

# STORIES from the CORRIDOR "CAPITAL CITY to the SEA TALES"

During the CC2ST Master Plan process, many unique stories and histories along the corridor began to emerge. The following of stories were highlighted on the project website and helped bring the region's past to life.

## GF&A RAILROAD- OVERLAND ACCIDENT

In October of 1926, tragedy struck along the GF&A Railroad. Sarah Emma Ferrell, Jonnie M. Ferrell Sutton, Ira Sutton, and Annie C. Moore Ferrell were taking a trip in Ira's new Overland sedan to a poultry farm to purchase food for the upcoming holidays. The poultry farm was located in the Gossitt Mill Community which was west of the GF&A Railroad. Even though it was in the 1920's when automobiles were becoming popular, many people were still unfamiliar with driving techniques.

This was the case on October 28, 1926 when Annie asked Ira if she could try driving his Overland sedan, a car which was not a familiar to her as the Model "T" Ford. The Overland sedan had a three-speed sliding gear transmission with a conventional clutch, with which the Model "T" Ford was not equipped. On their way back from the poultry farm, the car stalled while slowly crossing over the GF&A Railroad, and they were struck by a GF&A train. The train was traveling at a speed of around 30 miles per hour, and the amount of distance required to stop the train was not available in this situation. The GF&A railroad was busy transporting freight and passengers from Carrabelle, on the Gulf Coast, to Richland Georgia. Sarah Emma Ferrell and Jonnie M. Ferrell Sutton died immediately on impact, Annie C. Moore died from injuries three days later and Ira Sutton lived, but never fully recovered from his injuries; he died 19 years after the crash from a cerebral stroke. The crumbled up Overland sedan still remains at the crash site along the GF&A railroad, and is one of the few pieces of the rails' history that can be seen to this day.

Currently, along the GF&A corridor there is a shared-use path, the GF&A at Trout Pond Trail. The remainder of this corridor could be a potential rail to trail conversion site for the CC2ST project. There could also be a potential rest stop along the trail where the Overland sedan remains are located. A kiosk could be placed here to tell the story of the accident and allow trail users to learn more about the history of the trail and the area.



Article About the Overland Accident



Overland Sedan



Overland Sedan at Crash Site



Overland Sedan at Crash Site



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## WAKULLA BEACH

Wakulla Beach, located on Goose Creek Bay in Wakulla County, is currently enjoyed by residents and visitors as a beach for anglers, swimmers, and paddlers. This site is also the location of some of Wakulla County's interesting history.

Wakulla Beach was inhabited between A.D. 100 and A.D. 800 by Native Americans during the Swift Creek to Weedon Island periods. Bird Hammock, located at Wakulla Beach contains burial mounds and midden deposits from this time period. This site was added to the U.S. National Register of Historic Places on December 15, 1972.

