

Florida Paddling Trails Association
Trail Keeper Responsibilities & Guidelines

Draft

Revised July 16, 2014

This document defines the responsibilities of the Florida Paddling Trails Association (FPTA) Trail Keepers and provide guidelines for working on water trails and with other trails & organizations. Please note there are Trail Keepers for both the Florida Circumnavigational Saltwater Paddling Trail (CT) and for rivers.

A. Organization of the Florida Paddling Trails Assn (FPTA)

1. For organizational purposes, the FPTA has divided the state of Florida into 32 segments which are grouped into 15 regions - lettered A thru O. Each region has two or three segments. Each region has a Director who appoints trail keepers for both the CT and any portion of rivers within their region. The Director also organizes and directs his/her Trail Keepers. See map in Attachment A for location of segments and regions.

B. Assignment/ Appointment of Trail Keepers:

It is the responsibility of the Regional Director to appoint Trail Keepers in his/ her region for both the CT and for rivers. For the CT the goal is to have two Trail Keepers per segment. Qualifications to be a Trail Keeper are:

- 1) Should be a member of the Florida Paddling Trails Association.
- 2) The Trail Keepers can either be an individual or a club/organization.
- 3) Responsible adults who have a passion for the environment and paddling should be selected.

C. Responsibilities of Trail Keepers

THIS IS A COMPLETE LIST OF THINGS WHICH A TRAIL KEEPER COULD DO. EACH TRAIL KEEPER IS ASKED TO DO WHAT THEY CAN.

Mission of FPTA	Trail Keeper Responsibilities
<p>1. Develop Water Trails</p> <p>Monitoring and improvement of the trail</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collect information about the trail for our web site (launch sites, sights to see, places to eat, etc) • Monitor campsites annually in your trail segment along the CT and other water trails. Perform litter cleanup, clear vegetation only within established area of the campsite footprint. Report problems to land manager of the property, Regional Director and Office of Greenways & Trails (OGT) Paddling Trail Coordinator at 850-245-2079 	<p>The Regional Director or OGT Director will provide specific instructions on which trail improvements need to be made. Most of this work can be done on your regular paddles.</p>

<p>b. Coordinate with land managers along the trail</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Work with public land managers, Regional Director and Paddling Trail Coordinator on new campsites, launches and trail amenities ○ Learn when management plans will be updated/revised and become involved in the process ○ Coordinate with land managers about campsite monitoring and clean-ups ○ Notify OGT Paddling Trail Coordinator if private landowners or businesses are willing to provide camping opportunities so the CT guide can be updated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Work with the government agency that manages land where we need a trail improvement (e.g. campsite improvement or launch site). b. Notify the Regional Director and other FPTA officers of specific needs & and issues within your region.
<p>2. Protect the Environment The major areas on which we will concentrate are:</p> <p>a. Cleanup Events</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Monitor campsites & and partner with others to initiate cleanup events 2) Ocean Conservancy Intercoastal Cleanup 3) National Public Lands Day <p>b. Paddler Environmental Toolkit: detect environmental problems – solve the small problems & and report the big ones</p>	<p>The Trail Keepers will receive environmental training which can lead to improved water trail environment.</p>
<p>3. Resource and Voice for Paddlers</p> <p>a. Work with the paddling community</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Identify trails in each region 2) Paddle clubs, outfitters & and government agencies 	<p>a. Complete Trip Reports for all water trails in your region and add to the FPTA web site.</p>
<p>b. Help develop a fraternal network of paddlers within Florida</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Trail Keeper’s email addresses will be available to FPTA members to provide “local knowledge” to fellow paddlers using the trail. 2) Work to have the FPTA web site become a “one-stop” site for places to paddle in Florida. 	<p>a. Help paddlers who request knowledge about their trail.</p>
<p>c. Provide opportunities for FPTA members to volunteer to communicate & help: Develop kayak interest groups as needed for the future.</p>	

Other miscellaneous duties include:

- Assist with marketing the trail.
- Assist with trail fund-raisers.
- Assist with trail and environmental education.
- Attend Regional Meetings of Trail Keepers.
- Join other FPTA members in the annual election of their Regional Director.

