



FLMSTA Newsletter | Mar 2026

March 2026 | Volume 20 | Issue 3

Welcome to the **Florida Gator Tale Newsletter** from the Florida Chapter of the MSTA! We've updated the newsletter to make it easy to read on your phone or tablet. However, you can still download a .pdf of this newsletter and archived newsletters from the FLMSTA website [here](#). The **Florida Gator Tale** includes all the news about rides, feature articles, Florida state reports and safety information to keep you current with the Florida MSTA.



Rides

Florida Rides This Month

IMPORTANT NOTE: Always remember to check the rides calendar and/or your email for updates on scheduled rides. Changes in

times, dates, and especially locations are often out of our control and with short notice. Please check the [rides calendar](#) for possible updates.

MSTA Bike Week Lunch Ride

When: **Thursday, March 5, 11:30 AM - 1:30 PM**

Location: **RiverGrille on the Tomoka**, 950 U.S. Route 1, **Ormond Beach, FL** (386) 615-2004 ([map](#))

Description: Very attractive and easy-to-get-to location, next to the Tomoka River, off US 1 in Ormond Beach. No reservations, but quick seating if we're all there by 11:30 AM when they open!!

South Lunch Ride

When: **Saturday, March 7, 11:30 AM - 1:30 PM**

Location: **Gator Shack Restaurant at Babcock Ranch Eco Tours**, 8502 FL-31, **Punta Gorda, FL** (800) 500-5583 ([map](#))

Description: Out of the way...Always amazing!! Join us and see why!

Contact: Van, busavanflmsta@gmail.com or (561) 386-2594

West Central Lunch Ride

When: **Saturday, March 14, 11:30 AM - 1:30 PM**

Location: **Sunrise Eatery**, 5883 Gall Blvd., **Zephyrhills, FL** (813) 782-0401 ([map](#))

Description: Eve will host this lunch ride back to a fan favorite!! Meet her there!!

Contact: Eve Blazsur, 6saturdaysretired@gmail.com

East Central Lunch Ride

When: **Saturday, March 21, 11:30 AM - 1:30 PM**

Location: **Cowpoke's Watering Hole**, 6813 U.S. Highway 27 S., **Sebring, FL** (863) 314-9459 ([map](#))

Description: Huge destination! Appetizers, soups, salads, sandwiches, pasta, steaks, seafood AND more!! Paved parking

Contact: Tom (321) 794-6147

Future Florida Rides

Note that the future ride events are included to facilitate longer term planning. The destinations and/or dates may be changed just before the ride dates. Please check the [rides calendar](#) for possible updates.

East Central Lunch Ride

When: **Saturday, April 4, 11:30 AM - 1:30 PM**

Location: **Drifters Riverfront Bar & Grill**, 55716 Front St. **Astor, FL**
(352) 759-2802 ([map](#))

Description: This is the old Blackwater Inn in Astor next to the St Johns River. They have a big menu - about anything you could want. Plenty of paved parking.

Contact: Tom (321) 794-6147

North Lunch Ride - New

When: **Saturday, April 11, 11:30 AM - 1:30 PM**

Location: **Swampy's Bar & Grille**, 19773 E. Pennsylvania Ave.,
Dunellon, FL (352) 283-8368 ([map](#))

Description: NEWLY MINTED NORTHERN AREA REP, Robert Frey, has set up a few lunch rides!!! Look for more later this year...
Join him at this new-to-us location. Right ON the Rainbow River! Lots of parking. Great menu and plenty of outdoor seating!

Contact: Robert, president@dixiedualsport.com

South Lunch Ride

When: **Saturday, April 11, 11:30 AM - 1:30 PM**

Location: **Marsh Landing Restaurant**, 44 N. Broadway St.,
Fellsmere, FL (772) 571-8622 ([map](#))

Description: This location will not interfere with the North ride.
An old favorite worth another visit!!

