

# FLORIDA SCENIC HIGHWAYS PROGRAM

## QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER



Real Places. Real Stories.

[www.floridascenichighways.com](http://www.floridascenichighways.com)

December 2023

**HAPPY HOLIDAYS TO  
OUR FSHP COMMUNITY  
AND THEIR FAMILIES!**

## HOLIDAYS ON THE HIGHWAY

*As we move closer to the holiday season, let's take a look at some unique and festive events that the Sunshine State has to offer.*



### Conch Shell Drop at Sloppy Joe's (Key West, FL)

**Nearest Scenic Highway: Florida Keys Scenic Highway**

**Event Date: December 31, 2023**

Located at one of Key West's most iconic (one of the oldest) bars on Duval Street, this year marks the 30th annual Conch Shell Drop. In 1993, local artist Tobias McGregor approached the Sloppy Joe's management to pitch a Floridian-inspired ball to help synchronize the crowds of New Year's Eve celebrators. If that's not your style, Key West has a variety of other ball drops to enjoy when the clock strikes midnight!

Learn more: <https://sloppyjoes.com/events/>



*Dropping of the Conch Shell New Year's Eve (December 31, 2021)*

Photo Credit: Sloppy Joe's (<https://sloppyjoes.com/photo-gallery/2021-photos/>)



Source: [www.facebook.com/events/bluewater-bay-marina-com-plex/santa-paddle-parade-bluewater-bay-marina](https://www.facebook.com/events/bluewater-bay-marina-com-plex/santa-paddle-parade-bluewater-bay-marina)

### Annual Santa Paddle Parade at Bluewater Bay Marina (Niceville, FL)

**Nearest Scenic Highway:  
Scenic Highway 30A**

**Event Date: December 17, 2023**

Ever wonder what a school of Santa Clauses might look like? Then look no further than the 5th Annual Santa Paddle Parade at the Bluewater Bay Marina at Rocky Bayou. In the words of the event organizers: "If you can paddle it, bring it!" The parade features dozens of Santas on paddleboards, canoes, and kayaks. All proceeds benefit the Niceville Sharing & Caring organization and aims "to meet emergency needs of families in the Niceville-Valparaiso-Choctaw Beach area."

Learn more: <https://bluewaterbaymarina.com/2022/11/27/5th-annual-santa-paddle-parade/>



*Dean, FSHP Program Coordinator, and his wife, Anna*

### DEAN'S CORNER

To all our Florida Scenic Byways partners, associates, travelers, and friends, it has been a great honor to lead our program these past two years. As I visit our byways and get to know the folks who make our program thrive, I'm humbled by the dedication our byways leaders and volunteers provide. I'm inspired by the strength of our program and the potential to grow even stronger. Thank you all for a great 2023. 2024 is just around the corner and we are gearing up for a blockbuster year!

As we all make our plans for the holidays, whatever these may be, may they be immersed in peace and joy.

Visit Us Online!



## Holidays in Space at the Kennedy Space Center Visitor Complex (Cape Canaveral, FL)

**Nearest Scenic Highway:** Indian River Lagoon National Scenic Byway

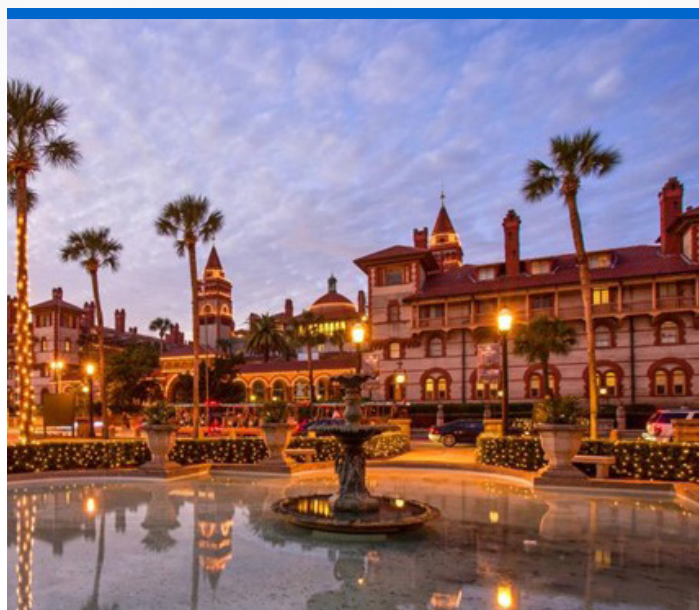
**Event Dates:** December 15 – 30, 2023

Included in a regular admission ticket, Holidays in Space features a variety of festive décor, like a 50-foot-tall Christmas tree and astronaut nutcrackers, a nightly projection show entitled Holiday Voyage, and family-friendly games and activities at the Atlantis West Pavilion. Holidays in Space is sure to be out of this world!

