



A National Scenic Byway

Florida Black Bear Scenic Byway Newsletter

July 2024

published quarterly



Bear Bytes *Submitted by Nikki Thorsen*

This is a share for our Newsletter enthusiasts to see what the Florida Black Bear National Scenic Byway committee has done thus far in 2024:

* Quarterly Board meetings were held in January, 2024 and April, 2024. The next meeting will be August 6, 2024 at the Pioneer Settlement in Barberville FL @ 2:00 PM. The public is always welcome to attend.

* The committee has been working diligently with **Sailforth Productions** to get our antiquated website updated, sparkled up, refreshed and *running*. Mission accomplished! A huge thank you for all the work put in by **Sailforth Productions** to produce our beautiful new, user friendly and informative website. Please visit us at www.floridablackbearsenicbyway.org

* Our Board is excited to announce the addition of two new committee members: Janet Lewis – Curator, The Umatilla Museum and Mike Cross – Ocala Alliance volunteer and President of Friends of Carr Cabin. Each of their individual expertise will be valuable additions as we move forward with current and new projects.

* Installation of an updated Black Bear panel on the kiosk at Rodman Dam (Kirkpatrick Dam) in Putnam County.

* Installation of a new information panel on an existing U.S. Forest Service kiosk located on S.R. 19 at the Florida National Scenic Trail Head on The Ocala National Forest.

* FBBNSB Board members attended the Florida Scenic Byway Annual Meeting held at The Lakeside Inn, Mt. Dora on March 7, 2024 where many byways presented projects



they have completed or are currently working on. This annual event was a very informative all-day session.

* FBBNSB Board is applying for a grant to create the addition of four kiosks to be installed at new locations along the Byway. We currently have 15 existing kiosks on our Byway.

* Mike Cross worked with Florida Dept. of Transportation (FDOT) to install a designated sign for a wildflower location (Coreopsis) on the southern terminus at Pittman on S.R. 19. This signage is a permanent protected “No Mow” area so travelers may enjoy perennial wildflowers on our Byway.



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* Our permanent Byway display located at The Pioneer Settlement in Barberville has been refreshed by Board members and now houses Byway tee shirts, tote bags and caps which can be purchased onsite. Proceeds from purchased items will be used as donations for ongoing projects.

* Board members created a display area at Juniper Springs with an information table, donation jar and new membership flyers.

NOTE FROM OUR CHAIRMAN.....Jim Thorsen

In the July, 2024 FBBSB Newsletter, we have an article called “Bear Bytes.” We are always proud of what we do and our future activities. As mentioned, we have completed the revision of our website. Please visit

www.floridablackbearsecenic.org and enjoy the activities that are displayed. One important item on the site is “Get Involved.” This section will engage you in **why to support us, membership and volunteering.** We ask that you consider donating to our mission and of course volunteering to help us with activities.

Currently, we have a vacant Board position which is the treasurer job. If any of our FBBSB newsletter readers would like to be on the Board and consider the role of treasurer, please contact me for specific details. Our Board is fun, excitable, gratifying, enjoyable and most important environmentally friendly!



You may contact me by e-mail: thor1505@aol.com or call me on my cell: 352-455-1326. The Florida Black Bear is our “umbrella” species that represents all wildlife along the Byway. We ask for your support to educate the public on protecting and understanding Florida wildlife. With that in mind, did you know that Florida Black Bears are fast runners, skilled swimmers, have great senses and have the largest relative brain size of any carnivore! Thank you for your support!!

Jim Thorsen, Chair thor1505@aol.com

Cathy Connolly recently resigned from our Board after volunteering for over 15 years. Cathy’s passion began working for FWC and she brought Florida Black Bear valuable experience and many hours of volunteering. **Thank you Cathy** for everything you’ve done to contribute to many of our committee successes over the years.



FBBNSB Board members



Do you know the byway? Be the first to answer our byway question and win a Florida Black Bear Scenic Byway Tote Bag.

What famous TV & Movie actor filmed at Alexander Springs in 1965?

Email your answer to tomrose43@gmail.com

Congratulations to the previous contest winner, John Hammel of Orange Park, FL. John knew that the three

Marjories closely involved with the Oklawaha River and the Ocala National Forest were Marjory Stoneman Douglas, Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings and Marjorie Harris Carr. A number of you had the answer to this one but John was the first to respond.



Byway & Umatilla Historical Museum Announce Partnership at April 9th Board Meeting. From left, Michael Cross, Janet Lewis and Jim Thorsen

Website & Facebook: Learn more about the byway at our website

<https://floridablackbearsenicbyway.org/> and Facebook page

<https://floridablackbearsenicbyway.org/facebook>

Next Meeting: August 6, 2024 (Tuesday) at the Pioneer Settlement in Barberville FL @

2:00 PM. Visitors are welcome. Attending a board meeting is a great way to learn more about the byway. Please let us know if you plan to attend. tomrose43@gmail.com

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 - Nikki Thorsen, Secretary

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