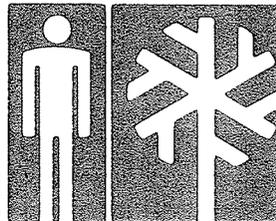


national scenic trail study

February 1980

FLORIDA TRAIL



FLORIDA

As the Nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has responsibility for most of our nationally owned public land and natural resources.

This includes fostering the wisest use of our land and water resources, protecting our fish and wildlife, preserving the environmental and cultural values of our national parks and historical places, and providing for the enjoyment of life through outdoor recreation.

The Department assesses our energy and mineral resources and works to assure that their development is in the best interests of all our people.

The Department also has a major responsibility for American Indian Reservation communities and for people who live in island territories under United States administration.

U.S. Department of the Interior

National Park Service

FLORIDA TRAIL STUDY

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Apalachee Regional Planning Council
North Central Florida Regional Planning Council
Northeast Florida Regional Planning Council
Withlacoochee Regional Planning Council
East Central Florida Regional Planning Council
Central Florida Regional Planning Council
Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council
Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council
Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council
South Florida Regional Planning Council

Finally, we thank the members of Florida Trail Association for their keen participation in this study process, and for the important contributions they provided to this study on behalf of the hiking community in Florida.

INTRODUCTION

AUTHORITY AND PURPOSE

The National Park Service, Southeast Regional Office, in compliance with the National Trails System Act, Public Law 90-543, Section 5(c)(19), has prepared this study of the feasibility and desirability of the proposed Florida National Scenic Trail.

SCOPE

Congress directed the Secretary of the Interior to study the general route of the Florida Trail, "...extending north from Everglades National Park, including the Big Cypress Swamp, the Kissimmee Prairie, the Withlacoochee State Forest, Ocala National Forest, Osceola National Forest and Blackwater River State Forest...."¹ On behalf of the Secretary, the National Park Service has coordinated the preparation of this report with State and Federal agencies known to have an interest in the Florida Trail, with several thousand Florida Trail users and landowners, and with several hundred local government and private agencies and organizations.

All reporting requirements of the National Trail Systems Act are addressed. The findings and recommendations are based not only upon National Park Service technical evaluations of natural resources, land use and ownership, costs, environmental impacts and estimated public use, but also upon the many facts, opinions and suggestions presented by the people who participated in the process.

The report contains eleven chapters. The first chapter summarizes the principal findings of the study and presents the major public policy recommendations to Congress. Chapter two presents basic facts about Florida's residents and visitors, land use and land ownership. Chapter three describes Florida's diverse natural environment. Chapters two and three also provide the environmental, social and economic context for the report. Discussion of the Florida Trail Association and the Florida Trail follows in Chapter four, accompanied by photographs which perhaps will communicate the concept and the reality of the Florida Trail more effectively than words. Next, in Chapter five, is a quantitative analysis of trail resources, trail use and trail needs in Florida, largely derived from available information provided by the State of Florida.

¹/ Public Law 90-543, The National Trails System Act, Section 5(c)(19).

Chapter six especially will interest those who are curious about the planning process the government used to arrive at the findings and recommendations for this study. What NPS has learned through this study process is reported in Chapter seven, "Principal Findings." Chapter eight is an important chapter. It presents alternative public policies for the Florida Trail, with general estimates of the environmental, social and economic consequences of each. Chapter nine represents the best judgement of the National Park Service regarding the most appropriate public policy for the proposed Florida National Scenic Trail. Chapter ten suggests policies and actions in support of the Florida Trail for consideration by the State of Florida, local governments, private organizations and Floridians. Finally, Chapter eleven looks ahead and offers general management guidelines for the proposed Florida National Scenic Trail. These guidelines use the National Park Service experience with the public planning process for this study and the NPS and Appalachian Trail Conference experience with planning and administration for the Appalachian National Scenic Trail.

THE REPORT IN PERSPECTIVE

From Colonial days through modern times, trails have been an important part of America's tradition. Today's Americans, on foot, bicycle and horseback, use trails to reach a destination, for pleasure and relaxation, for learning, for physical exercise, for risk, challenge and adventure, or for other reasons that often have strong personal meaning. In 1968, Congress responded to a rising national interest in trails, and established a national public policy for trails, the National Trails System Act. This law contemplated a national system of trails primarily near urban areas and secondly, within established scenic areas more remotely located. In so doing, Congress cited the need to "provide for the ever-increasing outdoor recreation needs of an expanding population and to promote public access to travel within, and enjoyment and appreciation of the open air, outdoor areas of the nation."^{2/}

The National Trails System Act designated the Appalachian Trail in the east and the Pacific Crest Trail in the west as the country's first two national scenic trails, long-distance trails providing passage through some of the most striking natural beauty in the United States. This law also established administrative procedures for the Secretary of Agriculture and the Secretary of the Interior for designating national recreation trails in or near urban areas. Finally, this law created a Federal feasibility study procedure whereby potential additional trails may be evaluated and possibly designated by Congress as national scenic trails. In a 1978 amendment to the National Trails Systems Act, Congress also established a national historic trail classification. Today the National Trails System includes more than 250 national recreation trails, three national scenic trails and four national historic trails.

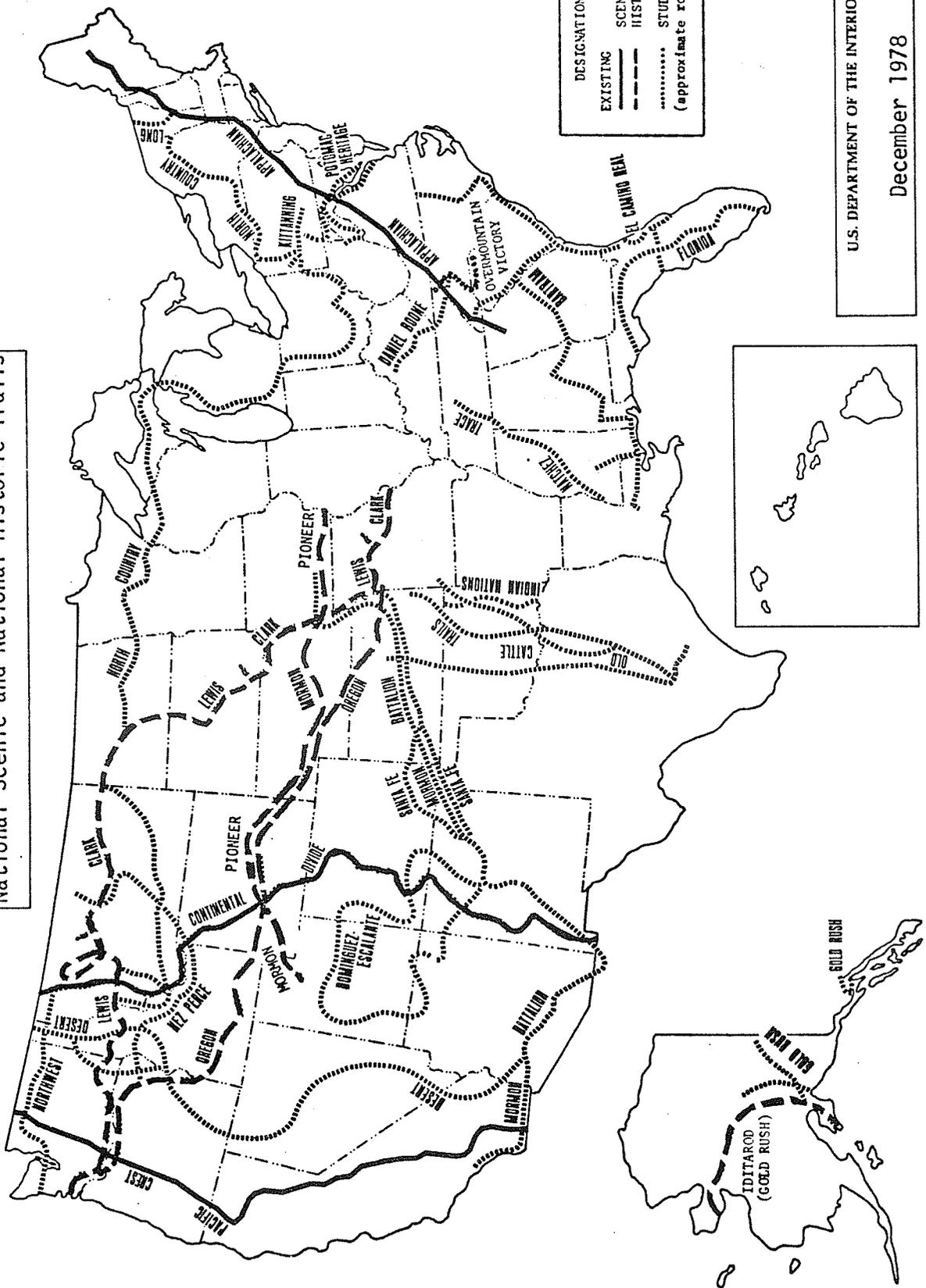
Congress has authorized and funded 23 national scenic and/or national historic trail feasibility studies since 1968. This study process has yielded one national scenic trail, the Continental Divide Trail. In addition, four national historic trails have been designated: the Lewis and Clark Trail, the Mormon Trail, the Oregon Trail and the Iditarod National Historic Trail in Alaska. Map 1 shows the national scenic and national historic trail routes which Congress has designated and the routes of potential national scenic and historic trails Congress has authorized for study. Map 2 shows the distribution of national recreation trails in the United States.

^{2/} National Trail System Act, Section 2(a).

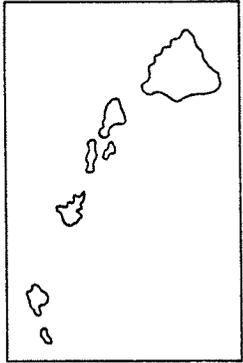
MAP 1

NATIONAL TRAILS SYSTEM

National Scenic and National Historic Trails

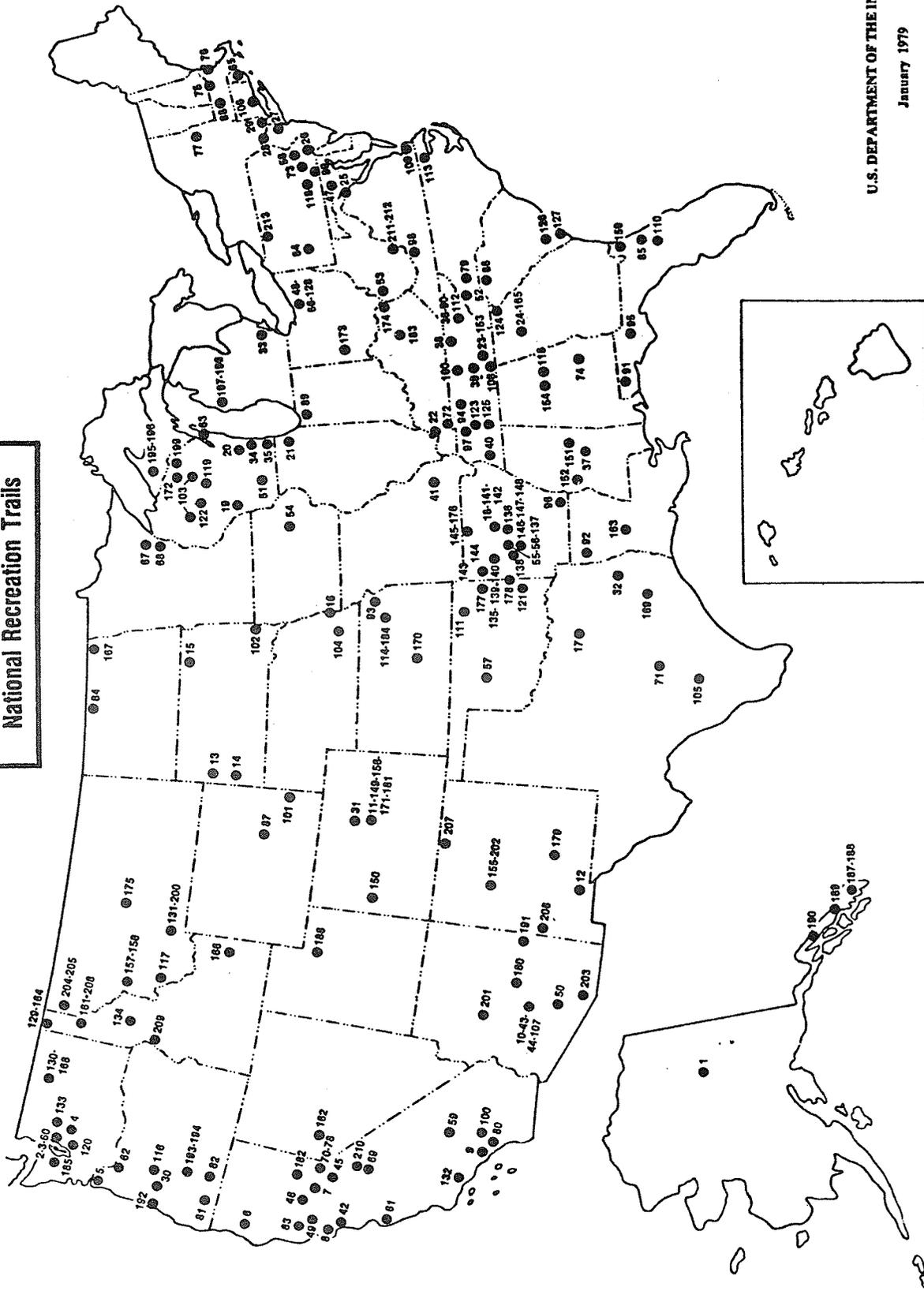


U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
December 1978



MAP 2

NATIONAL TRAILS SYSTEM
National Recreation Trails



The three standards by which potential national scenic trails are evaluated are: national significance, feasibility and desirability. The Federal criteria defining these words are in the appendix. For our purposes here, however, it is useful to think of these words in terms of three key questions:

1. Does the trail pass through, or could it be routed through undeveloped lands of striking natural beauty, and be long enough and continuous enough to provide extended public use?
2. Can such a trail actually be developed, given limits of scarce financial and human resources?
3. Is this trail really something the public wants and will support?

With respect to the proposed Florida National Scenic Trail, we have concluded that the answer to each of these questions is positive. But this study also has identified important considerations. In Florida, and indeed in all eastern states, where most of the land is privately owned and publicly owned lands are scattered, trail continuity over hundreds of miles is a goal which is not feasible immediately. The reasons for this go well beyond economics, although the financial consequences for acquiring a continuous right-of-way normally are substantial. The current public sentiment runs heavily against more government spending and regulation to extend the proposed Florida National Scenic Trail across private land. There is very strong public opposition to any government power to acquire land for Florida National Scenic Trail purposes through condemnation procedures under eminent domain authority. Nevertheless, there is strong public support for a more extensive Florida Trail network on existing public lands, new "through" trails, loop trails and the like. And there is especially strong support, indeed demands, from the Florida Trail Association, for a continued major role in Florida Trail development and maintenance.

The Florida Trail study has come at a time when American citizens are expressing disaffection for government and concern about economic and energy issues, a national dilemma President Carter termed "a crisis of confidence." But the study also has come at a time when citizens of the United States in general and Florida in particular seem to be increasingly supportive of trails. For example, two national organizations with trails constituencies, the National Trails Council and the American Hiking Society, have sprung up in the past few years alongside longer standing national organizations with similar goals to increase the quantity and quality of trails opportunities. In Florida, the 1979 Legislature established a new State policy on trails with passage of the Florida Recreational Trails System Act.

In his environmental message, the President reported that more than 61 million Americans enjoy nature walking and more than 28 million hike or backpack at least five times a year. The President stated his belief that the National Trails System should grow to meet widespread public interest in trails, and directed principal Federal land managing agencies to designate more national recreation trails on public land and to encourage State and local governments and private landowners to increase support for trails throughout the country. We project that in the future, more people and organizations, both public and private, will perceive trails as community assets of significant value. As public support grows, the still fledgling system of national trails may take wing and soar to remarkable heights.

Chapter 1

Summary of Findings and Recommendations

This report is the National Park Service's response to the Secretary of the Interior, the President and the Congress concerning the national significance, feasibility and desirability of the proposed Florida National Scenic Trail. The study process began in November 1978, preceded by informal exchanges with interested organizations and individuals.

The findings and recommendations have been derived from extensive consultation throughout the planning process between the National Park Service and interested or potentially affected parties. Chapter 6 details that process. However, the recommendations also have been tempered by the technical judgment of the National Park Service, and comprise the best public policy advice the Service can provide, within the limits of time and resources for this study.

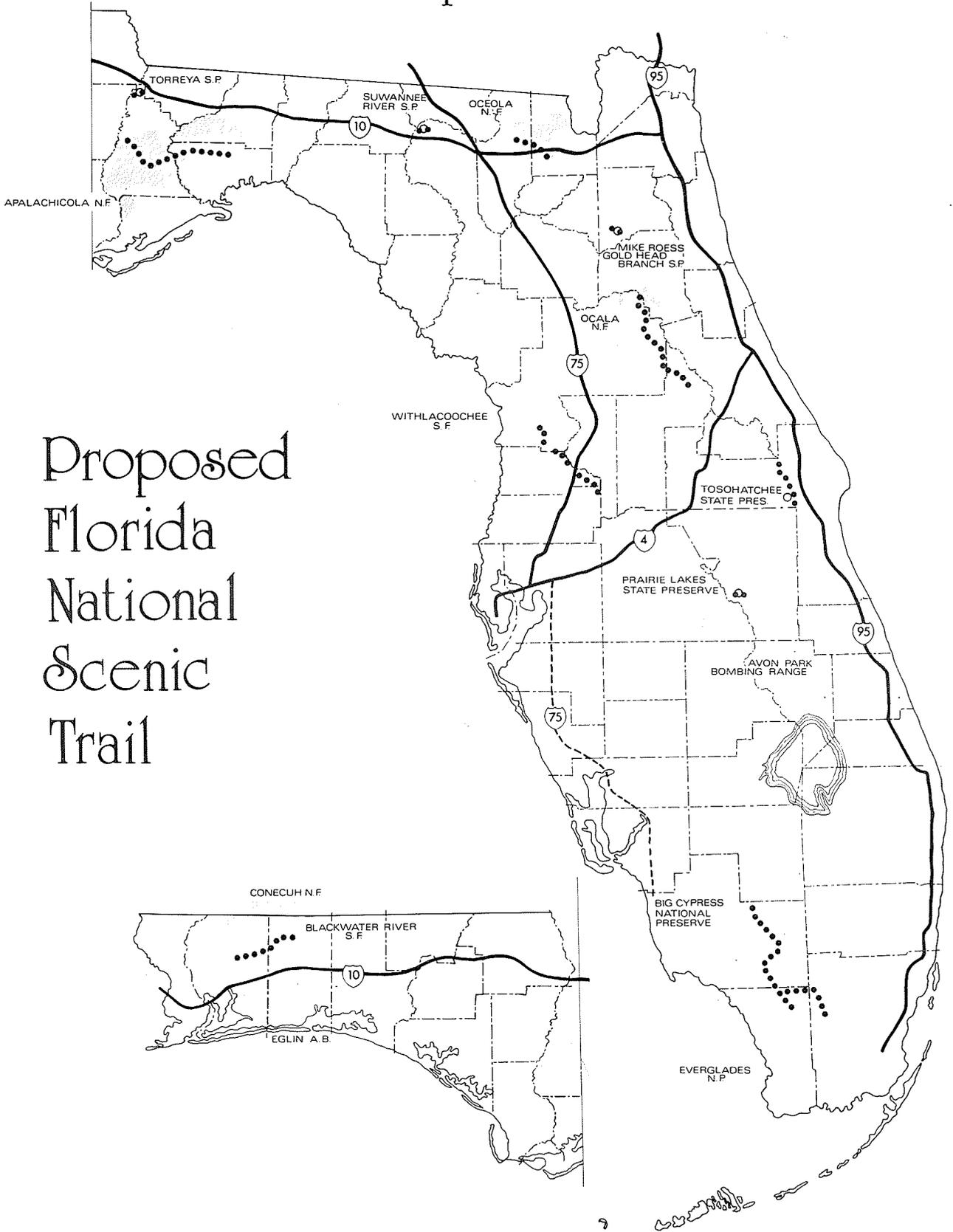
PRINCIPAL FINDINGS

1. The proposed Florida National Scenic Trail, as depicted in Map 3, meets federal criteria for national scenic trail designation by Congress. Because the existing public land ownership pattern in Florida is fragmented, a continuous trail from Everglades National Park in Dade County, Florida, to Conecuh National Forest in Escambia County, Alabama, is not feasible at this time. A segmented national scenic trail network, beginning with appropriate federal and State lands, is the most feasible routing for the immediate future. Trail continuity, however, is a valid, long-term goal that can be reached as local landowners and land users increasingly perceive and support the Florida Trail as a community asset as well as a State and national asset.
2. The Florida Trail Association has been the single most effective hiking trail developing and maintaining organization in Florida and is one of the most effective organizations of its kind in the country. The Association, with the cooperation of public and private landowners, has developed more than 500 miles of the Florida Trail on both public and private land since 1964. The Association strongly urges that its trail development and maintenance roles continue on any segments of the Florida Trail which may be designated as national scenic trail components.
3. The Florida Trail provides outstanding hiking opportunities through lands of striking beauty in many parts of Florida, especially during the cooler fall, winter and spring seasons. Because the Florida Trail is a "flatland" trail, it is potentially more accessible to children and to older Americans. Currently, there are about 25,000 - 50,000 estimated annual visitor-days of use on all segments of the Florida Trail. Most of this public use occurs on those public lands proposed for national scenic trail designation.
4. The Florida Trail is reasonably physically accessible to the major urban and the rural communities in Florida as well as to the more than 35 - million annual visitors to Florida.
5. There is significant public interest in trail related recreational activities in the U.S. and Florida. In the U.S., 68% of the population walk or jog; 43% walk to observe nature, and 23% hike, according to a 1977 U.S. Department of the Interior survey. However, there are only a reported 316 miles of hiking and nature study trails available for general public use in Florida, according to a 1978 state survey. The State estimates that 800 miles of hiking and nature study trails are needed, as well as more than 500 miles of horseback riding trails, and over 800 miles of bicycle trails.

6. The study found several major concerns which we have responded to in our recommendations:
 - a. Landowners and most trail users strongly oppose government powers of land condemnation (eminent domain authority) for Florida Trail purposes. Trail users have stressed incentives to encourage landowners to open lands for trail use.
 - b. Landowners throughout the state have not supported the idea of a national scenic trail on private land, because of concerns of poaching, tort liability, fence damage, range and forest fires, litter, cattle losses, etc. which they believe may result from general public use. Also, landowners point out that law enforcement in rural areas is difficult.
 - c. Both hikers and hunters have concerns about the compatibility of hunting and hiking during the hunting season.
 - d. Operators of off-road vehicles and exempt property owners in Big Cypress National Preserve do not support national scenic trail designation for the Florida Trail, because of restrictions which might be placed upon the operation of these vehicles.
7. About 100 miles of the Florida Trail have been developed and are in public use on lands managed by the U.S. Forest Service in Ocala and Osceola National Forests. The Forest Service is developing about 60 miles of the Florida Trail in Apalachicola National Forest. There is potential for extending the Florida Trail into Conecuh National Forest in Escambia County, Alabama.
8. About 30 miles of the Florida Trail have been developed and are in public use on lands managed by the National Park Service in Big Cypress National Preserve. There is potential for about 30 miles of additional Florida Trail development in the southern part of the Preserve and in the northeastern part of Everglades National Park.
9. There is significant potential for Florida National Scenic Trail development on Eglin Air Force Base. Avon Park Air Force Range has cooperated with the Florida Trail Association and has permitted trail development and use by the Association. Avon Park officials are concerned about tort liability with general public use, unless trail users signed liability waivers. Eglin officials do not support trail routing proposed along the eastern and northern perimeter of the base at this time.

10. The State of Florida has provided important support for the Florida Trail. The Florida Trail Association has developed about 40 miles of the Florida Trail on the Division of Forestry's Blackwater River and Withlacoochee State Forests, and about 30 miles on lands administered by the Florida Division of Recreation and Parks. The Association has built several miles of the Florida Trail on lands administered by the Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission and the Stephen Foster Folk Culture Center. The Division of Forestry desires assurances that multiple use forest management policies and practices will not be affected by national scenic trail designation on State forests.
11. Over the past 15 years, many private landowners, including several forest products industry corporations, have cooperated with the Florida Trail Association, and have entered into informal trail use arrangements with the Association.
12. The Florida Trail is and should be primarily for walking, hiking, nature study, and backpacking. In certain situations, however, such as along the Florida Barge Canal right-of-way, horseback riding and bicycling may be compatible trail uses. In certain situations on undeveloped public lands, trails for horseback riding and bicycling also might be established in the same general trail corridor, but not upon the same tread as the hiking trail.
13. The State of Florida has enacted several pieces of legislation which potentially could support both the development and protection of the Florida Trail and the interests of private landowners. These laws cover tort liability protection for landowners, who open private property to public recreational use; financial incentives for conservation easements on private land; financial incentives for forgoing development of environmentally significant land; mandatory local and regional land use planning; and environmentally endangered lands identification and protection. The recently adopted Florida Recreational Trails Act has set important policy goals for the State in meeting needs for a balanced system of trails throughout Florida. The Florida Trail is now, and will become, more dependent upon a complex arrangement of inter-institutional cooperation and coordination among the involved or affected organizations and individuals.
14. Environmental impacts of the proposed Florida National Scenic Trail will be negligible. At certain major trail access points and camping areas, especially thoughtful planning, careful development and watchful management may be needed. However, there are competent public and private organizations readily available to correct problems which may arise.

Map 3



Proposed Florida National Scenic Trail

RECOMMENDATIONS

We recommend that Congress enact legislation to:

1. Designate the proposed Florida National Scenic Trail on

Apalachicola National Forest
Conecuh National Forest
Ocala National Forest
Osceola National Forest
Big Cypress National Preserve
Everglades National Park (northeast end of the park)
Eglin Air Force Base*
Avon Park Bombing Range*
Blackwater River State Forest
Withlacoochee State Forest
Mike Roess Gold Head Branch State Park
Prairie-Lakes State Preserve
Suwannee River State Park
Torreya State Park
Tosohatchee State Preserve

as a National Scenic Trail, primarily for walking and hiking, under the administration of the Secretary of the Interior.