Learn more: <https://www.kennedyspacecenter.com/landing-pages/holidays-in-space>



Source: Kennedy Space Center (<https://www.kennedyspacecenter.com/landing-pages/holidays-in-space>)



Source: Visit St. Augustine (<https://www.visitstaugustine.com/event/nights-lights>)

## 30th Annual Night of Lights (St. Augustine, FL)

**Nearest Scenic Byway:** A1A Scenic & Historic Coastal Byway

**Event Dates:** Now – January 28, 2024

Historic downtown St. Augustine receives a makeover with more than three million lights, the city is sure to sparkle! This annual celebration “traces its origins back to the traditional Spanish practice of displaying a white candle in windows during the Christmas holidays.” In addition, you can book a variety of different tours [link: <https://www.visitstaugustine.com/event/nights-lights-tours>] to make your visit to St. Augustine even more memorable.

For more information: <https://www.visitstaugustine.com/event/nights-lights>

## Pensacola Winterfest (Pensacola, FL)

**Nearest Scenic Byway:** Pensacola Scenic Bluffs Highway

**Event Dates:** Now until December 24, 2023

Be transported to a true winter wonderland! The Pensacola Winterfest is held annually at the Plaza Wonderland at Palafox Place and offers a host of ticketed events throughout the day. Take a ride on a mini-train, get your photograph taken with Santa Claus, or join in the festivities with the Grinch and the rest of the Whoville Whos. Check their website for a full schedule of events.

For more information: <https://pensacolawinterfest.org/>



Source: <https://pensacolawinterfest.org/>

### Menorah Lighting Celebration (Fort Lauderdale, FL)

**Nearest Scenic Byway: Broward County A1A Scenic Highway**

**Event Date: December 7, 2023**

Presented by the City of Fort Lauderdale's Parks and Recreation, the Menorah Lighting Celebration is held at the beautiful Las Olas Oceanside Park. Celebrate the first night of Hanukkah through the lighting of the menorah, read blessings, traditional music, and treats. You can visit the Menorah anytime throughout the holiday season.

For more information: <https://www.parks.fortlauderdale.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/463/638321186706030000>



2021 Menorah Lighting Celebration (November 11, 2021)

Source: City of Fort Lauderdale, Parks and Recreation (<https://www.parks.fortlauderdale.gov/home/Components/PhotoAlbum/PhotoAlbum/128/1298#ad-image-23>)

### Victorian Christmas Tours at the Historic Stranahan House (Fort Lauderdale, FL)

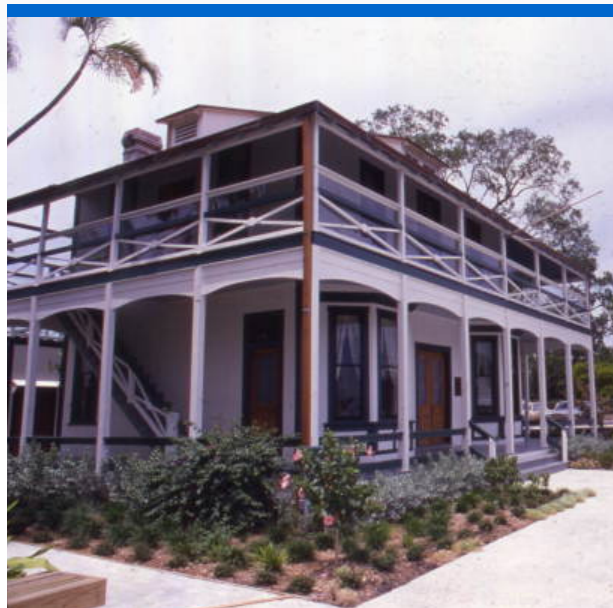
**Nearest Scenic Byway: Broward County A1A Scenic Highway**

**Event Dates: December 14-15 and 21-23, 2023**

History lovers rejoice! The Stranahan House was built by community leader Frank Stranahan in 1901. Not only is it the oldest remaining structure in Broward County, but it was also listed on the National Register for Historic Places in 1973. During the holiday season, the Stranahan House is decked out in Victorian-inspired Christmas decorations. You can choose to roam the house or take a docent-led guided tour.

Note: This is a ticketed event.