D. Partnering With Other Organizations

FPTA Trail Keepers should realize that everyone in our organization is a volunteer. As a volunteer organization, the FPTA has no real authority to make demands or insist on changes with any other organization, trail, park or government agency. Therefore, our approach must be, “We are volunteers. An extra set of hands. How may we help you?”

When dealing with others, change can be difficult because stakeholders, including land managers, often have a vested interest in keeping things the way they are. One of the advantages of belonging to a statewide organization like the FPTA is that within our organization we can often find someone who knows how we can start to make change happen. When a difficult problem or change is needed, we need to make sure that the Regional Directors, other Board members and the President are involved in the discussion.

E. Updating FPTA Web Site Information

At this time there are many websites with information about the Florida’s water trails.

- a. **Office of Greenways & Trails** designated paddling trails includes the Florida Circumnavigational Saltwater Paddling Trail (CT): www.dep.state.fl.us/gwt/paddling/saltwater.htm which provides campsite numbering & maps with logistics and technical information about the trail. Also interactive maps and guides for Florida’s 49 designated paddling trails are available at: www.dep.state.fl.us/gwt/guide/paddle.htm. Sending updates to the OGT Paddling Trail Coordinator will help keep the information current on maps and segment guides for the CT and state paddling trails.
- b. **Florida Paddling Trails Association** web site found at: www.floridapaddlingtrails.com. This is the web site of the FPTA which has links to all Florida water trails. It will be dynamic and change frequently with information about the organization, Trail Keepers and details about the trail. Trail Keepers are responsible for updating certain “Trail Information” portions of the web site:
 - i. Campsites
 - ii. Facilities
 - iii. Launches
 - iv. Points of Interest

Separate procedures, under Volunteer on the web site, have been written which instruct the Trail Keeper how to do this. If you need assistance contact your Regional Director.

F. Frequently Asked Questions:

1. Just what does a Trail Keeper do?

In a summary of Trail Keeper responsibilities it could be said that they:

- Monitor campsites annually along the CT and maintain other water trails. Perform litter cleanup, clear vegetation only within established area of the campsite footprint. Report problems to land manager of the property, Regional Director and OGT Paddling Trail Coordinator at 850-245-2079
- Improve the **environment** along water trails
- Act as a **resource & voice** for Florida paddlers. This includes building a stronger paddling community.

2. How can I receive environmental training?

The FPTA offers a one day course called Environmental Toolkit Training. The course is scheduled when a region has a minimum of ten people who wish to take the course. The course is free for FPTA members. Contact your Regional Director or the FPTA President to determine if and when training will be available to you.

3. All of these missions/ objectives seem like a lot to do. What do I do if I am not sure if I have enough time?

Each Region works as a team with a Regional Director as the team leader. Each Trail Keeper can do a little or a lot, depending on the time that you have. It is not necessary that each Trail Keeper do everything for the region. The amount that you do is up to you and your Regional Director. We are a voluntary organization and would like our Trail Keepers to have fun while helping. Our goal is that during a normal paddle you can accomplish things which will move your Region forward – one step at a time.

4. Why do you need so many Trail Keepers for each region?

There are a number of reasons for this:

- a. This is a volunteer position, so we want people to be able to easily work their responsibilities into their schedule without any strain.
- b. Each region has many water trails – including both river and coastal trails. Many helping hands makes it easier for Trail Keepers to monitor the trails.

