



DEP TRAIL TOWN PROGRAM

Anna Hopkins

Office of Greenways and Trails

Florida Department of Environmental Protection

Florida Scenic Highways Program Annual Meeting | March 7, 2024



THE OFFICE OF GREENWAYS AND TRAILS

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

The Office of Greenways and Trails was established to fulfill the Florida Greenways and Trails Act...

To ... *"conserve, develop and use the natural resources of this state for healthful and recreational purposes"*.

[Florida Greenways and Trails Act, Chapter 260, Florida Statutes \(F.S.\)](#)





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Florida Greenways and Trails Council (FGTC)

- Established in Chapter 260.0142, F.S.
- Advises the department on greenway spaces and trail related issues.
- Promotes intergovernmental cooperation and private partnerships for developing the greenways and trails system.
- Recommends priorities for critical links in developing and managing the system.





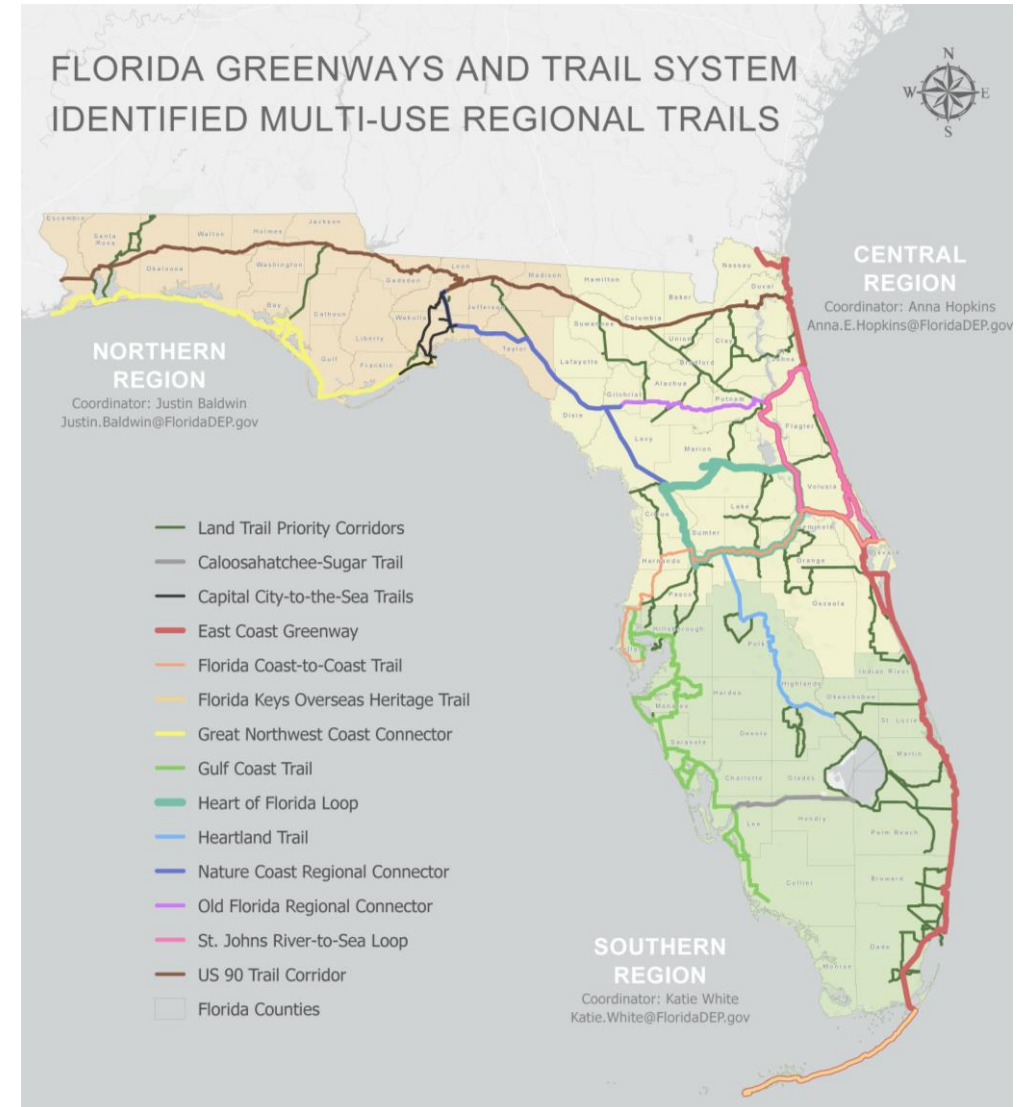
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Florida's Greenways and Trails System Includes:

