

The *Reinvented* Florida National Scenic Trail Partnership A Case Study

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FNST Symposium
September 28, 2013
Sanford, FL

Introduction

Purpose

- To highlight the process and outcomes of reinventing the Florida National Scenic Trail partnership
- To present a successful example for public lands partnerships looking to reinvent for the 21st century

Outcomes

- An understanding of the process and results of the Florida National Scenic Trail partnership reinvention



Case Study Methodology

- Stakeholder interviews
- Review of all documents during the 2-year process
- Conservation Impact's work with 600 conservation nonprofits and agencies across the US

- **Florida National Scenic Trail: “the Trail”**



Overview

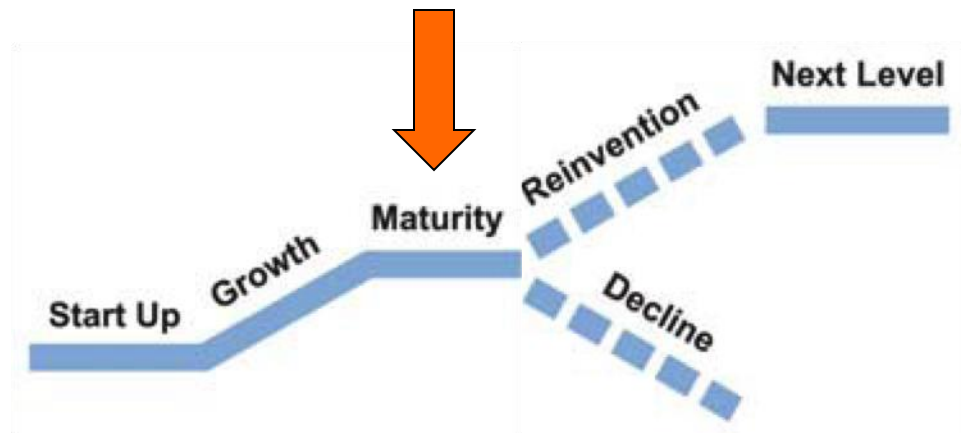
- Present the case study
- Why the Trail partnership reinvention is a success
- Reinvention lessons for public lands managers



What is a Partnership Reinvention?

Implementing changes to the partnership in order to achieve:

- Relevancy to current context
- Strategic goals
- Sustainability
- Scale and scope



5 Steps to Partnership Reinvention

1. Understand the need for change
 - Analysis
2. Consciously refocus on the resource
 - The Trail
3. Agree upon strategic goals, objectives, and deliverables
4. Refine structure and composition to meet needs and achieve goals
5. Define roles and responsibilities



PARTNERSHIP REINVENTION CASE STUDY

The Original Trail Partnership

Primary Partners



The Original Trail Partnership



The First 30 Years



- Federal agency/ Trail Administrator and Partnership Coordinator
- Congressionally designated administrator
- Resources/ \$\$, knowledge, and expertise
- Big picture of FNST
- 501(c)(3) / 18 chapters
- Championed congressional designation
- People on the ground/ volunteer labor
- Trail building and maintaining
- Local picture of FNST

