

CONSERVATION TRUST OF FLORIDA

THE POST

PROTECTING OUR RURAL LANDS



WILDLIFE EXPEDITION

Four explorers raise awareness of Florida's natural beauty by documenting their 1,000 mile, 100 day journey

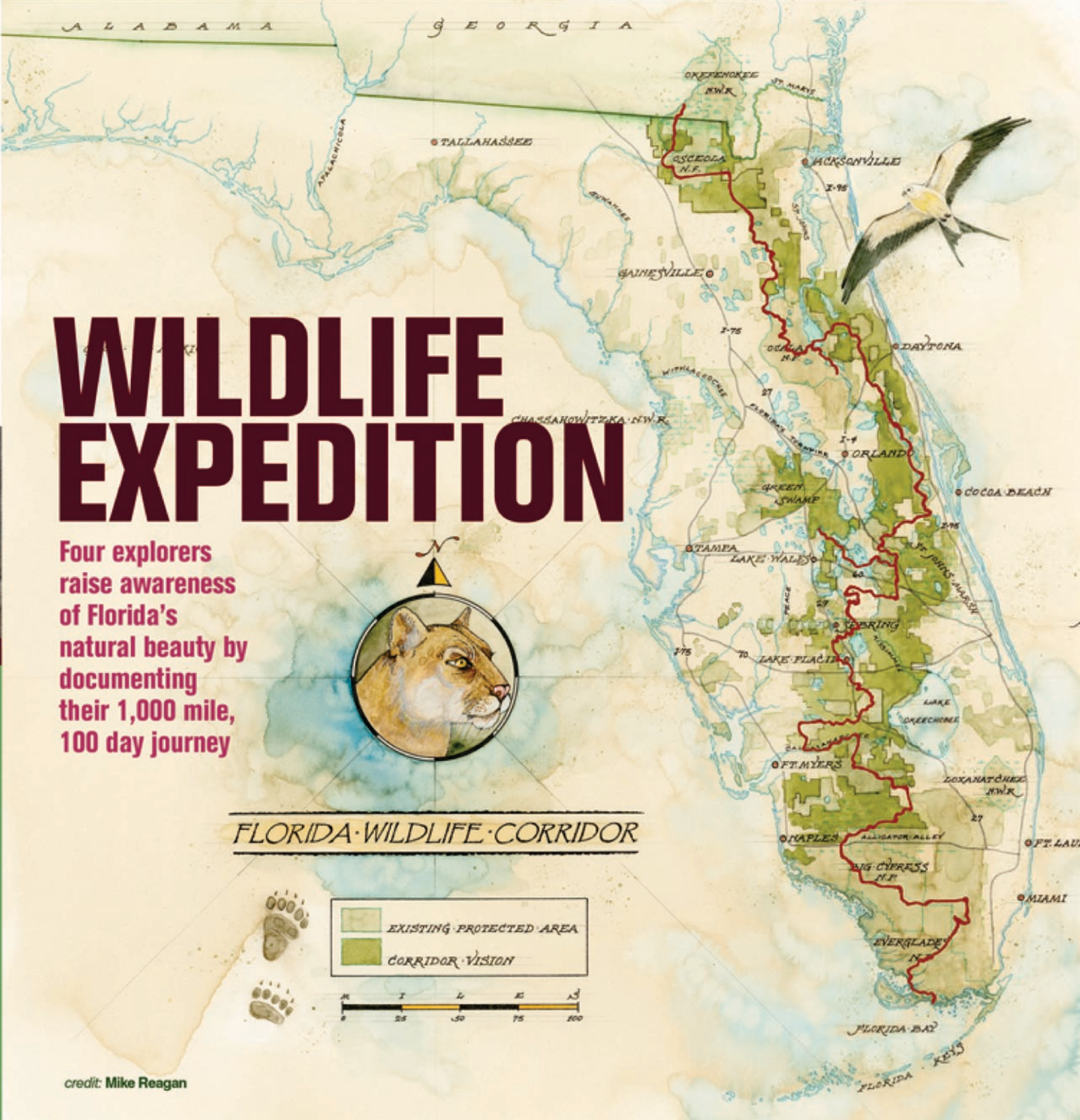


FLORIDA WILDLIFE CORRIDOR

	EXISTING PROTECTED AREA
	CORRIDOR VISION



credit: Mike Reagan





Florida Wildlife **Corridor Expedition**

On January 17, 2012 the Florida Wildlife Corridor Expedition launched and four explorers began their trek in the Everglades National Park.