For more information: <https://stranahanhouse.org/victorian-christmas-tours/>



Source: City of Fort Lauderdale, Parks and Recreation (<https://www.parks.fortlauderdale.gov/home/Components/PhotoAlbum/PhotoAlbum/128/1298#ad-image-23>)

## The Florida Scenic Highways Program is coming to a TV near you!



**Florida Crossroads** is an award-winning, half-hour documentary series that looks at the people, places, and events shaping

Florida. PBS television station **WFSU**, located in Tallahassee has produced this long running show for nearly 30 years. In 2022, the series partnered with the **Florida Scenic Highways Program** to develop a multi-year project to produce a series of television segments that explore the nuances of the scenic highways program, its history, and byways.

The next Crossroads segment featuring the Florida Scenic Highways Program is expected to air on the **Florida Channel** on **Monday, December 18th, 2023**. The following week, our segment will show up on affiliated PBS stations. This segment will highlight **William Bartram Scenic & Historic Highway, A1A Ocean Islands Trail Scenic Highway, J.C. Penney Memorial Scenic Highway**, and the state's newest All-American Road - **A1A Scenic & Historic Coastal Byway**. Be sure to check the Florida Channel website to determine which channel locally will show the segment! **You can also check out the different byway segments on the FSHP Website by scanning this QR code:**



# BYWAY DOINGS

## A1A OIT Gets New Informational Signage

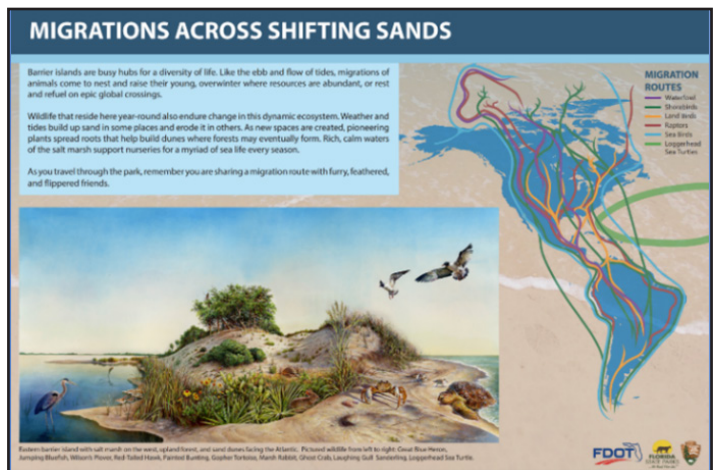
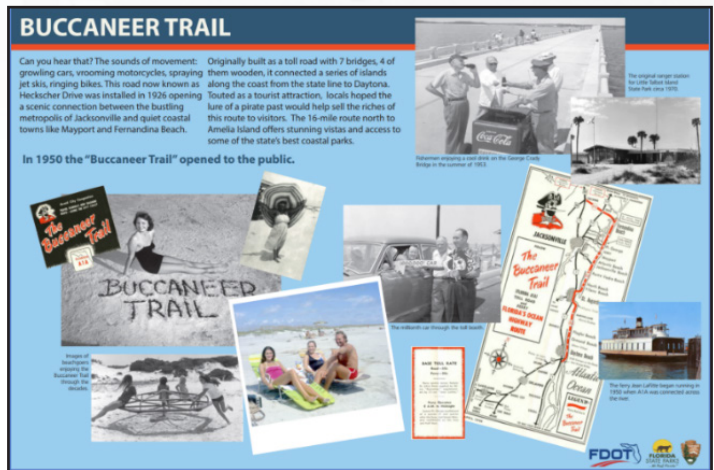
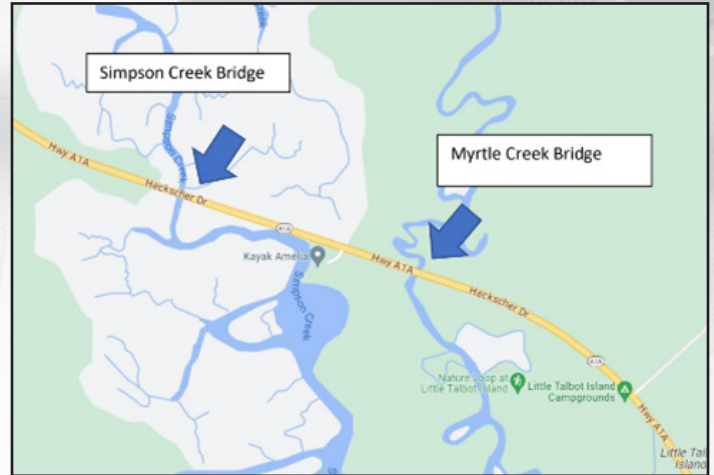
FDOT District Two recently completed a Project Development & Environment (PD&E) Study in 2018 to evaluate replacement options for two bridges and the construction of a portion of the Timucuan Trail along SR A1A - Heckscher Drive from Little Talbot Island to Big Talbot Island. This project is located on the **A1A Ocean Islands Trail Scenic Highway (OIT)** - north of Jacksonville. A PD&E study is an environmental and engineering process to identify social, economic, natural, and physical environmental effects that may be associated with a transportation project.

