



Little Toot

Deep River Rail-Trail officially opens

What began as a dream 20 years ago became reality Sept. 19 as state Secretary of Commerce, Keith Crisco, officially opened the first .75 miles of the planned 6-mile Deep River Rail-Trail that will eventually connect Ramseur, Franklinville and Cedar Falls

About 60 people attended the 10 a.m. ribbon cutting in Franklinville.

The trail, which is part of the new Deep River State Park, is a story of teamwork and the shared vision and efforts of three men: Mac Whatley, Perry Conner and Harvey Harman. North Carolina Rail-Trails joined their efforts in 2007.

Whatley, an attorney, historian, visionary, dreamer and long-time mayor of Franklinville, envisioned as early as 1989 a rail-trail on the old rail bed of the Ramseur Branch (1883) Atlantic and Yadkin Railroad (Norfolk Southern), which had a quarter mile portion on the town's River Side Park. When he left the town board in 2005, the town had acquired several trail easements on the rail corridor and an abandoned N. C. Wildlife Resources Commission boat landing under US 64 as well as a



Photo by GR Townsend

Officials celebrate the Sept. 19 ribbon cutting of Deep River Rail-Trail. Left to right, Kevin Franklin, Ramseur City Manager; Harvey Harman, Manager Walk Softly LLC and DRRT Steering Committee; Perry Conner, Franklinville Town Commissioner, Chair DRRT Steering Committee and Trail Boss; Pat Hurley, State Representative for Randolph County (District 70); Darrell McBane, Director N.C. State Trails; Dilys Bowman, NCRT Board and DRRT Steering Committee; AL Capehart, NCRT Board and DRRT Steering Committee.

\$50,000 national Recreational Trails Program grant.

Conner, a Franklinville native, returned to his hometown in 2001 where he became an activist for litter control and town beautification, among

other activities. In 2003 he was elected to the town board and pushed Whatley's vision for a trail when Whatley left the board.

Deep River (Continued on page 2)

Dissertation on rail-trails

New NCRT board member Dilys Bowman completed her Ph.D. in geography at UNC-Chapel Hill in May. The dissertation was an analysis of the planning and routing of greenway trails (generally paved) in North Carolina towns.

A "foot person" and dedicated walker, often with nose in book, Dilys has walked many miles as the result of deciding to walk to the next bus stop rather than wait for the bus. Dilys is keenly interested in planning for pedestrian and bicycle transportation. When not working on or thinking about trails, she thinks about her three children who are in the working world, grad school, and college respectively.

Here is an extract of her work.

Greenway trails, including rail-trails, are increasingly popular throughout the U.S., but there has been comparatively little research about

them. The dissertation attempted to answer two questions:

1) To what extent do African-Americans have equitable access (proximity) to urban/suburban greenways?

2) Which factors in the planning process of greenways have led to their equitable or inequitable distribution?

Census 2000 data, town greenway plans, information from departments of planning, parks and recreation and other data were used to select the study towns. Greenways included rail-trails and creek-side greenways as well as trails in

Dissertation (Continued on page 2)



Photo by AL Capehart

Dilys Bowman

Deep River

(Continued from page 1)

Harman, a farmer, builder and teacher, is an environmental visionary who saw the 124-acre tract of land at the confluence of Sandy Creek and Deep River as an opportunity to build a park to showcase the area's natural setting and simple, community-oriented, commercial and sustainable life style. As manager of Earth Renewal Shelter/Walk Softly LLC, an ecologically friendly, sustainable land development non-profit, Harman spearheaded the acquisition of the 124 acres in 2006.

In early 2007 support for the rail-trail began to waver on the town board. There was discussion of returning the \$50,000 grant. Through contacts with Harman,

NCRT brought its expertise to the efforts in mid-April 2007. Aided by recent legislation from the General Assembly that created the Deep River State Park, the town board approved the trail by a 3-2 vote on May 8, 2007.

The usual design and rights of way struggles followed. Local residents and volunteers from two local high schools, the N.C. Zoological Park and the Triangle Rails to Trails Conservancy helped clear trail for a June 2008 sneak preview.

Today the first section of the 8-foot wide trail is surfaced with 3 inches of compact granite screening over a stabilizing geo-textile material. There is a 12-car parking lot and trail access on Rising Sun Way beside the Franklinville Waste Water Treatment Plant.