For 100 days, the team traveled by kayak, on foot, by bicycle and on horseback through a matrix of public and private land, following a route that connects many of Florida's large conservation lands. With articles and essays to the media, and photos and videos shot straight from the field on a daily basis, the explorers were able to document and portray the extraordinary natural beauty of the rivers, pastures, forests, and fields that they traversed. They celebrated the culmination of their extraordinary journey on Earth Day - April 22, 2012 with a "Picnic for the Planet" in the Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge in southern Georgia.

The FWC Expedition brought attention to the urgent need to protect additional land for wildlife corridors, particularly in the working landscapes of central Florida and in the timberlands of north Florida. Ensuring connections in these regions would have major implications not only for wide-ranging wildlife, such as the Florida black bear and panthers, but for water quality and quantity throughout the state.

The explorers, conservationist Mallory Lykes Dimmitt, photojournalist Carlton Ward Jr, filmmaker Elam Stoltzfus and bear biologist Joe Guthrie, modeled their trek after expeditions by John Muir and more recently Michael Fay, whose narratives of his wilderness experiences through Central Africa led to the creation of 13 new national parks

in Gabon. They also carefully planned the expedition to traverse the most critical sections of the Florida Ecological Greenways Network (FEGN), which provided the scientific foundation for the Florida Wildlife Corridor.

Despite the difficult economic climate, and with state government seeking cost-cutting opportunities within the natural resource agencies, the Florida Wildlife Corridor project was warmly received by a broad spectrum of the public and large landowners, and may have expanded the constituency of Floridians who care about land conservation. The hope is that the Expedition generates momentum for protecting what remains of natural Florida and galvanizes political support to fund the Florida Forever program. The success of the 2012 Expedition suggests that even large-scale conservation goals such as the Florida Wildlife Corridor are still attainable.

Wildlife, Water and People

Wildlife corridors are areas of natural habitat which connect large existing conservation lands that are separated by compatible, but unprotected rural lands. The Florida Wildlife Corridor includes several greenways throughout the Florida peninsula, all of which are a part of the Florida Ecological Greenways Network (FEGN.) The team visited 23 private ranches that are either currently under the protection of a conservation easement, or are seeking funding for a conservation easement. In north Florida, the team trekked through three Florida Forever projects, which if funded, would complete the Ocala National Forest to Osceola National Forest "O2O" Greenway.



photo by: Genevieve Dimmitt

1,000 miles in 100 days

What is the Florida Wildlife Corridor?

The Florida Wildlife Corridor vision is built on a foundation laid by decades of work from several organizations and agencies and by the earlier efforts spearheaded by Dr. Larry Harris and Reed Noss at the University of Florida in the 1980s. This research culminated in the Florida Ecological Greenways Network (FEGN), which is part of the Florida Greenways and Trails Plan. The FEGN is a cutting edge computer map that identifies areas of opportunity for protecting a statewide network of conservation hubs and corridors designed to maintain large landscape-scale ecological functions including wildlife habitat and ecosystem services, which help protect clean air and water.

One focus of the Florida Wildlife Corridor vision is concern over the conservation status of the Florida black bear and the Florida panther. The black bear in Florida is segregated into 7 mostly distinct subpopulations, the bulk of which exist on large, contiguous tracts of public land across the state. Subpopulations in south-central and southwest Florida are isolated from their neighbors to the north by the city of Orlando and its outlying suburbs, as well as an extensive network of high traffic volume roads, such as Interstate 4. Ensuring the future of the Florida black bear will require habitat management and development planning that allows individuals from the various subpopulations to travel and breed among widely scattered areas. Similarly, the ability of the Florida panther population to expand beyond south Florida is reliant on the restoration and maintenance of viable wildlife corridors to potential habitat further north.

Background

The expedition was lead by Conservation Trust for Florida Advisory Board member Carlton Ward, Jr. He is an 8th generation Floridian and conservation photographer from Tampa. After starting his photography career with the Smithsonian Institute in Africa, Ward turned his focus back to Florida, where his family's pioneer cattle ranching heritage and the accelerating decline of natural areas drew his interest. In 2009 he published his second book, *Florida's Cowboys: Keepers of the Last Frontier*, which publicized the little-appreciated culture of traditional cattlemen still in Florida and celebrated the wildlands over which they preside.

