

**Florida Paddling Trails Association**  
**Trail Keeper Responsibilities & Guidelines**

Revised November 30, 2010

**Purpose:**

The purpose of this document is to define the responsibilities of the FPTA Trail Keepers and provide guidelines for working on water trails and with other trails & organizations.

**A. Organization of the Florida Paddling Trails Assn** - For organizational purposes, the Florida Paddling Trails Association has divided the state of Florida into 15 regions, lettered A thru O. Each region as two or three sub-sections, call segments. Each region has a Director who organizes and directs his/her Trail Keepers. The Regional Directors are on the FPTA Board of Directors, who elect a president for a one year term.

**B. Assignment/ Appointment of Trail Keepers**

It is the responsibility of the Regional Director to ensure that each region has sufficient Trail Keepers. Trail Keepers are appointed by the Regional Director. Qualifications to be a Trail Keeper are:

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

**C. Responsibilities of Trail Keepers**

| <b>Mission of FPTA</b>                    | <b>Trail Keeper Responsibilities</b>  |
|---|---|
| <b>1. Develop Trail Campsites</b>         | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Learn about water trail problems in your region. These are listed on the FPTA web site at.....</li> <li>2. Work with the Regional Director, local land and water managers to resolve water trail issues and build water trails.</li> </ol>  |
| <b>2. Protect the Environment</b>         | The Trail Keepers will receive the Paddler Environmental Toolkit Training which can lead to improved water trail environment.   |
| <b>3. Resource and Voice for Paddlers</b> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Complete Trip Reports for all water trails in your region and add to the FPTA web site.</li> <li>2. Notify the Regional Director and other FPTA officers of specific needs &amp; issues within your region.</li> <li>3. Be willing to assist paddlers planning trips in your region.</li> </ol> |

**Other miscellaneous duties include:**

- Assist with marketing the trail.

- Assist with trail fund-raisers.
- Assist with trail and environmental education.

## D. Dealing With Other Trails, With Parks & 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.

- The State of Florida** has web sites for it’s trails. The Florida Circumnavigational Saltwater Paddling Trail web site found at: [www.dep.state.fl.us/gwt/paddling/saltwater.htm](http://www.dep.state.fl.us/gwt/paddling/saltwater.htm) This is technical information about the trail and will remain fairly static. You can find campsite numbering & maps on this site. Maps and descriptions for Florida’s 40 designated paddling trails can be found on this site: <http://www.dep.state.fl.us/gwt/guide/paddle.htm>.
- Florida Paddling Trails Association** web site found at: [www.floridapaddlingtrails.com](http://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:
  - Campsites
  - Facilities
  - Launches
  - Points of Interest

Separate procedures, under Volunteer on the web site, have been written which instruct the Trail Keeper how to do this.

## 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 and improve the **campsites** along water trails.
- Improve the **environment** along water trails
- Act as a **resource & voice** for Florida paddlers

### 2. What is the difference between a Trail Keeper and a Senior Trail Keepers

The major difference is that the Senior Trail Keepers have agreed to accept additional leadership responsibility within their Region.

### 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. Do Trail Keepers need to be a FPTA member?**

While we would like for all Trail Keepers to join the FPTA when they become Trail Keepers, this is not mandatory. However, in order to make changes on the web site, Trail Keepers must be members of the FPTA. Therefore, we hope that all Trail Keepers will become FPTA members.

**5. If the FPTA received a grant of money, why do you need my financial help?**

The grant money must be used for environmental training and cannot be used to run the FPTA. We have ongoing expenses for our state wide organization and need everyone's financial help.

**6. 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.

**7. 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. Forms Attached**

- Volunteer information form (Attachment A)
- Liability release form (Attachment B) - If required by Regional Director for specific projects.

Attachment A  
**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](http://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): \_\_\_\_\_

