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## Trail advocates meet to celebrate the St Johns River-to-Sea Loop

DELAND -- Supporters of the longest loop trail in Florida will meet October 26-28, 2017, in DeLand, for the St Johns River-to-Sea Loop (SJR2C) Summit and Celebration – an event that will target completion of the 260-mile St. Johns River-to-Sea Loop by 2025.

It's the first meeting of the five Loop counties -- Volusia, Putnam, St. Johns, Flagler and Brevard -- since last year's commitment by the Florida Department of Transportation to build the trail to completion.

St Johns River-to-Sea Loop Summit  
October 26-28, 2017



That commitment spurred formation of the nonprofit St. Johns River-to-Sea Loop Alliance that will host the three-day event.

Chief FDOT planner and former Office of Greenways and Trails Chief Jim Wood will keynote the Community Outreach Day October 27.

"Jim is exactly the 'big picture' leader that our audience – visionaries to cyclists -- needs to hear from," said Alliance President Maggie Ardito.

Ardito expects economic development directors, planners, landscape architects, business people and others to attend.

When complete, the loop will be the most connected paved trail in Florida with links to the East Coast Greenway and the Florida Coast-to-Coast Trail. Currently, land for the loop is 63 percent acquired; the trail is 31 percent complete and otherwise 22 percent programmed from preliminary design and environmental review to engineering and construction.

“We want to stimulate trail-oriented development and use from Titusville to Palatka, from DeBary to St Augustine by drawing local cyclists and affluent, ecologically aware travelers from around the world,” said Ardito, SJR2C Alliance president.

“It’s all about safer, healthier, more active lifestyles for everyone. We want to fulfill the trail’s promise.”

The three-day summit is open to the public and will include an afternoon “Taste of the Loop” tour, ride and dinner (10/26), the community outreach panel and presentations day (10/27), and will end with a family-fun Great DeLand Pumpkin Ride and Safety Village at Bill Dreggors Park (10/28).

- Open sections include DeBary to Osteen, Orange City to Beresford Park, DeLeon Springs to west of DeLand, and north-south through Flagler County.
- By summer 2018, the closing of gaps in the SR 207 corridor will complete a 22-mile section just west from I-95 to Palatka, a distance of 22 miles.
- By fall 2018, Volusia County will close a critical gap between Blue Spring State Park and DeBary Station, where SunRail already connects Orlando cyclists to the trail.



Thursday morning of the summit (10/26), an invitation-only program organized by the East Central Florida Regional Planning Council and backed by a \$75,000 technical assistance grant from the Department of Economic Opportunity will start work on a strategic plan that will encompass safety issues and branding and marketing among topics.

For more information about the summit, visit: <http://www.sjr2c.org>. For questions about the SJR2C Alliance, contact Ardito at [maggie@sjr2c.org](mailto:maggie@sjr2c.org).

Summit sponsors include Florida Hospital Fish Memorial, City of Titusville, England-Thims & Miller, Landis Evans Partners, Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, Dixie Crossroads and Volusia County. Additional sponsors for Saturday’s events include the Deland Area Chamber of Commerce, FDOT and the River to Sea and Space Coast Transportation Organizations.

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10/9/17

Attached photo: Trail Advocates Plan St Johns River-to-Sea Loop Summit

Seated: Maggie Ardito, Pat Northey

Standing: Jack Knicely, Georgia Turner, Jim Ardito, Steve Tonjes, Pamela Blankenship

