

# BLUEPRINT

## INTERGOVERNMENTAL AGENCY

**BLUEPRINT INTERGOVERNMENTAL AGENCY NEWS RELEASE:**  
**October 18, 2023**

**CONTACT:**

Shannon Allen  
Blueprint Intergovernmental Agency  
(850) 510-8823

Alison Faris  
City of Tallahassee Communications  
(850) 891-8533

Mathieu Cavell  
Leon County Community and Media Relations  
(850) 606-5300

**Blueprint Debuts Debbie Lightsey Nature Park and Golden Aster Trail**

~ 113-acre nature park encompasses a butterfly garden, playground, picnic areas, two elevated boardwalks and trails. ~



Tallahassee, Fla. – Today, Blueprint Intergovernmental Agency, in collaboration with the City of Tallahassee and Leon County Government, hosted the grand opening of the Debbie Lightsey Nature Park and Golden Aster Trail, situated at 1317 Capital Circle SW.

This Debbie Lightsey Nature Park and Golden Aster Trail grand opening was celebrated with a ribbon-cutting ceremony. The community then joined local leaders in an engaging walking tour, which offered an opportunity for participants to learn, explore and immerse themselves in the park's remarkable amenities and wildlife.

"The Debbie Lightsey Nature Park and Golden Aster Trail represent distinctive assets within Southwest Tallahassee-Leon County, offering tangible benefits to the community as a result of the IA Board's commitment to the creation of natural spaces," said IA Board Chair and Leon County Commission Vice Chair Carolyn Cummings. "The tranquility enveloping the park embarking upon the trail is full of a diverse wildlife, which graces the entirety of this pristine natural sanctuary."

The Debbie Lightsey Nature Park is an integral component of the Blueprint Capital Circle Southwest Greenway project. Spanning an impressive 113 acres, this nature park boasts a plethora of attractions, including a unique playground, designated picnic areas, 1.3 miles of picturesque trails, a butterfly garden and two elevated boardwalks that offer panoramic vistas of the adjacent wetlands. The Debbie Lightsey Nature Park is filled with beautiful vegetation and wildlife species that can be spotted year-round, such as Great Blue Herons, Great White Egrets, Snowy Egrets, Wood Storks, Ospreys, Anhingas, monarch butterflies, buttonbush and cypress, red maple and black gum trees. Construction of a single-track mountain bike path is anticipated to begin in late 2023, further enhancing the park's appeal.



"These amenities constitute valuable additions to the Southwest area, providing more opportunities for residents to recreate in a beautiful, natural setting," said IA Board Vice Chair and Tallahassee Mayor Pro-Tem Dianne Williams-Cox. "This Park actively promotes community engagement through the outdoors and the appreciation of the natural splendor inherent to Tallahassee-Leon County."

Nestled within the tranquil confines of the Golden Aster Nature Preserve, the Golden Aster Trail is also part of the Blueprint Capital Circle Southwest Greenway. This natural trail, spanning .32 miles, was strategically implemented across from the Tallahassee International Airport, conveniently linking Capital Circle Southwest to Long Leaf Road. The trail provides access to

# BLUEPRINT

## INTERGOVERNMENTAL AGENCY

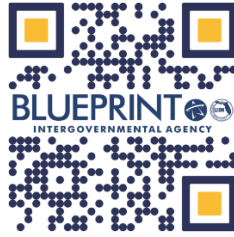
the Preserve, which offers an important habitat for the Bent Golden Aster plant, an endangered species.

“The grand opening of the Debbie Lightsey Nature Park and Golden Aster Trail signifies significant achievements for Blueprint’s implementation of the Tallahassee-Leon County Greenways Master Plan,” Blueprint Director Autumn Calder said. “The Debbie Lightsey Nature Park is a testament to Mother Nature’s inherent beauty. The park provides access to and educates the community on the pristine wetlands and distinctive wildlife. Blueprint expresses its gratitude to the community leaders, residents and media representatives for their collective participation, which transformed this event into a memorable occasion for the Tallahassee-Leon County community.”

The Debbie Lightsey Nature Park and the Golden Aster Trail were adopted and incorporated into the [Tallahassee-Leon County Greenways Program](#) in 2013. This network provides shared-use paths for cyclists, hikers and other non-motorized users, while connecting neighborhoods in south and southwest Tallahassee to several parks, greenways and the Apalachicola National Forest. This connectivity offers more options, opportunities and safer ways to commute for Southside residents.

Learn more at [BlueprintIA.org](https://BlueprintIA.org).





###

### **About Blueprint Intergovernmental Agency**

The Blueprint Intergovernmental Agency (IA) is a joint City-County agency within the Department of Planning, Land Management, and Community Enhancement (PLACE). The City of Tallahassee and Leon County created the joint Department of PLACE, which emphasizes the desire to create a livable, sustainable, and economically vibrant community through the coordinated efforts of the Planning Department, Blueprint IA, and the Office of Economic Vitality.