- 1,500-mile Florida National Scenic Trail.
- 1,515-mile Florida Circumnavigational Saltwater Paddling Trail.
- 250-mile Florida Coast-to-Coast Trail.
- 260-mile St. Johns River-to-Sea Loop.
- 270-mile Gulf Coast Trail.

... And much more.



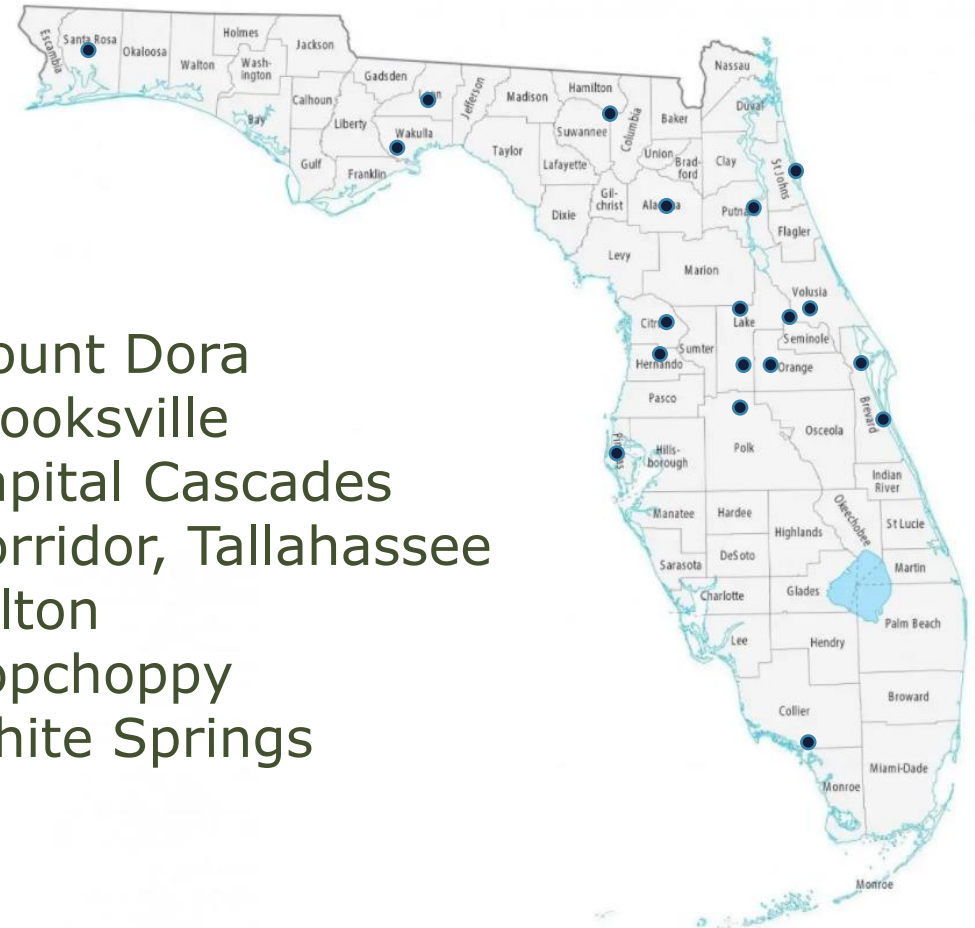


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Florida's Designated Trail Towns

- Dunedin
- Titusville
- Malabar
- Vilano Beach
- Clermont
- Palatka
- Inverness
- Deltona
- Everglades City
- Winter Garden
- Depot Park, Gainesville
- DeBary
- Winter Haven
- Mount Dora
- Brooksville
- Capital Cascades Corridor, Tallahassee
- Milton
- Sopchoppy
- White Springs



