Community Consciousness during COVID-19

We’ve heard it said over and over again: these are unprecedented times. The Coronavirus pandemic has put our individual lives into a worldwide storm of uncertainty. We are saddened by those who have died or are suffering, appreciative of those on the frontlines fighting the good fight and hopeful for better days ahead. FBA asked the Florida cycling community to share their inspiring stories for this special COVID-19 edition of the Messenger. Please enjoy this small sampling of Positives Spins from around the state.

Restaurant Meals on Two Wheels: A Brigade of Bicycles Takes to Tampa Streets to Save Local Restaurants  
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An all-volunteer group of cyclists hop on their bikes to help a Tampa neighborhood’s restaurants stay afloat during COVID-19.

As word of statewide closing of restaurants and bars due to COVID-19 began to circulate, Tampa, Florida-area restaurant owners, along with those nationwide, scrambled to change gears and shift to take-out-only business models. At the same time, Devon Brady, a captain with Hillsborough County Fire Rescue, began thinking of ways to support his local community in The Heights, a collection of three neighborhoods with a vibrant dining scene, just north of downtown Tampa.

“As a captain in fire rescue, emergency response is kind of my thing,” says Brady. “I could see from that perspective what was going on with the virus, what was being suggested in terms of shutdown, and knowing business owners in the neighborhood and needs they would have,”

“It’s a pretty small, tight-knit group of business owners who are running these types of mom and pop establishments here [in the Heights],” Brady, who has lived in The Heights for more than 20 years, continues. “Everyone’s on a first-name basis with each other and we know each other. Most of us have worked together in different ways over the years.” He’s also a co-founder of a cooperative design, research and production facility, and has worked with many of the neighborhood restaurants and bars.

A bicyclist in his free time, Brady reached out to a group of friends with whom he frequently rides and floated an idea by them: running deliveries for The Heights’ restaurants.

“Everyone in the group was interested, so I put feelers out to a few of the [restaurant] owners I know and they were really excited about it,” Brady says. “We started putting it together from there, and it came together relatively quickly.”

Drawing upon his experience in setting up a dispatching operation in fire rescue, Brady and his friends cobbled together an entirely-volunteer-based operation: the Heights Citizens Bicycle Brigade.

“We didn’t have the means to expand a delivery system; we were just rapidly trying to get on our feet and stay open and play this new take-out game,” explains Melissa Deming, owner of Ella’s Americana Folk Art Cafe. “The Bicycle Brigade is awesome.”

Veronica Danko, owner of Independent Bar and Cafe and a sometimes-volunteer rider with the Bicycle Brigade, agrees.

“It’s this neighborhood. No matter what happens, it’s so supportive,” she says. “A couple of my friends who have signed up [to ride and deliver] are enjoying it. It just feels good.”

Danko had completely closed The Independent during the first week of the shutdown “to decide what to do.” Eventually, she reopened three nights a week, and is now open weeknights with most of the menu available for take-out and delivery.

“It’s pretty cool when the Bicycle Brigade comes up on their bikes,” she says. “The people who are getting the deliveries are very appreciative.”

When he’s out making deliveries on behalf of the Bicycle Brigade, volunteer Brenton Wiernik sees that appreciation first-hand. A professor of psychology at the University of South Florida, Brenton is “still doing my full-time job doing research and teaching online classes, and I’m volunteering alongside that.”

“I deliver a lot of meals to people who are immune-compromised, who have kids,” (continued on page 12)
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There’s No One Someone Won’t Miss!
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FDOT Using MS Teams to Take NHI Bicycle Facility Design Course

The course is available for free to anyone seeking to learn more about planning and designing bicycling facilities. It covers principles of bicyclist safety, comfort, connectivity, selection of bikeway type and associated design considerations.

The course length is estimated at eight hours over ten modules (that can be completed at your own pace), and is appropriate for planners, engineers and others interested in the planning and design of bicycling facilities. Not all elements of the course may be 100% compatible with state or local design criteria, but it presents a useful overview of the principles for bicycle facility design. Direct link: https://www.nhi.fhwa.dot.gov/course-search?tab=0&key=bicycle&sf=0&course_no=142080

Contact nhicustomerservice@dot.gov or 877-558-6873 with questions.

DISTRICT FIVE UPDATE
Speed Limit Changes Coming to S.R. A1A in Brevard County
Roadway changes aim to improve safety in high-pedestrian corridor

The speed limit from north of 11th Avenue to Palmetto Avenue in Indialantic will be reduced from 40 mph to 35 mph, and the speed limit from Palmetto Avenue to S.R. 404 in Satellite Beach will be reduced from 45 mph to 35 mph. Traffic signage depicting the new speed will be posted. Motorists are advised to safely follow posted signs. These speed limit changes are part of a multifaceted effort to increase safety in high-pedestrian areas along S.R. A1A in Brevard County.

Along this corridor, the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) has also installed Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons (RRFBs) at 16 locations to offer drivers an added alert when a pedestrian is attempting to cross at a designated crosswalk. Of the 16 RRFBs, six are already operational, while the remaining are scheduled to be activated on May 1, barring any unforeseen circumstances.

FDOT’s Roadway Design Office, where I work as the State Bicycle Pedestrian Coordinator, has been participating in the National Highway Institute’s (NHI) new course on Bicycle Facility Design. During the COVID 19 work at home period, the Criteria Section has been going through this course together using Microsoft Teams to enhance the safety and mobility of our transportation system for Florida’s bicyclists.

The course is available for free to anyone seeking to learn more about planning and designing bicycling facilities. It covers principles of bicyclist safety, comfort, connectivity, selection of bikeway type and associated design considerations.

The course length is estimated at eight hours over ten modules (that can be completed at your own pace), and is appropriate for planners, engineers and others interested in the planning and design of bicycling facilities. Not all elements of the course may be 100% compatible with state or local design criteria, but it presents a useful overview of the principles for bicycle facility design. Direct link: https://www.nhi.fhwa.dot.gov/course-search?tab=0&key=bicycle&sf=0&course_no=142080

Contact nhicustomerservice@dot.gov or 877-558-6873 with questions.

Despite COVID-19, Tallahassee found a way to honor National Bike Month

May was still National Bike Month!

Like most things, Bike Month in Tallahassee and Leon County looked a little different this year. But even in these uncertain times, May is still National Bike Month. As the Florida Department of Health has deemed biking an essential activity during the COVID-19 pandemic, Tallahassee and Leon County residents grabbed their bikes and hit the streets and trails to stretch their legs, get to and from work and perform other essential activities.

Since group rides, events and other in-person activities were not recommended at this time, we created a detailed Virtual Bike Month space at Bike Tallahassee. Cyclists new and old found a robust repository of resources with a special emphasis on how to safely and responsibly bike during the COVID-19 pandemic. Cyclists have access to tips, tricks, including information on how to bike smart and bike safe, helpful links and general information about sharing space during a pandemic.

We know the weather is nice, and we understand that cyclists can’t wait to get out.
I hope this message finds our readers and FBA members safe, healthy and quarantining well. I imagine some of our snowbird populations were stuck either in Florida or ventured back north to quarantine with family in your home state. Our world has certainly changed over the last 90 days. COVID-19 has impacted everyone across the globe, including our cycling community throughout the state of Florida. Group rides, cycling events, club meetings and even our RLRM Certification classes have all been paused to support social distancing, our safety and that of our family and neighbors. As I write this newsletter, our local, state and federal government compliance including ‘stay at home’ restrictions are still in place in South Florida and easing up just a bit in Central and North Florida. Is it too soon? I know Dr. Anthony Fauci thinks so, yet we will not know for another month or more.

The need to get out and exercise after gyms closed and being quarantined at home for a few weeks grew rapidly by the second week in April. No sport or recreational activity grew faster than cycling. For some of us, it was a great release, even though no sport or recreational activity grew faster than cycling. For some, it was a great release, even though we could not ride with our weekly club rides or groups. We could ride with a close friend or two or family while practicing social pedaling.

A lot of people who have not been on their bikes in a while, were pulling their bikes out of their garages and storage areas and hopping on. Some tried to locate the few bike shops that were open and deemed essential businesses to get their bikes tuned up, tires and brakes repaired, and some, not so much? Yes, some just jumped on and rode their clunky, rusted bikes with flat tires for the first time in years. They rode against traffic, in the middle of the road, on pedestrian packed sidewalks—so much for social distancing outdoors! They rode with no helmets, with face masks and no helmets, no face masks, and no helmets, and sometimes they wore both—imagine that! It puzzled me to see the ones with masks and no helmets. Did COVID-19 scare them more than a brain injury? I asked the two cyclists I saw outside of Publix this morning. They said, “Yeah, I hate helmets!” I asked if they were at least organ donors?

In April there were three to four times the number of cyclists and at least half as many cars as I normally see on the road in Miami. The number of Facebook posts of cyclists on bikes and my friends’ Strava reports, proved cyclists were racking up a lot of miles during the quarantine, especially during the week when working from home standards allowed a morning ride or lunch time roll more easily.

So, because cyclists owned the road, they let cycling laws, good habits and share the road etiquette lapse. I saw more cyclists running stop signs, red lights and dodging dangerously in between the few cars that were on the road. My concern is as traffic is increasing to near pre-covid-19 levels, I am not seeing our cycling habits (not that they were stellar before) and skills increasing to accommodate riding in traffic and sharing the road with cars. How soon we forget!

We should treasure our time riding outside and, at the same time, treat it with the responsibility that goes with our freedom to ride. Ride safely, abide by the cyclist laws, and practice social distancing and wear a mask. Yes, they are hot, yet it may save yours or another’s life. Stay safe and tailwinds until we connect on the road soon!

Support Florida Bicycle Association Inc.

When you shop at smile.amazon.com, Amazon donates.

Go to smile.amazon.com

Thank You!

As Executive Director of the Florida Bicycle Association, and on behalf of our Board of Directors, I offer a moment. It’s your moment to do with as you please, just be sure to take it.

My moment sometimes is to note all the things that make me smile throughout the day. Currently, it’s having the A/C off and the windows open to hear and feel nature. It’s May in Tampa Bay, so surely this moment won’t last much longer. I smile anyway.

My moment for this block, however, is to say thank you. Thank you for your support of the Florida Bicycle Association. During this COVID-19 pandemic, we continue with our mission and are grateful to have you along for the ride. We are here for you, and that makes me smile. Everyday, Thank you.
Crisis Response: Investing in the Future We Want and Need

by V Christiansen, Florida Coordinator, East Coast Greenway Alliance and FBA Advisory Board member

The COVID-19 pandemic crisis is one of the biggest challenges our nation has ever faced. It is eroding our public health and our economy at levels not seen in decades. As we work to brighten the light at the end of this tunnel, we need to act in a way that addresses both key dimensions of the crisis.

