



Florida National Scenic Trail Coalition

Meeting Summary

7 June 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.

Purpose of Meeting

To re-affirm the purpose and structure of the FNST Coalition after nearly a year on the ground, to review to-date the FNST 5-Year Strategic Plan format, goals and strategies and objectives that have been compiled through work of the Forest Service, the Coalition and Coalition small groups since the group's inaugural meeting in September of 2010 and to begin a dialogue regarding project planning and priority setting under a new 5-Year Strategic Plan.

Overview of Workshop

Strategic Implementation Plan

The Coalition members reviewed the Strategic Plan format during the meeting. The Plan will be published as a simple yet visually appealing document highlighting the Coalition's mission and desired goals, along with strategies for achieving them. Once finalized, the Strategic Plan and its supporting documents will be completely available to the public on the USFS's FNST website, which will be useful to both the public and to the land managers of the Florida National Scenic Trail. The Plan includes materials such as the strategic framework, the trail class segments with related maintenance standards, and FNST goals, strategies, and objectives.

The Coalition helped the Forest Service refine the strategies and objectives to serve mutually beneficial purposes. The final strategies and objectives from the April 5, 2011, meeting are attached (pages 4-8).

Coalition Role

The members reviewed the Coalition's purpose, 9 months after its inaugural meeting, reiterating that it was established as a group of FNST land managers and partners to work collaboratively in the best interest of the Trail and to further the unique recreational experience that the resource provides. The following concepts were reiterated:

- **Meetings:** The Coalition agreed to meet twice per year to review progress of the Plan, and they will explore the use of video conferencing. Quarterly progress reports via e-mail or conference calls will provide regular updates and serve as discussion forums as issues arise. The USFS website is being developed as a convenient, accessible, and centralized location for data, information, and maps for use by land managers in particular.
- **Decision making:** The Coalition is not a decision making body. It was established to provide strategic-level oversight of annual plans and to assist in defining the parameters and criteria for decisions. A steering committee composed of members of the USFS, Florida Trail Association, and Office of Greenways and Trails will identify the priorities of the Plan based on Coalition, partner, and public input.
- **Plan Implementation:** Coalition members agreed that it was not necessary to create sub-committees for each goal or strategy. Instead, land managers and partners felt the USFS should take the lead in strategy implementation and organizing partners as needed.

Closing Comments

Two specific issues in the Strategic Plan prompted discussion, FNST routing and FNST public relations. The Coalition agrees that routing decisions are within the purview of the USFS in conjunction with individual land managers, but they still require significant public input and local knowledge. Any FNST designation will acknowledge the land management agency needs and concerns, as well as those of key stakeholders and volunteers.

In public relations efforts, the Coalition emphasized the importance of considering and involving the public and the Trail partners. However, the group agreed for the next year the focus is on FNST data, standards, and branding (before promotion).

The USFS is considering an FNST Summit to bring together diverse land managers and stakeholders to begin developing consistency and standardization in managing and maintaining similar trail segments. It was suggested that this coincide with the Public Lands Management Conference.

The Coalition acknowledged that setting project priorities to the new Plan is "out of sync" with both Federal and State fiscal years. Ideally, priorities should be set in May. Thus, the agenda for the next (tentatively) planned Coalition meeting on December 7th, 2011, will be to:

- Discuss the annual plan of work developed from the Strategic Implementation Plan
- Identify project priorities, opportunities, and obstacles for the completion, development, maintenance, and promotion of the FNST.

Florida National Scenic Trail

Strategies and Objectives: Final Coalition

June 7, 2011

Preface: FNST: visionary and aspiring; more systematic, coordinated; for the public; voluntary cooperative of landowners and managers.

Goal: Complete the Trail. Add 100 new scenic and designated miles of FNST toward completion of a high quality trail.

Strategies (3-5 years)	Objectives (1-2 years)	Deliverable (1 year)
Define routing of a complete scenic trail, based on current and accurate data that defines actual on-the-ground conditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete an evaluation and assessment of trail corridor (to include assessment of scenic, cultural, ecological resources) • Assess trail sections with scenic values and complete matrix of high priority areas • Coordinate routing plan with long range planning of other agencies/partners • Engage stakeholders in review of routing plan • Finalize routing plan • Coalition to provide input on 2012 routing plan • Formally designate all FNST miles 	State of the Trail report Updated and approved routing plan
Prioritize trail segments to fill gaps (ongoing and iterative process)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify critical gaps and the ownership situation • Agree to criteria for prioritization including scenic values and feasibility of inclusion 	Prioritize segments for addition to trail
Negotiate easements or formal agreements as options for trail completion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and systematically contact landowners of important segments • Educate on easements and define potential • Create easement agreements • Create formal agreements 	Identify segments that could be designated/developed through easements or formal agreements
Acquire segments as necessary for trail completion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue acquisition as appropriate 	Acquisition of key segments
Transfer outlying parcels to more appropriate management agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to work on legislation for transfer of parcels • Continue to identify (based on routing map) parcels that are more appropriate as non-USFS parcels • Work with partners for transfer 	More appropriate ownership of all parcels
Enhance partnerships with NGOs for	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify areas that need additional protection or are at risk 	Identification of parcels/areas

long term protection of trail corridor to protect integrity of scenic, ecological, and cultural values of the surrounding landscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify partners • Work together to ensure permanent protection while landowner objectives are met 	that require protection
---	--	-------------------------

Standards: 100% of existing designated FNST meets recreational, informational, and interpretive trail standards within its resource classification category of 1- 5.

