Florida National Scenic Trail Visitor Assessment

2004-2005 Annual Report

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Executive Summary

The University of Florida's School of Forest Resources and Conservation began a collaborative visitor assessment project for the Florida National Scenic Trail (FNST) with the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) and the Florida Trail Association (FTA) in June of 2003. The purpose of the study is twofold. First, researchers are striving to determine reliable use estimates of annual trail visits to 28 segments of the FNST. These 28 segments of trail are to be studied over a five year period, beginning in the summer of 2003. Specifically, this report discusses the results of sites studied from June 1, 2004 – May 31 2005. Second, researchers are striving to gather visitor information to better understand FNST hiker characteristics and motivations.

Study Methods

Four methods are used to collect data at annual survey sites:

- Personal Observations
- Mechanical Counters
  - Infrared Eyes
  - Pressure Pads
- Supplemental Materials
- Visitor Questionnaires

2004-2005 Results

Estimation of Trail Visits

The FNST is primarily meant to be a 1600 mile footpath covering the length of Florida allowing a wide-range of opportunities for non-motorized recreation. As a result, two annual estimates are reported. The first estimate is pedestrian visits only, which includes hikers, walkers, joggers, and runners. The second estimate is all inclusive, including not only pedestrian visitors but also bikers, roller bladders, horseback riders, etc.

- Pedestrians: 234,594
- All Visitors: 487,778

Participant Trip Characteristics

- 75 % of participants have hiked the FNST before
- 46 % of participants have hiked the FNST more then 12 times in the past year
- 74 % of participants spend 1 hour or less on the FNST
- 68 % of participants live within an hour or less of the FNST

Participant FNST Experience & Knowledge

- 98 % of participants rate their FNST experience as a 7 or higher with 10 representing a perfect experience
- 59 % know they are hiking on the FNST

Visitor Demographics

- 89 % of participants travel alone or with one other person
- 89 % of participants are 40 years of age or older
- 65 % of participants are retired
- 82 % have no children living at home
- 93 % of participants are Caucasian

Introduction

The 1,600 mile Florida National Scenic Trail traverses through both urban and rural areas creating a footpath that stretches almost the entire length of Florida. As a result, the FNST is no more then 120 miles from all Florida residents, with the exception of the Florida Keys, and attracts thousands of visitors annually, and provides various passive recreation opportunities beyond hiking such as nature study, photography, and bird watching.

A nationwide survey of state and federal trail managers indicated collecting trail use data is a high importance, and that the collection of this data would be crucial to future management success for trail planning and other related projects (Lynch, J. et al, 2002). Visitor monitoring is a key component to effectively managing recreation on a regional scale. This process, which is often limited by resources (i.e. money, staff, etc), centers around two main processes: 1) obtaining the number of visitors to an area, and 2) administering visitor questionnaires (Cope, Doxford, and Miller, 1999). The necessity for collecting visitor counts is slowly emerging within recreation and land use agencies. This data helps in justifying budget requests, and it can provide a direction for appropriate resource distribution (Loomis, 2000). The most common method for collecting visitor counts has been through the use of mechanical counters. However, records on visitor counts are also kept through visitor sign in sheets, registration cards, and personal observations. In addition to obtaining information on the number of visitors to an area, gathering specific information on visitors themselves such as visitor motivations, visitor preferences, visitor knowledge of the area, and visitor socio-demographics can help managers and planners create a balance between the conservation of the surrounding habitat and providing quality recreation experiences.

Current monitoring efforts on the Florida National Scenic Trail (FNST) were undertaken by the U.S. Forest Service with the help of the University of Florida, School of Forest Resources and Conservation in order to gather baseline information on current trail use. The potential continuation of this research will provide long-term data in order to monitor trends in use and trail user characteristics. As the monitoring of visitor use along the FNST continues over the next several years, management will be provided with reinforcement of previous observational notions of the number of annual visits to the FNST, trail user characteristics, and trail user motivations. This baseline data will further allow managers to evaluate trends of trail visitation and the above mentioned characteristics over an extended period of time therefore aiding programmers, managers, and volunteers with the ability to enhance user experience and acquire appropriate funding (Loomis, 2000).

This report presents the information collected from June 1, 2004 through May 31, 2005 at seven identified survey sites through which the Florida National Scenic Trail traverses. In addition to these seven survey sites, seven additional counters where maintained in Florida's National Forests. Data collected from these counters are reported within as well.

Study Objectives

The purpose of the Florida National Scenic Trail Visitor Assessment study is to generate reliable use estimates of annual visits to the FNST. A visit is defined as an individual entering and exiting the FNST. Although all visitors are reported, both pedestrian and "other" visitors, the primary focus of this assessment is foot traffic (i.e. hiking, walking, backpacking, running, etc.).

Specifically, study objectives aim to:

1. generate reliable use estimates of each survey site, which can be inferred to all FNST survey sections of similar categorized use which then can be combined to create a trail-wide visitation estimate, and
2. to describe pedestrians in terms of their socio-demographic and trip characteristics, as well their level of satisfaction.

Methodology

Survey Sections

The Florida National Scenic Trail is composed of 42 sections. Using these 42 sections as a foundation for survey efforts, UF researchers identified 28 survey sites within each section that would likely serve as exit and/or entrance points for hikers. These areas tended to correspond closely to public lands with established trailheads, which attract more hikers and serve as efficient survey sites. Preliminary research then categorized these sites as receiving high, medium, or low use (Table 1). Survey sites were then geographically divided into groups, and each group will be sampled for one year during the five-year visitor assessment (Appendix I). Each survey site is further divided into potential FNST access points (Table 2). Although data might not be collected at every access point within a site, every access point is classified by use type. This classification allows data collected at similar access points to be inferred to access points without data (Appendix II). Finally, visitor use estimates generated for high, medium, and low use sites surveyed each year will be used to help generate an estimate of overall FNST visits each year.

Table 1. Site use classification

Site Use Type	Annual number of visits
High	1000 or more
Medium	366-999
Low	0-365

Table 2. Access point classification

Access Point Type	Monthly number of visits
A	500 hundred or more
B	100-499
C	50-99
D	15-49
E	15 or less

Counting Visitors on the FNST

When

Study years are divided into two seasons:

1. Summer season, June 1st to September 31st
2. Fall/Spring Season, October 1st to May 31st

Beginning the study year during summer, allows researchers ample time to contact recreation and land managers at new study sites, install trail counters and work out any kinks that may arise with equipment or the sampling framework over the summer months without sacrificing the loss of visitor use data. In addition, the use of two survey seasons allows researchers to account for seasonal differences in use.

Where

Researchers collected visitor use data from 10 study sites from June 1, 2004-May 31, 2005 from:

1. Pine Log State Forest
2. Apalachicola National Forest
3. St. Marks Wildlife Management Area & Rail Trail
4. Aucilla Wildlife Management Area
5. Suwannee: Stephen Foster St. Park & Big Oak Trail
6. Osceola National Forest
7. Rice Creek Conservation Area
8. Ocala National Forest
9. Seminole State Forest
10. Lake Okeechobee

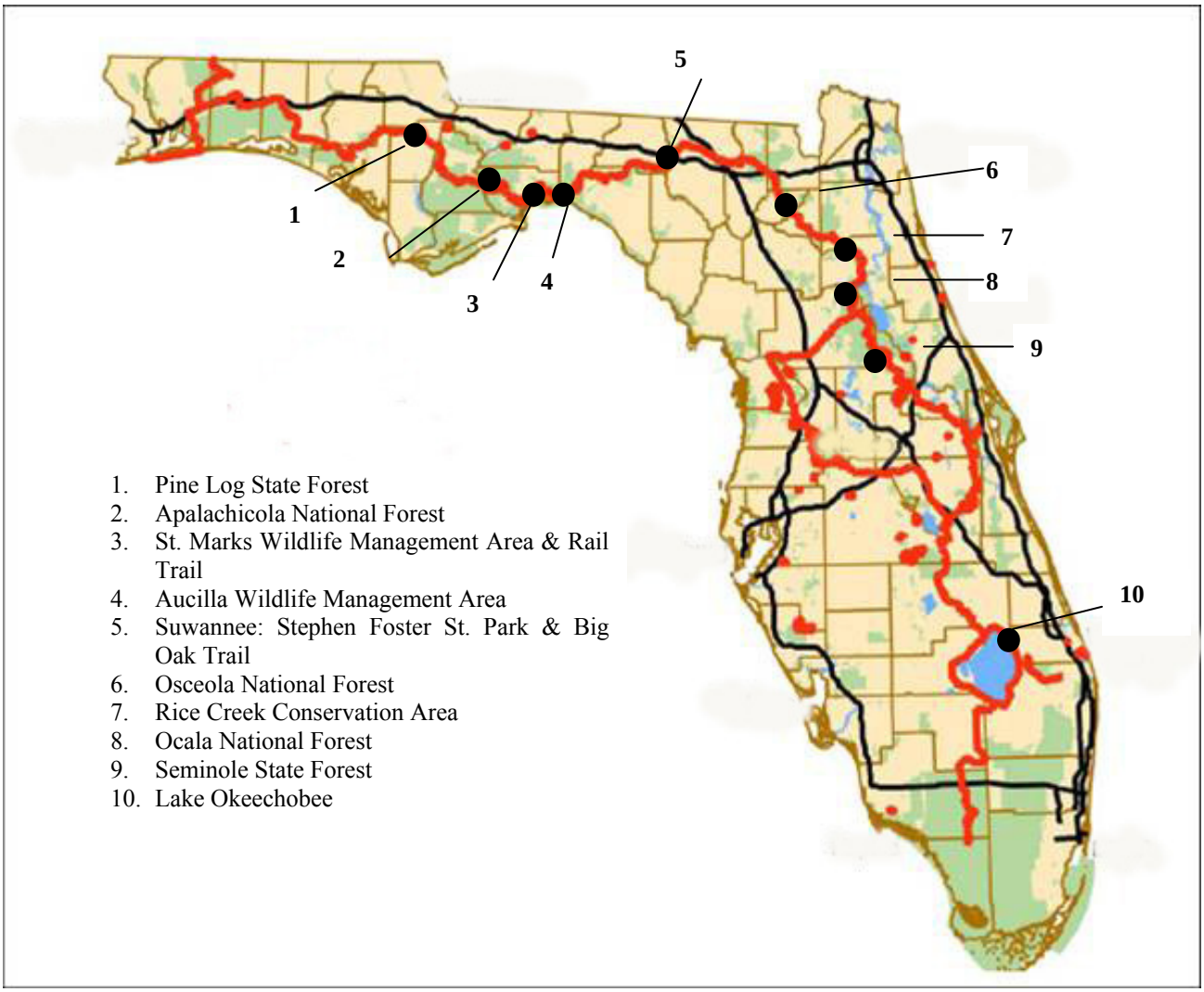


Figure 1. 2004-2005 Study Sites

Information on individual sites can be viewed in Appendix XIII. These seven survey sites contained a total of 36 access points (Appendix III) that where monitored throughout the study year.

How

To obtain a reliable used estimate of pedestrians of the FNST, researchers combined four different methods:

1. personal observations,
2. mechanical counters,
3. supplemental materials, and
4. visitor questionnaires.

The following sections describe each technique.

Personal Observations

A stratified random sampling approach was used to assign personal observation times in conjunction with survey periods. The sampling framework consists of three strata:

1. Use level
   a. High – 1000 visits or more/year
   b. Medium – 366 – 999 visits/year
   c. Low – 365 visits or less/year
2. Day type
   a. Weekdays (Monday - Thursday)
   b. Weekends (Friday - Sunday)
3. Time of day
   a. morning
   b. afternoon

Following this framework, personal observation times were assigned to all study sites using a random numbers formula in Excel where high use sites were allocated more survey periods then lower use sites (Table 3). However, the allocation of survey periods

differed slightly for sites where counters were unable to be installed (i.e. rail-trails, or any multiple use section of trail) (Table 4). This is because sites that do not have counters to collect data must have estimates derived from personal observations. Therefore, survey times need to be randomly scheduled to also include weekdays, allocating more personal observation times on weekends then weekdays.

Table 3. Allocation of survey periods for sites with pedestrian counters

Use Type Classification	Summer Season	Fall/Spring Season
High	3-4	9-11
Medium	3	5-6
Low	2-3	3-4

Table 4. Allocation of survey periods for sites without pedestrian counters

	Summer Season June 1 – September 30		Fall/Spring Season October 1-May 31	
Site Type	Weekday	Weekend	Weekday	Weekend
High	2	3	4	8
Medium	1	3	2	4
Low	1	2	1	2

During these personal observation times, surveyors kept a tally of individuals entering/exiting the FNST, as well as group size, the number of males, the number of females, activity, and direction of travel. These observation logs were used to generate an estimate of trail use at sites that are observation only (Appendix IV).

During the 2004 summer season, every survey day contained two possible survey periods: a 5 hour morning period or a 5 hour afternoon period. The summer season was comprised of 70 weekdays, making a total of 140 possible weekday survey days, and 52 weekend survey days, making a total of 104 possible weekend survey periods. First, every survey period was assigned a number. Using an Excel spreadsheet, researchers randomly selected numbers without replacement and correlated the random number to the assigned survey period. This process was used to determine survey periods for each survey site. Due to the cost and time of traveling to Lake Okeechobee, researchers performed two survey periods back-to-back with the first being an afternoon shift at one access point, and the second being a morning shift at a different access point. There was a total of 10 observation/survey periods conducted over the summer season (Appendix V).

For the fall/spring season, there are 244 days in the fall/spring season, 139 weekdays and 105 weekend days. Similar to the summer season, every designated survey day consists of five hours of observation. While all survey sites had personal observation sessions, Lake Okeechobee and the St. Marks Rail Trail where the only two sites that user estimates where entirely derived using the personal observation method. There were a total of 51 survey periods conducted over the fall/spring season (Appendix VI).

Mechanical Pedestrian Counters

UF researchers used two types of counters to generate visitor use estimates: infrared eyes and pressure pads. While the installation of the two pieces of equipment differs, the data collection methods are the same. Researchers used the numbers collected from the counters to provide a reliable estimate of hikers on the FNST. Seven counters where installed at the beginning of the survey season (Appendix VII).

Pressure Pads

TrafX pressure pads are designed to be buried approximately one inch below the trails surface. By being buried, TrafX manufactures are aiming to reduce the number of defaced counters as a result of vandals in some back country areas.. The pad is "tripped" when pressure is exerted from the top by hikers, wildlife, bicyclists, etc. however the pad can not distinguish between trail users. This data is recorded onto a small computer memory card which is stored in a weather proof box and placed strategically among brush and covered with surrounding vegetation to help conceal its existence. The pad and the memory card are interconnected by a cable which is buried beneath the ground as well.

Active Infrared Eyes

The Diamond Traffics TCC-4420 infrared eye trail counter was originally designed by the U.S. forest service equipment center to aid in trail monitoring in remote areas. The counter is cases in a water-proof aluminum and operates on 4-D batteries that usually

last 12-15 months in length. The counter is installed on a tree or wooden post and is aligned with a reflector 20-75 feet across the trail creating an invisible beam. When this beam is broken a hiker, wildlife, or other user is recorded. The counter can not differentiate between user types.

Both types of trail counters were calibrated on monthly bases (Appendix VIII). Calibration of counters was essential in obtaining and maintaining counters accuracy. Researchers walked on or across the counter a designated number of times and compared this number to the number of registered counts on the counter. The number of actual counts was then divided by the number of registered counts to develop a monthly correction factor (Appendix XII). At the end of the survey season these monthly correction factors were averaged together, omitting outliers, to develop one correction factor for an entire season. This correction factor was then applied to each month of data for that survey site to compensate for a counter over or under counting.

Supplemental Materials

For many areas, additional information regarding visitor numbers is available. This type of information ranges from formal registration cards to informal visitor logs kept in a mailbox on a nearby kiosk. The information found in these materials helps supplement the counters and observational counts.

Registration cards can be used to obtain supplemental counts of visitors to the FNST. Visitor compliance is often an issue when depending on registration cards for visitor counts. There is currently no standardized system for registration cards on the FNST, so the reliability of this data is site dependent.

For 2003-2004, researchers only used registration cards from Eglin Air Force Base for supplemental data. Registration is mandatory at this site, and there is consistency in the card's dispersal and collection. Numbers obtained from this site was also used in the 2004-2005 estimation of trail visits. However, there were no additional survey sites in 2004-2005 that contained supplemental material.

Defining Visitor Characteristics

In order to meet the studies second objective, to describe pedestrians in terms of their socio-demographic and trip characteristics as well their level of satisfaction, researchers conducted on-site exit interviews and distributed mail-back surveys.

Visitor Questionnaires

Seventy-six on-site visitor surveys where conducted and forty mail back surveys where distributed, of which twenty-eight where returned equaling a 70% response rate.

The on-site exit survey (Appendix IX) was given to one consenting participant 18 years of age or older within every group exiting the FNST. For groups that were larger then six people, one person for every seventh person in the group was asked to complete and on-site survey. The questionnaire took approximately 3-5 minutes of the participant's time to complete, containing 15 questions pertaining to frequency of trail use, primary activities, group size, trip length, trip satisfaction, and desired trail improvements. At the end of the on-site interview a mail back survey was distributed to the participant (Appendix X). While similar questions are asked in both surveys, the mail-back survey provided more in-depth information about the participants hiking experience and behavior. The mail-back survey contains four sections pertaining to trip characteristics, hiking experience, Florida National Scenic Trail knowledge and association, and participant demographics.

