



Florida National Scenic Trail Coalition

Strategic Plan Workshop

5 April 2011

Mission San Luis, Tallahassee, Florida

Mission of Coalition

The USFS and its partners work to complete, protect, maintain, and promote the FNST as a distinct Florida recreational asset and to ensure an optimum, nationally significant recreation experience.

The optimum recreation experience defined:

As a National Scenic Trail, the FNST provides readily available, safe, educational, and memorable opportunities across a spectrum of challenges; recreationists can expect signage, maintenance, accessibility, and interpretation to be standardized and to meet best trail management practices; recreationists recognize and identify their experience as part of the larger, distinct National Scenic Trail experience

Purpose of Meeting

To hold a workshop designed to solicit important agency and land manager insight regarding a 5-Year Strategic Plan for the Florida National Scenic Trail.

Participants

Charlie Dunn – Plum Creek Timber Company

Dale Allen – Florida Trail Association

James Burnett – US Fish & Wildlife

Jim Wood – Office of Greenways and Trails

John Waldron – Florida Division of Forestry

Julia Thompson – Seminole County

Rich Noyes – Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

Susan Jeheber-Matthews – US Forest Service

Tom Heffernan – Eglin Air Force Base

Zack Wetzels – FDEP, Office of Park Planning

Overview of Workshop

Discussion

Trail classification by natural resource condition, related recreation experience and trail standards

- The Coalition reviewed the findings from the January 2011 FNST Data Development Workshop. The workshop classified the Trail into five natural resource categories and set recreation experience standards within each category as well as describing Trail attributes appropriate for each class. The Coalition discussed these categories and the type of experience that each category represents on the FNST. The Coalition felt it would be useful to identify a Trail segment that is most representative of each class. **(See attachment 1)**

Plan content and format

- The Coalition contributed to the draft plan content and format. **(See attachment 2)** There was discussion about the Plan and its purpose. The Coalition agreed that the plan is a high level document used to guide prioritization and actions of partners along the FNST. The plan is a tool to define the vision of the FNST and to engage partners in the completion, development, and maintenance of the Trail. It is not a detailed comprehensive land use or management plan.

Strategic goals

- The Coalition deliberated about strategic goals. The result was a draft strategic framework and a set of high level goals. **(See attachment 3)**
- The draft goals are:
 1. Complete the Trail: Add 100 new scenic miles of FNST to complete the 1,400 miles and provide a high quality experience.
 2. Standards: 100% of existing designated FNST meets trail standards within its resource classification category of 1-5.
 3. Partnerships: As part of larger picture, each of the 50+ FNST land managers proactively contribute to trail development, maintenance, and endorsement of their segments
 4. Promotion: 100% of FNST recreationists can identify that they are on the FNST and know what the FNST is

Draft Plan

- A Coalition subcommittee will provide input to the USFS staff completing a draft plan, which will be ready for review by the Coalition in June.

Closing Comments

- The Coalition emphasized that the focus needs to be on the diversity of the FNST and its distinct and distinguishing characteristics.
- While most of the FNST's *current* users are people who live within 30 miles of the Trail, Coalition members want to attract all potential users, including tourists and long distance travelers.
- There is concern about what to prioritize and how to diversify funding and identify tactical and operational implications regarding the plan.
- June 7, 2012, will be the third of three meetings that Coalition members agreed to participate in during 2011/2012. The purpose of the meeting will be to discuss the FNST 5-Year Strategic Plan and to its potential implications, including: prioritization, resources, and implementation strategies. For example, the Plan will likely have implications for certification agreements, and the Coalition will provide suggestions as those develop.