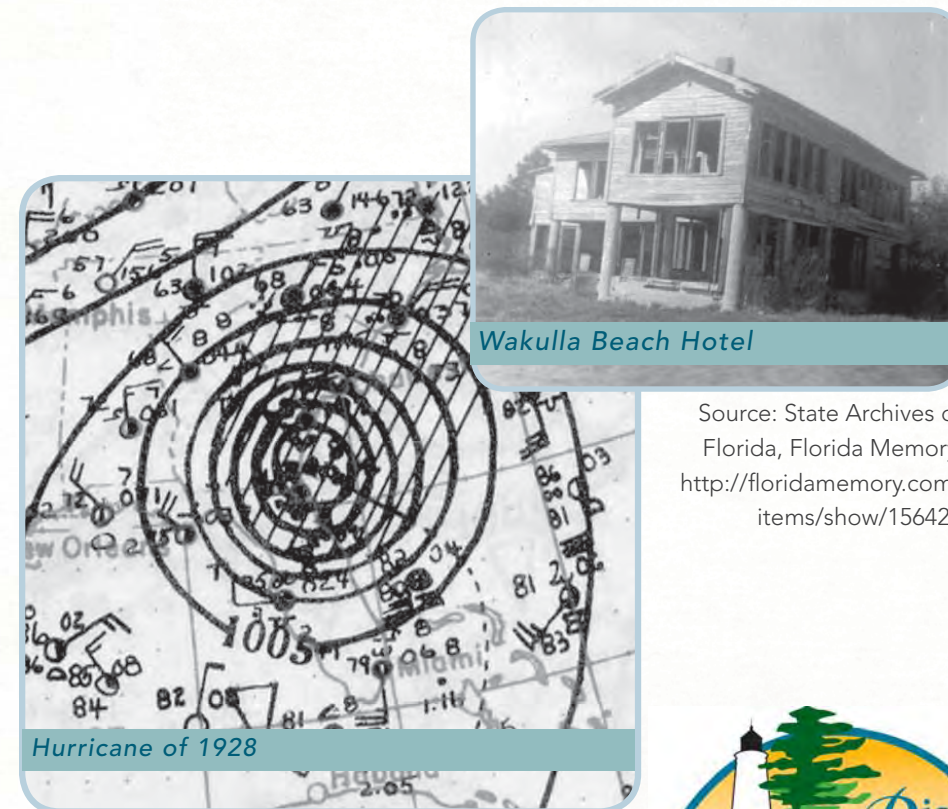
In the early 1900s, Daisy Walker (Miss Daisy) was inspired to establish the town of East Goose Creek on Wakulla Beach. Daisy Walker and her husband, Senator Henry N. Walker, laid out the town in 1915, developing what is said to be Florida's first subdivision<sup>1</sup> and built a hotel to attract visitors. The main road through the subdivision, Hotel Avenue, is currently known as Wakulla Beach Road. In the 1920s, the hotel became the Walkers' home, and they constructed another hotel closer to the beach. The second hotel was destroyed by a hurricane in 1928.



A third hotel was built in approximately the same location as the second hotel. The hotel is said to have been used to entertain legislators, hunters, tourists, and soldiers returning from World War II; however, Daisy Walker died in 1935 and Senator Walker lost his bid for reelection in 1939.

Sometime after 1949, former Senator Walker eventually worked with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to add East Goose Creek to the St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge, and demolished the hotel. Remains of the third hotel can still be found at the forest edge at Wakulla Beach.

Today, Wakulla Beach is used by anglers, swimmers, and paddlers. Wakulla Beach is also a launch site for the Goose Creek Bay Paddling Trail, part of the Apalachee Bay Maritime Heritage Paddling Trails in Wakulla County.



Source: State Archives of Florida, Florida Memory, <http://floridamemory.com/items/show/156420>



## BIG BEND SCENIC BYWAY (BBSB)

"Explore Undiscovered North Florida: The Big Bend (BBSB) will transport you to a different time and place through its wildlife, waterways, woods, and way of life." This is the theme for Florida's BBSB, a National Scenic Byway that passes through Leon, Wakulla, and Franklin counties. The BBSB is over 220 miles long and offers an abundance of ways to explore north Florida's natural environment, including the Apalachicola National Forest, St. Marks Wildlife Refuge, Tate's Hell State Forest, Wakulla State Forest, Edward Ball Wakulla Springs State Park, and much more!

Sunset Along Big Bend Scenic Byway



Many of the intrinsic resources along the BBSB are universally accessible so everyone can enjoy all that the BBSB has to offer, such as camping, hiking, kayaking, shopping at local businesses, and visiting unique local communities. Many of the proposed CC2ST corridors mirror parts of the scenic byway, adding more activities that visitors can enjoy.

The CC2ST Master Plan is consistent with the BBSB Corridor Management Plan, which includes the following strategies:

- Collaborate with State, regional, county, and local authorities to improve universal design and connectivity between and among existing trail networks.
- Encourage coordination of regional transportation planning with FDOT, local governments, the MPO (CRTPA), U.S. 98 Corridor Authority, the Apalachee Regional Planning Council (ARPC), and land management entities on regionally significant projects.
- Encourage enhancement projects along the BBSB corridor to improve bicycle and pedestrian access, connectivity, and facilities.
- Encourage the use of alternative means of transportation, including, but not limited to, wheelchairs, bicycles, all-terrain and off-road vehicles (when appropriate), in order to reach intrinsic resource destinations.