Contact: Van, busavanflmsta@gmail.com or (561) 386-2594

West Central Lunch Ride

When: **Saturday, April 18, 11:30 AM - 1:30 PM**

Location: **TBD**, TBD, **TBD**, **FL**

???????????? (map)

Description: TBD

Contact: TBD, **IBD**

MSTA North Georgia Classic

When: **Friday-Sunday, April 24-26**

Location: **Mountain Valley Inn**, 13 Royalty Lane, **Dillard, GA**
(706) 746-5373

Description: The North Georgia Classic is a beloved tradition for the MSTA, marking the start of the rally season. This year we return to the mountain town of Dillard in Rabun County. Three unforgettable days of of breathtaking scenery, exploring winding roads or forest trails.

Contact: For information and registration: <https://www.ridemsta-ga.com/home>

For additional Florida events and information, to see the Florida MSTA website's Events page.

The Florida MSTA chapter also has a presence on Facebook with upcoming events and past photos.

Feature Article

[Editor's Request: If you have ridden somewhere interesting at any time and would like to share your experiences and some photos from your journey with other riders, please contact editor@flmsta.org to publish an article. Thanks!]

There is no Feature Article this month. Check next month's newsletter for a promotional article about an upcoming SE regional event.

Safety Talk



Safety Strategies- Environmental Analysis by Doug Westly

[IMPORTANT NOTICES: Ultimately, the safety of motorcycle riders and their passengers is their own responsibility. Nothing presented in the column supersedes, negates or relieves a motorcyclist and/or passenger from assumption of personal responsibility for their actions and safety.

Editor's Note: We think Doug's safety tips merit repeating. This safety article is a repeat from the July 2020 issue of The Gator Tale.]

I was rounding a corner of one of my favorite back roads the other day and had an epiphany. Actually, I hit an unexpected patch of sand in the corner, so the epiphany almost filled my riding briefs. Big kudos to the Ducati Safety Pack system on my Hypermotard SP! The traction control activated and between that and some instinctive rider input, I managed to survive the corner. However, the event really threw me, so I stopped, turned around and went back to analyze how I got caught up in that situation. What I found was that inside the pavement, in the middle of that turn was a small patch of sandy soil that had been turned up by vehicles taking the corner too sharp, dropping wheels off the pavement and subsequently kicking the sand up onto the inside line.

As road riders (we'll save off-road for another day), we spend a lot of time analyzing the road itself. Surface conditions, pavement construct, etc. all get continuously assessed (or should) as we ride. The problem with this is that we can only analyze what we can see, and the road surface itself is a fairly confined area. It should still remain the focus of our traction requirements, but how taking that analysis effort and expanding it outside the road envelope itself? Let's call it "Environmental Analysis".



I define Environmental Analysis as examining the environment around the road for those factors which could impact safe road conditions. For example, in my previous dilemma could I have foreseen possible sand in the

middle of the corner by recognizing that sandy patch of soil just to the inside of the pavement? If you ride in rural areas, particularly farm, mining or other locations where heavy equipment moves on the roads, can you expect dirty corners?



How about the foliage? Beautiful, narrow canopied road are a joy to ride, but what can all those overhanging trees mean for your traction conditions and riding safety? If you have an area that is constantly

shaded, it could mean a wet road surface well into morning hours. In the fall in areas where trees drop their leaves, this could also mean a road coated with wet, slick leaves.

Heavily foliated areas also are havens for wildlife. Watch out!

Pictured above is one of my favorite local roads, but I am never in a hurry here. Overhanging trees means possible debris on the road. The soil encroaching on the pavement edges guarantees a poor traction environment. There are critters everywhere, including the inevitable suicidal squirrels!

How about other areas? Should we still practice environmental analysis? Why not? When I'm riding in the canyon roads of southern California, I'm going to be more focused now on not just the loose dirt/gravel in the corners, but the sides of the hills as well. Loose hillsides ahead probably mean a dirty road surface. Riding in other parts of the country and world will offer up their own terrain analysis challenges.