Data Analysis

Personal Observations

The observation logs completed by researchers during sampling blocks were used to develop seasonal estimates of visitors to the FNST. For each access point within every survey site, the following counts were recorded:

- TFC = Total Foot Count. Total number of visitors that are considered foot traffic (hikers, walkers, backpackers, runners) who were observed entering or exiting the FNST.
- TOC = Total Other Count. Total number of bikers, horseback riders, rollerbladers, who were observed entering or exiting the FNST.
- TWC = Total Work Count. Total number of service workers, volunteer or agency related, who were observed entering or exiting the FNST.
- TVC = Total Visitor Count. Total number of visitors, including all activities, who were observed entering or exiting the FNST.

Average seasonal counts of TFC, TOC, and TVC were calculated for each survey site using a four-step process. While, the TWC was recorded, the data were not analyzed using this process.

1. For each variable (i.e. TFC, TOC, and TVC), researchers calculated the **average sampling period count** (am and pm) for each day type (weekend or weekday) for each access point of each survey site.

$$X_{ijkl} = 1/N_{ijk} \sum_{l=1}^{Nijk} X_{ijkl}$$

Where:
i = access point
j = survey site (1,…,8)
k = weekday (1) and weekend (2)
l = the sampling periods for each day (am or pm)
m = number of counts for sampling period *l* on day type *k* at access point *i* of site *j*
N_{ijkl} = number of times counted during shift *l* on day type *k* at access point *i of* site *j*
X_{ijklm} = the count on *m*th repetition for sampling period *l* on day type *k* at access point *i* of site *j*
X_{ijkl} = average count during sampling period *l* on day type *k* at access point *i* of site *j*

2. Second, researchers calculated the **average daily count** for each access point of each site by summing the two sampling periods (calculated above) for both weekend days and weekdays.

$$X_{ijk} = \sum_{k=1}^{3} X_{ijkl}$$

Where:
i = access point
j = survey site (1,…,8)
k = weekday (1) and weekend (2)
l = the sampling periods for each day (am or pm)
X_{ijk} = average daily count on day type *k* at access point *i* of site *j*

3. Next, the average daily counts of all access points within a site were summed to calculate the average daily count for a site for both weekdays and weekends.

$$X_{jk} = \sum_{k=1}^{3} X_{ijk}$$

Where:
i=access point
j=survey site (1,…,8)
k=weekday (1) and weekend (2)
X_{jk}=average daily count on day type *k* at site *j*

4. Researchers calculated the **average seasonal count** for each site, for variables TFC, TOC, TVC. Researchers multiplied the average daily count for weekends by the number of weekend days in that season. Then, they multiplied the average daily count for weekdays by the number of weekday days in that season. Researchers then added the two numbers to find the average seasonal count.

Seasonal Average for each site =

$$M_1(\sum_{i=1}^{8} X_{i1}) + M_2(\sum_{i=1}^{8} X_{i2})$$

Where:
M_1 = number of weekend days in the season
M_2 = number of weekday days in the season
X_{i1} = average daily count for site *i* for weekend days.
X_{i1} = average daily count for site *i* for weekdays
i = site (1,…, 8)

Next, the survey site estimates, for variable TFC, were grouped by use type (high, medium, and low). The average of the estimates for the high use sites medium use sites, and low use sites was determined. Finally, for variable TFC, an estimate for all 27 survey sites was generated. The following equation was used:

$$E = \sum S + X_H(N_H) + X_M(N_M) + X_L(N_L)$$

Where:
E = TFC Estimate for all 27 survey sites
S = Estimates from completed survey sites
X_H = Average TFC for high use sites
X_M = Average TFC for medium use sites
X_L = Average TFC for low use sites
N_H = Number of high use survey sites not yet surveyed
N_M = Number of medium use survey sites not yet surveyed
N_L = Number of low use survey sites not yet surveyed

Mechanical Pedestrian Counters

Data collected from mechanical counters provide continuous counts for selected survey sites. Analyzing counter data is the same regardless of the type of counter being used. A seven-step protocol was developed to transform raw counter data to final seasonal counts for each installed counter.

Step 1: Adjust Raw Data

Delete data:

1. One hour after sunset to one hour before sunrise, unless there was scheduled night hikes that researchers were made aware of. This information was obtained at the study sites website, from the study sites land/recreation manager, from the FTA website or from the FTA publication *Footprints*.

2. Pressure pads only: Any counts occurring within the same second.

3. Infrared eyes-only: Unusually high counts, with no explanation from FTA or other group, and unusual patterns of high numbers. Unusually high counts are site specific. Counts that may be considered "high counts" should were not deleted until reasonable knowledge about the trail section had been obtained.

4. Any data that was our researchers calibrating or working on trail.

Step 2: Adjust Data by Month & Compensating for Missing Data

Counter data was then analyzed by the month, so each month within a season had a total number of counts. This number was recorded in an Excel spreadsheet.

If data was missing within the month, data was estimated by:

[(Total # of hits for *x* days before missing data + Total # of hits for *x* days after missing data) / 2

If days were missing between two months (not the whole month) then researchers followed the procedure above. After dividing by 2, the answer was then divided by the number of missing days. This gave the number of hits per day. This number was multiplied by the number of missing days within the month.

If data was missing for an entire month an access point average was applied to that particular month for that particular site.

Step 3: Corrected Monthly Count

In order to better estimate the actual number of users, each access point with a counter had an average correction factor that was multiplied by the access point's monthly total. This was done at the end of a season when all the correction factors were averaged together. Every counter is calibrated regularly, and correction factors were produced by dividing the actual number of counts by the registered number of counts. The average correction factor accounts for every time the access point was calibrated since installation. If a counter had to be replaced, correction factors were averaged as normal unless there are known differences between the counters or conditions. Outlying correction factors were omitted if the cause of the unusually high/low factor was known.

Step 4: Final Monthly Data

To account for the same entry and exit by pedestrians at a site, an access point's corrected monthly count was divided by two.

Step 5: Apply Access Point Averages

Once final monthly counts were formed, all like access points were grouped together from all study years – irregardless of location. Next, an average for that type access point was formulated. This average was then applied to current access points where data was not collected.

Step 6: Final Seasonal Data

All final monthly data was summed up within the season.

Step 7: Trail-Wide Estimate

1. Summation of the actual estimates for sites already surveyed, plus
2. The number of high sites not yet surveyed multiplied by the high use average , plus
3. The number of medium sites not yet surveyed multiplied by the medium use average, plus
4. The number of low sites not yet surveyed multiplied by the low use average = Estimate of Use for 28 survey sites

Results

This section describes data collected from mechanical counters and visitor surveys during both the summer and fall/spring study seasons. Further information for individual sites is detailed in appendix XIII.

Estimate of Summer Visits

Trail visitor estimations were developed through the use of two methods, personal observations and mechanical counters. Of nine sites being monitored for visitor use, Lake Okeechobee had the highest estimation of visitors, followed closely by St. Marks which includes the rail trail. Medium use sites, which included Seminole State Forest, Pine Log State Forest, Aucilla WMA, and Apalachicola National Forest received a total of 717 visits over the 2004 summer season. Rice Creek Conservation area had the lowest number of visitors (Table 5). These estimates were complied from mechanical counters installed at designated trail locations and personal observations.

Table 5. Estimate of Summer FNST Visits for 2004 Summer Survey Sites

Use Type	*Site*	*Foot Traffic*	*Other Traffic*	*Total Visitor*
High	Lake Okeechobee	1,329	1,229	2,558
	St. Marks	290	1,229	1,519
	Suwannee	199	0	199
	Ocala National Forest	446	0	446
	Osceola National Forest	92	0	92
Medium	Seminole State Forest	212	0	212
	Apalachicola NF	212	0	212
	Aucilla	171	0	171
	Pine Log State Forest	72	0	72
Low	Rice Creek Conservation Area	43	0	43
Total Estimate for Summer 2004 Survey Sites				**5,742**

Summer results were then added to 2003 summer estimations (Appendix XI) in order to develop a more accurate visitor estimation of trail wide summer use. Summer 2003 results were recalculated to compensate for hurricane damage that occurred during the month of September, 2004 resulting in approximately 80% of the FNST being temporarily closed to hikers. Averages were then developed for each high, medium, and low use site category which was then applied to similar sites not yet studied. Preliminary research performed in 2001-2002 identified six high use sites, one medium use site, and six low use sites for summer 2005-spring 2008 study years. Once these averages were applied to sites not yet studied, the summer estimate for pedestrian visits to the FNST is 15,694 and an additional 15,051 visits from multiple use recreationists, equaling a total of 30,745 visits (Table 6).

Table 6. Trail-wide estimate of 2004 summer FNST visits

Use Type	*Sites*	*Foot Traffic*	*Other Traffic*	*Total*
High	Lake Okeechobee	1,329	1,229	2,557
	St. Marks	290	1,229	1,519
	Ocala National Forest	446	0	446
	Osceola National Forest	92	0	92
	Suwannee	199	0	199
	'03-'04 High Use Estimates	8,354	8,601	16,954
	AVERAGE x 6 Unstudied Sites	6,265	6,450	12,716
	Total High Use Estimate	***14,619***	***15,051***	***29,670***
Medium	Seminole State Forest	212	0	212
	Apalachicola NF	212	0	212
	Pine Log State Forest	72	0	72
	Aucilla WMA	171	0	171
	'03-'04 Medium Use Site Estimates	33	0	33
	AVERAGE x 1 Unstudied Site	150	0	150
	Total Medium Use Estimate	***900***	***0***	***900***
Low	Rice Creek Conservation Area	43	0	43
	'03-'04 Low Use Estimate	0	0	0
	AVERAGE x 6 Unstudied Sites	132	0	132
	Total Low Use Estimate	***175***	***0***	***175***
	2004 TOTAL SUMMER ESTIMATE		**30,695**	

Estimation of Fall/Spring Visits

Observation only sites had the highest use estimates with Lake Okeechobee being the most frequently visited segment of trail, receiving an estimated 89,930 pedestrian visits, and 111, 482 other traffic visits during the fall/spring season for a total of 201,412. St. Marks, which includes the rail trail, had the second highest estimated combined use, receiving an estimated 2,515 pedestrian visits and 10,562 estimated other visits for a combined total of 13,077 (Table 7).

For all other sites, pedestrian numbers where obtained through the use of mechanical counters, both infrared eyes and pressure pads. Out of these sites, Ocala National Forest had the highest number of recorded pedestrians, receiving a total of 3,392 fall/spring visits. Apalachicola National Forest had the highest recorded pedestrian counts for medium use sites (906), and Seminole State Forest had the highest overall recorded visits for medium use sites receiving 563 pedestrian visits and an estimated 449 other use visits to the FNST. Rice Creek Conservation area was the only low use area receiving 84 visits over the fall/spring season

Table 7. Estimate of fall/spring visits for 2004 and 2005 study sites

Use Type	*Site*	*Foot Traffic*	*Other Traffic*	*Total*
High	Lake Okeechobee	89,930	111,482	201,412
	St. Marks	2,515	10,562	13,077
	Ocala National Forest	3,392	0	3,392
	Osceola National Forest	1,522	0	1,522
	Suwannee	1,147	0	1,147
Medium	Seminole State Forest	653	449	1,102
	Apalachicola NF	906	0	906
	Pine Log State Forest	662	0	662
	Aucilla WMA	376	0	0
Low	Rice Creek Conservation Area	84	0	84
Total Estimate for Fall/Spring 2004 & 2005 Survey Sites			**223,680**	

Fall estimates from the 2003-2004 study year were then added to the data collected for the 2004-2005 study year (Appendix XI). Next, an average was obtained and applied to sites not yet studied. The total estimation of pedestrian visits to the Florida National Scenic Trail for the fall/spring season is 218,779, and an additional 238,265 was estimated for other use visits equaling 457,044 total visits the FNST over the 2004-2005 fall/spring season (Table 8).

Table 8. Trail-wide Estimate of Fall/Spring FNST Visits

Use Type	*Sites*	*Foot Traffic*	*Other Traffic*	*Total*
High	Lake Okeechobee	89,930	111,482	201,412
	St. Marks	2,515	10,562	13,077
	Ocala National Forest	3,392	0	3,392
	Osceola National Forest	1,522	0	1,522
	Suwannee	1,147	0	1,147
	'03-'04 fall/spring sites	23,823	13,801	37,624
	AVERAGE x 6 Unstudied Sites	91,762	101,884	193,646
	Total High Use Estimate	***214,111***	***237,729***	***452,660***
Medium	Seminole State Forest	653	449	1,102
	Apalachicola NF	906	0	906
	Pine Log State Forest	662	0	662
	Aucilla WMA	376	0	0
	'03-'04 Medium Use Site Estimates	610	0	610
	AVERAGE x 1 Unstudied Site	629	87	716
	Total Medium Use Estimate	***3,836***	***536***	***4,372***
Low	Rice Creek Conservation Area	84	0	84
	'03-'04 Low Use Estimate	124	0	124
	AVERAGE x 6 Unstudied Sites	624	0	624
	Total Low Use Estimate	***832***	***0***	***832***
ESTIMATES OF TRAILWIDE FALL/SPRING VISITS			**457,044**	

Estimation Annual Visits

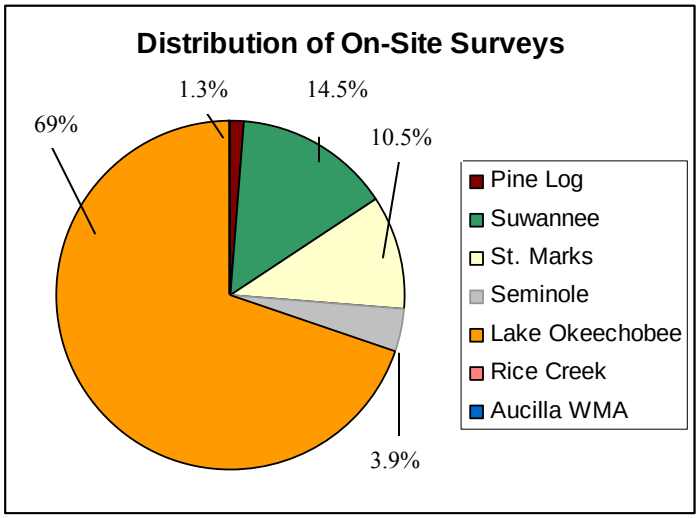
Finally, trail-wide estimates for the summer season and the fall/spring season were added together to form an annual estimate of FNST visits. Overall, the FNST hosts 487,818 total visits annually. Forty-eight percent (48%) of these visits were foot traffic and fifty-two percent (52%) were other use types. Lake Okeechobee had the highest estimate for high use sites, receiving an estimated 203,969 annual visits. Seminole State Forest had the highest estimate for medium use site receiving an estimated 1,314 annual visits. Finally, Rice Creek Conservation Area had the highest estimate for low use sites, receiving an estimated 127 annual visits (Table 9).

Table 9. 2004-2005 trail-wide annual visits to the FNST

Use Type	*Site*	*Foot Traffic*	*Other Traffic*	*Total*
High	Lake Okeechobee	91,259	112,711	203,969
	St. Marks	2,805	11,791	14,596
	Ocala National Forest	3,838	0	3,838
	Osceola National Forest	1,614	0	1,614
	Suwannee	1,346	0	1,346
	'03-'04 High Use study sites	29,841	19,944	49,785
	Sites not yet studied	98,027	108,334	206,361
	Total High Use Estimate	***228,730***	***252,780***	***481,509***
Medium	Seminole State Forest	865	449	1,314
	Apalachicola NF	1,118	0	1,118
	Pine Log State Forest	734	0	734
	Aucilla WMA	547	0	547
	'03-'04 Medium Use Study Sites	664	0	664
	Site not yet studied	794	0	794
	Total Medium Use Estimate	***4,722***	***539***	***5,302***
Low	Rice Creek Conservation Area	127	0	127
	'03-'04 Low Use Estimate	124	0	124
	Sites not yet studied	756	0	756
	Total Low Use Estimate	***1,007***	***0***	***1,007***
	Sub-Total	***234,473***	***253,319***	**487,778**
2004-2005 ESTIMATES OF TRAIL-WIDE ANNUAL VISITS				

On-Site Survey

Survey periods were conducted at each of the study sites and exit interviews were completed by pedestrian only. A total of 76 participants completed the exit interview at five of the seven locations (Figure 2). Of the sites where on-site interviews were obtained Lake Okeechobee made up the majority of exit interviews (69.7%), and Pine Log State Forest had the least percentage of interviews (1.3%). There were no on-site surveys performed at Aucilla WMA or Rice Creek Conservation Area.



n=76

Figure 2. On-site survey distribution

Trip Characteristics

Surveyors began by asking the participant how many times they had used the particular segment of trail they were surveyed at in the past year. The majority (75%) had visited the FNST before, and almost half of respondents (46.1%) had hiked that section of trail 12 or more times in the past year. In addition to the repeated high use of the FNST, the majority (89.5%) of respondents entered and exited the trail from the same location.

Next, participants were asked how long they spent on the trail that day. Close to three quarters (73.7%) of participants spent an hour or less. An additional 22.4% spent "a few hours" hiking or jogging on the FNST. When asked how far the respondents lived from the FNST, over half (67.9%) stated that they lived 60 miles or less from the trail. Lastly, over half (59.2%) of the respondents stated that they knew they were hiking on the FNST (Table 10).

