



NOTICE TO OUR FLORIDA TRAIL COMMUNITY:



Together, we will do all we can to reduce the spread and severity of COVID-19

PLEASE REVIEW THE SAFETY PRECAUTIONS LISTED BELOW

The Florida Trail Association is closely monitoring the spread of COVID-19 (commonly referred to as "Corona Virus") to ensure we are taking the appropriate actions, not only for our staff, but also for the community of volunteers and hikers who actively use and work on the Trail. We have been working in close collaboration with other National Scenic Trails, as well as our US Forest Service partners to ensure we are providing the most prudent and relevant information for members of the hiking community.

After careful consideration, the FTA board has made the decision to cancel and/or postpone all in-person events, including but not limited to activity hikes, trail maintenance, chapter meetings, and other meetings, until May 1. During this time, trail work done by an individual would not fall

under the US Forest Service sponsored volunteer agreement, and therefore would not be covered by US Forest Service liability insurance. We will reevaluate the circumstances and update our community if this recommendation will be extended beyond May.

In addition, the FTA office in Gainesville has been closed to the public until further notice. With more FTA staff working remotely, you may notice some delays in our ability to process orders from the FTA store, process new memberships, and respond to questions. Thank you in advance for your patience.

If you are currently hiking the trail, or soon planning to start a long distance hike, please consider the following precautions drafted by our friends at the Appalachian Trail Conservancy:

- Wash your hands frequently with biodegradable soap at least 200 feet from water sources. When soap is not available, use hand sanitizer that contains 60-95% alcohol.
- Avoid sharing food. Do not eat out of the same food bag, share utensils or drink from other hikers' water bottles.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
- Cover your mouth when coughing or sneezing. Use the crook of your arm (inner elbow) or use a tissue and dispose of it using Leave No Trace Principles.
- Keep some distance between you and other hikers whenever possible, especially if anyone shows signs of being sick. Avoid shaking hands or other close contact — instead, elbow bumps or waving are safer ways to greet others.
- Avoid congregating in groups along the Trail.
- If you are an older adult or have serious chronic medical conditions like heart disease, diabetes, or lung disease, you are at a higher risk of serious complications from COVID-19 disease. Hike and camp away from others to minimize the likelihood of infection.
- If you begin to feel sick, stay away from others and get off the Trail until examined and cleared for return to the Trail by a medical professional.
- If you are planning to begin a long-distance hike in the next six weeks, you must be prepared — mentally and financially — to self-quarantine in a private hotel room for at least two weeks if you think you are exposed to the virus and/or begin to develop symptoms. Traveling home from the trail to self-quarantine would be ill-advised and would endanger those around you and people on your route home.

If you are diagnosed with COVID-19 after hiking the trail, please email communications@floridatrail.org so we can take the necessary steps to alert land managers and other entities along the trail.

Thank you for your passion and commitment to the Florida Trail. Together we'll do all we can to reduce the spread and severity of COVID-19.