For more information about the BBSB and for itineraries to help plan your next trip, please visit their website <http://www.floridabigbendscenicbyway.com/>



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The following timeline shows the major accomplishments the BBSB has achieved:

- 2001 – The BBSB began the process to become a designated Florida Scenic Highway (FSH)
- July 2006 – The Wakulla County segments were approved for designation as FSH by Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT)
- July 2006 – The Franklin County segments were approved for designation as FSH by FDOT
- February 2007 – The Leon County segment was approved for designation as FSH by FDOT
- October 2007 – Completion of initial signing plan for the Byway
- December 2008 – Application was submitted to the Federal Highway Administration for consideration to be a National Scenic Byway
- October 2009 – The Byway is officially designated as a National Scenic Byway
- March 2009 – The Byway Interpretive and Wayshowing Plan was developed
- December 2011 – The Five-Year Corridor Management Plan Update was completed



Big Bend Scenic Byway Corridor

## FLORIDA'S SEINEYARD HISTORY

Many people are unfamiliar with the seineyard tradition that once dominated the Panhandle of Florida, especially in the CC2ST study area. A seineyard was based in shallow waters with few obstacles and a beach to haul and prepare the catch. There were 16 seineyards located between the St. Marks Lighthouse and Turkey Point in Franklin County, including the West Goose Creek Seineyard. Many seineyards were located near the St. Marks Wildlife Refuge, and were a great place for economic activity as well as social gatherings. People from southern Georgia would travel by wagon to assist in the process and barter other goods for the salted fish. The typical fish caught at seineyards was mullet, and because mullet deteriorate so rapidly, they were salted or eaten right after coming out of the water. The seineyard industry began to decline in the 1980s with the last of the shelters being destroyed by Hurricane Kate in November of 1985. Though seineyards are no longer present, this once traditional fall gathering was a popular pastime for many along the coast, and will remain an important piece of the region's history.

## TROUT POND

Located near the former GF&A Railroad, Trout Pond is an accessible destination in the Apalachicola National Forest for hikers, bicyclists, fishermen, and equestrians.



Trout Pond

While all people are welcome to visit Trout Pond, the recreational area was established in 1970 specifically for the differently abled. This recreation area was one of the first of its kind.



Holland, Karl E., 1970. State Archives of Florida, Florida Memory, <http://floridamemory.com/items/show/85233>

Leading up to the opening of Trout Pond, local social workers and the differently abled community of Tallahassee hoped for additional recreational activities within the surrounding area.



Holland, Karl E., 1970. State Archives of Florida, Florida Memory, <http://floridamemory.com/items/show/85760>



# STORIES from the CORRIDOR "CAPITAL CITY to the SEA TALES"

## TALLAHASSEE TO ST. MARKS HISTORIC RAILROAD STATE TRAIL HISTORY 1826

- 1826 - A road was being constructed from Tallahassee to the St. Marks River
- 1831 - The Tallahassee Railroad Company received the first Congressional Land Grant ever given to a railroad
- 1835 - The Tallahassee Railroad Company was approved by the Florida Legislative Council
- 1836 - The first train traversed the railroad
- 1837 - Tallahassee-St. Marks Railroad construction completed and regular business operations began
- 1838 - 30,000 bales of cotton traveled on the railroad since its operations began
- 1839 - The railroad was extended to Port Leon with the construction of a bridge over the St. Marks River
- 1843 - A hurricane demolished the section of rail in and leading to Port Leon, and St. Marks became the new southern terminus of the railroad
- 1856 - The wooden rails were replaced by steel rails and the mule-drawn carriages were replaced by locomotives
- 1865 - Tallahassee-St. Marks Railroad moved hundreds of confederate troops during the Civil War to the Battle of Natural Bridge
- 1983 - Tallahassee-St. Marks Railroad stopped operating
- 1984 - The Florida Department of Transportation purchased 16 miles of the corridor and Florida's first "Rails to trails" project began.
- 2008 - Boundless Playground was added to the Wakulla Station Trailhead
- 2011 - The Tallahassee to St. Marks Historic Railroad State Trail was widened from 8 to 12 feet
- 2013 - The development of the Capital City to the Sea Trails Master Plan begins



