

FLORIDA TRAIL RIDERS Membership Guide



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WELCOME

Welcome to the FTR. This booklet was written for you and is the result of contributions by many riders who have learned the hard way. To really enjoy special events like these, it's important to know what to expect and how to best prepare. In this guide, fellow FTR members share their experiences with you to improve the overall experience and long-term enjoyment of the sport. It is not, however, a substitute for reading the rulebook, which is also available from FTR.

The purpose of our organization is to promote the image of "Responsible Motorcyclists"; to sanction, schedule, assist and monitor off-road motorcycle events in Florida; to establish policies, rules and procedures to be followed by promoters, with the end result being a series of organized events; to sponsor and support positive motorcycle legislation; and to establish and maintain good rapport with private land owners, local, state and federal land management agencies.

The FTR and its membership is made up of amateur motorcycle enthusiasts from all walks of life, from all across the state of Florida, who have the exciting sport of off-road motorcycling as a common interest. There are family people (husbands, wives, children), professional people (doctors, lawyers, teachers), technicians, and laborers. Off-road motorcycling holds no social, age, or ethnic bounds. With a strong common interest there is no young or old, black or white, rich or poor, just people who love the sport.

Our organization is over 3,000 members strong and still growing. Many members of FTR are also members of regional and local clubs, each with their own governing body. FTR helps coordinate the clubs' racing activities by sanctioning club races, rather than hosting each race directly. It is through this combined effort that the FTR is able to support its members with great events and its community through gifts such as scholarships.

IT'S ALL ABOUT VOLUNTEERS

Although we do have to pay for some services, such as auditing the books, FTR is a volunteer organization. This means the real work only gets done when members like you participate. It takes a lot of preparation to layout a trail, sign racers up, and score their results. But this work can be a lot fun when you are working along side fellow members. Getting involved can be as easy as a phone call or e-mail. Look in your latest issue of the FTR magazine or visit the website (www.floridatrailriders.org) for a club near you. Local clubs are the backbone of FTR. They are the men and women who find the land, layout the courses, sign up and score the races. They pay FTR a sanction fee to have their event(s) included in the FTR Championship Series. The clubs pay a "head tax" and an administrative fee to FTR, which provides the trophy fund for the Annual Awards Presentation and pays the FTR scorekeepers to tally the overall results to determine Championship Point standings. Scores are compiled at the events and mailed to the FTR scorekeepers for tabulation of Championship point standings before they are released to our web site and magazine.

SECURING A GOOD PLACE TO RIDE

Finding a good place to ride with permission from the landowner is a challenge. Thanks to our Forestry Service, there are several parks in Florida that permit off-road vehicles, but that right is always being challenged, especially when riders behave inappropriately. Some of the most popular places are the Croom Motorcycle Riding Area near Tampa and the Ocala National Forest. For more information on these and other places, visit the FTR website.

Keeping a good place to hold FTR races can be even more challenging. FTR volunteers invest hours trying to secure a place to ride. Once a landowner is agreeable, the initial relationship can be very fragile. For the first time, strangers will be enjoying their land. Strangers who may forget to close the gate, leave trash behind, and make lots of noise late at night. We have found great properties all over the state only to lose them for one reason or another.

Most of these properties are working ranches kept in the family for generations. Just because you don't see cows, bulls, or horses doesn't mean they are not there, somewhere. Taking care of their property is key to ensuring we can continue to ride. Here are a few tips to keep in mind when participating in an FTR event:

- Be careful not to tear up the roads entering and leaving property
- Stay off fences and gates
- Don't wander out on the property beyond designated areas
- Don't sneak out to ride a practice lap after hours
- If you see folks abusing these rules, let an official wearing an orange vest know.

PIT RIDING

In most FTR events, racers are permitted to ride their bikes to the starting line, but riders must remain in first gear and not race their machines or try stunts. This not only keeps the pits safe for the children to enjoy, but also prevents problems with the landowner. The official FTR rules state, "No pit racing and/or reckless riding will be allowed. Riders or the parents will be warned once and then disqualified. No one under the legal driving age will be allowed to operate an ORV except on the course during their competition or to and from the start finish line and must be accompanied by an adult of legal driving age. Competition vehicles will use 1st gear to and from the starting area."

Because pit riding has been abused, strict penalties are being enforced. Riders racing in the pit areas, even if only to warm up their bikes or "clear a plug" have been disqualified from their race for causing a safety hazard. Please do not risk it. If you see others racing in the pit area, inform them of the consequences or notify an official.

GENERAL SURVIVAL



Where did all these people come from? FTR races can be big events and they just get bigger every year. People from all over the state of Florida slide into their trucks, cars, SUVs, and RVs in anticipation of an exciting time. They bring their kids, their toys, their toolbox, and of course, their race bikes. It's an exciting time for everyone, even the volunteers. Whether you're just along for race day, or camping for a full race weekend, it's always good to know a few important rules for survival.

SIGN UP & THE RIDERS MEETING

If you planned your race well in advance, you have probably signed

up before the event. In this case, you simply need to get your helmet sticker/card. Oh yea, and sign those papers you forgot to sign when you mailed them in. You'll still need your FTR membership card for identification.

For those who do not pre-register, there is usually a long line well before the sign-up booth even opens. Although this can be a long wait, it can also be a good time to chat with your fellow riders and learn a little bit about the course. Make sure you bring your FTR membership card and some cash (or check). It's also a good idea to get the form from the FTR website or the FTR magazine and fill it out ahead of time to save yourself a little time at the sign-up table.

Some races are AMA sanctioned, which also require an AMA membership. The good news is that you can do this at the race during registration. The bad news is for those who are already members and forgot their AMA membership card. The officials at sign-up must be able to scan your card at sign-up, even if you pre-registered. Having the number handy is not enough. So remember your AMA and FTR cards at sign-up.

The Riders Meeting is an important part of any race. This is where all the special warnings specific to the course or track are provided. At Hare Scrambles, you will learn how many laps each class will be racing. At Enduros, you will learn of the special gas stops and other important information such as, special hazards or rules regarding landowners or government agencies. At Motocross events, you will learn when your moto will be run and how long each moto will be.