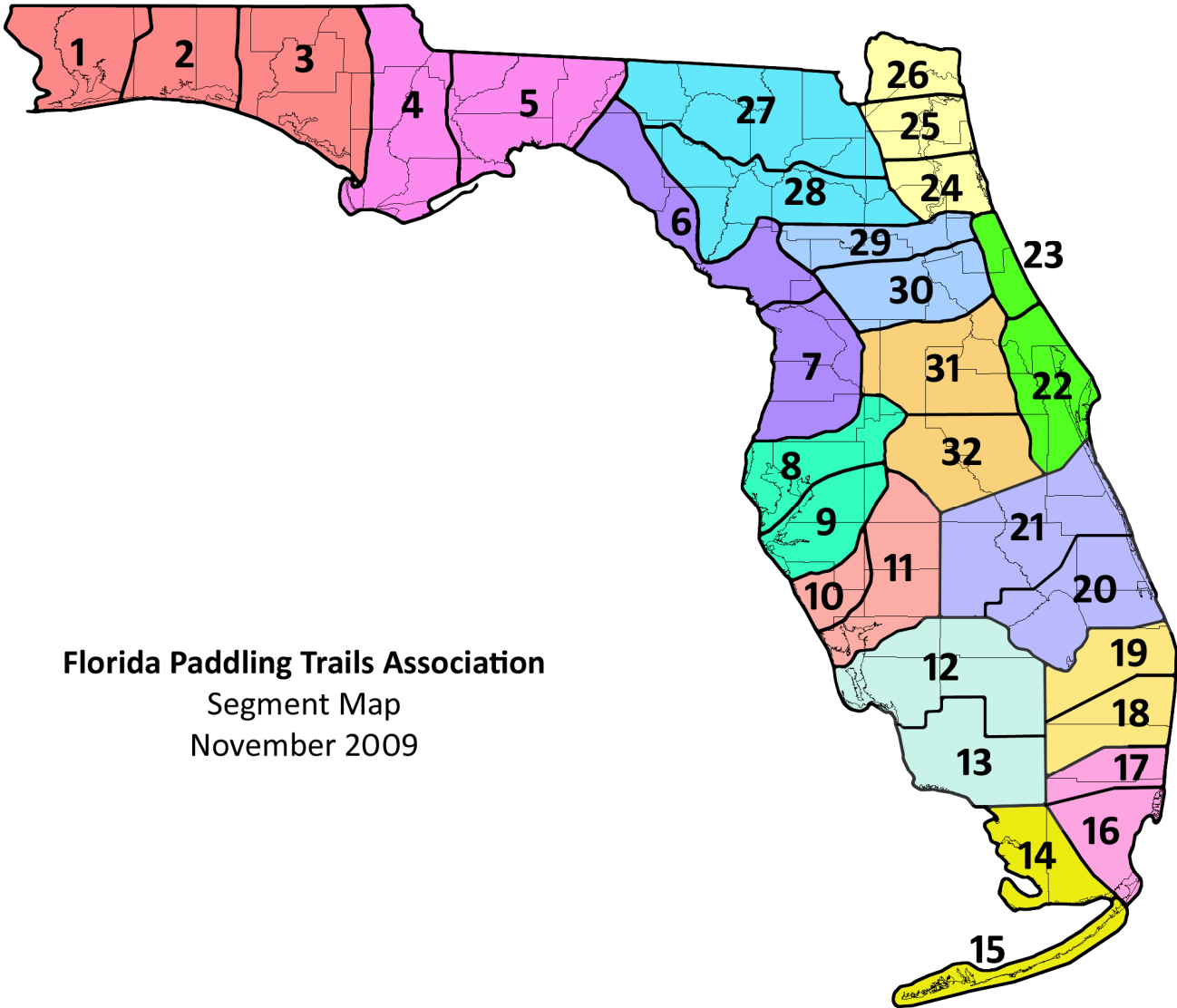
5. Do all Trail Keepers need to take the Environmental Training?

The Environmental Training will be worked into the FPTA one Region at a time. We hope that eventually all Trail Keepers will receive this training. However, at this time it is not a requirement to be a Trail Keeper or other volunteer for the FPTA.

G. Attachments:

- Map showing segments and regions for the FPTA (Attachment A)
- Volunteer information form (Attachment B)
- Liability release form (Attachment C) - If required by Regional Director for specific projects.

Attachment A
FPTA Map of Segments & Regions
Colors denote different regions



Florida Paddling Trails Association
Segment Map
November 2009

Attachment B
Florida Paddling Trails Association
Volunteer Information

Name _____

Home Address _____

Phone: _____ **Email:** _____

Reason For Attending This Meeting: _____

Which Trail Section Are You Most Interested in Working With: _____ (Section No. – refer to map on website: www.dep.state.fl.us/gwt/paddling/saltwater.htm)

Or:

Which River Are You Most Interested in Working With: _____.

In Which Area(s) Are You willing to help (circle as many as applicable):

Maintain Trails

Raise funds for FPTA

Board Member/Office in FPTA

Raise awareness of trails

Help with marketing FPTA

Give presentations to interested groups and organizations

Other (please specify): _____