Can we apply this analysis technique in an urban setting? Why not? We already know that intersections accumulate oil, engine coolant, grease, etc. How about analyzing the environment around the urban streets? Exits from car washes are always wet. Industrial areas usually mean chewed up streets with lots of potholes, from the heavy truck traffic.

Let's extend the urban environmental analysis to its interaction with other drivers. If you see a Starbucks ahead, I will guarantee you that at least one car in front of you is going to turn into it, and there is probably another waiting to pull out! Shopping areas means families in the vehicles, in turn this causes distracted driving, particularly during holiday events.

So how far can we take the idea of environmental analysis? I suggest it is up to the rider to assess how far out he or she needs to look in order to assess the environment and its potential impact on riding safety.

We should recognize another factor here, and that is the condition of the nut that connects the handlebars to the seat. That's right...the rider. It is up to all of us to stay focused on our riding, constantly scanning our path of travel for possible negative riding situations. The MSF strategy of "SEE", standing for Search, Evaluate and Execute, remains one of the most valuable tools we have as riders to keep ourselves safe. What I'm suggesting here is we take the SEE concept and extend it well out beyond the road and path of travel itself.

The next time you are out riding, try a little environmental analysis. Try looking beyond the road surface and around at the environment. See if there are other factors outside the road area itself that may impact your riding safety or may give you clues as to possible road conditions.

***Ride safe!** – Doug Westly*

Florida News

Florida News

Well, how dry we are...



Yet we were threatened with a very soggy February 28th for the West Central Lunch ride. Collectively, we decided on a conservative path and canceled the ride. Some of you may have fared better than others regarding the riding conditions.

Nonetheless, we all sure could use some rain for the yard!! (P.S. - we did get a 40- minute drenching thunderstorm with small hail right around the time we would have been on the road back from Solomon's...)

Tom hosted the February 7th lunch at the Deland Fish House. Good times!! See his report below!

The Southies ventured to a new-to-us location, the Dune Dog Cafe in Stuart. The weather couldn't have been more enticing for a ride! Four riders joined me at the Wawa, and rode the scenic coastal route up to Stuart. I also "treated" them to a wander around downtown...Several Easties and Westies were already there to greet us for some tire kicking. Understandably, the Westside riders clocked in at over 160 miles!! 18 of us occupied the waiting table, set up nicely on their veranda, covered and surrounded by wonderful landscaping! The "hot dog" weighted menu suited most, with lots of options for everyone else.

Ah, dining alfresco in February, breeze in our hair, scrumptious grub and delightful gab carried the day!! If you know, then you know...I am always grateful for the warm response to our planned gatherings!!

Rick A. won the 50/50, pocketing \$43!! Our new total is \$1,217.00. A **BIG THANKS** to all who participate!!



Enticing weather for the South Lunch Ride to Stuart

Last, but not least, thanks to all of you who take the time to send your comments and suggestions to me/us!! They are most welcome!! Remember, this is YOUR club, and to make it better often lies with the membership rather than the leadership. I thank you all for your support!!

What's Next??

We have **four** rides planned for March!!

Tom will host the Daytona Bike Week Lunch ride, March 5th, AND the East Central Lunch ride on March 21st to the Cowpoke's Watering Hole in Sebring. Van will host the South Lunch ride at the Gator Shack Restaurant at the Babcock Ranch in Punta Gorda on March 7th. Eve will host the West Central Lunch ride to the Sunrise Eatery in Zephyrhills on March 14th.

We currently have rides planned through March, into April, including a NORTH Lunch ride!! Stay tuned!!

We have inserted an email response "button" to our announcements to assist our coordinators with the reservation

headcount. Click on the green "button", then hit the send arrow. The pre-loaded email will be on its way!! Easy peasey!!



Membership News!!

If you are receiving the *Gator Tale*, but not my announcements, **PLEASE** email me ASAP to correct my files. I believe I'm up to date...