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## GF&A RAILROAD HISTORY



Trout Pond GF&A Trailhead

Photo credit: Robert Seidler

## GF&A RAILROAD HISTORY

- 1895** - The Georgia Pine Railway was chartered
- 1898** - First section of tracks was opened between Bainbridge and Damascus
- 1901** - The Georgia Pine Railway was renamed the Georgia, Florida & Alabama Railway (GF&A)
- 1901-1902** - The rail line between Cuthbert and Tallahassee was put into service
- 1906** - The Carrabelle, Tallahassee & Georgia Railroad was acquired and extended the GF&A railroad from the Capital to the Gulf Coast at Carrabelle
- 1910** - Extension up for Richland, GA was completed
- 1926** - Three people were killed when a GF&A train hit their Overland sedan
- 1927** - The railroad went up for sale and the ICC approved Seaboard Air Line Railway to refinance and reorganize it, and lease the GF&A for 99 years
- 1936** - The Apalachicola National Forest was officially designated as a national forest
- 1948** - The Carrabelle to Tallahassee line was abandoned, and soon after, the Havana to Quincy branch was also abandoned.
- 1948 - 1995** - The railbed lay abandoned for 47 years
- 1995** - A Project, Development, and Environment Study was completed by the Florida Department of Transportation for the Gopher, Frog, Alligator Rail Trail from Tallahassee, FL to Carrabelle, FL
- 2008** - Construction began for the GF&A Trail and trailhead at Trout Pond
- 2009** - Trout Pond Trailhead had its grand opening
- 2010** - The Historic Depot in Sopchoppy, FL was restored by the City



# STORIES from the CORRIDOR "CAPITAL CITY to the SEA TALES"

Trout Pond was envisioned as a recreation area with amenities designed specifically for people with disabilities, including evenly paved surfaces and accessible restrooms, drinking fountains, picnic tables, and fishing pier.

Holland, Karl E.,  
1970. State Archives  
of Florida, Florida  
Memory, <http://floridamemory.com/items/show/85241>



In September of 1970, Trout Pond was officially dedicated by Governor Kirk as a park for the differently abled community in the Tallahassee area.



Holland, Karl E.  
1970. State Archives  
of Florida, Florida  
Memory, <http://floridamemory.com/items/show/89044>

In order to expand access and usability of the GF&A Trail at Trout Pond and the Trout Pond Recreation Area, the Tallahassee to Trout Pond Trail segment was identified through public participation as a potential CC2ST segment. Consistent with the Tallahassee-Leon County Greenways Master Plan, this segment would connect the City of Tallahassee to the existing trail. Based on public input and the evaluation criteria, this important trail connection was ranked as the #2 priority for the CC2ST project.

Engraved directional signs and bump plates were also incorporated to improve self-sufficiency when navigating the paths.

Holland, Karl E.,  
1970. State Archives  
of Florida, Florida  
Memory, <http://floridamemory.com/items/show/85240>



Holland, Karl E.,  
1970. State Archives  
of Florida, Florida  
Memory, <http://floridamemory.com/items/show/89046>

In 2008, construction began on a 2.4-mile shared-use path to connect the recreation area, amenities, and scenic locations in the area. The grand opening of this GF&A Trail at Trout Pond was in 2009. The GF&A Trail at Trout Pond and the Trout Pond Recreation Area are intrinsic resources on the BBSB, a State and nationally designated scenic highway.