FOLLOWING THE TRAIL

Hare Scrambles and Enduros make use of the countryside and require a lot of preparation in laying out trails. Depending on the length of the course, the property being used, and the condition of the land, it can take a team of volunteers several weeks and sometimes months to layout the necessary trail. This involves, cutting away vegetation, removing dangerous obstacles such as fallen trees, mowing grassy areas, posting trail markers, and various other activities.

This effort is to help you navigate these trails as safely as possible during the race, but there are always some hazards that go unmarked, so racers must beware. Once on the trail, discipline yourself to keep an eye out for the markers and hazards. This can be very difficult for novice riders who may have a tendency to focus more on the ground directly in front of them, rather than the trail ahead. At racing speeds, it's easy to miss one of these markers. Therefore, as you navigate the trail, remember to constantly glance up ahead to anticipate turns, dangerous obstacles, and scoring areas.

During a race, you will see the trail markers as illustrated at the back of this booklet. These are used to mark the trail to show turns and provide warnings for hazard, wrong way, down hills and so on. Ensure you are familiar with these signs. If, during a race, you get hurt, stay close to the trail so someone will see you. If your bike breaks down, please stay with your bike. This avoids creating a search party for someone who wondered back to their campsite.

DOING THE RV THING

Because FTR events are located across the state of Florida, many have invested in an RV to take their home with them. This is a great way to enjoy the whole race weekend without rushing to and from the race – you have enough to worry about. For those of you who have taken this route, there are a few important points worth considering.

Although some events offer RV facilities like water, electrical hook up and sewage, most do not. Even those events where RV hook ups are available, the sites get filled up quickly. Therefore it is wise to be prepared for primitive camping. This means filling your tanks with water and gas, and dumping your sewage before you arrive.

There are a few places to do this on the way to the race. Campgrounds will typically allow you to fill your water tanks and dump your sewage for a small fee. Some truck stops, like Flying J, even offer RV facilities for water and sewage. But these are few, so mark them down when you find one. Flying J with RV stations can be found on I-95 exit 66 and the Turnpike exit Highway 70.

It's always nice to have a generator along to run lights, air conditioners, and microwaves – all the comforts of home. However, these units can be very noisy, especially at night when your neighbors, some of whom will be in tents, are trying to get some sleep before a full day of racing. Take care to ensure your generator exhaust is not pointed directly in your neighbor's camp. Also keep in mind that some properties ask that generators be turned off after certain late night hours or ask those using them to park in designated areas.

When finding your way to Hare Scrambles and Enduros, the road to the camping area is often a challenge for the larger RVs, especially those with low ground clearance. You can expect mud, sand, and uneven terrain to make navigating your RV a real challenge. Just ask the person at the gate for help. Often times there will be someone on a quad to help the bigger RVs find the best path to a campsite. There always seems to be someone who gets stuck. If it's your turn, don't panic. Every event has volunteers ready to help get you unstuck. It's usually not as bad as it seems.

INVESTING IN THE RIGHT GEAR

It is critical to your safety that you invest the necessary money in gear. A good helmet is only the start. Your goggles will keep all that "roost" out of your eyes. If mud is likely, don't forget the tear-offs; this plastic film over your goggle lens will allow you to keep a clear view of the trail.

Pants should be durable enough to protect your legs from the engine, the brush, and the occasional oops. Boots specially designed for off-road riding will protect you from many dangerous situations and could save your foot and lower leg from getting twisted on a stump or crushed in a fall. A long sleeved jersey is necessary to protect your arms from brush and other threats. A chest protector will not only help deflect the rocks and debris other riders kick up,

but may also protect your ribs during a fall. Finally, gloves will help keep those hands from getting ripped apart; unfortunately, some blistering is almost inevitable for some of us.

Let's not forget an important part of every athletic sport-staying properly hydrated. Your body will use a lot of fluids as you exert yourself. Therefore, you need to ensure you get plenty of liquid prior to a race. On longer races, like Hare Scrambles and Enduros, it is critical to bring along water. There are many creative ways to bring water along with you during the race, but specially designed drinking systems that strap onto your back are available from bike shops, sporting goods stores, and even discount stores. The trick is to keep sipping on the water. If you wait until you are thirsty, you're waiting too long.

And then, of course, there are those unmentionables. Everyone seems to have their own secret approach to ensuring their bodies and especially their bottoms are comfortable throughout the race. From the special underwear with a padded seat to the Desitin cream between the cheeks. The extra long tube socks doubled up and the two Advil's before the start. There always seems to be some home remedy that does the trick.

SELECTING YOUR CLASS

If you are like many new adult members and just getting back into riding, you might want to consider trying the Beginner class for your first race. Although many of these racers are very capable of riding aggressively, it will give you a chance to test your skills on a shorter, milder course. However, if after racing one of these races, you find that you are comfortable with your bike at race speeds, you are encouraged to promote yourself up to the appropriate C class or above. There you will get a longer, more challenging ride where your skills will be more fairly tested with competitors.

For those who are not beginners, there are many other classes offered at FTR races. Classes based on age, size of engine, type of machine (quad or bike), type of engine (e.g. 4-Stroke) and even classes for women racers. Each sign up sheet includes a list of classes. Be sure to take a look at the rulebook for details.

TIRED OF FINISHING BEHIND EVERYONE ELSE?

If you're tired of finishing behind everyone else, you should consider a few things. Obviously more practice will go along way, but sometimes even more practice has very little effect on a DNF (did not finish). Fortunately, you are a member of an excellent organization with lots of members willing to help.

First, invest some time in getting to know your fellow riders. Pay attention to some of the pre-race activities they are doing, especially at the starting line. Ask why they are setting up the way they are. Most FTR members are good sportsmen and enjoy sharing their techniques. From tire pressure to body position, you can learn a lot from your competitors.

Beyond improving your skill, you also want to make sure your ride is working for you and not the other way around. You can certainly look at bolting on more horsepower, which is what some do first.

It's not hard to find these guys; they are the ones who pass you only to fall down and pass you again.