As part of this process, the FDOT consulted with the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) to identify any concerns related to existing historical and archaeological resources along this segment of A1A. This consultation determined that the bridges over Myrtle Creek and Simpson Creek were eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), which is the official list of the Nation's historic places worthy of preservation. These bridges are eligible for listing as contributing resources to the SR A1A highway corridor, which is also eligible for NRHP listing. As such, the replacement of these bridges may result in an adverse effect to these historic structures. Additionally, the Timucuan

Ecological and Historic Preserve, Little Talbot Island State Park, and Big Talbot Island State Park were identified as properties of special concern during this consultation.

While FDOT considered a number of rehabilitation/ no build options as part of this study, none corrected the bridge engineering issues of concern

and therefore replacement remained the preferred alternative. As a result, additional coordination was required with SHPO and the National Park Service (NPS) regarding appropriate bridge removal documentation methods. Concurrently, SHPO required that FDOT consult with the Timucuan Ecological and Historic Preserve as well



**WE WANT YOU** to submit articles to the FSHP blog, the **Byway Buzz!** You can access submittal forms [here](#) to include information, graphics, and photos for a blog post to highlight everything your byway has to offer, from upcoming events to intrinsic qualities.

## MOVING PEOPLE, CHANGING LANDS

Connections across land and time unite humanity. A need to explore, commute and learn drives us to create and improve transportation. In coastal communities, islanders must forge water crossings and navigate narrowways. Early Floridians, known as the Timucuan, established well-worn roads through forests and carved sturdy canoes to traverse the salt marsh creeks. Since then, generations of people have designed roads, bridges and vehicles to ease our movement across this watery landscape.

**Shaped By Nature and People**  
Wind, tides and storms continually shape these lands, but people can influence the process. Dredging maintains deep channels in the intercoastal waterway and St. Johns River. Rock jetties installed in the 1880s built up over two miles of new land on Little Talbot and created Huguenot Park!

**1562** Spanish colonists first establish a road through the salt marshes to connect the mainland to the island of Little Talbot.

**1880s** The first bridge is built across the Little Talbot River to connect the mainland to the island.

**1926** August 1926: The first road is built across the Little Talbot River to connect the mainland to the island.

**1950** The first road is built across the Little Talbot River to connect the mainland to the island.

**1952** Little Talbot Island State Park is established.

**1979** The first road is built across the Little Talbot River to connect the mainland to the island.

**1990s** The first road is built across the Little Talbot River to connect the mainland to the island.

**2000s** The first road is built across the Little Talbot River to connect the mainland to the island.

**2016** The first road is built across the Little Talbot River to connect the mainland to the island.

## Thousands of Years a Crossroads

Today when archaeologists find unique artifacts they wonder at the miles traveled and connections built to get that piece of history to this spot. As we continue to learn about the indigenous people of Northeast Florida, we discover that they were not only deeply connected to the coastal resources, but also to people from other regions.

This area has been home to people for thousands of years. Attracted to the rich natural resources, early inhabitants thrived on fish, plants, and especially oysters. From these, they formed shell mounds like the Grand Site Shell Ring (AD 900-1200). They were known as the Mocama which in the Timucuan language means "sea or ocean". The Mocama Timucuan village of Sarabady (AD 1500-1610) was a hub for people traveling along key waterways. Building dugout canoes, some so large they could hold over a dozen people, the Mocama traveled this area, and connected to larger trade networks as far west as the Mississippi.

Archaeology connects us to those who walked these trails before us.



as the Talbot Island State Park to address trail construction impacts associated with these facilities. These project coordination efforts resulted in FDOT establishing a project commitment to fund the creation of four informational panels along the byway that celebrate the historic role of SR A1A in the development of northeast Florida tourism.

The A1A Ocean Islands Trail Byway organization thanks FDOT and its agency partners for the thoroughness of their research and its transformation into educational tools that help enhance the visitor experience for those traveling SR A1A and the OIT byway.