2. Establish an administrative procedure whereby Federal, State and local government agencies or private interests owning land may apply to the Secretary of the Interior for national scenic trail designation for segments of Florida Trail existing or later established on their lands.
3. Establish a Florida National Scenic Trail Advisory Council, as provided for by Section 5(d) of the National Trails System Act, with representation by appropriate Federal, State and local government land managing agencies, the Florida Trail Association and other private interests to provide advice and counsel to the Secretary on all matters pertinent to the Florida National Scenic Trail, including identifying a right-of-way connecting initial segments of the trail and developing guidelines for land and easement acquisition and trail development, management and maintenance. The Council would serve also as a forum for resolving differing points of view which may arise between and among land managers, trail users and landowners.
4. Withhold land condemnation authority from the federal government for Florida National Scenic Trail purposes on lands outside the boundaries of existing federal areas.

* Provided suitable arrangements can be made with the Department of Defense

5. Authorize federal appropriation of such sums as may be necessary to carry out this proposal.

We recommend also that the State of Florida, local governments and private interests take actions to support the development, protection, public use and enjoyment of undesignated segments of the Florida Trail.

Chapter 2

The People and the Land in Florida

Population and Tourism

Florida, the most populous southeastern State, continues to experience rapid population growth and land use change. The U.S. Bureau of the Census ranked Florida first among the southern States in population migration during 1970-1976, with a net influx of 1.5 million people, and an average annual percent population change of 4.15%. The U.S. Bureau of the Census estimated Florida's 1975 population at 8,493,000. The University of Florida's Division of Population Studies has projected Florida's 1980 population at 9,575,000.

Table 1 shows Florida's estimated 1975 population by age groups. Florida has a large retirement age population, 15.8% age 65 and older compared with the 1975 national average of 10.3%. Many of these people still enjoy good health and walk and hike for recreation and exercise. The proposed Florida National Scenic Trail is quite relevant to older Americans living in Florida as well as to younger Floridians.

The 1975 Bureau of the Census population data indicate that 70% of Florida's people live within metropolitan areas, primarily along the Atlantic and Gulf coasts.^{1/}

Map 4 shows where most of Florida's people live. While Florida's resident population is growing rapidly, the rate of tourism is increasing even faster. In 1977, the Florida Division of Tourism reported 29.8 million visitors to the state. Tourism is projected to rise to 36.5 million people in 1980.

Land Use

Table 2 provides base land use and land cover data for Florida according to the U.S. Geological Survey classification. The data show that much of Florida's natural environment has been altered by cultural development. However, only a relatively small part of the State, 5.6% as of 1973-1974, was classified in the most intensive land use category, "urban and built-up". The land use is, however, changing very rapidly in some parts of the State, from agriculture, rangeland and forest use to urban use as Florida's population continues to grow and human demands upon the land increase. Map 5 shows the pattern of major planned communities in Florida.

^{1/} The Bureau defines "metropolitan" as standard metropolitan statistical areas (SMSA'S). An SMSA is a county or group of contiguous counties which contain at least one city of 50,000 or more inhabitants, or "twin" cities with a combined population of at least 50,000. Also, additional contiguous counties are included in an SMSA if, according to certain criteria, they are metropolitan in character and are socially and economically integrated with the central city.

TABLE 11975 Florida Population, by Age Groups

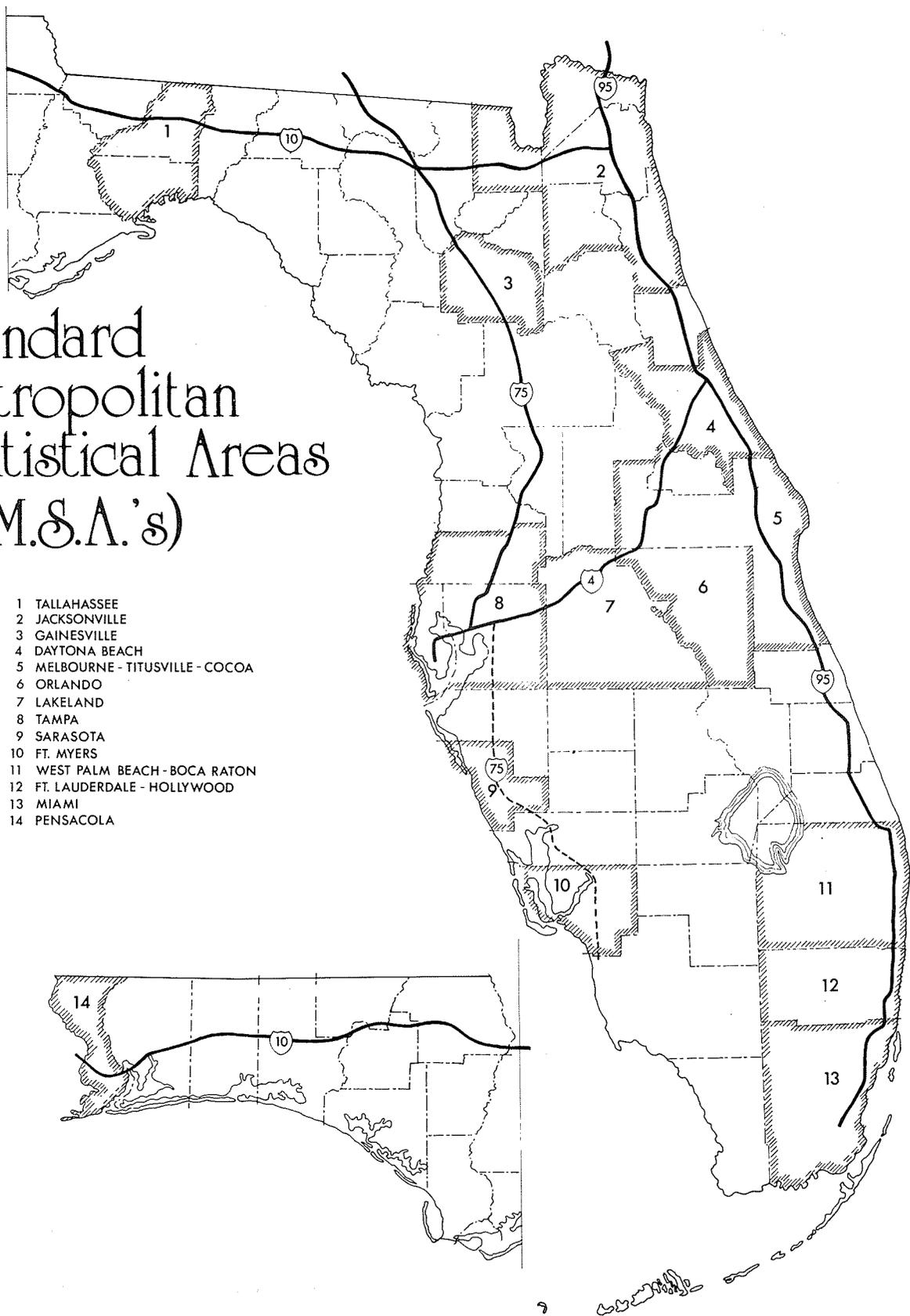
<u>Age Group</u>	<u>Number (in thousands)</u>	<u>Percent of State Population</u>
less than 14	1,672	19.7
14 - 24	1,636	19.4
25 - 34	1,163	13.7
35 - 54	1,793	21.1
55 - 59	461	5.4
60 - 64	411	4.9
65 and over	1,356	15.8
Total 1975 population (est.)	8,493	100%

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census

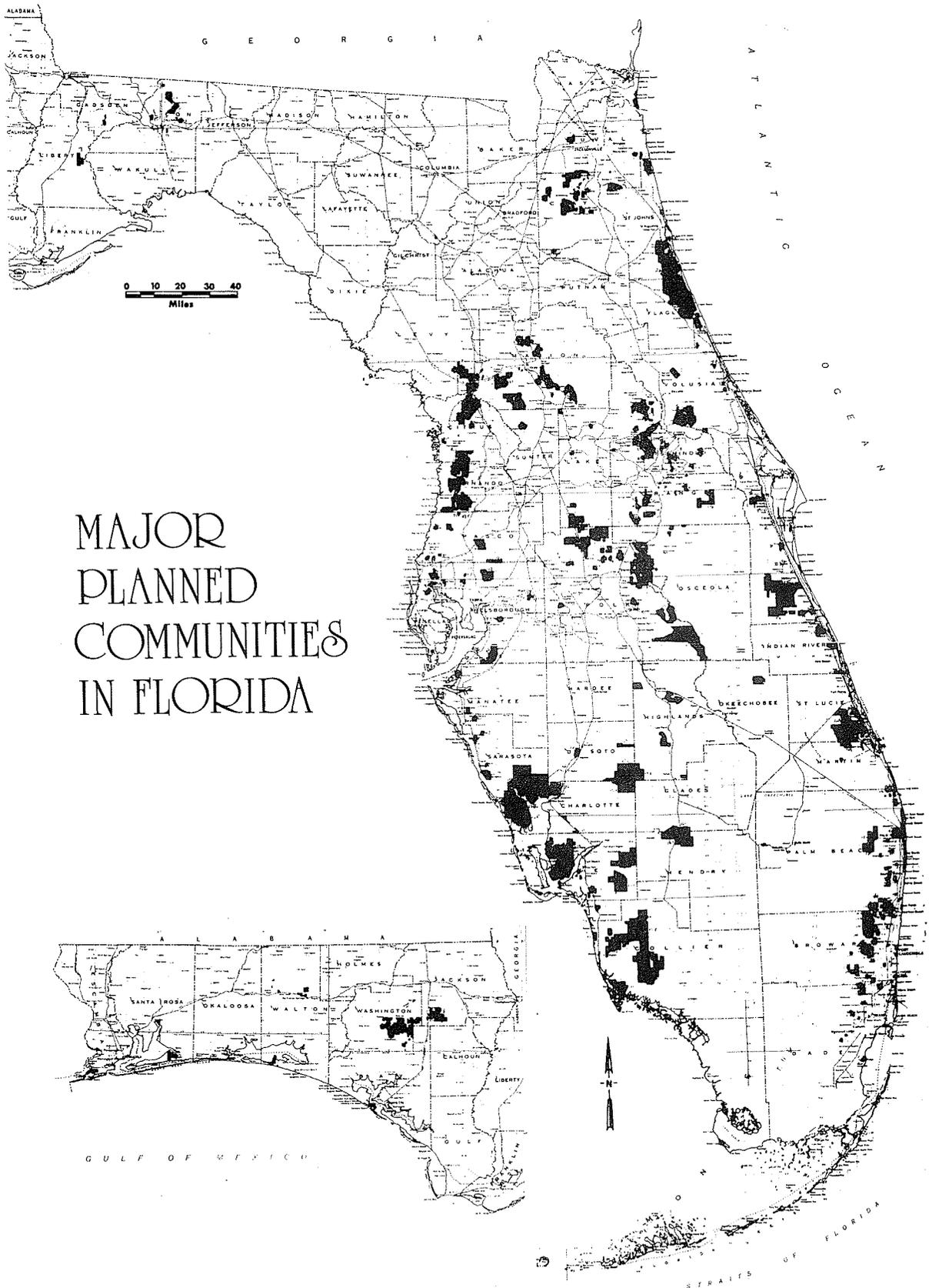
Map 4

Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas (S.M.S.A.'s)

- 1 TALLAHASSEE
- 2 JACKSONVILLE
- 3 GAINESVILLE
- 4 DAYTONA BEACH
- 5 MELBOURNE - TITUSVILLE - COCOA
- 6 ORLANDO
- 7 LAKELAND
- 8 TAMPA
- 9 SARASOTA
- 10 FT. MYERS
- 11 WEST PALM BEACH - BOCA RATON
- 12 FT. LAUDERDALE - HOLLYWOOD
- 13 MIAMI
- 14 PENSACOLA



Map 5



MAJOR PLANNED COMMUNITIES IN FLORIDA

TABLE 2Land Use / Land Cover Data, Florida, 1979^{1/}

U.S.G.S. Land Use / Land Cover Classification	Acres	Percent
Urban and built-up	2,110,600	5.6%
Agricultural	8,385,200	22.4
Rangeland	3,467,900	9.3
Forest	11,685,800	31.3
Water	2,468,600	6.6
Wetland	8,322,100	22.3
Barren land	938,500	2.5
Totals	37,378,700	100%

Source: U.S. Geological Survey, Geography Program

^{1/} Based on 1973 - 1974 satellite data

In central Florida, Orange and Osceola Counties are particularly affected by Disney World development, Florida's most popular tourist attraction. The 600 acre expansion to the theme park, an Experimental Prototype Community of Tomorrow (EPCOT), scheduled for completion in 1982, will about double the capital investment in the project area. This project continues to promote extremely rapid growth, in population and tourism, economic development and land use change. Map 6, "Growth and Development," is the State's first effort to identify those lands in Florida with few environmental constraints to future development. Detailed planning will improve future land use under State - required local and regional land use planning programs.

Land Ownership

Figure 1 shows that while there is substantial public ownership of land in Florida, the private sector owns more than 70% of the State. Map 7 shows the distribution of public and private lands in Florida. The existing and suggested routing of the proposed Florida National Scenic Trail makes good use of most appropriate Federal and State lands. However, the pattern of private land ownership precludes immediate National Scenic Trail continuity and requires initially a segmented approach to national scenic trail designation. Continuity of the Florida Trail in a natural environment in the long run depends directly upon the future support of private landowners and local communities.

FIGURE 1

Land Ownership in Florida

<u>CATEGORY</u>	<u>PERCENTAGE</u>	<u>ACRES</u>	<u>SUB-TOTALS</u>	<u>GRAND TOTAL</u>
I. Public Lands:				
1. Federal	11.0	4,119,993.00		
2. State and sub-state	7.6	2,849,557.00		
3. County/Municipal and other local government	<u>1.7</u>	<u>657,170.00</u>		
Sub-total	20.3		7,626,720.00	
II. Large Private Sector Holdings:				
1. Forest Industry	13.9	5,216,500.00		
2. Independent Private Forest Lands	23.7	8,869,600.00		
3. Cattle and Dairy Pasture Lands	14.8	5,530,413.00		
4. Citrus Industry	2.2	830,831.00		
5. Phosphate Industry	<u>1.1</u>	<u>412,274.00</u>		
	55.7		20,859,618.00	
III. Other Private Lands:	16.4	6,131,262.00	6,131,262.00	
IV. Inland Waters (Includes state submerged, county, and municipal, and private ownership)	<u>7.6</u>	<u>2,860,800.00</u>	<u>2,860,800.00</u>	
Grand Total (Not including saltwater submerged)	100%			<u>37,478,400.00</u>

Source: "Public Lands in Florida", Natural Resources & Conservation Committee October 1978

Map 6

Growth and development in Florida



In this era of rapid change, the challenge is to guide growth toward a balance of man with nature. In environmentally sensitive areas this balance is difficult to achieve and requires careful planning, but in areas without environmental constraints development can proceed under looser reins and result in less critical damage to natural systems. Ecologically sensitive flora and fauna, fragile topographic features such as beaches, dunes and marshes, major springs, soils that present severe drainage limitations, wetlands, hurricane flood zones, flood prone areas, and public investments are all viewed as constraints to development.

Cooperative efforts between the ten Regional Planning Councils and the Division of State Planning have delineated areas where growth can be accommodated with minimal impact upon the State's natural resources. The areas shown on the Growth Areas Map are those which exhibit few of these major physical constraints. This effort must be viewed as preliminary in nature and worthy of further refinement.

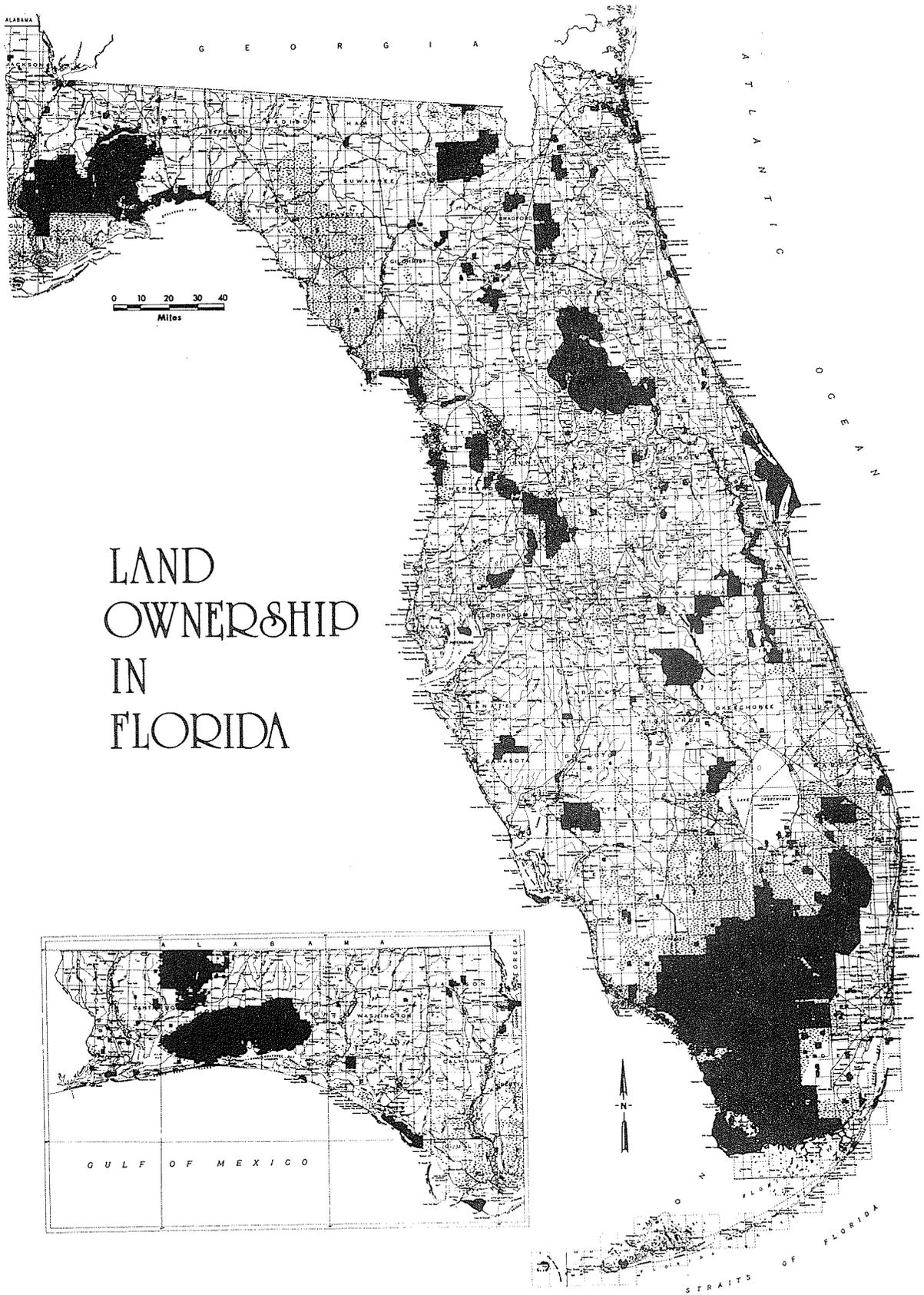
Although prime agricultural lands were not delineated in this mapping effort, it must be recognized that some soil types that are highly suitable for development are also important for agriculture and forestry. Future efforts must be directed to these issues, the lands clearly identified, and appropriate policies implemented to conserve these valuable resources. The wisdom of this action becomes increasingly apparent as world food shortages become more severe and the nation may be called upon to increase its production of food and fiber.

Mineral deposits were also excluded from identification since their distribution and nature is not viewed as a major constraint to urban development if proper development timing is provided. It is recognized that some of the Florida minerals, such as phosphate, should be protected until mining and land reclamation can occur.

Lands that have already been urbanized are also shown on the Growth Areas Map since they will probably continue to grow. Recognizing that this is likely, local communities should be encouraged to place greater emphasis on sound planning within these areas.

■ Areas with few major constraints to development including existing developed areas.

Map 7



LAND OWNERSHIP IN FLORIDA

Chapter 3

Florida's Natural Environment

It is important to stress that Florida's natural environment is very fragile. Several of the nation's most bitterly contested environmental issues have arisen in Florida over that fact. The proposed Miami Jetport on the fringes of the Big Cypress Swamp posed such danger to the continued sheet flow of water in Everglades National Park and Big Cypress Swamp that the project was relocated. More recently, the State and federal governments took action to protect the Big Cypress from further development through extensive and costly land acquisition. The Cross Florida Barge Canal, a federal public works project authorized more than thirty years ago, ultimately may be terminated. The increasing volume of technical data has identified unacceptable risks to Florida's groundwater system. In the Florida Keys, Green Swamp and Big Cypress Swamp, the collective impacts of private land development have prompted the Florida Legislature to adopt landmark legislation to designate those places as Areas of Critical State Concern and to enact land protection and preservation policies and programs in 1974. It is precisely because Floridians are increasingly aware of and concerned about the fragile nature of Florida's land, water, and biological resources that the State is emerging as a leader in guiding the nature and the location of economic growth, and shaping public policies which promote quality of life goals.

This chapter provides an overview of Florida's natural environment: physical geography, climate, geology, physiography, hydrology, soils, vegetation, wildlife and air quality. Much of this descriptive information comes from the 1975 Florida Endangered Lands Plan, prepared by the Florida Department of Natural Resources.

Physical Geography

Florida, the second largest State east of the Mississippi River, is a peninsula which occupies 58,560 square miles, including 4,424 square miles of inland water. No point in the State is more than 60 miles from the sea. Florida's coastline extends 472 miles along the Atlantic Ocean and 674 on the Gulf of Mexico.

Climate

Florida lies in the temperate latitudes, although the climate in the lower peninsula is subtropical with wet, humid summers and relatively dry and cool winters. The influence of the Atlantic Ocean and the Gulf of Mexico moderates the extremes of heat and cold throughout the State. The warm, north-flowing Gulf Stream and prevailing southeast winds create winter temperatures that are higher than is characteristic of an inland climate at the same latitude.

Most of the State experiences a short, mild winter and a long, warm summer with subtle seasonal transitions. The mean annual temperatures range from the upper sixties in the northern parts of Florida to the upper seventies in the south.

Rainfall is seasonal. Up to one-half of the total annual precipitation falls from June to September. The average annual rainfall, which fluctuates widely year to year, is fifty-three inches. The southern part of the state receives an average of 60-70% winter sunshine. The northern half receives 50-60%. These factors strongly influence outdoor recreation activity and tourism during the winter months. Figure 2 shows basic climate data for the state.

Geology

Florida is geologically very young. Most of the State last emerged from the sea during the past one million years. Florida lies upon the Florida Plateau, a partly submerged shelf, nearly 500 miles long and from 250 to 400 miles wide. The Plateau, which has existed for millions of years, has been alternately dry land and shallow sea. It separates the deep waters of the Atlantic Ocean from the deep waters of the Gulf of Mexico. The submerged portions of the Plateau form the continental shelf, extending out to a depth of 300 feet. The Plateau core is metamorphic rock, chiefly limestone, about one to four miles thick. It is one of the most stable sections of the earth's crust. Florida's fossil record is unusually interesting. Particularly impressive is the record of the late Pleistocene Age, a geologic period extending 20,000 to 200,000 years ago. Fossils of lions, sabertooth tigers, mammoths, horses, camels and giant armadillos are in many limestone deposits.

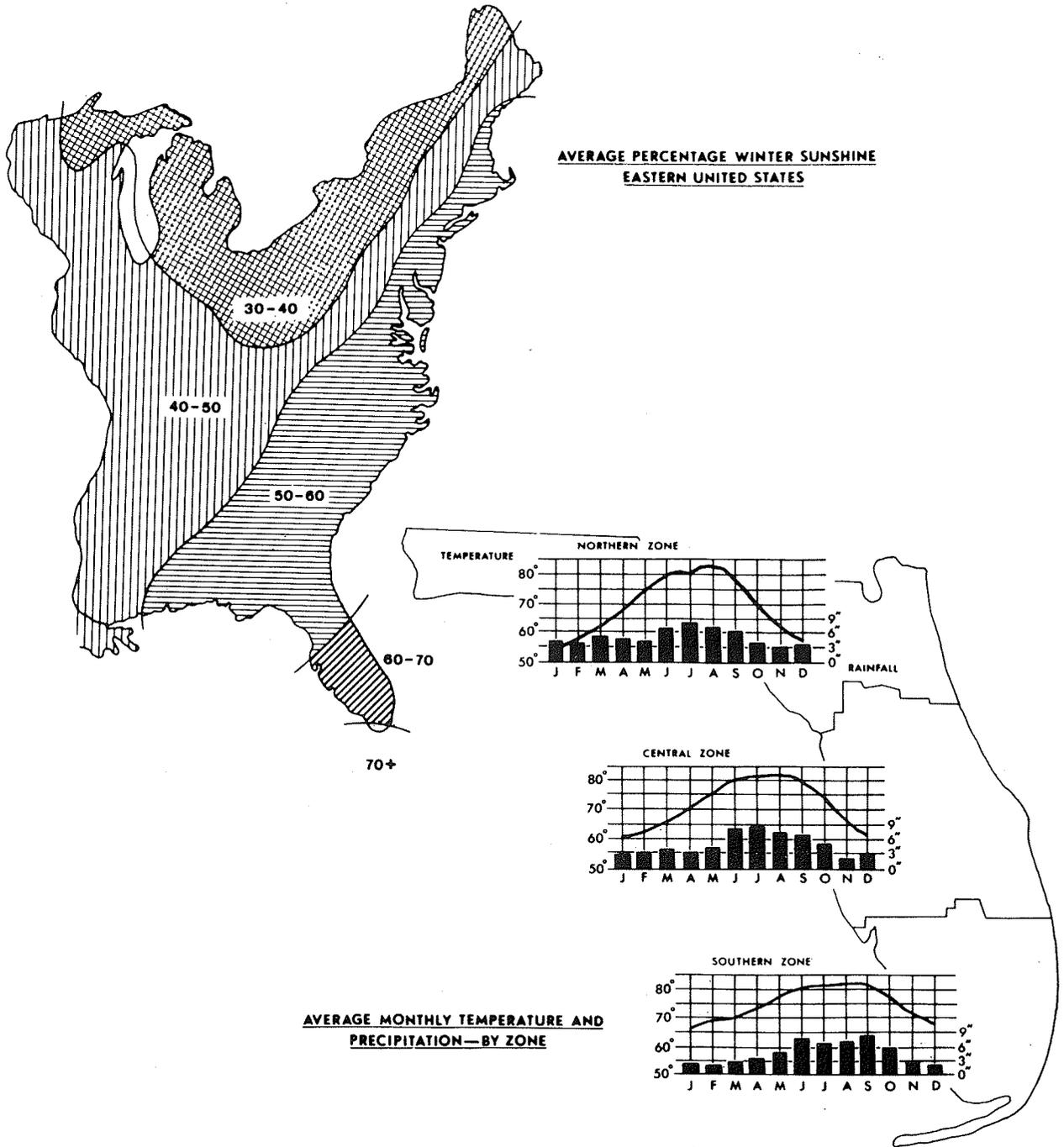
Physiography

Florida does have a diversity of landforms. The five physiographic regions commonly identified in Florida are the Western Highlands, the Marianna Lowlands, the Tallahassee Hills, the Central Highlands and the Coastal Lowlands (see Map 8).