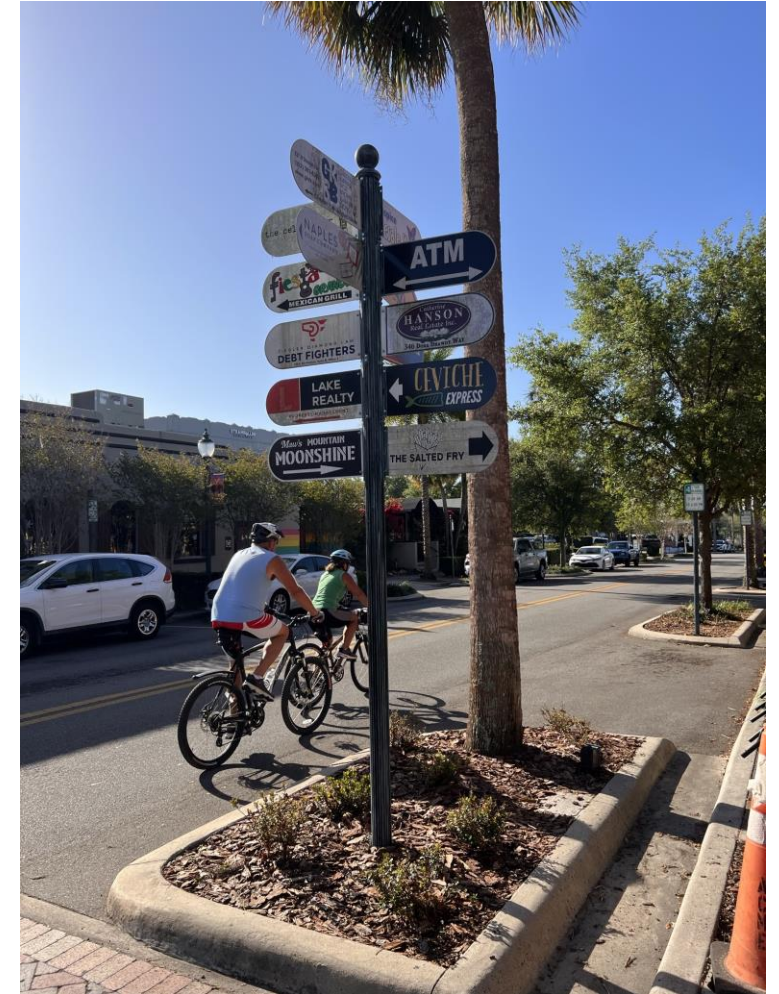


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Trail Towns on Scenic Byways

- **Vilano Beach** – A1A Scenic and Historic Coastal Byway
- **Mount Dora & Winter Garden** – Green Mountain Scenic Byway
- **Malabar & Titusville** – Indian River Lagoon National Scenic Byway
- **Debary** – River of Lakes Heritage Corridor





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Trail Town Goals:

- Enhance the quality of Florida's trail experience.
- Promote tourism and growth of Florida's trails and throughway towns.
- Increase the amount and frequency of trail users in Florida.
- Engage citizens with Florida's trail system through active community participation.





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What Makes a Trail Town?

- A portal, gateway or hub to a regional or priority trail or trail system.