Joe Guthrie, Mallory Lykes Dimmitt and Elam Stoltzfus also participated in the 100 day trek. Guthrie is a wildlife biologist from a team of University of Kentucky (UK) researchers studying the south-central Florida black bear subpopulation. UK's research helped inspire the expedition idea. Mallory Dimmitt is a conservationist who also comes from a family with deep Florida ranching history. Her previous work on conserving watersheds in the American West parallels the current effort to restore and protect the Everglades headwaters. Elam Stoltzfus is a respected Florida documentary film producer, who joined the expedition to produce a feature-length film to spread awareness for the project. Among Elam's numerous projects are two films that have focused on the greater Everglades ecosystem: *Big Cypress Swamp: The Western Everglades*, and *Kissimmee Basin: The Northern Everglades*.



(continued on back)

The Post | December 2012

Conservation Trust for Florida, Inc.
P.O. Box 134
Micanopy, FL 32667

PRESORTED
STANDARD
US Postage
PAID
Gainesville, FL
Permit #1



The Conservation Trust for Florida, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) non-profit land trust. The mission of CTF is to protect the rural landscapes of Florida. We focus on farms, ranches, working forests and natural areas that provide landscape connections.

sponsored by:



Plum Creek



1,000 miles in 100 days

Florida Wildlife Corridor Expedition

(con't from inside)

The Conservation Trust for Florida was an integral partner for the team during the expedition, and is a key stakeholder in efforts to protect the landscape that is the focus of the Florida Wildlife Corridor. Dr. Tom Hoctor, who is one of the founders of the Florida Wildlife Corridor, represented the Conservation Trust for Florida throughout the Expedition and made numerous presentations about the importance of wildlife corridors and the private land uses, including timberlands, farms, and ranches that help sustain vital ecological functionality.

CTF has worked with landowners and agency partners to help protect portions of one such large-scale corridor project, the Ocala to Osceola Greenway. If funded through the Florida Forever program, the roughly 150,000-acre "O2O" incorporates private timberland and smaller conservation tracts to connect two major conservation areas, Ocala National Forest and Osceola National Forest in north-central Florida. The protection of the O2O would ensure a landscape connection between two of Florida's 5 largest black bear subpopulations.

above photos by: Carlton Ward Jr.

www.conserveflorida.org
www.floridawildlifecorridor.org



photo by: Carlton Ward Jr.

Dear Members Friends of CTF

Hiking the Florida National Scenic Trail from Olustee Historic Battlefield State Park to Ocean Pond in Osceola National forest with FL Department of Environmental Protection Secretary Herschel Vinyard and Dennis Miranda, director of the Florida Trail Association. photo left to right: Mallory Dimmitt, Joe Guthrie, Secretary Vinyard, Dennis Miranda and Carlton Ward Jr.

First and foremost, thank you. Your support of the Conservation Trust for Florida has made it possible to help families protect over 9,500 acres of working lands and natural habitat that integrate our rural landscapes into a statewide network of conservation lands that are critical to wildlife. We are proud of our achievements and we know we couldn't have done it without you!

The Conservation Trust's efforts to protect working lands have never been more important. Family farmers and ranchers are under economic pressure to sell their properties. As farms are converted to more intensive uses, local food supplies are lost, small businesses sell to franchises, and rural communities give way to sprawl. Not only are our cultural values threatened, but natural heritage and way of life suffers when private lands no longer provide conservation benefits.

The Conservation Trust provides guidance on real estate transactions shows how tax benefits can help farmers and ranchers retain and protect their lands, not only for their lifetimes, but for future generations. This year alone, the Conservation Trust held eight workshops reaching over 125 families without you.

The Conservation Trust has honed its programs to protect agricultural lands and connect them to Florida's conservation lands, through our Greenways and Farmlands Programs for over a decade now.

Recently, the Trust received national recognition of our effectiveness, financial oversight, and program efficiency from the Land Trust Accreditation Commission. The Accreditation Commission's seal of approval is not given lightly. The Conservation Trust went through a vigorous evaluation process and passed with flying colors. It is now time to build on our strengths and expand our reach throughout the state, truly becoming the land trust center for all of Florida.

The Felburn Foundation supports the Conservation Trust's objectives and they have awarded a challenge grant that we're counting on you to help us meet. Donate to our Challenge Campaign today and leverage your gift as never before.

"Every dollar you donate to this campaign will be amplified through the generous Felburn Foundation grant."

As we approach the year-end, please take this opportunity to show your support for the Conservation Trust with a gift to our Challenge Campaign. You can donate safely online at www.conserveflorida.org. We can't do our important conservation work without you.