Relief through support for health workers and the millions of people who lost their jobs has been key. Now our nation needs to make the infrastructure investments that lead us to strong economic recovery and a healthy future.

Expanding highways doesn’t do it. The public is already showing us a path that does. People are flooding greenways and trails across the country as they strive to maintain their mental and physical health. No doubt you’ve seen this anecdotally in your city or town. We at the East Coast Greenway Alliance see it play out in the numbers as well.

Exercising and connecting with nature on a greenway is one of the best ways to relieve stress and keep you healthy for the future in these challenging times. In fact, a recent NYU study found that obesity was the leading chronic factor to COVID-19 hospitalization.

“As a wide path that’s safe for walking, running and biking while maintaining physical distance, greenways like our Maine to Florida linear park are essential to helping us maintain mental and physical health now and into the future,” says East Coast Greenway Executive Director Dennis Markatos-Soriano.

Up and down the Greenway corridor, people are taking notice. From New England to the South, recent reports show local greenway and trail usage on the rise. Understandably, some local officials are even closing these facilities due to their popularity as they worry about the potential for continued spread. But in the months and quarters ahead, we need to invest in building more greenways and trails. That is the best path to public health and a strong economy we all can enjoy.

The recent Connecticut Trail Census found that “more than half of the trails participating in this study recorded an increase of greater than 100 percent in use, compared to March 2019.” Among them were three East Coast Greenway segments each reporting an increase of more than 166 percent.

In Philadelphia, the Delaware River Trail saw a 107 percent jump and the popular Schuylkill Banks Trail witnessed a 58 percent increase in usage over the same time period. Richmond, Virginia’s WWBT-TV reports the Virginia Capital Trail experienced a 65 percent increase over March 2019.

Recently, Parade Magazine – with a readership of 54 million – highlighted the top greenways in all 50 states and featured 14 favorite segments of the East Coast Greenway route, including our 600-mile route in Florida.

With this surge in trail usage and increase in interest, walkers, runners and cyclists need to utilize proper physical-distancing guidelines for exercise during the COVID-19 pandemic. Nationwide, Philadelphia, Boston, Minneapolis and Oakland are among the cities creating spaces for responsible recreation by closing some streets to car and truck traffic and opening them for people to bike and walk safely.

There has never been a more critical moment for our nation to invest in regional trails and greenways – and the Greenway’s off-road route is one of many projects all over the country set to grow dramatically with the necessary funding.

Across the East Coast Greenway’s 15 states, $400 million in construction-ready projects covering 210 miles of both the urban and rural landscape are ready to be built. These 60 greenway and trail segments are poised to drive both the economic growth and public health improvement the nation so desperately needs. An investment in these projects would create more than 6,000 jobs, according to American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials research. A 2012 study found that each $1 million invested in greenways, bike lanes and sidewalks created 17 jobs – nearly 50 percent more than new highway construction.

With federal lawmakers preparing an infrastructure stimulus package in the near future, the East Coast Greenway staff has developed a website – greenway.org/stimulus – to highlight these projects and their profound potential impact.

Recent studies along the East Coast Greenway show a more than ten-fold return. A $2.5 billion investment this decade could turn into over $25 billion in benefits as we complete the route for the 450 communities we connect from Maine to Florida.

“Greenway progress and programs can bring our people together to tackle shared challenges as we rebuild – rebuilding community, rebuilding our connection with nature, and rebuilding our health,” adds Markatos-Soriano.

Federal leaders have an opportunity to invest in a healthy and strong economic recovery. The next round of stimulus needs to feature strong investment to the tune of $25 billion to develop safe, accessible routes to walk, bike and run all over our beautiful country. The people want them, our health needs them, and there is no better way to spur economic growth that everyone can enjoy.

In Remembrance by Becky Afonso, Director

On Saturday, April 11, 2020, Kristin Diane Jacobs succumbed to her battle with colon cancer. She was 60 years old. Kristin was an American politician who served as a member of the Florida House of Representatives from 2014 until her death. She represented the 96th District, including Coconut Creek, Margate, Coral Springs and Parkland in northeastern Broward County. Known more as an environmental advocate – testifying before Congress and the U.S. Senate about clean water and climate change – Kristin also enjoyed bicycling, especially off-road riding.

I first met Representative Jacobs in 2018 when the FBA Move Over for People legislative initiative took hold as the CS/HB 117 Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety bill. I recall her being on the then House Transportation & Infrastructure Subcommittee, finding favor with the bill. The bill would eventually make its way to the House floor but failed to be heard in the Senate chamber. If at first you don’t succeed, try, try again.

This past Florida legislative session, FBA again floated the Move Over for People initiative. I spoke with Representative Jacobs via phone call to discuss bill sponsorship. Never once did she admit pain or suffering as she battled cancer. I can only assume now that she took my call while in the hospital. Sufficient to say, bill sponsorship was to be for another time.

I made it a point with every Tallahassee visit during session to stop by her office and leave word with her staff that I hoped she was doing better. Representative Jacobs was a friend to the Florida Bicycle Association, and for me personally, an inspiration and champion for advocating the greater good. I am forever grateful to have met this woman. We may not have her bill sponsorship for future legislative sessions, but FBA will try and try again to have our Move Over for People initiative become law. We have been inspired by the best.

Representative Jacobs, may you rest in peace.
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City names denote board and program staff member distribution. Is your area represented? Contact a board member today!

Working Together to Build a Bicycle-friendly Florida

OUR MISSION: is to encourage more people to bicycle through education and advocacy.

OUR VISION: is for bicycling to be safe, accepted and encouraged in Florida.

OUR PURPOSE:
• Protect and advance the interest of bicyclists
• Educate the public about sharing roadways and paths with people on bicycles
• Encourage the creation of great places to ride
• Continue to grow as a financially stable, well-managed organization

Help Us Grow the Base! Give to FBA

The Florida Bicycle Association was founded by people like you who want to make Florida a better place to ride a bicycle. Our projects and programs that benefit bicyclists are made possible primarily through membership and sponsorship to our organization. Simply put, without membership, sponsorship and donations, the Florida Bicycle Association would not exist. Keep bicycle enjoyment alive in Florida and help us in the fight against bicycle fatalities, Join FBA!

Did you know your membership donation to FBA is tax-deductible?

FBA is a 501(c)(3) education and charitable nonprofit corporation. You can join FBA online or download and mail an application from our website, www.floridabicycle.org. You can request an application to be mailed to you by contacting Becky Afonso at 813-748-1513.

Does your place of employment offer matching gifts to non-profits? Think FBA!

Bicycling is one of life's simple pleasures to enjoy, not fear. Join or donate to the Florida Bicycle Association and let’s ride together for Florida bicycling excellence. Contact Becky Afonso at becky@floridabicycle.org for more information on ways to donate to FBA.

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V Christiansen, East Coast Greenway Alliance, v@greenway.org
Julie Christesen, City of Tallahassee Planner, julie.christesen@talgov.com
Lucy Gonzalez-Barr, Safe Routes to School, lucygbarr@gmail.com
Chris LeDew, City of Jacksonville Chief of Traffic Engineering, cledew@comcast.net
Laura Minns, Transit/Rail Lead Planner, laura67@gmail.com
Dan Moser, Bike/Ped/Traffic Safety Consultant, bikedpmoser@gmail.com
Yvonne Nyakana, Black Girls Do Bike/Miami, gobavm@gmail.com
Roger Pierce, Florida Bicycle Touring Calendar, roger@piercepages.com
Paula Saracki, FBA Messenger, paulas@impactgrafx.com
Lisa Walker, Public Affairs, pedalpusher25@gmail.com
May was still National Bike Month! (from page 4)

there and enjoy Tallahassee and Leon County’s extensive trail system. Taking this into account, we created the following guidance specifically for trail riding.

- **Plan:** Choose off-peak hours for riding to avoid crowded trails and unnecessary interactions with others. Choose wider trails in order to safely pass, while maintaining maximum distance from other trail users. (6 feet is the recommended minimum, more is better!) Find information about all Leon County trails at Trailahassee.com.

- **Yield:** Who has the right-of-way? Most of the trails we bike on are multi-use. Bikers yield to horses and foot traffic. When on a hill, descending riders yield to climbing riders. If it is your turn to yield (or even if it isn’t but you have chosen to), provide as much space as possible to keep an appropriate distance.

- **Communicate:** Unplug, stay alert, slow down and communicate with each other from a distance. Better yet, take the initiative to yield and offer space to keep an appropriate distance.

Also included are specific, helpful resources, including: Visit Tallahassee’s website, Trailahassee.com; a map detailing cycling routes to Tallahassee and Leon County’s numerous parks, Bike2parks.com; and, information from Tallahassee-Leon County’s Office of Economic Vitality, TLH2GO.com, outlining which restaurants are offering takeout – cyclists have to eat!

TLH2GO.com provides a wide-ranging list that features the restaurant’s location, hours, menus and options for online ordering for delivery or take out. Although in-restaurant dining is limited at this time, cyclists still have many options for takeout!

The Bike2Parks map (Bike2parks.com), created and maintained by the Florida Bicycle Association’s Citizen Advocate of the Year, Ashley Hopkins, provides cyclists with information about getting to and from Leon County’s numerous parks (all parks on the Bike2Parks map are located on Apalachicola, Muscogee Miccosukee and Seminole homelands). She breaks down the difficulty of reaching each of the parks into bike-to-able levels of easy, intermediate and advanced. Also provided are route tips for those unfamiliar with the area. See page 11 for more details about her Annual Award.

In addition to local resources, BikeTLH’s Virtual Bike Month page features informational videos from the League of American Bicyclists, including information on how to properly fit a bike helmet and how to perform a bicycle safety check. In Bike Months of the past, staff could often be found distributing and fitting bicycle helmets, and hosting bicycle safety fairs to ensure those in the community in need of a tune up could get one.

Other information on BikeTLH includes the location of bicycle parking throughout the community, a list of local non-profit and for-profit bike shops and maps that provide details of existing bicycle infrastructure in Tallahassee and Leon County, including the locations of the protected bike lane network and buffered bike lanes.

Florida Interscholastic Cycling League (FICL)

**First Race Success**

Florida NICA League Director Maxwell Gledhill reads the participants at the historic first Hammer the Hammock race.