You may get more bang for your buck if you spend some time making sure your suspension is set up right for your size, weight, riding abilities, and terrain. Remember, even if your engine takes you faster, you still have to be able to stay on your ride to finish. Reading up on your suspension in your favorite magazine is a good start. If you need a little more help, look for a good suspension expert. Just ask around.

TIPS FOR RACE SETUP

Florida has several terrains throughout the state. Sand is the most predominate but on Hare Scrambles and Enduros, you must also cope with palmetto fields, large roots, hard pack, and rocks. Choosing the right tire and tire pressure can go a long way in your race performance. A few days before the race, check the FTR website to get a race update. If a lot of sand is expected, soft terrain tires with low air pressure just might be the ticket. If you want to keep it simple, just find a good intermediate tire and adjust the air pressure slightly to accommodate the conditions.

Proper carburetor jetting and oil mixture on two-stroke machines may be a concern due to Florida's seasonal temperature swings. Trouble signs include frequently fouling plugs, inconsistent throttle response, and stuttering at high rpm. If you have specific questions or problems, ask your fellow racers. These questions come up frequently and FTR members do a great job of helping riders get the best performance from their machines.

RIDER'S ETIQUETTE - PASSING

One of the first areas of etiquette you will be confronted with is passing fellow racers during the race. The best approach is to get the holeshot; otherwise you will have to pass to win. Some of the tighter tracks will require some imagination and patience. Here are a few pointers:

- Don't crowd the other rider or follow their lines
- Look for passing lanes that stay within 20 feet of trail markers (except motocross)
- Pace yourself – use this time following someone to catch your breath
- Be ready when the slower rider gives you room
- When you pass someone thank them when on a long trail
- Let faster riders pass – don't take it personal
- Remember, you're there to have fun, not get hurt

AVOIDING HEAT EXHAUSTION AND HEAT STROKE

As mentioned previously, a good drinking system is key to keeping your body hydrated and cool. Events held during a hot day make riders susceptible to heat exhaustion and heat stroke even with the best drinking system. One can progress from exhaustion to heat stroke quickly. The cause is severe elevation of the body's core temperature due to muscular exercise with the body being unable to cope with it.

SIGNS

- Early signs are dizziness, weakness or nausea (not always evident)
- Sweating progressing to dry, hot skin
- Skin may be pink or pale
- Pupils may be constricted or pin-point
- Increased heart rate and hyperventilation
- Loss of consciousness
- May progress to seizures and delirium and coma

TREATMENT:

If the rider recognizes the early signs of heat stroke, he should stop, rest, and shed some gear to cool off. Other riders, seeing someone down, must stop and render aid, or ride to the next checkpoint and notify the workers of the emergency (except motocross). Emergency treatment consists of the following:

- If unconscious, check for open airway and pulse.
- Offer water only if conscious.
- Remove tight clothing and helmet.
- Pour lots of water on the rider - not ice water.
- Get rider into the shade.
- Get medical evacuation to the scene as soon as possible. They need to start IV fluids and transport to a hospital.

One of our riders, Dr. Steve Augustine, wrote the following article for the FTR Magazine:

••• Dehydration •••

Adverse environmental conditions can cause some major problems during a race - mainly dehydration. Exercise-induced dehydration is a real problem and can be avoided. Even though it can happen while you are riding in cold weather, it is more common when there are high temperatures and humidity levels. Since we live in Florida and the weather here is often hot and humid most of the year, we are particularly vulnerable to dehydration problems when we ride or race. As the temperature and humidity rise it becomes more difficult for your body to release the heat that is generated during a race or grueling trail ride. The goal is to maintain the body's fluid levels, which allows it to produce sweat and cool itself preventing body temperatures that could potentially lead to heat exhaustion or heat stroke.

During vigorous physical activity, like a race or tough trail ride, your body generates heat from all the work your muscles have to do. During a ride your metabolic rate can increase as much as 20 to 25 times the resting rate, which can cause your core body temperature to rise dramatically. The sun's heat can also be absorbed by the body, adding to the amount of heat that needs to be released to keep your body's temperature stable. The ability to release this heat depends on the ability to form and evaporate sweat. Your body has many ways to release heat but when the outside temperature approaches or is higher than your body temperature (98.6 degrees F) then 100% of the heat loss must come from evaporation of sweat.

Evaporation is optimal on breezy, low humidity and cloudy days. When the sweat evaporates it transfers the heat from your body to the environment, which cools the skin. The cooled skin then cools the blood near the skin's surface, which in turn, cools the core body temperature as the cooled blood circulates to the inner parts of your

body. High humidity greatly reduces the ability to evaporate sweat, so even though you may be sweating like O.J. Simpson on the stand, the cooling effect from evaporation is not working. This means your losing fluid but not heat - increasing the risk of dehydration.

Athletes can lose 1 to 2 Liters of sweat/fluid per hour during a ride on a hot day. This results in about 2.5 to 5% loss in your total body water per hour. A fluid loss as little as 1% is associated with an increase in your core body temperature making you more susceptible to heat illness. A loss of 3% of body weight as sweat impairs muscle contractile activity, thereby impairing athletic performance and increasing the risk of injury. Exercise - induced dehydration results from not drinking enough fluids to replace the fluid volume that is lost from sweating. This lowered blood volume results in less blood flow to the skin, which hinders heat loss, which in turn, causes an increase in body temperature. The low blood volume in dehydration also decreases the delivery of oxygen to your working muscles causing early fatigue. All of this means that racing on a clear, hot and humid day makes it harder for your body to lose heat and maintain a normal temperature. Keeping your fluid volume up allows you to sweat and keep your body temperature down without becoming dehydrated. This allows you to perform at an optimal level.