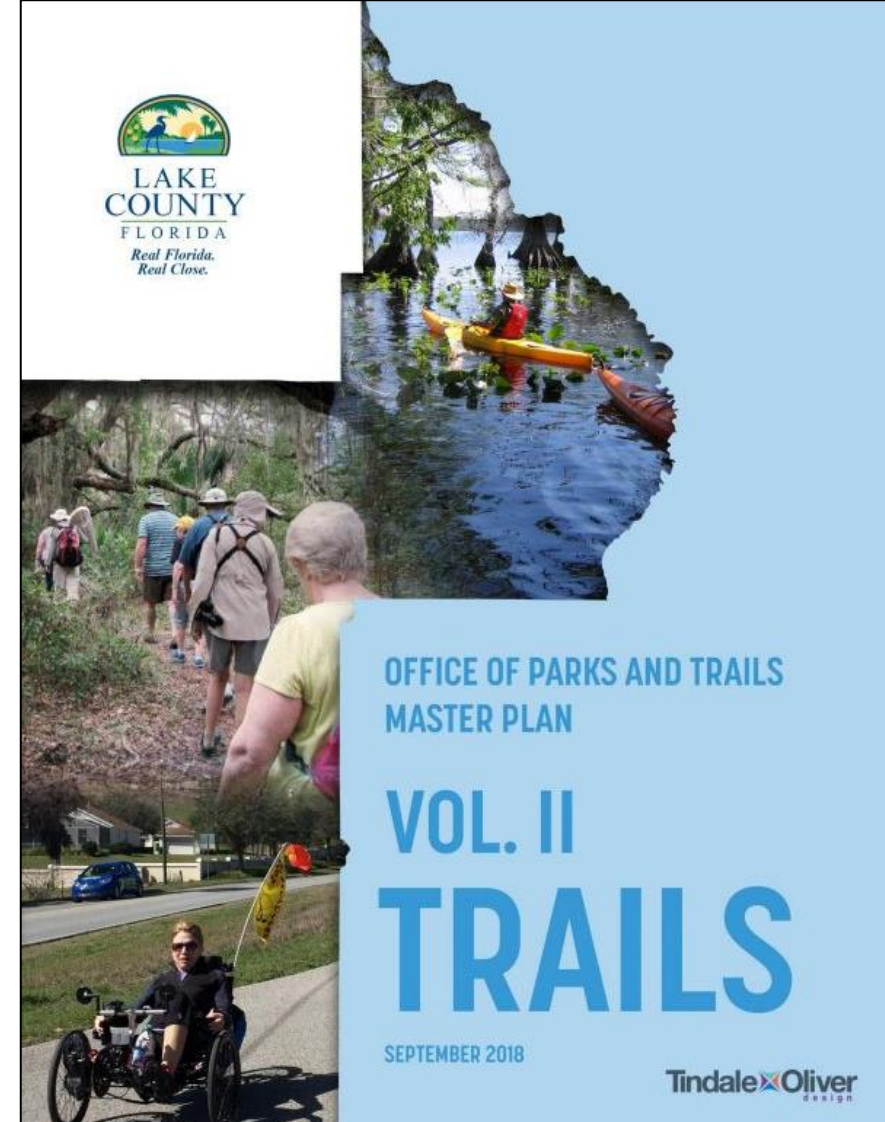
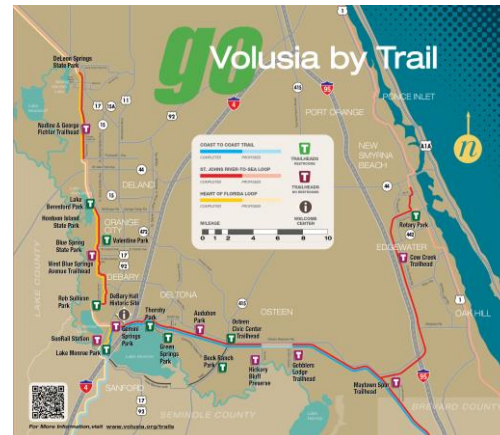




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What Makes a Trail Town?

- Trails and greenway action plan.
- Shared vision.
- Local business support – Trail Town business pledge.
- Social infrastructure.





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What Makes a Trail Town?

- Trail-related services and businesses such as:
 - Shuttles.
 - Supplies and gear for hiking, biking, paddling or horseback riding.
 - Rentals of canoes, kayaks or bikes.





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What Makes a Trail Town?

- Amenities for trail users that are safe and easily accessible such as:
 - Lodging.
 - Restaurants.
 - Points of Interest- museums, retail shops, etc.

