

2014 Summer Newsletter

Bike Path Safety and Courtesy

It is a wonderful thing to be outside in the Florida sunshine. Walking and listening to something motivational can enhance the enjoyment of exercising or unwinding on the GICIA Bike Path. And, it's not just walkers who are plugged in, it's also bicyclists and golf cart operators.

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With more and more walkers, cyclists, and cart drivers wearing ear buds or headsets while using their iPod or other listening device on the path, there is increased concern for safety. While music or podcasts can enhance your outing, they may also be a distraction. It can make it difficult or impossible to know when someone is approaching you from behind. For example, when walking or on a bicycle you may be unaware that a golf cart is behind if you cannot hear its approach.

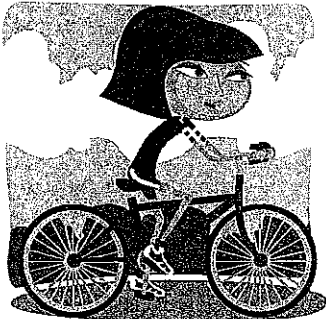
Courtesy and safety seem to be the primary concerns of those who frequently use the GICIA Bike Path. Many of those who have expressed concern question why others cannot simply state something like "passing on the left." However, with compromised hearing (from ear buds or headsets) such a warning would likely not be heard.

Walking, biking, or using a golf cart in the center of the path makes it extremely difficult for someone to pass. Using the path to the right side (rules of the road) makes it more accessible and safe for everyone. It is 10 feet wide and provides ample room for users on either side.

Another suggestion would be to use only one ear for listening to your device and leave the other available for safety. Sight is important to staying safe, but hearing's value for safety and awareness shouldn't be reduced--especially during season.

The GICIA Bike Path is privately owned but accessible to everyone. It continues to be recognized as one of the most important amenities on Gasparilla Island. It is important enough to our members that they demonstrated their support by enabling the GICIA to secure a \$4,000,000 endowment to cover the annual expenses of landscape and overall maintenance, safety patrol, signage, and trash removal.

The GICIA asks all users to comply with its Bike Path Safety Rules so everyone benefits. When followed, the rules improve safety, courtesy, and enhance quality of life in Boca Grande. They are listed in their entirety on next page:



Bike Path Safety, Continued from Page 6

GICIA Bike Path Safety Rules

- Persons under age 14 are prohibited by law from operating golf carts (even if accompanied by an adult or person over the age of 14).
- Electric golf carts may travel on the designated Bike Path and **MUST** yield to all other users of the path.
- Users of the Bike Path **MUST** yield to traffic where the path intersects with public roads or streets.
- All gas powered vehicles (including gas powered golf carts) are prohibited from traveling on the path.
- The shell path is for pedestrian use only.
- Golf cart drivers **MUST** observe the same rules of the road as automobiles.
- Bicycles and golf carts **MUST** observe the 15 mile per hour Bike Path speed limit.
- Remember that golf carts operating after dark **MUST** have adequate headlights and taillights.
- Cart drivers should politely warn pedestrians and bikers when they are going to pass.
- Be sure your homeowners or rental insurance covers your golf cart.

***"This is the long version.
The short version is: Be Courteous; Be Safe."***

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