COVID-19 put a halt to the spring race series for the inaugural season, but the first and only race that did happen was an amazing event. From Florida League Director Maxwell Gledhill:

“Race #1 at San Felasco was such an awesome experience! We were stoked to see such profound energy from our student-athletes, coaches, parents, sponsors and volunteers. A huge shout out and ‘THANK YOU’ to everyone that supported the league and worked so hard to develop their teams of student-athletes. Your hard work and dedication does not go unnoticed.”

FBA is a proud sponsor of FICL – we look forward to what’s next!

Post COVID-19 City Cycling Plans

**by Sharon Skeele-Hogan, Inverness, FL; FBA 2019 Bicycle Friendly Community of the Year Award Winner; sskeele-hogan@inverness-fl.gov**

While we are all sequestered at home, ordering things online that we don’t need, eating loads of take-out, and working from home, the City of Inverness is making plans for its future. It’s cycling future. A post COVID-19 future.

Bike Inverness is a brand introduced by the city’s Event & Visitor Bureau. Bike Inverness promotes Inverness as a cycling city. The EVB is creating a new series of bike rides, speaking engagements and cycle-centric opportunities geared to a diverse audience. This bi-monthly series will utilize a variety of city venues, in partnership with small businesses for a year-long calendar of events. The rides will showcase connectivity of the new Depot District, its newly renovated parks, Lake Henderson, the 46-mile Withlacoochee State trail and city streets. The focus will be fitness and social opportunities belying the goal of getting people out of their cars, and onto their bikes.

The City of Inverness is the proud recipient of the 2019 Florida Bicycle Association Bicycle Friendly Community of the Year award. Executive Director Becky Afonso presented the City of Inverness with the award in March 2020. Inverness is also a Trail Town city; one of 10 designated by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, and a designated Bronze Level Bicycle Community by the League of American Bicyclists. From bicycle rodeos, to historic tours of the city, Bike Inverness offers something for everyone.
Almost everyone knows that Florida and its many Counties and Cities have the unenviable record of being either number one or close to number one in pedestrian and bicycle fatality crashes in the Nation – no one wants to be on this train; let alone be number one! The bad news is that Lakeland is in this group; the good news is that the City is not afraid to face this demon.

The even better news is that the City has the good fortune of being part of the Polk County Transportation Planning Organization (TPO) and District One of the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT). All of our agencies are truly committed to reducing fatality crashes to zero – you heard right: ZERO!

Just as Michelangelo chipped away at creating David one chisel blow at a time, we too are engaged at solving these problems incrementally; small successful installations, one-at-a-time. As part of the City’s S.A.M. (Safety, Accessibility, and Mobility) program for ALL transportation users, we’re working together by installing, among other things:

- Lake-to-Lake Bikeway and Greenway trails,
- Lead Pedestrian Interval traffic signals (30 intersections in Lakeland),
- Our first Cycle Track on New York Avenue and modified cycle track on Lake Hollingsworth Drive,
- 15 locations of Rectangular Rapid Flash Beacons (RRFB),
- “Diagonal Pedestrian” Crosswalks, and
- Right-sizing (road diets) of at least six collector and arterial and State roadways, many of which prioritize pedestrian and bicyclists’ operations.

The Memorial Boulevard (SR 546) corridor in Lakeland, was identified as having significant pedestrian and bicycle crashes. These transportation users typically crossed the roadway at many points; often not at the signalized intersections. We realized that expecting pedestrians and bicyclists to dutifully proceed on the “U” walk method (walking to the signal, crossing the roadway and walking back) instead of just crossing where one wants to be from the original point (“I” walk) was naïve on our part!

Unfortunately, this “I” Walk approach may have been responsible for many of these pedestrian and bicyclists’ related crashes. FDOT investigated the crash data and determined that during a five-year period, 28 such crashes occurred on this corridor (one fatality and 27 incapacitating and injury crashes).

Realizing that decisive action had to be taken, the FDOT working with the City, established a safety action plan to modify many of the roadway features such as concrete pavement repairs, intersection and median modifications, upgrades to streetlights and sidewalks, as well as designing four High Intensity Activated CrossWalk Signals (HAWKS) for the corridor. The four sites are also shown on the map (Kettles Avenue, Vermont Avenue, Stella Avenue and Morgan Avenue). They were installed on February 24, 2020.

Pedestrians / Bicycle Crashes on Memorial Boulevard in Lakeland, FL and HAWK Locations

How do the HAWK signals work?

- Pedestrian/bicyclist pushes the crosswalk button.
- Overhead signal begins flashing yellow
- Changing to a solid yellow, warning motorists to slow down and prepare to stop
- Signal will then change to solid red Motorists must stop for Pedestrian/bicyclist to safely cross (users should always make sure traffic has stopped before entering the roadway).
- When the signal begins flashing red, drivers may proceed with caution if the crosswalk is clear.
- The signal will then go dark and remain dark until a pedestrian pushes the button to begin the process again.

Our City’s Traffic Management Center (TMC) team has several CCTV camera locations along the corridor designed to observe traffic operations and assist with incidents with Police, Fire, EMS and other safety-first responder services. Through the TMC, we are observing the use of the four HAWK crossings.

(continued on page 14)
Bike Club: Caloosa Riders Bicycle Club

The Caloosa Riders Bicycle Club describes itself as a family of cyclists in Southwest Florida since 1988. The CRBC consists of a wide range of riders from various ages and backgrounds, all of whom share a common enthusiasm and love of cycling.

The CRBC has also advocated for safe cycling in Lee County and beyond. Through the dedication of their members, CRBC offers summer bicycling skills programs in their community with a goal to not only teach young riders cycling skills and laws, but also to reinforce life skills of cooperation, teamwork and communication. Those who register for a summer session are also provided a free bicycle safety check in partnership with local bicycle shops.

The Caloosa Riders believe that among the benefits of cycling is development of self-assurance. Bicycling helps motivate youth to overcome failures and is one of few sports where boys and girls follow the same rules for competition. For adults, the CRBC encourages members to become involved in the transportation decision process through advocacy and attendance at public meetings to make their voice heard.

Off-Road Club: Shane Richeson, SWAMP Mountain Bike Club

The original SouthWest Association of Mountainbike Pedalers was founded in 1999 as a social off-road bicycle club. Today, SWAMP Mountain Bike Club is a 501(c)(3) non-profit that aims to inspire adventure, build and maintain sustainable trails and strengthen community through cycling.

The SWAMP in the community web page boasts 6000 volunteer hours (via 645 active members and counting) to maintain the off-road trail systems in Balm-Boyette Scrub Nature Preserve, Croom (within the Withlacoochee State Forest), Jay B. Starkey Wilderness Park and Wilderness, Morris Bridge and Flatwoods Trails of the Wilderness Preserve of Lower Hillsborough County. The club has donated $21,000 (and counting) to community organizations and projects, including the development of natural surface single-track in Pinellas County. The club has representation on the Hillsborough County Greenway Committee and is currently orchestrating a state-wide coalition of natural surface trail leadership. SWAMP is a sponsor of the inaugural season of the Florida Interscholastic Cycling League.

Law Enforcement Agency: Sarasota Police Department

Sarasota Police Department is committed to eliminating traffic fatalities resulting in serious and fatal injuries to pedestrians and bicyclists. Their consistent High Visibility Enforcement efforts resulted in a reduction of bicyclist fatalities from four in 2015 to one in 2017.

The Sarasota Police Department also hosts what is called “Tweet from the Beat.” Twitter users can virtually “ride along” with department officers during a night shift and those following on Twitter can ask questions and interact with the officer during the patrol shift.

During Spring Break, there is an influx in vehicular, bicycle, pedestrian and private transportation throughout the community. In an effort to save lives and stop drivers from drinking and driving, the Sarasota Police Department partners with the Florida Sheriff’s Association, Florida Highway Patrol and Florida Police Chiefs Association for a statewide DUI enforcement operation known as “Dry Streets.” A special “Tweet from the Beat” takes place during “Dry Streets,” demonstrating how officers are saving lives.

Supporting Agency: Westshore Alliance

The Westshore Alliance is a member-based organization of business and community leaders recognized as the voice of Tampa’s Westshore District. Although the Westshore District of Tampa has long been considered among the least walkable and bike-friendly areas within the city, the Alliance has made significant progress in transportation, public safety and education primarily for pedestrians and cyclists due to Michael Maurino.

Michael Maurino is the Director of Transportation for the Westshore Alliance and Chair of the Hillsborough MPO Livable Roadways Committee. Thanks to Michael’s leadership since coming on board just one year ago, the District now has a comprehensive multi-agency active transport master plan.

Michael has identified some 25+ studies and projects that have been conducted over several decades and breathed new life into many, and identified additional segments of the desired outcome: a connected grid of safe, comfortable space for all who live, work and play in the District. He’s worked to gain support from agency partners City of Tampa, Hillsborough Metropolitan Organization (MPO), Hillsborough County, and the Florida Department of Transportation.

In 2019, he oversaw a new League of American Bicyclists Bicycle Friendly Business program (BFB) within the District, which had a goal of five BFBs and achieved six new and one bronze-to-silver elevation, for a total of seven. The crowning jewel of the BFBs in the Westshore District was Tampa International Airport, which is the first airport in the nation to receive the League’s BFB designation.

Supporting Agency: Hernando/Citrus MPO

As the Executive Director of the Hernando/Citrus Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), Steve Diez has been a steadfast champion of long-distance paved trails. He actively promoted the existing Suncoast Trail alongside the Suncoast Expressway in Hernando and Pasco Counties, and in the process added a critical segment to Florida’s evolving paved trail system.

With the creation of the SUN Trails program in the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) in 2015, the Suncoast Trail became a significant part of the Coast to Coast Trail, a corridor planned to link the Canaveral National Seashore on the Atlantic Ocean to the City of St. Petersburg on the Gulf of Mexico. In fact, it was Steve Diez who first recognized the potential of linking many existing area trails into this regional system.

In recognition of his vision of regionally linked trails and his efforts to secure funding support for their development, Steve was nominated to the Honorary Board of the Florida Greenways & Trails Foundation in 2019.

Program: Project Hero

Project Hero is a national non-profit organization dedicated to helping Veterans and First Responders affected by Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), traumatic brain injury (TBI) and injury to achieve rehabilitation, recovery and resilience in their daily lives and increasing awareness to combat the national mental health emergency posed by PTSD and TBI.

Valerie Gambino is the regional contact for the Jacksonville Project Hero “HUB” and is always looking for ways to help the local Veteran and First Responder community by introducing them to cycling. Valerie started with Project Hero on a 9/11 Memorial Ride to commemorate her brother Thomas who was a Fireman in NYC on 9/11.