Table 10. On site survey: trip characteristics

Statement	Response	Valid Percent (n=76)
First time visiting that particular segment of trail	Yes No	25.0 75.0
Visits to the FNST in the past year	2-6 times 7-12 times More than 12 times	25.0 0.0 46.1
Did the participant enter and Exit the FNST from the same location	Yes No	89.5 10.5
Time spent on the FNST	1 hour or less A few hours Half a day A whole day	73.7 22.4 3.9 0.0
Did the participant know they were on the FNST	Yes No	59.2 40.8

Activities

Participants were asked to determine what three activities best describe the reason that they visited the trail that day. Participants reported the primary reason was for hiking/walking (78.7%). Respondents' second reason cited for visiting was viewing scenery (56.4%). The third most often cited activity was for nature study (25%) (Table 11).

Table 11. On site survey: activities

Statement	Response	Valid Percent (n=76)
Primary Activity	Hiking/Walking Viewing Scenery Bird Watching Other	78.7 6.7 2.7 9.3
Secondary Activity	Viewing Scenery Hiking Walking Bird Watching Other	56.4 12.7 5.5 12.7
Third Activity	Nature Study Bird Watching Photography Other	25.0 19.4 11.1 22.4

Participant Experience

Respondents were asked to rate their experience on the FNST on a scale of 1 to 10 with 10 representing a perfect experience. Almost half (45.9%) rated their experience as perfect. An additional 37.9% rated the trip with a score of eight or nine. There were no respondents that rated their experience below a five. This question was followed by asking if there was any particular reason why the respondents trail experience was not a 10. Reasons cited included undesirable weather, lack of trail maintenance, and lack of wildlife. Lastly, visitors were asked to identify any improvements they would like to see on the FNST. The trail improvement most often selected was better overall trail maintenance (Table 12).

Table 12. On-site Survey: Participant Experience

Statement	Response	Valid Percent (n=76)
Participant FNST rating	10	45.9
	9	17.6
	8	20.3
	7	13.6
	6	0.0
	5	2.7
	1-4	0.0
Reasons why experience was Not a 10	Weather related	5.2
	Lack of maintenance	2.6
	Conflicts between user groups	2.6
	Noise pollution	2.6
	Lack of wildlife	3.9
	Other	5.2
Suggested Improvements	Better maintenance, signage, and blazes	24.7
	On-site facilities and amenities	17.0
	Other	7.8

Visitor Demographics

Most of participants (49.3%) on the trail were with one other person, however, a little over a third (40%) were visiting the FNST alone. Groups of three to five made up 9.3% of surveyed trail visitors. Conversely, when asked what type of group the participant was traveling with that day, the most common response (42.2%) was that the participant was traveling alone, and 40.6% of respondents stated they were with their significant other or spouse.

The majority (88.8%) of respondents were 40 years of age or older, with the mass of this group being divided between participants who were 50-59 years old (29.6%) and 60-69 age category (29.6%). The lowest age ranges were ages 18-29 (4.2%) and ages 80 and over (4.2%).

There was a noticeable difference in the respondent's gender, with over 60% (64.5%) of the respondents being male, and 35.5% being female. Congruently males groups or 1-2 males (89.9%) were higher the female groups of 1-2 individuals (67.2%).

Lastly, the majority (67.9%) of survey participants lived within 60 miles of the trail, though 16.1% lived more than 240 miles from the FNST (Table 13).

Table 13. On-site survey: visitor characteristics

Statement	Response	Valid Percent (n=76)
Group Size	1	40.0
	2	49.3
	3	8.0
	4	1.3
	5 or more	1.3
Number of Males in Group	0	7.2
	1-2	89.8
	3-4	1.4
Number of Females in Group	0	28.4
	1-2	67.2
	3-4	4.5
Group Type	Alone	42.2
	Spouse/Significant Other	40.6
	Friends/Family	15.9
	Other	1.4
Distance the participant lives from the FNST*	30 miles or less	64.3
	31-60 miles	3.6
	61-120 miles	12.5
	121-240 miles	3.6
	More then 240 miles	16.1
Participant Age	80 years or older	4.2
	70-79 years old	14.1
	60-69 years old	29.6
	50-59 years old	29.6
	40-49 years old	11.3
	30-39 years old	7.0
	18-29 years old	4.2
Gender of participant	Male	64.5
	Female	35.5

* Participants who were seasonal residents to the area were asked to estimate the distance from their seasonal Florida home.

Mail Back Survey

Forty mail back surveys were handed out to participants during the fall/spring season and 28 were returned, resulting in a 70% response rate.

Trip Characteristics

The majority of respondents (96.3%) had visited the FNST before, and over half (56.0%) of participants had visited the FNST more than 12 times in the past year. In addition, most respondents (88.9%) used the same entry and exit point. Almost all (92.6%) of respondents were day-use visitors, spending less then half a day on the trail (88.9%) while 7.4% spent more than one day on the FNST . Of the day use visitors, the majority (65.4%) hiked three miles or less the day they were contacted (Table 14).

Table 14. Mail back survey: trip characteristics

Statement	n	Response	Valid Percent
First time visiting that particular segment of FNST	27	Yes No	3.7 96.3
Previous site visits in the past year	25	1 other time 2-6 times 7-12 times More then 12 times	24.0 16.0 4.0 56.0
Enter/Exit from the same location	27	Yes No	88.9 11.1
Length of time on the FNST	27	Less then half a day Half or whole day More then one day	88.9 3.7 7.4
Miles hiked that day	26	0-3 miles 4-6 miles 7-10 miles More then 10	65.4 23.0 7.6 3.8

Hiking Experience

Participants were asked to rate their hiking experience level on a scale of 1 (novice) to 5 (expert). Close to one third (29.6%) rated themselves as level 2, while an additional 25.9% rated themselves as level 3. Almost 15% (14.8%) of respondents belong to a hiking or outdoor club, and just under 20% (18.5%) subscribe to a hiking magazine (Table 15).

Table 15. Mail back survey: hiking experience

Statement	Response	Valid Percent (n=27)
Level of Hiking Experience	1 2 3 4 5	18.5 29.6 25.9 18.5 7.4
Belong to a hiking or outdoor club	Yes No	14.8 85.2
Subscribe to hiking or outdoor magazine	Yes No	18.5 81.5

Motivations

Participants were given a list of motivations and were asked to rate the importance of each motivation as a reason for visiting the FNST that particular day. Over 80% (81.5%) stated that promoting physical fitness as either very or most important (mean = 4.41). More then 75% (77.8%) stated that "enjoy nature" was either very or most important (mean = 4.26). Motivations "reduce tensions and stress from everyday life" (70.8%) (mean = 3.79) and "be with friends and family" (mean = 3.67) (70.8%) were also highly ranked and most or very important reasons for visiting trail. Reversely, nearly 80% (78.3) of respondents stated that "take risks" was not at all or not very important (mean = 1.65), and over 56% (56.5%) stated that "depend on my skills and abilities" was not at all or not very important reasons for visiting the Florida National Scenic Trail (mean = 2.70) (Table 16).

Table 16. Motivations

Motivations	n	Not at all important (%)	Not very important (%)	Important (%)	Very important (%)	Most important (%)	MEAN
Promote physical fitness	27	0.0	0.0	18.2	22.2	59.3	4.41
Enjoy nature	27	0.0	3.7	18.5	25.9	51.9	4.26
Escape noise/crowds	26	0.0	19.2	15.4	26.9	38.5	3.85
Be in an area where I feel secure and safe	26	3.8	3.8	26.9	34.6	30.8	3.85
Reduce tensions and stress from everyday life	24	4.2	4.2	20.8	50.0	20.8	3.79
Be with friends and family	24	16.7	4.2	8.3	37.5	33.3	3.67
Learn about the natural environment of the area	22	0.0	20.8	25.0	29.2	25.0	3.58
Explore the area and natural environment	25	20.0	4.0	12.0	28.0	36.0	3.56
Strengthen family kinship	22	13.6	13.6	31.8	18.2	22.7	3.23
Challenge myself and achieve personal goals	23	17.4	13.0	26.1	21.7	21.7	3.17
Engage in personal or spiritual reflection	23	17.4	13.0	30.4	21.7	17.4	3.09
Feel a sense of independence	22	31.8	9.1	18.2	13.6	27.3	2.95
Depend on my skills and abilities	23	30.4	26.1	8.7	13.0	21.7	2.70
Meet new people	23	17.4	30.4	34.8	8.7	8.7	2.61
Learn about history and culture of the area	24	13.6	31.8	45.5	9.1	0.0	2.50
Take risks	23	69.6	8.7	13.0	4.3	4.3	1.65

Likert Scale 1= Not at all important…. 5 = Most Important

FNST Knowledge and Association

The majority of respondents (76.9%) reported that their visit to the trail was not specifically because it was the Florida National Scenic Trail. Reasons most often cited for visiting were exercise (12.8%) and because the trail was close to their home (8.4%). Over one-third of respondents (34.6%) learned about the trail from family and friends. Over half (69.2%) of participants had not visited any other sections of the Florida National Scenic Trail. Lastly, the majority (92.0%) of respondents were not members of the Florida Trail Association (FTA) and similarly, most (84.0%) of respondents were unfamiliar with the FTA (Table 17).

Table 17. Mail back survey: FNST knowledge and association

Statement	n	Response	Valid Percent
Chose the trail because it was FNST	26	Yes No	23.1 76.9
Primary reason for choosing the trail	20	Close to home Exercise Other	8.4 12.8 7.0
How did the participant learn about The FNST	26	Friends/Family Magazines Road signs Guidebook Brochure Don't remember/not sure Other	34.6 3.8 15.4 3.8 3.8 19.2 19.2
Visited other sections of the FNST	26	Yes No	30.8 69.2
Is the participant familiar with the FTA?	25	Yes No	16.0 84.0
Is the participant a member of FTA?	25	Yes No	8.0 92.0
Length of FTA membership	2	1 year 2-5 years 6-10 years More the ten years	0.0 50.0 0.0 50.0

Socio-Demographics

The long survey provided more extensive socio-demographic information (i.e., race, education) than the short survey. Gender differences were not as noticeably different for the mail back survey as was the on-site exit interview. Still, males made up the majority (53.8%) of respondents. Of the participants who provided their age most (21.7%) were age 60 and older. Almost all (96.2%) of the respondents were white, and American/Alaskan Native was the only other ethnic group represented (3.8%). Close to 70% (69.2%) of survey respondents were married, and more than three quarters responded that they had no children living at home (81.5%). Almost all (88.8%) respondent's were educated, obtaining a high school diploma or higher. In regards to occupation, over half (65.4%) of respondents were retired. Finally, over 60% (63.4%) of respondents made household incomes of $50,000 or more annually (Table 18).

Table 18. Mail back survey: socio-demographic information

Variables	n	Values	Valid Percent (%)
Gender	26	Male	53.8
		Female	46.2
Age	25	18-29	1.4
		30-39	1.4
		40-49	4.3
		50-59	7.2
		60 or older	21.7
Marital Status	26	Married	69.2
		Single	11.5
		Divorced	11.5
		Widowed	7.7
Children in Household	27	0	81.5
		1	7.4
		2	7.4
		More than 2	3.7
Highest Level of Education	27	Some high school	11.1
		High school graduate or GED	40.7
		College or vocational/trade school graduate	33.3
		Some graduate school	11.1
		Graduate degree or beyond	3.7
Employment	26	Employed (part & full time)	23.1
		Unemployed	3.8
		Full-time homemaker	7.7
		Retired	65.4
Race or ethnic group	26	American Indian or Alaskan Native	3.8
		White	96.2
Household Income	22	10,000-19,999	9.1
		20,000-29,999	9.1
		30,000-39,999	4.5
		40,000-49,999	13.6
		50,000-59,999	22.7
		60,000-69,999	4.5
		70,000-79,999	4.5
		80,000-89,999	4.5
		90,000-99,999	4.5
		100,000 or more	22.7

Conclusion and Trail Management Implications

The results presented in this report are meant to aid the USFS, the FTA, and the corresponding research sites land and recreation managers better understand the number of visitors recreating on the FNST and to better understand who these visitors are and what benefits they are seeking. This information can be used to continue to provide quality recreation experiences in a variety of natural settings along the FNST.

Estimation of Visitors

The final estimation of FNST visitations for the annual study year of June 1, 2004- May 31, 2005 was based on mechanical counters, both pressure pads and infrared eyes, personal observations made by UF researchers, and registration cards from 2003-2004 season (Eglin Air Force Base).

Mechanical Counters

Two types of mechanical counters, infrared eyes and pressure pads, were used to generate an estimated number of visits to a particular segment of the FNST. These mechanical counters provide a continuous stream of data as opposed to the personal observation method which is limited to travel time, staff, and financial resources. Although the use of mechanical counters is more accurate and less time consuming for researchers, each type of counter has its costs and benefits.

Infrared Eyes

Researchers have found the infrared eyes to be sturdy and reliable in terms of functionality. The eye has never stopped working for unexplained reasons during the season, and they have not yet been vandalized. The installation time of the equipment is minimal, usually taking thirty minutes to an hour to complete. Finally, infrared eyes calibrate perfectly (10 out of 10) the majority of the time, therefore recording more accurate results.

A reoccurring implication that researchers have faced since the beginning of the visitor assessment project in 2003 is that in some locations, highly irregular counts were recorded, and in such a way that it was evident the counts may not be attributed to hikers. Examples include unusually high counts late at night (which are discarded per protocol), but more complicated to evaluate are a consistent stream of lower counts (i.e. 10, 7, 9) occurring during daylight hours that follow the unusually high counts recorded the previous night. While the unexplained high counts can be discarded per protocol, the consistent stream of lower counts that usually occur during weekdays following a night of unusually high counts can not be discarded. At high use sites on weekends, such as Stephen Foster Folk Cultural Center, these counts can be considered normal. It is when these counts seem to occur at low use sites such as Aucilla Wildlife Management Area that it becomes difficult to evaluate. When Diamond Traffics was contacted about this matter researchers were informed that fog can trip the counters and that a defogger can be applied to the reflector and eye. After implementing this practice there was a noticeable difference in the frequency of these unexplained high counts, however by the end of the month the problem begins to reoccur.

Pressure Pads

The pressure pads are designed to provide researchers with data down to the very second of when the pad was walked on. As a result, any counts reoccurring within the same second can be deleted with the assumption that it was the same individual. In addition, when data is uploaded into the computer data is analyzed automatically, providing researchers with graphs formatted to their specifications. The installation time of the pad is minimal, usually taking about thirty minutes to complete.

In spite of the useful data reporting trait, the pressure pads have had the most reoccurring problems over the past year. They have stopped working for unexplained reasons causing loss of data, and a variable monthly correction factor. In addition to its unreliability, the pads would repeatedly work its way up from the ground becoming exposed to FNST visitors. Although

visitors left the pad where it was, the pad was repeatedly moved around and thrown to the side at the south end of Seminole State Forest. This leads to further complications for researchers such as questioning how long the pad had been up, and questioning whether or not an individual walked over it when it was exposed or did they walk around it? Since one can not assume the answers to these questions, counts could only be analyzed per protocol without consideration of the above.

Personal Observations

Although mechanical counters are cheaper to purchase and maintain in order to obtain continuous visitation counts to the FNST, the use of a trained personal observer (i.e. researcher) can be more dependable and informative. This reliability however, is largely a function of the length and frequency of sampling areas to FNST trailheads. In order to have the lowest error of estimation possible, a researcher would have to monitor a single trailhead for a 24 hour period. Since research observers can not be expected to visually monitor a site over a complete 24 hour time frame the project manager must be knowledgeable enough about "normal" hiking hours and implement survey periods during this time frame in order to lessen the sampling/estimation error (Gregoire and Buhyoff, 1999). Therefore it is assumed that a "normal" hiking day spans from sunrise to sunset. This time frame will depend on the season with the sun rising earlier and setting earlier in the fall, and rising later and setting later in the spring and summer. This framework was closely adhered to for Lake Okeechobee and St. Marks Rail Trail, whose estimations were developed solely by personal observation. This framework was not as consistent in sites where mechanical counters were installed to collect pedestrian counts and "other traffic" counts were developed through the use of personal observations. In order to lessen the estimation error of other users at sites where counters are installed, this framework must be strictly adhered to at all study sites where other user types have access to the FNST, irregardless of whether or not a pedestrian counter is installed if estimation of "other traffic" visits to the FNST are to be reported with the lowest error percentage possible.

Visitor Surveys

The Florida National Scenic Trail traverses through both rural and urban areas and therefore should result in a diverse group of FNST visitors. However, results from both 2003-2004 and 2004-2005 have consistently shown that visitors to the FNST are a rather homogenous group.

- Over 60% of participants are male,
- Over 85% of participants are 40 years of age and older,
- Over 95% of participants are white,
- Over 65% of participants are retired, and
- Over 60% of participants have an annual household income of $50,000 or higher.

Similarity between users may not been viewed as out of character for other recreation activities however, Florida's diverse population in addition to the various areas that the trail traverses through provides an expectation of diversity represented within FNST visitors.

