



2023 Annual Report

ADVOCACY + EDUCATION = PROGRESS

It's hard to fathom just how far Bike Walk Golden Isles has been able to come in one short year. After hiring Executive Director Tavel Cowan in late 2022, 2023 saw BWGI stepping up its work of advocating for better opportunities for local residents and visitors to bike, run, walk and roll throughout the Golden Isles area. On the next pages, you'll see more of the details of both our advocacy efforts along with the education opportunities we offered throughout the year. Throw in efforts like our Glynn County Trail Map and Safety Guide and our community bike rides, and a clear picture emerges of just how impactful BWGI is to the Golden Isles area.

As we reflect on our accomplishments, we recognize that there is still much work to be done. Your support is a critical component of our success as we continue our advocacy and education efforts. We invite you to consider joining BWGI as an individual, family or corporate member or make a tax-deductible donation through our website: bikewalkgoldenisles.org/donate-to-bike-walk-golden-isles. Want to do more? Consider becoming a patron for one of our community bike rides, walks or education sessions. Even better, become a sponsor for our big Pedal Golden Isles bike ride on October 26, 2024.



STAFF

Tavel Cowan, Executive Director
Will Black, Webmaster

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Ben Slade

BikeWalkGoldenIsles.org



GLYNN COUNTY MAP & SAFETY GUIDE

One of our proudest accomplishments during 2023 was the creation, printing and distribution of “Glynn County Bike and Walk Maps.” Working with the Governor’s Office of Highway Safety, the Coastal Regional Commission, and area designers and printers, BWGI created the first of its kind document depicting opportunities to bike, walk and run in and around Brunswick and St. Simons Island, as well as Jekyll Island. The map also includes a lot of safety information for bikers, walkers/runners. More than 14,000 maps have been printed, with almost 5,300 already distributed through 55+ different locations. In addition to the printed version, the technically gifted can access an online version by scanning a QR code included on the printed version as well as on the BWGI website: bikewalkgoldenisles.org.

“I’ve been looking for a trail map for a long time. This is perfect!”

EDUCATION

In addition to participating in community events sponsored by other organizations, BWGI also hosts its own educational and community involvement programs. They include:

- On May 24, 2023, BWGI hosted its first ever “Community Bike Ride” to celebrate National Bike Month, featuring a family-friendly fun roll through Brunswick.
- On October 18, 2023 BWGI held a 2nd Community Bike Ride and Membership Meeting to recognize BWGI’s birthday. Both rides featured safety discussions prior to each ride.
- In January, BWGI held a Smart Cycling class with Georgia Bikes designed to improve riding skills and confidence for riders of all ages and abilities while training others to be teachers in their own communities. Later that month, we added a second League of American Cyclist Certified Instructor to our organization.
- In June, BWGI worked with Georgia Bikes and the Brunswick Police Department to conduct a training program for law enforcement officers. Course curriculum included information on bike and pedestrian related laws, along with proper methods to report pedestrian and bike accidents.
- In November, we presented a “Pedestrian Safety at Night” seminar for Game Changers Running Company’s weekly run/walk group, complete with safety light distribution



COMMUNITY EVENTS

BWGI maintains an active presence a wide variety of community events sponsored by other organizations. Here are just some of the events BWGI assisted with during 2023:

- Hosted a booth at the monthly “First Fridays” in Downtown Brunswick
- Conducted a Bike Rodeo at the Safety KidsFest Event in Brunswick
- Worked with Golden Isles Track Club at the Sunshine Festival 5K and Kids Run on July 4th
- Assisted with the “Trash Bash” event in Brunswick with Keep Golden Isles Beautiful
- Distributed rehabbed bikes at Community Outreach Family Fun Day in Brunswick
- Helped with the YMCA Healthy Kids Day



Pedestrian Beacon and Crossing at Massengale Park Entrance on Ocean Boulevard

BWGI ADVOCATES FOR SAFETY

BWGI continually seeks opportunities to improve safety for pedestrians, runners and bikers throughout the Golden Isles. We've had some particularly good success on St. Simons Island. Included among our successes was the installation of a pedestrian beacon (pictured above) at the entrance to Massengale Park across Ocean Blvd. Previously walkers, runners and bikers were forced to cross busy Ocean Blvd. without any assistance in order to access this highly popular park. BWGI was able to convince county officials of the need to add this safety feature.

