

As of September 16, 2003, which marked the second anniversary of the initial opening of the Suncoast Parkway and Trail, a number of awards and designations were received in recognition of the positive impacts that the Turnpike Enterprise and its local partners have had on the state, national, and international communities:

- **IBTTA Votes Suncoast Parkway “Best of the Best” in 2003:** The International Bridge, Tunnel and Turnpike Association (IBTTA) selected Florida’s Turnpike Enterprise to receive its “2003 President’s Award of Excellence” for the Suncoast Parkway project. In his letter to Florida’s Turnpike Enterprise, IBTTA’s President describes the President’s Award as “the most prestigious of the IBTTA and represents the best example of excellence among the toll agencies of the world.”
- **IBTTA’S 2003 Toll Excellence Award:** To become eligible for the President’s Award, the Suncoast Parkway project was first the winner of one-of-five major category awards, IBTTA’s “2003 Toll Excellence Award” in the category of social responsibility. Based on judging by the association’s award task force, the Turnpike’s *Suncoast Parkway Aesthetic Design Guidelines* entry was selected as “setting the standard of excellence” within the industry.
- **Florida Bicycle Association (FBA) 2003 Awards:** When “BIKEFEST 2003-The National Rally for Cyclists gathered in Madison, Florida in October 2003, FBA invited Florida’s Turnpike Enterprise, along with 600 cyclists, to its annual meeting to accept two awards for the Suncoast Trail.



Figure 19: Turnpike receives IBTTA’s 2003 Toll Excellence Award



Figure 20: Florida Bicycle Association (FBA) at Suncoast grand opening

Mr. James L. Ely, Executive Director and Chief Executive Officer for Florida’s Turnpike Enterprise received the 2003 “Supporting Agency of the Year Award” for the Turnpike’s vision in designing, funding, and constructing the Suncoast Trail as part of the Parkway project. The “2003 Trails Manager of the Year Award” was also received on behalf of the Suncoast Trail Advisory Group (STAG), which is comprised of members of Hillsborough, Pasco, and Hernando Counties and the Turnpike Enterprise. The STAG was recognized for ongoing efforts to resolve trail issues, promote trail stewardship and safety, plan major events, and coordinate operations and maintenance efforts.



Figure 21: Suncoast Trail grand opening at SR 50 Trailhead



Figure 22: Grant presentation by Office of Greenways and Trails to Hernando County



FBA's awards committee cited the Suncoast Trail grand opening at the SR 50 trailhead and overpass in April 2003 as an outstanding example of community partnership. One of the major partners present at the opening was the Florida Department of Environmental Protection's Office of Greenways and Trails, which had presented a check for \$50,000 to Hernando County for trailhead improvements. FDOT District Seven is also providing \$200,000 in enhancement funds for this new facility.

- ***Suncoast Trail Designated as a National Recreation Trail:*** In 2002, the Suncoast Trail was one of 26 trails across the nation to be added to the United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service's National Recreation Trails System.
- ***Suncoast Trail Logo Receives American Trails Award:*** In 2003, the Suncoast Trail Logo won the "Signs and Trailheads" category of American Trails' first photo contest under its National Recreation Trails Program.



Figure 23: Suncoast Trail standard signage and designation

Since the Suncoast Parkway's initial opening in early 2001, motorists have enjoyed an aesthetic enhancement on bridge end walls—a five-foot square panel cast with a recessed image of *Andropogon ternarius*, a native grass indigenous to the area. The logo was developed as part of the Turnpike's *Suncoast Parkway Aesthetic Design Guidelines* in September 1993. The logo stands for the efforts that were put forth to preserve and enhance the natural landscape along the Suncoast corridor and to create a more pleasurable travel experience.

In mid-2000 the Suncoast logo served as a basis for the award winning Suncoast Trail logo developed by Mr. Jim Slaughter, Pasco Parks and Recreation Director and member of the Suncoast Trail Advisory Group (STAG). Jim's graphic design skills captured the spirit of cooperation that exists between Hillsborough, Pasco, and Hernando Counties and Florida's Turnpike Enterprise. The distinctive blue and yellow logo design is now featured on trail publications, maps and signs, staff caps and shirts, and trail markers.

- ***Suncoast Trail Designated a Greenway:*** In mid-2002, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, Office of Greenways and Trails officially designated the Suncoast Trail as an integral part of Florida's Greenways and Trails System. The designation plays an important part in furthering the establishment and interconnectivity of a statewide system of greenways and trails.
- ***2000 Millennium Trail Designation:*** In mid-2000, the White House Millennium Council designated the Suncoast Trail as a Millennium Trail, in recognition of efforts to bring the community together to "Honor the Past—Imagine the Future," by developing a trail that connects people to their land, history, and culture.



Figure 24: Suncoast Trail designations