The Need to Reinvent the Trail Partnership

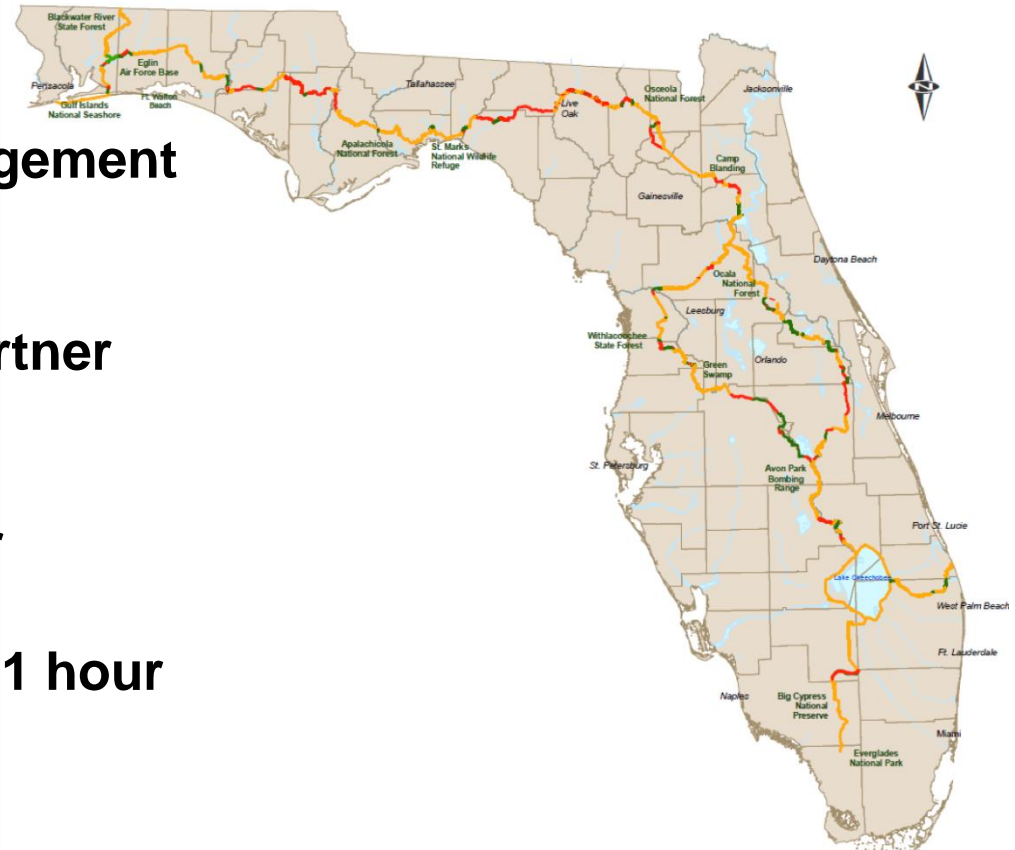
- Changed needs: from establishing the Trail to completing, maintaining, stewarding, and promoting it
- Land managers were disconnected from the whole
- Fragmented, inconsistent operations
- Infrastructure and signage inconsistencies
- Safety concerns
- New recreational use patterns
- Low public awareness
- Partnership was more about the relationships than the resource



**Wow! I didn't know
that I'm on a
nationally
significant scenic
trail?!**

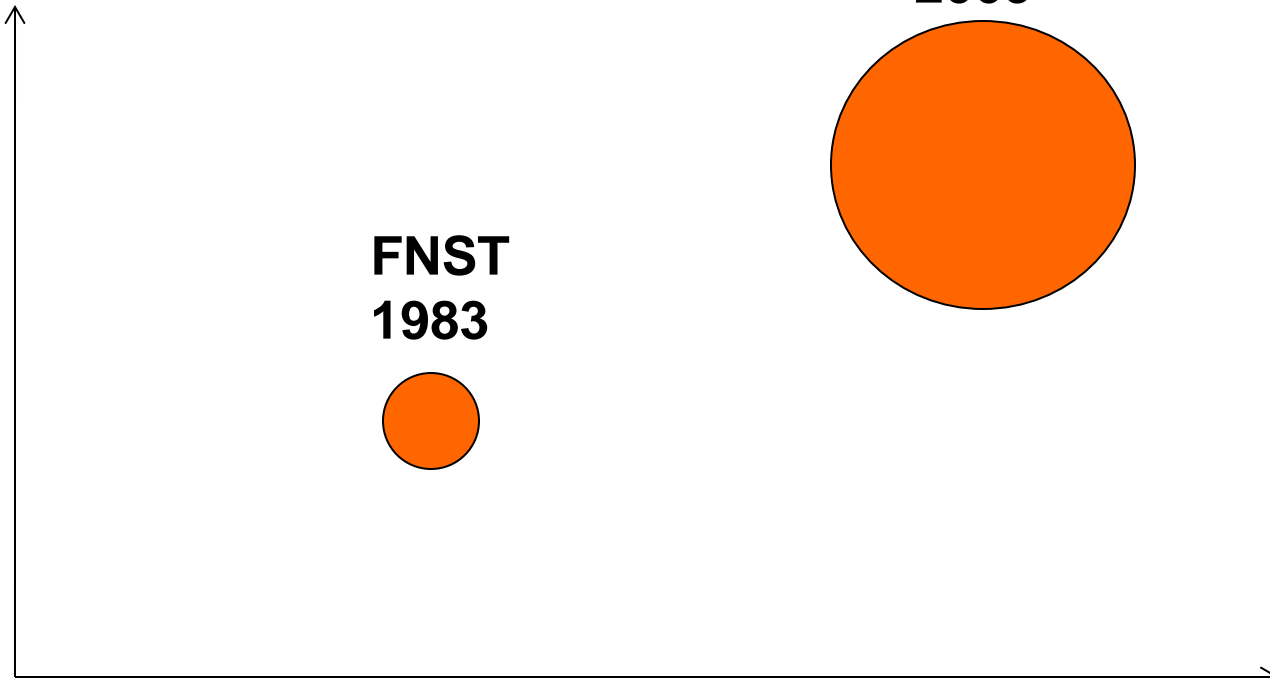
Size and Complexity of the Florida Trail