For more insider information about trail construction, check AL Capehart's post on the NCRT Web site: www.ncrailtrails.org



Photo by AL Capehart

Alison Carpenter

Alison Carpenter is a North Carolina native who joins the North Carolina Rail-Trails Board with an extensive background in bicycle and pedestrian planning on all levels.

She currently resides in downtown Durham where she often enjoys the world-class American Tobacco Trail and volunteers regularly with the Durham Bike Co-op. As a transportation planner she has worked in bicycle and pedestrian planning at the campus, municipal and regional level.

While she currently works in the private sector, Alison has experience in local and regional government positions, as well as non-profit management experience. She is an active board member with the North Carolina Active Transportation Alliance.

Dissertation

(Continued from page 1)

utility corridors that were planned to promote recreation, economic development and transportation, among other things.

GPS was used (via bicycle) to map all the greenways in the 11 study towns. GIS mapping software enabled a comparison of neighborhoods within a half-mile street network of greenway access points with each town as a whole. The GIS analysis was complemented by 41 interviews with planners and other people knowledgeable about planning greenways in North Carolina.

The results showed that there is not spatial inequity overall in access to greenways within towns, but that there is unequal access for African-Americans in some towns. Land availability, the priorities of town, neighborhood input and other factors restrict greenway routing.

Towns that had at least equitable access for African-Americans were more likely to

have expressed a commitment to equity and/or a commitment to trail connectivity. Towns without such a commitment were less likely to have equitably distributed greenways. Trails built only for recreational purposes were less likely to be distributed equitably.

Developers often benefit from greenways, but may influence or restrict their routes. Neighborhoods often have worries about fear, crime, property rights and privacy, concerns that are unsupported by research and experiences elsewhere. Such opposition can derail plans for greenways, unless the town is firmly committed. After a greenway is built, objections almost always subside as people discover the trail is actually an asset.

Rail corridors had the potential to foster equity of access because rail lines often went straight through towns. But in many towns the rail corridor is so fragmented that a rail-trail is not long enough to traverse different neighborhoods. (Durham's popular American Tobacco Trail is a notable exception and is a significant part of Durham's equitably distributed, growing alternative transportation greenway network.)

Unsurprisingly, the biggest barrier to trail access that the interview subjects saw was too few miles of trail on the ground. Another barrier is that governments sometimes fail to realize that greenways and pedestrian/cycling facilities have a role in the overall transportation structure.

There is a long way to go to create a pedestrian/cycling path infrastructure that can complement the one built for cars — although the picture is slowly changing.

Little Toot via email

Readers wishing to be alerted via email when "Little Toot" is posted on the North Carolina Rail-Trails website- www.ncrailtrails.org should send their email address to Dave Connelly, NCRT's vice chair, at Connelly@duke.edu



North Carolina Rail-Trails

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Resource Contacts

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NC DOT Rail Planner	Pam Davis	919-733-7245 x-274
NC DOT Bike-Ped. Div.	Tom Norman	919-715-2342
NPS Field Office, RTCA	Deirdre Hewitt	828-271-4779 x-272
Rails-to-Trails Conservancy	Kelly Pack	202-974-5148

NCRT seeks part-time executive director

The North Carolina Rail-Trails' Board of Directors strengthened the 19-year-old organization's administrative infrastructure at its July meeting by adopting a position description for a part-time executive director who should be at work sometime next year.

A search committee of NCRT Board members chaired by Board Chair John Morck will publicize for and recruit a candidate over the next few months for the first paid staff position in NCRT's history.

In its meeting in Charlotte, the board adopted new bylaws to merge the president's role with that of the executive director. NCRT co-founder AL Capehart has been volunteer president since NCRT was founded. The executive director will be

NCRT has new ally

NCRT has a new ally in the recently formed North Carolina Active Transportation Alliance, which provides a cohesive alliance of individuals, advocacy organizations, businesses and clubs working toward a better statewide network of multi-modal and non-motorized transportation facilities.

The new statewide nonprofit advocacy organization for people-powered transportation has a mission "to inspire and support advocacy and educational efforts throughout North Carolina for an environment that fairly and equitably accommodates bicyclists, skaters, pedestrians, and others using human-powered active transportation."

NCATA is the reincarnation of a previously existing group. In February NCATA received 501c3 status as a federally-registered charitable nonprofit. In August a board of directors was elected, whose members include residents of Wilmington, Charlotte, Raleigh, Durham, Pittsboro, Cary, Kernersville, Greensboro, Black Mountain and Hendersonville. For more information or to join, visit the Web site at www.ncactivetransportation.org.

a voting member of the board, which will have up to 15 members including the chair.