Strategies (3-5 years)	Objectives (1-2 years)	Deliverable (1 year)
Build and maintain accurate data base of trail miles by class	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set up and maintain central data base and infrastructure • Collect and track data • Identify gaps and needs on a regular basis • Use data to set priorities 	Data platform
Develop, manage, and evaluate standard at all times across entire trail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define standards • Train volunteers and land managers • Set priorities • Complete priority projects to standard • Continue ongoing maintenance to standards • Include management to standards in partnership agreements 	25% of designated trail to standard (~250-300 miles)
Create and produce signs, electronic media, print materials, etc. for visual identity, education, and trail standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design visual identity and create graphic/design standards • Design and develop trail materials to standards • Place and maintain trail signs, interpretive exhibits, way finding, etc. 	Visual identity and materials to standard (designed for entire trail)

Partnerships: Each of the FNST land managers (~50) proactively contribute to trail development, maintenance, protection, and promotion of their segment as part of a larger whole.

Strategies (3-5 years)	Objectives (1-2 years)	Deliverable (1 year)
Continue to work with Coalition to refine and agree to partnership model	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to build and strengthen relationship between USFS and all land management agency partners Develop and refine Coalition 	Effective FNST Coalition
Work with land management partners to include FNST standards in their management plans, and ensure better coordination of land management practices on a regular basis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop schedule of updates for land management plans around the state Educate partners about FNST and segment standards and how each segment contributes to the whole Align FNST and land management plans to ensure better coordination 	Participate in five land management plan process around the state to have input for updated plans
Complete (and review on a regular basis) customized agreements between USFS and land management partners to define partner participation in FNST	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update and revise partnership agreement format to ensure more practical and realistic document for management and monitoring Define, with partners (including FTA), management plans for respective segments Create customized agreements with land manager partners based on individualized negotiation, partner capacity, and trail needs Include mechanisms for better coordination of land management to ensure economies of scale and efficiencies (less duplication of efforts i.e. fire management, seedlings) 	Customized agreements between USFS and land management/owner partners
Increase volunteer capacity to develop and maintain FNST – highly coordinated with partnership agreement plans and FNST standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify volunteer opportunities, needs, and gaps Coordinate volunteer activities from a centralized point based on management plans and agreements (above) Build FTA capacity to recruit, mobilize, and retain trail volunteers throughout the state Build relationships with other trail volunteer groups around the state, with focus on youth groups 	Identification of volunteer capacity and gaps around the state

<p>Manage projects and allocate financial and human resources in a coordinated and systematic effort based on agreements and standards</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish system to define and prioritize projects to include partner/coalition involvement • Allocate resources based on deliberate decisions and priorities • Fully utilize partner participation as defined by agreements (above) 	<p>Annual coordinated priority project list suggested by Coalition</p>
<p>Establish more systematic, coordinated, and ongoing monitoring and evaluation of trail standards (as defined in partnership agreements)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor to standard and agreement • Modify agreements as necessary • Share information with Coalition to help create a complete and coordinated approach utilizing best practices 	<p>Define monitoring protocol and schedule</p>

Promotion: 100% of FNST recreationists know they are on the trail, know the significance of the trail, and know how their experience is part of the larger whole.

Strategies (3-5 years)	Objectives (1-2 years)	Deliverable (1 year)
FNST “officially” designated route to be publicized and promoted - help people understand how to access the trail, including the connector trails	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publish trail route from start to finish (see completion goal) • Collaborate with local partners to promote the connections to the FNST 	Updated publications of FNST route, corridor, and connectors
Create and define FNST brand, branding standards, and communication protocols	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Naming protocols (i.e. appropriate acronym) • Create branding/graphics standards and communications protocols (how FNST is described) • Monitor for consistency • Include in all agreements 	Brand standards and communications protocols
Create message, maps, materials, and merchandise to distribute through a variety of media and constituency groups that represent diverse recreational users	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define diverse constituency groups and “gate keepers” • Create the materials – hard copy and electronic • Train and engage constituency groups in promotion and outreach 	Reprint the map online and on paper (year 2 is the “app”)
Implement public relations campaign	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define publics and target markets (both current and potential) • Define outreach strategies, including the four major statewide, outdoor trail days and events • Implement and update 	Public relations plan (targeted outreach to market segments (regular users, occasional users, tourists)