- **1,100 mile trail**
- **Traverses 58 land management areas in 37 counties**
- **28 land management partner agreements**
- **400,000 visitors per year**
- **18 million people within 1 hour drive of Florida Trail**



Scaling Up for Impact

Scale and scope of partnership



**FNST
1983**

**FNST
2009**

Size and complexity of project

Process

- Objective Situation Analysis
 - Current needs of the Trail
 - Partner roles
- FTA – USFS Partner Meeting
- Strategic Framework
 - Core decisions about the Trail and strategic goals
- Partnership model for reinvention

Summary of Findings of Analysis

- Different views of what the Trail was and should be
- Little sense of the whole Trail
- Trail plan and partnership agreements were not reflecting current realities
- Partnership wasn't functioning like a partnership
- Not leveraging land manager resources
- Insufficient capacity

Partnership Meeting and Strategic Framework

- Mission/ Vision
- *Optimum recreation experience*
 - *Public's expectations of the Trail*
 - *Multi-use, non-motorized*
 - *Representing diverse character of Florida*
- Key focus areas

Partnership Model

- Purpose and function
- Composition and structure
- Stakeholders and leadership

Solution: A New Partnership Model

What does the Trail need in order to provide the optimum recreational experience and to achieve Trail goals?

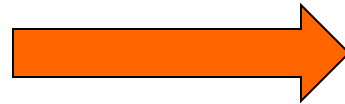
How do we need to organize ourselves in order to achieve that?



Trail Coalition: Land Managers

- **Florida Department of Environmental Protection, Division of Recreation and Parks**
- **Florida Department of Environmental Protection, Office of Greenways and Trails**
- **Florida Forest Service**
- **Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission**
- **Florida Outdoor Recreation Coalition**
- **Florida Trail Association**
- **St. Johns River Water Management District**
- **Plum Creek Timber Company**
- **Seminole County, Greenways and Natural Lands Division**
- **University of Florida, School of Forest Resources and Conservation**
- **United States Air Force, Eglin Air Force Base**
- **United States Forest Service, National Forests in Florida**
- **National Park Service, Big Cypress National Preserve**
- **USDI – Fish and Wildlife Service, St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge**

New Partnership Model: Scaling Up for Impact



Purpose of Coalition

- **More fully engage the 28 land managers**
- **Committed to the completion, development, maintenance, and promotion of the Trail to ensure an optimum recreational experience**
- **Diversity of expertise, experiences, perspectives**
- **Develop the 5-year Strategic Plan**

Florida National Scenic Trail 5-Year Strategic Plan

- To fully acknowledge the 1,100 mile Trail
- To focus the work and resources
- To prioritize and leverage

