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**Trail at Snead Island dedicated**

By CARL MARIO NUDI  
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MANATEE -- Betty Rynsburger and her sister, Marilyn Vereske, are happy Manatee County completed the pedestrian trailway attached to the Snead Island Bridge.

"We like to bike from Palmetto to Emerson Point," Rynsburger said. "This is way nicer than what was here before."

County and Palmetto city officials gathered Thursday to dedicate the cantilevered, 8-foot-wide concrete pathway, which replaces a three-foot sidewalk.

The old, narrower crossing was usually crowded with fishermen, bikers and walkers, making it unsafe to cross over the Snead Island Cut.

The safety of bikers and walkers was the reason former county commissioner Pat Glass pushed for the new walkway when she was in office.

"This improvement was necessary," said Glass, who lives on Snead Island. "The bridge was built in 1959 and was too narrow."

Bikers who tried to use the roadway portion of the bridge competed with cars, trucks and boat trailers.

"I think this is a good example of what can be done to create a greenway," Glass said. "It's important because bikers can ride from west Bradenton to Emerson Point."

Rynsburger and Vereske, Hudsonville, Mich., residents who spend several months during the winter in Palmetto with their husbands, Bill and Dave, said that was why they liked the new trail.

"In Michigan, we're really used to biking," Vereske said.

Rynsburger said they "are always looking for new trails."

The county's Conservation Lands Management Department is finishing designs for the connector portion of the trail west of the bridge to Emerson Point Park, at the western tip of Snead Island.

At the ceremony, Commission Chairwoman Jane von Hahmann said county employees did all the work, from design and engineering to construction.

The project cost \$172,400, almost \$57,000 under budget, and was paid for with state and federal grants.

However, Von Hahmann also recognized the city of Palmetto for the portion of the trail along 10th Street West.

"It was a partnership with the city of Palmetto," she said. "They brought the sidewalk to the bridge and we got it over the water."

The 2-mile-long Palmetto trail was completed last year and begins at Hydrant Park on 14th Avenue West and meanders through neighborhoods to 10th Street West, and travels along 10th Street West to the bridge.

"The addition of the portion over the bridge is an asset for Palmetto and Manatee County," said Tanya Lukowiak, director of the Palmetto Community Redevelopment Agency. "This effectively moves us toward a community that is completely pedestrian friendly."

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