Through Project Hero, Valerie has secured several loaner bikes that she uses to introduce cycling to wounded veterans. She attends the quarterly Vets for Vets meet up to recruit new cyclists and host new rider rides every week.

Valerie recently organized a 9/11 Memorial ride that was widely reported by local news. She has also helped organized a ride to Key West for wounded veterans.

Program: Pedal Power Ministries

Ted Hogan is the founder of Pedal Power Ministries at the Florida Presbyterian Church in Lakeland. Since 2008, the mission of Pedal Power Ministries is to refurbish and repair bicycles to give to those in need as a means of transportation and to children whose parents have fallen on hard times.

The ministry relies solely on donations and is not funded by the church. Any monetary donations received are used to buy parts and equipment to further the ministries’ goal of obtaining, refurbishing and repairing more bicycles.

Since it’s founding, the ministry has given away over 3000 bicycles to those in need. Many of the recipients are homeless men and women without reliable transportation. When someone receives a bicycle, they are given lights and a lock. Children receiving a bicycle are also fitted with a helmet. The ministry recently started teaching recipients how to maintain and repair their bicycles. All persons working for Pedal Power are volunteers. Since Ted repaired his first bicycle the ministry has grown exponentially and he has several hundred bicycles waiting to be repaired and distributed.

Bicycle Professional: Mary O’Brien, FDOT Bicycle/Pedestrian Coordinator

Mary O’Brien, AICP (American Institute of Certified Planners), is the State Bicycle/Pedestrian Coordinator. In her three years at the Florida

Supporting Agency: Westshore Alliance – Ann Kulig Executive Director Westshore Alliance, Michael Maurino Transportation Director, FBA’s Becky Afonso and Christine Acosta of Pedal Power Promoters.

Department of Transportation (FDOT), Mary has led revolutionary overhauls to FDOT’s bicycle facilities criteria and has spearheaded the creation of the ConnectPed app.

Mary has thoughtfully sought out the best national and international guidance on separated bike facilities, including the CROW manual (Netherlands Design Manual for Bicycle Traffic), for inclusion on FDOT’s system. Her considerable personal drive and infectious commitment to bicycle safety have allowed her to effect changes directly and indirectly through the efforts of roadway design and operations engineers, planners, IT staff and others at FDOT. Recent examples include the first ever guidance on separated bike lanes in the FDOT Design Manual.

Mary has also led the development of ConnectPed, an online data visualization app. Based on the TransPed concept developed by FDOT District 5, ConnectPed taps into the vast data resources of FDOT that have previously been inaccessible to most people. Crash data, roadway speeds and volumes, Context Classification and more are now available to the general public thanks to Mary’s leadership and hard work. Mary was able to assemble and lead an interdisciplinary team of engineers, planners and IT staff to develop this app. She continues to monitor and champion this effort. In her unique position at FDOT, Mary has the opportunity to make changes that can impact the entire state for decades to come. She is using that opportunity wisely for the benefit of Florida’s cyclists.

Citizen Bike Advocate: Ashley Hopkins

In 2018, Ashley began working on a project to demonstrate the accessibility of all Leon County parks by bike. To date, Ashley has established routes to over 138 Leon County parks, making the route information public along with valuable information such as available bike infrastructure, traffic expectations and general rider-comfort. Ashley carefully documents these routes with photos and makes all the information available to the public through the Bike2Parks.com website. The Bike2Parks project can also be followed on Instagram, where Ashley provides a stream of photo documentation of the beautiful parks and public lands in and around Tallahassee.

In 2019, Ashley began demonstrating how she can use her bike to help contribute to maintaining public lands by committing to carrying out trash and litter by bike. She uses a cargo bike to haul a kayak so that she can paddle some of the spectacular waterways of Leon County, while gathering up any trash she comes across, everything from bottles and cans to household items and small furniture!

Ashley also demonstrates how she can make an impact by carrying a messenger style bag to carry out trash while riding mountain bike trails, and fire roads through the Apalachicola National Forest, ensuring that she always leaves it better than she found it. In almost every post made on the Bike2Parks account, followers will be reminded that these public lands and parks are homelands of various nations including the Apalachee Indian Nation, the Muscogee Nation of Florida, the Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida, the Seminole Nation of Oklahoma and the Seminole Tribe of Florida, reminding our community that all of these tribal nations still exist today.

Because the Bike2Parks project is accessible on social media, the inspiration and impact reaches far beyond Tallahassee. The Tallahassee bike community would look very different without the enormous contributions made by Ashley Hopkins. She is a constant source of inspiration, encouragement and leadership.

Bicycle Business: The Ride Xperience

Alex Regino is the founder of The Ride Xperience, a bicycle rental and tour business in Orlando. The Ride Xperience provides innovative and exceptional services for visitors from all over the world. Alex first fell in love with cycling while living at a boarding school in Massachusetts at the age of 15. The only way he could explore the beautiful coast of the City of Beverly, MA (just north of Salem) was on a bicycle. Cycling gave him freedom and the feeling that there were no limits to what and where he could explore.

Now living in one of the most popular tourist destinations in the world, Alex has a mission to show that there is much more in Orlando than just huge conventions centers and theme parks, and that you can explore Orlando by bicycle. At the end of a Ride Xperience tour, there is nothing more satisfying to Alex than to hear from guests that the cycling experience was the best part of their trip to Orlando. That is The Ride Xperience.

Citizen Bike Advocate: Christian Wagley, Bicycle Pensacola

Christian Wagley Co-founded and is the Executive Director of Bike Pensacola, an organization made up entirely of volunteers who advocate for bike-friendly streets. Christian started a “Slow-ride Pensacola” event to get citizens to start thinking about safe-streets initiatives and to showcase the value of bicycles as an alternative to driving.

The events are held monthly and started with just a few riders, but through Christian’s persistence and leadership the events are now attended by over 350 people. Bike Pensacola uses these events to educate citizens about bike safety and to encourage them to get involved in our complete streets initiative. Christian also attends local City Council meetings and public input meetings held by FDOT.

Bicycle Friendly Community: City of Inverness

In the fall of 2016, the League of American Bicyclists designated the City of Inverness as a Bronze Level Bicycle Friendly Community. This national recognition has brought numerous cyclists to Inverness, a few of which have become regular snowbirds to the area.

Part of the attraction for cyclists to Inverness is the Withlacoochee State Trail, a 46-mile, mostly flat, rails-to-trail system traversing rivers and forests. The City of Inverness, capitalizing on its small-town charm while still being the county seat of Citrus County, has created a sense of place utilizing the trail.

Comprehensive planning, supported by annual review and budgetary consideration, has given staff and city leadership strategic vision and direction for Smart Growth. Downtown streets have been reengineered and pedestrian walkways, decorative lighting, benches and ecologically friendly landscaping have been added to compliment the historic district. Between this district and Wallace Brooks Park lies the Withlacoochee State Trail – a perfect respite for cyclists.

In 2019, the City of Inverness made a pitch to the Florida Office of Greenways and Trails Council to become a Florida Trail Town. The presentation included detailed plans for the makeover of Wallace Brooks Park and the Railroad Depot. Today the plans have come to life and Inverness is designated Florida Trail Town.

Trails Promoter: Friends of Amelia Island Trails, Inc

The Friends of Amelia Island Trail, Inc., is a non-profit organization with the purpose of developing, improving and maintaining the Amelia Island Trail (AIT). In essence, to help make the Amelia Island Trail the best place to walk, run or bicycle in Florida.

The Amelia Island Trail currently extends over seven miles and connects to Big Talbot Island in northeast Florida. The AIT also connects across the Nassau Sound to the Timucuan Trail, which eventually, when all phases are completed, will give users over 15 miles of continuous multi-use trail. These trails are also part of the East Coast Greenway, an ambitious greenway

Program: Pedal Power Ministries - FBA Board Director Angelo Rao, Doug Hogan of Pedal Power Bicycle Ministries, FBA Board Director Eddie Mingus and Commissioner Scott Franklin.

(continued on page 17)
Community Consciousness (from page 1)

or who are older and really don't want to or can't get out and risk social contact,” says Wiernik. “There's one woman who, every Tuesday, orders a fish dinner from Heights Seafood Co., and I've delivered that to her a few times. She is always so grateful — I'll leave it on her porch and she'll shout her thanks out to me (from her house) as I leave.”

Wiernik delivered the Bicycle Brigade's first order from Ella’s, and is riding an average of six nights a week making deliveries. He’s clocked about 260 miles so far.

“That’s one of the fun things about the Brigade,” says Wiernik. “None of us has ever tried to do something like this before, so this is kind of, let's create a system from scratch and make it work and organized.”

Since its inception last month, the Heights Citizens Bicycle Brigade counts 30 volunteers amongst its riders and dispatchers, and there are close to 30 participating restaurants. More than 200 orders were delivered within the first month of operation.

As a free service to The Heights restaurants and customers, the Bicycle Brigade is also a more beneficial option for restaurant owners over Uber Eats, Grubhub and DoorDash, which charge a percentage that eats into the restaurants' profits.

“We’re already scaled back in sales, and then all of a sudden having to turn around and give them [food delivery services] 30 percent...” Deming starts to explain and trails off. “We rapidly updated our website to include an online ordering system with the Bicycle Brigade as an option for delivery, so here in the neighborhood, you can get online, place your order and go.”

In its first weekend, Deming said Ella’s updated website “worked really, really well, and the Bicycle Brigade was a big part of that.” In fact, the weekend’s Brigade deliveries surpassed those made by Uber Eats and GrubHub.

“The Bicycle Brigade allows the business to keep all of the proceeds,” explains Dankso. “If customers tip the riders, the Brigade gives the tips to the staff or business. It’s a win-win situation. “The generosity of the neighborhood and support — it’s really encouraging,” Dankso says.

“This neighborhood understands what restaurants have meant for the revitalization of our community, and we don’t want to see that go away,” says Deming. “We are very proud of our independent spirit around here, coming together whenever there’s a time of crisis or need. We definitely appreciate it here at Ella’s.”

In Her Own Words - Special Recognition Amanda Beal

Bicycling has changed my health for the better and has become a passion! Along with a healthy diet, I have managed to lose 100 lbs. over a two-year period with stationary and road biking. As stated in the nomination letter, I have osteoarthritis in both knees and had to find a way to exercise that would not put pressure on my knees. I chose bicycling! I got a used bike and a membership at Planet Fitness. I could sit my butt on a seat, get the weight off my knees and exercise. I rode like crazy and loved it!

