

**Proposed Florida Trail Association Policy Statement
For
Trail Route Protection Through Land Acquisition**

Whereas, the Florida Trail Association was organized in 1964 to implement a statewide hiking trail known as the Florida Trail, and

Whereas, the Florida Trail was designated by U.S. Congress as a National Scenic Trail in 1983, and

Whereas, the Florida Trail Association partners with the USDA Forest Service, the Federal Administrator of the FNST, to promote the implementation of the trail through land acquisition, trail construction, and trail certification, and

Whereas the Florida Trail Association and the USDA Forest Service have established long-term relationships with dozens of public and private partners based on voluntary partnerships; and

Whereas, the U.S. Congress has appropriated \$9 million to acquire land for the route of the FNST through a willing seller program, and

Whereas, in Fiscal Year 2003 the National Forests in Florida, assisted by the Florida Trail Association, identified many property owners who are willing to sell their land to the USDA Forest Service to provide a route for the FNST; and

Whereas, the amount of FNST land acquisition funding currently appropriated is significantly less the total estimated value of these identified properties owned willing sellers;

NOW THEREFORE IT BE RESOLVED THAT:

The Florida Trail Association hereby adopts the following trail policy to be incorporated into the Trail Manual for the Florida Trail System.

TRAIL ROUTE PROTECTION THROUGH LAND ACQUISITION

The Florida Trail Association supports the acquisition of land to provide a permanently protected route for the Florida National Scenic Trail. The FTA supports the limited land acquisition authority that federal law grants to the USDA Forest Service to acquire land for the Florida National Scenic Trail. The National Trails System Act, P.L. 90-543, 82 Stat. 919, as amended; 16 U.S.C. 1241, allows the Federal government to purchase of land outside of boundaries of Federally administered areas only with the consent of the landowner. It is FTA's goal that the Florida National Scenic Trail will be completed in partnership with landowners and willing sellers.