

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## *Big wheels ready to roll out trails across two states*

"Morning in America" gusto marks plans for an early 2009 bicycle tour that will advance trails in both Georgia and northeast Florida.

For five days starting January 14, 25 coastal Georgians will ride the invitational Savannah-Northeast Florida Workshop on Wheels that begins in St. Marys, Georgia, and continues along off-road trails, bicycle lanes, backroads and ferries through Florida's Amelia Island, Jacksonville, Clay and St. Johns counties.

"The tour will greatly advance regional ecotourism," says Visit Jacksonville President John G. Reyes.

"Cycling and trail-riding is just one of the many experiences that the Savannah area has to offer," says Savannah Convention & Visitor Bureau President Joseph Marinelli. "The Workshop on Wheels will be good exposure for the sport through coastal Georgia."

"It will greatly focus trail-building through our six coastal counties," says Jo Hickson of the Coastal Georgia Greenway.

"It will put the East Coast Greenway on the map in its two most important southern states," says Herb Hiller, Southeast Region Program Consultant to the East Coast Greenway Alliance.

Bankers, elected officials, educators, land developers, lawyers, and MDs are among the touring group. They'll not only ride an average of 25 miles a day.

"Evenings," says host committee chairman David Strickland, [Community Bank Vice Chairman of Everbank](#), Jacksonville, Jacksonville, "they'll meet with political leaders, parks and transportation planners, tourism leaders, trail advocates and others to learn the best so far accomplished in northeast Florida and about issues affecting how the region further develops trails."

The touring group is expected to report back to Savannah, Chatham County and regional authorities about how best to connect trails through Georgia's six coastal counties. Earlier this year the Coastal Georgia Greenway and East Coast Greenway Alliance designated their first sections of state trail in Woodbine and in Richmond Hill.

Also earlier this year, Visit Florida, ECGA and tourism agencies in Nassau, Duval and St. Johns counties published the first guide to the East Coast Greenway in Florida.

The touring group will overnight in St. Marys B&Bs, at the Hyatt Regency Jacksonville Riverfront, Ponte Vedra Beach Resorts, and at Amelia Island Plantation.

Additional organizations involved in the event include the Trust for Public Land, St. Johns River Alliance, St. Marys Tourism, Camden Community Trails, Bike Florida, the North Florida Bicycle Club, Amelia Island Tourist Development Council, and the St. Johns County Tourist Development Council.

**Coastal Georgia Greenway** (<http://coastalgeorgiagreenway.org/>) is a rapidly growing grassroots volunteer organization working to build a network of trails from South Carolina to Florida through six Georgia coastal counties. A shared regional vision, the planned 450-mile Coastal Georgia Greenway system of trails will make the beauty of coastal Georgia safely and easily accessible to pedestrians, bicyclists, hikers, joggers, equestrians, canoeists and kayakers – helping preserve the unique and beautiful Georgia coast, attracting visitors, providing recreation, and making local economies stronger.

**The East Coast Greenway Alliance** is a national nonprofit membership organization dedicated to making the greenway a reality. Working through state committees, ECGA partners with national, state, and local organizations to close the gaps and ensure high standards of maintenance. The Alliance sets the vision, defines trail criteria, provides coordination among the many players that develop, own, and manage the trail. ECGA also monitors trail segments as they are designated to ensure a safe, memorable experience for the user.