I have gotten off blood pressure and cholesterol meds, no longer a borderline diabetic and have nearly painless walking.

I would bike 3-4 times a week at the gym and trail bike on the weekends but never really gave much thought about biking as a mode of transportation. Then, my workplace, DOH-Seminole, had its first “Bike To Work Day” in October 2018. Then, I went through the de-prepping process and quickly found out what you need and what you don’t need to carry! So, every once in a while, I would bike to work and it got easier to plan and prepare. It took a while before I committed to riding to and from work every Friday but, after our 2nd Annual Bike To Work Day in October 2019, I did! I did it for my health, my passion and to inspire others. I ramped that up in March 2020 to every Tuesday and Thursday as March was Florida Bicycle Month and my gym, Planet Fitness, soon closed due to COVID-19. I kept this going through April 2020 as April was Stress Awareness Month and COVID-19 is definitely a stressor!

During National Bicycle Month in May, I set a goal to ride to and from work every workday, unless there is inclement weather. I’ve been very fortunate with my position at the DOH-Seminole to incorporate my passion for bicycling. I became a Certified Bicycle Helmet Fitter in May 2019 and have done several outreach events in the Seminole County community for the DOH-Seminole and with my newly, part-time job with Best Foot Forward. For DOH-Seminole, I came up with the motto, “Let’s Roll Seminole” and worked with a graphic designer to create a logo. (below)

Eventually, I want my bicycle to be my main mode of transportation and use public transportation (SunRail, Uber, etc.) when biking isn’t practical. I would love to be rid of my car and auto insurance payments! I aspire to find my encore career in the Bicycling/Pedestrian arena and really make a difference in our community's safety and health. Finally, I continually share with others that exercising outside in fresh air and sunlight is one of the best things you can do to combat COVID-19 and stay healthy!

(Read about her award on page 17.)

Naples Velo and Bonita Bay Bicycle Club Food Bank Fundraisers

Mark Dillon, President of Naples Velo, describes their successful virtual fundraiser to support the Harry Chapin Food Bank:

In April during our Naples Velo monthly board meeting (on a conference call because of the Covid-19 crisis) we began to talk about how we as cyclists could help the community at this critical time. We (continued on next page)
had decided as a club to suspend our daily group rides and encourage people to ride solo or in very small groups and to ride several feet apart; instead of the usual large groups and close drafting that we usually do. The first idea to come to mind was to hold a “charity ride” when it was safe and raise money to help the community; we had done a similar ride following the devastation from Hurricane Irma and it was well received.

As a way to have an immediate impact we decided to give any money we received to the Harry Chapin Food Bank of Southwest Florida. The sheer number of people affected here in Southwest Florida is staggering. Many, many people that never even thought that they would have to go to a food bank to help feed their families were suddenly lined up in their cars to get food. And the Harry Chapin Food Bank has been stressed beyond what they ever thought they would. Usually the food donations that they receive are enough to keep pace with demand but during the Covid-19 crisis they have been faced with having to purchase much more food than they ever had before.

Not being sure when it would be “safe” to do group rides again, we decided to hold a “virtual ride”. And since May is Bike Month we thought what a great way to kick it off! We would ask people to ride solo or in small groups from May 1st to May 3rd and keep track of their miles and then make a donation based on that. The response was overwhelming! Naples Velo donated $2,500 to begin and then promised to match the next $2,500 in donations; and when the “ride” closed on May 10th we ended up making a total donation of $10,785!

All and all it was a huge success and a great example of what cyclists can do as a community to help out!

Next, David Timm, Bonita Bay Bicycle Club President, shares the story for their successful virtual fundraiser to support the very same food bank:

Bonita Bay Bicycle Club (BBBC) members were disappointed in early April when they had to forgo their End of Season Party (our 20th Anniversary Season) and Ride of Silence reception because of the coronavirus pandemic. Ever resourceful, the BBBC board decided to put the $1,500 they would have spent on these events to good use. They launched a fundraising ride for the Harry Chapin Food Bank of Southwest Florida, offering to donate $1 for every mile that members cycled between May 1–3; and when the “ride” closed on May 10th they raised $1,500 they would have spent on these events to good use.

The response exceeded all expectations. Sixty-Five club members rode 3,036 miles during the three-day weekend! Seven members rode 100+ miles each, including 82-year old Jack Panozzo. Panozzo, who reported the next day, “Those were the three best riding days of my life. I felt great!” Other noteworthy participants included Lee Chouinard, one of BBBC’s founders, who was delighted to contribute miles from his current home in Colorado, and Becky Afonso, Executive Director of Florida Bicycle Association, who rode in the Tampa Bay area. Several club members hopped back on their bikes following recent back surgery and knee replacement surgery.

Member enthusiasm didn’t stop with cycling. They also contributed more than $2,800 in personal donations to the Harry Chapin Food Bank. The combined total contribution to the Harry Chapin Food Bank exceeded $4300!

BBBC President, David Timm, summed up the experience saying, “These are difficult times for our country and our Southwest Florida community. A fantastic response from our club membership for both miles on our bikes and dollars donated to a worthy cause. On behalf of the BBBC Board of Directors I thank the membership of our club for demonstrating your commitment and generosity in this time when all of us need to have our spirits lifted. Proud to be a member of our bike club!”

Friends of the River of Grass Greenway
Gift of Giving

FBA Board Secretary Patty Huff shares this from her hometown of Everglades City

Taking an idea from Collier County’s Naples Velo Bicycle Club, the Friends of the River of Grass Greenway and the Everglades City community chose to celebrate National Bike Month by recognizing our local essential businesses by donating $1 for each mile the residents cycled during the week of May 3-9. All proceeds will benefit local grocery and produce markets, the hardware/general store and other small businesses who have made it possible for the communities in the Everglades City area to remain at home and not have to travel to Naples for necessities during this time when social distancing is so important.

SWAMP Mountain Bike Club
Communications and COVID-19

The following are excerpts of a pandemic timeline from Facebook posts by our 2019 Off-Road Club of the Year, SWAMP Mountain Bike Club (See page 10):

March 14: Morning Swampers! In light of the current guidance from DOH and the DEPs message about group events at Alafia, the Swamp Club is going to suspend hosting all group events until those entities feel it is acceptable to resume group activities. All trails are open as of this posting so get out and ride and enjoy this beautiful weekend. Thanks for your understanding and patience.

March 17: Hey all, with today’s guidance from the Gov of FL and decisions from local jurisdictions it is important that we keep our local business partners in mind as we all get through these times together. If you can support your local bike shops, coffee shops, eateries, etc. with pick up orders or online orders do so! It’s important to support those small business that support us when we need sponsors and if we can do it in a socially responsible way in line with current guidance let’s try and support them! Be safe and keep yourself out of harm’s way when shredding the trails to keep out of the ER! Be safe, be healthy, #DoTheFive and carry on!

March 22: As things unfold day by day, and with so much uncertainty building, we want to encourage all of you to take a moment to breathe. Take a deep breath! Please be kind to one another, to those who will ultimately suffer losses and to our volunteers. The reality is most of our parks are closing, and with a possible mandated stay at home order, all of them could be closed by mid-week or sooner. Don’t despair. It is only temporary.

Sincerely, Shane Richeson, President Swamp Mountain Bike Club Inc.

March 24: Patience is not simply the ability to wait – it’s how we behave while we’re waiting. – Joyce Meyer

March 27: Be creative! During this wild and crazy times, trails are shutting down, people are spreading negativity, and focusing on all the negative. You have a mountain bike, dirt jumper, bmx, gravel or cross-bike don’t you? Explore your urban areas. You will be surprised at what you have right around the corner. Urban obstacles provide an amazing way to practice skills for the trails. Instead of paying attention to social media, look up videos of skills that you can practice at home! Workouts that help

Editor’s note: The combined contribution from both clubs to date has exceeded $15,000 – way to go BBBC and Naples Velo!
Bicycling Off-Road

Cycling in the Big Cypress

by Betty Huff

What is it like cycling in wonderful wild Florida during these times of uncertainty and when the whole world is on lockdown? Well, it’s strange, as we all know. Hopefully, by the time this article is published, it will be safe enough for our parks to reopen and we can get back to a somewhat normal life.

I live in a small town in the middle of the wilderness, away from cities, people, crowds, etc., so it’s easy to practice social distancing but life here is still odd when we’re used to hosting year-round tourists. I now have much more time to cycle every day since my weekly meetings and appointments in Naples have been canceled; the hour and a half round trip just driving have provided me more time to exercise. It’s beautiful riding around town in the fresh air, crossing over the Chokoloskee Bridge and back, which is my daily 10-mile ride. However, my favorite time is cycling with my husband on the weekends along the Tamiami Trail. On Easter Sunday there was very little traffic, but this past weekend it picked up a lot with several groups of motorcycles and a parade of Jeeps out for a westbound traffic has already been released.

To balance the safety needs of pedestrians/bicyclists with the mobility needs of motorists, only one direction of travel is stopped at a time (the user presses another button in the refuge median to cross the other half of the road). This methodology seeks the optimum combination of traffic operations and tends to breed more respect between motorists and crossing users – time will tell!

The HAWK system is another tool in the toolbox helping us to meet our ZERO fatality goal, one solution at a time.

We’re watching pedestrians and bicyclist, like a HAWK; working together to save lives!

Bike/Walk Central Florida

Announces New Executive Director Emily Hanna

by Amanda Day, Bike/Walk Central Florida, 407.636.5606, amanda@bikewalkcf.org

Bike/Walk Central Florida (BWCf) is pleased to announce Emily Hanna has been named the new Executive Director of the nonprofit devoted to making walking and biking a safe, accessible option for Central Floridians, no matter where they live or where they’re trying to go.

Hanna joins BWCf from the City of Casselberry where she served most recently as the city’s Development Services Manager. Hanna succeeds Amanda Day, who held the post for six years, transforming the non-profit’s signature program, Best Foot Forward, into the nation’s largest, grassroots pedestrian safety coalition focused on changing driver behaviors toward people simply going about their daily lives, walking.

“All of us serving on the Bike/Walk Central Florida Board are thrilled to have Emily lead us in this next stage of growth,” Billy Hattaway, Bike/Walk Central Florida Board President, said. “Emily’s experience in transportation planning, her devotion to the outdoors and her experience as a change agent are the perfect additions we need to evolve as a regional organization.”