Likewise, BWGI was able to convince Glynn County of the need to add a pedestrian beacon at the traffic circle at Frederica and Lawrence Roads. This highly traveled area had no signalization following its construction. This situation placed those crossing the entrances and exits to the roundabout at peril. Through BWGI's efforts crossing that intersection is much safer following the installation of the beacon system.

Although it hasn't come to fruition yet, BWGI also lobbied officials at Glynn County to add yet another pedestrian beacon in the area of 6th St. and Ocean Boulevard, where St. Simons Elementary School is located. Not only is this a school zone with lots of students crossing the street, it is also heavily used during non-school hours by those going to the beach.

BWGI has also developed a list of concerns presented Glynn County regarding the trail system on SSI. These conditions include lack of appropriate signage, poor pavement conditions and substandard trail design. BWGI has also recommended clarifying Glynn County ordinances regarding what are considered trails and pathways useable by bicyclists, and the manner in which bicyclists can use street crossings.

BWGI has also worked with neighborhood advocates to improve safety for pedestrians and bikers in specific locations. BWGI worked with neighbors on Broadway St. to conduct a traffic study, in an effort to show how traffic is negatively impacting the neighborhood. Another effort involved offering ideas on construction of a better pathway in front of the new Friendly Express which is to be built on Frederica Road in the Sea Palms area.

HOW CAN YOU RIDE, WALK AND RUN SAFELY?

Here are just a few safety tips for biking, walking and running safely:

- Whether you're walking, running or biking it's important to be seen. Wear light/bright colored clothing. At night, use appropriate lights such as a flashlight, or a body mounted light when walking or running. When biking, you must have an operational headlight and rear reflector or taillight. Reflective clothing, arm or leg bands also help you to be seen.
- When walking or running, use sidewalks, paths and trails whenever possible. If using a roadway, head into traffic at the left edge of the roadway.
- If you're riding a bike on a shared use trail or path, remember to announce yourself when passing a slower party, using a bell or a verbal announcement such as, "Passing on your left."
- If you're on a bike you are considered a vehicle and must follow all traffic laws. You should use the right side of the roadway.
- Always remember to wear a helmet when you're on your bike. Under Georgia law helmets are required for riders age under the age of 16, but they are a good idea for everyone.
- Keep safety in mind at all times. There is no substitute for being aware of your surroundings and being proactive and exercising caution. Keep your head on a swivel!

BikeWalkGoldenIsles.org/safety





ILLUSTRATION FROM MLK/AA BIKE/PED CORRIDOR STUDY

ADVOCATING FOR IMPROVED BIKE/PED FACILITIES

A key mission for BWGI is to add to and improve existing Bike/Pedestrian facilities in the Golden Isles. The BWGI Board, along with Executive Director Tavel Cowan, work constantly with Glynn County and City of Brunswick elected officials and staff, the Georgia Department of Transportation, and other agencies to encourage such activities. Some key projects that were advocated for during 2023 included:

- Development of a county wide Trails Master Plan for Glynn County to guide future development and improvements of bike/ped facilities.
- Ensuring the replacement bridge for Sea Island Road over Dunbar Creek includes room for a future bicycle/pedestrian path. BWGI also advocated for the development of such a path during public input session for the Sea Island Road Corridor Study.
- BWGI is actively following the development of plans for the replacement bridge over the McKay River on the Torras Causeway to make sure it is appropriately designed to accommodate bicyclists and pedestrians.
- Worked with the City of Brunswick to offer input on a proposed bike and pedestrian path that would run along Martin Luther King Boulevard and Altama Avenue, from Prince Street to near Brunswick High and the College of Coastal Georgia. BWGI is also advocating for future expansion of the project beyond the Brunswick city limits to aid in expanding the East Coast Greenway Trail.
- Began lobbying to change the current plan to expand the shoulders of the Jekyll Island Causeway in favor of a full-fledged bicycle/pedestrian path. Such a path would offer a much safer route for bicyclists, runners and walkers to traverse the causeway.



Join our efforts!

Become a member now to support BWGI's efforts for safety and accessibility for those who cycle, walk, run and roll! We are a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, so your donation is tax deductible.

Name

Phone Number

Email

Address

Donation

 \$100

 \$250

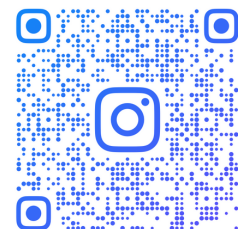
 \$500

 Other _____


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