

Florida's Greenways and Trails record 10 million annual visitors

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Gil Ziffer

The Florida State Parks Foundation congratulates Florida's Greenways and Trails System for hosting 10 million visitors during the last financial year, which concluded at the end of June 2020.

"During this period of restrictions and social distancing due to COVID-19, it is very encouraging to see that people are taking advantage of all Florida's state parks, greenways, and trails and turning out in record numbers," said Gil Ziffer, Foundation President.

The most popular trail is the Marjorie Harris Carr Cross Florida Greenway, a remarkable environmental success story that covers more than 71,000 acres and is enjoyed annually by more than three million visitors.

The 110-mile, multi-use linear park runs from the Gulf of Mexico to the St. Johns River and in places is more than a mile wide. The trail welcomes exercise enthusiasts and casual visitors alike, with plenty of outdoor recreation activities for everyone from hikers, paddlers, and mountain bikers to young families with strollers and friends enjoying a refreshing walk through nature.

According to the American Heart Association, outdoor activities such as walking, hiking, and paddling, can reduce the risk of heart disease, stroke, and diabetes while also supporting stress relief and mental health.

The Office of Greenways and Trails, within the Division of Recreation and Parks, works with stakeholders throughout the state to plan and implement the state's greenways and trails system, considered one of the best in the nation. There are more than 7,500 miles of land-based trails in Florida and an additional 4,000 miles of designated paddling trails to enjoy.

The Foundation, founded in 1993 as Friends of Florida State Parks and renamed in 2018, is a

501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation whose mission is to support and help sustain the Florida Park Service, its 175 award-winning parks and trails, local Friends groups and more than 20,000 park volunteers.

It does this through programs that preserve and protect state parks, educate visitors about the value of state parks, encourage community engagement and active use of state parks, and advocacy.

The volunteer Board of Directors represents private and public sectors as well as local and statewide interests.

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