Hanna was selected as Executive Director March 23, 2020. Hanna’s background in planning and public service is extensive. In addition to working as the City of Casselberry’s Development Services Manager, Hanna also served as Casselberry’s Chief Planner. She brings experience from Orange County Government where she served as a project coordinator, sustainability coordinator and neighborhood planner. Hanna also serves on six advisory boards, including the Orlando metro section of the American Planning Association (APA) Florida. She’s been involved with Bike/Walk Central Florida since 2016, helping to coordinate the Bike 5 Cities initiative, of which Casselberry is a part.

“My goal is to build upon the tremendous momentum of the past six years,” Hanna said. “I look forward to working with the board, staff, our passionate volunteers and the broader community to advocate for infrastructure and policies to make our streets safer and more inviting for people walking, biking and driving.”

Bike/Walk Central Florida (BWCf) is a 501(c)(3) that promotes walkable and bikeable communities through raising public awareness and advocating for safe, active transportation and recreation. To learn more or join the cause, go to http://bikewalkcentralflorida.org/.

Lakeelnd and FDOT’s HAWKS

To date, we have noticed users:
- Pushing the button and crossing at the designated locations;
- Crossing at the designated locations without pushing the button;
- Crossing near the designated locations and utilizing the median as a “refuge”; and
- Not crossing anywhere near the sites.

It’s too early to know of the efficacy of the HAWK signals’ system; the COVID-19 reduction in traffic has also put a damper on post installation studies. Above is a photo of one of our very own team members using the Vermont Avenue site, just east of Massachusetts Avenue. Note that eastbound traffic is stopped while

Florida Bicycle Association
Wheels of Justice – Ask the Attorney  
Bicycling Safely during the Covid-19 Crisis

by Christopher G. Burns, Esq.

As cyclists, most of us are still allowed to ride our bicycles outside during the COVID-19 crisis. What if we want to ride with a training partner? Is this safe? Does it increase the risk of contracting COVID-19? How do you correctly “social distance” while cycling with another person? Should you keep a physical distance of 6 feet behind the cyclist in front of you? Or is it more? A recent study gives answers.

Social distancing of 6 feet fails when people are moving, such as walking or running or cycling. It is too close. Six feet is the right “social distance” only when people are stationary. When a person breathes out, especially with sneezing or coughing, this person releases small droplets that may transport COVID-19. Another person in the vicinity can be infected by inhaling these droplets, or by getting these droplets on their hands and then touching their mouth. The purpose of “social distancing” is to allow the droplets to evaporate or disburse before potentially infecting bystanders. When a person rides a bike, the droplets emitted from this person travel backward quite a distance. Researchers were able to use a wind tunnel to replicate walking or running or cycling and the path of the droplets released by the athletes. They found that when walking at an average pace, one walker should stay behind the other walker around 16 feet – not 6 feet. Runners keeping 6/4/mile pace should keep a distance of 33 feet behind each other. Cyclists riding 18 mph should keep 65 feet behind each other – more than 10 times the “social distance” norm of 6 feet. The researchers found that walking, running, or cycling side-by-side seemed to be safer than following in the “slipstream” of your training partner. The risks could be reduced by wearing a mask while exercising to minimize the distance with droplets travel.

The best advice – KEEP EXERCISING during the crisis. Riding a bike is a great way to stay healthy, both physically and mentally. But stay out of the slipstream of other cyclists, where their droplets are still active. Stay back a safe distance or ride well to their side.

Christopher is an attorney who has specialized in enforcing the rights of injured cyclists for more than 30 years. He is Chair for the Jacksonville (Fla.) Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Committee. Consultations are free. 904-632-2424, chris@floridacyclinglaw.com or FloridaCyclingLaw.com.

Jim Dodson is an experienced bicycle accident lawyer, cyclist, former FBA Board Secretary and bicycle safety advocate who has been representing accident victims for over 25 years. His primary office is in Clearwater and he represents injury victims throughout Florida. He is author of the Florida Bicycle Accident Handbook which answers the most commonly asked questions by injured cyclists. If you have questions about a Florida cycling accident this valuable resource is available free at jimdodsonlaw.com.

Helping Our Neighbors

Who can we Help?

by Jim Dodson

Like many of you, my wife and I have spent more time recently watching movies on Netflix. We recently saw our second film about the plight of Jewish families as the Nazis invaded neighboring European countries at the beginning of World War II. Jewish parents had to make horrible choices about sending their children away in order to have any chance of not being swept up into concentration camps. In one particular family, the father and the son were about to be separated forever. The father held his son very close, intently looked into his eyes, and told him he must always remain strong; he must never show fear and never forget who he is. The boy successfully escaped from that immediate peril and spent the remainder of the war evading the Nazis by living in and out of the forests of his country. At various times he was hunted by dogs, shot at, captured, and escaped—all on his own.

The movie revealed some striking similarities between what the child experienced and what we see going on around us during this period of economic turmoil. People were kind and acted out of love and concern for that boy, even to the point of endangering their own lives and property. The movie portrays how Germans were relentless in hunting down these Jewish children. They would destroy the homes of anyone harboring them to the point of burning farms and killing the livestock. Despite such peril, the young man survived through his incredible courage and strength. But he wouldn’t have made it without the critically important generosity and compassion of total strangers.

In reflecting on this film, it occurred to me that we have a similar opportunity today. Throughout the country millions of families are unable to sustain themselves because they have been forced out of their jobs. Sadly, 60 percent of Americans have no savings to fall back on to sustain them in unexpected emergencies. Their hardships begin when the last dollar is spent. Although there is a lot of publicity about the billions of dollars being poured into SBA loans, the reality is that millions of people will not benefit from that money. Because this shutdown has been going on since 3/20/20, they have exhausted their resources and are entirely dependent on the generosity of others.

I know many of you reading this have done what you can to help. Others would like to help but have no idea about how to proceed. You may live in a neighborhood or community where you don’t see these hurting families. Believe me, they are there. Here is an idea we had. We recently publicized on social media that we would give away $100 Walmart gift coupons to ten people and asked followers to send us the names of people whom they knew were in need. We received almost sixty such nominations, meaning there are fifty extra families at risk for hunger, waiting for assistance.

Call almost any church in your community and ask how you can help them in unexpected emergencies. Their hardships begin when the last dollar is spent. Although there is a lot of publicity about the billions of dollars being poured into SBA loans, the reality is that millions of people will not benefit from that money. Because this shutdown has been going on since 3/20/20, they have exhausted their resources and are entirely dependent on the generosity of others. We in the cycling community can be difference makers in the lives of those who urgently need it, when they need it most, which is now. We can fill their needs like the strangers who stepped up when the refugee boy in the movie was alone, hungry, and in danger. If you are not already contributing to this urgent task, I ask you to join us in this effort to help our neighbors.

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*Legal information is not legal advice. Nothing in this article may be considered legal advice. If you have specific questions for Jim Dodson, simply call his office at 1-888-340-0840. There is never a charge to talk about your case.

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Add your voice for the future of all bicyclists in Florida.

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State __________________ Zip __________________

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☐ Champion ($250) ☐ Legacy ($500)

☐ Other/additional donation ____________________________

Membership includes a FREE subscription to the FBA Messenger!

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PO Box 2452, Oldsmar, FL 34677

Or go online to: www.floridacycling.org

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Questions about the laws related to bicycling?  
Ask Geo @ FLBikeLaw.org*  
by George Martin

Officer Says Stop!

Jeff asked: An Officer tasered a bicycle rider who failed to obey the officer’s command to stop. The incident started when the bicycle rider popped a wheelie through an intersection in front of the patrol car. “In response to the wheelie, the officer said he flashed his patrol lights and called over the teens, but they rode away.”

You have not provided any information about a citation that may have been issued, so it is difficult to determine any violations. While we can’t be sure, it may be that the officer felt the cyclist was performing an unsafe act, s. 316.1925 – Careless Driving

(1) Any person operating a vehicle upon the streets or highways within the state shall drive the same in a careful and prudent manner ....

In any event, the cyclist had no information about the officer’s order to stop, only that the officer had issued the order, and was required to do so. Refusing to do so greatly increased the cyclist’s exposure to more serious law enforcement action.

s. 316.1935 – Fleeing or Attempting to Elude a Law Enforcement Officer; Aggravated Fleeing or Eluding

(1) It is unlawful for the operator of any vehicle, having knowledge that he or she has been ordered to stop such vehicle by a duly authorized law enforcement officer, willfully to refuse or fail to stop the vehicle in compliance with such order or, having stopped in knowing compliance with such order, willfully to flee in an attempt to elude the officer, and a person who violates this subsection commits a felony of the third degree ....

Headsets

Dave asked: If a deaf person is allowed to ride a bike, why can’t headphones be worn while riding a bike?

My answer must be that it is illegal. If you are asking why the law is in place, I don’t have the answer. Surrounding sounds are cues we can use for our safety. The statute that applies is not specific to bicyclists, but includes all vehicle operators and provides for the use of hearing aids.

s. 316.304 – Wearing of Headsets

(1) No person shall operate a vehicle while wearing a headset, headphone, or other listening device, other than a hearing aid or instrument for the improvement of defective human hearing.

(2) This section does not apply to:

(a) Any person using a headset in conjunction with a cellular telephone that only provides sound through one ear and allows surrounding sounds to be heard with the other ear.

(b) Any person using a headset whose electrical output is carried on the moving parts of the bicycle.

Electric Trike

Ulf asked: What is the maximum size allowed on an electric trike in Pinellas County, Florida?

There is no size restriction on motorized scooters in state law.

s. 316.003 – Definitions

(45) Motorized Scooter – Any vehicle or micromobility device that is powered by a motor with or without a seat or saddle for the use of the rider, which is designed to travel on not more than three wheels, and which is not capable of propelling the vehicle at a speed greater than 20 miles per hour on level ground.

I can find no contradiction to the above in the Pinellas County Code of Ordinances.

Which Side of the Roadway?

Jennifer asked: Does Florida law state that if it is too dangerous for a bicyclist to ride on the right side of the road with traffic that they can choose to ride on the left?

State law requires bicyclists to travel in the direction of other traffic on the roadway.

As part of the Bicycle Law Enforcement Program, FBA maintains FLBikeLaw.org to provide a place to ask questions about the laws. Questions come direct to FBA via the “Contact FBA” form from floridabicycle.org as well as other sources. Herein is a very limited sample of questions and answers found on the site. Go online for more.

How Many on a Bike?

Paul asked: Is it illegal to ride a bike with somebody else?

Please see Bicycles Regulations below.

s. 316.2065 – Bicycle Regulations

(3)(a) A bicycle may not be used to carry more persons at one time than the number for which it is designed or equipped, except that an adult rider may carry a child securely attached to his or her person in a backpack or sling.