The Western Highlands includes most of the Florida panhandle between the Perdido and the Apalachicola Rivers, north of the Coastal Lowlands. It is a plateau, sloping southward, hilly in the northern part, and trenched by narrow, steepwalled stream valleys. The higher hills in the northern part are over three hundred feet high and include the highest measured elevation (345 feet) in the state.

The Marianna Lowlands, west of the Apalachicola River in Jackson, Washington and Holmes Counties, is a low, rolling, hill and sinkhole

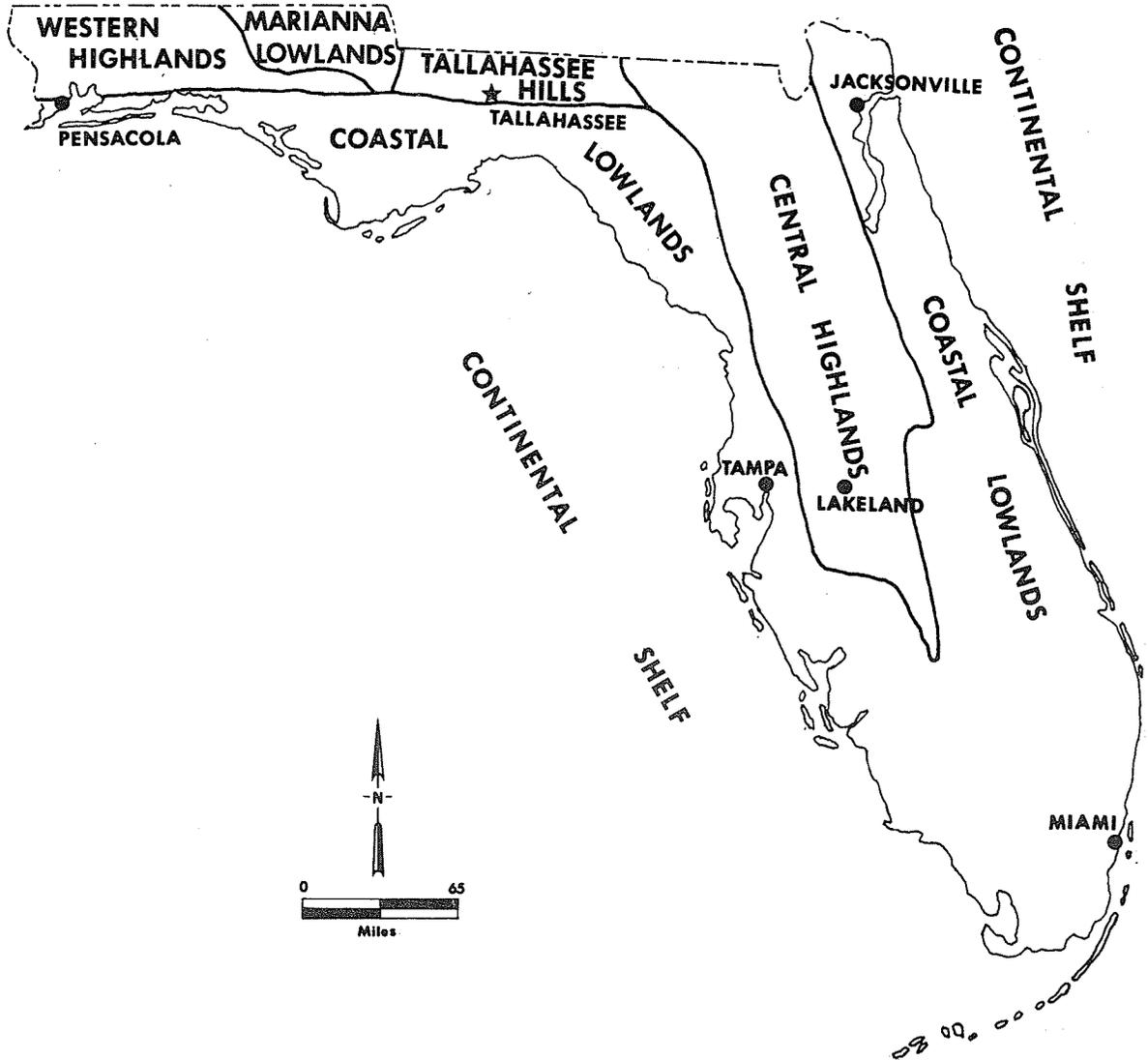
Figure 2



BASIC CLIMATE DATA FLORIDA

SOURCE: OUTDOOR RECREATION IN FLORIDA, 1976

Map 8



PHYSIOGRAPHIC REGIONS OF FLORIDA

SOURCE: FLORIDA ENVIRONMENTALLY ENDANGERED LANDS PLAN

region, with numerous small lakes. Its southern and western limits are marked by a rise to the Western Highlands. The rise is due to the increasing thickness of sand covering the limestone, which lies near the surface in the Marianna Lowlands.

The Tallahassee Hills region, north of the Coastal Lowlands, stretches from the Apalachicola River to the northern Withlacoochee River. It is approximately twenty-five miles wide and one hundred miles long and is characterized by long, gentle slopes with rounded summits, except for western Gadsden County, which consists of nearly level plain about three hundred feet high.

The Central Highlands region reaches from the Tallahassee Hills and the Okefenokee Swamp in the north almost to Lake Okeechobee in the south. Its length is about 250 miles; the width tapers from sixty miles wide in the northern two-thirds of its length down to a blunt point at the southern boundary.

Much of the northern part above Gainesville, is nearly level plain about 150 feet above sea level. Between Gainesville and Pasco County the western part of the Central Highlands consists of hills and hollows interspersed with broad, low plains. This sub-region ranges in altitude from two hundred feet to less than forty feet above sea level. Adjoining this sub-region to the east and extending southward beyond it to the end of the Central Highlands is the sub-region known as the Lake Region. It is characterized by numerous lakes and high hills - up to 325 feet above sea level.

The Coastal Lowlands form the entire coastline, including the Florida Keys, and reach inland as much as sixty miles at some points. Their inner edge generally lies at the one hundred foot contour line. These lowlands were, in recent geologic times, marine terraces (sea floors) during three or more successive inundations by high seas. This is a flat region, except where old dune ridges occur or where the surface has been modified by erosion and underground solution.

Hydrology

More than four thousand square miles of inland Florida is covered by water. This includes 5,815 lakes larger than ten acres. Most of these lakes were probably created through solution and subsequent collapse of the underlying limestone. Some of the larger lakes - Lake Okeechobee, for example - were originally depressions on ancient sea floors created by the inundations mentioned earlier.

Most of the defined river systems in Florida are in the northern half of the State. South Florida has few such defined river systems. Much of south Florida's original drainage (prior to development of the present canal system) was through broad, shallow channels, such as the Fakahatchee Strand in the western Big Cypress.

Florida also has 1,146 miles of coastline (excluding islands), with State jurisdiction extending out three miles into the Atlantic and nine miles into the Gulf. Between the continental shelf waters and the inland fresh waters are sheltered coastal waters generally referred to as estuaries, which are among Florida's most biologically productive waters.

Soils

Florida soils generally are young and poor in productivity, although the climate allows a long growing season. The deep sandy soils of present-day and ancient sand dunes are particularly low in plant nutrients, and tend to be excessively drained as well. In general, topography and soil texture determine drainage. Upland soils are usually well drained, and lowland soils are poorly drained with seasonally high water tables. Both extremes of drainage characteristics present difficult conditions for plant growth. Map 9 shows the general pattern of wetlands and uplands in Florida.

Florida soils are predominantly sandy, derived from deep marine sands that were transported by currents and wave action and deposited on the Floridan Plateau during ancient inundations by higher seas. Other materials forming Florida soils, either as admixtures to sand or by themselves, are: clay, present in loamy soils of the panhandle and in poorly drained soils throughout the State; marl (a calcareous deposit), found in south Florida, especially near the coast; shell, which sometimes occurs in thick beds in coastal counties; limestone, which outcrops at various locations throughout the state, especially in Collier, Broward, Dade and Monroe Counties; and muck and peat (organic soils), which occur in scattered small locations throughout Florida and over large areas of the Everglades, the Lake Okeechobee floodplain and the upper St. Johns River floodplain.

Vegetation and Wildlife

Florida has a diversity of flora and fauna, owing to the presence of both North American and Caribbean biota. The flora of an area is a product of the interaction of the soil, water, temperature, light, atmospheric, fire and biotic factors. Rainfall, soil moisture and fire are particularly important in Florida. Variation within each of the

factors produces an infinite number of different environments and different vegetative responses to them. These responses do tend, however, to fall within several recognizable groups, or plant communities, which contain characteristic though variable assemblages of plant species.

The fauna of an area also is dependent on many factors, the most obvious one being vegetation. Each plant community has a characteristic animal community; the combination of the two is termed a biological community. (An ecosystem, or environmental system, is simply a biological community and its non-living environment.) Several communities are named for their more abundant, or dominant, species - usually a plant. The following communities are shown on Map 10 and described in Table 3.

Upland Communities

coastal strand
sand pine scrub
sandhill
mixed hardwood and pine
hammock
tropical hammock
flatwoods
dry prairie

Weland Communities

scrub cypress
swamp forest
cypress swamp
freshwater marsh and wet prairie
mangrove swamp
salt marsh

Submerged Land or Aquatic Communities

A few of these communities - sand pine scrub, tropical hammock, scrub cypress and mangrove swamp - are rare or absent in the rest of the United States. A number of Florida's plant and animal species are also rare or absent in the rest of the country. Among them are the royal palm, mahogany tree, lignum vitae tree, bonefish, crocodile, short-tailed hawk and Florida mouse.

Air Quality

Air Quality in Florida is generally very good. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency reported violations of Clean Air Act air quality primary standards for photochemical oxidants (smog or ozone) for nine of Florida's most urbanized counties during the 1976-1977 reporting period. One county failed to meet the carbon monoxide standard; one county failed to meet the sulfur dioxide standard. The air quality along the proposed Florida National Scenic Trail routing exceeds Federal Clean Air Act Standards. Public use of the trail will promote health, from an air quality standpoint.

Summary

Florida's wonderful environment is diverse and rich in natural values which make the Florida Trail a memorable experience for people.

Map 10

(ADAPTED FROM DAVIS, 1967)

FLORIDA'S BIOLOGICAL COMMUNITIES

-  MANGROVES AND SALT MARSHES
-  FRESHWATER MARSHES, DRY PRAIRIE,
WET PRAIRIE AND SCRUB CYPRESS
-  CYPRESS SWAMPS AND SWAMP FORESTS
-  MIXED HARDWOOD AND PINE, HARDWOOD FORESTS,
TROPICAL HAMMOCK AND CABBAGE PALM
-  FLATWOODS AND ROCKLAND SLASH PINE FORESTS
-  SCRUB (SAND PINE) AND COASTAL STRAND
-  SANDHILLS
-  WATER AREAS

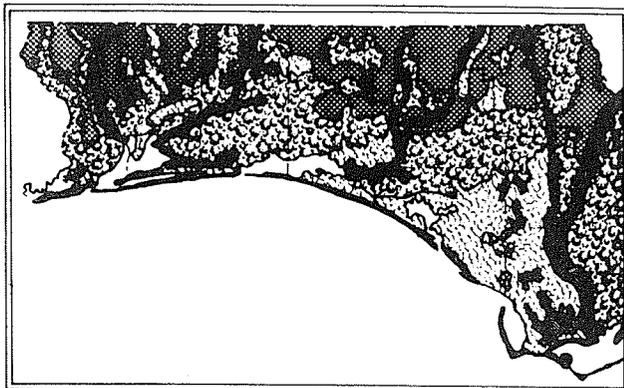
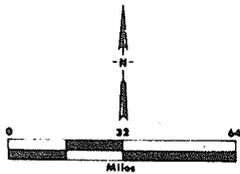


Table 3

Florida's Biological Communities

COMMUNITY	LOCATION	TYPICAL PLANTS	TYPICAL ANIMALS
coastal strand	sand & shell beaches & dunes along both coasts	sea oats, railroad vine, seagrape, scrub oaks, yucca	beach mice, gulls, terns, shorebirds, sea turtles, crabs
sand pine scrub	relict sand dunes along the coast & inland	sand pine, scrub oaks, saw palmetto, rosemary, lichens	Fla. mouse, scrub jay, blackracer, sand skink
sandhill	older relict dunes, esp. along Fla.'s central ridge	longleaf pine, turkey oak, wiregrass	fox squirrel, towhee, pine snake, gopher tortoise, fence lizard
mixed hardwood and pine	uplands in the Florida panhandle	beech, magnolia, dogwood, loblolly & shortleaf pines	deer, grey squirrel, woodpeckers, barred owl
hammock	uplands in peninsular Fla. also along both coasts	magnolia, laurel oak, live oak, hickories, red bay	as above
tropical hammock	Fla. Keys, Everglades, south Florida coasts	strangler fig, gumbo-limbo, pigeon plum, Jamaica dogwood	Key Largo woodrat, cotton mouse, white-crowned pigeon
flatwoods	flat, poorly-drained areas	longleaf, slash, & pond pines, gallberry, fetterbush	cottontail, cotton rat, red-tailed hawk, great horned owl
dry prairie	low, level areas N. & W. of Lake Okeechobee	saw palmetto, wiregrass, carpet grasses, blueberry	caracara, burrowing owl, sandhill crane
scrub cypress	frequently flooded rock & marl soils of so. Fla.	pond cypress, sawgrass, beakrushes, air plants	raccoon, wood stork, alligator
swamp forest	floodplains & seasonally flooded basins	blackgum, water tupelo, pop ash, red maple, buttonbush	otter, red-shouldered hawk, wood duck, pileated woodpecker
cypress swamp	as above	bald-cypress, pond cypress, willow, wax myrtle, red maple	otter, alligator, snakes, salamanders
freshwater marsh and wet prairie	as above	sawgrass, pickerelweed, cattails, spikerushes, bulrush	Fla. round-tailed muskrat, egrets, everglade kite, waterfowl
mangrove swamp	low energy coastlines in south Florida	red, black, & white mangroves, buttonwood, pickleweed	osprey, pelican, roseate spoonbill, crocodile, crabs
salt marsh	low energy coastlines in north Florida	cordgrasses, black rush, salt grass, sea ox-eye	seaside sparrows, rails, marsh periwinkle, crabs
aquatic or submerged land	fresh waters & inshore salt waters	seagrasses, eelgrass, spatterdock, water lilly,	manatee, waterfowl, turtles, amphibians, fish, invertebrates

Source: Florida Environmentally Endangered Lands Plan

Chapter 4

The Florida Trail Association and the Florida Trail

The Florida Trail Association

The Florida Trail is the creation of Florida citizens. In 1966, Miami resident James Kern founded the Florida Trail Association, a non-profit organization dedicated to developing and maintaining a hiking trail extending some 1,300 miles north from Big Cypress Swamp in south Florida to Blackwater River State Forest, near Pensacola in the western panhandle. The Florida Trail Association has developed more than 500 miles of the Florida Trail during the past 13 years.

The Florida Trail Association numbers about 5000 members, making it the largest trail organization in any southeastern state. This organization is governed by elected Officers and an elected Board of Directors. Trail development and maintenance activities are handled by a volunteer network of trail section leaders and trail workers. A quarterly newsletter provides formal internal communications.

Florida Trail Association membership is open to anyone. Annual dues presently are \$7.50 (single membership) and \$11.50 (family membership), plus a one-time \$1.00 membership processing fee. Dues and fund raising activities generate about \$27,000 per year. These funds support: purchase of power tools for clearing and maintaining the trail; buying paint and other materials for blazing the trail and building signs; publishing and distributing the quarterly newsletter; a liability insurance policy covering all members; printing and distributing Florida Trail map sets; administrative costs; and salary expenses for one full-time employee.

The Association's high level of trail building and trail maintenance expertise is evident in the quality of the trail. The Association has published a trail development manual and a landowner information package, policy documents which lend consistency to trail development and foster positive hiker-landowner relationships.

Association members donate thousands of hours to volunteer work and thousands of dollars of out-of-pocket personal expenses to maintain existing segments of the Florida Trail. The Association extends the trail whenever appropriate land use arrangements can be made with private landowners or public land managers on suitable lands and when volunteer trail workers are available.^{1/} In terms of miles of hiking trail "on the ground" through its efforts, the Florida Trail

^{1/} Table 10 provides more detailed information on the magnitude of this volunteer effort, estimated at 7,000 hours (3 1/2 person-years) and more than \$10,000 in cash expenditures related to the trail annually.

Association is the most effective trail building and maintaining organization, public or private, in Florida. The association appears to be one of the most effective citizen trail-developing and maintaining organizations in the country.

Beyond its trail development and maintenance program, the Association is an environmental education and outdoor recreation skills teaching organization. These activities are carried out through workshops and through hundreds of hiking, backpacking and canoeing trips scheduled throughout the year.

Through the work of the Association, the Florida Trail is a reality, providing hiking opportunities to thousands of Floridians and visitors to Florida each year. And, most extraordinarily, in an era of big government, the Florida Trail exists almost entirely without cost to either the national or the Florida taxpayer.

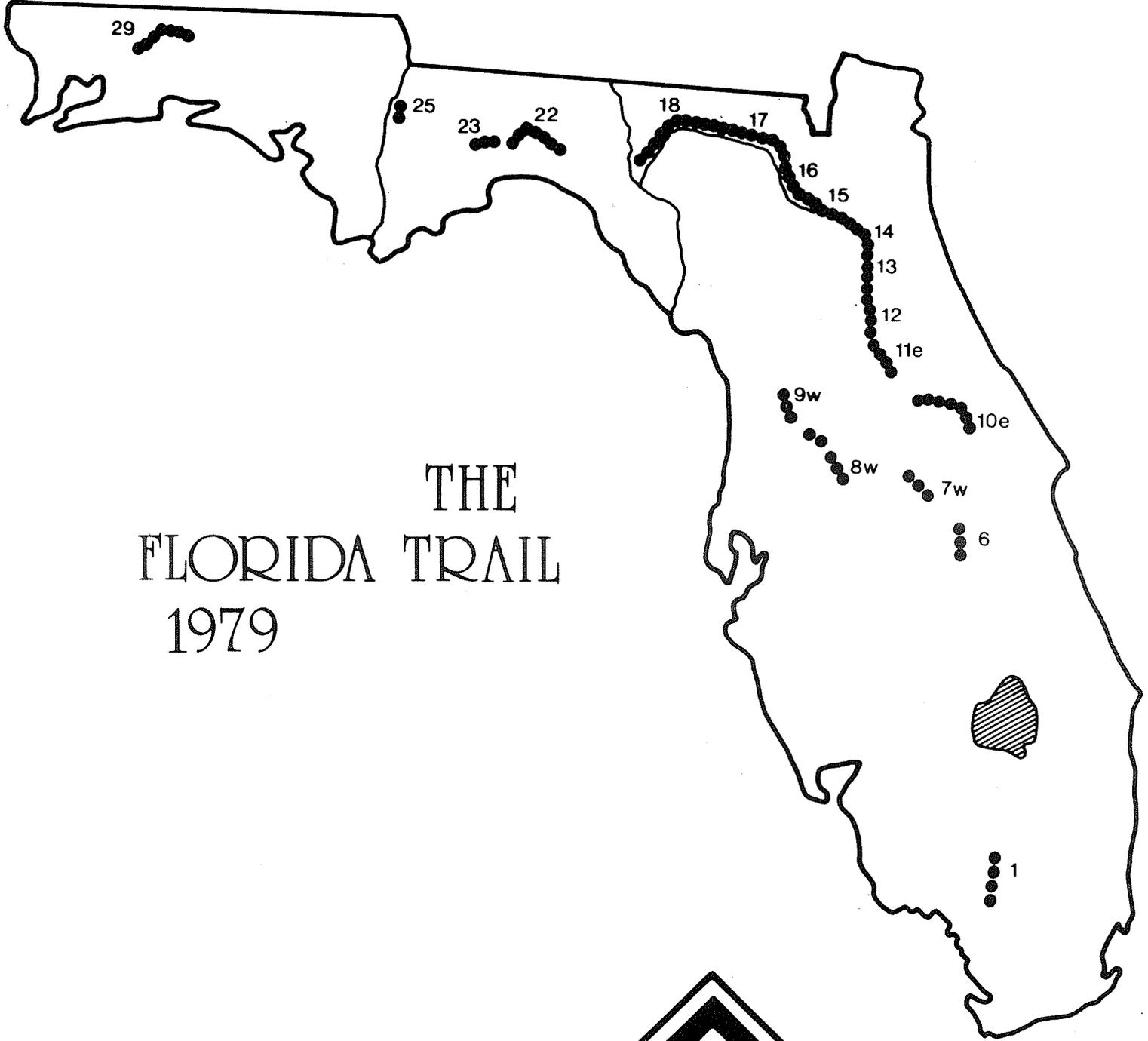
The Florida Trail

Florida's natural beauty is exquisite when evaluated in its own geophysical environment. Florida is a large state, and most human development has been and continues to be concentrated in areas along the Atlantic and Gulf coasts. Over the years, man has changed the expansive rural interior of the State through drainage projects, agriculture and commercial forestry operations and urbanization. But while the pristine wilderness known to the Calusa Indians and other native Americans in Florida is gone for the most part, the Florida Trail affords people an intimate and intensely personal view of "the other Florida,"-- the forests, swamps, sandhills, prairies, lakes and rivers which harbor some of the most remarkable natural values in the South.

The Florida Trail is a primitive hiking path that the Florida Trail Association has planned, developed and maintained through many of Florida's wonderful biological communities. The trail receives its greatest use during winter months when temperatures normally are mild, rainfall is low and insects are less troublesome. Currently, the Florida Trail totals more than 500 miles, in about 20 segments. The longest, most continuous section comprises 8 contiguous segments running about 350 miles through northeast Florida across both public and private land.

Much of the Florida Trail crosses public land and is open to the public. Other segments cross private lands with the approval and cooperation of the landowners. Where the trail crosses private land, it is open only to members of the Florida Trail Association, under land use agreements between landowners and the Association.

Map 11



THE FLORIDA TRAIL 1979



SOURCE: FLORIDA TRAIL ASSOCIATION, INC.

Map 11 shows the present routing of the sections of the Florida Trail which the Florida Trail Association has completed and maintains.

Existing segments of the Florida Trail provided a point of departure for National Park Service planning purposes. The rest of this section describes the natural values and human experiences which draw people to the Florida Trail in south, central, northeast and west Florida.

South Florida

The southern terminus of the Florida Trail is at the National Park Service's Oasis Ranger Station in Big Cypress National Preserve, deep in the coastal lowlands of south Florida. This wetland mosaic, along the north side of Everglades National Park, normally is relatively dry during the mild winter months. Hiking, nature walks and backpacking are especially pleasant during winter, with sunshine levels which average about 70% of daylight hours and low insect population levels. The Florida Trail Association has developed about 40 miles of trails in Big Cypress National Preserve, including two loop trails off the north-running through trail. This trail segment is Section One of the Florida Trail. It lies between U.S.-41, the Tamiami Trail, and the State Toll Road 84, Alligator Alley.

Section One provides hiker access into the freest water prairie, scrub, cypress and slash pine island environment so unique to South Florida. The subtropical climate promotes the growth of hundreds of herbaceous plant species, including orchids, bromeliads and air plants. The diversity of wildlife species in this subtropical environment is particularly significant during the winter with the arrivals of migrating birds. Big Cypress also has the power to punish as well as to reward human visitors. Hikers need to be aware of and well prepared for natural hazards which include poisonous snakes, fire, summer lightning strikes, insects and limestone pot-holes (pinnacle rock).

The Florida Trail Association has developed two designated camping zones, with shallow wells and pitcher pumps, along the trail. Nearly all trail use occurs during the fall, winter and spring months. Peak hiking use is on winter weekends, except during deer hunting season, (late November to early January,) when motorized swamp buggy vehicle use is extensive. During the summer rainy season, high water levels, insects and the hot, humid climate tend to make the Big Cypress a less enjoyable experience for most people. North of Big Cypress National Preserve, the Florida Trail Association, with the cooperation of the Seminole tribal officials of the Big Cypress Seminole Reservation, has developed a 12-mile loop trail network in the unpopulated western part of the reservation, in Hendry County. However, tribal officials

recently closed the western part of the reservation, including this segment of the Florida Trail, because of illegal hunting by poachers. Ultimately, with an improved game law enforcement program, the Seminole Tribe may reopen these reservation lands to public hiking.

Central Florida

There are six Florida Trail segments in central Florida, mostly in the Central Highlands physiographic region. Generally, the biological communities through which the trail passes include flatwoods, slash and longleaf pine forests and sandhills. The trail skirts around the rapidly growing Orlando, Tampa and St. Petersburg metropolitan areas.

Public landholdings through which the trail passes are Prairie-Lakes State Preserve, Three Lakes Wildlife Management Area and Withlacoochee State Forest (Richloam, Croom and Citrus sections). The trail also crosses much privately owned land, through the cooperation of private landowners.

Northeast Florida

The Florida Trail's longest, generally continuous segment, roughly 350 miles, is routed through biologically diverse areas in northeast Florida. Notable natural landscape features include the sand pine scrub, (particularly the Big Scrub region of Ocala National Forest), swamp forests, flatwoods, slash and longleaf pine forests and mixed hardwood and pine forests, (especially along the Suwannee River). There are numerous fresh water springs, lakes, ponds and streams throughout this region. Hiking is pleasant during most of the year.

The Florida Trail crosses the following publicly owned lands: Ocala National Forest, Osceola National Forest, Cross Florida Barge Canal (U.S. Army Corps of Engineers dam), Camp Blanding (Florida National Guard), Mike Roess Gold Head Branch State Park, Stephen Foster Folk Culture Center, Olustee Battlefield State Historic Site and Suwannee River State Park. Currently more than half of the Florida Trail in northeast Florida is on privately owned lands, principally forest products industry properties. One segment of the Florida Trail on lands of the former Hudson Pulp and Paper Company, (now a Georgia-Pacific Corporation division), is included in a National Recreation Trail designation.

