



# News Release

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## **Fred Marquis Pinellas Trail Receives National Recognition**

Like a living legend making its grandest stage, the *Fred Marquis Pinellas Trail* will be formally inducted into the Rail-Trail Hall of Fame on Tuesday, Oct. 21, 10 a.m., at the 2008 ProBike®/ProWalk Florida Conference held at the Hilton St. Petersburg Bayfront hotel.

Since opening the first five-mile stretch in December 1990, Pinellas County's urban *Pinellas Trail* has helped millions of Floridians and visitors gain access to healthier and more sustainable lifestyles. Today in Florida's second-smallest yet most densely populated county, the trail and its spurs span 50 miles among nine cities and towns throughout Pinellas County. It is recognized as one of the best U.S. trail systems and will become one of the first five trails to be nationally recognized by the hallowed institution of trails, Rails-to-Trails Conservancy (RTC). It is these trails – converted from unused railroad lines – that the nation connects in the same way the railroads once linked people across the county. Across the U.S., more than 15,000 miles of rail-trails create the pathways linking metropolitan areas with small towns and everywhere in between.

Each month, approximately 90,000 individuals use the *Pinellas Trail*, a unique greenway corridor linking some of the county's most picturesque parks, scenic coastal areas and residential neighborhoods. While traveling along the trail, outdoor enthusiasts enjoy deep glades of ancient live oaks trailing Spanish moss, quiet waterways and tidal streams with all varieties of land and water birds. Amenities, such as benches, water fountains, rest areas and landscaping, are paid for by the citizens fundraising group Pinellas Trails, Inc. Hailed as a priceless haven in a busy, highly urbanized environment, it provides trail-goers both recreation and alternative commuter transportation options. More than 10 over-and-underpasses allow users to travel breezily above or below busy intersection traffic.

RTC's Rail-Trail Hall of Fame was established in 2007 to honor outstanding rail-trails. Currently 1,500 open rail-trails exist and approximately 750 more are in development. Hall of Fame inductees are selected based on merits such as scenic value, high use, trail and trailside amenities, historical significance, excellence in management and maintenance of facility, community connections and geographic distribution.

Past trails that have received the designation include the Minuteman Bikeway in Boston, the Burke-Gilman Trail in Seattle, the Katy Trail State Park in Missouri and the Great Allegheny Passage in Maryland and Pennsylvania.

The ProBike®/ProWalk Florida Conference is held this year from Oct. 20 through Oct. 23, and brings together elected officials and community and organization leaders to discuss the expansion of walkable and bikeable communities among cities, towns and counties.

Formal induction ceremony:

Tuesday, Oct. 21

10 a.m.

ProBike®/ProWalk Florida Conference

Grand Bay North Ballroom

Hilton St. Petersburg Bayfront hotel

333 1<sup>st</sup> Street South, St. Petersburg, Fla.

For more information about the *Fred Marquis Pinellas Trail*, visit Pinellas County Parks & Recreation Department at [www.pinellascounty.org/park](http://www.pinellascounty.org/park), Pinellas County Planning Department at [www.pinellascounty.org/plan](http://www.pinellascounty.org/plan), or call Pinellas County at (727) 464-3000.

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