The board adopted a personnel manual drafted by the personnel committee chaired by Tony Reevy. Officer terms, committee structure, vice chair, staff and executive committee and complete bylaws are among the topics that can be found at the NCRT Web site:

www.ncrailtrails.org



Photo by CR Townsend

Former Pfeiffer University classmates N.C. Secretary of Commerce, Keith Crisco, left, and AL Capehart, president of NCRT, enjoy Deep River Rail-Trail ribbon cutting Sept. 19 in Franklinville.

Workplace giving

NCRT participates in workplace giving campaigns as a partner with Earth Share of North Carolina. Upcoming campaigns will be conducted through the State Employees Combined Campaign, the Combined Federal Campaigns, the Greensboro City-County Campaign, the United Way of the Greater Triangle.

Look for NCRT and ESNC this fall in your workplace giving campaign!

Briefs

A group of citizens including some public officials has recently formed a two-county "Friends" group to support the establishment of an 18.5-mile rail-trail between **Hendersonville and Brevard** on a discontinued Norfolk-Southern RR rail corridor.

The group has posted a petition at <http://hbtrail.org> for signatures from all trail enthusiasts to request state and local governments to partner to create the first North Carolina state rail-trail. The trail should draw visitors from all over North Carolina and surrounding states.

Hendersonville, Laurel Park, Flat Rock and the Henderson County Chamber of Commerce have each formerly supported the rail-trail effort between Hendersonville and Brevard. The working name for the trail is the **Ecusta Trail**, so named for a local specialty paper plant that at one point employed 3500 during its years of operation from 1939 – 2003.

The old roadbed of the former Carr Lumber Company is presently being prepared for a gravel composite surface leading into the Pisgah National Forest and extending the Brevard Bike Path so as to join the Art Loeb Trail which in turn joins the Mountains-to-Sea Trail. More information including photos can be found at <http://www.traillink.com/> by typing in "Brevard Bike Path" at that link.

North Carolina Rail-Trails' new Web site opens in mid-October with a new look, much of the current content and new features that include digital displays, a FAQs page, and a map of North Carolina showing rail-trails and projects.

Additional features are a calendar of events, more information on the NCRT Board of Directors and an expanded section for displaying technical information and legal guidance documents. The new Web site is: www.ncrailtrails.org

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NCRT annual memberships: Individual - \$25, Corporate - \$100
Mail to North Carolina Rail-Trails, PO Box 61348, Durham, NC 27715-1348

On line at www.ncrailtrails.org

NCRT is a 501-c(3) public non-profit tax exempt organization founded in 1990.
 All contributions and donations are tax deductible to the fullest extent of the law.

"To Protect Rail Corridors for Trail and Rail with Trail Use"

A prescription: rail-trails

Over the last several years while biking the New River Trail in Virginia, the Silver Comet Trail in Georgia and the American Tobacco Trail in Durham, Charlotte trails advocate Dean Brodhag and his friend Dr. Paul Smolen, a pediatrician, hatched an idea: Why not "prescribe" trail use as an antidote to childhood obesity? The idea was reinforced by an article a couple of years ago in the national *Rails to Trails* magazine and in the Spring 2009 issue of *Little Toot*, "A matter of life and girth."

Now, patients of Providence Pediatrics, a Carolinas Healthcare Practice in Mecklenburg County's Ballantyne area, leave their appointments with a GIS map of a nearby greenway on the back of prescriptions and a recommendation that parents take their kids out for a hike or bike ride.

The idea is to get pediatricians to use their close relationship with their patients to encourage children to use the "rails to trails" and "greenways" to increase their physical activity.

Thread Trail

"Mark the Thread" signs were erected Sept. 15 on 11 community trails in North and South Carolina, including North Carolina's first federally railbanked Class 1 Railroad, the 1.7 mile Highland Rail-Trail in Gastonia.

The signs designate completed sections of the Carolina Thread, which will eventually include several hundred miles of trails, blueways and conservation corridors connecting 2.3 million citizens in 15 counties surrounding Charlotte. The Catawba Lands Conservancy is the lead agency, in partnership with the Trust for Public Land, Foundation for the Carolinas and various agencies.



Photo by Nancy Pierce

NCRT Fall Board Meeting

Saturday, Oct. 10
10:30 a.m.
Community Room
Woodcroft Community Association
5501 Fortunes Ridge Drive
Durham, NC 27713

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