West Florida

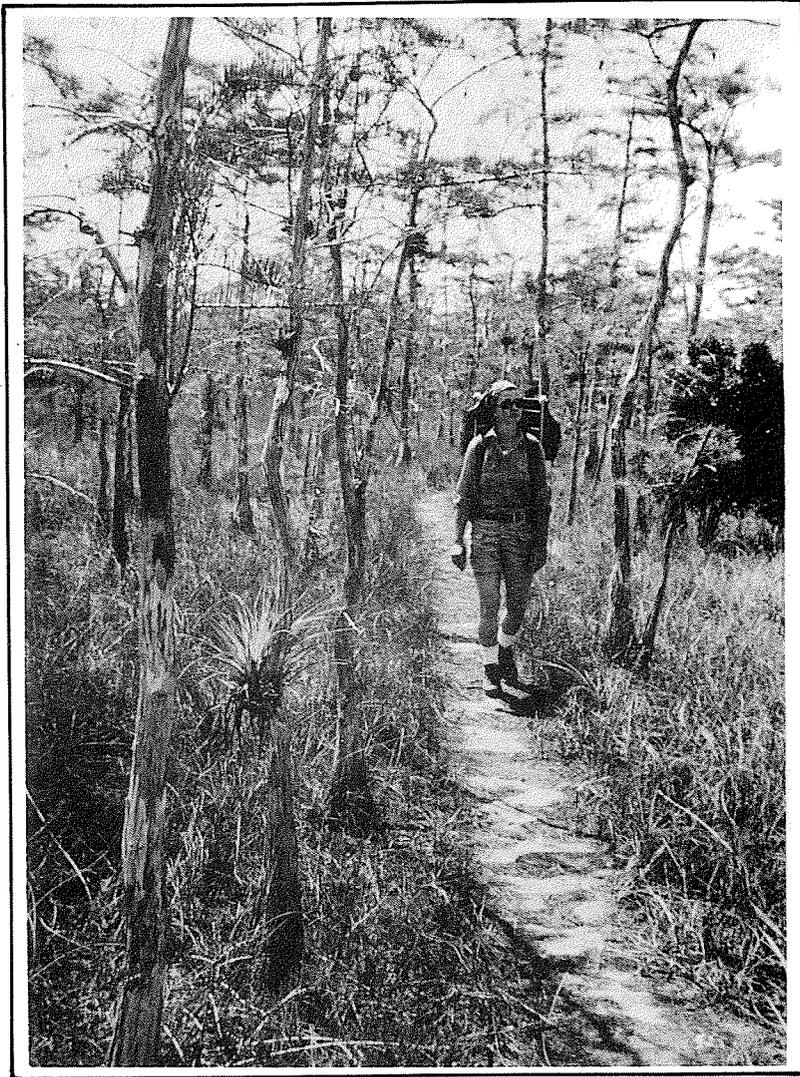
Principal biological communities in the Florida panhandle are mixed hardwood and pine forests, sandhill areas forested mostly in pine and scrub oak, swamp forests and hardwoods in river bottoms.

At the present there is little Florida Trail development in west Florida. This can be attributed to the few Florida Trail Association members available for trail development and maintenance work in this thinly populated part of the State.

Nevertheless, there are two Florida Trail segments in the panhandle. There is a 6-mile loop trail, in Torreya State Park, along the Apalachicola River, west of Tallahassee. Near Pensacola, in Blackwater River State Forest, is a 22 mile segment, the Jackson Red Ground Trail. Part of the Torreya Trail and all of the Jackson Trail are National Recreation Trails, designated by the Secretary of Interior.

Here, now, is a photographic journey along the Florida Trail.

PHOTOGRAPHIC JOURNEY
along the
FLORIDA TRAIL



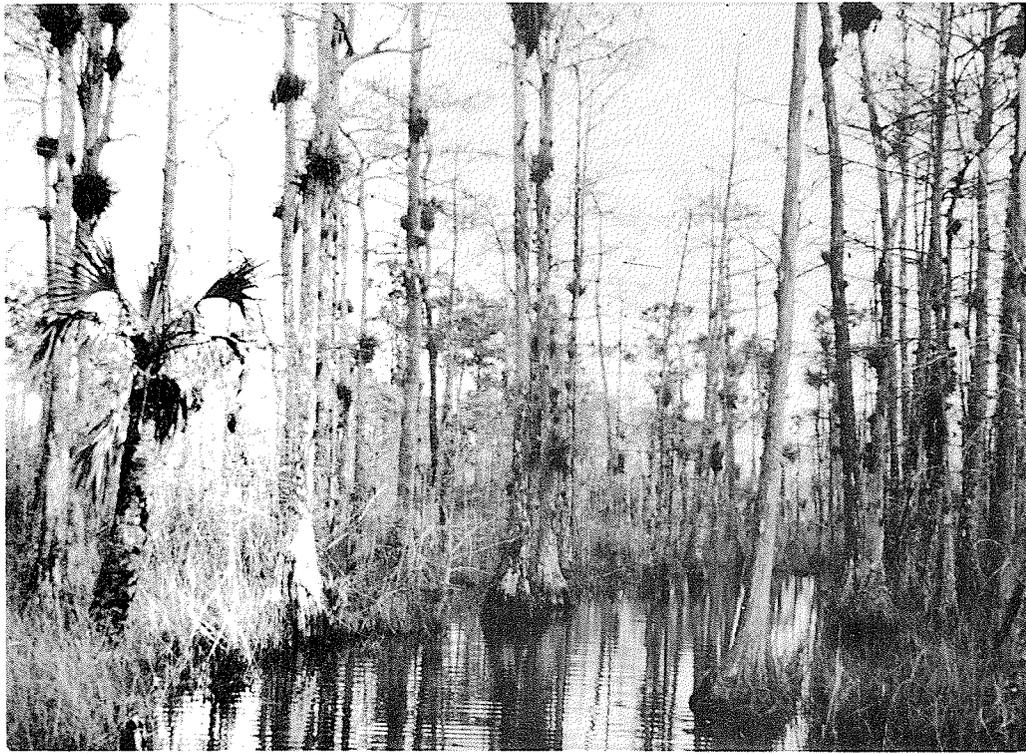
Most people hiking the Florida Trail through South Florida's Big Cypress Swamp find the normally dry winter months enjoyable.



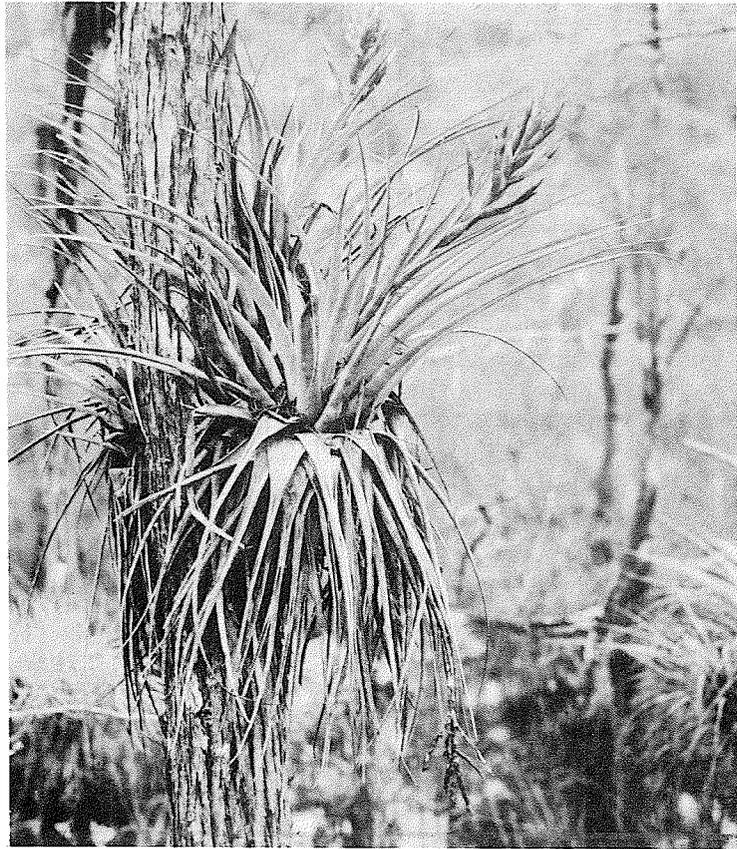
Bald cypress head rises from freshwater marsh in Big Cypress National Preserve--along the Florida Trail.



The Florida Trail passes through freshwater marshgrass, slashpine and dwarf cypress vegetation in Big Cypress National Preserve.



Hiking in some parts of Big Cypress National Preserve is wet and wild.



Air plants, epiphytic species which grow on trees and other plants and get nutrients and water from the air, abound in Big Cypress.



The Florida Trail Association has built and maintains shallow wells in two camping zones in Big Cypress National Preserve.



In the south Florida Everglades, north of Big Cypress National Preserve, publicly owned and managed canal levees like this one may provide access for hikers, horseback riders and bicyclists, while maintaining trail continuity.



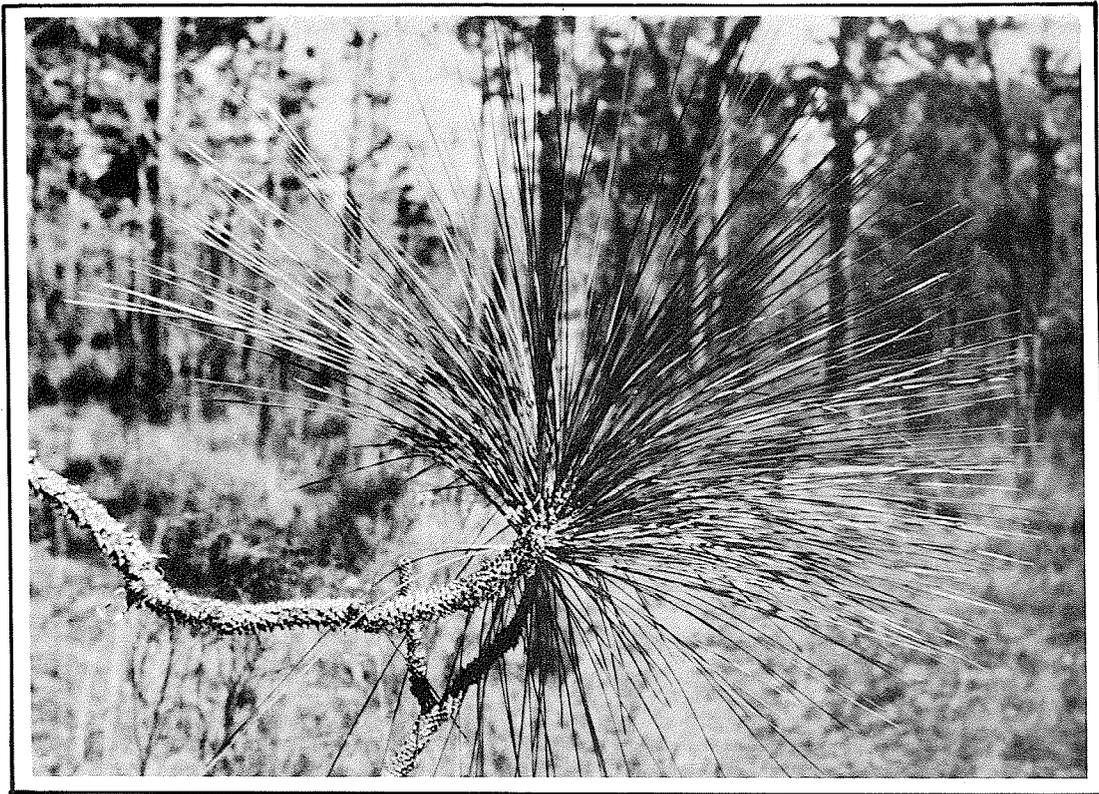
The Florida Trail in the live oak bottoms of the Kissimmee River basin, Prairie-Lakes State Preserve.



Trail clearing, like this, has made over 500 miles of Florida Trail a reality.

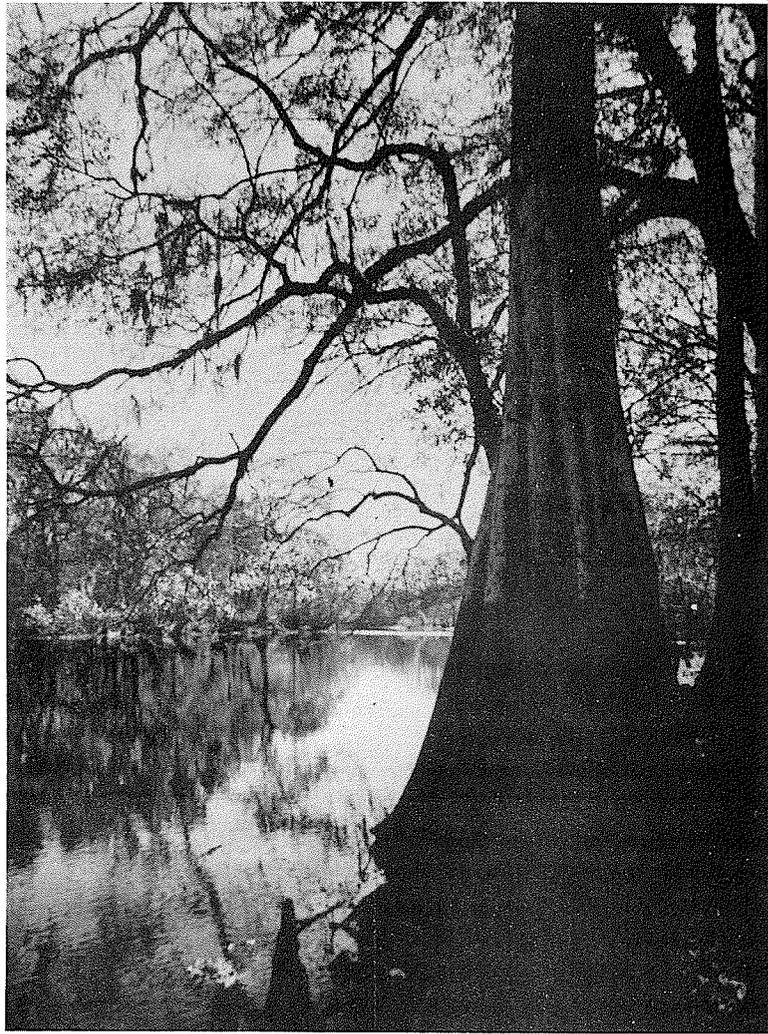


Florida Trail Association workers sign a newly completed segment of the Florida Trail in Withlacoochee State Forest.



Florida longleaf pine,
an important commercial species that
provides jobs, housing, paper, chemicals
and other consumer products.

Most people who expressed opinions
on land use compatibility thought
that the Florida Trail and commercial
forestry were compatible land uses.



Withlacoochee River provides an especially scenic Florida Trail background.



The Ocala Trail, a 66 mile Forest Service designated National Recreation Trail in Ocala National Forest, is the longest continuous segment of the Florida Trail on public land.



The Florida Trail passes through palms and palmettos here in Ocala National Forest.



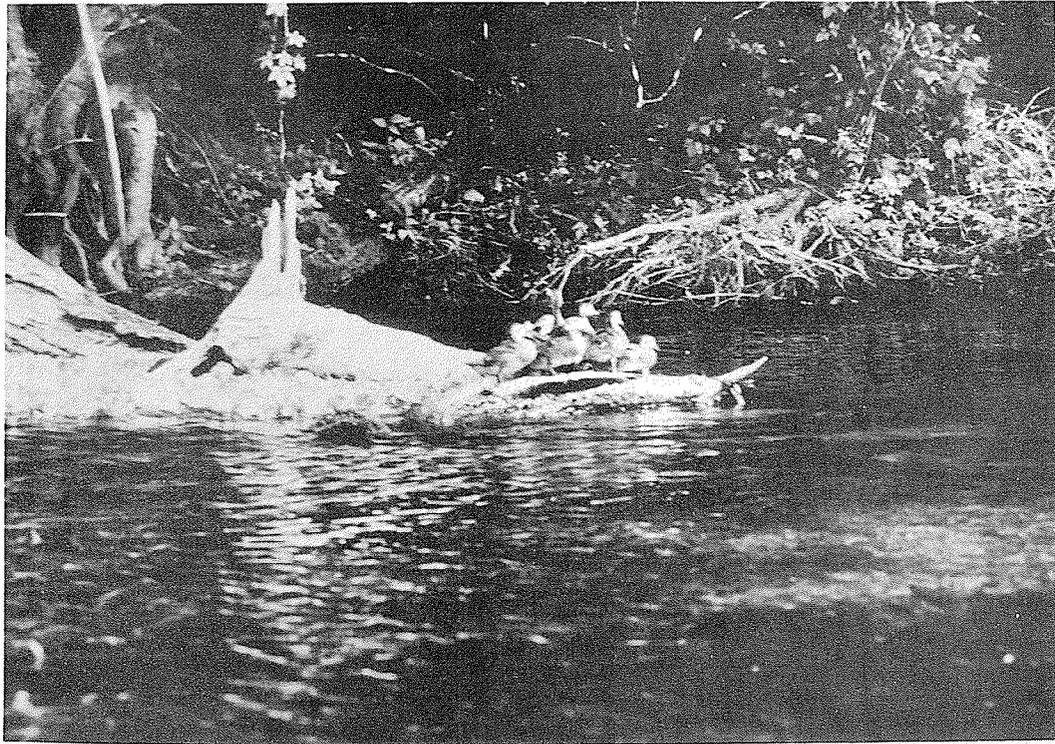
U.S. Forest Service has constructed boardwalks over some segments of the Florida Trail where use level is high and soil drainage is poor.



A bald eagle nest in Ocala National Forest near the Florida Trail.



Alexander Springs and Juniper Springs in Ocala National Forest are developed Forest Service recreation areas accessible from the Florida Trail.



Fresh water lakes and ponds along the Florida Trail.

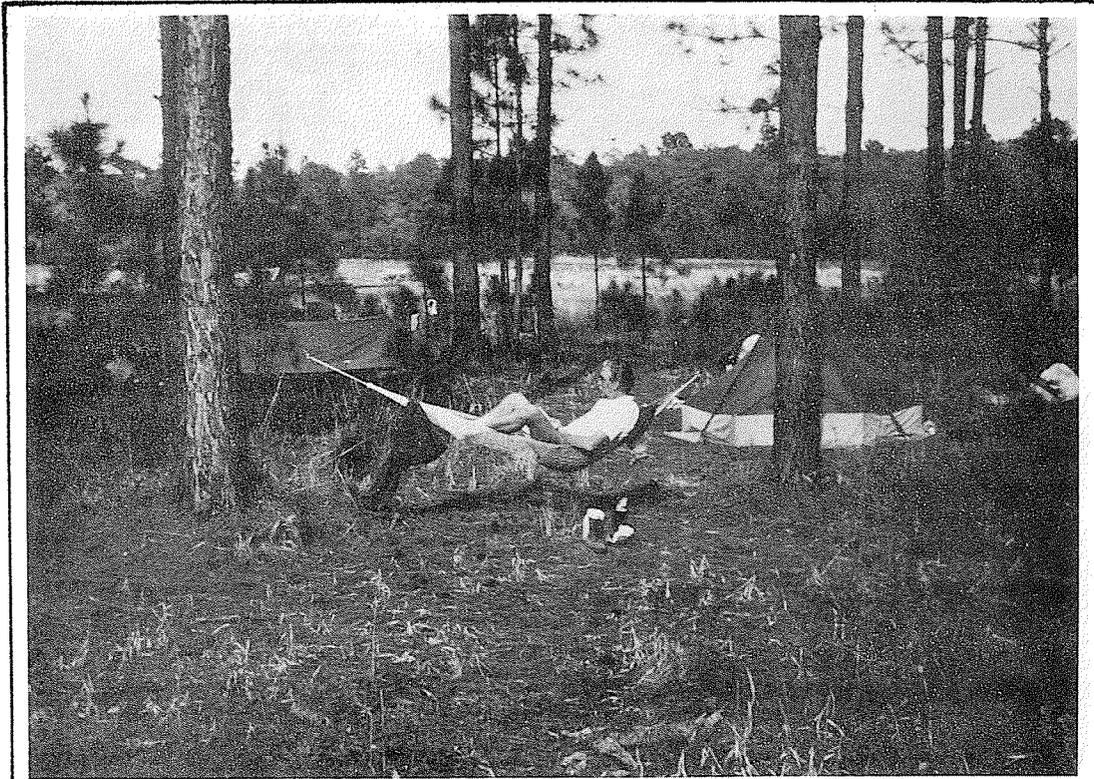




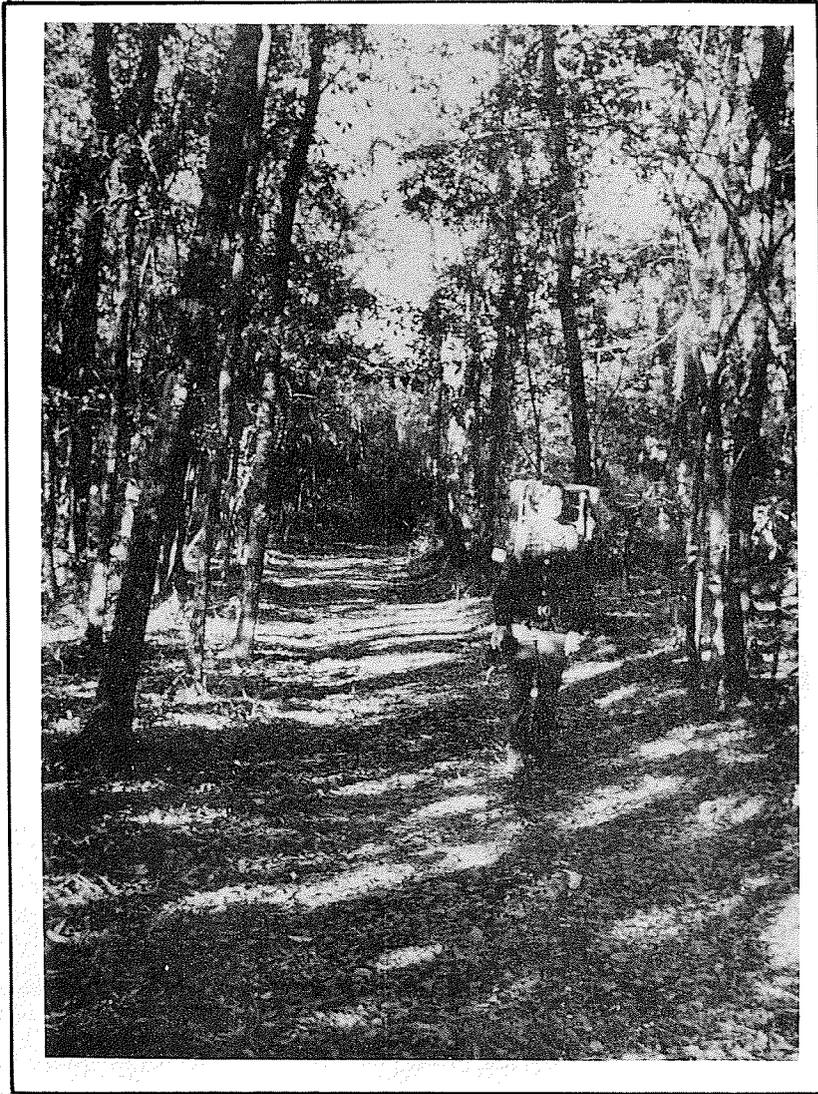
Backpacking is an experience enjoyed by adults and teenagers together.



Nature walking and day hiking are popular on the Florida Trail.



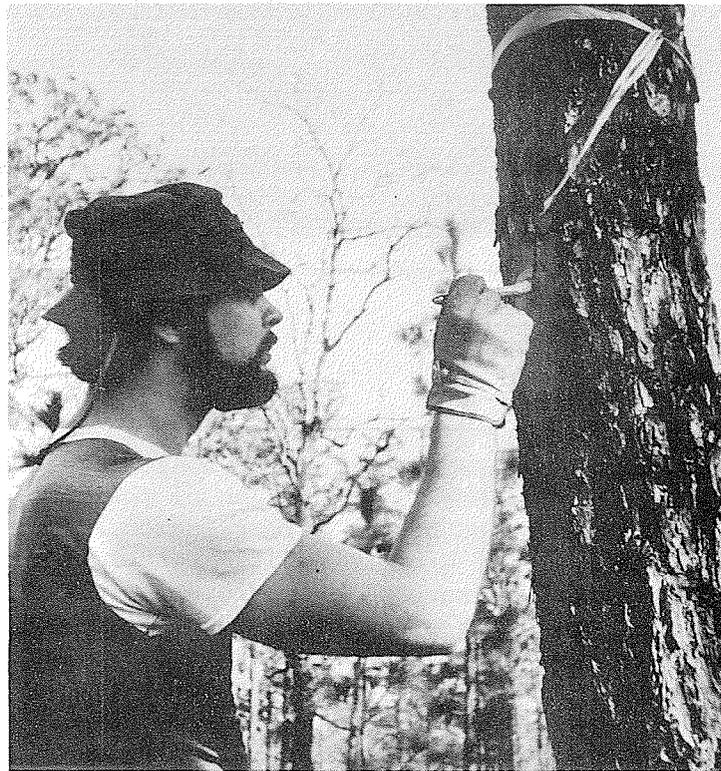
The camping zone concept has worked well on the Florida Trail
in keeping costs and environmental impacts low.



Private landowners have provided substantial support for the Florida Trail. Here is a section of the Florida Trail on land near Palatka owned by the former Hudson Pulp and Paper Company, now a division of Georgia Pacific Corporation. Owens-Illinois, ITT-Rayonier and several other forest products corporations have allowed the Florida Trail Association to route the Florida Trail on company lands in north Florida.