**SAVE THE DATE**  
SATURDAY OCTOBER 28TH 2023

4th Annual  
2023  
Scenic Summer  
Heritage Byway  
FISH IN THE PAN  
BASS TOURNAMENT

SUMTERBYWAY.COM

**Fish-in-the-Pan a Success!**

The **Scenic Summer Heritage Byway** Organization held their fourth annual fishing tournament in October. The *Fish-in-the-Pan Fishing*

Tournament, held at the historic Pana Vista Lodge located on Lake Panasoffkee attracted fishing enthusiasts from around the region. A record, 30 fishing teams entered this year's event. Participants arrived at the fish camp early and stayed late. Boats were on the lake at sunrise and the afternoon was dedicated to telling stories about the "one that got away", fish weigh-in, prize drawings and the announcement of event awards. It appeared that all boats involved caught fish or at least enjoyed a beautiful day on the water. At the completion of the tournament, participants were offered lunch sponsored by the byway organization in partnership with Fenney Grill a favorite local restaurant.



Participation in this byway fundraiser has grown each year since it began. Proceeds from the event help support the byway organization's mission, with some of the proceeds being banked for possible use in the organization's community giving program. Community events like these offer numerous benefits including;

- ◆ **Education:** Introduces the community to the mission of the byway organization.
- ◆ **Escape:** Catching fish offers an escape from the challenges of life - and what better way to enjoy a fall day.
- ◆ **Fund Raising:** Raising funds - even for a good cause can, at times can be secondary to the overall event experience.
- ◆ **Economic Development:** local community investment

The byway organization holds two major fundraisers on a yearly basis. Their fall fishing tournament and their springtime; *Clays-2-Raise* skeet shooting event. You can find out more about the byway and these events on the Sumter Facebook page via the QR code link.



# BYWAY LEADER INTERVIEW

**Name:** Ingrid McClellan

**Byway:** Bradenton Beach Byway, Palma Sola Byway and Tamiami Trail - Windows to Gulf Coast Waters Byway

**Position:** Chairperson, Vice Chairperson and Vice Chairperson respectively

Ingrid has been married for more than 30 years to her husband Rusty. They like to travel, garden and recreate on the water. Ingrid uses her education and expertise in mass communications, natural resources and science education to assist Florida's citizens in enhancing their community environments from shorelines to urban forests, and in striving to be good stewards of God's creations. She is the Executive Director Emeritus of Keep Manatee Beautiful Inc., the Keep America Beautiful nonprofit affiliate for Manatee County, after being their director for 22 years. She has served on the City of Bradenton Tree and Land Preservation Board, Manatee County Environmental Lands Management and Acquisition Committee, and Manatee Chamber of Commerce Natural Resources Committee. Currently, she is a board member for Citizens for a Scenic Florida Inc. and coordinator for the Scenic Manatee Advisory Committee.

**How long have you been part of the Florida Scenic Highways Program?**

Since 2002

**Tell us about your experience volunteering with the Florida Scenic Highways Program:**

My involvement began in 2002 as Co-Chairperson of the Tamiami Trail - Windows to Gulf Coast Waters Byway with the City of Sarasota Co-Chairperson Dennis Daughters, when we completed its Eligibility Application then Designation Application. In 2003, I became a member of the Palma Sola Byway to complete its Designation Application and many projects thereafter! In 2011, I became a member of the Bradenton Beach Byway to help it become a Tree City USA and many trees have been planted on this Byway. What initially attracted you to the Scenic Byways? I observed how this designation preserves and enhances



*Ingrid McClellan*

the valuable intrinsic resources in Manatee County.

**What are the intrinsic qualities of your byway that make it unique?**

Each of these three scenic highways has all of the intrinsic qualities - archaeological, cultural, historic, natural, recreational and scenic.

**What has been your favorite project to work on as part of your involvement with the byways?**

Preserving and enhancing the natural and scenic resources of the Byways, and meeting incredible, like-minded people. What is one piece of advice you would give to other Scenic Byway organizations based on your experience? Change and working with multiple organizations takes much time, so be patient and persistent!

**What does the future look like for your byways?**

The future looks great! The Palma Sola Byway's extension application to connect to the Bradenton Beach Byway was approved this year, so there is much to accomplish. The Byway committees of Bradenton Beach and Tamiami Trail are revitalized with eager members.

**Which byway would you most like to visit (besides your own!) and why?**

The Ridge Byway because you are driving on some of the highest elevations in Florida.

**Any final thoughts?**

I am grateful to be involved with this great program.



*Boats, bikes, pedestrians and vehicles all use the Longboat Pass bridge, which connects Anna Maria Island and Longboat Key.*