



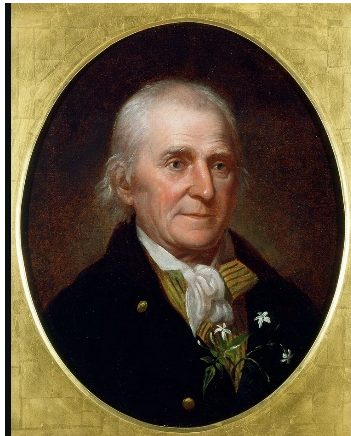
A National Scenic Byway

Florida Black Bear Scenic Byway Newsletter

published quarterly



April 2023



William Bartram

1739 - 1823



Did you know that William Bartram “camped” along the Florida Black Bear Scenic Byway? Yes, it was in May 1774! There was no Byway, no Ocala National Forest, no stores, no banks – just luscious vegetation, lovely trees on the bluffs of a 310 mile St. Johns River. Bartram’s travels through Florida were significant as he described and often named the fauna, flora and wrote about his adventures with Native Americans and the untamed tropical Forests of Florida.

The location where Bartram’s team set up camp is in Volusia County just past the bridge over the St. Johns where a large live oak (*Quercus virginiana*) on the North side is still standing and in good health. From tree measurements, the age of this live oak is approximately 310 years old. When Bartram staged his party next to the tree, this live oak would have been 61 years old and offered plenty of shade. It was a convenient location which was close to Spaldings Outpost for supplies. Today this location is Astor, Florida.

NOTE FROM OUR CHAIRMAN.....Jim Thorsen

Our featured newsletter article for April is a brief tribute of facts about William Bartram. In 1774, he explored Florida along the St. Johns River. He was one of the first ornithologists born in America. His travels through the southeast and Florida are depicted in his book known as *Bartram's Travels*. Hope you can appreciate William Bartram's passion for Florida as he learned about and described the flora and fauna in a land where the majority of the population was Native Americans.



If you attended the “Spring Frolic” at the Pioneer Settlement in Barberville, we hope enjoyed our booth and display. We will definitely be at the Settlement again for the fall festival.

Black Bear Scenic Byway is continuing to update and increase our kiosks across the 123 mile Byway in central Florida. The Pittman Visitor Center on State Road 19 has new informational prints and we have added a kiosk with a new FBBSB print at the Florida National Scenic Trail head on State Road 19.

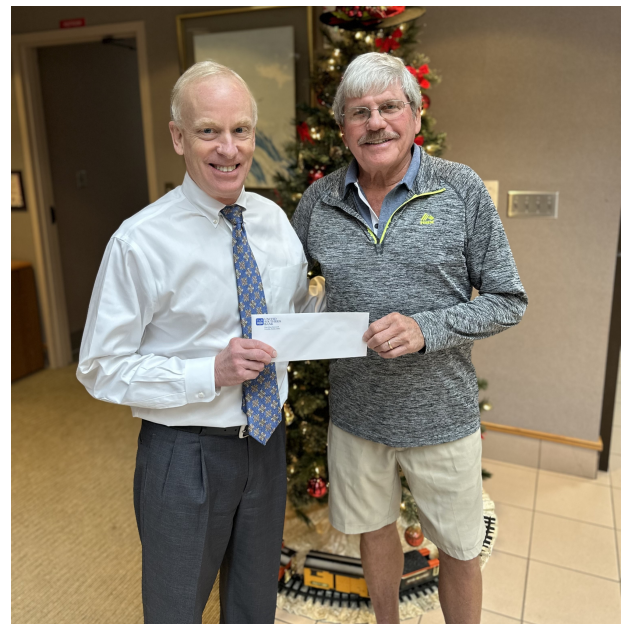
One last item: we were fortunate to receive a \$1000 donation from United Southern Bank for promotional products to increase the Byway's existence and contribute informational materials and displays for the public. A “big” thanks to United Southern Bank for supporting the Florida Black Bear Scenic Byway!

We always like hear from our partners and members. You may contact me for any information. My cell phone is 352-455-1326 and e-mail is thor1505@aol.com. We appreciate all the support.

Jim Thorsen, Chair

Chairman Thorsen on the right accepts donation from USB President and CEO Greg Nelson.

Thank you, United Southern Bank!





The kiosk at the Pitman Visitor Center has been updated and refurbished.



What is smarter than the average bear?

About half of all bears.

Next Meeting: April 11, 2023 - 2:00 pm at the Pioneer Settlement in Barberville. Open to all members & interested visitors.

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.