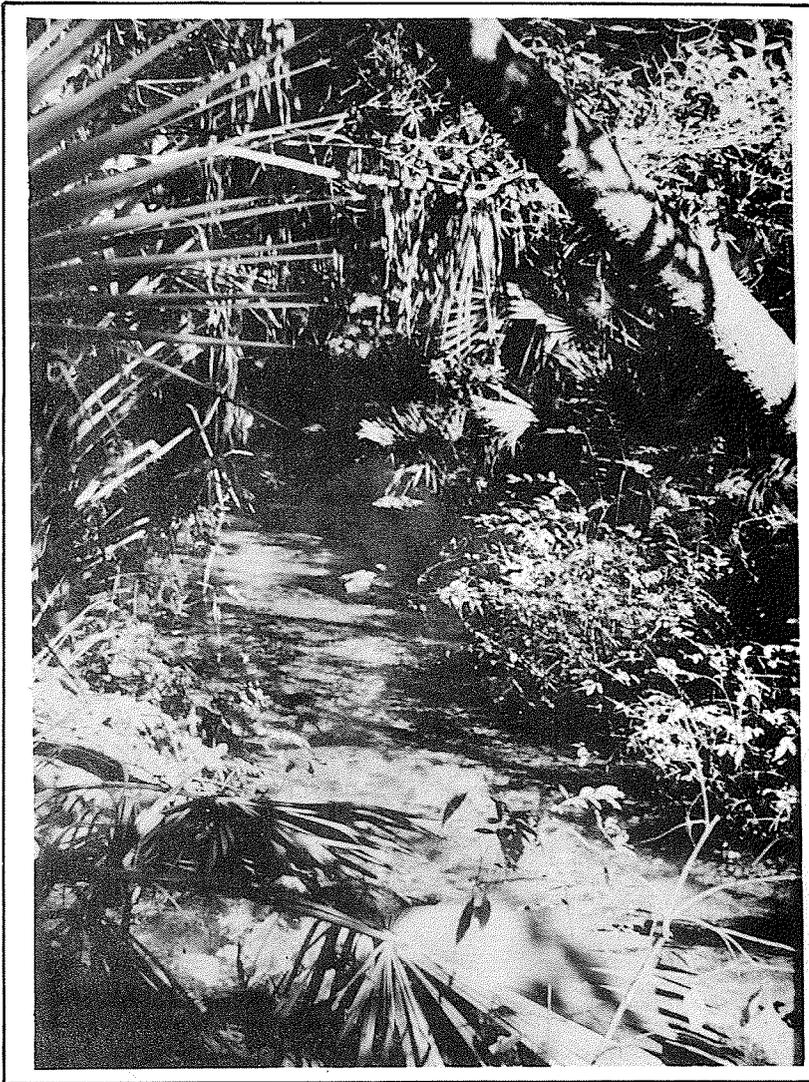


Citizen volunteers donate thousands of hours of hard work and thousands of dollars in personal cash outlays on the Florida Trail.



Trail blazing.

The hallmark of the Florida Trail is a neat 2X6 inch orange blaze.



In some places the Florida Trail crosses crystal springs and streams lined with lush vegetation in north Florida.

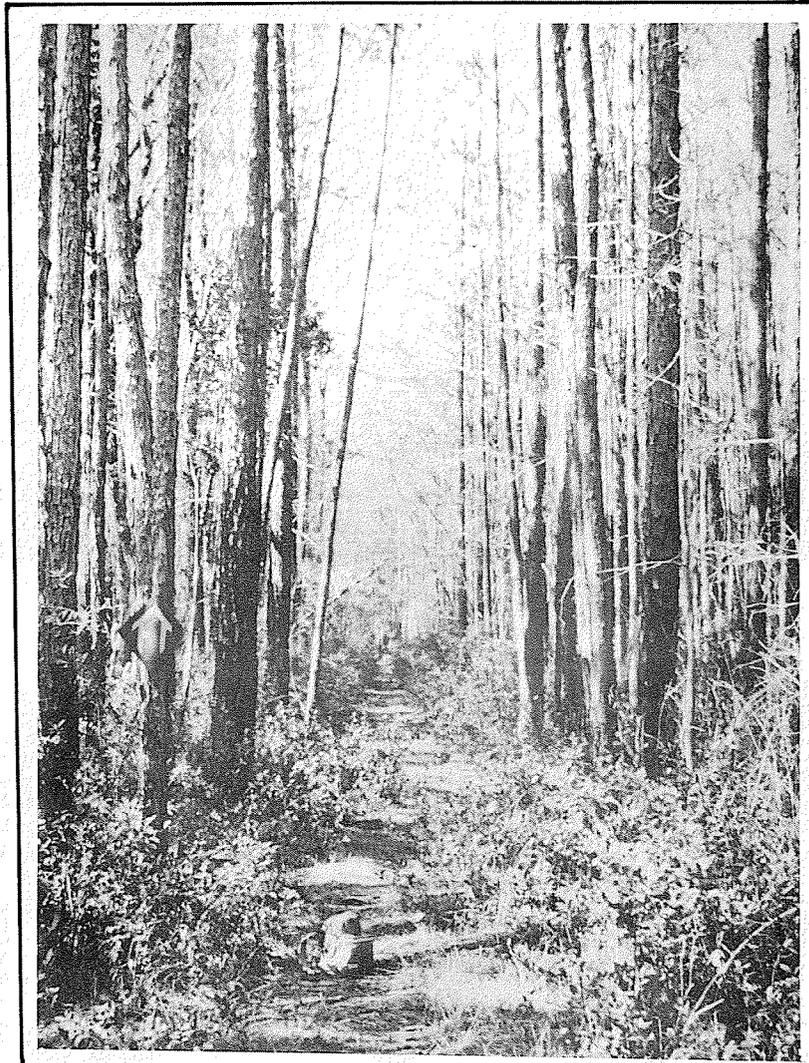


Live oak canopy over the Florida Trail.

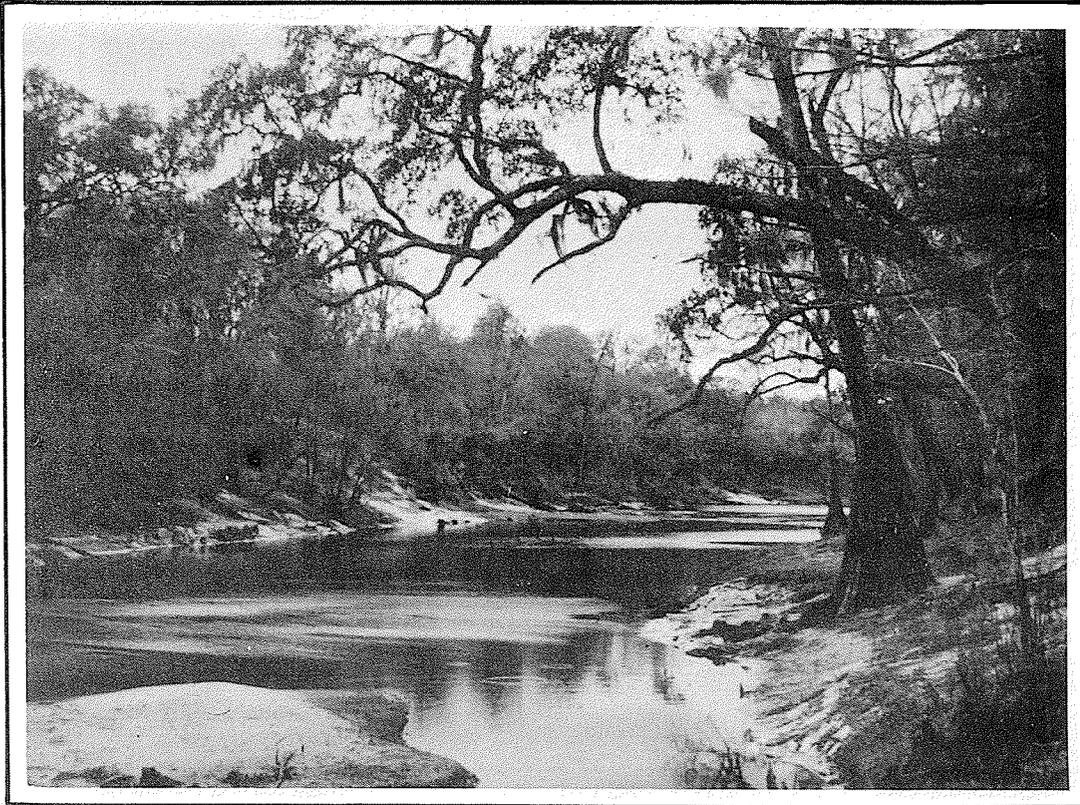


The Florida Trail runs through stands of slash pine in forest management units of Osceola National Forest.





Swamp hardwoods in Osceola National Forest.



The Florida Trail follows the scenic Suwannee River for about 40 miles in Hamilton County, mostly through privately owned land with the cooperation of private landowners. Landowners here do not support national scenic trail designation for this part of the Florida Trail.

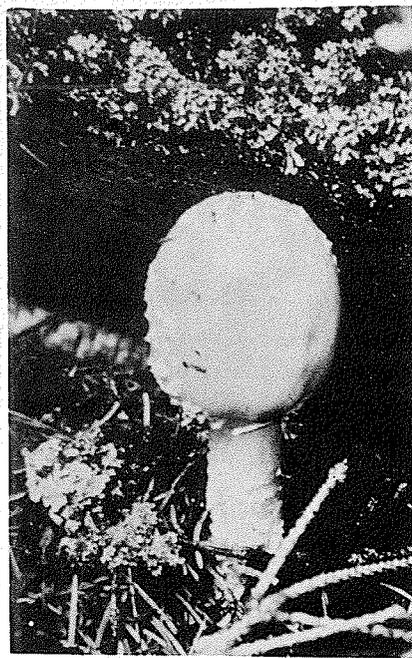


Florida Trail Association backpackers hiking and relaxing along the Suwannee River. This segment of the trail is not open to general public use at the request of private landowners.





Limestone sinks are interesting geological features along some segments of the Florida Trail.



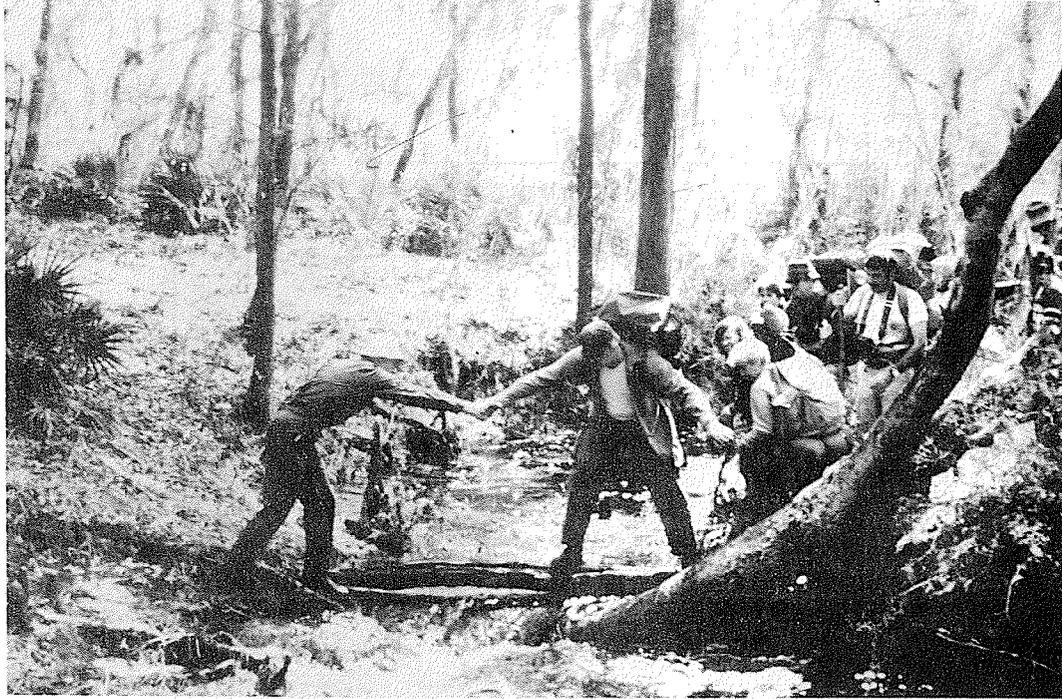
Natural values, small and large, are along the trail.



Winter camping on the Florida Trail.

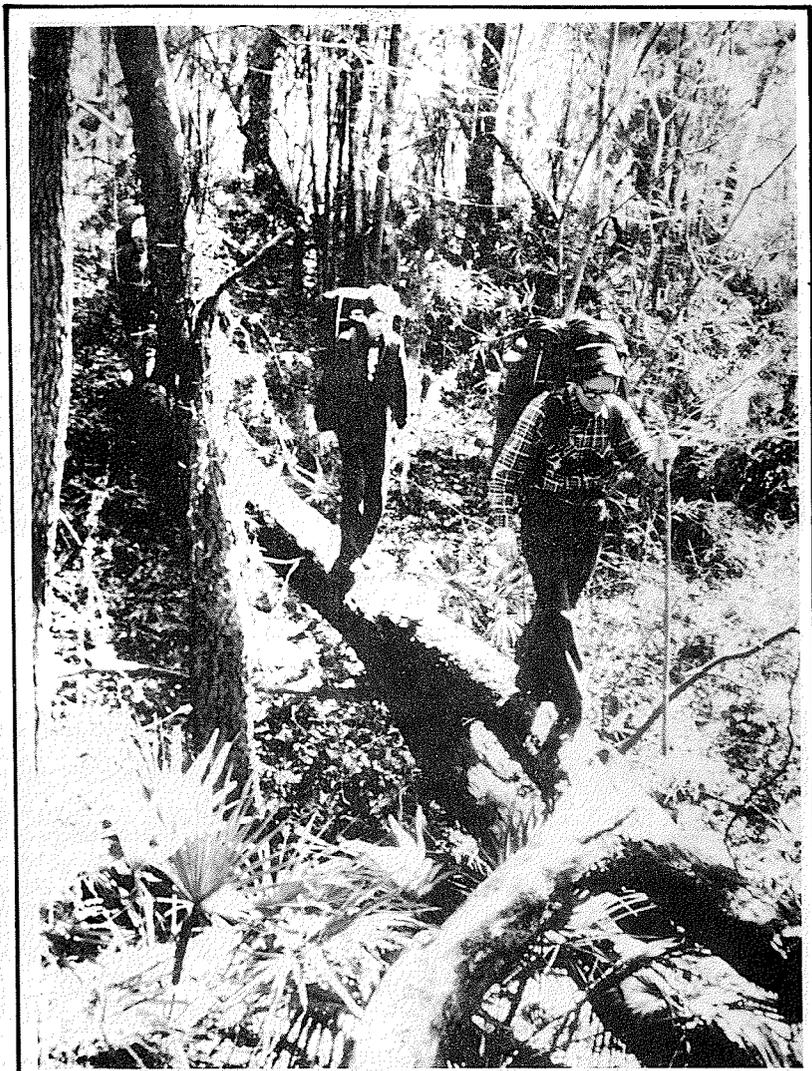


Florida Trail Association members preparing for a work hike.



Small stream crossings are easily made over simple footbridges. Large stream crossings pose special problems. The Appalachianicola River, for example, has no safe pedestrian access.





Natural values for those who go slow and look hard, abound along the Florida Trail.

Chapter 5

Trail Resources, Public Trail Use and Trail Needs in Florida

Trail Resources

The Florida Division of Recreation and Parks' 1978 State outdoor recreation resources inventory provides the best available information on the trails in Florida. Although it appears that not all trail resources were reported to the Division, there seem to be limited trail-related recreational opportunities available to Floridians and visitors to the State. Table 4 summarizes State data for hiking, horse-back riding, nature study, bicycling and canoeing trails.

Public Trail Use

The 1976 State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) provides the best available statistical information on public trail use in Florida. The Division of Recreation and Parks developed this information through surveys of Florida residents and tourists in 1975. Table 5 shows the 1975 regional per-capita participation rates,¹/the 1975 demand and projected 1980 demand for trail use.

Table 6 shows comparative participation rates between Florida and the nation for selected recreation activities. It is interesting to note that hiking, bicycling and canoeing are reportedly more popular in Florida than in the United States as a whole. Hiking is reportedly more than twice as popular among Florida tourists than among Americans nationwide.

Public Use of the Florida Trail

It is difficult to accurately determine the extent of public use of specific trails, particularly the far-flung Florida Trail. Our best estimate, based upon information provided by the Florida Trail Association and Federal and State agencies currently managing some sections of the Florida Trail, is that 10,000 different individuals use the Florida Trail each year, and that there are 25,000 to 50,000 visitor-days of use annually. Chapter seven provides more information on these estimates.

¹/Regional per-capita participation rates represent the average of how often all residents or tourists from the entire State participate in a particular activity in each State planning region. It is not how often the resident or tourists of a particular region participate in their "home" region.

The U.S. Department of the Interior conducted a national household survey of recreation participation in 1977. Table 7 shows the 20 most popular outdoor recreation activities in the Southeastern United States, in terms of percentage of the population participating in those activities. Recreation activities that strongly relate to the Florida Trail--walking, walking to observe nature, and hiking--were reportedly very popular, with 68%, 43% and 23% of the population participating in those activities respectively.

Trail Needs

It is difficult to quantify human needs for trails in any precise way. However, statistical measures do exist. Outdoor Recreation in Florida, 1976, provides the best available quantitative estimates for trail needs in the State. Table 8 shows that significant additions to Florida's recreational trails network are needed, according to State estimates, and that these needs are projected to increase.

Another measure of need is the existence of State legislation intended to provide trails for its citizens. The 1979 Florida Legislature passed, and Governor Graham signed into law, a new State public policy to promote trail development, use and enjoyment. This law, the Florida Recreational Trails System Act of 1979, envisions a system of hiking, bicycling, nature study, horseback riding and canoe trails throughout Florida. The enactment of this public policy, we believe, also is a valid indicator of trail needs in Florida.

The public meetings and workshops hosted by the National Park Service and related correspondence also provided insight into trail needs, particularly for walking and hiking, nature study and backpacking. The fact that hundreds of trail enthusiasts participated in this public involvement process, is a further indicator of the public interest in and need for trails.

Finally, the well documented efforts of the Florida Trail Association speak clearly to the need for trails.

In summary, we believe that human needs for trails of all types in Florida do exist, and that the proposed Florida National Scenic Trail will help to satisfy many of these needs now and in the future.

TABLE 4

Trail Resources in Florida, 1978

TRAIL TYPE	MILES
Hiking	152
Bicycling	989
Horseback Riding	99
Nature Study	164
Waterway (canoe)	1,873
Total, All Trail Types	3,277

Source: Florida Division of Recreation and Parks

TABLE 5

Florida Statewide Per Capita ParticipationRates and Estimated Demand for Trail-Related Recreational Activities

Trail-Related Recreational Activity	1975 Per Capita Participation Rates	1975 Estimated Total Demand (Thousands of User-Occasions)	1980 Estimated Total Demand (Thousands of User-Occasions)
Hiking	2.38	23,332	26,209
Nature Study	4.50	38,724	43,770
Canoeing	0.60	5,813	6,541
Bicycle Riding	33.17	281,281	320,053
Horseback Riding	1.71	15,215	17,268

Source: Outdoor Recreation in Florida, 1976

TABLE 6

PERCENTAGE OF POPULATION PARTICIPATING
IN SELECTED RECREATION ACTIVITIES
FLORIDA VS. NATIONWIDE FIGURES*

ACTIVITY	Nationwide Figures (Percent)	Florida Residents (Percent)	Florida Tourists (Percent)
Picnicking	47	35	14
Fishing	24	23**	13**
Camping	11	6***	8***
Bicycling	10	31	6
Horseback Riding	5	5	2
Hiking	3	5	7
Water Skiing	5	8	4
Trail Bike Riding	5	4	2
Canoeing	3	4	2
Sailing	3	3**	3**
Hunting	3	7	1

* Source: Outdoor Recreation--A Legacy for America, page 23 and
Outdoor Recreation in Florida, 1976.

** Average of the Activities for both Freshwater and Saltwater.

*** Average of R.V./Trailer Camping and Tent Camping.

TABLE 7

The Twenty Most Popular Outdoor
Recreation Activities in the Southeast

Popularity Rank	Percent Participating	Recreation Activity Surveyed
1.	69%	driving for pleasure
* 2.	68%	walking or jogging
3.	68%	picnicking
4.	64%	visiting zoos, carnivals, amusement parks
5.	62%	attending outdoor sporting events
6.	59%	playing outdoor games
7.	58%	sightseeing
8.	57%	swimming
9.	52%	fishing
10.	48%	bicycling
* 11.	43%	walking to observe nature
12.	38%	attending outdoor concerts, dances, plays
13.	34%	boating
14.	29%	playing tennis
15.	27%	camping in developed area
16.	25%	driving vehicles or motorcycles off road
* 17.	23%	hiking
18.	23%	hunting
19.	17%	canoeing
20.	17%	waterskiing

Note: The survey sample was not large enough to produce reliable data for Florida alone.

* Principal recreation activities that are or might be enjoyed on the Florida Trail

Source: U.S. Department of the Interior national household telephone survey, 1977.

Table 8

Estimated Trail Needs for Florida, 1980 and 1990^{1/}

Recreation Activity	1980 Estimated Trail Needs in Miles	1990 Estimated Trail Needs in Miles
Hiking	370	481
Nature Study	429	542
Bicycle Riding	868	1053
Horseback Riding	556	729
Canoeing	"What is needed is a designated system of canoe trails supported by an information program to supply canoeists with details of where access and take-out points are located, as well as camping and other points of interest" ^{2/}	

^{1/} Source: Outdoor Recreation in Florida, 1976.

^{2/} Ibid, p. 109.

Chapter 6

The Public Planning Process for the Florida Trail Study

It is the policy of the Department of the Interior "to offer the public meaningful opportunities for participation in decision making processes leading to actions and policies which may significantly affect or interest them."^{1/} The National Park Service policy on public participation in park planning declares that the Service will take positive actions to involve the public as individuals and through public interest groups and organizations at the earliest possible stage in the planning process before planning decisions have been made."^{2/}

This chapter describes the Florida Trail study public planning process by which NPS collected and analyzed the facts, opinions and suggestions provided by individuals and by representatives of public and private organizations. This public involvement has significantly improved the quality of advice pertaining to wise national public policy for the Florida Trail.

The Public Meetings

On November 7, 1978, the National Park Service issued a news release formally announcing the beginning of the Florida Trail study and invited public participation in the study process. Letters to several hundred public agency and private organization representatives inviting their participation also were sent. A study participant mailing list of interested people and organizations was organized. As NPS planners became aware of other interested or affected people during the study process, their names were added to the mailing list.

Formal public involvement began with a series of NPS-hosted public information evening meetings held in 14 Florida cities^{3/} during November and December 1978. The eleven Florida Regional Planning Councils, the Florida Division of State Planning and the Florida Division of Recreation and Parks helped organize the meetings.

1/ U.S. Department of the Interior, Departmental Manual, Part 301.

2/ U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Management Policies, 1978.

3/ NPS held public meetings in Pensacola, Marianna, Tallahassee, Gainesville, St. Petersburg, Ft. Myers, Ft. Lauderdale, Palm Beach Gardens, Bartow (afternoon meeting), Winter Haven, Orlando, Silver Springs and Jacksonville, Florida. At the request of Suwannee River area landowners NPS held a 15th public meeting at White Springs, Florida, on January 30, 1979. The public meeting in White Springs was well attended by Suwannee River area residents and corporate landowners and their representatives.

These meetings provided NPS with opportunities to inform people about the study process and to identify individuals and organizations potentially affected by or interested in the study. More importantly, the meetings provided people with opportunities to express their opinions and concerns about the study and about the Florida Trail, and to provide suggestions and information to NPS planners at the outset of a year-long planning process.

The public meetings were extremely valuable. About 400 people participated. Landowners, trail users (principally members of the Florida Trail Association), interested citizens and State and Federal government land managing agency representatives provided information which enabled NPS to identify many of the important issues the study would need to consider.

NPS reported back a summary of these issues to study participants, using an informal newsletter-style publication, "Feedback - The Florida Trail Study" to keep people informed and involved throughout the study.

The Public Planning Workshops

The next milestone in the study public planning process was a series of NPS-hosted public planning workshops. NPS held seven workshops in cooperation with the Florida Division of Recreation and Parks, the Florida Division of Forestry, the Stephen Foster Folk Culture Center and the Big Cypress National Preserve on Saturday mornings during March 31 - May 19, 1979, at park or forest locations near the Florida Trail. About 100 landowners and trail users participated in these workshops. Others mailed comments and suggestions.

At each workshop, NPS asked small groups of people to express their opinions about the national significance, feasibility and desirability of the proposed national scenic trail. In addition, we asked for public viewpoints on planning alternatives for trail routing, trail protection (including protection of private land) trail management and potential environmental impacts.

Informal Out-of-State Resident Reaction

In order to better assess the potential out-of-state visitor use that might occur if the Florida Trail were designated as a national scenic trail, NPS held three very informal evening meetings in April and June in Atlanta outdoor recreation equipment shops. The reaction of participating Atlanta area residents (who presumably were hiking and backpacking enthusiasts) was consistently very positive toward using the Florida Trail in connection with Florida vacation or weekend trips.

Public Review of Preliminary Alternatives

Following the workshops, NPS printed and distributed a "Feedback" report containing tentative NPS planning alternatives for public response in July 1979. At this point in the study, the "Feedback" mailing list contained the names and addresses of 3000 people.

We included a self-addressed, franked, tear-out, mail-back response sheet to encourage public response. We also issued a press release announcing the alternatives. Although we received less than 100 responses, many of those people and organizations potentially most directly affected by the planning alternatives provided perceptive comments which were most helpful in preparing recommendations for the draft report.

The Draft Report

Following analysis of public response to the tentative alternatives, we prepared our planning recommendations and drafted a report for formal public review. We distributed this report in (February 1980). We also issued a "Feedback" summary of the report to the study mailing list. Following analysis of the comments received, we prepared the final Secretarial Report.

Table 9 summarizes the NPS planning process for the Florida Trail study.

TABLE 9

The Public Planning Process for the Florida Trail Study

<u>Date</u>	<u>Action</u>
Nov. 1978	Letters to public agencies and private organizations expected to have an interest in or be affected by the study; press release announcing study.
Nov. 1978	Letters and press release announcing schedule of public meetings.
Nov. - Dec. 1978	Public meetings in 14 Florida cities to tell people about the study and to ask people about issues, concerns, suggestions.
Jan. 1979	"Feedback" report providing a summary of public meetings and announcing White Springs public meeting.
Jan. 1979	Public meeting in White Springs, in response to Suwannee River Area landowners.
March 1979	"Feedback" report and press release announcing schedule of public planning workshops.
March - May 1979	Public planning workshops in 7 Florida parks or forest locations to obtain public suggestions/ advice on national significance, feasibility and desirability of the proposed Florida National Scenic Trail and on planning alternatives for trail routing, management, protection, and protection of private land.
April, June 1979	Three informal presentations on the Florida Trail at Atlanta backpacking shops.
July 1979	"Feedback" report and press release announcing a summary of the workshop and tentative NPS planning alternatives.
Aug. - Sept. 1979	Analyzed public mail-back reaction to tentative alternatives.

Feb. 1980

Issued Draft report containing tentative recommendations; "Feedback" report and press release announcing summary of recommendations.