Racing desert hare and hound races, hare scrambles, enduros, and GNCC events have some inherent problems that can lead to dehydration and heat problems. These problems include the duration of the races, the amount of gear that has to be worn, racing in the summer months and the starting times. All of these types of races are more than an hour long, requiring the rider to hydrate "on the fly" or to take unscheduled breaks. Fortunately, hydration packs that allow riders to drink while they ride have eliminated most of this problem. But they would have to be the size of a five gallon drum to keep you hydrated adequately during an entire race. The guidelines set by The American College of Sports Medicine for maintaining fluid levels during sports activities recommends drinking 600 to 1200 mL/hour (or 20 to 40 oz/hour) during activity. This means that every 15 to 20 minutes you should drink 5 to 10 oz of fluid. So during a two hour hare scrambles you should consume about 80 oz of fluid. Since most hydration systems don't hold that much fluid, you aren't getting enough fluid unless you refill them during the race or take drink breaks, which no one likes to do during a race.

Other guidelines to follow for good hydration for a race include: making sure to consume adequate fluids 24 hours before the race, avoid alcohol, drink about 20 oz of fluid in the two hours before the race and drink 5 to 10 oz every 15 to 20 minutes. The fluid of choice is water, but sometimes there are reasons for using drinks that contain carbohydrates and electrolytes. For races that last longer than 1 hour, drinks containing carbohydrates provide a fuel source and can help delay fatigue. Drinks with electrolytes keep your sodium level up (reducing cramps) and are absorbed by your gut quicker than pure water. For the races mentioned above I recommend mixing a carbo/electrolyte drink with pure water in a 50/50 mix. If it is extremely hot then go with a water/electrolyte mix and avoid the carbohydrate drinks. Always remember to drink even if you are not thirsty because thirst is a poor indicator of how dehydrated you may really be.

Another problem is that the races are scheduled during the summer

months when the weather conditions are ideal for dehydration to occur. Obviously, a lot of work goes into sponsoring and preparing these events and re-scheduling a race is not a real option, but adjustments could be made. So when an event is scheduled on possibly hot humid days, instead of starting the races around noon they should start either earlier or later in the day to avoid peak temperature and sun exposure times, decreasing the risk of potential problems to the riders.

The amount of equipment a racer wears also makes it more difficult to evaporate sweat. The ability to evaporate sweat is related to body surface area exposed, and the less area open to the air the less evaporation takes place. If you think about it, almost your entire body is covered when all of your gear is on which decreases your ability to evaporate the sweat and lose heat. So even though your jersey is soaked in sweat you can't get rid of the heat your body is making. This causes your body temperature to rise, which can lead to heat cramps, heat syncope (passing-out), heat exhaustion, and heat stroke. But don't change into a dry jersey because the wet one is still more efficient at evaporating the sweat. The dry clothing acts as a barrier preventing the air from contacting the sweat, which evaporates it. At least the sweat in the soaked jersey is getting evaporated just not as well as having the air right on the skin.

So what kind of clothing should you wear on hot days? If you can deal with the tree branch scratches and funny looks, then ride naked, but seriously, loose fitting pants and jerseys preferably made of mesh or some breathable material is best because it allows air to circulate over the skin for sweat evaporation. Some riders just cut holes in their regular jersey. Also wear light colors to help reflect the sun's heat because dark colors absorb radiation energy from the sun. Make sure you wash your gear because dirt and oil can block the holes in the material that allows the air to circulate through.

Even though clothing may make evaporation of sweat more difficult, it does protect your skin from the sun. Since you are at risk for prolonged sun exposure and sunburn on a hot race day it is best to stay out of the sun until race time. Staying in the shade helps keep your body temperature down as well as limiting your sun exposure and the chance of a sunburn. Always wear a sunscreen of at least a 15 SPF (sun protection factor). If you are going to a race on a hot day always take a tarp or tent for shade in case there are no trees available for shade. A sunburn decreases the ability of your skin to sweat which only makes the situation for dehydration and heat illness worse. Besides that there is the skin cancer risk from sun exposure-so stay covered.

Another way of preventing dehydration and the problems associated with it is to acclimatize your body to hot conditions. Acclimatizing your body to hot weather can take days to months depending on how in shape you are. Acclimatization occurs by exercising and being exposed to the hot temperatures. Exercising in the heat should start gradually, 20-30 minute sessions and then worked up to your desired event time. This allows the body to make changes that help the athlete to maintain a stable internal core temperature at higher humidity and temperatures allowing you to perform at your peak. This would be important if you go from a northern climate to race in the southern one without letting your body acclimatize

to the change in the environment. Like heading to Florida in the spring to run the “Alligator” after spending all winter in Massachusetts or racing in August after spending every day in an air conditioned office. Your body just isn’t accustomed to the heat.

In summary maintain your fluid levels and get out and practice in the heat. If you or someone you are riding with is having problems with the heat, get them into the shade and cover them with cold soaked towels. If possible get a fan on them as well as get fluids in them. Get to a hospital for evaluation and treatment. Just be smart, the problems with dehydration and heat intolerance can be avoided if you follow the guidelines I listed. Ride On!

Dr. Augustine (cyclurg@aol.com)

HAPPY HARE SCRAMBLES



Hare scrambles are run on trails through the woods. Unlike the Enduro, which is a long distance endurance test, the hare scramble is a shorter distance and therefore races more like an all out sprint. These exciting contests usually consist of a few long laps on a specified course nearing 40 miles in length, with no public road sections. Riding hard for over an hour requires a large dose of physical stamina, so make sure your heart is up for it.

THE PRACTICE LAP

This is an opportunity to familiarize yourself with the course, noting double green arrows, good sections to pass, even doing some last minute suspension adjustments. Because all the racers for that day will be allowed on the course at the same time, this lap will probably not be an opportunity for you to go full speed, so relax and observe the track.

SETTING UP AT THE STARTING LINE

Hare Scrambles require a “dead engine” start, with the rider standing, facing his bike, 10 feet in front of the machine. Most riders take a friend (called the mechanic) to the starting line to hold the bike up and position the kickstarter back with a ribbon or piece of tape to allow a quicker start. Some bring a box to step on to make it easier to get their leg over the bike. This is all legal, provided the equipment is removed immediately after the start so that it is not in the way of the next row of bikes.

Since your performance depends on the bike starting up quickly, make sure you have a fresh spark plug in the machine and keep the bike warm. A good start can avoid having to pass slower riders on the trail. This is where the excitement begins!

