

Discover Wild Florida

Website

July 2020

Florida Black Bear National Scenic Byway Newsletter

Between every two pines there is a doorway to a new world. John Muir

The College Boys & The Big Snake

by Bill Milton as told to Tom Rose

Life was good in Florida in 1953. The popular WWII General Eisenhower was our president, the Korean war had ended and The University of Florida had some 8,000 full time students, many of them veterans attending on the GI Bill. Quarterback Doug Dickey led the Fighting Gator Football team to wins over Stetson, The Citadel & Georgia on their way to a 3-5-2 season record. You could buy a new Ford for \$1,500 and fill it with gas at 22 cents a gallon. If you had a minimum wage job, and many of us did, you earned \$.75 an hour. The Ocala National Forest had been established just 45 years previously. Silver Springs and Ross Allen's Reptile Institute was Florida's top tourist attraction with 1,000,000 annual visitors.

So lets go back to 1953 for the amazing story of the College Boys & The Big Snake as told to me by the man who experienced it. W. A. "Bill" Milton, now retired, served over 25 years as a highly regarded County Judge. Bill is an avid outdoorsman, he has hunted, fished, camped and hiked the Ocala all his life. Here is his story, in his own words.....

"After the 1953 Summer break of my Sophomore year at The University Of Florida, I was returning to school in my newly acquired 1940 Mercury Club Coupe. On my return trip to Gainesville, I had as passengers, two college buddies: Ray Morgan of Winter Garden and Phil Easterling from Orlando. I drove on 441 to 19 in Eustis and then North to Highway 40, then West to Ocala, then to Gainesville on 441. As we drove through the Ocala National Forest on West 40 we observed a large rattlesnake crossing the highway.

Since we had seen several students capturing snakes along 441 as it crossed Paynes Prairie and learned that they sold them to Ross Allen's Reptile Institute at Silver Springs Park, we decided to capture the rattle snake and sell it to Ross Allen as we were getting near Silver Springs Park. We stopped, found a large fallen pine branch; was able to break it so that it had a fork at the end and held the snake's head down. I fashioned a noose with a strand of electrical wire and was able to get it over the snakes head and then loop it around the end of our forked stick; I tied it off and we were able to get our snake and the pine limb into the trunk of the car.



Ray was concerned that the snake would get loose and crawl into the back seat of the car. I assured him that I had tied it so tight that the snake could not get loose. We went to Silver Springs Park; found the Snake Institute and Ross Allen the "great man" himself went with us to get the snake from the car. Ross gave us quite a lecture about catching snakes and especially about the damage you do if you put a noose around the snakes neck as I had done; he discussed how delicate the glands are in the throat of the rattle snake. He said that he would take the snake and if it lived, I could come by the next week and get my five dollars (a dollar a foot; the going rate). I did go back the next week and he did pay me the five dollars.



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The College Boys & The Big Snake –

Continued

I think it was worth the risk and the danger in order to meet the famous herpetologist and later get to see him “milk the snakes”, in order to obtain venom that would be used to produce anti-venom and maybe save someone’s life or limb.

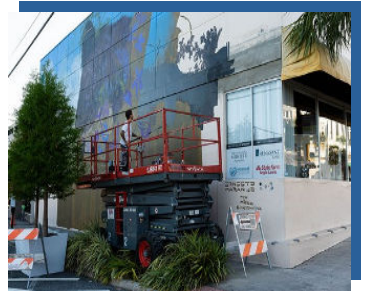
Ray has now gone to his reward; I hope Phil is still well and here am I writing about something that happened all those years ago, because my good friend Tom Rose has asked me to give a short narration of the “time we caught the snake” in what is now the Florida Black Bear National Scenic Byway. Life is made of memories.” - Bill Milton.

In the Know Cool TidBits

Living Art Mural

The City of Ocala, through its Culture Arts and Sciences Division, announced the installation of a “living art mural” in the downtown area. The concept for the mural is a unique blend of street art, incorporating horticulture into the design. When completed, it will be one of only a few in the world, and the only one in Marion County. The design incorporates Florida flora and fauna into a cohesive concept. The focal point of the mural is a Florida Black Bear accompanied by two Roseate spoonbills. When completed the mural will have a semi three dimensional look.