4 Goals

- **Complete the Florida Trail:** add 100 new miles
- **Standards:** 100% of existing designated trail meets trail standards
- **Partnerships:** Each Florida Trail land manager proactively contributes to the larger whole
- **Promotion:** 100% of trail recreationists know they are on the Florida Trail

Florida National Scenic Trail Strategies and Annual Deliverables

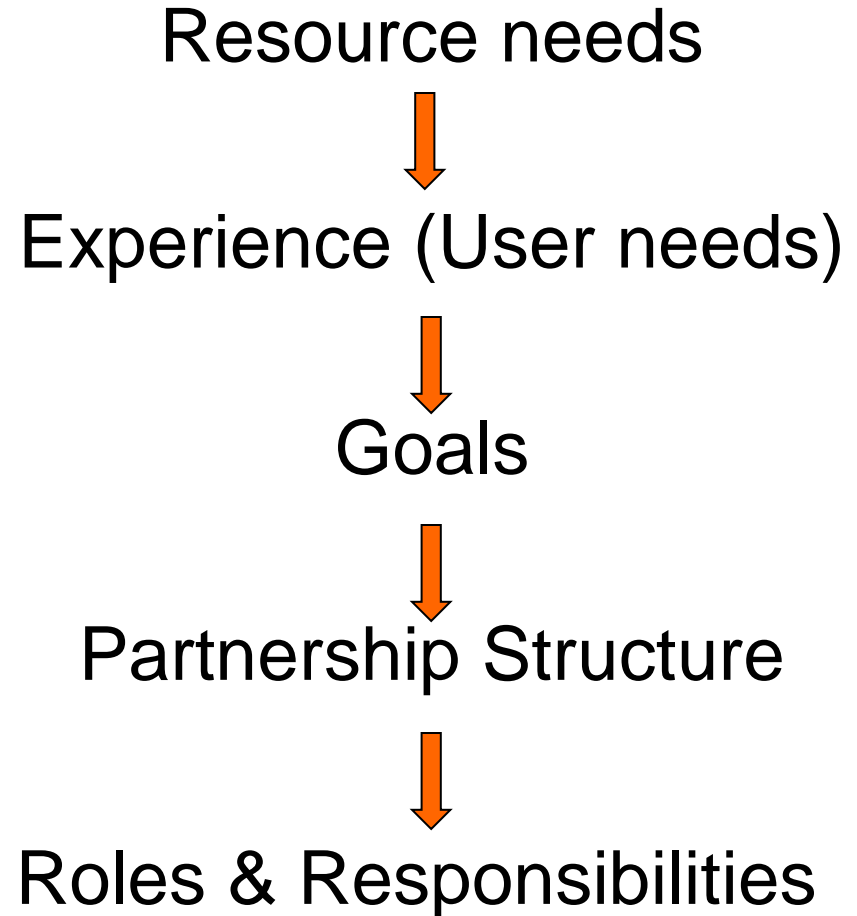
Strategies – 3-5 years	Objectives 1-2 years	2013 (Yr. 2 deliverables)	Status / Needs
Define routing of a complete scenic trail, based on current and accurate data that defines actual on the ground conditions	<p>Complete an evaluation and assessment of trail corridor (to include assessment of scenic, cultural, ecological resources) add recreation usage</p> <p>Assess trail sections to scenic values and complete matrix of high priority areas</p> <p>Approve plan</p> <p>Coordinate routing plan with long range planning of other agencies/ partners</p> <p>Engage stakeholders in review of routing plan</p> <p>Finalize routing plan</p> <p>Coalition to formally adopt 2012 routing plan</p> <p>Formally designate all FNST miles</p>	<p>Updated and approved segment routing plan</p> <p>Values assessment – inventory from land managers or projects – update baseline and identify gaps</p>	<p>Beginning to identify gaps – how to set criteria for priorities, outside of other than acquisition</p>
Prioritize trail segments to fill gaps (ongoing and iterative process)	<p>Identify critical gaps and ownership situation</p> <p>Agree to criteria for prioritization including scenic values and feasibility of inclusion</p>	<p>Priorities segments for addition to trail</p>	<p>Criteria: (economics, significance/ value to trail, timeliness/ risk)</p> <p>Non-acquisition</p> <p>Significance of gap- what we gain; what it saves;</p> <p>Qualitative – length of trail</p> <p>Risk of loss of opportunity to close gap</p> <p>Safety</p>
Negotiate easements or formal agreements as options for trail completion	<p>Identify and systematically contact landowners of important segments</p> <p>Educate on easement and define potential</p> <p>Create easement agreements</p> <p>Create formal agreements</p>	<p>Identification of segments that could be designated/ developed through easements or formal agreements</p>	<p>Bring list to summer meeting of opportunities – do it by region and set priorities within regions</p> <p>How can agencies help once prioritized – need local real estate/ support</p>
Acquire segments as necessary for trail completion	<p>Continue acquisition as appropriate</p>	<p>Acquisition of key segments</p>	