Feb. - March 1980

Analyzed public comments on draft report recommendations

May 1980

Submitted final report to the Secretary of the Interior.

Chapter 7

Principal Findings

The study process described in Chapter 6 discovered some key facts and important public sentiments which shaped the national public policy recommendations for the proposed Florida National Scenic Trail. Here is what we learned.

National Significance, feasibility and desirability

The proposed Florida National Scenic Trail meets all six federal criteria for national scenic trail designation. However, a continuous 1300 - mile national scenic trail is not feasible at this time.

1. National Significance -- the proposed Florida National Scenic Trail incorporates many scenic, natural and cultural characteristics which are of superior quality and capable of attracting people from throughout North America.
2. Trail Use -- the proposed Florida National Scenic Trail is recommended primarily as a hiking trail. On certain lands which have been altered by cultural development, such as canal levees and railroad grades converted to recreational use, horseback riding and bicycling may also be compatible trail uses.
3. Route Selection -- the route of the proposed Florida National Scenic Trail takes advantage of fifteen publicly owned areas managed by federal and State agencies.* The route generally avoids established highways, mined areas, power transmission corridors, and commercial and industrial developments.

The proposed Florida National Scenic Trail has no major historic significance. The trail is land based.

4. Accessibility -- Access to the proposed Florida National Scenic Trail exists or is potentially available at reasonable intervals. The trail is within a very reasonable travel - time - distance range of most residents and visitors to the State. In some areas, public transportation can provide access to the trail.
5. Continuity -- the proposed Florida National Scenic Trail is continuous to the extent possible at this time. Several of the trail segments are, or could be, in excess of 60 miles, providing for extended public use and enjoyment. The goal of

*Includes Eglin Air Force Base and Avon Park Air Force Range provided suitable arrangements can be made with the Department of Defense

a continuous 1300 ± mile trail throughout the length of Florida is valid. It is expected that this goal has a reasonable chance of success as landowners, land users, including the Florida Trail Association, and government work cooperatively toward that end.

6. Length -- proposed Florida National Scenic Trail is approximately 350 ± miles in length, and has longterm potential for 1300 ± miles.

The Florida Trail Association

The Florida Trail has evolved over the past 15 years, largely through the labor and expense of the hikers and backpackers of the Florida Trail Association. The trail is designed and used for walking, nature study, hiking, backpacking and complementary activities, interests and experiences like primitive camping and photography.

The 5000 - member Florida Trail Association is the most effective trail building organization in Florida, and is undoubtedly one of the most effective in the United States. The Association has expressed its support for a Florida National Scenic Trail as proposed in this report. The Association desires to maintain its vital role in trail development and maintenance, to the extent of its resources, and to be a full partner with the government in trail management and in formulating policies which will affect the proposed Florida National Scenic Trail.

Trail Design

The proposed Florida National Scenic Trail should be designed, maintained and used as a primitive path for walking and hiking except in situations involving public rights-of-way canals, levees, railroad grades and the like. In localized areas where there may be citizen support and volunteer resources, loop trails for horseback riding which cross the Florida Trail at designated points may be appropriate. However, in the event of appropriation of federal funds for Florida Trail right-of-way land or easement acquisition, there should be consideration for obtaining a recreation use corridor that is adequate to provide for more than one trail use in order to increase total public benefit from expenditure of public funds.

Access to handicapped people is a related consideration. We believe many handicapped people would enjoy the Florida Trail. The most reasonable way to achieve this objective is trail development to higher physical accessibility standards at carefully selected, short-length trail segments and major access points on public lands and/or to provide volunteer services to assist handicapped people. To attempt to boardwalk or pave the Florida Trail or significant parts of the trail, is unwarranted. We think most handicapped people would agree with this general guideline.

Trail Routing

A continuous Florida National Scenic Trail, from Everglades National Park to Conecuh National Forest is not feasible at this time. There is potential for great flexibility in the routing of possible future

segments of the proposed Florida National Scenic Trail. For this reason, we have not attempted to narrowly define a continuous 1300 - mile conceptual trail corridor. Chapter 8 contains those routing alternatives which the study identified. However, landforms and landowner attitudes require considerable and continuing analysis to identify feasible connecting rights-of-way. We believe that the proposed Advisory Council may productively address itself to this work. Moreover, we believe that identifying feasible connecting rights-of-way is such an extraordinarily complex matter that immediate detailed planning would be a fruitless exercise, notwithstanding the provisions for such comprehensive planning in the National Trails System Act (Section 5e).

Tort Liability

Landowners expressed numerous concerns about tort liability. The State of Florida, like most States, has a limited liability law (375.251 Florida Statutes: Limitation on liability of persons making available to public certain areas for recreational purposes without charge). However, this law has not been sufficiently tested in the courts to provide landowners with confidence in an era of frequent lawsuits and large damage awards. Liability is a concern of public land managers also. The Southwest Florida Water Management District, a quasi-State agency, has landholdings potentially well-suited for Florida Trail development. However, the District repeatedly has withheld cooperation with the Florida Trail Association on District lands because of the District's concern about tort liability that might occur with public use of trails developed and maintained by the Florida Trail Association. The District has requested the Florida Trail Association to assume full financial liability for public use of Florida Trail segments as a precondition to District approval for any Florida Trail development on District lands. Clarifying State law perhaps could help to remove this perceived impediment to Florida Trail development and public use on State and private lands.

Concerns of Landowners

Although landowners generally have enjoyed good rapport with the Florida Trail Association, they consistently have expressed opposition to a Federally-designated national scenic trail on private lands. Key landowner concerns include possible government acquisition of land or land-use easements through condemnation, tort liability, reduced property values, illegal hunting and poaching, litter, fire, vandalism, law enforcement difficulty in rural areas, disruption to agricultural operations and other property rights infringements that might occur

with general public use. In some cases, private landowners have cancelled land-use agreements with the Florida Trail Association because of the perceived possibility of national scenic trail designation on private lands.

We believe that these concerns merit the serious attention of public and private organizations which support the proposed Florida National Scenic Trail, and most importantly, the attention of each individual who uses the proposed Florida National Scenic Trail. Landowner support, so essential to the Florida Trail, cannot be commanded by government fiat. Landowner support must be earned through considerate, neighborly behavior of government and the trail using public. The proposed Advisory Council has the potential to foster cooperation among landowners and trail users and managers. However, the informal day-to-day relationships among landowners and trail users and trail managers will probably determine whether the long-run goals for the proposed Florida National Scenic Trail will be achieved.

Land User Conflicts

A principal trail user conflict issue concerns Florida Trail hikers and hunters, most particularly during the deer hunting season on State and federal lands open to hunting. This conflict is especially strong in Big Cypress National Preserve, where Congress has authorized continuation of long standing swamp buggy and air boat use by hunters and by landowners whose property is exempt from federal purchase. We believe that these conflicts can be resolved. However, a formal representative process to obtain fair judgments in resolving land user conflicts consistent with law and administrative policy is an essential prerequisite to positive solutions to these problems. We think the Advisory Council outlined in Chapter 9 can be an effective body to deal with such conflicts.

Government Power of Eminent Domain

We do not believe that Federal eminent domain (condemnation) is a constructive way to protect or extend the proposed Florida National Scenic Trail on private land outside the legal boundaries of existing federal areas. Corporate and individual landowners throughout Florida have consistently and forcefully expressed deeply felt opposition to the exercise of such government power. Trail users, too, generally have expressed a similar view and have stressed incentives as a means of securing landowner cooperation with the Florida Trail.

It is almost certain that the goal of continuity for the proposed Florida National Scenic Trail may be more difficult to achieve without such power. However, we are persuaded that the essential landowner support can be won as landowners begin to see the proposed Florida National Scenic Trail as an asset which has relevance to their needs.

Federal Support

The federal government has supported development of the Florida Trail by cooperating with the Florida Trail Association. About 100 miles of the proposed Florida National Scenic Trail have been built and are in public use on lands managed by the U.S. Forest Service in Ocala and Osceola National Forests. The Forest Service is developing about 60 miles of trail in Apalachicola National Forest. There is potential for extending the proposed Florida National Scenic Trail into Conecuh National Forest in Escambia County, Alabama.

On National Park Service lands in Florida, the Florida Trail Association has blazed and cleared about 30 miles of trail in Big Cypress National Preserve. There is potential for an additional 30 miles of trail in the southern area of the Preserve and in the northeastern part of Everglades National Park.

Avon Park Air Force Range also has cooperated with the Florida Trail Association and has permitted trail development. Avon Park officials, however, are concerned about tort liability if the trail were given national scenic trail designation and opened to general public use. A liability waiver may be a necessary condition for public access.

Eglin Air Force Base has an excellent record of making many areas of the facility available for public outdoor recreation. There is potential for about 25 miles of the proposed Florida National Scenic Trail generally along the eastern and northern perimeters of the base. Unfortunately, Eglin officials do not agree that the proposed Florida National Scenic Trail is compatible with the national defense activities on the base.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service manages a number of federal wildlife refuges in Florida. The Loxahatchee, Saint Marks, Lake Woodruff and Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuges, in particular, may have potential for future segments of the proposed Florida National Scenic Trail.

State and Local Government Support

The State of Florida has provided important support for the Florida Trail. State lands figure prominently in the proposed Florida National Scenic Trail. The Florida Trail Association has developed about 40 miles of trail on Blackwater River and Withlacoochee River State Forests, administered by the Division of Forestry. The Division of Forestry has requested assurances that national scenic trail designation on its lands will not impact its forest management programs. The Division of

Recreation and Parks also has cooperated with the Florida Trail Association, which has developed about 30 miles of trail on Suwannee River State Park, Torreya State Park, Prairie-Lakes State Preserve and Mike Roess Gold Head Branch State Park. The Division of Recreation and Parks and the Florida Trail Association are in the process of trail development on Tosohatchee State Preserve. The Florida Trail Association also has built several miles of trail on lands administered by the Florida Game and Fresh Water Commission and the Stephen Foster Folk Culture Center.

Private Support

The private sector has provided important support for the Florida Trail. However, as noted in other parts of the report, most private landowners do not support national scenic trail designation for segments of the Florida Trail which are located on private lands. As noted earlier, landowners expressed concerns about poaching, tort liability, fence damage, range and forest fires, litter, livestock loses and law enforcement difficulty in rural areas.

Nevertheless, we found a willingness among many private landowners, both individuals and corporations, to continue the cooperation which they have extended to the Florida Trail Association through informal land use agreements.

Environmental Impacts

Generally, environmental impacts can be expected to be negligible. At certain major trail access points and camping areas thoughtful planning, development and management may be needed. We make this conclusion based upon both reported and observed experiences of Federal and State land managing agencies and the Florida Trail Association with the Florida Trail. Generally, these organizations expect about 20% more annual public use of the proposed Florida National Scenic Trail with national scenic trail designation.

If, however, public trail use does increase in certain areas beyond the capability of the natural resource to sustain that level of use, there are many management options available to reduce environmental impacts to acceptable levels. The key point is that there are competent public and private trail management resources available to anticipate environmental impacts and to correct those problems which may arise. The Appendix contains an environmental assessment.

Suggested policies and procedures directed to this subject are contained in Chapter 11.

Costs

The striking finding here is that the Florida Trail Association volunteers can build and maintain the Florida Trail at much less dollar cost than government agencies. Table 10 illustrates this point. The quality of the trail work by Association workers is excellent. The Association has requested that, should there be a national scenic trail designation for the Florida Trail as proposed in the report, they continue this important role of trail development and maintenance on those trail segments.

There are some things which government agencies can do to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of this citizen volunteer trail effort. Table 11 presents ideas provided by the Florida Trail Association and by government agencies presently involved with the Florida Trail.

The Proposed Florida National Scenic Trail and the Future

Most trail users feel that a Florida National Scenic Trail is desirable, citing limited trail resources in Florida and rapid urbanization and land-use changes. While Federal designation is believed to increase long-term protection and public use for the Florida Trail, trail users want a major role in trail development and management. Some trail users believe that walking for pleasure, nature walks, day hikes, backpacking on accessible trails and in remote areas are the kinds of low fossil fuel energy forms of recreation that will be increasingly appropriate to our society.

TABLE 10

ESTIMATES OF DEVELOPMENT AND MAINTENANCE COSTS FOR THE FLORIDA TRAIL^{1/}

Reporting organization	Estimated Current Total Annual Development Costs	Estimated Current Total Annual Maintenance Costs	Estimated Average Cost Per Mile of New Trail Development	Estimated Average Cost Per Mile of Trail Maintenance	Estimated Current Annual Hours of Volunteer Trail Work by the Florida Trail Association and Estimated Current Public Agency Employment Related to the Florida Trail
Florida Trail Association	\$550	\$1,150- ^{2/}	\$10 / 50 hours	\$2.50 / 9 hours	development - 2500 hours maintenance - 4500 hours (equivalent to about 3 1/2 person-years total)
Florida Division of Forestry	\$8,500 (one year only, not recurring)	\$4,000	\$400	\$100	2 person-years
Florida Division of Recreation and Parks	\$0	\$500	\$1,000	\$10	0
U.S. Forest Service	\$15,000 ^{3/}	\$30,000 ^{3/}	\$5,000	\$500	3 person-years
National Park Service	\$0	\$0	no data available	no data available	0

^{1/} This information represents the best judgments of the organizations reporting to the NPS survey; the reliability and accuracy of the data are unknown. Cost estimates do not include extensive boardwalking or bridging situations.

^{2/} The Florida Trail Association also reported: "We do not have any good data to estimate total out-of-pocket expenses by F.T.A. Section Leaders, Trail Masters and trail workers during a typical season but we feel reasonably certain that the total of such volunteer expenses would exceed the total F.T.A. Trail budget by at least a factor of ten. These expenses consist primarily of gasoline and other car expenses and the purchase of personal hand tools (loopers, mowers, saws, post-hole diggers, etc.) which are not furnished by the Association."

^{3/} Majority of these costs probably are salaries and wages of enrollees in U.S. Department of Labor - funded Youth Conservation Corps and Young Adult Conservation Corp programs operated by Forest Service.

Source: NPS Survey, 1979

TABLE 11

Suggestions for Government Action to Encourage More Citizen Volunteer Effort, or to Increase Productivity of Volunteers Working on the Florida Trail

Reporting Organization	Suggestions
Florida Trail Association	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Furnish powered equipment for volunteer use, such as mowers and brush cutters. b. Furnish equipment and supplies for sign fabrication by volunteers. c. Provide powered equipment and supplies for construction of long-span foot bridges. d. Furnish group transportation (e.g. bus) for trail workers from central staging point to trail area to save fuel.
Florida Division of Forestry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Encourage existing trail clubs to participate in trail maintenance. b. Utilize available inmate labor for trail maintenance. c. Contract private landowners to maintain camping zones, e.g. mowing grass, litter removal, clean up etc. d. Solicit outdoor groups such as Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts to conduct clean up on trails. <p>The Division of Forestry also suggested:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Plan to make trail as primitive as possible to keep cost at minimum and maintain a natural setting. b. Keep federal restrictions to absolute minimum to prevent over-development.
National Park Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Coordinate NPS - operated Youth Conservation Corp and Young Adult Conservation Corp resources with the Florida Trail needs in Big Cypress National Preserve. b. Provide equipment and hand tools to volunteers for trail work. c. Assist in Florida Trail routing.

Chapter 8

Alternatives for the proposed Florida National Scenic Trail

Following the public meetings and workshops, we prepared a set of tentative planning alternatives for public review through a mail-out "Feedback" report, with a mail-back, tear-out page.

Here are the planning alternatives which were considered.

Alternative One

Proposed Federal legislation to designate some parts of the following Federal lands in Florida as Florida National Scenic Trail components.

- | | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| (National Park Service lands): | Big Cypress National Preserve
Everglades National Park |
| (Forest Service lands): | Ocala, Osceola, Apalachicola
National Forests; also Conecuh
National Forest, Alabama |
| (U.S. Air Force lands): | Eglin Air Force Base, perimeter
areas; Avon Park Air Force Range |

The overall coordination of Federal administrative responsibilities could be carried out by a single Federal agency, or could be shared by more than one agency. Actual trail management responsibility could remain with each Federal land managing agency having a Congressionally designated segment of the Florida National Scenic Trail.

Coordination and cooperation with citizen interests could be achieved through a Congressionally or administratively established advisory board with provisions for adequate representation of the various interests.

The expected result would include:

--immediate long-term protection and increased public use of existing segments of the Florida Trail on Federal lands.

--supportive Federal land management policies for further Florida Trail development, protection and public use.

--low public cost, assuming a major role for Florida Trail Association and other citizen groups to develop new trail segments and to perform most trail maintenance.

--a highly segmented national scenic trail of very roughly 250 or more miles (perhaps 500 miles or more with development of loop trail networks off the main trail segments), which would provide public access to examples of some of Florida's natural diversity.

Alternative Two

Propose Federal legislation to designate some or all of the existing Federal lands in Florida listed in alternative one as Florida National Scenic Trail components, plus appropriate State lands of the Florida Department of Natural Resources, Division of Forestry, Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission, Florida National Guard (Camp Blanding), St. Johns, Southwest Florida, South Florida, Northwest Florida and Suwannee River Water Management Districts, Cross Florida Barge Canal right-of-way (if de-authorized), and where appropriate, local government lands.

The overall coordination of administrative responsibilities could be shared between the Federal Government and the State of Florida or could be placed entirely with the Federal Government, with land-use agreements to be arranged with each affected State or local agency. Actual trail management responsibility would remain with each land managing agency.

Coordination and cooperation with State and local government and with citizen interests could be achieved through a Congressionally or administratively established advisory board, with provision for adequate representation of the various interests.

The expected results would include:

--Immediate long-term protection and increased public use at existing segments of the Florida Trail on appropriate public lands of the Federal, State, and local governments.

--supportive Federal, and perhaps supportive State and local government policies for further Florida Trail development, protection and public use.

--low public cost, assuming a major role for Florida Trail Association and other citizen groups to develop new trail segments and to perform most trail maintenance.

--a segmented national scenic trail of very roughly 400 or more miles (perhaps 800 miles or more with development of loop trail networks off the main trail segments), which would provide public access to examples of most of Florida's natural diversity.

Alternative Three

Proposed Federal legislation to designate some or all of the existing Federal lands in Florida listed in alternative one, plus appropriate State lands of those State agencies listed in alternative two, and where appropriate, local government lands. In addition, designate a generalized,

continuous trail corridor on those privately owned lands interspersed between public lands, and authorize the Federal Government to:
(1) purchase a trail right-of-way from private landowners on a willing seller basis; (2) accept donations of land or easements for Florida Trail purposes; (3) exchange existing Federal land for private land for Florida Trail purposes; (4) negotiate land-use agreements with private landowners for Florida Trail purposes.

Administration and coordination arrangements among Federal and State Governments and citizens are as in alternative two.

The expected results would include:

--immediate long-term protection and increased public use of existing segments of the Florida Trail on Federal, State and perhaps local government lands, and, to the extent Federal funds are available to buy land or easements from private landowners on a willing seller basis, long-term protection could be extended ultimately to a State-length trail. Experience with the Appalachian Trail National Scenic Trail suggests that land use agreements with private landowners do not provide the assurance of long-term protection and that donations of easements and land and land exchange arrangements are rare.

--supportive Federal, and perhaps supportive State and local government land management policies for the Florida Trail.

--potentially large public cost, assuming both the authorization and the appropriations of Federal funds to acquire about 800 miles of Florida Trail right-of-way. Assuming that an average of 25 acres per mile of trail would be acquired at an average cost of \$1,500 per acre, total costs could exceed \$30 million, plus additional administrative costs for land appraisals, surveys, negotiations, etc. Acquisition of easements would be somewhat less costly.

--eventually, perhaps requiring decades, a potentially continuous national scenic trail of roughly 1,300 miles, again assuming adequate Federal funding.

Alternative Four

Propose Federal legislation as in alternative one (designate the trail on Federal lands only), and establish an administrative procedure whereby State and local government agencies can request national scenic trail designation at some time(s) in the future by the Federal Government for those segments of the Florida Trail on State and local government land which meet Federal criteria for national scenic trails.

Administration and coordination arrangement among Federal and State governments and citizens are as in alternative two.

The expected results would include:

--long term protection and increased public use of existing segments of the Florida Trail on Federal lands, with perhaps some gradual extension of this protection to State and local government lands.

--low public cost, assuming a major role for Florida Trail Association and other citizen groups to develop new trail segments and to perform most trail maintenance.

--initially a highly segmented national scenic trail of roughly 250 or more miles (perhaps 500 miles or more with development of loop trail networks off the main trail segments); with State and local support and initiative and with Federal cooperation, additional national scenic trail segments on State and local government lands might be added gradually.

Alternative Five

Propose Federal legislation as in alternative one. Under existing Federal programs, encourage State and local government agencies, private landowners and the Florida Trail Association to support the Florida Trail through such means as:

1. Utilizing the Land and Water Conservation Fund and other appropriate, existing Federal funding programs for land acquisition for Florida Trail purposes.
2. Coordinating with those Federal and State agencies concerned with existing and proposed railroad right-of-way abandonments with high recreation potential (U.S. Interstate Commerce Commission, U.S. and State Department of Transportation, and the Florida Division of Recreation and Parks).
3. Requesting national recreation trail^{1/} designation from the Secretary of the Interior for segments of the Florida Trail that meet Department

^{1/} The Federal Government criteria for national recreation trail designation are generally, that the trail is ready for public use, is close to urban areas, is continuous in length, is designed and constructed to standards appropriate to public use expected and is managed according to an approved management plan for at least 10 consecutive years. National recreation trail designation authority is delegated to the Secretary of Agriculture (Forest Service lands) and to the Secretary of the Interior (all other public and private lands). No Federal funds are provided through this program.

of the Interior criteria for public use and access, management and protection. This same program of recognition also is available to private landowners. For example, Hudson Pulp and Paper Corporation (now a Division of Georgia Pacific, Inc.) requested and received U.S. Department of the Interior designation for a loop trail off the Florida Trail in Rice Creek Sanctuary near Palatka.

4. Continuing the cooperation between landowners and the Florida Trail Association.

The expected results would include:

--Those listed under alternative one; however, in-between segments of "national scenic trail" may be other segments of undesignated trail on private land open primarily to those people who are willing and able to pay the annual membership fees (\$7.50 single, \$11.50 family) of the Florida Trail Association, and also segments of undesignated trail and/or segments of national recreational trails on public or private land open to the general public. Trail continuity might be increased; trail protection and public use of uncertain duration may possibly be extended to more of the Florida Trail.

The Public Reaction

Most of the public response to these alternatives endorsed alternative three because it appeared that this action would promote the most intergovernment coordination and land user and landowner cooperation, with a more extensive and interconnected trail system resulting.

Routing Alternatives

We have concluded that there must be great flexibility in the route which the Florida Trail may follow in eventually linking those trail segments initially designated as the Florida National Scenic Trail on selected Federal and State lands. In view of the present attitudes of private landowners and the scarce financial resources of government, a continuous Florida National Scenic Trail is not immediately feasible. We also do not have at hand adequate information to make binding judgments on the optimum route or routes the trail should follow throughout the State. In many cases, route selection will be a matter of where the private landowners' attitudes are most supportive of the trail. Thus, trail continuity is best viewed as a very long range goal which will be reached in small incremental steps over the long run, through the combined efforts of landowners, land users and government. We are, therefore, recommending that routing options be kept open and flexible.

We are including for informational purposes the routing possibilities which the study process identified. This information may be useful to future evaluations of a continuous trail right-of-way.

Map 12 shows the general routing possibilities that the study identified.

All of the lands along the proposed Florida National Scenic Trail are in public ownership as shown in Table 12. And the Florida Trail is already in place and in public use along most of these public lands.

Looking into the future, if the Florida National Scenic Trail is designated as proposed, the cooperation of hundreds of private landowners, the continued efforts of the Florida Trail Association and the appropriate support of all levels of government all will be needed to reach the goal of a continuous Florida National Scenic Trail.