GETTING YOUR SCORE

Scoring is done by volunteers who watch for the class or classes for which they are responsible to come through the scoring chicane. The chicane is designed to slow the riders down and give the scorekeepers ample opportunity to identify the class you are riding and read your number. Even electronic scoring requires these visual checks as a backup. Please help in this process by using the proper background color on your number plates and using contrasting numbers and letters on your bike. You should use white numbers and letters with black, green, red and blue backgrounds and black numbers and letters with white and yellow backgrounds. Don't use fancy, striped, polka dotted or checkered backgrounds or hieroglyphic, chrome or other stylish numbers. Make it easy for the scorers to identify you so that you are scored properly.

After the race, once the scores are posted, riders have 30 minutes to protest the results. There is always a scorer responsible for your class and a master scorer who writes down every bike number, letter and background color that goes through the scoring chicane. Mistakes can usually be confirmed by scrutinizing the Master Sheet. If you have a protest, you must provide it in writing to someone at the sign up table. **DO NOT** bother the people at the scoring chicane. They are very busy trying to do their job and cannot discuss results with you.

If you don't finish in time, your last lap may not be recorded. This means that you "timed out" and will receive a DNF (did not finish) with your position listed based on the last lap scored.

Please keep in mind that all the club personnel are volunteers and are spending their day off providing you with a place to race and have fun. Treat them with respect and be grateful they have given you an opportunity to have fun.



If you really like trail riding, an Enduro provides the longest lasting dose. An Enduro is basically a challenging, timed trail ride, with rewards for riders who come the closest to maintaining a designated speed average over a difficult course, typically around 24 mph. The starting line consists of four to five racers per row, each starting at one-minute intervals. With all these different starting times, racers arrive at timed checkpoints along the route. Penalty points are assessed for arriving either too early or too late. Serious competitors use sophisticated on-board timing equipment to keep the exact pace, but the rest of us use nothing more than a cheap watch and a route sheet supplied by the club. Since courses usually contain sections of public dirt roads, a street-legal dirt bike is often required.

A RICH HISTORY

The motorcycle Endurance Run is one of the oldest forms of off-road activity in this country. Although “purists” do not consider it a race, it is still a competitive endeavor utilizing man and machine.

The AMA started sanctioning these events when it became apparent that a certain breed of man wanted to test their abilities against nature and each other. Taking the saddlebags, mirrors, windshields, and various chrome goodies off a multi-hundred pound Harley, or Indian in the 1930's was considered as having a first class Enduro machine. Imagine if you will, dropping a 450 pound anvil into a 3 foot deep cranberry bog in New Jersey, now try to pull it back out! These guys (and girls) were the true pioneers in a sport that grew steadily into the 60's and then exploded around 1968 with the introduction of lightweight machines such as the Yamaha DT1 and various Spanish-brand two-strokes. Every rider over the age of 50 seems to have their own watermark as to the date it really caught on, but few would disagree that the 125cc Penton put most of us into the trees.

North Easterners found the 125 Penton machine practically indestructible and set up with what we thought were state-of-the-art components for the time. John Penton sired a family of unbeatable machines and those of us under the 200-pound mark fell in love.

As America usually does, we immediately looked for more power, more suspension, etc. The European and Japanese obliged us and the forests quickly resounded with that familiar ring-a-ding noise. The basics of an Enduro continued to be the same as far as layout and scoring. However, the growth of development and the intensity of the conservationists soon began to take its toll on the amount of land available for this pursuit.

At the same time, the quality of rider and machine began to create situations where these events were becoming timed races. The skill level changed. You did not have to be a Steelworker with 20" biceps and a 30 lb. bag of tools to get through the course.

Now you had power, suspension (that's where all those whoops come from), reliability, and some gadget that calculated your time and distance for you. Gone were the days of 500-mile runs. Gone

were the days where you could count on putting the Sunday paper inside your jacket to help combat 9 degree weather while you tried to keep your trusty BSA Gold Star from freezing the forks and limiting your usual 3" travel to only 1". These technological advances brought the sport into a whole new range of recreational enthusiasts for their enjoyment.

GETTING STARTED

To ride an Enduro, you need a reliable bike that has a power-band suitable to your level of expertise and aggressiveness. Other important attributes include a wide ratio gearbox, folding foot pegs, low end torque, handle bars less than 32" wide, waterproofing, ability to touch your feet flat on the ground while sitting, spark arrestor, odometer, knobby type tires, and perhaps a route card holder. These are all good starting points when you think about a machine for this type event.

The Beginner class will only ride half the course, so if you've never done it before, give yourself a break and take the safe way through the first time. Pre-entry is a smart way to get started because it allows you to easily pick up your route sheet and number when you arrive.

Everyone has his or her own theory on row numbers. Some like the earliest number, because you can usually make your own lines on the trail and not get into someone else's mistakes. Others like higher row numbers (starting towards the end of the line) because they have a more open course to more easily follow. Ride a few and make your own decision.

As you become more familiar you'll want to get different types of gear and equipment to better utilize your abilities. The list of items you can purchase is never ending, depending on what makes you feel confident. The must haves include a full-face helmet, boots, goggles, gloves, and a drinking system to strap on your back. Depending on the ratio of intelligence-to-macho you possess, your next decisions are padding, braces, chest protectors, and any thing that will help you bounce back up when you go down. Some say unless you fall, you're not going fast enough! You will ultimately fall down, for gravity is your sworn enemy when moving quickly through the trees.

TECH INSPECTION

The Tech Inspection is required before each race. In most cases, you must have an approved spark arrester, silencer, headlight and license plate. These inspections can be demanding when the course requires racers to cover official roads and public areas with noise restrictions. Make sure you confirm inspection requirements before you depart.

A FEW RACING TIPS

Use your common sense when you ride; don't get bullied by some pseudo fast guy coming from behind, screaming at you to move. At your first opportunity raise your left arm as a signal and duck off to the side of the trail to allow room for the fast guy to pass. A

trade secret, the REALLY fast guys will NOT warn you, they will assess your moves and go by you before you're even aware of their presence. That's why they're the fast guys, conserve energy, don't scream.

