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County Commission assists Inglis in trail grant request



Marilyn Ladner shows the County Commission the map as Mayor Drinda Merritt speaks. County Coordinator Wilbur Dean is seen in the background.

Story and Photo

By Jeff M. Hardison © Nov. 8, 2017 at 4:17 p.m.

BRONSON -- An item that was not on the agenda **Tuesday morning (Nov. 7)** received a 4-0 vote of approval from the Levy County Commission.

After first agreeing 4-0 to hear the non-agenda item, the County Commission moved forward. Commissioner Rock Meeks was absent.

Inglis Mayor Drinda Merritt asked the County Commission to allow Grant Coordinator Tisha Whitehurst to work with the Town of Inglis for a feasibility study to be conducted in regard to the town's connection to Sun Trails.

The Florida Shared-Use Non-motorized (SUN) Trail Network is authorized under Florida Statutes.

The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) is directed to make use of its expertise in efficiently providing transportation projects to develop a statewide system of paved non-motorized trails as a component of the Florida Greenways and Trails System (FGTS), which is planned by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP).

FDOT is soliciting new proposals for funding Regional Trail System and Individual Trail projects through the Shared-Use Non-motorized (SUN) Trail program for inclusion in the Tentative Five-Year Work Program development cycle. Projects programmed for this cycle will be funded as early as Fiscal Years 2023/2024.

To receive consideration for SUN Trail funding, the District Trail Coordinator must receive a

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separate, complete "Request for Funding" for each eligible Regional or Individual Trail project with applicable information, including the prioritization, and required signatures beginning Oct. 5 and no later than 5 p.m. Eastern Standard Time (EST) on Dec. 15.

The FGTS currently includes the bike trails between Levy, Dixie and Gilchrist counties, with trailheads in Chiefland, Trenton and Cross City at former railroad depots. The Rails To Trails program led to this aspect of the Florida State Park System.

Withlacoochee Gulf Area Chamber Of Commerce President Marilyn Ladner joined Mayor Merritt as the map-holder for the presentation.

When County Commission Chairman John Meeks asked Whitehurst if she had time to help in this project, she said she is able to fit it into her work schedule.

In a matter related to recreation in Inglis, **County Coordinator Wilbur Dean announced that everyone is invited to the FDEP, Division of Recreation and Parks meeting in the Inglis Community Center on Nov. 16 from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m.**