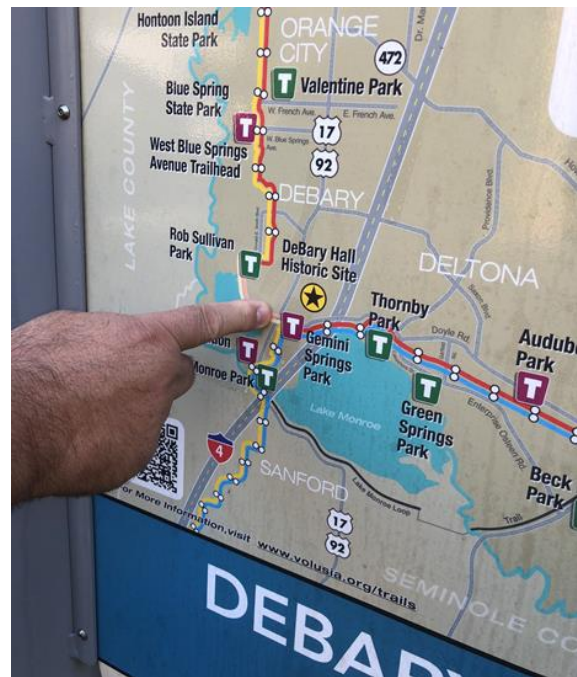




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What Makes a Trail Town?

- Clear directional signage on and to the trail.





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What Makes a Trail Town?

- “Trail friendly” experience with knowledgeable citizens who interact with visitors.
- Business owners and employees who can answer trail questions.





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What Makes a Trail Town?

- A variety of community events/competitions that promote the outdoors or involve local trails.





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What Makes a Trail Town?

- Provides a “sense of place”
 - Local citizens willing to share culture, history, and stories.
- Local trail users and local trail promotion.
- “Trail Champions” – standout citizen supporters.