Learn the course markings and pay attention to them and not that guy in front of you. Think about it, if the other guy was really good, would you be able to keep up with him? Your competition is a clock, not the guy doing the brake checks and screaming at you. Think about the terrain you're riding into, and prepare mentally to visualize yourself through it. Do you have the power to top that hill? Is the guy in front of you in control? What if he falls? How deep is that rut? Will your bike bottom out in it? How about that water? Does it have a solid bottom? Is there a log under there? Speaking of logs, that's a shiny one – is it slippery? The trail is off camber along the hill, which way do you lean? There's a lip on the top of that creek bank. Can I loft my wheel over it?

You must think until you have done it so often that the answers to all the questions are programmed in, and your body reacts almost automatically. Then you will have achieved the status of Woods Rider.

Now you have to learn how to tell time so you can ride within 30 seconds of your minute, achieve the ability to actually do this, and of course be able to rebuild a broken bike in the middle of a swamp, with only a plug wrench, then my friend, you will be an Enduro Rider.

MAKING YOUR RACE BIKE STREET LEGAL

Some Enduros make use of official roads and therefore require all race bikes to be street legal. Registering a race bike that was never intended for street use can be a challenge. Many states make this very difficult while others make it very easy. Although it has been done in Florida, it can be very frustrating and may vary from one county to another. Although the FTR makes no claim as to the legal validity of this process, some riders have shared their experiences on how they legally registered their vehicles and are included here for your consideration.

In most counties, you can use the Homemade Vessel Form from the DMV along with your Certificate of Origin, Bill of Sale, and receipts. Make sure all required equipment is installed for street legal use-kits are available from race shops like Baja Designs in California. Once installed, the DMV can tell you where to get your bike inspected to get a VIN number and Title. With this, you can register like any other motorcycle, but these rules are always changing. Vermont, on the other hand, makes this process even easier.

Getting a Vermont Tag:

1. Call the Vermont Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) at (802) 828.2000. Ask them to send you a copy of the Vermont Registration, Tag & Title Application Form
2. Fill out all the forms. If you are not sure about a section, call Vermont DMV they will talk you through them
3. Find your Certificate of Origin or MSO. The manufacturer typically

provides this when they sell an off-road vehicle. If you don't have this, you will have an extra step*

4. Get a Bill of Sale to avoid paying Vermont State Sales Tax
5. Send the above items plus \$34.50 to:
State of Vermont, Agency of Transportation
Department of Motor Vehicles
120 State Street
Montpelier Vermont 05603-0001
<http://www.aot.state.vt.us/dmv/dmvhp.htm>

****Note: Without the Certificate of Origin or MSO, you will need to have your bike bonded to show proof of ownership. This can all be done via fax, but will cost around \$100. A firm in Orlando can help with this process, but you will also need another form from the Vermont DMV called the Title Bond Form. Then contact Huckleberry, Sibley & Harvey Insurance & Bonds Inc. at (407) 647-1616. Ask for a Title Bond for Motorcycle 1@ x Value of Motorcycle for (3) Years.***

You should receive your Registration & Tag in about 3 weeks and your Title in 6 weeks. You can take this to your State Tag Agency and Transfer, in Florida they will require The Police / Sheriffs Department to check the VIN # then pay the DMV Approx. \$ 67.00 for Tag & Title.



MORE FUN WITH MOTOCROSS

The single most popular form of off-road racing in the U.S. for the past 20 years has been motocross, a type of competition that involves tens of thousands of people. Races are held on closed courses over natural and enhanced terrain. There are amateur classes for nearly every age group, from 4 to over 50. Most motocross events include multiple races called motos, with final standings based on combined results. The length of each moto is usually measured in time, ranging from 10 to 30 minutes. The combination of rugged courses and intense competition place a premium on riding skills and physical stamina.

GETTING SIGNED UP

Most tracks have overnight camping and facilities for RVs. Some have night races, and if there are FTR people there they will have an early sign up that evening for the riders who are spending the night. Sign up is done at the race, usually at 7:30 AM, so get there early! Be sure to have your FTR card with you. New members can also join at the track. If you're a minor, a Minor Release Form must be filled out and signed by a parent or guardian. It is also recommended that you have major medical insurance before racing. Boo-boos can be very expensive and do occur from time to time.

You can enter several classes if you like. Some of the better riders race at least three classes. But, unless you're really experienced, don't over do it. Many only ride one class and still go home feeling sufficiently worn out—it's an exercise and work out that's more fun than any other. If you are a woods rider and you don't have a full race MX bike we have a special class just for you. But, there are some really fast woods machines that roost berms and jump doubles just as well as the full race iron and qualify for several classes. If you're a fast experienced rider, please, don't cherry pick and sign up for the Beginner classes. These classes are reserved for true beginners. We've got two or three classes that will fit everybody according to age, ability and equipment.

The FTR follows the AMA rulebook and tries to keep it as close to AMA racing as possible. Many of the FTR members are AMA racers as well. And, if you're a fast rider, you can bet that you'll get some superb competition, because there are some really fast men and women in the FTR - they take racing seriously! Don't let the term Trail Rider fool you. Many of the fast FTR riders use motocross to hone their skills for the trail events, such as Hare Scrambles and Enduros. Just remember the next time you're riding a woods event and some girl blows by you like you're standing still. She probably learned to ride that fast on a motocross track!

GETTING PREPARED

After you've signed up and before you leave the sign up area be sure to get the practice order. Practice usually starts about 8:30 or 9:00. The order of practice is usually broken up into Minis, 80s, 125s, 250s and Open Class bikes, Quads, Age and Women's classes. You need to know when you can go onto the track and practice. Practice is very important. You must find out how your bike is working on that particular track so you can make adjustments before you race. You've got to learn the track and pick your lines. You've got to figure out what jumps you can or cannot do. Try to get there early enough to walk the track. Walking the track is as helpful as practice itself, because you can see things on the ground that you can't see from your bike.

After practice the Riders Meeting is held. You must attend the Rider's Meeting. It is mandatory! Here you will be shown the flags, find out the rules on passing a yellow flag area, discuss any problems, issues, or changes that might come up, and the race order. When the race order is posted, you need to write it down on a piece of paper and keep it handy in your pit, so you can keep up with when you need to go to the start area. It's a good idea to be ready to ride a couple of classes before yours, because while the class just before

you is on the track you will be lining up for the next start.