(b) Except as provided in paragraph (a), a bicycle rider must carry any passenger who is a child under 4 years of age, or who weighs 40 pounds or less, in a seat or carrier that is designed to carry a child of that age or size and that secures and protects the child from the moving parts of the bicycle.

Riding in the Roadway Required?

David asked: When you are riding your bike and there is a designated bike lane are you required by Florida law to ride your bike in that lane and not on the sidewalk? I was riding my bike on the sidewalk where there was a designated bike lane and a car made a right hand turn crashing into me. The police officer gave me a ticket for failing to obey road signs!

There is no statute that requires that a cyclist ride in the roadway, which includes the bike lane, and avoid using the sidewalk unless a local ordinance prohibits the use of the sidewalk. See other posts on this site about crossing a roadway from a sidewalk.

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*DISCLAIMER: The purpose of this column is to inform about bicycling laws. The material provided here and through other means is for general informational purposes only and shall in no way constitute or be construed as legal advice by the officers, directors, agents or employees of the Florida Bicycle Association. If you experience in a court of law or on the streets differs from that presented, we want to know about it, but George Martin and FBA are not accountable for a ruling contrary to our interpretation of Florida Law or other consequences of cycling. You should seek legal advice on a particular situation.

Upcoming Bicycle Touring Events in Florida will be back in the next issue!
Congratulations to our 2019 Award Recipients!

system designed to connect Calais, Maine to Key West, FL.

The Friends of AIT have helped Nassau County to receive federal and state grants, totaling over 9 million dollars, for off-road and on road trails, in addition to Safe Routes to School grants for projects to benefit three Amelia Island schools. The group is currently helping to plan and solicit additional trail funding for two additional Amelia Island Trails that would provide 100% completion of the East Coast Greenway Trail on Amelia Island.

The Friends have represented AIT needs and proposed plans at the Fernandina Beach City Commission and Nassau County meetings. They maintain a partnership with the North Florida Transportation Planning Organization (TPO) staff and the Florida Department of Environmental Protection Office of Greenways and Trails while working with local businesses, clubs and developers to the area. A BFF to AIT for sure.

**Trails Manager:** Tim Baylie, Volusia County Parks

As the Parks Director for Volusia County, Tim Baylie has been on the leading edge of long-distance paved trail development in Florida. Two SUN TRAILS system by the Florida Department of Transportation Planning Organization (FDOT) – the Coast to Coast Connector and the St. Johns River to Sea Loop – pass through Volusia County with Tim a champion of both.

Since long-distance regional trails are still new to Florida, both transportation planners and park managers are learning how to develop these trails so that they work for travelers and recreational users. Since the advent of the SUN TRAILS system in 2015, he has worked tirelessly to understand and address the issues unique to a long-distance linear conservation corridor as a park amenity for Volusia County.

In the process, Tim has established a standard of excellence for trail signage and trail aesthetics that are inspiring other park leaders in Florida. In 2019, Tim Baylie was nominated to the Honorary Board of the Florida Greenways & Trails Foundation in recognition of his efforts to make Florida a delightful trail state.

**Volunteer:** Jim Shirk

Jim has been an advocate for safe, effective and fun bicycle transportation for over 25 years. Jim himself uses bicycling as a way of life for recreation, errands and commuting.

Jim is a part owner of City Bike Tampa bicycle shop and spends significant portions of his time educating customers on bicycle safety (Jim is a League of American Bicyclists certified instructor), even if they do not actually buy anything. He has also been a member of the Hillsborough County Metropolitan Planning Organization’s Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) since 2002 and has served as Chair. He volunteers when he can to Hillsborough County’s annual Gasparilla Children’s Bike Safety Rodeo along Tampa’s Bayshore Boulevard.

Jim has led and/or participated in over 300 long-distance bicycle rides with individuals as well as organized groups such as former Tampa Bay Freewheelers and current Seminole Heights Bicycle Club. He has volunteered for numerous Sunday Market rides and community events that offer Bike Valet operations. He encouraged the University of South Florida (USF) student body in advancing bicycling on campus and in their personal endeavors. He is a regular participant, on his dime, to the National Bike Summit in Washington, DC to advocate for cyclists while serving on Team Florida.

Jim’s sincere love for safe and fun bicycling has earned him the title as “Tampa’s Bicycling Enabler-in-Chief.”

**Elected Official Champion:** Senator Wilton Simpson, District 10

Senator Wilton Simpson was elected to the Florida Senate in November of 2012 and currently serves as Florida’s Senate Majority Leader while representing the state’s 10th District. Growing up on a farm in rural Pasco County, Senator Simpson developed a hard work ethic and a take-responsibility attitude. He prides himself on being a strong and consistent voice for the issues that matter most to families.

In 2016, Senator Simpson introduced Senate Bill 76 – Driving While Using a Wireless Communications Device. Originally, this bill would allow Florida to be a Hands-Free state – meaning no devices in your hands while driving. The journey of this bill was a hard-fought battle and a testament to the Senator’s will. All through the 2019 Florida legislative session, before the four Senate committees the bill was heard, amendments were made to the point that SB 76, when arriving to the Senate floor, evolved as CS/CS/CS/CS SB 76 (CS = Committee Substitution).

Ultimately, however, the companion House bill, CS/HB 107 (Representative Jackie Toledo, District 60), is what Governor Ron DeSantis signed into law. In essence, this bill made texting while driving a primarily offense. This may not have been the initial outcome the Senator hoped for, but the victory to move texting while driving from a secondary offense to a primary offense was six years in the making.

For this bill and the process through which the Senator went through, Floridians witnessed a champion for public safety on public roads. Thank you, Senator Simpson. [And thank you Representative Toledo, our 2017 Elected Official Champion.]

**Special Recognition:** Amanda Beal, Florida Department of Health/Seminole County

Amanda Beal is a Bicycle Enthusiast. In mid-2017, at the age of 48, she made the decision to start biking at the gym and on the road. This decision followed her doctor telling her that she had osteoarthritis in both knees and that she was too young and too obese to have surgery to correct the condition. The doctor told Amanda, “If you want to walk the second part of your life, you need to start biking or swimming for regular exercise.” Amanda listened.

Amanda fell in love with biking and gradually lost over 100 pounds; and is in great physical health! When her place of employment completed their First Annual “Bike To Work” Day in late 2018, Amanda became a cycling commuter. Amanda is also involved with the bicycle community and received certifications in Bicycle Helmet Fitting and Bicycle Safety Rodeos. She works part-time with Best Foot Forward and in late 2019, coordinated the Seminole County Health Department’s First Annual series of events for Safe Mobility for Life Week. [Editor’s note: You can read more In Her Own Words on page 12.]

**Special Recognition: Rajeeb Das, The Freewheel Project**

Rajeeb Das has been the heart and soul of low-income and children’s bicycle advocacy in Gainesville for a very long time. For more than a decade, Rajeeb has organized and managed bicycle repair classes, free repairs and an Earn-a-Bicycle program for the most-needy in the Gainesville community – low-income children, day workers, the homeless and other residents – through a program called The Kickstand.

Rajeeb has served on the Gainesville/Alachua County Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Board (BPAB). Rajeeb organized the “Light the Night” program, where members of BPAB went to local day labor sites in the early morning darkness to install free bicycle lights and distribute reflective vests. In 2007, he began to organize a volunteer bike repair – The Kickstand – which continues more than 13 years later to provide weekly free bike repair, training on bike repair and Earn-a-Bikes for kids, the homeless and others in need. The goal has always been about “empowering members of the community to ride and repair independently (or in groups), for work or play.”

Rajeeb Das is an inspiration by his vision, by his example of hard work and friendship on behalf of those in need and by his success in getting others to join the cause. Having just accepted a new position in Texas, Rajeeb leaves behind a strong and dedicated group of volunteers committed to carrying on his work. Gainesville, UF and Florida have been blessed to have Rajeeb Das as such a dedicated bicycle advocate for so many years.

**Special Recognition:** Jim Dodson, FBA

Jim Dodson was invited to join the FBA Board in the spring of 2015, and his wisdom and dedication cannot be understated. Everyone who knows Jim can attest to his honesty, his integrity and his sincerity.

As a personal liability attorney, specializing in bicycle-related crashes, his knowledge of the laws to protect Florida cyclists has been valuable as a member of the FBA Board.

Jim is a regular contributor to The Messenger with concise, informative articles. In addition, Jim has written ten books, including the Florida Bicycle Handbook, relied upon by hundreds of cyclists across the state. He also publishes from his law firm a monthly newsletter that features interesting articles, healthy recipes and important bicycle safety information.

Although FBA misses Jim’s insight and contributions during our Board conference calls and meetings, his commitment to FBA continues with his service on our Advisory Board and his liaison with the bicycle clubs.

**Special Recognition:** Steele Olstead, FBA

J. Steele Olstead was invited to join the FBA Board in the spring of 2014. Steele is a personal liability attorney, specializing in bicycle-related crashes, and his knowledge of the laws to protect Florida cyclists has been valuable as a member of the FBA Board.

Perhaps what will be missed most is Steele’s unique sense of humor and his willingness to volunteer. As president of the FBA Board, Steele enjoyed representing FBA at various events and loved engaging the public to talk bicycle. Our association will always remember the time and service Steele gave and the memories of his whack-a-doodle ways.
to become a stronger rider are a great way to pass the time. Binge watch Red Bull rampage footage with your friends via video chat! Do some yoga, read a book, go for a jog, get creative in the kitchen, plant a garden, play a board game...be creative!

April 3: Professional wisdom: Take this time to rethink how you eat and the role food plays in your life. Fuel your activity right with whole, clean, preferably locally sourced food. The role that proper nutrition plays in overall infection and disease resistance is well documented, going all the way back to Hippocrates. Good food alone does not boost your immune system so keeping active is also key. We will post simple recipes once a week that will give you ideas in the kitchen. [Editor’s note, there are some seriously good recipes posted on their Facebook page.]

April 18: Dear Swampers – PLEASE READ ALL OF THIS MESSAGE before commenting!

First off, we hope this message finds you safe and healthy! It’s been a tough time for everyone getting through this ordeal but with the recent buzz of activity around “reopening” states and relaxing isolation measures, there is light at the end of the tunnel.

Secondly, NOTHING HAS CHANGED but, we need to start thinking about what it looks like when things resume some semblance of normalcy. The Swamp Club is going to need our volunteers more than ever once we get the green light to start opening parks up and riding again. It will have been at least 6 weeks or more since trail maintenance has been done on our favorite trail systems so we are going to need to lean on our volunteers to help get our trails back in the awesome shape they were in before the closures.