The artist Ernesto Maranje is a Miami based painter and muralist. He uses his imagination to portray the unity of animals and plants by pulling different segments from each and making it a cohesive whole. Not only is the result pleasing to the eye

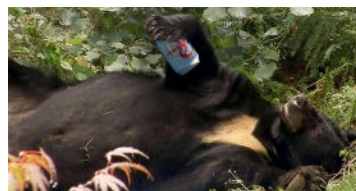


but it reminds the viewer of our connection with nature. The mural can be seen at Brick City Center for the Arts, 23 SE Broadway, Ocala Florida.

Beer Bait ???

Fish and Wildlife agents were called to Baker Lake Resort Oregon only to find a black bear non responsive on the lawn.

Apparently a black bear got into a cooler from one of the campers, and used his claws and teeth to puncture the cans and they where not just cans. This black bear had a taste for beer and a particular beer brand called Rainier Beer. A half a can of Busch beer was gone but 36 cans of Rainier beer was consumed. When the bear became responsive Fish and Wildlife agent tired to chase the bear away but the animal just climbed a tree to sleep it off for the next 4 hours. The bear returned the next morning looking for more Rainier Beer. Fish and Wildlife finally set a trap to capture the bear for relocation and they baited with donuts, honey and for good measure two cans of open Rainier beer. That did the trick. All in all I think it was the Rainier Beer that persuaded the bear go into the trap.





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In the Know Cool News

Caution on Hand Sanitizers

The FDA has issued a warning to not use the following hand sanitizers due to the potential presence of methanol (wood alcohol), a substance that can be toxic when absorbed through the skin or ingested. Some of these products have been tested and found to have over 80% methanol and no ethyl alcohol. Methanol is extremely toxic to humans if ingested or if absorbed through the skin, or inhaled. [More Information.](#)

Amazon Smiles

Florida Black Bear National Scenic byway is now on Amazon Smiles. So the next time you order from amazon utilize this link and select Florida Black Bear Scenic Byway as your non profit. Thank you in advance. [More Information and login.](#)

FDOT

The Florida Transportation Plan (FTP) is the state's long-range plan guiding Florida's transportation future. The FTP is a plan for all of Florida – and affects every resident, business, and visitor.

FDOT is requesting your input via the following four (4) Survey Links:

Technology

<http://floridatransportationplan.com/tech.htm>
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/PQ8MXVS>

Resilience (Rising Sea Levels)

<http://floridatransportationplan.com/resilience.htm>
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/7BXXNR7>

State/Interregional

<http://floridatransportationplan.com/state-interregional.htm>
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/H5PRX35>

Regional/Local

<http://floridatransportationplan.com/regional-local.htm>
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/JYNFB3K>

Florida's Trails Economic Impact Study & Presentation

<http://www.opportunityflorida.com/pdf/Jim%20Wood%20-%20Trails%20and%20Economic%20Impact%20-%20Rural%20Summit.pdf>

Marion County 2024 TPO Plan

Please take time now to browse the interactive website and provide comments!

<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/7fad6f489ae3493c8474501343822d84>

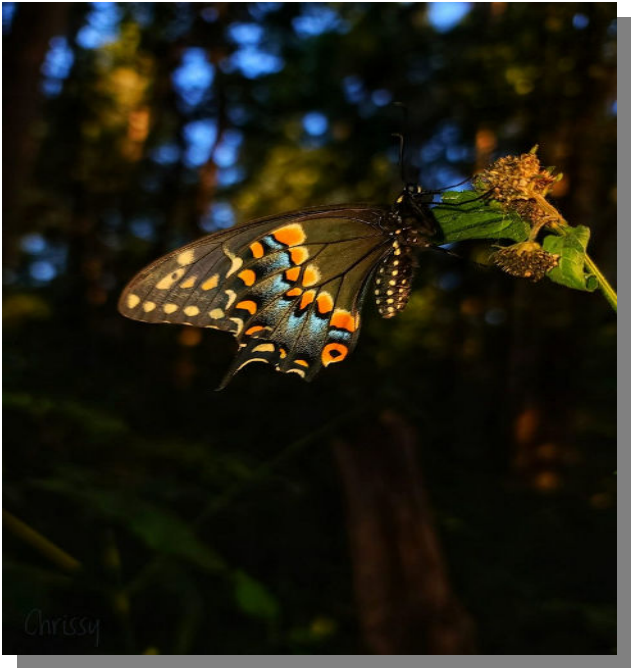


Image by Chrissy. That concludes another adventure on the Florida Black Bear National Scenic Byway. Stay Safe. Till our paths cross again..