Partnership Reinvention Outcomes

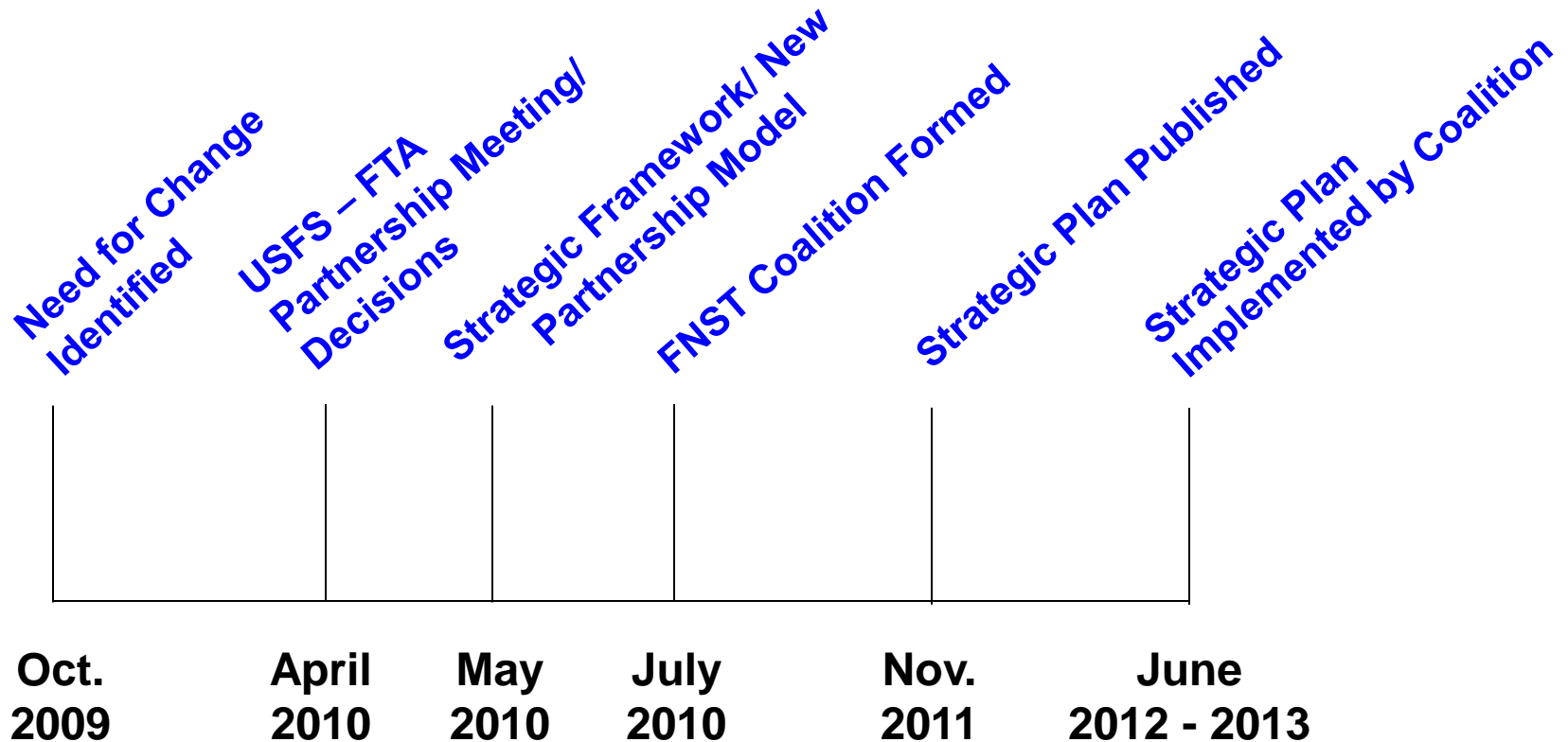
- **Shared vision of desired recreational experience**
- **Clear roles and responsibilities of partners**
- **Accountability for outcomes**
- **Trail is treated holistically – sum is much greater than its parts**
- **Increased capacity/ joint ownership: *see more, do more, raise more***
- **Common, consistent message**
- **Bigger voice for the Trail**