Sincerely,
David Pais
President



BOARD of DIRECTORS

- J. David Pais, President
- Pais Realty/Pais Landscapes, Owner
- Ed Montgomery, Vice-President
- Forester, Dir. of Rural Properties, TerraPointe Services
- Stephen Nesbitt, Secretary
- Ornithologist, FL Wildlife Commission (retired)
- Nancy J. Peterson, Treasurer
- Assoc. Director of Research and Outreach, School of Forest Resources & Conservation, UF
- K. Marlene Conaway, Vice-President
- Planner, Dept. of Community Affairs (retired)
- Barry Rutenberg
- 2011 First Vice Chairman, Board of the National Association of Home Builders, President of Barry Rutenberg and Associates, Inc.
- Mike Webster
- Conservationist, Yacht Broker, Recipient of the City of Jacksonville' Mimi & Lee Adams Environmental Award
- Lee A. "Alex" Wheeler III
- Senior Accounting Manager, Bunting Tripp and Ingley, LLP CPA's, former Mayor of Lake Wales and former Polk County School Board member

ADVISORY BOARD

- Fay Baird
- Kevin Brown
- David Carr
- Margaret "Peggy" Carr
- Will Ellis
- Lisa Molitor Gearen
- Erik Lewis
- Anne MacKay
- Former FL Gov. Buddy MacKay
- Celeste Shitama
- Bob Simons
- Jennifer B. Springfield
- Hans G. Tanzler III
- Carlton Ward, Jr.
- Richard White
- Kathleen S. Williams
- Terry L. Zinn

Busy Shires Byerly, Assistant Executive Director
Tom Hocter, Greenways Program Research Scientist

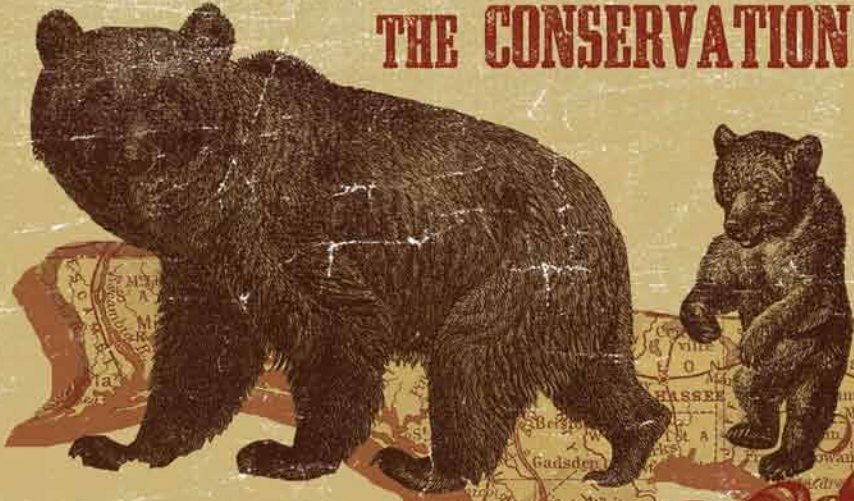
Conservation Trust for Florida, Inc.
1731 NW 6th Street, Suite F
Gainesville, FL

Mailing: P.O. Box 134, Micanopy, FL 32667
Phone: 352-376-4770

www.conserveflorida.org

CTF is a 501 (c)(3) nonprofit land trust. The mission of CTF is to protect the rural landscapes of Florida. We focus on farms, ranches, working forests, and natural areas that provide landscape connections.

THE CONSERVATION TRUST FOR FLORIDA
ASKS YOU TO HELP



Meet the
CHALLENGE

As we approach the year-end, please take this opportunity to show your support for the Conservation Trust with a gift to our Challenge Campaign. You can donate safely online at www.conserveflorida.org

Yes! I wish to renew my support of the Conservation Trust for Florida, Inc.

\$25 \$50 \$100 \$250 \$500 \$1,000 \$ _____ Other

I pledge to support CTF at the \$ _____ level on a _____ monthly basis or _____ quarterly basis.

Make a secure donation online or sign up to make recurring donations at

www.conserveflorida.org

Name(s): _____ Date: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____ Email: _____

I'd like to do more! Here's an additional gift to support the: Stewardship Fund \$ _____
Program Endowment Fund \$ _____ *Please consider CTF in your estate plans.*

A COPY OF THE OFFICIAL REGISTRATION & FINANCIAL INFORMATION MAY BE OBTAINED FROM THE DIV. OF CONSUMER SERVICES BY CALLING (800-435-7352) WITHIN THE STATE. REGISTRATION DOES NOT IMPLY ENDORSEMENT, APPROVAL, OR RECOMMENDATION BY THE STATE. FL Dept. of Ag and Consumer Services Reg. #: CH13778 Federal Tax ID #: 59-3613021

**make a
donation.**