

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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**East Coast Greenway Alliance awarded Bikes Belong Coalition Grant -  
East Coast Trail Network to be Advanced in Florida**

Rich Olken, Executive Director of Bikes Belong Coalition, announced today a grant to the East Coast Greenway Alliance for their work developing a network of bike paths in Florida. The East Coast Greenway (ECG), a trail connecting cities, is projected to be 2600 miles long. Some 700 miles of that will be in the Sunshine State.

Many Florida communities have been hard at work for years creating facilities for bicyclists and pedestrians. The integration of these pathways into a continuous network will be a great boon for recreation and transportation, will reduce roadway congestion and auto-related air pollution, and will create a new facility for Florida's tourism industry.

"The East Coast Greenway is an exciting project, furthering Florida's own efforts to connect natural and urban communities through a system of greenways and trails," said Deborah Parrish, Director of FL DEP's Office of Greenways and Trails. "This 'super-connector' will provide tremendous recreational, environmental and alternative transportation benefits to Florida and its east coast partner states."

Designated as one of only 16 National Millennium Trails last year by the White House and the US Department of Transportation, the ECG is recognized as one of the boldest and most far-reaching planning projects currently underway on the eastern seaboard.

"The ECG will be the centerpiece of a statewide multi-user trail system identified as a state goal through the State Trails and Greenways planning process recently completed," said Lys Burden, a member of the Advisory Board for the Florida Bicycling Association. "It will provide a safe and appealing north-south spine route for both local cyclists and tourists within this heavily populated corridor. The ECG vision will help marshal support for completion of bicycle facilities along the A1A corridor, and for the upgrading of existing segments, many of which do not meet current standards."

Florida's section of the ECG will connect urban centers of the Atlantic coast, including Key West, Miami, Daytona Beach, and Jacksonville. Other cities connected by the ECG include Savannah, Raleigh, Washington DC, Philadelphia, New York, and Boston. Currently, 25 trail segments in seven states are parts of the network.

"Our vision for an off-road multi-user trail linking all of the east coast cities from Maine to Florida is rapidly taking shape," said Karen Votava, Executive Director of the ECGA. "This week we designated over 700 additional miles of the ECG, including 24.7 miles in Florida. Funding from Bikes Belong will help in our efforts to define our specific trail route and to capture the transportation funds needed to plan and build the trail."

The East Coast Greenway Alliance, formed nine years ago, is well recognized and respected for its advocacy and partnership building work relating to creation of off-road opportunities for muscle-powered transportation and recreation. They project that the ECG will be in place as an 80% off-road route by the year 2010. For more information, visit [www.greenway.org](http://www.greenway.org) or email [ecga@juno.com](mailto:ecga@juno.com).

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