Pat Mogavero is our MSTA Membership Director! We have adapted to the new presentation of monthly data over these last few months. So far, Pat has introduced several improvements with a few more tweaks to come. **Big Thanks!!** patrickmogavero@gmail.com Contact him directly with any membership issues.

FLMSTA welcomed a new member in February - Hal Lambert of Vero Beach. Welcome!

The following MSTA memberships have or will be expiring soon:

- **Michael Demario**
- **Mike Halburnt**
- **Claude Hayes**

We urge all our members to renew their memberships and continue supporting their MSTA. If you have a question about when your membership expires, please contact the **NEW MEMBERSHIP SYSTEM** at <https://ridemsta.com/membership-account/membership-levels/> or simply visit the **MSTA Website** at www.ridemsta.com and **LOG IN** and then click on **MEMBERSHIP**.

When you encounter a rider who would seem to be a good fit as a new MSTA member, please direct them to the **MSTA Website** at www.ridemsta.com. For each new member you recruit and who provides your name and/or membership number on the application, you will receive a coupon for a

raffle ticket for the motorcycle touring package drawing at our next STAR event. Any new or current member who joins or renews as a Sustaining Member will likewise receive a coupon for a raffle ticket for each year of the new membership term.

Random Ramblings!!

Hope you're out riding during this dry season... you know what's coming!!

Smile every morning that you see yourself looking back in the mirror!!

Hoping you're living the life you love, and loving the life you live...

When you can...

Join one of our monthly rides!!

And invite a friend to ride along!!

Ride well! Ride often!! Do it safely!!!

ATGATT Van

MSTA Florida State Director



January 2026 East Central News

Tom Blake

Our February EC ride is in the books. The *Deland Fish House* was a really nice place and convenient for riders coming from all directions. And, it was a beautiful day to ride. So it was surprising that only eight showed up. Those who did enjoyed the typical good-natured banter in the parking lot and around the table. The grilled fish and sides were very tasty. Some thought the battered, fried fish was greasy. That's why I always opt for grilled. Learned my lesson at Long John Silver's many years ago.

Bob and Mike rode over from the Gulf Coast. Mark, a first timer, rode down from St. Augustine with Dennis. Nice to meet you, Mark. Alan rode up from Winter Garden on a new-to-him shiny red Ducati sport tourer. Way to go Alan! And Larry, Sam and I rode up from the Melbourne area. Sunshine, clear skies and moderate temps made it difficult not to enjoy. It was so nice, most of us detoured down to R.C. Hill's Honda there in Deland and checked out their attractive dealership before heading home.

Up Next: March 5th is the Thursday Bike Week Luncheon at *River Grill on the Tomoka* in Ormand Beach. It sits along US 1 right on the edge of the Tomoka River just 2.5 miles north on SR 40 or 0.5 miles north of 5A. They don't take reservations, but if we're there when they open at 11:30, we should get seated right away.

Then everyone's invited to our regular EC lunch at *Cowpoke's Watering Hole* just south of Sebring on the 21st. They have good food and plenty of room.

Florida MSTA Apparel



Florida MSTA Apparel

As a reminder, our Florida State Storefront is open online for your MSTA-branded apparel! Go to mstaflorida.qbstores.com. We have made arrangements

with the supplier for our National Gearbox to allow our State membership to buy shirts, hats, etc. with our State logos directly from the source!!! No muss, no fuss!! Order yours today!! They offer both embroidery and digital print options. Click onto the Embroidered Apparel or Shop By Logo for each option. Don't hesitate to contact Queensboro directly with any and all questions. They are very customer friendly. They also offer Polo shirts and T-shirts with pockets!!

Classified Ads

To find a buyer for your motorcycle items, please send your ad and pictures by email to editor@flmsta.org. Don't trash it, recycle it! One man's trash is another man's treasure!

Contact Information

These MSTA websites have extensive event information:

National MSTA: RideMSTA.com

SE Regional MSTA: MSTA-SE.com

Florida MSTA: FLMSTA.org

We're also on **Facebook:** facebook.com/FLMSTA/

More contact information:

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