There is usually a pre-staging area and a staging area before you go to the gate. For the first moto everyone in your class will pick a number at random to determine who gets first pick of the starting gates, and you are allowed into the gate in that order. The second moto gate pick is determined by how you placed in the first moto. When you get to the staging area and you're not sure what class is running or when you should be there, ask somebody. There is usually a gate manager or start crew that will help. Never be afraid to ask someone for help. FTR motocrossers are the friendliest people and if they can't help you they may know someone at the track who can. Motocrossers would rather embarrass you on the track than let you be embarrassed sitting in the pits!

BIKE RESTRICTIONS

If you have a street legal dual sport, you can race it on the motocross track only after removing some of the street equipment. For example, unless the lights are race approved and securely mounted, they must be removed. No metal fenders, or glass parts should be on it unless it is a vintage motorcycle normally raced that way in its day. If in doubt ask an FTR official. Absolutely, no kickstands are allowed! Motocross is a torture test for bikes and, if it can fall off or be knocked off, it probably will. Motorcycle parts make evil shrapnel when kicked up in the roost of a dirt bike! The rocks and roots are bad enough. Also, dirt oriented tires are a must, especially in the sand. Any good set of knobbies will work better than trials or street-trail tires. The best tires, of course are soft terrain, or sand tires. The tried and true Dunlop 752 seems to work on anything. Used knobbies are better than no knobbies, but make sure there is at least a half inch of knob showing on the rear and the center knobs on the front haven't been street worn. You have to have visible numbers on both sides and on the front. If you're squeamish about dents, scratches, bent parts and covering your bike with mud, sand and rocks until it permeates every part of your motorcycle, don't race it!

MORE THOUGHTS ON SUSPENSION

Motocross is more about suspension and trying to get a smooth ride than just about anything else. You can have a motor that will get you the hole shot every time, but it won't do you any good if your suspension spits you off in the first big bump or beats you to death after half a lap.

Modern suspensions must have clean oil & internal parts to function properly. The extreme velocities of the moving internal parts create a lot of heat that breaks down your oil. Thus, losing the ability to lubricate the metal components that are broken down and eroded back into the oil, causing your suspension to quit working after a few hours of actual riding time at casual speeds. In motocross, that can happen in a few minutes. Most stock forks can go three or four of our races before they need to be serviced if you're an average rider; the shock, about five or six, depending, on how many classes you ride. The really, really, really fast riders show up at every race with fresh suspensions. And some pros, every moto!

Don't make the mistake some friends of mine have and tell your

pro to set your suspension up just like Jeremy McGrath or Ricky Carmichael, because you can't ride their bikes. These guys are so fast and jump so high their suspensions are set up so stiff the average guy couldn't make a lap on them, especially in supercross mode. Seeing how smooth they look on ESPN II, sure, you want your bike to do that, but unless you can ride wide open in 3rd or 4th gear all the time and jump 90 feet be sure and tell your pro how you really ride. You'll save a lot of money when you realize that stock works just fine.

The most important aspect of setting your suspension up for is the correct springs. Most bikes are set up for average rider weights of from 160- 180 lbs. on 250s or open bikes and 140-160 lbs. on 125s with the sag set at 90-105mm (3-4 inches). The sag setting determines where the shock travel rests with you and your gear on it - usually in the upper third of the total travel. If the springs are too soft the shock piston rides too low in the body where it gets stiffer as it progresses in its travel. Thus, it is in the stiffer area all the time and, your bike rides like a dump truck. Correct springs allow it to ride in the smoother area where it was designed to function. Too stiff a spring will make it ride like a pogo stick!

Changes to the rear may necessitate changes to the front to maintain that balance. The clickers adjust the oil flow rate in your suspension. If the compression flow is too fast your forks or shock will bottom hard. If the rebound flow is too fast it will pogo or stinkbug. If it is too slow it will jar your teeth out and can actually lock up over a set of bumps. The only way to adjust the clickers is to ride it 1st with the stock settings and if it is too soft and bottoms, gradually adjust them no more than 2 clicks at a time until it just kisses the bottom on the hardest bumps and landings. After that you adjust the rebound until you get the smoothest ride over the same rough ground. You may end up adjusting the compression again, to get it a little smoother yet. Remember, one set up at one track may not work at a different track, especially if one is hard pack and the other is sand. Bikes do better on the stiff side in the soft stuff and better on the soft side on hard pack.

The final aspect of suspension set up is tire pressure. This is also best adjusted under actual conditions. I like to show up at the track with 10lbs. in the front and 12 in the rear. I bring an air tank as part of my race gear and adjust it according to the track. Usually 10 & 12 work OK on hard pack, but I like 10 & 10 in the sand. I might go to 8 & 10 on slick mud. Below 10 you can peel a tire from the rim causing a flat on the rear, don't go below 8 on the front. These are not hard and fast rules either, each track is different and changes with the amount of water or rain on it. Also, the tracks change as the day wears on with 300 or 400 motorcycles chewing it up all day and as the sun dries it.

RACING IN THE HEAT

We race a lot in the heat in Florida. A heat injury is serious and can cause more problems than just slowing you down. The night before a motocross you should eat a high carb diet and drink at least a quart or more of water. When you get up drink some more, a glass or two. Drink another glass or two 15-20 minutes before each moto. Don't over do it or you'll throw up when it's really hot! Here are few tips:

- Soak your jersey in water and put it on just before the race. This make you more comfortable sitting in the sun waiting to stage.
- A light colored helmet that doesn't absorb the heat
- Avoid wearing dark race gear
- Put a white towel on the seat of your race bike when it sits in the pits to keep it cool
- Use a fully vented jersey
- Bring a large water can to cool down with soaked towels after the moto.
- Drink more water after a moto, but take 2-3 swallows and rinse your mouth. Drink this way until you feel better. Wait a few minutes and do it again. Don't over hydrate or you'll vomit.
- Power drinks and Gatorade help if you just drink a little, but good cool water is the best for you.