As a result, the University of Florida, School of Forest Resources and Conservation has started to implement a marketing study of other hikers in Florida to gather more knowledge about individuals who do not currently visit the FNST. Identifying site characteristics, user satisfaction pertaining to these particular recreational sites, and what benefits the user is seeking from these sites is essential for recreation managers and planners working with the USFS and the FTA to understand in order to successfully market the FNST as a recreational opportunity.

In addition, various marketing strategies such as kiosk design, flyers, signs, etc., must be tested in various regions across Florida to gain a better understanding on what forms of marketing appeal to potential users in these areas. Results may show that marketing strategies are region dependent. Once these characteristics and motivations of current non FNST visitors are known and an understanding of successful marketing tool(s) is obtained, it is vital that the USFS and the FTA began working with

managers and recreation planners at public recreation sites as well as local community members in which the FNST traverses through to market the trail to non-existing visitors.

Hurricane Effects

In 2004, much of the Atlantic experienced an above-normal hurricane season. This season produced, 14 tropical storms, 9 of which became hurricanes, and 6 of those 9 becoming major hurricanes. Of these 14 storms, Florida was hit by five, one as a tropical storm (Bonnie) and four as hurricanes (Charley, Frances, Ivan, and Jeanne). This tied the record with Texas (1886) for most hurricanes to hit one state in a single season. Also, all four of the major hurricanes that made landfall struck the state of Florida, which is the most ever recorded in a single season since accurate state records began in 1900.

The four hurricanes that hit Florida in 2004 caused an overall decrease in tourism. Total visitation to the state of Florida as a whole the first three-quarters of the year was up 4% from the 2003 season. However, the fourth quarter experienced an approximate 8% decrease from the 19.1 million visitors of the previous quarter to 17.5 million visitors (Associated Press, 2005). The same of type trends are true of recreational visits to natural areas. While traffic in some areas was mildly affected by the hurricanes, others experienced greater losses in recreation visits due to the damaging effects of the 2004 hurricane season. For example, visits to the Suwannee River dropped from 26,852 visitors in 2003 to 23,086 in 2004 (a decline of 14%). On the other hand, Stephen Foster Folk Cultural Center State Park experienced an overall increase in yearly visits, but a decline in visits during the month directly following the hurricanes (John W. Reynolds, OMC II, Bureau of Operational Services, phone interview, 2005).

Specifically, the Florida National Scenic Trail experienced damaging effects resulting in approximately 80% of temporary trail closure (Florida Trail Association, 2005). More specifically, the 2004 hurricane season on UF researchers included missed survey sessions for both summer and fall/spring seasons as mentioned above, and extended trail closures. Extended trail closures included Seminole State Forest and Rice Creek Conservation sites which were reopened late November. Also, Stephen Foster Folk Cultural Center State Park and surrounding Suwannee segments experienced record breaking flood levels, up to 84 feet (Suwannee River Water Management District, 2004) in some areas, resulting in trail closures until mid November as well. Sections of the trail that were open to the public such as Lake Okeechobee were inaccessible to researchers as a result of hotels being full of surrounding residents whose homes had been damaged or completely destroyed during the storms. These trail closures resulted in a possible lower estimate of FNST visitors that what was previously expected as noted in "Estimation of Visitors" of this section of the report. This is clear when comparing summer estimations from 2003 to the summer estimation of 2004. Lastly, the hardest hit area was Blackwater River State Forest which had an extended trail closure well into the late winter season. As a result, UF researchers decided to move this site to the 2005-2006 study year.

2005-2006 Efforts

The allocation of survey periods will be re-stratified according to the number of surveys administered per month in the previous two study seasons in addition to the number of visits each classified segment of trail received. The goal of restructuring how the allocation of survey/personal observation periods is randomly allocated is to obtain more surveys. In addition National Forest will also be surveyed during the 2005-2006 study year.

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Appendix I
Five-Year Schedule

Five Year Research Schedule

2003-2004

Gulf Islands National Seashore (H)
Goldhead Branch State Park (H)
Ocala National Forest (H)
Eglin Air Force Base (M)
Apalachicola National Forest (M)
Osceola National Forest (H)
Little Big Econ State Forest (H)
    Includes Cross Seminole Trail (Multi-Use Trail)
Etoniah Creek State Forest (L)

2004-2005

Suwannee (H)
Lake Okeechobee (H)
Seminole State Forest (M)
St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge & Rail Trail (H)
Aucilla River WMA (M)
Pine Log State Forest (M)
Rice Creek (L)

2005-2006

Tosohatchee State Preserve (H)
Withlacoochee State Forest (H)
    Includes Withlacoochee St. Rail-Trail
Ellaville/Twin Rivers State Forest (M)
Green Swamp East (L)
Green Swamp West (L)
Big Cypress National Preserve (H)

2006-2007

Blackwater River State Forest (H)
Highlands: S65B to US 98 (H)
Bull Creek WMA (L)
Greenway (H)
Kissimmee River WMA to Avon AFB (L)
Ecofina Creek WMA (L)
Three Lakes WMA (L)

2007-2008

Wrap up

Appendix II
Protocol for Classifying Access Points

Classifying Access Points within a Site

Throughout the study year, researchers get to know all the FNST access points within a site irregardless of whether or not a counter is installed. Researchers talk to land managers as well as visitors who know the area well to get an idea of the type of use at each trailhead. They also randomly visit all access points throughout the year to take notes on the number of cars in the parking lot and the number of people in the area. Data collected from mechanical counters provide continuous counts for selected survey sites. However, there is often more access points within a site then there are mechanical counters. To compensate for these implications, access points that do have mechanical counters are analyzed via protocol and then grouped into the following categories:

- Type A – Very high use, well known access point, 500 users/month or more
- Type B – High use, between 100-499 users/month
- Type C – Medium high use, between 50-99 users/month
- Type D – Medium low use, between 15-49 users/month.
- Type E – Low use, trailhead or road crossing with really low numbers, 15 users/ month or less

An average for each type of access point is then formulated. Then based on observations and notes taken about access points without counters an access point average that seems suitable for the access point is applied.

Appendix III
2004-2005 Monitored Access Points

Monitored Access Points

1. Lake Okeechobee
   - Okeechobee
   - Okeetantie
   - Clewiston Park & Marina
   - John Stretch Park
   - Nubbin Slough
   - Chauncey Bay
   - St. Lucie Canal
   - Liberty Point
   - Moore Haven
   - Pahokee
   - Taylor Creek
   - Belle Glade
   - Wood Street
   - South Bay RV
   - Henery Creek
   - Port Mayaca
   - Liberty Point
   - Bare Beach
   - Uncle Joes Fish Camp
   - Canal Point
   - Fisheatting Creek
   - Harney Pond
   - Indian Prairie
   - Buckhead Ridge

2. Suwannee
   - Stephen Foster Folk Cultural Center State Park
   - Big Oak Trail at Suwannee River State Park

3. St. Marks
   - Lighthouse Road
   - Wakulla Beach Road
   - Purify Bay Road
   - Rail Trail

4. Aucilla Wildlife Management Area
   - Goose Pasture Road
   - CR 14

5. Rice Creek Conservation Area
   - Parking Area

6. Pine Log State Forest
   - Campground

7. Seminole State Forest
   - South end at SR 46
   - North end at SR 44

8. Ocala National Forest
   - Juniper Springs Recreation Area
   - Clearwater Recreation Area
   - Grassy Pond
   - Alexander Springs Recreation Area
   - Lake Delaney
   - Juniper Wilderness
   - Hopkins Prairie
   - State Road 19

9. Apalachicola National Forest
   - FR 150
   - Camel Lake Campground
   - Soppchoppy
   - Porter Lake Campground

10. Osceola National Forest
   - Turkey Run
   - Battlefield
   - Ocean

Appendix IV
Observation Log

Observation Log

Surveyor:_____

Date:_____

Time:_____

Site:_____

Access Point:_____

Notes (include weather and where you sat):

Time	**Number in Group**	**Gender (#males/females)**	**Activity**	***Direction Heading***	***Starting Point***	**Ending Point**	***Notes***

Appendix V
2004 Summer Survey Times

Survey Times and Dates for
Summer Sampling Season June 01 – September 30, 2004

Section	Number of Times Surveyed	Survey Dates and Time Periods
Suwannee River (H)	1*	Saturday 8/28/04 1pm – 6pm
Blackwater State Forest (H)	2*	Saturday 7/10/04 8am-2pm Saturday 8/7/04 2pm-7pm
Okeechobee (H)	2*	Saturday 7/24/04 1pm-7pm Sunday 7/25/04 7am-1pm
Seminole State Forest (M)	1*	Saturday 7/17/04 8am-1pm
St. Marks NWR (M)	2*	Saturday 6/5/04 12pm-3pm Saturday 7/18/04 2pm-7pm
Aucilla (L)	1	Saturday 8/22/04 9am-2pm
Pine Log (L)	0*	
Rice Creek (L)	0*	

* Survey times were canceled due to hurricanes and hurricane damage. Please review calendars for specific dates and details.

Appendix VI
2004-2005 Fall & Spring Survey Times

Survey Dates and Times for Fall/Spring 2004-2005

Site	Total Number of Survey Blocks	Day and Date	Time
Suwannee	11	Sunday 11/21/2004	8am-1pm
		Friday 12/10/2004	8am-1pm
		Friday 12/17/2004	8am-1pm
		Saturday 1/29/2005	8am-1pm
		Saturday 2/19/2005	1pm-6pm
		Saturday 2/26/2005	1pm-6pm
		Saturday 3/19/2005	8am-1pm
		Sunday 5/15/2005	1pm-6pm
		Friday 5/6/2005	8am-1pm
		Sunday 5/22/2005	8am-1pm (Extra)
		Sunday 5/29/2005	12pm-5pm (Extra)
Lake Okeechobee	12	Thursday 10/28/2004	1pm-7pm
		Friday 10/29/2004	7am-1pm
		Sunday 11/28/2004	1pm-7am
		Monday 11/29/2004	7am-1pm
		Thursday 1/20/2005	12pm-6pm
		Friday 1/21/2005	7am-1am
		Sunday 2/13/2005	12pm-6pm
		Monday 2/14/2005	7am-1pm
		Tuesday 3/2/2005	12pm-6pm
		Wednesday 3/3/2005	7am-1pm
		Friday 4/1/2005	12pm-6pm
		Saturday 4/2/2005	7am-1pm
St. Marks NWR	6	Friday 10/22/2004	12pm-5pm
		Sunday 11/14/2004	12pm-5pm
		Saturday 12/18/2005	8am-1pm
		Saturday1/15/2005	12pm-5pm
		Sunday 3/6/2005	8am-1pm
		Friday 5/20/2005	4pm-8pm
St. Marks Rail Trail	6	Friday 10/22/2004	12pm-5pm
		Monday 12/13/2004	9am-2pm
		Sunday 1/2/2005	12pm-5pm
		Saturday 2/3/2005	12pm-5pm
		Sunday 3/27/2005	8am-1pm
		Wednesday 5/18/2005	12pm-5pm
Seminole State Forest	8	Sunday 1/23/2005	12pm – 5pm
		Friday 2/4/2005	12pm-5pm
		Saturday 2/12/2005	12pm-5pm
		Friday 3/11/2005	8am-1pm
		Sunday 4/10/2005	12pm-5pm
		Saturday 4/16/2005	8am-1pm
		Friday 5/13/2005	5pm-8pm (Extra)
		Friday 5/27/2005	5pm-8pm (Extra)
Pine Log State Forest	4	Saturday 11/6/2004	8am-1pm
		Saturday 12/4/2004	8am-1pm
		Saturday 1/8/2005	12pm-5pm
		Sunday 3/13/2005	7am-12pm
Aucilla Wildlife Management Area	3	Saturday 12/11/2004	8am-1pm
		Sunday 2/27/2005	12pm-5pm
		Sunday 4/24/2005	12pm-5pm
Rice Creek	4	Friday 1/14/2005	12pm-5pm
		Sunday 2/6/2005	7am-12pm
		Saturday 3/28/2005	8am-1pm
		Saturday 5/28/2005	8am-1pm

Appendix VII
2004-2005 Counter Locations

2004-2005 Counter Locations

1. Suwannee

Stephen Foster Folk Cultural Center State Park
An infrared eye was initially installed about 100 yards from the gazebo trail entrance. A ***pressure pad*** was later installed at the canoe launch trailhead where the trail was better indicated

Big Oak Trail
A ***pressure pad*** was installed on the southwest corner of the trail in Suwannee River State Park

2. Seminole State Forest

State Road 44
A ***pressure pad*** was installed here approximately 100 feet after passing the kiosk/mail box.

State Road 46
An ***infrared eye*** was installed about .5 miles down the trail

3. Rick Creek Conservation Area

An ***infrared eye*** was installed 1.2 miles from SR 100

4. St. Mark National Wildlife Refuge

An ***infrared eye*** was installed off of Light house Rd, approximately 100 feet after entering Gate 127.

5. Aucilla Wildlife Management Area

An ***infrared eye*** was installed on the south side of Goose Pasture Rd, approximately .25 miles into the trail.

6. Pine Log State Forest

A ***pressure pad*** was initially installed 50 feet in from the campground trailhead. Due to mechanical problems this counter was replaced with an ***infrared eye*** in March and moved about .25 miles from the campground trailhead.

7. Ocala National Forest

Juniper Springs Recreation Area
A ***pressure pad*** is located on the north side of SR about .5 miles into the trail.

Clearwater Recreation Area
A ***pressure pad*** is located approximately .15 miles north if the spur trail.

Grassy Pond
A ***pressure pad*** is located on the west side of FR 88 about 25 feet into the trail.

8. Osceola National Forest

Turkey Run
A ***pressure pad*** was initially installed at the gate of this trailhead. Due to flooding the pad was removed and replaces with an ***infrared eye*** at the end of April. The eye is located approximately 30 feet into the trail once passing through the gate.

Battlefield
A ***pressure pad*** is located approximately 150 feet in after crossing Loop A trail.

9. Apalachicola National Forest

FR 150
An ***infrared eye*** was initially installed in this location. It was removed in April and installed in Osceola National Forest.

Camel Lake
An ***infrared eye*** was installed at the end of March. It is located on the campground side, approximately .5 miles in from where the FNST crosses FR 105.

Sopchoppy
A ***pressure pad*** is installed approximately .15 miles in from the trailhead off of FR 329.

Appendix VIII
Calibration Sheets

Pressure Pad Calibration Summary Sheet

Surveyor_____

Counter Name_____

Date_____

Calibration Start and Stop Time_____

Battery Level: _____

File Name of Downloaded Data_____

Total number of *registered counts*_____

Total number of *actual counts:* **10**

Notes:

Infrared Eye Calibration Sheet

Surveyor(s): _____

Counter Name: _____

Date: _____

Calibration Start and Stop Time: _____

Total Hours: _____ Total Count: _____

Alignment on Arrival: _____ Alignment on Departure: _____

Registered Counts: _____ Actual Counts: _____

RainX: ☐

Notes:

Appendix IX
On-Site Survey

Florida National Scenic Trail Visitor Study

Surveyor:_____ **Time:**_____ **Notes:**

Site:_____ **Date:**_____

Access Point:_____ **Survey ID#:**_____

1) Is this your first time on this particular trail?

___Yes ___No **(☞Go to Question 2)**

2) Over the past year, how many times have you used this trail?

___None ___7-12 times

___2-6 times ___More than 12 times (___ # of times

3) Did you enter and exit the trail at the same location?

___ Yes ___No **(☞Go to Question 4)**

4) If no, where did you enter and exit the trail

Enter_____ Exit_____

5) From the list of activities, please rank the three activities that best describe the reason you and your group visited the trail today.

1st_____ **2nd**_____ **3rd**_____

6) About how long did you spend on the trail?

____1hour or less ____Half a day ____More than 1 day (_____number of days)

____A few hours ____One whole day

7) Including yourself, how many people are you here with? _____number of people (___#males, ___#females)

8) What type of group are you traveling with?_____

9) How far do you live from the trail? _____min. OR _____mile

10) On a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being the perfect experience, how would you rate your experience on this trail? _____

11) If you did not rate your trail experience as a 10, can you explain why not?

_____

12) Are there any other improvements you would like to see on the trail?_____

13) Did you know you were on part of the Florida National Scenic Trail?

____Yes ____No

14) What year were you born? 19____

15) Your gender _____Male _____Female

Name_____ **Address**_____

City_____ **State**_____ **Zip Code**_____ **Country**_____

Appendix X
Mail Back Survey

UNIVERSITY OF
FLORIDA

IFAS

SFRC **School of Forest Resources & Conservation**

118 Newins-Ziegler Hall
PO Box 110410
Gainesville, FL 32611-0410
www.sfrc.ufl.edu

Dear Participant,

The University of Florida School of Forest Resources and Conservation and the United States Forest Service are conducting a survey to learn more about your hiking experience on the Florida National Scenic Trail. Only a small number of people have been chosen to participate in this study; therefore, ***your response is very important***.

Your participation is voluntary, but we sincerely hope that you will help us with this project. You are not required to answer any question that you do not wish to answer, and there are no risks to you from participating in this study. ***Your answers will be kept entirely confidential to the extent provided by law.***

Your responses will be very helpful in assessing the current and future needs of visitors to the Florida National Scenic Trail. Providing input about your hiking knowledge, experiences, and motivations will help the United States Forest Service better manage the National Florida Scenic Trail; therefore, we urge you to complete this questionnaire and return it as soon as possible. The total time needed to complete the survey should be approximately 15 minutes.