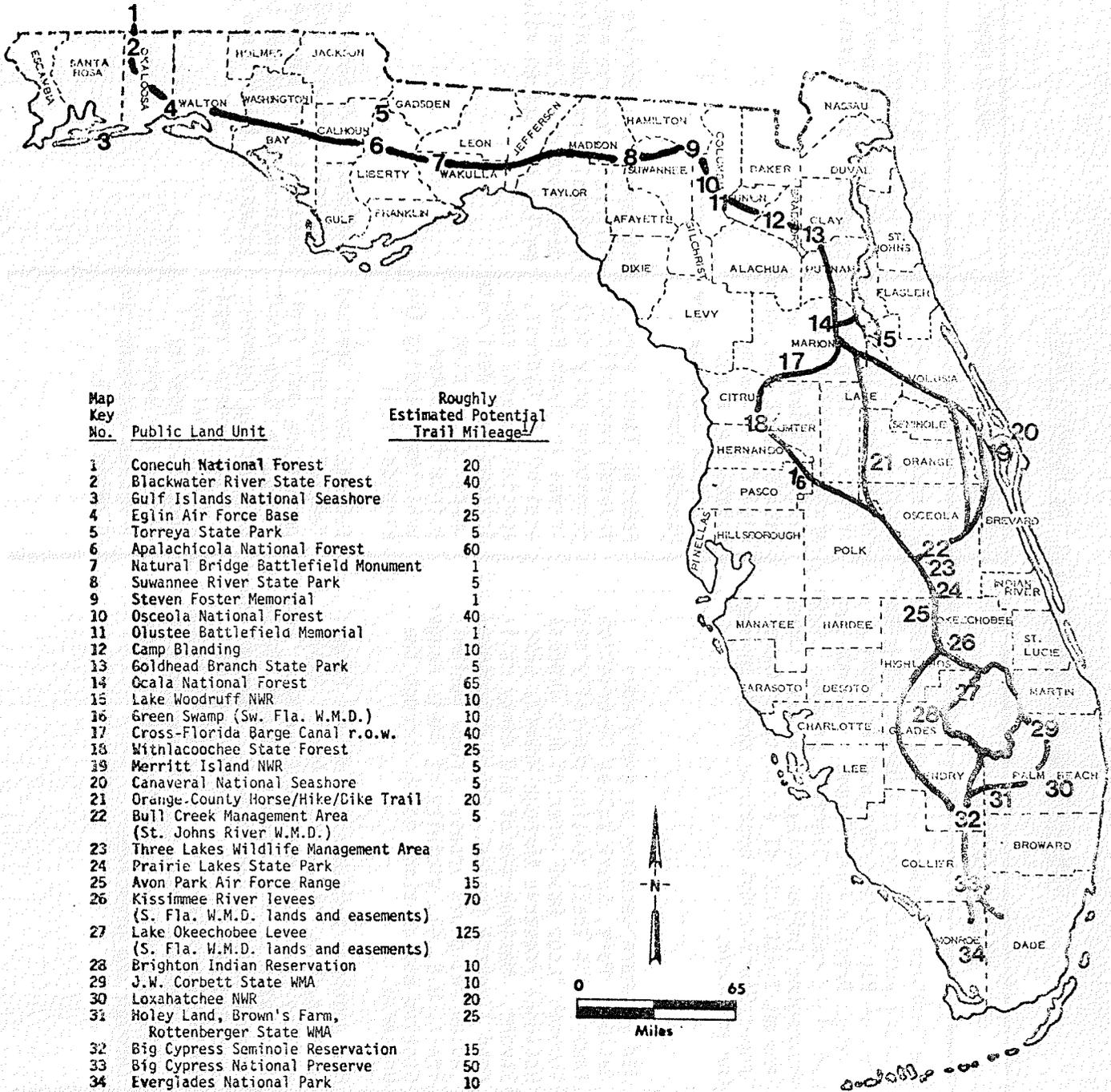
TABLE 12

General Land Ownership Along the Proposed Florida National Scenic Trail

Ownership	Estimated Miles of Trail Route	Percent of Total
Private	0	0%
Federal Government	280	80%
State Government	70	20%
Local Government	0	0%
Total	350 Miles	100%

MAP 12

General Routing Alternatives for the Florida Trail



Map Key No.	Public Land Unit	Roughly Estimated Potential Trail Mileage ^{1/}
1	Conecuh National Forest	20
2	Blackwater River State Forest	40
3	Gulf Islands National Seashore	5
4	Eglin Air Force Base	25
5	Torrey State Park	5
6	Apalachicola National Forest	60
7	Natural Bridge Battlefield Monument	1
8	Suwannee River State Park	5
9	Steven Foster Memorial	1
10	Osceola National Forest	40
11	Otustee Battlefield Memorial	1
12	Camp Blanding	10
13	Goldhead Branch State Park	5
14	Ocala National Forest	65
15	Lake Woodruff NWR	10
16	Green Swamp (Sw. Fla. W.M.D.)	10
17	Cross-Florida Barge Canal r.o.w.	40
18	Withlacoochee State Forest	25
19	Merritt Island NWR	5
20	Canaveral National Seashore	5
21	Orange County Horse/Hike/Dike Trail	20
22	Bull Creek Management Area (St. Johns River W.M.D.)	5
23	Three Lakes Wildlife Management Area	5
24	Prairie Lakes State Park	5
25	Avon Park Air Force Range	15
26	Kissimmee River levees (S. Fla. W.M.D. lands and easements)	70
27	Lake Okeechobee Levee (S. Fla. W.M.D. lands and easements)	125
28	Brighton Indian Reservation	10
29	J.W. Corbett State WMA	10
30	Loxahatchee NWR	20
31	Holey Land, Brown's Farm, Rottenberger State WMA	25
32	Big Cypress Seminole Reservation	15
33	Big Cypress National Preserve	50
34	Everglades National Park	10

^{1/} Mileage could at least double with loop trail networks off main "through" trail.

SOME ROUTING ALTERNATIVES FOR THE FLORIDA TRAIL

COUNTY	ROUTING OPTIONS	PROTECTION OPTIONS	MANAGEMENT OPTIONS
Monroe	<p>New Southern terminus at Pinecrest; trail routing generally north through "Loop Road" area of Big Cypress National Preserve, through Roberts Lake Strand. Maximum use old dinky railroad limerock grades. Avoid Miccosukee Indian religious sites. Cross Tamiami Trail U.S. 41 vicinity of Oasis Ranger Station and continue north through the preserve.</p> <p>New southern terminus at Everglades National Park, Shark Valley Observation Tower, with trail routing generally east through "Loop Road" area of Big Cypress National Preserve through Roberts Lake Strand. Maximum use of old dinky railroad limerock grades. Avoid Miccosukee Indian religious areas. Cross Tamiami Trail, U.S. 41, vicinity of Oasis Ranger Station and continue north through the preserve.</p>	<p>Federal land; special federal regulations permitting only foot travel in "Loop Road" area of Big Cypress; special federal regulations that designate specific crossing points for motor vehicles crossing the Florida Trail.</p> <p>Federal land; special federal regulations permitting only foot travel in "Loop Road" area of Big Cypress; special federal regulations that designate specific crossing points for motor vehicles crossing the Florida Trail</p>	<p>National Park Service, Big Cypress National Preserve administration; trail maintenance and new trail development primarily by citizen volunteers.</p> <p>National Park Service, Big Cypress National Preserve and/or Everglades National Park administration; new trail development and trail maintenance primarily by citizen volunteers.</p>
Dade	<p>New southern terminus at Tamiami Ranger Station, U.S. 41 (40-mile bend); trail routing generally northwest through "Loop Road" area of Big Cypress National Preserve through Roberts Lake Strand. Maximum use of old dinky railroad limerock grades. Avoid Miccosukee Indian religious areas. Cross Tamiami Trail U.S. 41 vicinity of Oasis Ranger Station and continue north through the preserve.</p>	<p>Federal land; special federal regulations permitting only foot travel in "Loop Road" area of Big Cypress; special federal regulations that designate specific crossing points for motor vehicles crossing the Florida Trail.</p>	<p>National Park Service, Big Cypress National Preserve and/or Everglades National Park administration; trail maintenance and new trail development primarily by citizen volunteers.</p>

SOME ROUTING ALTERNATIVES FOR THE FLORIDA TRAIL

COUNTY	ROUTING OPTIONS	PROTECTION OPTIONS	MANAGEMENT OPTIONS
Collier	<p>Maintain present southern terminus at Oasis Ranger Station; trail routing north through Big Cypress National Preserve. Cross Alligator Alley (to become Interstate Highway 75). A safe pedestrian crossing is necessary; parking and trail access is highly desirable.</p> <p>This could be accomplished, with the cooperation and assistance of the Florida Department of Transportation, if one of the proposed interstate highway wildlife crossings could be located near the eastern boundary of the preserve, perhaps Section 31, T49S, R32E. If hiking trail access could be provided from the proposed rest area in Sections 33 and 34, hikers would also have reasonable trailhead access in both north and south directions.</p>	<p>Federal land; consider special federal regulations that designate specific crossing points for motor vehicles crossing the Florida Trail.</p>	<p>National Park Service Big Cypress National Preserve administration; trail maintenance and new trail development primarily by citizen volunteers. Consider additional loop trails; consider use of oil field access roads when oil operations terminate, for hiking/bicycling/horseback riding.</p>
Broward, Pal. Beach, Martin, Okeechobee, Highlands	<p>(east side Okeechobee Alternatives) From Big Cypress Seminole Reservation generally east across the Everglades, through the Holy Land, Brown's Farm, Rottenberger State Wildlife Management Areas, northeast to Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge, north to J.W. Corbett State Wildlife Management area, east along canal right-of-way to Lake Okeechobee levee vicinity of Palm Beach and Martin County line. Continue north to Kissimmee River levee, to Avon Park Air Force Range and State Wildlife Management Area.</p>	<p>Purchase or donation of land or public right-of-way easements or cooperative agreements with landowners, lease holders and a public agency or cooperative owners, leaseholders and hiking organizations.</p>	<p>Broward/Palm Beach Counties or State of Florida or National Park Service or private landowners. South Florida Water Management District administration on District lands or on lands owned by the State Trustees and leased to the District Fish and Wildlife Service administrator on Loxahatchee NWR.</p>

SOME ROUTING ALTERNATIVES FOR THE FLORIDA TRAIL

COUNTY	ROUTING OPTIONS	PROTECTION OPTIONS	MANAGEMENT OPTIONS
<p>Broward, Palm Beach, Martin, Okeechobee, Highlands, (Glades)</p>	<p>From Big Cypress Seminole Reservation, generally east to Miami Canal; north on Miami Canal levee to Lake Okeechobee in vicinity of Lake Harbor continue around either or both east and west sides of Lake Okeechobee on the lake levee, with detours to public road rights-of-way around Fish Eating Creek and other unleveed areas. Consider the lake levee for possible bicycling and horseback riding public use. Continue north along Kissimmee River levee to Avon Park Air Force Range and State Wildlife Management Area.</p> <p>Note 1: In 1968 the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers was authorized to raise the levee height around Lake Okeechobee to increase the water storage capacity of the lake. If Congress appropriates the funds for this project, the Corps also could enhance recreational opportunity, especially for bicycling, with appropriate design and construction of the new levee.</p> <p>Note 2: Avon Park Air Force Range "cannot support the designation of that part of the Florida Trail that passes through the Avon Park Air Force Range as a national scenic trail if access control is reduced."</p>	<p>Purchase or donation of land or public right-of-way easements or cooperative agreements with landowners, leaseholders and a public agency or cooperative agreements with landowners, leaseholders and hiking organizations.</p>	<p>Broward/Palm Beach/Martin/Okeechobee/Highlands/Glades Counties or State of Florida or National Park Service or private landowners. South Florida Water Management District administration on District lands or on lands owned by the State Trustees and leased to the District</p>

SOME ROUTING ALTERNATIVES FOR THE FLORIDA TRAIL

COUNTY	ROUTING OPTIONS	PROTECTION OPTIONS	MANAGEMENT OPTIONS
Hendry	From north boundary of Big Cypress National Preserve east along Hendry-Collier County line to Big Cypress Seminole Reservation.	Purchase or donation of land or public right of way easements or cooperative agreements with landowners and a public agency or cooperative agreements with landowners and hiking organizations.	Hendry County or State of Florida or National Park Service or private landowners. Trail development and maintenance primarily by citizen volunteers. Seminole Tribe administration on reservation lands.
Hendry/Glades	(west side Okeechobee Alternative) From Big Cypress National Preserve north boundary generally north to the west of Lake Okeechobee, crossing Okeechobee waterway at Ortona Lock. Crossing Fisheating Creek on U.S. 27.	Purchase or donation of land or public right of way easements or cooperative agreements with landowners and a public agency or cooperative agreements with landowners and hiking organizations.	Hendry/Glades Counties or State of Florida or National Park Service or private landowners. Trail development and maintenance primarily by citizen volunteers. Seminole Tribe administration on reservation lands.
Glades/ Highlands	Generally north to the Brighton Indian Reservation to the Kissimmee River levees to Avon Park Range.	Purchase or donation of land or public right of way easements or cooperative agreements with landowners and a public agency or cooperative agreements with landowners and hiking organizations.	Glades/Highlands Counties or State of Florida or National Park Service or private landowners. Seminole Tribe administration on reservation lands. South Florida Water Management District administration on District lands or on lands owned by the State Trustees and leased to the District.

SOME ROUTING ALTERNATIVES FOR THE FLORIDA TRAIL

COUNTY	ROUTING OPTIONS	PROTECTION OPTIONS	MANAGEMENT OPTIONS
<p>(Eastern Orlando Loop Alternatives)</p>	<p>Generally north along Kissimmee River on Avon Park Range lands and Kissimmee River levees to Prairie Lake State Park, Three Lakes Wildlife Management Area and Bull Creek lands of the St. Johns River Water Management District. Continue north along St. Johns River to Ocala National Forest, utilizing public lands and easements of the St. Johns River Water Management District to the fullest extent. Alternatively, from Bull Creek, north across higher lands, mostly cattle ranches, west of the St. Johns River to Ocala National Forest.</p>	<p>By public agencies where public lands are involved; by purchase or donation or land or public right-of-way easements or cooperative agreements with landowners and a public agency or cooperative agreements with landowners and hiking organizations.</p>	<p>Counties or State of Florida or National Park Service or private landowners or combination thereof. Florida Water Management District administration on District lands or on lands owned by the State Trustees and leased to the Districts.</p> <p>Division of Recreation and Parks and Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission management on lands owned by those agencies.</p> <p>Trail development and maintenance primarily by citizen volunteers.</p>
<p>Brevard</p>	<p>In appropriate areas of Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge and Canaveral National Seashore; unconnected hiking trail segments not linked physically to the main Florida Trail, except perhaps by bicycle route.</p>	<p>Federal land.</p>	<p>NPS and Fish and Wildlife Service administration; new trail development and trail maintenance primarily by citizen volunteers.</p>
<p>(Western Orlando Loop Alternatives)</p>	<p>Generally northwest, west of side of Lake Kissimmee State Park, to Green Swamp Area of Critical Concern, including Southwest Florida Water Management District lands</p>	<p>Purchase or donation of land or public right-of-way easements or cooperative agree-</p>	<p>Counties or State of Florida or National Park Service or private landowners or combination thereof. Division of Forestry, Division of Recreation and</p>

SOME ROUTING ALTERNATIVES FOR THE FLORIDA TRAIL

COUNTY	ROUTING OPTIONS	PROTECTION OPTIONS	MANAGEMENT OPTIONS
	<p>and Green Swamp Wildlife Management Area (under lease to Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission) to Withlacoochee State Forest (Richloam, Croom, Citrus units) north to Lake Rousseau State Park; northeast along Cross Florida Barge Canal right-of-way to Ocala National Forest. (The Cross Florida Barge Canal lands could be used for multiple recreation purposes, including walking and hiking, horseback riding and bicycling.</p>	<p>ments with landowners and a public agency or cooperative agreements with landowners and hiking organizations.</p> <p>Using the undeveloped Cross Florida Barge Canal lands for public trail purposes first requires deauthorization of the Barge Canal project by Congress and by the State of Florida.</p>	<p>Counties or State of Florida or National Park Service or private landowners or combination thereof. Division of Forest Division of Recreation and Parks, Southwest Florida Water Management District management on lands owned by those agencies with coordination with public land leaseholding agencies like the Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission. Trail development and maintenance primarily by citizen volunteers.</p>
<p>Marion/Putnam/ Clay/Bradford/ Union/Baker/ Columbia/ Hamilton/ Suwannee</p>	<p>Through Ocala National Forest (The Ocala Trail, currently a designated national recreation trail); with a possible loop trail addition to the west within the Forest and with a possible spur trail east to the St. Johns River ferry landing, across the river to the Mount Royal archeological site (Indian ceremonial mounds); generally north, through Goldhead Branch State Park, Camp Blanding, to Osceola National Forest, to Stephen Foster Memorial to Suwannee River State Park along either or both the Hamilton and Suwannee County banks of the river; if public access is not feasible by land, trail continuity could be maintained at least in concept by the existing State Canoe Trail designation for the Suwannee River.</p>	<p>Purchase or donation of land or public right-of-way easements or cooperative agreements with landowners and a public agency or cooperative agreements with landowners and hiking organizations.</p>	<p>Counties, or State of Florida or U.S. Forest Service or National Park Service or private landowners or combination thereof.</p> <p>Division of Recreation and Parks, U.S. Forest Service, Florida National Guard and Stephen Foster Memorial management on lands owned by those agencies, Trail development and maintenance primarily by citizen volunteers, except on the U.S. Forest Service lands. (Forest Service prefers to use its own resources for trail development and maintenance)</p>

SOME ROUTING ALTERNATIVES FOR THE FLORIDA TRAIL

COUNTY	ROUTING OPTIONS	PROTECTION OPTIONS	MANAGEMENT OPTIONS
Madison/ Jefferson/ Leon/Wakulla/ Liberty	From Suwannee River State Park, west to Natural Bridge Battlefield State Monument to Apalachicola National Forest	Purchase of donation of land or public right-of-way easements or cooperative agreements with landowners and a public agency or cooperative agreements with landowners and hiking organizations.	Counties or State of Florida or U.S. Forest Service or National Park Service or private landowners or combination thereof. Division of Recreation and Parks, and U.S. Forest Service management on lands owned by these agencies. Trail development and maintenance primarily by citizen volunteers, except on the U.S. Forest Service lands. (Forest Service prefers to use its own resources for trail development and maintenance.)
Liberty/Calhoun/ Washington/ Walton/Ocala/Toosa/ Santa Rosa; Florida Escambia; Alabama	From Apalachicola National Forest, across the Apalachicola River on State Road 20 bridge. (Note: this bridge is unsafe for pedestrian use; hikers must drive or hitch hike across the bridge until the Florida Department of Transportation is authorized to replace the bridge with one that meets current public use and safety standards); generally west to the eastern perimeter of Eglin Air Force Base, along the eastern and northern perimeter of the base to State Road 85 bridge across Yellow River. At this time, Eglin Air Force Base does not support any Florida Trail routing alternative involving base lands, citing incompatibility with weapons testing and other military operations. NPS has requested that Eglin reconsider its position, without response. Northern terminus of the Florida Trail is currently in Blackwater River State Forest. An alternative northern terminus is in Conecuh National Forest in adjoining Escambia County, Alabama.	Purchase or donation of land or public right-of-way easements or cooperative agreements with landowners and a public agency or cooperative agreements with landowners and hiking organizations.	Counties or State of Florida or U.S. Forest Service or National Park Service or private landowners or combination thereof. Division of Forestry, U.S. Forest Service and Eglin Air Force Base management on lands owned by these agencies. Trail development and maintenance primarily by citizen volunteers, except on U.S. Forest Service lands. (Forest Service prefers to use its own resources for trail development and maintenance).

SOME ROUTING ALTERNATIVES FOR THE FLORIDA TRAIL

COUNTY	ROUTING OPTIONS	PROTECTION OPTIONS	MANAGEMENT OPTIONS
Santa Rosa	In appropriate areas of Gulf Islands National Seashore; unconnected hiking trail segments not physically linked to the main Florida Trail, except perhaps by bicycle route.	Federal land.	NPS administration; new trail development and trail maintenance primarily by citizen volunteers.

Chapter 9

Recommendations For National Public Policy

This chapter provides the detailed information required by Section 5(b) of the National Trails System Act, and presents the major study recommendations.

1. The Proposed Route

The proposed initial designation would involve selected Federal and State lands only. Since the Florida landscape is not dominated by a single geophysical feature, like the ridgelines of the Appalachian Mountains, the Florida Trail has great latitude to meander through many areas that have appealing natural diversity. As a practical matter, because of the extensive private land ownership of lands between these public areas, route selection to connect the public areas will be largely a matter of opportunity as lands may become available for National Scenic Trail purposes through actions by landowners, land users and by government.

The goal of a continuous trail is certainly valid; however, this goal is best served by an incremental approach that takes advantage of opportunities which may be stimulated through growing awareness and appreciation of the Florida Trail by landowners and land users. Therefore, neither a detailed trail corridor nor more costly planning by the Federal government to identify a detailed trail right-of-way is recommended at this time. Rather, this is business to which the proposed Advisory Council can address itself.

2. Adjacent Areas

On the Federal and State lands on which the initial designation of the Florida National Scenic Trail is recommended, no specific areas are recommended to be utilized for scenic, historic, natural, cultural or developmental purposes. In keeping with the primitive nature of the trail, very little development, if any, is needed. We suggest that these points be considered during the implementation of national policy to establish a Florida National Scenic Trail. Guidelines for these and related purposes are suggested in Chapter 11 of this report.

3. Key Characteristics

The proposed Florida National Scenic Trail is believed to meet Federal criteria for national scenic trail designation for these reasons:

- a. The trail passes through biologically and geophysically diverse temperate and sub-tropical lands of national and State significance.

- b. Although segmented, the trail as proposed does provide for extended opportunities hiking, walking, backpacking and nature study and has potential for a continuous 1300-mile right-of-way in the future.
- c. The proposed Florida National Scenic Trail will provide people the best opportunities for winter use of any trail in the nation.
- d. The existence of most of the proposed Florida National Scenic Trail and the effectiveness of the volunteer efforts of the Florida Trail Association clearly demonstrate the feasibility and the desirability of the proposed Florida National Scenic Trail.

4. Land Ownership

All lands proposed for Florida National Scenic Trail designation are publicly owned and managed by agencies of the Federal government and the State of Florida.

5. Land Costs

No land or interests in lands are proposed for acquisition by the Federal government to complement the initial designation of the proposed Florida National Scenic Trail at this time.

6. Trail Development and Maintenance

Suggested guidelines for the development and administration of the proposed Florida National Scenic Trail are presented in Chapter 11. The key point is for government to do everything possible to encourage the participation of citizen volunteers, most particularly, the Florida Trail Association, in this area. The Florida Trail Association has demonstrated excellence in trail development and maintenance, and Table 10 on page 90 clearly shows that volunteers can perform this work at far less cost than government.

We estimate that there will be little cost to the Federal government for administering existing segments of the Florida Trail as a national scenic trail. The cost of developing new segments of the proposed Florida National Scenic Trail on federal lands will range from \$10.00 to \$5000.00 per mile depending upon site conditions and availability of citizen volunteer assistance. The federal cost of maintaining these and any new sections of trail on federal land will vary from \$2.50 to \$500.00 per mile, again depending upon the availability of help from Florida Trail Association and other citizen volunteer workers.

7. Administration

We recommend that the federal responsibility for overall coordination of the proposed Florida National Scenic Trail rest with the Secretary of the Interior. The Secretary of the Interior would work closely with the Secretary of Agriculture, the State of Florida, the Florida Trail Association and the proposed Advisory Council. Actual day to day, on-the-trail administration would be a responsibility of each land owning or land managing agency or organization.

8. Participation by the State of Florida and Local Government

The State of Florida supports the Florida National Scenic Trail as proposed. The initial designation would include seven State Forests, Parks and Preserves. Other State-owned lands and trail administration might be included in the future, notably lands or interests in land presently owned by the State Water Management Districts, the Cross Florida Barge Canal Authority and the Florida National Guard. Local governments may also choose to become directly involved with the Florida Trail as community support grows for the Florida Trail. Increasing such support for the proposed Florida NST is another piece of highly important business to which the proposed Advisory Council could address itself.

9. Relative Uses of the Land

a. Trail Use

We estimate that there are 25,000 - 50,000 visitor-days of public use on existing segments of the Florida Trail (including parts of the trail which are on privately owned land). Probably 2/3 or 17,000 - 35,000 visitor-days of this use occurs on public lands. Public use of the segments of the trail that may be designated on Federal and State land is estimated to increase by about 20% beyond the level of public use estimated without national scenic trail designation.

We estimate that 20,000 - 40,000 annual visitor-days of public use would occur on those Federal and State lands in the year following designation of the Florida National Scenic Trail.

b. Period of Trail Use

The proposed Florida National Scenic Trail would be available for year-round public use. However, in south Florida, because of climate and insect factors, most use would occur between November and April. In the rest of Florida, environmental

conditions favor a somewhat longer outdoor recreation season. The most enjoyable season is during the winter months, when trails in other regions of the country are snowbound, or require specialized equipment and a high level of outdoor skills. Public trail use may be curtailed or limited on some lands open to hunting, generally mid-November to early January.

c. Economic and Social Benefits for Alternative Land Use

We believe that current economic and social benefits produced by public land now associated with the Florida Trail would be enhanced by the proposed national scenic trail designation. Land management practices on the State and National Forests concerned are not an issue with users of the Florida Trail. We would expect that these lands would continue to be managed in the same manner following national scenic trail designation.

d. Civilian Employment

Civilian employment directly associated with the Florida Trail is very limited. The Forest Service estimates that they expend three person-years and the Division of Forestry currently expends two person-years of effort. Again, these estimates underscore the very significant role of the Florida Trail Association in Florida Trail development and maintenance, currently about 3 1/2 person-years annually.

If all government agencies take actions that encourage and support the volunteer work of the Florida Trail Association and other citizens, public employment - and cost - will continue to be a very minor factor in the growth and maintenance of the proposed Florida National Scenic Trail. Indirect employment connected with the proposed Florida National Scenic Trail is not easily measureable. Suffice it to say that many trail users purchase equipment and supplies to support recreation activity on the Florida Trail. National Scenic Trail designation may increase such purchases, and hence, economic activity.

e. Costs to the Federal Government

Our estimates for annual Federal maintenance, supervision and regulation costs connected with the proposed Florida National Scenic Trail are \$25,000 to \$50,000. This estimate also includes support for Federal participation in the proposed Advisory Council, the key organization for promoting wise public policy implementation for the proposed Florida National Scenic Trail. As mentioned previously, we are not recommending

any further detailed planning by the federal government until there is a significant shift of the attitudes of landowners to support for extending the proposed Florida National Scenic Trail.

Chapter 10

Suggestions for Consideration by the State of Florida, Regional Planning Councils, Local Government, Private Organizations and Floridians

Apart from the alternatives available for the consideration of the Federal Government, there are a number of options open to the State of Florida, the Regional Planning Councils, local governments, the private sector and Floridians.

1. The Florida Legislature has enacted a new public policy establishing a "Florida Recreational Trails System." A network of recreational trails for hiking, bicycling, horseback riding, jogging and canoeing is the policy goal. Implementation of this State policy on recreational trails in Florida unquestionably will increase trail-related recreational and physical fitness opportunities for Floridians and visitors to the State.
2. Landowners, corporate and individual, can continue to cooperate with the Florida Trail Association by granting access across private land to members of the Florida Trail Association.
3. Counties can encourage landowners to protect undeveloped land in private ownership through preferential ad valorem tax assessment as provided for in Florida Statutes, Chapter 193, Part II, "Assessments of Special Classes of Property." Appropriate lands so protected by landowners could be utilized for Florida Trail purposes under landowner agreements with the Florida Trail Association.
4. The State can encourage private landowners to provide public access for Florida Trail purposes through tort liability protection as provided for by Florida Statutes 375.251, "Limitation on liability of persons making available to public certain areas for recreational purposes without charge." Landowners seem to have little confidence in this statute, perhaps because there is no case law concerning it. As noted earlier, in related legal area, the Southwest Florida Water Management District, a quasi-State government agency, has withheld cooperation with the Florida Trail Association on District lands because of the District's concern about tort liability that might occur with public use of trails developed and maintained by the Florida Trail Association. Clarifying the protection this law provides may help to remove this impediment to Florida Trail development and public use on these State lands.
5. State and local governments could consider a land leasing program, perhaps funded by trail use fees, for Florida Trail purposes.

6. Local governments, under existing State-required local land use planning responsibilities and with citizen consultation, can identify linear greenway corridor lands suited for Florida Trail and other recreational purposes. Alternatively, local land use plans can identify lands poorly suited for human development. Through such local land use controls as subdivision and planned unit development ordinances, floodplain zoning and transfers of development rights local governments could choose to guide future development around the Florida Trail, or help to guide new Florida Trail development to scenic areas that are unsuited for development.

7. The eleven Florida Regional Planning Councils, through their regional planning and coordination, reviews of Developments of Regional Impact (DRI) and other authorized functions, can suggest, advise and encourage appropriate public and private actions to protect and enhance the Florida Trail.

