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Scenic Watch is a free bi-monthly publication of Citizens for a Scenic Florida, Inc., dedicated to the preservation, protection and enhancement of Florida's scenic heritage. Individuals, organizations and government agencies are welcome as members. [Join Scenic Florida now](#) to protect our scenic qualities.

National News:

For the latest news of what is happening around the country with scenic issues, visit www.scenic.org. Scenic America has been at the forefront of protecting America's vast scenic heritage, not only with our natural environment but also our built environment. There is a tremendous amount that municipal planners and political leaders can do to enhance our built environment.

A current topic for example is

KCET-TV presents "Billboard Confidential"

SoCal Connected, a program on [KCET](#), southern California's community television station, has produced a two-part series called "Billboard Confidential" that takes an in-depth look at the outdoor advertising industry in the city of Los Angeles. You can read and see more at www.scenic.org.

Reporter Vince Gonzales and producer Karen Foshay put the spotlight on the new wave of digital billboards popping up all over L.A., and investigate the relationships between the billboard industry and city hall. The piece also touches on a recent proposal by the state of California to sell ads on official signs in the right of way (see story below).

Scenic America President Kevin Fry was among those interviewed for the series.

Click for [part one](#) of the series, [part two](#), and be sure to read "[Behind the Billboards.](#)" which provides some background information on the origin of the series.

Billboards

Lee school buses could become moving billboards, revenue producers

By [MATT CLARK](#) ([Contact](#))

7:26 p.m., Sunday, October 12, 2008

Editor's Note: I am not including this article. Here is a link if you want to read it.

<http://www.naplesnews.com/news/2008/oct/12/lee-school-buses-could-become-moving-billboards-re/>

The reason for even including it is that in the article residents of Lee County express approval of the idea of allowing their children to be used to raise funds for the school. One quote is "It would just be

like a billboard, right?" As though a billboard is accepted as being a positive part of the natural environment.

Another quote was "I don't see that as a bad idea." "We already have that thing that drives around with a rotating sign on it." In other words one bad thing makes another bad thing acceptable.

We are already bombarded with in-your-face advertising messages 24 x 7. Can't we let our kids have a small zone in their life that is free of advertising? Each generation becomes more tolerant of intrusions in their 'space'. The article points out that some schools that are trying this are having trouble finding advertisers.

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Scenic Highways & Trails

Group pushes for Penney Farms scenic highway



BILL JOHNSON

BILL JOHNSON/File

A Jacksonville Cycling Classic race gets started along Florida 16 in Penney Farms in 2007. An effort is under way to designate the tree-lined stretch of road as a Florida Scenic Highway.

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Anyone interested in participating in the Scenic Highway designation process should contact Cathie Parrott at 529-1496. For more information on Florida's Scenic Highway program, go to www.dot.state.fl.us/emo/scenichwy.

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The hope is that the designation will save the tree canopy.

By BETH REESE CRAVEY, My Clay Sun

An initiative to obtain state scenic highway designation for a Clay County stretch of Florida 16 - to protect the famed tree canopy of oaks and magnolias that lines the highway as it runs through Penney Farms - has entered its final phase.

On Sept. 30, a training session was held for Citizen Advocacy for a Scenic Highway Committee, a group of residents and representatives of area government, business, tourist, community and historical organizations. Committee members received a presentation on the step-by-step procedures for applying for scenic highway designation, said coordinator Cathie Parrott.

The group meets again Oct. 30 to choose assignments, working toward applying for the designation in June 2009, she said. More public participation is welcome.

"The goal ... is to protect, preserve, maintain and enhance the natural, scenic, historic and cultural resources along the corridor in working partnerships with economic development interests and government entities," Parrott said. "The projected route will include a loop where visitors can read a historic marker, see two beautiful old churches, picnic in the parks, stop at an original sharecropper home and have a picture taken beside the statue of [town founder] J.C. Penney."

A small group of interested residents began the process two years ago, filing a letter of intent and seeking eligibility for the designation. In February, the group was given the state go-ahead to begin the required paperwork.

The Scenic Highway program is part of the state Department of Transportation, which also owns and maintains Florida 16.

Parrott said earlier that the designation would not prevent DOT from widening the two-lane highway, which is a long-held fear of town residents, or prohibit property owners from developing land along the roadway. But it would give the agency and property owners reason to look at alternatives.