Please be assured that all of your responses will be confidential. We will not release information that could identify individuals that participate in the survey. The identification number on the questionnaire will be used only to verify the questionnaire's return. You will receive no compensation for completing the survey and your return of the survey will be interpreted as consent for participating in the study. If you have any questions about your rights concerning the study, please feel free to contact the UFIRB office, Box 112250, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL 32611-2250.

When completed, please put your questionnaire in the enclosed postage paid envelope. If you have any questions about this survey, please call (352) 846-0860 or email tstein@ufl.edu

Your input is important to the United States Forest Service. It is important that we hear from you within ***2 weeks*** of receiving this survey so your input can be added to the study.

Thank you for your help!

Sincerely,

Taylor V. Stein
Associate Professor

Florida National Scenic Trail Visitor Study

You were recently contacted by an interviewer while hiking the Florida National Scenic Trail. This survey is designed to find out more about your hiking experience. Sharing your opinions will help the US Forest Service and the Florida Trail Association better plan for your needs. As you fill out this survey, **please think about the visit when you were interviewed by our researcher**. Thanks for your help!

Section 1: Trip Characteristics

1. Please write down the name of the trailhead where you hiked on the day you were contacted by our researcher. _____

2. Did you enter and exit the trail at the same location?
   - [] Yes
   - [] No → If No, please list your entrance and exit points.
     - Entrance _____
     - Exit_____

3. Other then this trip, have you hiked the trail before?
   - [] Yes → If yes, how many times in the past year have you hiked the trail?
     - [] Just one other time
     - [] 2-6
     - [] 7-12
     - [] More then 12
   - [] No

4. On this trip, how much time did you spend hiking?
   - [] Less then ½ a day → Please continue to Section 2
   - [] ½ a day or a whole day → Please continue to Section 2
   - [] More then a day → Please continue to Question 5

5. If you hiked more then a day, how many days did you spend hiking? _____

6. If you hiked for more then 1 day, where did you stay overnight?
   - [] At a nearby hotel/condo
   - [] At a campground off the trail
   - [] In a tent along the trail
   - [] In an established campground along the trail
   - [] In a nearby residence of friends or family

7. If you stayed overnight, were you a….
   - [] Through hiker (hiking the length of the Florida National Scenic Trail in one calendar year)
   - [] Section Hiker (hiking sections of the Florida National Scenic Trail with the intent of hiking the entire trail over an extended period of time.)
   - [] Neither

Section 2: Hiking Experience

1. Do you belo5ng to any hiking/outdoor clubs?
   [] Yes
   [] No

2. Do you subscribe to any hiking/outdoor magazines?
   [] Yes
   [] No

3. Please rate your level of hiking experience on the following scale (circle a number).

1	2	3	4	5
Novice				Expert

4. People go to particular areas and hike or walk for any number of reasons. Listed below are some possible reasons you might have had for hiking or walking on the trail the day you were contacted. Please indicate how important each of the following motivations were as reasons for your hike or walk.

Motivations Statements	Not at all important	Not very important	Important	Very important	Most Important
1. Learn about history and culture of the area	1	2	3	4	5
2. Promote physical fitness	1	2	3	4	5
3. Reduce tensions and stress from everyday life	1	2	3	4	5
4. Escape noise/crowds	1	2	3	4	5
5. Learn about the natural environment of the area	1	2	3	4	5
6. Be with friends and family	1	2	3	4	5
7. Feel a sense of independence	1	2	3	4	5
8. Take risks	1	2	3	4	5
9. Engage in personal/spiritual reflection	1	2	3	4	5
10. Explore the area and natural	1	2	3	4	5
11. Challenge myself and achieve personal goals	1	2	3	4	5
12. Depend on my skills and abilities	1	2	3	4	5
13. Enjoy nature	1	2	3	4	5
14. Strengthen family kinship	1	2	3	4	5
15. Be in an area where I feel secure and safe	1	2	3	4	5
16. Meet new people	1	2	3	4	5

Section 3: Florida National Scenic Trail

1. Did you specifically choose the trial you were hiking on because it was part of the Florida National Scenic Trail?
   [] Yes
   [] No → If no, what was the primary reason for taking your trip? _____

2. How did you first learn about the Florida National Scenic Trail?
   [] Friends or Family
   [] Website, please specify: _____
   [] Travel Agent
   [] Magazine, please specify: _____
   [] Roadside Signs
   [] Guidebook
   [] Brochure
   [] Newspaper Article
   [] Don't remember, not sure
   [] Other, please specify _____

3. Other then the trail you were hiking the day our researchers contacted you, have you hiked any other sections of the Florida National Scenic Trail?
   [] Yes → Please name the section(s) hiked: _____
   [] No

4. In a typical year, how often do you hike the following:

	Number of Times		Total Miles
	Per week	Per month	Total miles hiked per year
The Florida National Scenic Trail			
Other trails in Florida			
Other trails outside of Florida			

5. Are you familiar with the Florida Trail Association?
   [] Yes → If yes, how did you learn about the Florida Trail Association? (check all that apply)
   [] Friends or Family
   []Website, please specify _____
   [] Travel Agent
   [] Magazine, please specify _____
   [] Roadside Signs
   [] Newspaper Article
   [] Guidebook
   [] Brochure
   [] Don't remember, not sure
   [] Other, please specify _____
   [] No

6. Are you a member of the Florida Trail Association?
   [] Yes → If yes, how long have you been a member of the Association?
   [] 1 year or less
   [] 2-5 Years
   [] 6-10 Years
   [] More then 10 Years
   [] No

Section 4: Participant Information

We would lie to ask a few questions about you, your background, and your past experiences. This information will be used for statistical analysis only, and all information will remain strictly confidential.

1. What is you gender?
   [] Male
   [] Female

2. What year were you born? 19____

3. Which of the following best describes your status?
   [] Married [] Divorced
   [] Single [] Widowed

4. How many children currently reside in your household? _____

5. What is the highest level of education you have completed? (please mark one)
   [] Eighth grade or less
   [] Some High School
   [] High School Graduate or GED
   [] Some College
   [] College Graduate
   [] Some Graduate School
   [] Graduate Degree or beyond

6. Are you presently…
   [] Employed Full Time: Occupation _____
   [] Employed Part Time: Occupation _____
   [] Unemployed
   [] Full Time Homemaker
   [] Retired: Previous Occupation _____
   [] Full Time Student
   [] Part Time Student

7. What race or ethnic group would you place yourself in?
   [] African American
   [] Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
   [] Asian American
   [] Hispanic or Latino
   [] American Indian or Alaskan Native
   [] White

8. What was your approximate total household income, before taxes this past year?
   [] Less the $10,000
   [] $10,001 to $19,999
   [] $20,000 to $29,999
   [] $30,000 to $39,999
   [] $40,000 to $49,999
   [] $50,000 to $59,999
   [] $60,000 to $69,999
   [] $70,000 to $79,999
   [] $80,000 to $89,999
   [] $90,000 to $99,999
   [] $100,000 or More

If you have any questions or comments, please write them in the space below.

Thank you for your help with this study!

Please place the completed questionnaire in the postage-paid business return envelope provided.

Appendix XI
2003-2004 Estimated FNST Visits

2003 -2004 Estimated Annual FNST Visits

Table 1. June 1, 2003 – September 31, 2003 trail-wide estimations

Use Type	*Site*	*Foot Traffic*	*Other Traffic*	*Total*
High Use Sites	Gulf Islands	5,926	4,790	10,716
	Little Big Econ	7,094	4,438	11,532
	Goldhead	356	96	452
	Ocala	140	26	166
	AVERAGE x 8 Sites	27,032	18,704	45,736
	High Use Total	***40,548***	***28,054***	***68,602***
Medium Use Sites	Osceola	156	0	156
	ANF	26	0	26
	Eglin	54	0	54
	AVERAGE x 3 Sites	237	0	237
	Medium Use Total	***473***	***0***	***473***
Low Use Sites	Etoniah	0	0	0
	AVERAGE x 9 Sites	0	0	0
	Low Use Total	***0***	***0***	***0***
SUMMER 2003 TRAIL-WIDE ESTIMATE OF VISITS				**69,075**

Table 2. October 1, 2003 – May 31, 2004 trail – wide estimates

Use Type	*Site*	*Foot Traffic*	*Other Traffic*	*Total*
High Use Sites	Gulf Islands	8,200	8,643	16,843
	Little Big Econ	10,797	5,158	15,955
	Goldhead	4,826	0	4,826
	Ocala	2,802	0	2,802
	AVERAGE x 8 Sites	53,248	55,208	108,456
	High Use Totals	***79,873***	***69,009***	***148,882***
Medium Use Sites	Osceola	415	0	415
	ANF	1,933	0	1,933
	Eglin	687	0	687
	AVERAGE x 3 Sites	3,036	0	3,036
	Medium Use Total	***6,071***	***0***	***6,071***
Low Use Sites	Etoniah	124	0	124
	AVERAGE x 9 Sites	1,116	0	1,116
	Low Use Total	***1,240***	***0***	***1,240***
FALL/SPRING TRAIL-WIDE ESTIMATE OF VISITS				**156,193**

Table 3. June 1, 2003- May 31, 2004 trail-wide annual visits to the FNST

Use Type	*Site*	*Foot Traffic*	*Other Traffic*	*Total*
High	Gulf Islands	14,126	13,433	27,559
	Little Big Econ	17,891	9,596	27,487
	Goldhead	5,182	96	5,278
	Ocala	2,942	26	2,968
	AVERAGE x 8 Unstudied Sites	80,280	73,912	154,192
	High Use Total	***120,421***	***97,063***	***217,484***
Medium	Osceola	571	0	571
	ANF	1,959	0	1,959
	Eglin	741	0	741
	AVERAGE x 3 Unstudied Sites	3,273	0	3,273
	Medium Use Total	***6,544***	***0***	***6,544***
Low	Etoniah	124	0	124
	AVERAGE x 9 Unstudied Sites	1,116	0	1,116
	Low Use Total	***1,240***	***0***	***1,240***
				225,268

Appendix XII
Seasonal Calibration Factors

Seasonal Calibration Factors

Table 1. Summer Calibration Factors

Sites	*June*	*July*	*August*	*September*	*Seasonal Average*
Pine Log St. Forest					
Campground	-	1.11	-	-	**1.11**
St. Marks NWR					
Lighthouse Rd.	-	1.25	-	1.0	**1.125**
Aucilla WMA					
Goose Pasture Rd.	-	1.0	1.25	1.0	**1.125**
Suwannee					
Big Oak Trail	-	-	.909091	-	**.909091**
Rice Creek					
Picnic Area	1.0	-	-	-	**1.0**
Seminole St. Forest					
State Road 46	-	-	1.25	-	**1.25**
Ocala NF					
Juniper Springs	1.0	1.0	1.0	-	**1.0**
Clearwater	1.6666667	1.6666667	1.6666667	-	**1.6666667**
Grassy Pond	-	1.0	1.25	-	**1.125**
Osceola NF					
Battlefield	1.43	.833	.6	1.0	**.965**
Turkey Run	2.0	1.43	1.67	2.0	**1.77**
Apalachicola NF					
FR150	-	1.0	-	1.0	**1.0**
Sopchoppy	-	-	-	.833	**.833**

Table 2. Fall/Spring Correction Factors

Sites	*Oct.*	*Nov.*	*Dec.*	*Jan.*	*Feb.*	*March*	*April*	*May*	*Season Average*
Pine Log St. Forest									
Campground	-	1.667	-	5.0	-	.2	1.0	1.0	**2.28**[1]
St. Marks NWR									
Lighthouse Rd.	-	1.0	1.0	.714	1.25	.909	1.0	1.0	**1.03**
Aucilla WMA									
Goose Pasture Rd.	1.0	-	1.0	1.0	-	-	1.0	1.0	**1.0**
Suwannee									
Big Oak Trail	-	.909	1.0	1.0	-	1.0	-	-	**.975**
Stephen Foster St. Park	-	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	.909	-	**.983**
Rice Creek									
Picnic Area	-	-	1.0	1.0	1.11	1.0	-	1.0	**1.183**
Seminole St. Forest									
State Rd. 46	1.25	1.11	1.11	1.0	1.0	.3	1.0	1.0	**1.02**
Ocala NF									
Juniper Springs	-	1.11	-	0.0	1.0	1.11	1.0	.833	**1.01**
Clearwater	-	1.25	-	1.667	2.5	1.0	1.0	1.0	**1.40**
Grassy Pond	-	1.11	-	0.0	2.5	10.0	-	-	**3.4**[2]
Osceola NF									
Battlefield	-	.91	10.0	.909	1	10	1.667	1.25	**4.79**
Turkey Run	-	10.0	1.67	1.11	1.0	1.11	1.0	1.0	**2.65**[3]
Apalachicola NF									
FR 150	-	1.11	-	1.0	1.11	-	1.0	-	**1.04**
Sopchoppy	.909	1.11	-	1.0	1.0	-	1.667	1.0	**1.09**

[1]Pine Log St. Forest

The correction factor 2.28 was applied to months October-March. The pad was removed due to a maifunction and was replaced with an infrared eye. A correction factor of 1.0 was applied to April-May. There were known differences in counters.

[2]Grassy Pond

The correction factor of 3.4 was applied to months October – March. The pad was then removed due to a malfunction and replaced with another pressure pad. A correction factor of 1.11 was applied to months April and May since there were known difference between the 2 counters.

[3]Turkey Run

The Correction Factor of 2.65 was applied to monthly data from October – April. The pad was removed due to a malfunction and replaced with an infrared eye. A correction Factor of 1.0 was applied to the month of May. There were known differences between counters.

Appendix XIII
2004-2005 Individual Site Assessments

Lake Okeechobee

Background

Preliminary research performed in 2001-2002 indicated that Lake Okeechobee should be classified as a high use site, receiving 1500 or more trail visits annually. In addition to being a high use site, this 110-mile stretch of trail contained 24 main access points; more then any other site studied thus far. Due to time and money constraints, researchers spent most of their time surveying at access points that there was known visitor use. However, at least one survey period was conducted for and AM period and one survey was conducted for a PM period at each access point type. This allowed researchers to apply observations for a particular access point type to all other like access points. By the end of the study year, 14 on-site sessions were completed. In addition to conducting 14 on-site survey and exit interview sessions with pedestrian trail users, researchers also briefly visited survey access points at least two to five times throughout the year, staying about five minutes each time to take notes on the number of people on the trail and the number of cars in the parking areas, making note of those vehicles that were there to boat and fish and those that were not.

Access Point Classification

At the end of the study year when researchers had gathered enough information about each of the 24 access points, and survey periods were completed, access points were grouped together in one of four categories according to estimated use levels. Paul Rardin Park was under construction throughout the study year. Therefore, this access point was not accounted for.

Type A – an average of more then 50 observed total visitors per observation period
Type B – an average of 25-49 observed total visitors per observation period
Type C – an average of 5-24 observed total visitors per observation period
Type D – an average of less the 5 total observed visitors per observation period

Table 1. Lake Okeechobee Access Point Classification

Type A	Type B	Type C	Type D
Okeechobee	No Access Points	Nubbin Slough	Buckhead Ridge
Okeetantie		Chauncey Bay	Indian Ridge Canal
Clewiston Park		St. Lucie Canal	Harney Pond Canal
John Stretch Park		Liberty Point	Fisheatting Creek
		Moore Haven	Canal Point
		Pahokee	Uncle Joes Fish Camp
		Taylor Creek	Bare Beach
		Belle Glade	Liberty Point
		Wood Street	Port Mayaca
		South Bay RV	Henry Creek

Surveyed Access Points

Okeechobee
Okeetantie (paved portion)
Clewiston Park & Mariana
John Stretch Park
Nubbin Slough
Pahokee
Taylor Creek
Belle Glade
Wood Street
Indian Ridge Canal
Canal Point
Port Mayaca

Trail Use Estimates

Trail use estimates were developed via protocol as described in the methodology section of this report.

