

## FLORIDA CRACKER TRAIL ASSOCIATION GENERAL RIDE INFORMATION

Below is some general information to answer some of the most common questions.

The dates for the 2009 ride: registration Saturday, February 21, ride February 22 through 27, parade in Ft. Pierce February 28.

The ride is for the most part conducted along side of public roads. We do have some days along the way where we are mostly off the road and on private ranches and some public conservation land. Wagons and buggies are welcome and can go with us off road most of the time, if not, then we send them forward on the roadway with an escort.

When on roadsides, we are fully escorted by local county sheriff's deputies. One lane of traffic is closed to provide us with a safety buffer. We also have a trail boss, assistant trail bosses and outriders to assist with directions to help keep everyone safe. Please listen to the directions of all law enforcement and staff.

In general, the ride is approximately 115 miles. We ride an average of 20 miles each day, but some days are longer or shorter.

We ride out each morning at 8:00 am, ride forward until noon lunch break where a bus takes one driver from each group back to the previous night's camp. The rigs are then moved to the next night's camp and the bus returns the drivers to the lunch break. Following that we ride forward to the night camp. Your rigs should be packed up and ready to roll before morning ride out time. There is not sufficient time during the lunch move to return to your camp and pack. If you are packing your rig, the bus will not wait for you. We will have at least one and sometimes two water breaks each morning and afternoon depending on the length of the day and weather conditions.

Riders may ride as many or as few days as they are comfortable with. Riders who sign up for the full week's ride do not receive partial refunds for days not ridden. Riders who elect to skip a day may simply move their rigs to the next night's camp at their leisure during the morning. We want to have the previous night's camp vacated following the main move up at lunch.

Riders may elect to ride mornings only. Simply ride the bus back to the previous night's camp from the lunch break, then trailer up to the lunch break, pick up your horse(s) and trailer to the next night camp. This is why we move the rigs at lunch, to give the option half day rides.

The meals are a mandatory part of the ride. The caterer will provide breakfast, lunch and supper each day as well as snacks at the water breaks. If you have special dietary needs, please let the caterer know well before the ride dates and he will attempt to accommodate you. Exemption from the meals is by medical order only.

You need to bring sufficient feed and hay for your animals. Water is provided for livestock at breaks, lunch and camps.

You also need to have a way to secure them at night; panels, step in posts with electric tape, ground ties, pickets or tie to trailer or trees, whatever works.

Other horse supplies include electrolyte past as some horses tend to dehydrate, liniment, vet wrap, bute, banamine and even extra cinch latigos so that you can move the girth to the center of their bellies if they get galled on the girth line from the long days if they are not used to it, it takes two extra latigos per saddle to do this. A general first aid kit for both horses and people is a good idea.

There are vets on call in each county as well as standard medical rescue services. Cell phones are generally in service along the way and law enforcement is with us while we are riding.

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Ride your horses a lot to get them and yourself into shape. If you plan to make all or most of the ride, it is important that you and the horse are in shape. We need to stay fairly close together for the ride, we can't get strung out for miles along the side of the road, it creates safety hazards as well as puts us way behind schedule. Out of shape horses tend to not be able to keep up.

In the event that your horse becomes distressed, we will insist that it be pulled from the ride for the remainder of the day. For that purpose, as well as for any minor injuries, we have a pick up trailer that follows us for the entire ride. Horses and/or riders that can no longer continue will be loaded and taken to the nearest camp or lunch break. This trailer is not to be used as a convenience and being tired or sore is not sufficient for loading up and being driven in. We need to keep the trailer available and with us for true emergencies.

Shoes are highly recommended, I prefer all four, but you should at least do the fronts. While some riding on pavement is in evadable, riders are asked to stay off the road and in the right-of-way grass whenever possible.

The weather can be anything from dry to wet, hot to cold, and all during the same week, so pack accordingly. Bring swimsuits or shorts as there are a few swimming ponds if it is warm enough. Also bring rain gear and warm clothes.

Definitely pack ice & coolers with whatever you want to drink besides what is furnished during our meals and water breaks. There is opportunity to go to several small stores along the way to replenish.

The only bathroom facilities provided are port-o-lets. They will be at all break areas, lunch stops and camps.

There are no showers along the way. Many riders have living quarter trailers or campers. Some people use fold up camp showers, some bath in ponds and creeks if it is not too cold. There is a battery operated shower that can be purchased at most camping stores for around \$20.00. You heat water and place in 5 gallon bucket. They work well. As you make friends along the way, you might be able to borrow someone's shower in a LQ trailer or camper. There are no RV hook ups along the way.

There is a community campfire in each night camp and entertainment almost every night. Unless otherwise directed, small private camp fires are fine and most sites have some deadwood lying about. If you plan on regularly building fires, I suggest a chain saw.

Ride registration forms will be posted online in December.

Feel free to contact me with any other questions you might have.

David Reed  
President and Trail Boss