Some racers enjoy a banana or two for breakfast and perhaps only one hot dog between motos for lunch. Most tracks have early concessions that serve breakfast and hot coffee. Most of the concessions have great food, so lunch is not a problem either. So enjoy - you can resume your training diet during the week.

THE HIDDEN FUN IN VOLUNTEERING



With thousands of FTR members, we are among the larger amateur racing organizations in the country. This is all run by people like you who volunteer to make it happen. If you see something that can be done differently, take the initiative to help out. Your participation is key to ensuring the FTR continues to be a great organization.

EARNING WORK CREDIT

It takes a lot of preparation to layout a trail, sign racers up, help riders in trouble, and score the results. To encourage those who

enjoy the racing do their part, we offer championship points for work credit.

Getting credit for working does require a few steps to ensure your work is productive and in cooperation with the rest of the overall team working the event:

1. Complete the sign-up form just as you would to pre-register for the event, but write WORK in big letters across the form.
2. Contact the official hosting the event to see what they would like you to do and if you need to bring anything such as an Orange vest, staple gun, etc. The name and phone number of the host is typically listed on the sign-up form.
3. Get back with the host immediately following the riders meeting to confirm your sign-up sheet was received, get any new assignments, and pick up any necessary supplies or radio.

Helping out at these events can be a lot of fun, but also keep in mind that a lot of riders will be out there trying to compete. Some will be having their best day, while others will be struggling with mechanical problems, lost gear, and anything else “Murphy” can throw at them. The stress can get unbearable at times; so don’t be surprised if you find an ungrateful racer venting that frustration.

WHAT GOES INTO A RACE EVENT

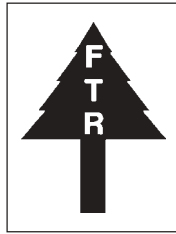
Have you every wondered what goes into putting on one of these races? Hare Scrambles seem to draw the greatest participation, and thus require a lot of work, most of which starts well before race day. Consider the following steps, many of which are done at Enduros and Motocross events as well, and consider getting involved. Volunteers make the FTR.

1. Survey The Property –Once you find a landowner willing to provide their land for an FTR event, you have to survey the property and begin planning how this will all come together. Believe it or not, parking is one of the biggest concerns. It must provide for hundreds to get in and out and make sure the tree limbs don’t destroy the RVs coming in. This is typically done months before race-day.
2. Designing The Loop –With compass in hand, someone must figure out how to make a loop for the racers. Special considerations are given to the skill level of the riders, the size of the trail for quad riders, and the durability of the trail– will soft sandy sections get too whooped out after the first race? These experienced volunteers ride through spider-infested brush tying ribbons to begin the initial markings of a trail. Let’s not forget designing a PeeWee loop for our younger riders.
3. Grooming The Trail–More volunteers, motivated by the excitement of a new race in the making, strap machetes, clippers, and other tools to their bikes and start cutting back the brush to make a more clearly defined trail. Rocks located in dangerous places get moved or sprayed with bright paint. Other hazards are marked or trimmed to protect unsuspecting riders from getting hurt. In some cases, barbed wire fences are built to keep cattle out of the way.

4. Finishing The Race Course–Starting lines have to be made with markers for racers and hay bales to protect spectators. The scoring chicane must be built to slow riders down for the scoring volunteers to capture their numbers and record their lap time. Danger fences have to be erected in areas where riders must avoid.
5. Administrative Preparations–Still more volunteers do some of the work behind the scenes. Arrangement must be made for an Ambulance to be available throughout the event; not even the practice lap can start unless the EMS crew is there. Portable restrooms need to be ordered along with trophies and sign-up materials. Insurance arrangements must be made. Pre-registration is organized and prepared for sign-up.
6. Hosting the Big Event–This is when the army of volunteers come out for all to see and to express their appreciation. Two days before the event, volunteers arrive at the race-site to do final inspections; fix broken fences; re-paint hazards; and put back some of the arrows and ribbons the cattle have eaten. Sign-up begins early on Saturday as racers are anxious to get started. The scoring crew of volunteers finds their way to the scoring chicane as they score each race from Saturday morning to late Sunday afternoon. Volunteer officials take their places and start each race, making sure everyone is on their line and ready to go. Course Marshals are placed throughout the course to help fallen riders or disqualify those who cut the course.
7. The Aftermath–Once everyone has enjoyed their race weekend and heading home to put the toys away, a few lowly volunteers must still hang around to police the area, pick up trash, and ensure the landowner is pleased with the condition we left the property. Within a week or two after the race, a final group of volunteers return to the race-site and remove all the arrows, fencing, and other additions.

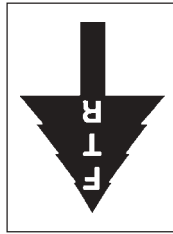
As you can see, there is a lot of work required to put on these events. This is just a summary to give you an idea of what goes into putting on one of these events. Volunteers do this because they enjoy their sport and enjoy working along side people like you. Please consider their thoughtfulness and express your appreciation for their hard work. It means a lot to them. Better yet, get involved–join them! It's your FTR.

FTR TRAIL MARKERS



Orange
Background

Marks the trail.
Riders must stay
within 20 ft. or
risk being
disqualified



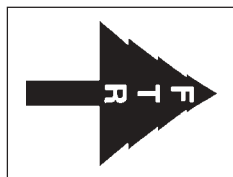
Orange
Background

Indicates down
hill or danger
below



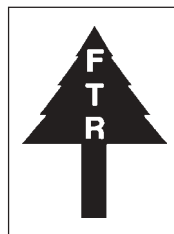
Orange
Background

Warning that
right turn is
coming. Reversed
for left turn.



Orange
Background

Marks a right turn.
Reversed for left turn.



Green
Background

Racers must ride
between green
markers or be
disqualified. They
are used to route
riders away from
dangerous areas
and major short
cuts.



This marker
indicates the
wrong way and is
often used when
old trails can be
easily mistaken
for the race
course.



This marker is
used to call
attention to
dangerous areas
where major
hazards exist.