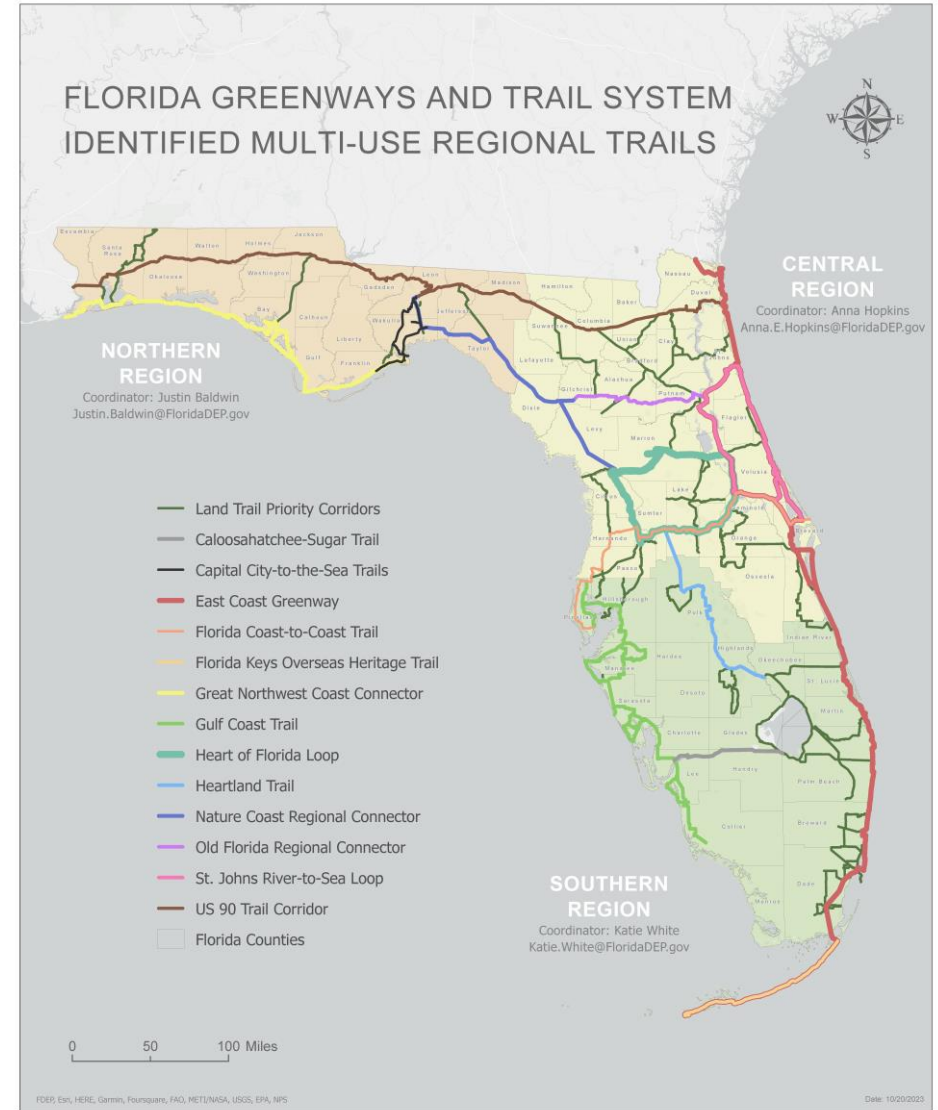


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Interested in becoming a Trail Town?

- Interested communities should contact their OGT Regional Coordinator to get started.





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The Trail Town Process:

Trail Town Questionnaire

Use the Self-Assessment to assist with completing the questionnaire.

Trail

What types of trails connect to or are located near your town? (hiking, biking, paddling, shared use non-motorized, multi-use, equestrian, etc.)

List any neighboring trails and their proximity to your town.

Who maintains your trail(s)? Please identify each trail and the manager.



2. OGT staff conduct a site visit with local trail advocates and planners after receiving an application.



3. After a town is approved, the Designation is presented to the Florida Greenways and Trails Council for official recognition.

1. Interested communities review the Trail Town Self-Assessment and complete the Questionnaire.



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The Trail Town Process



4. Designated Trail Towns receive plaques, stickers, website presence and publicity/promotion.



Brooksville: a Florida Trail Town

Equal parts historic & scenic, Brooksville offers trails with historic sites and adventure amongst the Spanish-moss draped oak streets.

5. Story Map tours are developed for each Trail Town and posted on the OGT website.



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Trail Town celebration events are great for publicity and community involvement.





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Legislation passed in 2023 directed Visit Florida to increase promotion of trails and Trail Towns.

[Webpage Link](#)