Everyone will want to rush out and ride but if you have the time, energy and desire to work on trail maintenance and give back to the organization, then this call to action is for you! We will post very specific information in the coming days or weeks, (based on however long it takes to relax current restrictions), advertising where and when any trail maintenance days will be held. Please watch our social media feeds for specific information.

Again, NOTHING HAS CHANGED...what’s closed is still closed, this is just a primer to get the community thinking about working together to get everything back in great riding shape! We will be posting status updates as soon as we get them from land managers so keep our FB handy.

Above all, stay safe, be healthy and take care of each other!

April 21: While the preserve is closed, we are taking the time to get some concrete work done! We are grateful to be able to give back to the community.

April 22: A huge thank you to the trail gnomes at Starkey for taking care of our local bike shops with masks!

April 25: The Starkey Trail Gnomes Strike Again! Starkey Mountain Bike Trails have been sending out local bike shops masks they made!

April 27: The Starkey Trail Gnomes have created masks for us to distribute in exchange for a donation that will go into a separate fund for doing something special for our community. We are already talking ideas!

April 30: Hey Swampers, great news! We've received info on the reopening of some of the local trails. PLEASE read all of the following info on requirements and PLEASE make sure you abide by all of them outlined below.

The following is from the May 3, 2020 SLBC Braking News e-newsletter, From the Front of the Peloton by Holly Dates, SLBC President (reprinted with permission):

The board is happy and excited to announce we are reopening our sanctioned rides using a soft pedal approach starting May 11th, with an 8 am ride start. Please read Don Chivaroli’s (ride director) rules for reopening in the article just before this one. He clearly spells out how we will proceed using the same distancing tactics, corners of the parking lot, limited number of 10 to a group, no announcements at this time...basically the same procedures we were using just prior to the cancellation of sanctioned rides.

Just a gentle reminder, we all have the right to make our own choice when we feel comfortable returning to group rides. Let us be gracious and supportive of one another as the restrictions are being lifted. I’ve included below a piece that club member Kay Carver reposted on Facebook (source unknown) that nicely sums up the importance of allowing each other to make our own decisions as we proceed forward:

Flattening the curve didn’t mean stop the infection, but spread it out so that the system could handle it.

I am seeing so much anxiety about resuming business, and so much anger about continued regulations. People are feeling the need to catastop to one side or the other, then fight the opposition.

Here’s my perspective, from a mainstream medical model. I think a lot of folks have fallen into the idea that social distancing was meant to stop the viral spread. It wasn’t—it was meant to SLOW it while we put medical infrastructure in place. It has worked. We have, in some parts of our country, not been overwhelmed like we would have been without protective measures. In the meantime, our testing procedures have gotten better. We’ve increased our ventilator count. We’ve gotten a little better handle on PPE supply chains, and many have helped by making masks and gowns. Some hospitals have a second COVID-19 ICU opened, and some larger cities have a field hospital ready to go. It’s not perfect, but it’s much better than it was seven weeks ago. Do you know what that environment looks like in YOUR community/city/state? If not, I’d invite you to make the finding of those facts part of your decision-making process.

A vaccine is a long way off. At some point, people have to be systematically exposed to begin the building of (hopeful) herd immunity. We WILL likely begin to experience a real increase in cases after reopening. Ideally, that exposure is controlled and calculated, in phases, to allow our medical community to respond adequately, and reduce the number of severe or fatal cases. That’s where we are. And not every state is on the same timeline. Some states with smaller or more rural populations and later emergence of infection may need to stay the course longer.

Whether you feel like your state is opening too soon, or not soon enough, we were never going to social distance this thing into nonexistence. You now need to proceed as your health, wallet and consience allow.

If you are medically vulnerable, you do not need to be a part of what is about to happen. Stay home if you can. If you’re not, or if your financial vulnerability trumps your health concerns, you need to proceed in ways that continue to protect yourself, AND the elderly and medically vulnerable around you.

All of us need to calm down. Quit telling people who are financially struggling that they don’t care about human lives. Quit telling people who are truly at risk of dying from this virus that they are cowering in fear. Remember that until you’ve walked in someone else’s shoes, you should probably be careful in your judgements and subsequent harsh words.

We don’t HAVE to choose an either/or proposition and fight. We could choose other ways to be. Examples include but are not limited to:

“I think this may be too soon, so I will continue to shelter myself, and pray/make masks/ check on those who can’t.”

“I really need to go back to work, so I will do so, BUT I WILL BE CAREFUL AND TRY TO PROTECT MYSELF, MY FAMILY AND THOSE AROUND ME WITH HEALTHY STRATEGIES.”

See how those positions allow each of us to do what we need to, and also respect who are choosing differently?

One thing that allows us to do this is humility. I can acknowledge that I am not an epidemiologist / economist / whatever, that I am making decisions based on my understanding of complex subjects and my own personal health and financial situation, that I am not all knowing, always right, and an expert in all fields, and that each person around me is doing their best too. We can make different choices and still be a supportive community. We can learn and evolve in our understanding of these issues.
FDOT Districts

**District 1**
Cities: Bradenton, Fort Myers, Naples, Sarasota
Counties: Charlotte, Collier, DeSoto, Glades, Hardee, Hendry, Highlands, Lee, Manatee, Okalooste, Polk, Sarasota
FDOT Bike/Ped coordinator: Deborah Chesna, 863-519-2562; Bike/Ped Safety Specialist: Mengya (Amy) Ao, 863-519-2510; SUN Trail Coordinator: Deborah Chesna, 863-519-2562
FBA Member Bicycle Clubs: Caloosa Riders Bicycle Club, Highlands Pedalers Bicycle Club, Peace River Riders Bicycle Club, Sanibel Bicycle Club, Sarasota-Manatee Bicycle Club, Gulf Coast Velo, Bonita Bay Bicycle Club, Coastal Cruisers Bicycle Club, Naples Velo
FBA Member Bicycle Shops: Acme Bicycle Shop, Fort Myers Schwinn Cyclery, Pedelec SQB LLC Electric Bicycles, Road & Trail Bicycles, Bicycles International, Naples Cyclery, Bike Route Naples

**District 2**
Cities: Gainesville, Jacksonville, Lake City, St. Augustine
FDOT Bike/Ped Coordinator: Derek Dixon, 904-360-5653; FDOT Bike/Ped Safety Specialist: Jennifer Graham, 904-360-5636; FDOT SUN Trail Coordinator: Barney Bennett, 386-961-7878
FBA Member Bicycle Clubs: Gainesville Cycling Club, North Florida Bicycle Club, Suwannee Bicycle Association
FBA Member Bicycle Shops: The Great Bicycle Shop

**District 3**
Cities: Destin, Panama City, Pensacola, Tallahassee
Counties: Bay, Calhoun, Escambia, Franklin, Gadsden, Gulf, Holmes, Jackson, Jefferson, Leon, Liberty, Okaloosa, Santa Rosa, Wakulla, Walton, Washington
FDOT Bike/Ped Coordinator: Olen Pettis, 850-330-1543; FDOT Bike/Ped Safety Specialist: Michael Lewis (Interim), 850-330-1266; FDOT SUN Trail Coordinator: Olen Pettis, 850-330-1543
FBA Member Bicycle Clubs: Capital City Cyclists, Emerald Coast Cyclists, Bike Pensacola
FBA Member Bicycle Shops: The Great Bicycle Shop

**District 4**
Cities: Fort Lauderdale, Fort Pierce, Palm Beach, Stuart, Vero Beach
Counties: Broward, Indian River, Martin, Palm Beach, St. Lucie
FBA Member Bicycle Clubs: Boca Raton Bicycle Club, Vero Cycling Club, South Broward Wheelers Bicycle Club
FBA Member Bicycle Shops: Orchard Island Bikes and Kayaks, Conte’s Bike Shop (Boca Raton, Boynton Beach, Ft. Lauderdale), Bike Tech, Wheels of Wellington

**District 5**
Cities: Cocoa Beach, Daytona Beach, Kissimmee, Melbourne, Ocala, Orlando
Counties: Brevard, Flagler, Lake, Marion, Orange, Osceola, Seminole, Sumter, Volusia
FDOT Bike/Ped Coordinator: Stephanie Moss, 386-943-5734; FDOT Bike/Ped Safety Specialist: Chad Lingenfelter, 386-943-5336; FDOT SUN Trail Coordinator: Heather Garcia, 386-943-5077
FBA Member Bicycle Clubs: Florida Freewheelers, Sunumer Landing Bicycle Club

**District 6**
Cities: Key West, Miami
Counties: Miami-Dade, Monroe
FDOT Bike/Ped Coordinator: Tiffany Gehrke, 305-470-5308; FDOT Bike/Ped Safety Specialist: Isis Sotolongo, 305-470-5187; FDOT SUN Trail Coordinator: Tiffany Gehrke, 305-470-5308
FBA Member Bicycle Clubs: Key West Bicycle Association, Everglades Bicycle Club
FBA Member Bicycle Shops: Mack Cycle & Fitness, Bike Tech (2 locations)

**District 7**
Cities: Brooksville, Clearwater, Port Richey, St. Petersburg, Tampa
Counties: Citrus, Hernando, Hillsborough, Pasco, Pinellas
FDOT Bike/Ped Coordinator: Alex Henry, 813-975-6405; FDOT Bike/Ped Safety Specialist: Ginger Regalado, 813-975-6970; FDOT SUN Trail Coordinator: Alex Henry, 813-975-6405
FBA Member Bicycle Clubs: Florida Panthers Tandem Club, St. Petersburg Bicycle Club, Suncoast Cycling Club, Swamp Mountain Bike Club
FBA Member Bicycle Shops: Bike Sport, Chainwheel Drive (Clearwater, Palm Harbor), Jim’s Bicycle Shop, City Bike Tampa

**FDOT Statewide Bicycle/Pedestrian Coordinator:** Mary O’Brien, 850-414-4283
www.floridabicycle.org/resources-by-the-f-dot for more FBA member club & shop info.

**FBA Board Secretary Patty Huff submitted this beautiful photo showing that during this time of “Safer at Home” measures, her ride takes her HOME. Note bicycle in front of the house.”**
If so, spin down to Central Florida’s Polk County—your hub for some of the best and most diverse cycling experiences in Florida. Road, mountain, single track, rails-to-trails, bikepacking— with some surprisingly heart-thumping elevation changes.

Why not stay here and ride them all?
Plan your velo-escape at ChooseEverything.com