Summary: Partnership Reinvention Steps

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Partnership Reinvention Timeline



REINVENTION ROLES

US Forest Service's Role

- Vision and leadership
- Willingness to adapt to change
- Financial resources and project coordination
- Implementing the 5-year Strategic Plan
- Reclaimed responsibility for Trail administration



Florida Trail Association's Role

- Willingness to adapt to change and share in the partnership
- Still primary nonprofit partner who mobilizes all volunteers on whom land managers depend



Coalition's Role

- Participates in implementing the 5-year Strategic Plan
- Bi-annual meetings
- Work groups for specific deliverables
- Brings resources to the table
 - ✓ Expertise
 - ✓ Information
 - ✓ Staff time
 - ✓ Funding
 - ✓ Networks of relationships



Conservation Impact's Role

- Conducted research and analysis
- Facilitated decision-making meetings with partners
- Completed Strategic Framework and Partnership Model to guide partnership development
- Taught and applied best practices
- Kept the partners on track/ focused on high level decision making
- Held the group accountable to specific outcomes



CONSERVATION **IMPACT**
focus | mission

SUCCESS STORY

Was it a Success?

Is the new trail partnership working?

- Relevant to current times and context?
- Working towards strategic goals?
- Sustainable for the long-term?
- Is the scale and scope of partnership commensurate with the size and complexity of the project?

Success Factors to Reinvention

➤ **Coming together**

- ✓ Communication
- ✓ Joint ownership
- ✓ Seeing the whole

➤ **Planning together**

- ✓ 5-Year Strategic Plan
- ✓ Joint goals
- ✓ Clear deliverables

➤ **Implementing together**

- ✓ Investment of time, expertise, and funding
- ✓ Accountability and integrity to the Trail and each other



CONCLUSION

The Next 30 Years

- Complete and improve the Trail
- Grow the community of Trail stewards
- Known around the country



Why Reinvent?

Federal sequestration,
ongoing budget cuts



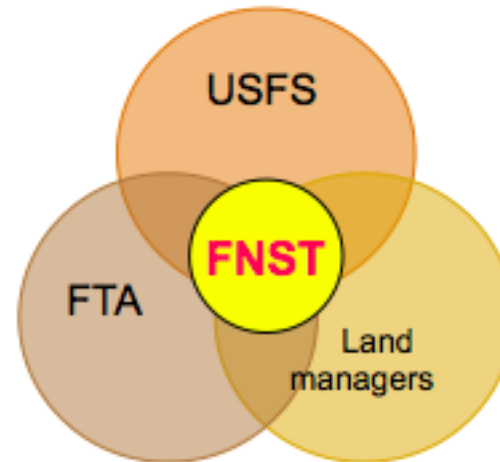
More reliance on public,
private, and nonprofit
sectors

Increased demands on
public lands



New levels of problem
solving, innovation, and
collaboration

A Success Story



Further Discussion and Resources

Questions? Comments?

www.fs.usda.gov/main/fnst/home

www.Conservationimpact.com

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