VISIT FLORIDA

BEACHES

PLACES TO GO

THINGS TO DO

DEALS

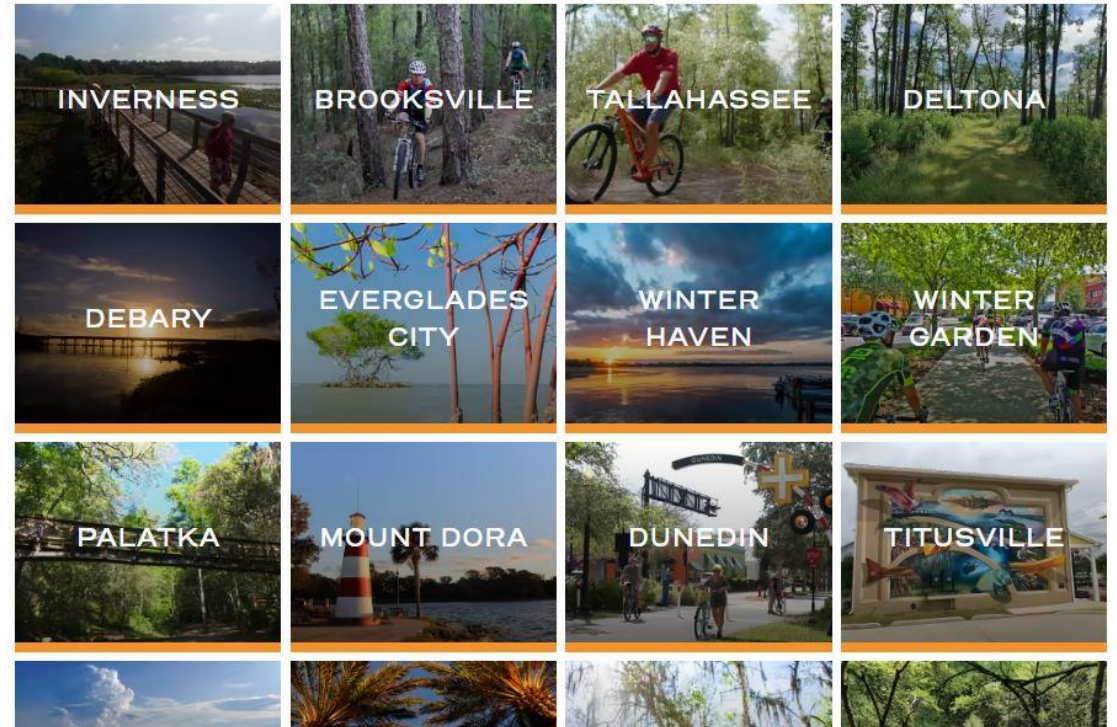
MORE

SHARE



TRAIL TOWNS

Trail Towns are friendly, vibrant communities located near long-distance recreational trails. When passing through, trail users can venture off the main path and become immersed into the different amenities and heritages of each town.





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Dunedin: Florida's Inaugural Trail Town

- Downtown business occupancy rose from 30% to 100% since the Pinellas Trail came through town.



"We couldn't be more proud. Our downtown has thrived around the trail and attracted folks of all ages and abilities. We like to think of the trail as the main artery of our community."

-Dunedin Mayor Julie Ward Bujalski



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The Dunedin Transformation



Early 1980s



Today



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Clermont Trail Town

- The midway point on the 250-mile Florida Coast-to-Coast Trail – Meet Us in the Middle Trailhead.
- City parks along the trail have restrooms, showers, and freshwater beach access on the lake. Entire trail within the city limits is lighted and has Wi-Fi access.





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Inverness Trail Town





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DeBary Trail Town

- Located at the intersection of three regional trails: the Coast-to-Coast, St. Johns River to Sea Loop, and Heart of Florida Loop.
- Dedicated ecotourism website.
- City of DeBary website features robust information on local trails including what businesses offer discounts to trail users.





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Winter Haven Trail Town

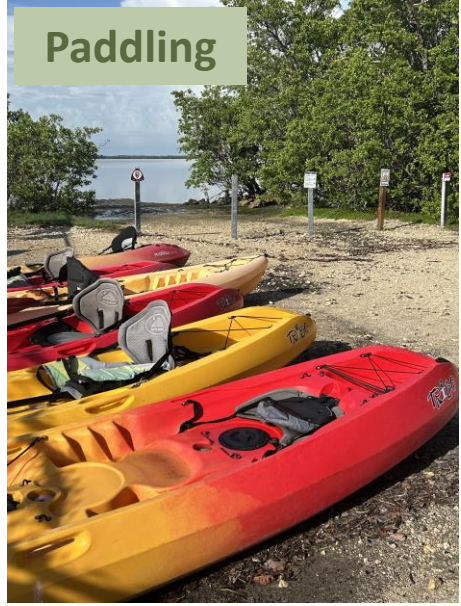




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Choose your adventure- there is a Trail Town for everyone!



Paddling



Biking



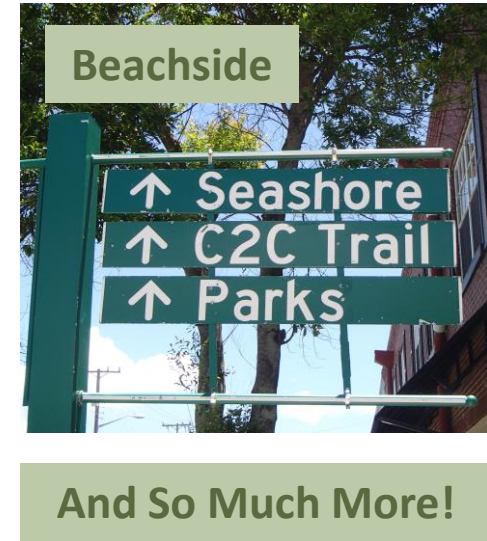
Small Town



Developed City



Lakeside



Beachside

And So Much More!



THANK YOU

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