic, a two-day event that brings together some of the best acoustic music and food that you'll ever experience. The Pioneer Settlement is located directly on the Florida Black Bear National Scenic Byway. Along with music and food, this family friendly event was the place to be for local arts and crafts, history demonstrations – and an antique car show too! Mix in great springtime weather and it was the perfect event for the Florida Black Bear National Scenic Byway Organization to be part of.

Jim Thorsen, Byway Chair and his wife Nikki – along with much of the byway crew – spent the weekend handing out byway information and answering questions about their organization and the Florida Scenic Highways Program, while the beautiful spring weather made it easy for them to show off their new products displaying the byway's logo.

Not only did the team look sharp but based on a recent donation from the United Southern Bank in Astor they had FBB t-shirts, tote bags and hats available to event participants for a small donation. By the end of the weekend, Jim reported that it was successful and they are looking forward to the 47th Annual Fall Country Festival at the Settlement which occurs November 4, 5 2023.

Next Meeting: July 11 at the Pioneer Settlement in Barberville, time is 2pm. Visitors are welcome.

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

Officers: Jim Thorsen, Chairman - Kristee Booth, Vice Chair - Cathy Connally, Treasurer - Nikki Thorsen, Secretary

Editor: Tom Rose Contact: tomrose43@gmail.com. Your letters, comments, suggestions and submissions are welcome.