Table 2. Lake Okeechobee Trail Use Estimates

User Type	Estimated Use
Pedestrian	91,259
Other Traffic*	112,711
TOTAL	***203,969***

*Other traffic includes bikers, individuals viewing scenery, accessing fishing spots, roller-blading, or ORV

Pedestrian Trip & Demographic Characteristics

A total of 52 onsite surveys were conducted over the fall/spring season;

- 8 at John Stretch Park
- 18 at Okeechobee (Jaycee Park)
- 18 at Okeetantie
- 4 at Pahokee
- 2 at Taylor Creek
- 1 at Belle Glade

Table 3. On-site exit interview: FNST use and knowledge

Characteristic	**Answer**	**Percentage (%)**
First time user	Yes	20.8
	No	79.2
Number of times the participant has used the FNST in the past 12 months	2-6 times	15.1
	More the 12 times	60.4
Did the participant enter and exit the FNST from the same location	Yes	96.2
	No	3.8
Time spent on the FNST	1 hour or less	84.9
	A few hours	9.4
	Half a day	5.7
Distance the participant lives from the FNST*	30 miles or less	57.0
	31-60 miles	3.8
	61 – 120 miles	9.5
	more then 120 miles	5.7
Did the participant know they were on the FNST	Yes	52.8
	No	47.2

n = 52

* Participants who lived in the area seasonally were asked to give the distance from their seasonal home

Table 4. Onsite exit interview: Participants FNST Experience

Characteristic	**n**	**Answer**	**Percentage (%)**
Participant FNST rating on a scale of 1-10 with 10 being a perfect experience	51	10	56.9
		9-8	33.4
		7-6	7.9
		5 or less	2.0
Reason why the experience was not a 10	53	No reason in particular	84.9
		Weather	5.7
		Insects being problematic	1.9
		Dogs & Bikers being discourteous	1.9
		Other	7.6

Table 5. Onsite exit interview: Group & Participant Demographics

Characteristic	Answer	Percentage (%)
Group Size	1-2	88.5
	3-5	11.5
	6 or more	0.0
Number of males per group	0	8.3
	1-2	91.6
	3-5	0.0
Number of Females per group	0	32.0
	1-2	67.0
	3-5	4.0
Group Type	Alone	42.6
	Significant Other	40.4
	Friends	8.5
	Family	8.5
Participant Age	80 years or older	6.0
	70-79 years old	20.0
	60-69 years old	34.0
	50-59 years old	24.0
	40-49 years old	12.0
	30-39 years old	4.0
	18-29 years old	0.0
Gender of participant	Male	62.3
	Female	37.7

n = 51

Table 6. Suggested Improvements to the FNST

Suggestion	Percentage (%)
Put up restrooms/portalets, water fountains, garbage cans	22.7
Paint in mile markers	7.6
Make gate signs more user friendly: the are currently discouraging	3.8
Install stairs @ John Stretch walk up to levy	3.8
More enforcement for keeping dogs on leashes	1.9

Suwannee

Background

Preliminary research performed from 2001-2002 indicated that the Suwannee River FNST segment was a high use segment, receiving 1500 visits or more annually.

This segment of trail faced several set backs throughout the study year due to flooding and hurricane damage. During the hurricane season the Suwannee River reached a flood stage of approximately 84 feet, one of the highest in recorded history. As a result the FNST was closed from the beginning of September through November 15, 2004. After experiencing a few drier months in winter and early spring, the river crested once again in the spring and the trail was closed once again from Aril 4–20, 2005.

Suwannee Segment Trail Use Estimates

A pressure pad was installed in the Big Oak Trail in early June, and an infrared eye was installed at Stephen Foster Folk Cultural Center State Park when the trail reopened in mid November. In addition to the counters, access point averages were applied to Holton Creek and Suwannee River Campground trail segments. The results of these estimates are presented below.

Table 1. Suwannee trail use estimates

	Jan.	Feb.	March	April	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Total
BOT	75	67	47	23	18	13	5	20	5	5	28	52	385
SFFCC	40	79	95	0	73	34	35	23	0	0	0	82	461
Holton Creek	38	37	47	23	18	15	5	12	0	21	25	22	263
Campground	38	37	47	23	18	15	5	12	0	21	25	22	263
TOTAL	191	219	236	69	126	77	50	67	5	47	78	178	**1,346**

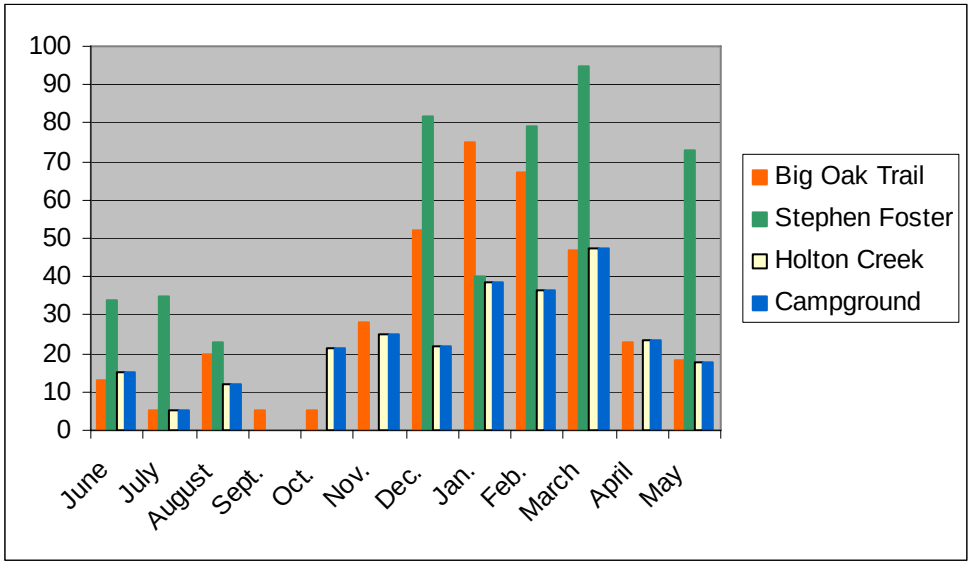

Figure 1. Suwannee trail use estimates

Pedestrian Trip and Demographic Characteristics

One survey period was conducted from June 1-September 31, 2004 summer season, and eleven survey periods were conducted from October 1, 2004 – May 31, 2005 for the fall and spring season. A total of 11 on-site surveys were completed at Stephen Foster Folk Culture Center State Park. While survey periods were conducted at other access points within the Suwannee segment, researchers did not observe anyone on the FNST during the designated time period. All surveyed access points included

1. Suwannee River State Park: Big Oak Trail
2. Holton Creek Wildlife Management Area
3. Stephen Foster Folk Culture Center
    a. Gazebo
    b. Canoe Launch
    c. Campground

Table 1. On-site exit interview: FNST use and knowledge

Characteristic	Answer	Percentage (%)
First time user	Yes	45.5
	No	54.5
Number of times the participant has used the FNST in the past 12 months	2-6 times	36.4
	More the 12 times	9.1
Did the participant enter and exit the FNST from the same location	Yes	72.7
	No	27.3
Time spent on the FNST	1 hour or less	54.5
	A few hours	45.5
	Half a day	0.0
Distance the participant lives from the FNST	30 miles or less	11.1
	31-60 miles	0.0
	61-120	33.3
	121-240	0.0
	241 or more	55.6
Did the participant know they were on the FNST	Yes	63.6
	No	36.4

n = 11

Table 2. Onsite exit interview: Participants FNST Experience

Characteristic	Answer	Percentage (%)
Participant FNST rating on a scale of 1-10 with 10 being a perfect experience	10	27.3
	9-8	45.5
	7-6	18.2
	5 or less	9.1
Reason why the experience was not a 10	No reason in particular	72.7
	Spiritual benefit not met	9.1
	Blazes are not very good	9.1
	Down trees and branches	9.1

n = 11

Table 3. Onsite exit interview: Participant's three main activities on the trail

Variable	n	Activities	Percentage (%)
Activity 1	11	Walking/Hiking	63.6
		View Scenery	9.1
		Camping	9.1
		Other	18.2
Activity 2	10	View Scenery	50
		Hiking/Walking	20
		Photography	10
		Camping	10
		Other	10
Activity 3	7	Nature Study	57.1
		Photography	14.3
		Hiking/Walking	14.3
		Bird Watching	14.3

Table 4. Onsite exit interview: Group & Participant Demographics

Characteristic	n	Answer	Percentage (%)
Group Size	11	1	36.4
		2	54.5
		3	9.1
Number of males per group	8	1	90.0
		2	10.0
Number of Females per group	10	0	12.5
		1	75.0
		2	12.5
Group Type	11	Alone	36.4
		Significant Other	45.5
		Family/Family	18.2
Participant Age	10	60-69 years old	18.2
		50-59 years old	54.5
		30-39 years old	9.1
		18-29 years old	9.1
Gender of participant	11	Male	63.6
		Female	36.4

Suggested Trail Improvements

Table 5. On-site exit interview: Participant suggested improvements

Suggestion	Percentage (%)
Improved signs & blazes. Specifically from the campground to the gazebo.	9.1
Better trail maintenance. Specifically clearing the trail of fallen trees and branches.	18.2
Improved management of spurs trails	18.2

n = 11

St. Marks

Background

Preliminary research conducted by UF researchers from 2001-2002 indicated that the St. Marks trail segment is a medium use site, receiving 366-999 visits per year. However, with the addition of researching the Rail Trail the estimate for this site was significantly higher, placing St. Marks into the High Use category.

Lighthouse Rd. and the Rail Trail heads were surveyed at more frequently then Wakulla Beach Rd. and Purify Rd. Due to time and money constraints, researchers spent most of their time surveying at access points that there was known visitor use within the NWR and relied on the infrared eye for pedestrian counts. However, other access points not surveyed frequently were visited 2-4 times throughout the year and researchers made note of use, if any, and these access points. These access points were then classified at the end of the survey year and estimates were developed for trail use at these access points.

St. Marks Trail Use Estimates

An infrared eye was installed off of Lighthouse Rd. at Gate 127 in order to obtain an accurate estimate of trail users in this area. Access point averages were applied to Wakulla Beach Rd. and Purifiy Rd. per protocol. Lastly, personal observations were conducted at the Rail Trail in order to formulate visitor counts to this segment of the FNST.

Table 1. St. Marks NWR Visitor Use Estimates

	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	April	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Total
Lighthouse Rd.	105	77	146	90	45	26	29	10	75	114	99	83	899
Wakulla Bch.	38	37	47	23	18	15	5	12	0	21	25	22	264
Purify Rd.	11	5	12	3	2	15	5	12	0	12	10	5	92
TOTAL	155	118	205	116	65	56	39	34	75	148	134	110	**1,255**

Table 2. St. Marks Rail Trail Visitor Use Estimates

Use Type	Estimated Use
Pedestrians	1,550
Other Traffic	11,791
TOTAL	13,341

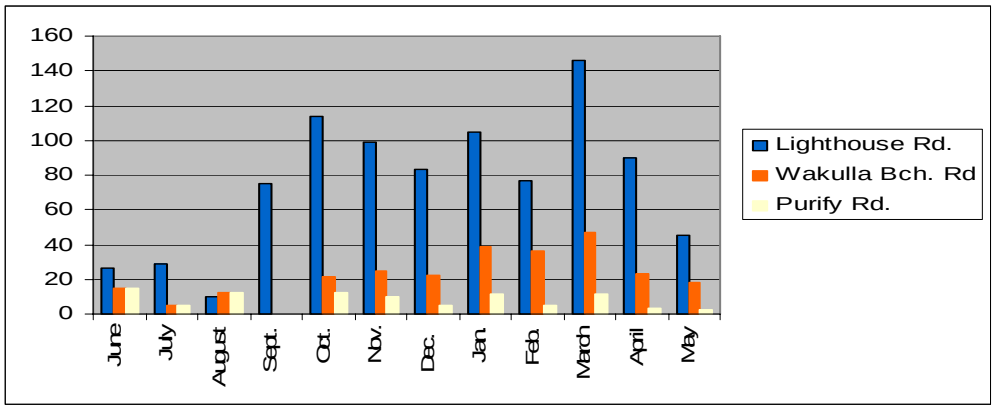

Figure 1. St. Mark NWR Estimates

Pedestrian Trip and Demographic Characteristics

Two survey periods were conducted over the summer season and twelve survey periods were conducted during the fall/spring season. A total of 8 individuals were observed exiting the trail and were interviewed, six at Lighthouse Rd. and 2 at the Rail Trail.

Table 3. On-site exit interview: FNST use and knowledge

Characteristic	Answer	Percentage (%)
First time user	Yes	37.5
	No	62.5
Number of times the participant has used the FNST in the past 12 months	2-6 times	62.5
	More the 12 times	37.5
Did the participant enter and exit the FNST from the same location	Yes	87.5
	No	12.5
Time spent on the FNST	1 hour or less	50.0
	A few hours	50.0
	Half a day	0.0
Distance the participant lives from the FNST	30 miles or less	25.0
	31-60 miles	0.0
	61-180 miles	12.5
	Out of State	12.5
	No Answer	50.0
Did the participant know they were on the FNST	Yes	75.0
	No	25.0

n = 8

Table 4. On Site exit interview: Participant Activities

Variable	n	Activity	Valid Percent (%)
Activity 1	8	Hiking/Walking	75.0
		Jogging/Running	12.5
		Bird Watching	12.5
Activity 2	8	View Scenery	75.0
		Hiking/Walking	12.5
		Other	12.5
Activity 3	7	Other	42.9
		Bird Watch	28.6
		Photography	14.3
		Nature Study	14.3

Table 5. Onsite exit interview: Participants FNST Experience

Characteristic	Answer	Percentage (%)
Participant FNST rating on a scale of 1-10 with 10 being a perfect experience	10	25.0
	9-8	50.0
	7-6	25.0
	5 or less	0.0
Reason why the experience was not a 10	No reason in particular	50.0
	Insects a problem	12.5
	Birding not so good	12.5
	Dog not on leash	12.5

n = 8

Table 6. Onsite exit interview: Group & Participant Demographics

Characteristic	Answer	Percentage (%)
Group Size	1	37.5
	2	50.0
	7	12.5
Number of males per group	0	14.3
	1	57.1
	2	14.3
	3	14.3
Number of Females per group	0	16.7
	1	66.7
	4	16.7
Group Type	Alone	42.9
	Significant Other	28.6
	Family/Friends	28.6
Participant Age	60-69 years old	28.6
	50-59 years old	28.6
	40-49 years old	14.3
	30-39 years old	14.3
	18-29 years old	14.3
Gender of participant	Male	75.0
	Female	25.0

n = 8

Suggested Trail Improvements

Table 7. On-site exit interview: suggested improvements

Suggestion	Percentage (%)
No suggestion given	75.0
Create bird hides	12.5
Better campsites	12.5

n = 8

Seminole State Forest

Background

Seminole State Forest was classified as a medium use sight, receiving an estimated 366-999 FNST visitors annually. Data collected from trail counters confirmed this preliminary estimate, showing a total of 865 annual pedestrian visits. However, hurricane damage was severe at this site, requiring the FNST to be closed to the public from September 3 – December 1, 2004, possibly inhibiting the number of annual visits to the trail

Estimation of Visitors

One trail counter (infrared eye) was initially installed at the south end of Seminole State Forest. In December, counter complications forced researchers to uninstall the infrared eye and install a pressure pad. However, the pressure pad was vandalized repeatedly and eventually had to be removed at the end of March and replaced with another infrared eye.

In addition to the counter at the south end of the forest, another counter was installed at the north end of the trail as well.

Table 1. Seminole State Forest Pedestrian Visitor Use Estimates

	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	April	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Total
SR 46	70	52	81	100	126	62	59	59	0	0	0	39	648
SR 44	22	60	47	23	18	15	5	12	0	0	0	15	217
TOTAL	92	112	128	123	144	77	64	71	0	0	0	54	865

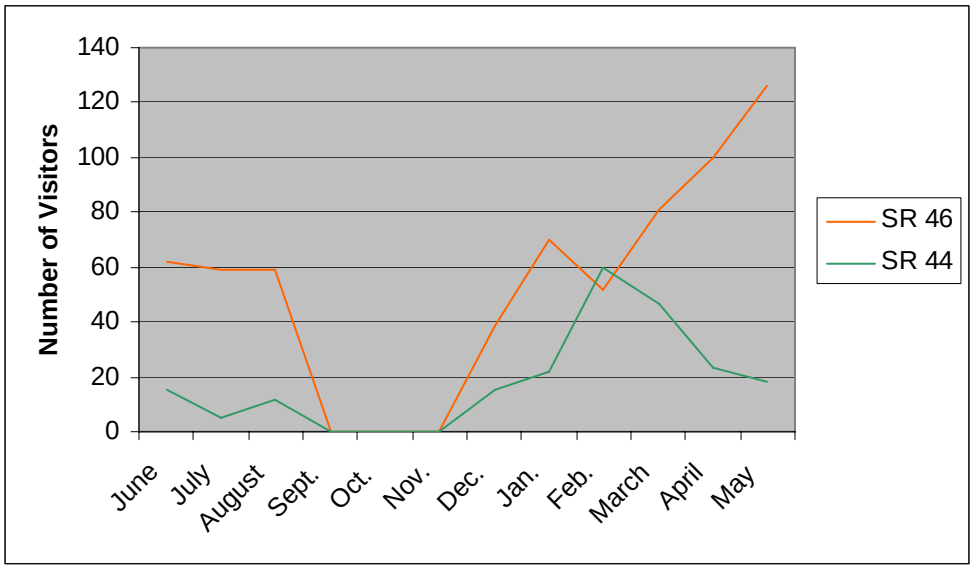

Figure 1. Seminole State Forest Visitor Use Estimates

Pedestrian Trip and Demographic Characteristics

One survey session was completed during the summer season and eight were completed during the fall/spring season. From these, 3 people were observed exiting the trail and interviewed. The results from these interviews are presented below.

