

# The Original Florida Tourism Task Force

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**Mission Statement:** The North Central Florida Region will promote the natural, historic, and cultural attractions of the area to increase the number of visitors and extend their stay. The goal is to enhance the area's economy, image, and quality of life through expanded revenues and employment opportunities. At the same time, the region will encourage the preservation of the resources which bring focus to the area.

## Background:

Formed in 1993, **The Original Florida Tourism Task Force** is a non-profit organization formed through inter-local governmental agreements that promotes tourism in 12 counties in North Central Florida. The region spans from the Tallahassee area in the west, east to White Springs, south to Gainesville and then west to Cedar Key. The Task Force is a founding partner of the state's official tourism marketing organization, VISIT FLORIDA®.

## Unique Features:

- The region is home to the largest concentration freshwater springs in the world, and the world-famous Suwannee River.
- The Timucuan Indian nation dwelled here over 10,000 years ago.
- Many of the region's historic buildings survived the Civil War, and turquoise springs, moss-draped oak trees and gently rolling hills will challenge the average visitor's notions of Florida.
- The University of Florida and Florida State University offer world-class cultural venues and cuisine and, of course, great college sports.

## Current Programs:

- Press trips through the region focus on "Spring into Nature," showcasing the region's freshwater springs, and also "Romantically North Florida" showcasing the ways a couple can get away from the hustle and bustle of everyday life and rediscover the magic.
- Hidden Treasures campaign – a combination of modern-day treasure hunting through geocaching will encourage travelers to experience "off the beaten path" places in North Florida.
- The Black Heritage Trail and brochure – designed to be a user-friendly driving tour through the region's sites that are open to the public.
- The Suwannee River Wilderness Trail Paddling Guide, covering 170 miles of the river from near the state line to the Gulf of Mexico, is available at Outfitters and Retailers throughout the region.

## Results:

- Marketing and FAM trips through the region generate over \$850,000 in advertising equivalency for the region annually.
- Finalist in the prestigious Flagler awards mixed-media tourism campaign, and awarded the Council for Sustainable Florida's Promising Practice Award for 2007.
- Through volunteer work, staff time and cooperative programs; the return on investment for member counties averages \$225 per every \$1 of dues.

For additional information on **The Original Florida Tourism Task Force**, please contact Bryan Thomas, North Central Florida Regional Planning Council, at 352-955-2200, ext. 106 or e-mail [thomas@ncfrpc.org](mailto:thomas@ncfrpc.org).

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