

# SHINGLE CREEK REGIONAL TRAIL UPDATE FOR SPRING 2015

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Thank you for your interest in the Shingle Creek Regional Trail (SCRT). This trail is the southern portion of a planned 32-mile, multi-jurisdictional regional trail system. This facility will become part of an extensive trail network that stretches from the newly developed Kissimmee Lakefront Park to Wekiva Springs State Park, and from Orlando to Mascotte, Florida. In its entirety, it will serve as a key north-south connector in a larger regional trails network that includes the West Orange Trail, South Lake Trail, Cross Seminole Trail and the Seminole Wekiva Trail.

The project is being developed through cooperation between the local governments of the City of Kissimmee, Osceola County, the City of Orlando and Orange County. The Orlando Metropolitan Planning Organization (MetroPlan Orlando) was instrumental in securing the federal funds for design and construction of the trail. The FDOT is responsible for administering the funds.



## SCRT Project Status

**NORTH PHASE I** - Construction is underway! C & L Landscape, Inc. has begun construction on the North Phase 1. This is the area shaded in **PINK** located in the center-left area of the map, and connects to the Pioneer Village and Osceola County Welcome Center and Historical Museum. Estimated completion date is early 2016.

**NORTH PHASE 2A** - This section is the area shaded **ORANGE** located in the upper third of the map, and is immediately north and adjacent to the North Phase I. Design is nearly complete.



**NORTH PHASE 2B** - This is the section shaded in **BLUE**, and is the upper north / south section of the SCRT and is located just south of the Orange / Osceola county line. Design is at the sixty percent mark. The spur to the east that is on previous plans has been removed from the design.

**NORTH PHASE 2C** - This is the northernmost section of the trail, runs east / west, and is shaded in **PINK**. The design team is refining the alignment. At this time, it seems likely that the SCRT connection with the Orange County section of the trail will be just west of John Young Parkway.

**NORTH PHASE 2D** - This is a bridge that will cross over Osceola Parkway and is shown in **GREEN**. Survey and geotechnical data has been collected.

**SOUTH PHASE 2A** - This section is in the southern portion of the map and is shown in **ORANGE**. This revised section of the trail now includes a leg to the north of Pleasant Hill Elementary. The revision provides a loop and creates more space for children to safely walk and ride bikes near their school. Kelly Collins and Gentry (KCG) and the rest of the design team coordinated closely with the Osceola County School Board on the alignment of this section. Survey and field data has been collected and design is underway.

The team has also coordinated with Osceola County on the southern leg of the Lancaster Loop with respect to the proposed pond for South Hoagland Boulevard / Pleasant Hill Road reconstruction project (Pond 2A) located in the lower third area of the map.

**KISSIMMEE TRAIL LOOP** - This loop is shaded in **YELLOW**. It will tie into the SCRT in two places.

## ***THE HISTORY BEHIND THE SCRT***

A project of this nature doesn't just happen overnight. Many years of planning take place before the first shovel of dirt is turned.

According to Jim Swan, current City of Kissimmee Mayor and Osceola County Commissioner from 1982-1994, the idea of a linear park along Shingle Creek from Lake Tohopekalgia to the Orange County Line was first considered in the early 1980's.

*"The parks you see now were not in place, and the land was owned by private owners including citrus growers. I was asked to serve on a Parks Liaison Committee that included representatives from the City of Kissimmee and Osceola County. The group envisioned the Kissimmee lakefront and marina facilities that are now in place, with the creation of the Shingle Creek Regional Trail to follow. We realized that we had a huge community asset in Shingle Creek and Lake Tohopekalgia." Mayor Swan continued, "Property was purchased over time, and right-of-way and access agreements were part of all development permits from that period forward. No developments would be approved unless the lot lines and buildings were a certain distance from the creek to allow for the linear park. In every case, developers responded positively to the idea and agreed to the terms."*

Swan said, *"Individuals from both the City and County were involved in this project for a period of many years. This project was a long time coming, and took a lot of patience. There was no instant gratification but now the trail is becoming a reality."*

Key people to mention include Terry Johnson, Osceola County Parks Manager, who has been with the County for more than 40 years; and Dan Loubier, City of Kissimmee Parks, Recreation and Public Facilities Director who helped generate funding and support for this project beginning 25 years ago when he first arrived in the City.

Previous County Commissioners Mike Bass, Larry Whaley, Charles Owen and John Pate all supported this effort from the very beginning. Bob Mindick, Osceola County Public Lands Manager, Natural Resources has also been a steadfast and valuable member of the team since 2006.



**City of Kissimmee Parks, Recreation and Public Lands Director Dan Loubier pictured above with some of the many studies, reports and grant applications for the SCRT.**

Other key members are Rod Schultz from the County who worked on applying for grants and purchasing the properties; Barry Campbell, Senior Planner now retired; and Randy Schrader, current Senior Planner with the City of Kissimmee, who has led the design and construction efforts for this project since 2008.