Table 2. On-site exit interview: FNST use and knowledge

Characteristic	Answer	Valid Percentage
First time user	Yes	0.0
	No	100.0
Number of times the participant has used the FNST in the past 12 months	2-6 times	33.3
	More the 12 times	33.3
Did the participant enter and exit the FNST from the same location	Yes	66.7
	No	33.3
Time spent on the FNST	1 hour or less	0.0
	A few hours	100.0
	Half a day	0.0
Distance the participant lives from the FNST	30 miles or less	100.0
	31-60 miles	0.0
Did the participant know they were on the FNST	Yes	100.0
	No	0.0

n=3

Table 3. Participant Activities

Variable	n	Activity	Valid Percent (%)
Activity 1	3	Hiking/Walking	66.7
		Jogging/Running	33.3
Activity 2	2	View Scenery	50.0
		Backpacking	50.0
Activity 3	1	Camping	100.0

Table 4. Onsite exit interview: Participants FNST Experience

Characteristic	Answer	Valid Percentage
Participant FNST rating on a scale of 1-10 with 10 being a perfect experience	10	0.0
	9-8	66.7
	7-6	33.3
	5 or less	0.0
Reason why the experience was not a 10	Lack of Wildlife	66.7
	No Response	33.3

n = 3

Table 5. Onsite exit interview: Group & Participant Demographics

Characteristic	**Answer**	**Valid Percentage**
Group Size	1	66.7
	2	33.3
Number of males per group	0	0.0
	1	100.00
Number of Females per group	0	50.0
	1	50.0
Group Type	Alone	66.7
	Significant Other	33.3
	Family/Friends	0.0
Participant Age	60-69 years old	0.0
	50-59 years old	33.3
	40-49 years old	0.0
	30-39 years old	33.3
	18-29 years old	33.3
Gender of participant	Male	66.7
	Female	33.3

n = 3

Table 6. On-site exit interview: suggested improvements

Suggested Improvement	**Valid Percent (%)**
Extend the length of permits	33.3
Less motorized use through the forest	33.3
No Recommendations	33.3

n=3

Pine Log State Forest

Background

Preliminary research performed in 2001-2002 indicated that the FNST section located in Pine Log State Forest was estimated to be a low use stretch of trail, receiving 365 visits or less annually. Despite the number of hurricanes and the tropical storm that passed through the panhandle, this section of trail had little damage and minor flooding causing a temporary trail closure of two and a half weeks.

Estimation of Visitors

A pressure pad was initially installed at the Sand Pond Campground trailhead in early June to collect information on trail visits. Due to counter complications, the pressure pad was removed in March and replaced with an infrared eye in the same location. Estimates from the counter are presented below.

Table 1. Pine Log State Forest visitor estimates

	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	April	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Total
Campground	38	103	87	101	108	19	19	14	20	75	92	58	**734**

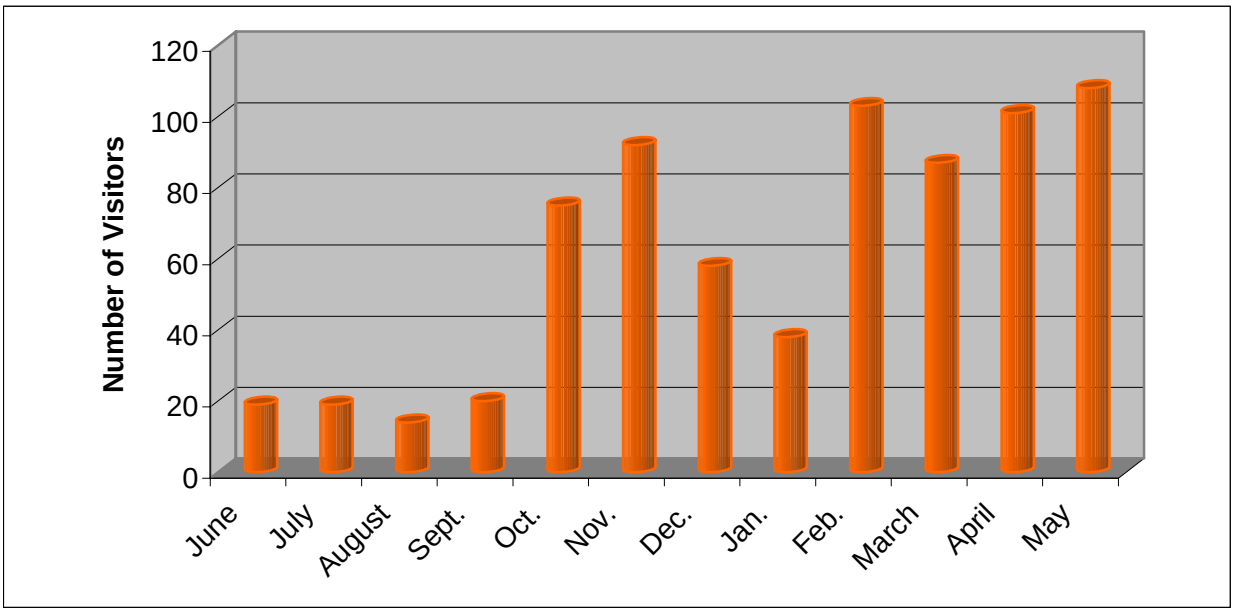

Figure 1. Pine Log State Forest visitor estimates

Pedestrian Trip and Demographic Characteristics

All summer survey periods were canceled due to hurricanes moving through the area. Four survey periods were conducted during the fall/spring season to gather information on FNST user characteristics. Only one participant was observed during these sessions and interviewed.

Table 2. On-site exit interview: FNST use and knowledge

Characteristic	Answer	Valid Percent (%)
First time user	Yes	0.0
	No	100.0
Number of times the participant has used the FNST in the past 12 months	2-6 times	100.0
	More the 12 times	0.0
Did the participant enter and exit the FNST from the same location	Yes	0.0
	No	100.0
Time spent on the FNST	1 hour or less	100.0
	A few hours	0.0
	Half a day	0.0
Distance the participant lives from the FNST	30 miles or less	100.00
	31-60 miles	0.0
	61-180 miles	0.0
	Out of State	0.0
Did the participant know they were on the FNST	Yes	100.0
	No	0.0

n=1

Table 3. Onsite exit interview: Participants FNST Experience

Characteristic	Answer	Valid Percent (%)
Participant FNST rating on a scale of 1-10 with 10 being a perfect experience	10	0.0
	9-8	0.0
	7-6	100.0
	5 or less	0.0
Reason why the experience was not a 10	No reason in particular	100.0
	Not well blazed	0.0

n=1

Table 4. Onsite exit interview: Group & Participant Demographics

Characteristic	Answer	Valid Percent (%)
Group Size	1	0.0
	2	100.0
Number of males per group	0	0.0
	1	100.0
	2	0.0
Number of Females per group	0	0.0
	1	100.0
Group Type	Alone	0.0
	Significant Other	100.0
Participant Age	60-69 years old	0.0
	50-59 years old	0.0
	40-49 years old	0.0
	30-39 years old	0.0
	18-29 years old	0.0
	No Answer	100.00
Gender of participant	Male	100.0
	Female	0.0

n=1

Aucilla Wildlife Management Area

Background

Preliminary research performed in 2001-2002 indicated that Aucilla WMA should be classified as a low use site, receiving 364 visits or less per year. However, counts gathered from a mechanical counter and other methods determined that Aucilla was a medium use site receiving an estimated 366-999 visits annually.

Estimation of Visitors

An infrared eye was installed in June 2004 on Goose Pasture Rd. to gather information on the number of visits the trail received during the study year. An access point average was applied to the CR 14 access point. The results are shown below.

Table 1. Aucilla WMA estimation of visitors

	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	April	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Total
Goose Pasture	52	29	73	40	4	33	44	25	35	35	30	22	450
CR 14	11	4	12	5	3	15	5	12	2	12	10	5	97
TOTAL	63	33	85	45	36	48	49	37	37	47	40	27	547

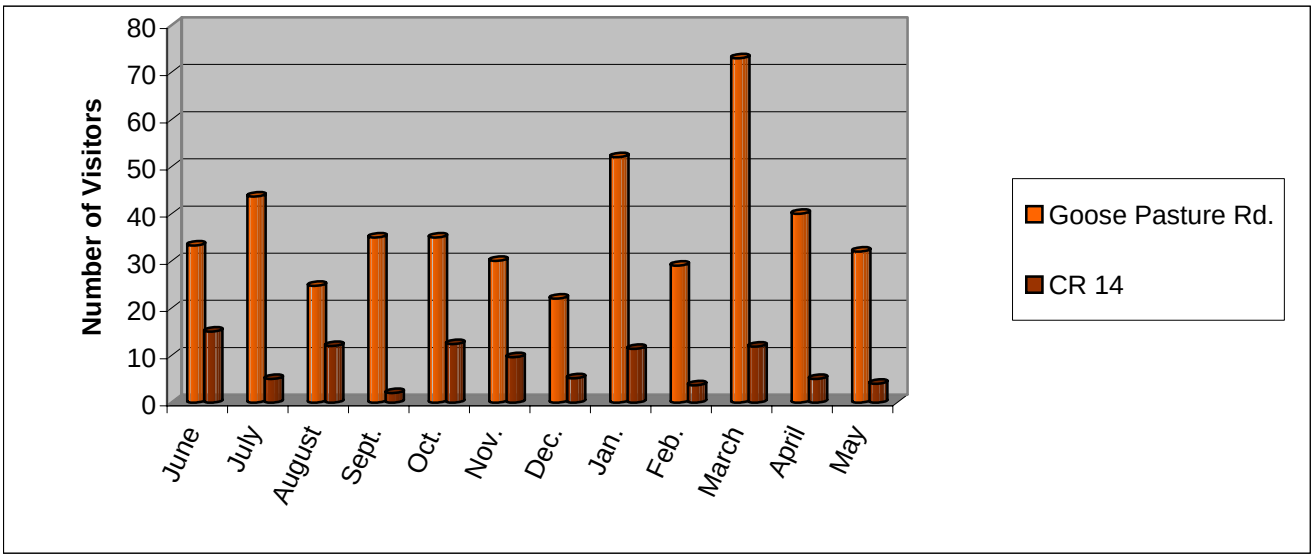

Figure 1. Aucilla WMA estimation of visitors

Visitor Surveys

Three survey periods were conducted during the study year, one during the summer season and three during the fall/spring season, however no FNST visitors were observed during these survey times. As a result, no exit interviews were completed.

Rice Creek Conservation Area

Background

Preliminary research performed in 2001-2002 indicated that Rice Creek Conservation Area (RCCA) should be classified as a low use site, receiving 364 visits or less per year. The FNST through RCCA experienced heavy flooding and some trail destruction from the 2004 hurricane season. As a result, this section of trail was closed to the public from September 3 – November 15, 2004, and survey periods had to be canceled.

Estimation of Visitors

An infrared eye was installed in June 2004 to gather information on the number of visits the trail received during the study year. The results are shown below.

Table 1. Rice Creek Conservation Area estimation of visitors

	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	April	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Total
RCCA	11	8	12	16	5	11	3	29	0	0	13	20	127

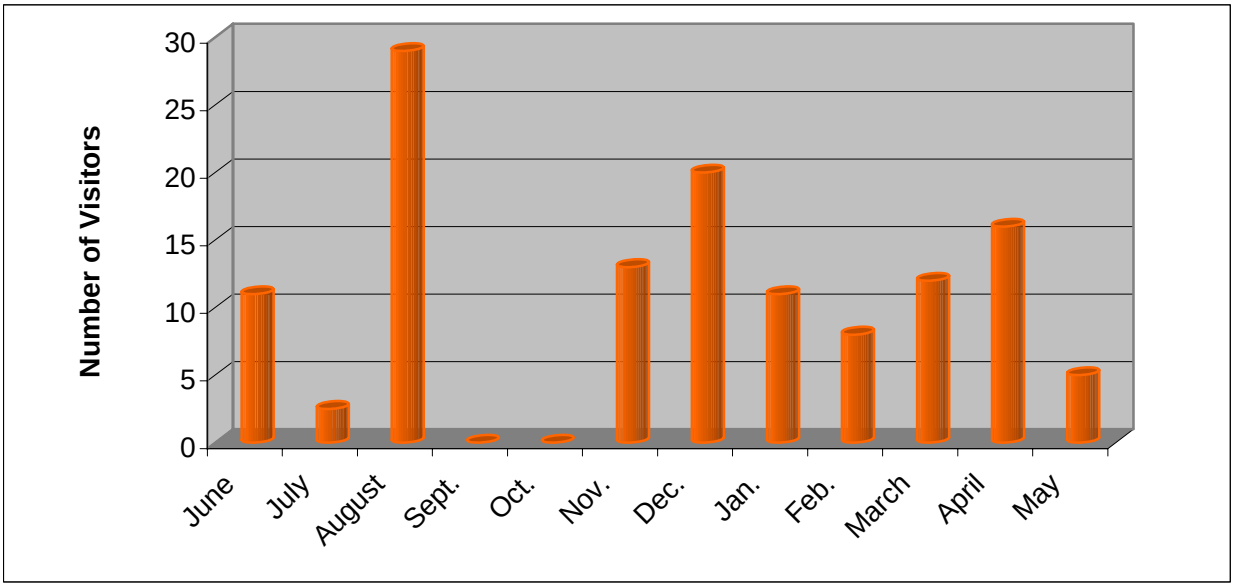

Figure 1. Rice Creek Conservation Area estimation of visitors

Visitor Surveys

No survey periods were conducted during the summer season due to hurricanes moving through the area. Three survey periods were conducted during the fall/spring season, however no FNST visitors were observed during these survey times. As a result, no exit interviews were completed.

Ocala National Forest

Estimation of Visits

2004-2005 Estimates

Three counters were installed in the fall of 2003 and have been maintained thereafter. These counters are located at Juniper Springs Recreation Area, Clearwater Recreation Area, and Grassy Pond. Access Point averages were applied to the locations via protocol.

	June	July	August	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	March	April	May	Total
Juniper	31	4	6	0	9	78	124	168	190	200	173	59	1,042
Clearwater	31	50	38	33	67	54	33	95	107	39	110	69	726
Grassy Pond	14	5	9	5	51	36	37	31	48	88	34	8	366
SR 19	34	35	23	0	9	78	124	160	138	185	128	62	976
Hopkins Prairie	15	5	12	0	21	25	22	38	37	47	23	18	264
Lake Delaney	15	5	12	0	12	10	5	11	3	12	10	5	101
Juniper Wilderness	15	5	12	0	12	10	5	11	3	12	10	5	101
Alexander Springs	15	5	12	0	21	25	22	38	37	47	23	18	264
TOTAL	170	114	124	38	203	315	372	554	563	630	511	244	3,838

Table 1. Ocala national forest estimation of FNST visitors from 2004-2005

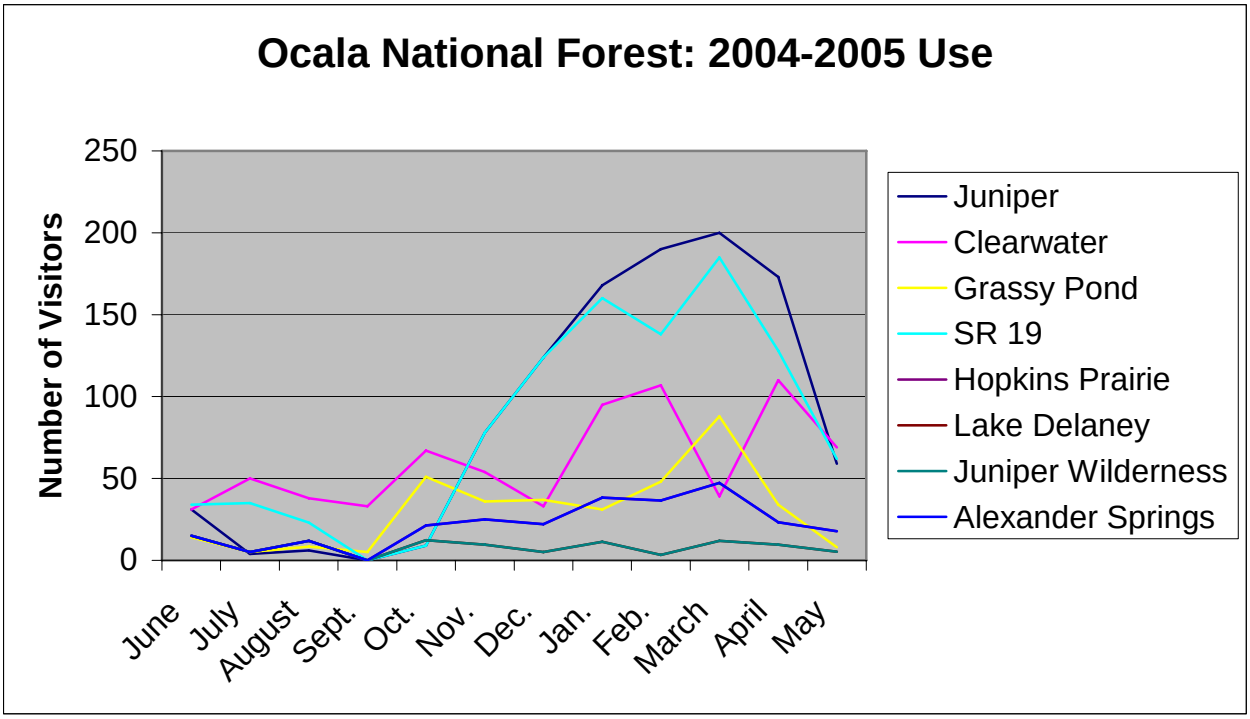

Figure 1. Ocala National Forest estimation of FNST visits from 2004-2005

2003-2005 Estimates

Comparative estimates from 2003-2004 to 2004-2005 shows a slight increase in use during the second study season. Only fall/spring data was compared since counters were not installed until fall of 2003.

