III. Trails Network Assessment

1.0 Greenways and Trails

A “greenway” is described as a linear open space established along either a natural corridor, such as a riverfront, stream valley, or ridge-line, or over land along a railroad right of way converted to recreational use, a canal, a scenic road, or other route; any natural or landscaped course for pedestrian or bicycle passage; an open space connector linking parks, natural reserves, cultural features, or historic sites with each other and populated areas; or a local strip or linear park designated as a parkway or greenbelt.

Trails are defined as linear corridors and any adjacent support parcels on land or water providing public access for recreation or authorized alternative modes of transportation. Trails are a common recreational component of greenways.

The Florida Greenways and Trails System has its roots in the Florida Recreational Trails System, the Florida Canoe Trail System, and the public parks, forests, refuges, wildlife management areas, and water management areas created to protect Florida’s natural heritage. On the local level, Lake County’s trails initiative will mesh nicely with the State’s overall planned greenways and trails system. Several major state greenways and trails intersect and pass through Lake County. From the Van Fleet Trail in the southwest to the West Orange Trail near Clermont and to the Florida Trail in the Ocala National Forest, Lake County is part of nearly 300 miles of existing and planned interconnected greenways and trails.

1.1 Existing and Planned Trails

There are numerous trail programs and projects in various stages of development within Lake County. Numerous organizations and local governments are involved in a variety of ways in developing trails in Lake County. Many trail projects are administered by various local governments and agencies. Lake County established a Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee to help with the coordination of trail projects throughout the County. Trail planning and construction is coordinated by the Public Works Engineering Division and the maintenance and operation of trails will be handled by the Parks and Recreation Section. The following is a list of known trails projects in Lake County.

**Countywide Trail Network**

- 25 miles of existing trails
- Nearly 120 miles of proposed trails
- **Existing Trails**
  - Emeralda Marsh – 3.6 miles from Lake Griffin to Lake Yale
  - Paisley – 14.9-mile loop between CR 445 & CR 42 thru Ocala National Forest
  - Van Fleet State Trail – 13.5 miles from So. County line to West County line
- **Partially Existing Trails**
  - Lake Minneola/So. Lake Trail – 27.1 miles, West County line to Orange County, phase two under design, phase 3&4 in FDOT work program
- **Proposed Trails**
  - Tav/Lee – 9.5 miles, West County line to Lake Dora, 0.2 miles under construction
  - Leesburg-Okahumpka – 11.1 miles, West County line to Tav/Lee Trail near SR 44
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- Leesburg-Lady Lake – 10.4 miles, Tav/Lee Trail to North County line
- Seminole Woods/Springs – 2.5 miles, Sorrento to Seminole line trail at SR 46 to Seminole Springs
- Ocala NF Ravenswood to SR 19 – 8.5 miles, SR 19 near Lake Dorr to SR 19 at CR 445
- Sorrento to Seminole line – 9 miles, CR 437 to East County line
- Tavares and Gulf – 17.9 miles, Montverde Junction Trail to CR 448
- Montverde Junction – 4.4 miles, Lake Minneola Trail to East County line
- Leesburg Eustis – 14.4 miles, Tav/Lee Trail to CR 452
- Howey-in-the-Hills to Okahumpka – 8.2 miles
- Franks Farm – 3.2 miles East of Astatula along CR 448

Lake Apopka Greenways & Trails Master Plan

The segments below are conceptual in nature and primarily consist of potential alignments for the proposed Lake Apopka Loop Trail, a +/- 57 mile loop around Lake Apopka.

- Segment D – Oakland to Montverde
  - South Lake Trail to West – proposed alignment would connect West Orange Trail to Lake Minneola Trail, right of way needed in portion of segment to complete
  - South Lake Trail to North – Alignment proposes using the Seaboard RR right of way, connect South Lake Trail towards Montverde
  - Pine Island Trail – Trail along the length of entire length of Pine Island property, agreement with owner needs to be formalized
  - Montverde Trail – From Pine Island Trail to Montverde, abandoned RR right of way proposed for alignment, additional private property needed for alignment

- Segment E – Downtown Montverde to Lake County Waterfront Preserve
  - This trail segment would connect Montverde with the proposed Lake County Lakefront Preserve
  - Lake Front Trail – may require boardwalks, other wetland considerations
  - Scenic Highway Trail – parallel trail along CR 455 (proposed scenic highway) using former Tavares & Gulf RR right of way, some portions of right of way are in private ownership

- Segment F – Lake County Lake Lakefront Preserve to Lake County Aquatic Park
  - This segment would connect the proposed Lakefront Preserve and Aquatic Park
  - The preferred alignment is to be as close to the lakefront as possible
The second, less desired (but most likely more feasible) alignment is to develop a trail along the Seaboard Air Line RR and parallel to the scenic highway.