The 2.85-mile J.C. Penney Memorial Scenic Corridor would run along Florida 16, from just east of the town limits, travel a short distance through Penney Farms, and create a small loop, terminating to the west of town.

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Other Scenic News

New Segment of The Florida Trail Offers Hikers a View of Rare Ecosystems

Groups offer guided hikes of new trail following ribbon-cutting ceremony

ALTAMONTE SPRINGS, FLORIDA — October 15, 2008 — A new section of [The Florida Trail](#) officially opens to hikers on Saturday, October 25, at 9 a.m. following a grand opening ceremony held in Seven Runs Creek Recreational Area.

The new trail section allows hikers to enjoy a 20-mile walk in the woods paralleling Lafayette Creek in southern Walton County, and across Nokuse Plantation. The 1,400-mile Florida Trail previously ran along the roadway before it enters Eglin Air Force Base; the new 20-mile segment closes a major gap between SR 81 and US 331. Following a ribbon-cutting ceremony to celebrate the trail segment's opening, visitors can take guided hikes led by trail blazers and area naturalists.

Anyone interested in attending the grand opening, should contact Vernon Compton in [The Nature Conservancy's](#) Milton office to RSVP. He can be reached at 850-623-0987 or vcompton@tnc.org.

"The [U.S. Forest Service](#) is privileged to manage the Florida National Scenic Trail, and pleased to announce the opening of the Nokuse Plantation section of the statewide footpath," said Susan Matthews, forest supervisor for the National Forests in Florida. "The trail is a part of Florida's natural and cultural heritage, and is a precious gift that will be passed from one generation to the next."

The new trail section was made possible by an agreement between the U.S. Forest Service and Nokuse Plantation founder M.C. Davis. Nokuse Plantation is a 48,058-acre private conservation initiative in the Florida Panhandle. The plantation is an active member of the Gulf Coast Plain Ecosystem Partnership (GCPEP), a public-private partnership that cooperates on conservation projects and management of more than a million acres in northwest Florida and south Alabama. Land management along the new trail segment in Nokuse Plantation is part of GCPEP's efforts in the region.

"Our trail provides the perfect opportunity for the public to enjoy substantial interaction with nature," said M.C. Davis, founder and owner of Nokuse Plantation. "These experiences will afford recreation, education, and for many a rekindling of the spirit."

The Florida Trail's first blaze was painted in 1966 and the trail achieved a National Scenic Trail

designation in 1983. The trail extends from Everglades National Park to the Gulf Islands National Seashore near Pensacola. The Florida Trail is one of eight National Scenic Trails in the United States.

“This 20-mile long section of the Florida Trail offers the public a wonderful opportunity to explore the Nokuse Plantation and the Northwest Florida Water Management District’s lands along Lafayette and Magnolia creeks,” said Peter S. Durnell, president of the Florida Trail Association. “The Florida Trail Association and its volunteers who built and maintain this hiking trail thank the USDA Forest Service, Nokuse Plantation and the District for their continuing partnership in support of the Florida Trail.”

Florida’s Panhandle is one of the United States’ top six most biologically diverse regions. The state’s western Panhandle includes the largest remaining stands of natural longleaf pine forests. These forests shelter rare and endangered species, such as the red-cockaded woodpecker—a species listed as federally endangered.

“[The Northwest Florida Water Management District](#) is honored to be a continuing partner with the USDA Forest Service, Nokuse Plantation and the Florida Trail Association in the development and dedication of this vital segment of the Florida National Scenic Trail,” said Bill Cleckley, director of the Division of Land Management and Acquisition for The Northwest Florida Water Management District. “In addition to providing public access and hiking opportunities through public and private conservation lands, the Nokuse Plantation trail segment allows hikers the opportunity to see unique Steephead habitats, gopher tortoise relocation and restoration efforts and longleaf pine and wiregrass habitat restoration activities while traversing a varied landscape from Eglin Air Force Base to the Choctawhatchee River Water Management Area.”

Recent research sponsored by The Nature Conservancy and conducted by researchers from the University of Chicago-Illinois found a long-term decline in nature-based recreation, such as fishing, camping and visits to parks.

“Providing opportunities for people to experience nature first-hand is critical for the future of conservation in Florida,” said Vernon Compton, project director for The Nature Conservancy’s Gulf Coast Plain Ecosystem Partnership. “The new Florida Trail section through Nokuse Plantation provides another important opportunity for people to connect with and learn about one of the most biologically diverse regions in the nation.”

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Wilton Rooks

Scenic Watch Editor