The general expected result of such supportive non-Federal alternatives is more timely and more cost effective long term protection for the Florida Trail. The goal of continuity of the Florida Trail would be served, and additional trail segments also could be designated as parts of the Florida National Scenic Trail.

Chapter 11

Suggested Guidelines for Managing the Proposed Florida National Scenic Trail

These guidelines make extensive use of the National Park Service "Statement for Management for the Appalachian Trail." However, the guidelines reflect NPS perceptions of the social and natural environment unique to the Florida Trail. The principal purposes of the suggested trail management guidelines which follow are: (1) to preserve the Florida Trail and protect the land associated with the trail; (2) to encourage appropriate public use of the trail; and (3) to create long-standing, productive and mutually supportive relationships between and among land users, landowners and land managers along the Florida Trail.

The Florida Trail: Its Purpose

The Florida Trail is part reality, part concept. The reality is a series of discontinuous trail segments through some of the natural, scenic, and culturally significant lands in Florida. The concept, a continuous path for travel principally on foot from Everglades National Park in south Florida to Blackwater River State Forest in the west panhandle, on to adjoining Conecuh National Forest in Escambia County, Alabama, is a goal which may be realized in the future.

The Florida Trail is and should be primarily a hiking trail. However, where opportunities exist for multiple trail use on canal, levee, railroad or utility rights-of-way, there should be full consideration given to horseback riding and bicycling recreation opportunities on those segments of the trail.

In the event of any future expenditure of federal funds for trail right-of-way land or easement acquisition in natural or pastoral areas, there should be full consideration of horseback riding and bicycling recreation opportunities within the same right-of-way; however, multiple use of the same path is not desirable.

Today an estimated 10,000 individuals experience the Florida Trail each year, and a remarkable corps of citizen volunteer support extends throughout much of Florida. That support will grow as more people perceive the Florida Trail as an important community, regional and national asset.

Management Guidelines

Conceptual

To secure and maintain the Trail as a simple path, continuous on Federal lands and, to the extent possible, continuous on other public lands through the wild, scenic, wooded, pastoral and culturally significant lands of Florida.

To refrain, wherever possible, from activities incompatible with the purposes for which the trail was established, while recognizing the legislative intent that the Trail be developed and managed to harmonize with other productive land uses.

To provide that decisions affecting the Trail are made on a decentralized basis to the greatest extent possible within broad guidelines which define the desired end result.

To ensure that the proposed Florida Trail Advisory Council effectively provides policy review on important issues and serves to stimulate public and governmental concern for meeting the objectives of the National Trails System Act.

Partnership

To assure that planning and management of the Trail is coordinated effectively through clear organizational arrangements and procedures reflecting the interests and responsibilities of federal and State agencies, the Advisory Council, the Florida Trail Association, adjacent landowners and local governments.

To achieve the voluntary cooperation of managers in all significant managerial actions reflecting a spirit of partnership of federal, State and Florida Trail Association participants.

To achieve a high level of communication within the Trail community in recognition of the fact that actions taken affecting the Trail in one section can affect other sections of the entire system.

To encourage the Florida Trail Association in its efforts to perform the necessary maintenance and other Trail management activities along the full length of the Trail, according to mutual responsibilities defined in written cooperative agreements.

Location and Design

To locate and maintain the Trail in such a way that access is provided without detracting from outstanding scenic, historic, natural and cultural features of the area through which it passes.

To maintain diversity of experience and change of environments from place to place along the Trail, provided that these are consistent

with the basic definition of the Trail, and are important to the quality of the Trail experience.

To use the most erosion resistant natural terrain available within the bounds of an interesting Trail route, so that little reliance on costly construction and hardening of the Trail will be required, and to use design and construction techniques that will minimize damage to the land.

To emphasize that simplicity of design and ease of maintenance should receive greater emphasis than user convenience in the design and management of the Trail, while recognizing that provisions for resource protection and quality of the user experience must be made.

To design the Trail, insofar as possible, to reflect a concern for safety without detracting from the opportunity for users to experience the wild and scenic lands by their own unaided efforts, and without sacrificing aspects of the Trail which challenge their skill and stamina.

Trail Use

To foster the use and enjoyment of the Trail by individuals, families and small groups without promoting use beyond the capacity of the Trail, and, conversely, to avoid uses that degrade the Trail's resources or social values, such as use by groups involved in spectator events or competitive activities, or by groups which by their size or commercial interest generate use which is inconsistent with the purposes of the Trail.

To foster an unregimented atmosphere and otherwise encourage self-reliance by Trail users.

To reflect, in all decisions, an appreciation for the special needs of long-distance hikers, while maintaining the Trail for hikers of all distances.

To stimulate public perception of the Trail as a resource of national importance, and public understanding of the historical and present role of the volunteer in Trail activities.

To encourage appropriate and safe use of the Trail in a manner that minimizes conflicts between trail users and adjacent landowners -- emphasizing, insofar as possible, educational techniques and other non-regulatory approaches over law enforcement activities.

Research

To secure, through research or other means, adequate information on the Trail's resources and visitors in order to develop the best possible Trail management strategies.

To coordinate and, if necessary, restrict research activities in order to minimize the distraction of trail users from the primary leisure objectives.

National Parks, Forests and other Federal Lands - The National Trails System Act and cooperative agreements will provide assurances that the purposes of the forthcoming Trail will be provided for as the Trail crosses National Parks, Forests and other federal lands, and by establishing a suitable protection zone. The Act provides that development and management of each segment of the Trail shall complement any established multiple-use plans to insure continued maximum benefits from the land. The Act further provides that the location and width of the Trail rights-of-way across federal lands under jurisdiction of another federal agency shall be by agreement between the head of that agency and the Secretary of the Interior. Although the National Parks and Forests have been established for specific purposes, there should be no significant conflicts over the use of the Trail corridor which cannot be resolved by good coordination and communication.

State Lands - Where the Trail passes through State-administered lands, such as State Parks and Forests, or State Wildlife Management Areas, the State shall have jurisdiction and management responsibility for the Trail. It is the intent of future cooperative agreements with the State that a suitable protective zone on State-owned lands be designated on either side of the Trail within which no developments or uses would be undertaken that are incompatible with the preservation and enjoyment of the Trail. The goal is that the Trail be in harmony with, and complement other established uses of the State lands. Problems can be expected to arise occasionally, but again, these can be overcome by effective communication between the State, the volunteers, and the National Park Service.

Lands outside the boundaries of existing federal and State jurisdiction acquired and administered by the State - For these areas, the State has responsibility for administration of the Trail. It is expected that such administration will be consistent with the purpose of the Trail, and, as in the above category, will be designed to accomplish the management objectives of the Trail and the intent of the legislation.

Lands Outside Existing State and Federal Area

Guidelines on this subject should be developed as the need may arise in the future.

Visitor Use - Annual visitation along the Trail is estimated at 25 to 50 thousand visitors. The great majority of use occurs from late fall through spring, although in places the Trail is used year-round. Visitation varies from heavy within some of the more accessible and popular parks and forests to light in the more remote areas. Variations in use by location and time of year are important in scheduling appropriate trail management activities.

The Trail ultimately may provide a premier long-distance hiking opportunity in the sub-tropical South. However, it should be remembered that most visitors are short-term hikers and relatively few "end-to-enders" would hike the entire length of the Trail. Planning for the longer range future requires awareness that the pattern of heavy short-term, day use necessitates careful balancing of the needs of the less experienced hiker with those of the "end-to-ender".

Conflicting Uses - Conflicts may develop between the Trail hiker and other users of the Trail. Off-road vehicle use, for example, may damage the physical resource or detrimentally affect the hiker's search for solitude. Although the legislation prohibits the use of motorized vehicles, experience has shown that enforcement of the prohibition of any non-conforming uses will be a problem because of the narrow and isolated nature of the Trail.

Horseback use on the Trail, other than along canal, levee, railroad and utility rights-of-way also may damage the Trail and adversely affect the hiker's enjoyment. Again, it will require continuing and sensitive negotiation to resolve equestrian and hiker differences.

Methods of resolving these conflicts must be identified and implemented or the Trail will suffer unwarranted damage - to its resources, to the quality of experience and to the relationships among all those people with an interest in the Florida Trail.

Crossing of the Trail by horse or off-road vehicles are not necessarily conflicting as long as the frequency and location of such crossings are coordinated with interested parties.

Legal hunting along the Trail has been an activity Trail administrators have accepted, recognizing the need to alert hikers of this seasonal hazard. However, as hunting and hiking pressures increase, there may be places where compromises have to be identified in order to provide adequate protection for the hiker.

Some conflicts may exist because the Trail occupies or will occupy the same land as that designated for other uses. The stress created by equally justified uses of the same area can be contained only by constructive cooperative agreements and continuous coordination and understanding by the parties involved. The National Scenic Trail System Act directs that development and management of each segment of a National Scenic Trail shall be designed to harmonize with and complement any established multiple-use plans for specific areas in order to insure continued maximum benefits from the land.

Facilities - Facilities associated with the Trail include the footpath, signs, campsites, vistas, water sources, toilets, boardwalks, parking, access and side trails at intervals along the Trail.

Facilities are and should continue to be minimal, in keeping with the primitive nature of the Trail. In existing parks and forests, the managing agency would be expected to continue responsibility for facilities, acting in cooperation with the volunteers who may be doing the actual maintenance.

The Trail requires three kinds of maintenance: (1) regular, long-term maintenance; (2) major erosion and overuse repairs; and (3) emergency, short-term maintenance. The latter is needed to clear the Trail following occasional severe wind or fire. Traditionally, the Florida Trail Association has performed regular and emergency maintenance along assigned sections of the Trail. Major repair projects generally are beyond the present capability of the Association, and may create a stress on volunteer resources.

Regulations and Enforcement - There are two major areas of concern to be addressed. Adjacent landowners are understandably anxious about the problems the users of the Trail may create. Vandalism, littering, and trespass are examples of the kinds of Trail misuse which worry property owners. Similarly, landowner trespass which threatens the quality of the Trail is a concern of both Trail user and manager.

The Trail should be protected with a minimum of restrictions or regulations while not adversely affecting adjacent landowners. It can be anticipated, however, that problems will occur, particularly where the Trail is easily accessible from public roads or highways. It can also be anticipated that the long, narrow and isolated nature of the Trail will make these problems difficult to solve.

The legislation provides the authority for the Secretary of the Interior to issue regulations governing the use and protection of the Trail. It is intended that regulations be prepared as part of the planning process.

Regulations and their enforcement fit two broad categories: where the Trail is within the boundaries of existing State or federally administered areas such as Parks and Forests; and where the Trail is outside the boundaries of these areas.

Where the Trail is within the boundaries of existing public areas, the regulations already in effect will govern. These regulations, while not always appearing in the best interest of the Trail hiker, are designed to serve the specific purposes for which each area was established. Managers of these areas continually balance Trail considerations with other uses. It is recognized that certain compromises are required so that potentially competing uses of the same area can occur on a compatible basis.

The goal of Trail management is to keep the regulations as unrestrictive as possible, while providing adequate protection for the hiker, the adjacent landowner and the Trail resource. Effective trail education programs directed at both the Trail user and the Trail neighbors serve to help in this regard.

Special Uses and Considerations - The Trail corridor may include a number of special uses or outstanding rights for such purposes as access roads, utility lines, electronic communication sites, fences, farming, and forestry. Continuation of these uses will be provided for through various instruments, including special use permits, leases, easements or cooperative agreements.

Cooperative Agreements - Important agreements would need to be developed between the National Park Service, the U.S. Forest Service, the State of Florida and the Florida Trail Association to accomplish the objectives of the National Trail System Act. The cooperative agreement is a key tool for the successful administration and management of the Florida Trail. This is particularly true because of the various organizations involved with Trail activities. Cooperative agreements are the thread of continuity linking the various partners together to achieve the objectives for the Trail.

Comprehensive Plan - A National Park Service plan for the management of the Trail is suggested, guided by these principals:

The Plan should be as simple and practical as possible, and directed only to fulfillment of the specific legislative requirements.

The Plan should be acceptable to the Trail community.

The Plan should strengthen the role of volunteers in Trail activities.

The Plan should assure that the basic responsibility of the Secretary of the Interior for the Trail is fulfilled.

The Plan should be responsive to the concerns of all parties involved in the management of the Trail.

Planning for the Florida Trail could be at two levels, comprehensive and management. The comprehensive plan level would be the broad umbrella-type plan stating objectives, identifying the resource, the issues, and providing direction and guidelines for local management. Management planning would be accomplished at the local or regional level to deal with resolution of specific issues or problems. For example, the need and procedure for dealing with trail maintenance standards could be spelled out in the comprehensive plan level; the details of Trail maintenance could be detailed in local management plans. This latter level of planning would require substantial involvement by local Trail clubs, government agencies, private organizations and individuals.

The comprehensive plan might contain five interrelated parts:

1. Introduction - defining the purposes of the Trail; constraints and influences on management; management objectives; and identification of issues.

2. Cooperative Trail Management System - describing the unique management system for the Trail fulfilling legislative intent to preserve the traditional partnership role of the volunteer in management activities. This system could outline:

The network, nature and purpose of cooperative agreements among the National Park Service and the Florida Trail Association, the State of Florida and other federal agencies and local governments as appropriate.

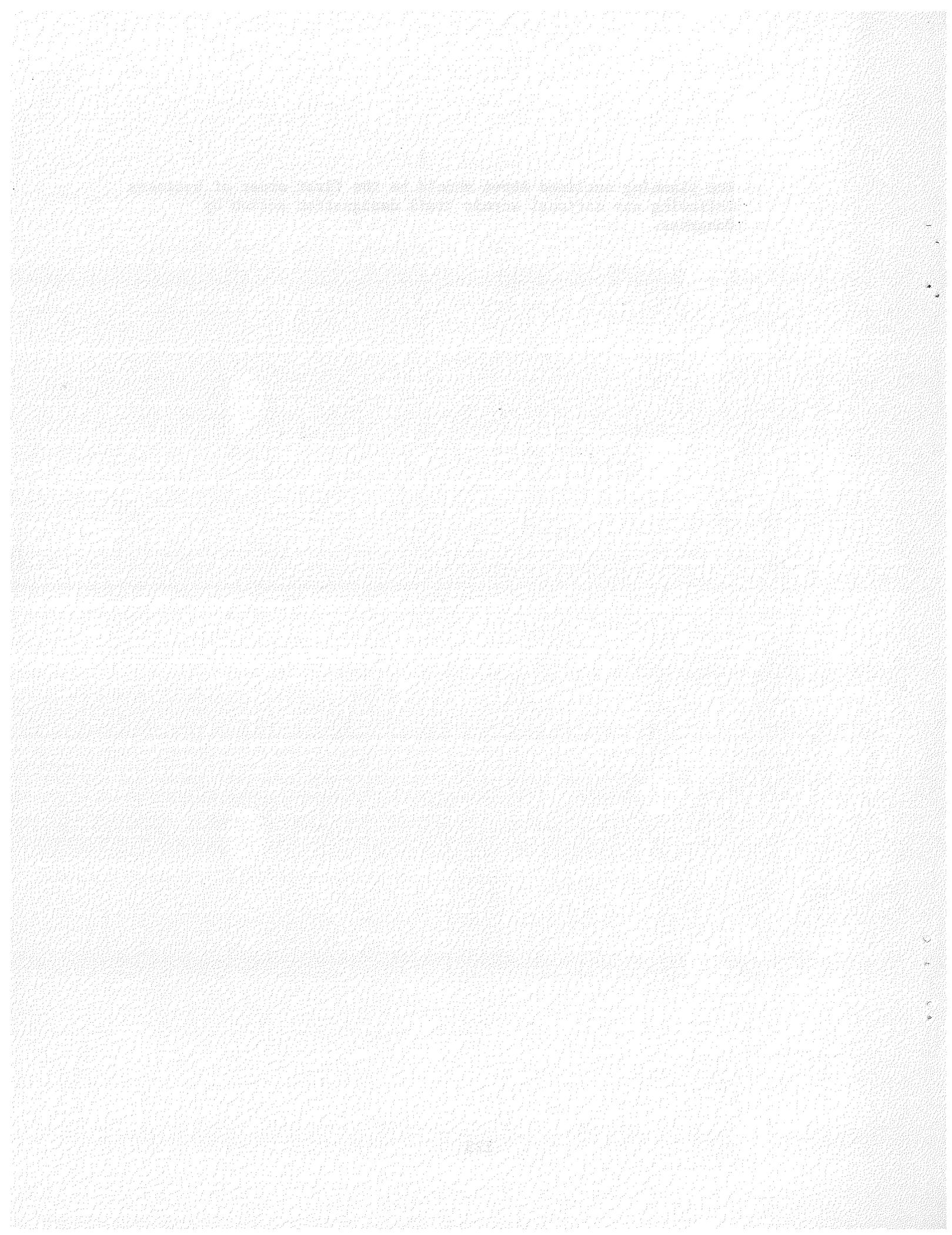
The National Park Service organization and function required to fulfill its basic responsibility for the Trail.

3. Resource Management - outlining strategies for protecting, perpetuating, and preserving natural and cultural resources.

4. Visitor Use - outlining strategies for interpreting Trail resources, for providing for visitor safety and use and for supplying information and support services.

5. General Development - outlining any development necessary to accommodate resource management and visitor use. Appropriate discussions dealing with the issue of carrying capacity could be covered here.

The planning outlined above should be the first order of business following any national scenic trail designation action by Congress.



APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

This analysis assumes that the Florida Trail is designated a national scenic trail as recommended. This study is conceptual. Extensive developments are not proposed. Accordingly, general information is presented in most instances.

IMPACT ON THE LOCAL ECONOMY

No data is available on local area income generated by Florida Trail hikers from such expenditures as gasoline and automotive supplies, groceries and motel and restaurant services. Current annual use of all existing segments of the Florida Trail is estimated to be 25,000-50,000 visitor-days. Since most hikers and backpackers are largely self-reliant for their needs on the Trail and live within an hour or two of the Trail segments hiked, current annual Trail-generated spending in the local economy probably is under \$25,000.

Increased recreation use in local areas close to Florida Trail segments may have a minor effect on local public services such as road maintenance, fire control, law enforcement and search and rescue operations.

Initially, no private lands are proposed for acquisition. It may be possible that in the future, the Federal Government could acquire lands outside established Federal areas on a willing seller basis. Some local tax revenues would be lost, but these would be offset somewhat by Federal "payment in lieu of taxes." Such payments are based on population and acreage within a county. Since there are no plans for acquisition at this time, no estimates of tax losses or tax payments have been made.

IMPACT ON MINERAL AND OTHER RESOURCE

There are known phosphate deposits within Osceola National Forest and oil and gas resources within Big Cypress National Preserve. Federal policy prohibits phosphate mining in Osceola National Forest. Oil and gas extraction in Big Cypress National Preserve is regulated by the Department of the Interior. The segments of the Florida Trail proposed for national scenic trail designation in these two areas neither affect nor are affected by mineral and oil and gas resource development.

IMPACT ON ARCHEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL VALUES

There has been no systematic inventory and evaluation of archeological and historical resources along Trail segments proposed for national scenic trail designation. Should later research identify any, these resources would be protected.

IMPACT ON SOILS

The Florida land form is not very susceptible to erosion from trail development and use, except perhaps in such localized areas as stream banks. Proper trail design can contain impacts of this nature. Soil compaction and oxidation will occur on the Trail tread. But in most instances this is a positive impact which will reduce Trail maintenance costs.

IMPACT ON VEGETATION AND WILDLIFE

Initially, designation of the Trail will attract more public use than would otherwise occur. This will exert pressures on vegetation and wildlife and result in some adverse impacts. In the long run, however, careful management and better surveillance of the Trail will have a more favorable result than if the Trail were not designated. Special measures will be taken to identify endangered plant and animal species and to protect them.

IMPACT ON LAND USE AND OWNERSHIP

Existing land uses will remain much the same if the recommended plan is adopted. Timber production on State and national forests is compatible with the recommended Scenic classification and will continue. Land uses on private lands adjacent to the public lands containing Trail segments will not be affected.

Initially, the proposal will have no effect on existing land ownership. At some future time, it is possible that private land could be acquired for public access or camping purposes, on a willing-seller basis.

IMPACT ON ROAD AND UTILITY RIGHT-OF-WAY

Future roads and pipelines and transmission lines would not be prohibited. However, the management plan for the Trail would outline proposed standards and recommend measures to minimize impacts of future road, powerline or pipeline construction. These measures would include, among others, design criteria to ensure minimal impact on the Trail environment and to promote safe and pleasant visitor passage along the Trail.

IMPACT ON ENERGY CONSUMPTION

Designation of the recommended segments of the Florida Trail as a national scenic trail will increase public awareness of this trail resource. Generally, two things can be expected to help to reduce recreation consumption of fossil fuel resources. First, more Florida residents probably will choose to hike the Florida National Scenic Trail rather than out-of-State trails which provide similar backcountry experiences. Second, more people will change recreation pursuits to less energy consuming (and less expensive and more healthful) activities, especially hiking and walking.

The Trail is accessible in many places by public transportation. However, while most Trail users probably will continue to choose to get to the Trail by personal auto, carpooling among trail users will conserve gasoline. In some instances, people may combine recreational pursuits and bicycle to the Trail, provided needs for secure bicycle storage at or near trailheads can be met.

IMPACT ON OUTDOOR RECREATION USE

Under the recommended plan, use of the Trail segments proposed for national scenic trail designation will be approximately 20,000 to 40,000 visitor days in the first year following designation. Most people will use the Trail during the cooler fall and winter months, except during hunting season for segments where hunting is authorized. Annual Trail use probably will increase 5 - 10%, as more Trail segments are opened for use, population and tourism increase and more people rediscover the simple joys of walking and hiking.

APPENDIX II

NATIONAL SCENIC TRAIL CRITERIA

1. National Significance

Because of their special characteristics, National Scenic Trails should be nationally significant and be capable of attracting visitors from throughout the United States.

National Scenic Trails, for their length or the greater portion thereof, should incorporate a maximum of significant characteristics, tangible or intangible, so that these, when viewed collectively, will make the trail worthy of national scenic designation. National significance implies that these characteristics, i.e., the scenic, historical, natural, or cultural qualities of the areas through which the trail passes, are superior when compared to those of other trails--not including national scenic trails--situated throughout the country. National scenic trails should, with optimum development, be capable of promoting interest and drawing power that could extend to any section of the conterminous United States.

2. Trail Use

National Scenic Trails are designed for hiking and other compatible uses. The National Trails System Act prohibits the use of motorized equipment on these trails, except in certain circumstances.

3. Route Selection

The routes of national scenic trails should be so located as to provide for maximum outdoor recreation potential and for the conservation and enjoyment of the nationally significant scenic, historic, natural or cultural qualities of the areas through which such trails may pass. They should avoid, insofar as practicable, established highways, motor roads, mining areas, power transmission lines, existing commercial and industrial developments, range fences and improvements, private operation, and any other activities that would be incompatible with the protection of the trail in its natural condition and its use for outdoor recreation.

National scenic trails of major historic significance should adhere as accurately as possible to their main historic route or routes.

National Scenic Trails should be primarily land based.

4. Accessibility

National scenic trails should be provided with adequate public access through establishment of connecting trails or by use of trail systems other than the National Trails System. Access should be provided at reasonable intervals and should take into consideration the allowance for trips of shorter duration.

5. Continuity

National Scenic Trails should be continuous except where no practical or feasible interconnection exists.

6. Length

National scenic trails shall be extended trails, usually several hundred miles or longer in length to encompass and provide appropriate access to the resources which are a basis for the trail's designation.

Neighbors And Friends

(Reprinted from KTA Newsletter)

A hiking trail has friends, and it has neighbors. The neighbors may or may not be friends. If they are not, then the trail is impoverished and the joy of hiking on it is less full than it might otherwise be.

Regardless of how wide a corridor may be acquired -- by government or otherwise -- for the protection of the trail, somewhere there is a line marking the point where the trail stops and neighbors begin. No trail is happy if it is lined with sullen neighbors who believe themselves to be under siege, and therefore, in turn, lay siege themselves to the trail, endlessly watching for acts that can be used to precipitate a confrontation.

Not all of the alarm of the neighbors is unjustified. It is self-serving deception for us, the friends of the trail, to pretend (as many do) that hikers are all "good people" who would do no wrong. There is in the hiking community the same cross-section of human weaknesses and failings that can be found in any other segment of society.

In the case of the Appalachian Trail in particular, we are, in effect, asking the neighbors of the trail to accept with equanimity the nearby passage in a year's time of thousands of people, virtually all of whom are strangers may, in fact, decide

to spend the night at the edge of the neighbor's land, thereby raising further the level of intimacy. Represented in the throng of walkers passing his land will be, perhaps, a high percentage of persons whose values and lifestyles are vastly different from his own. This difference may occasion, particularly in older people, a certain very human alarm. Even though our whole social structure is founded on respect for diversity, many people will nonetheless continue to experience a visceral skepticism of anything "different".

We are asking, I submit, of the neighbors of the trail a very great deal.

The problems now being thrashed out in the Cumberland Valley arose in large measure from this very kind of neighborly distrust. It is unfair, I think, to assume automatically that all of the people who are raising questions about the trail in this area must necessarily have nefarious motives...Most of these people have genuine, honest concerns about the welfare of their families, about the safety of their property, and about the continuance of their livelihoods.

When the Cumberland Valley controversy is finally resolved, the people representing what is now the opposition will be the neighbors of the

trail. And to have them surrounding the trail with a brooding bitterness will do nothing at all to benefit anyone. Although the Cumberland Valley situation has, by its size, gained most of the publicity, the trail is flanked with similar, though smaller, problem areas from Maine to Georgia.

What is needed, I believe, is a concerted, vigorous effort on the part of the Appalachian Trail community to study the relationship between the trail and its neighbors, and to open an honest dialogue between the two parties.

Although the theme for the 1979 Appalachian Trail Conference meeting is already set, I would suggest that as soon as possible in the future a meeting be devoted specifically to the trail and its neighbors; to admission, we might say, that the trail does not exist in a vacuum, and that it affects and is affected by all that surrounds it.

The theme for such a meeting might be: The Appalachian Trail and Its Neighbors -- A Partnership for the Future.

Such a thought is not, I honestly believe, mere wishful thinking. The interaction between the trail and its neighbors can be beneficial just as well as it can be abrasive. The partnership concept is not only possible, it is essential if the Appalachian Trail is to continue to provide an uninterrupted hiking experience that is rewarding and inviting.

Maurice J. Forrester, Jr.

Reprinted, in turn, from the March 1979 edition of the Appalachian Trail Conference newsletter "The Register," this article sensitively articulates the complex and important landowner - trail user partnership being sought along the Appalachian National Scenic Trail.

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