- **Segment G – Lake County Aquatic Park to Bird Sanctuary**
  - This trail would connect the proposed Lake County Aquatic Park with the Bird Sanctuary by way of the McDonald Levy
  - Rural trail designed to allow horseback riding
  - An additional/alternative alignment along the north shore of the lake, would run along perimeter of SJRWMD lands

- **Segment I – Lake Apopka Loop to Clermont (Segment H is not in Lake County)**
  - Connection between Lake Apopka Loop and the Lake Minneola Scenic Trail (21 miles when complete), it will have access to the Gen. James Van Fleet Trail (29 miles)
  - Alignments still need to be determined and right of way acquired

**City of Leesburg Trails Master Plan**

The City of Leesburg adopted a Trails Master Plan in October 2004 outlining their vision for their City’s trail network. The following is a summary of the trails included in their trail system.

- **Magnolia Trail**
  - Rail trail located just south of Main Street
  - ½ mile completed
  - Trailhead located at Mote Morris House & Museum

- **Venetian Trail**
  - ½ mile north-south connector between the Tav/Lee, Wild/Lee and downtown (Fountain Lake and Magnolia) trails
  - Adjacent to Canal Street
  - Additional connection to Venetian Gardens in the south and LCWA nature preserve to the north

- **Fountain Lake Trail**
  - Approximately 1 mile long
  - Runs east/west through downtown just north of City Hall
  - Rail trail that will include a trailhead at the historic train depot and exercise stations
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- Lake Denham Trail
  - Just over 5 miles of paved trail connecting the Magnolia and Gardenia Trails to the City's future Lake Denham Park site on the north side of CR 470
  - Several miles of abandoned RR bed already in City ownership
  - Proposed connection to Water Authority’s Flat Island property
  - 5 miles of unpaved trails proposed on City-owned property

- Gardenia Trail
  - Connect Fruitland Park to Carver Heights neighborhood, Carver Middle School and Susan Street recreational complex
  - Can be constructed exclusively on abandoned rail corridor

- Tav/Lee Trail
  - This trail is that portion of the Tav/Lee Trail through Leesburg
  - Working with FDOT to create a separated trail from US 27/441 from Lake Square Mall to the City of Leesburg’s downtown trails

- Wild/Lee Trail
  - Connect Leesburg and Wildwood
  - Approximately 2.3 miles in length
  - Alignment is proposed for the CSX railroad
  - Requires interlocal agreements between Leesburg, Wildwood, Lake County and Sumter County

- Connector Trails
  - 13th Street connector – provides north-south connection between Fountain Lake and Magnolia Trails
  - Sleepy Hollow Road connector – connects Sleepy Hollow Park to the Tav/Lee Trail
  - Lee School Connector – connection to Fountain Lake Trail
  - City Hall Connector – connection between Fountain Lake and Magnolia Trails at City Hall
  - Lake Square Mall – connection to Tav/Lee Trail
  - Leesburg Regional Medical Center Connector – connection to Magnolia Trail
  - Lake Sumter Community College – connection to Tav/Lee Trail
Green Mountain Scenic Byway

- CR 455 and Old Hwy 50, 12 miles
- Extremely popular cycling and motoring route through Montverde and Ferndale
- The vision of the Scenic Byway Corridor Advocacy Group is to be part of an interconnected and interdependent system of Scenic Highways, preserves, parks, trails, education and recreation centers surrounding Lake Apopka
- Could be part of a larger 27.5 mile cycling route proposed by Lake County for on-road bicycling

Florida Hospital Waterman

- Wellness Trail
  - The Hospital has plans to develop a trail connecting Lakeshore Blvd to SR 441 through their campus
  - Possible linkage between the downtowns of Tavares and Eustis