Table 2. Comparative estimates for Ocala National Forest

	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	March	April	May
2003-2004	449	421	260	471	336	377	273	218
2004-2005	203	315	372	554	563	630	511	244

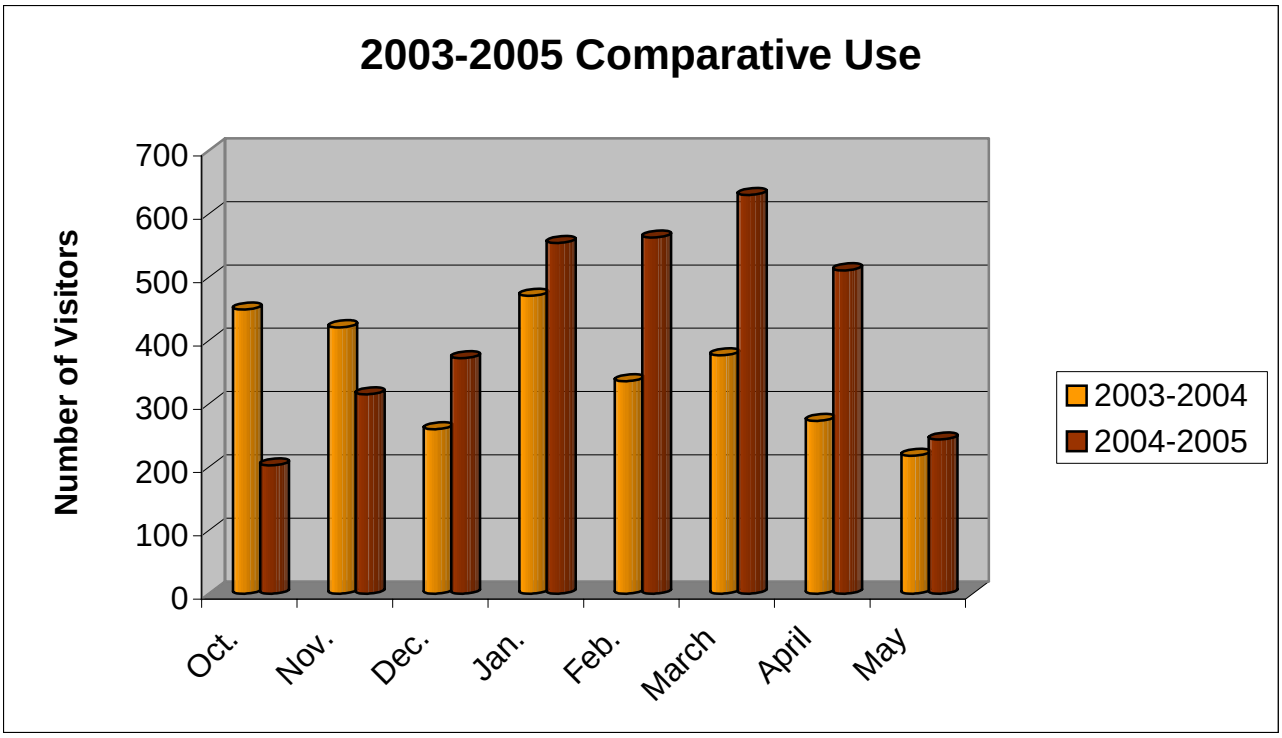

Figure 2. Comparative estimates for Ocala National Forest

Apalachicola National Forest

Estimation of Visits

2004-2005

Two counters were initially installed in ANF, one off of FR 150 and there other at Sopchoppy off of FR 329. During the Spring of 2005 the counter at FR 150 was relocated to Camel Lake. Access Point averages were applied to the locations via protocol.

Table 1. 2004-2005 estimation of FNST visits to ANF

	June	July	August	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	March	April	May	Tot.
FR 150	47	16	20	16	12	23	15	15	22	32	15	17	250
Camel Lake	34	35	23	0	21	25	22	38	37	47	23	18	323
Sopchoppy	4	0	8	5	12	23	15	15	22	32	15	17	168
Porter Lake	15	5	12	0	21	25	22	38	37	47	23	18	263
Bradwell Bay	15	5	2	12	12	10	5	11	5	12	3	2	94
TOTAL	115	61	65	33	79	106	79	118	122	171	80	72	1,118

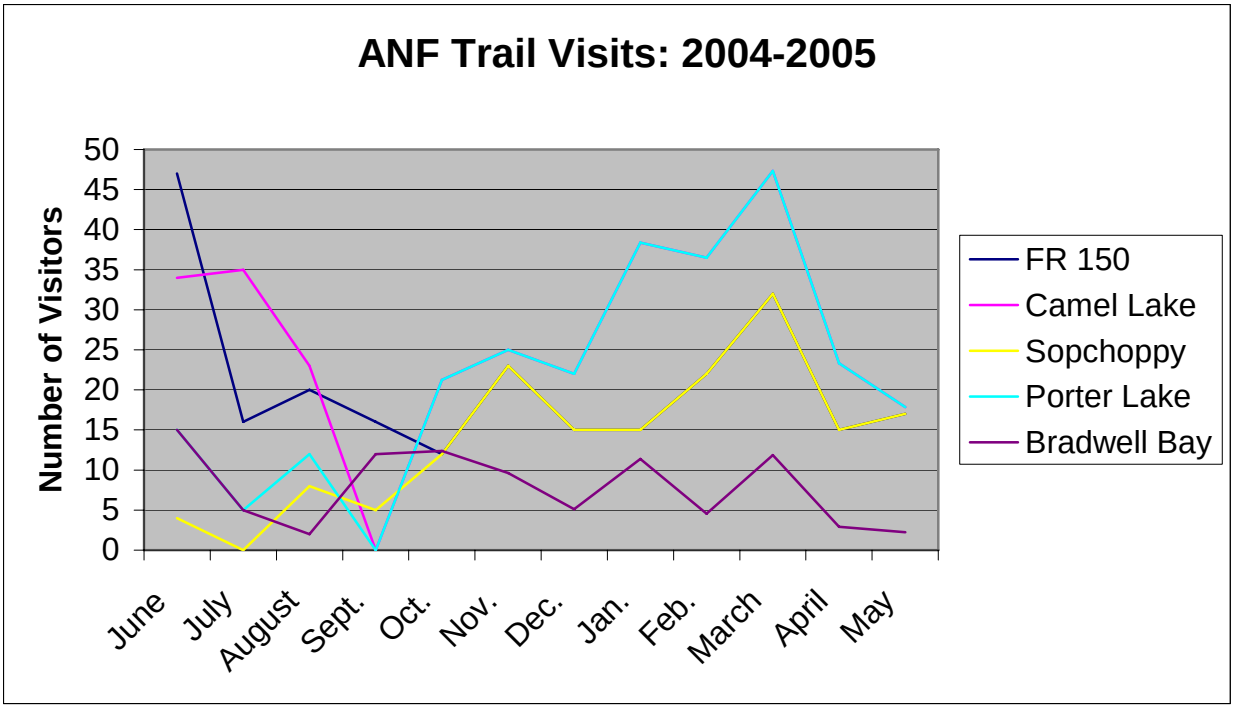

Figure 1. 2004-2005 estimation of FNST visits in ANF

2003-2005

Comparative estimates from the first study to the second study season show a slight drop in visitation. Only fall/spring data was compared since counters were not installed until fall of 2003.

Table 2. Comparative estimates of annual FNST visits between 2003-2005

	Oct.	**Nov.**	**Dec.**	**Jan.**	**Feb.**	**March**	**April**	**May**
2003-2004	150	107	63	156	154	273	872	158
2004-2005	79	106	79	118	122	171	80	72

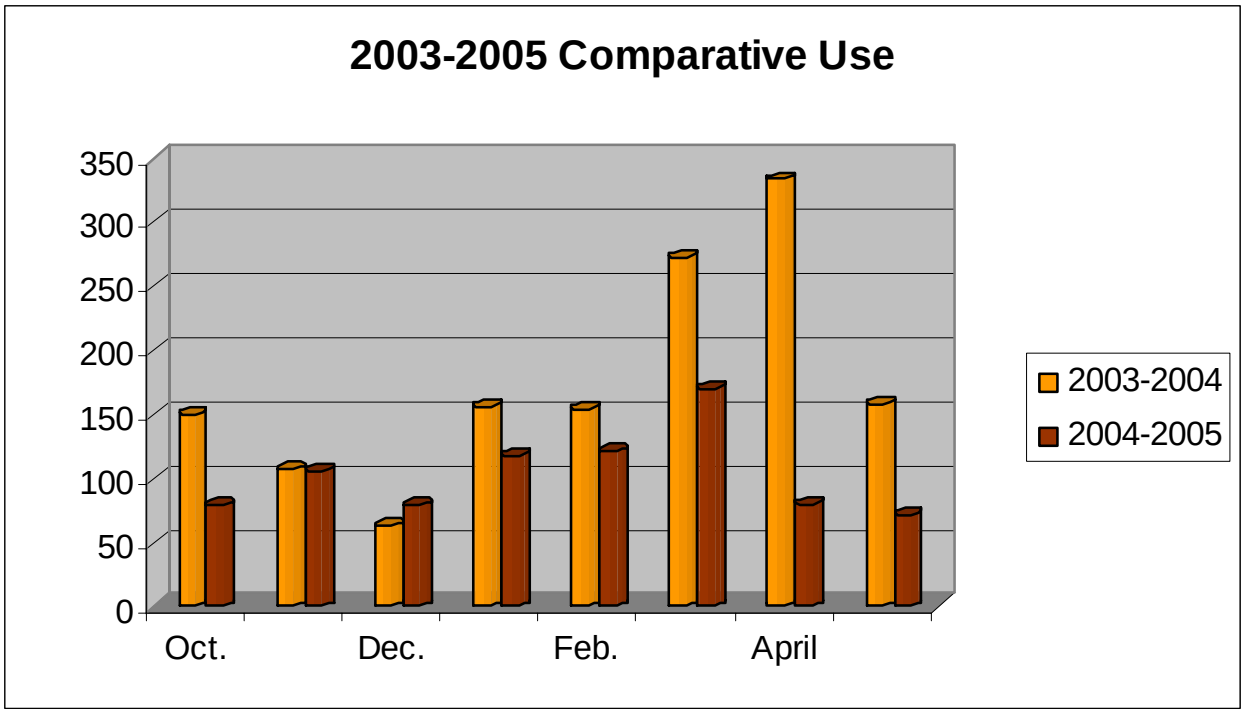

Figure 2. Comparative estimates of FNST visits between 2003-2005

Osceola National Forest

Estimation of Visits

2004-2005

Two counters were installed in Osceola National Forest in the fall of 2003, one at Battlefield and one at Turkey Run, and have been maintained thereafter. Access point averages were applied to Ocean Pond via protocol.

Table 1. Estimation of FNST visits in Osceola National Forest from 2004-2005

	June	July	August	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	March	April	May	Total
Battlefield	8	5	4	0	0	124	153	79	180	72	55	15	695
Turkey Run	22	8	8	0	9	78	124	151	86	170	82	65	803
Ocean Pond	15	5	12	0	12	10	5	11	11	12	10	8	111
TOTAL	45	18	24	0	21	212	282	241	277	254	147	88	1,614

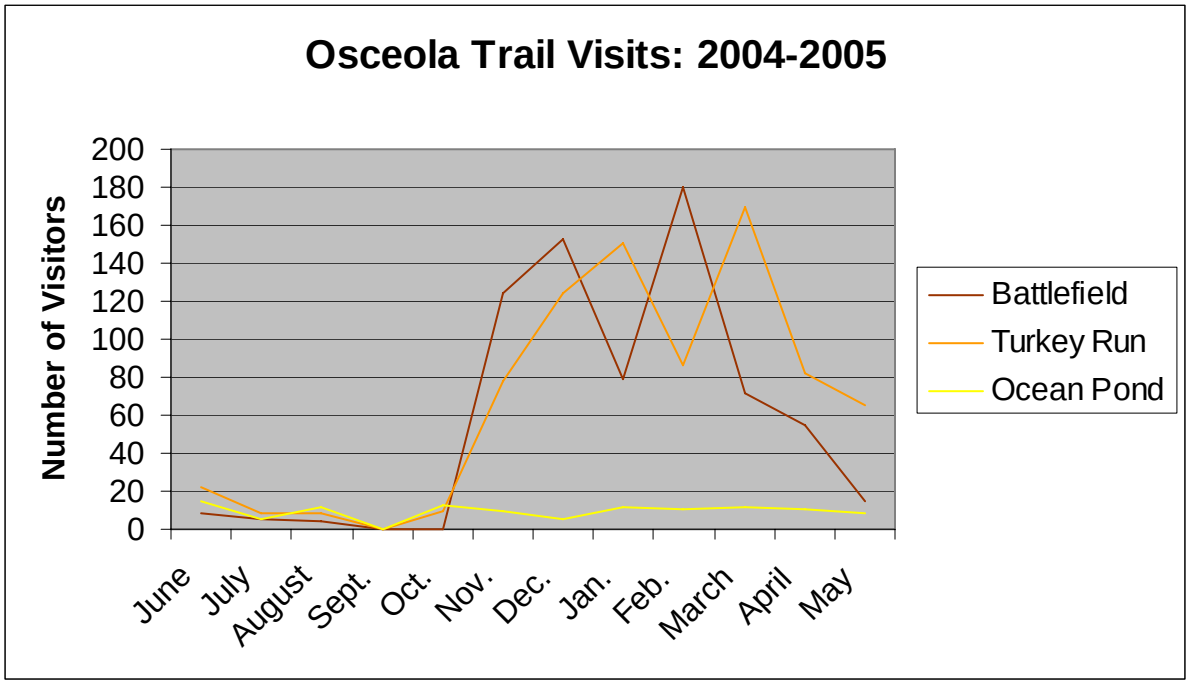

Figure 1. Estimation of annual visits to the FNST in Osceola National Forest from 2004-2005

2003-2005

Comparative estimates between study years reveal that 2004-2005 had approximately a 50% increase in FNST visitation. Only fall/spring data was compared since counters were not installed until fall of 2003.

Table 2. Comparative FNST visitation estimates in Osceola National Forest from 2003-2005

	Oct.	**Nov.**	**Dec.**	**Jan.**	**Feb.**	**March**	**April**	**May**
2003-2004	48	30	18	55	116	71	41	35
2004-2005	21	212	282	241	277	254	147	88

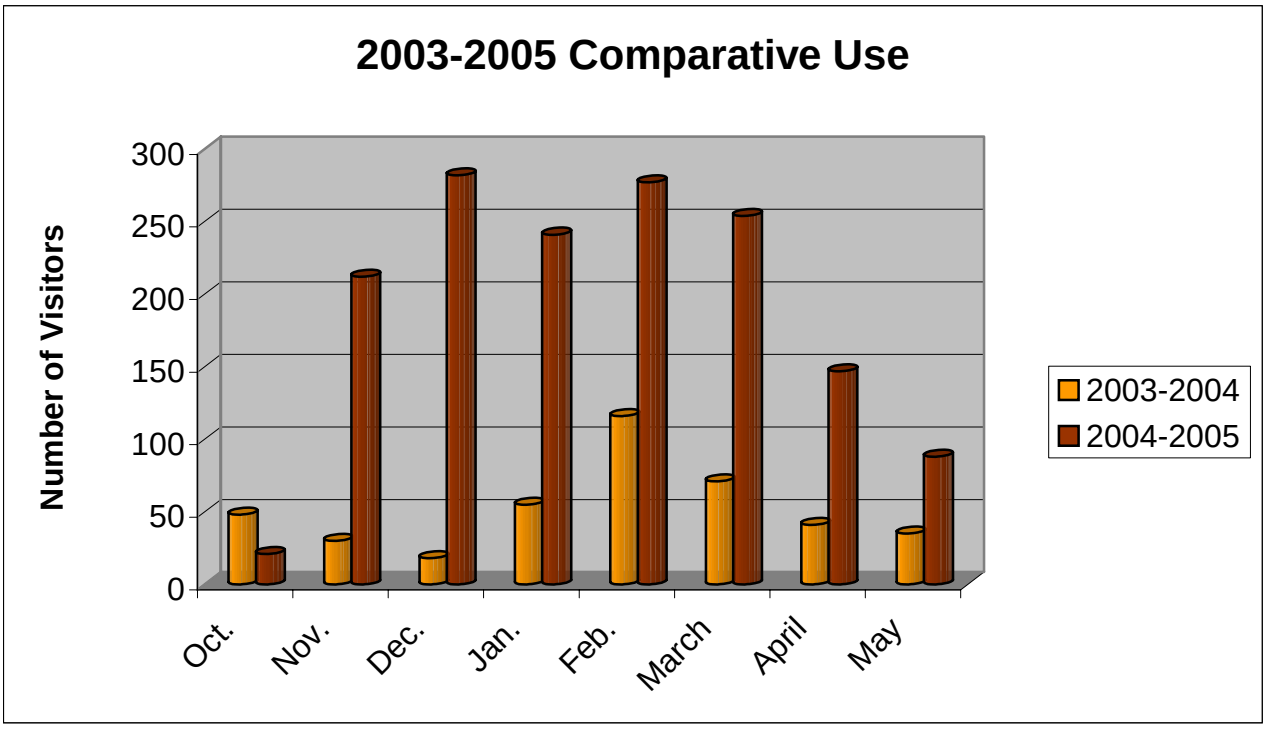

Figure 2. Comparative FNST visitation estimates in Osceola National Forest from 2003-2005