Dan Loubier has filled a large file drawer with studies, reports, contracts, requests for funding, engineering plans, etc. for the SCRT project. *“We worked with land owners on 46 parcels in order to get contiguous land all along the creek. Add to that the collaboration with numerous public agencies to obtain funding and permits. That’s a lot of pieces to put together”* said Loubier.

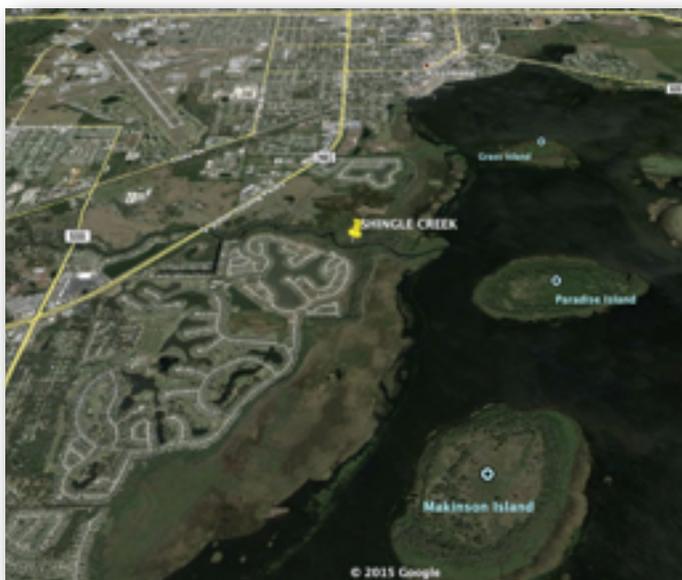
Grants used to purchase land were awarded by **Florida Department of Environmental Protection Preservation 2000 (P2000) (now Florida Forever)** program through the **Florida Community Trust** and the **Office of Greenways and Trails**, and **Save Our Rivers (SOR)** program. Those grants are an integral part of a statewide environmental protection program.

Further funding came from Osceola County’s **Environmental Lands Conservation Program**,

whose mission is to acquire and manage environmentally significant lands with a voter-endorsed ad valorem funding source. This property tax enables the program to issue bonds for the purchase of land for water resource protection, wildlife habitat, public green space and resource-based passive recreation.

Loubier said, *“Over time, many of the grant applications needed to be modified, and additional grants were applied for land purchases and design and construction. Interlocal Agreements between the City of Kissimmee, Osceola County and the South Florida Water Management District were necessary to outline who was going to pay for what. Then collaboration was necessary with the Florida Department of Transportation and Metroplan Orlando. Further agreements need to be in place with regard to ongoing maintenance of the trail and security. There was a immense amount of meetings, paperwork and effort needed to be able to build this trail.”*

Area residents should know that through the **Trust for Public Lands** and the **Florida Community Trust**, the City has purchased



**These islands on Lake Tohopekaligia are now public lands and provide an extension of accessible nature for SCRT kayakers and canoeists to enjoy.**

the Grass, Makinson and Paradise Islands located on Lake Tohopekalgia. Those islands are now under public ownership and for those lucky individuals with use of a boat, canoe or kayak, the islands provide an additional touring and camping opportunity in one of the the area's most pristine, historical public areas.

The hope is that residents will enjoy the trail and creek, and that visitors might choose to "stay the extra day" to enjoy the natural Florida as well as the theme parks that attract so many from around the world. As the community looks forward to the development of the trail, the many individuals involved can be proud of their involvement and accomplishment.

## **MARK YOUR CALENDAR**

Our next public information meeting is tentatively scheduled for Thursday, July 16, 2015 at 6 PM in the Kissimmee City Council Chambers. This meeting will be advertised in the local papers and by e-mail to those on our distribution list. This meeting is open to the public.

A project design presentation for the City Commission is scheduled for June 16 at 6 PM, and for the Osceola County Commission on June 15 at 5:30 PM. These meetings are also open to the public.

**The design team includes:** *Kelly, Collins & Gentry, Borrelli + Partners, C.M. Arrington & Associates, Ecotone Land Design, E-Sciences, The Fulcrum International, Geotechnical & Environmental Consultants, Johnston's Surveying, Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, Ground Hound Detection Services, and SAI Consulting Engineers.*

**To be added to our database of interested parties please send a request via e-mail to [jacklyn.vanderpol@thefulcrumintl.com](mailto:jacklyn.vanderpol@thefulcrumintl.com). For more information please check back on this website or contact: Randy Schrader, Senior Planner, City of Kissimmee at [RSCHRADE@kissimmee.org](mailto:RSCHRADE@kissimmee.org) or 407-518-2244; or the City's Public Information Officer, Arin Thrower at [athrower@kissimmee.org](mailto:athrower@kissimmee.org).**