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Trail Enhancement



In advance of the Tour de Melon Ride, which was planned for Saturday (June 1), Park Services Specialist Roy Ficht of Fanning Springs State Park (left) and Park Services Specialist Kirk Marhefka of the Nature Coast State Trail (a Florida Park) add new literature and spruce up the kiosk at the Chiefland City Park on the east side of Main Street (U.S Highway 19) and Southwest Second Avenue on Friday (May 31).

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Park Services Specialist Kirk Marhefka of the Nature Coast State Trail puts up information. The Tour de Melon Ride is a bicycle event where people can ride for any number of miles, including 100 miles, as a fundraiser for the Rotary Club of Suwannee Valley. The ride was set to start at 7:30 a.m. on Saturday from Charles Strickland Recreational Park 2340 Old Fannin Road, in Chiefland. As noted on the Florida State Parks website, In the early 1900s, trains were replacing the steamship as the freight and passenger carrier throughout the Suwannee River Valley. Today, visitors can retrace this historic route of the Atlantic Coastline Railroad, traversing 32 miles of Florida's beautiful Nature Coast region. Officially part of Florida's Greenways and Trails System, this state trail also has been designated as a National Recreation Trail. It consists of two primary alignments built along abandoned railroad lines that intersect at Wilcox Junction, connecting the communities of Cross City, Trenton, Fanning Springs and Chiefland. As funding becomes available, the trail will extend approximately nine miles east from Trenton toward Newberry. Among the trail's highlights is the Historic Suwannee River Railroad Bridge which is east of the Old Town Trailhead. These two parks specialists were in the area where the annual Chiefland Watermelon Festival was held Saturday (June 1).

Photos by Jeff M. Hardison © June 2, 2019 at 11:19 a.m.