

NORTH-CAROLINA RAIL TRAILS

Little...Toot

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UNCC Developing Plan For Lincolnton Corridor

The City of Lincolnton is being treated to a preview of how a rail-trail could be a community centerpiece and practical transportation link between parks, schools and the downtown business area.

The UNC Charlotte Landscape Architecture senior class is putting the finishing touches on a comprehensive development plan for a proposed two-mile greenway rail-trail project in Lincolnton.

The semester-long design project has been presented in its preliminary form to the Lincolnton Recreation Commission and is scheduled to be presented to the Lincolnton City Council and the public before the end of the year.

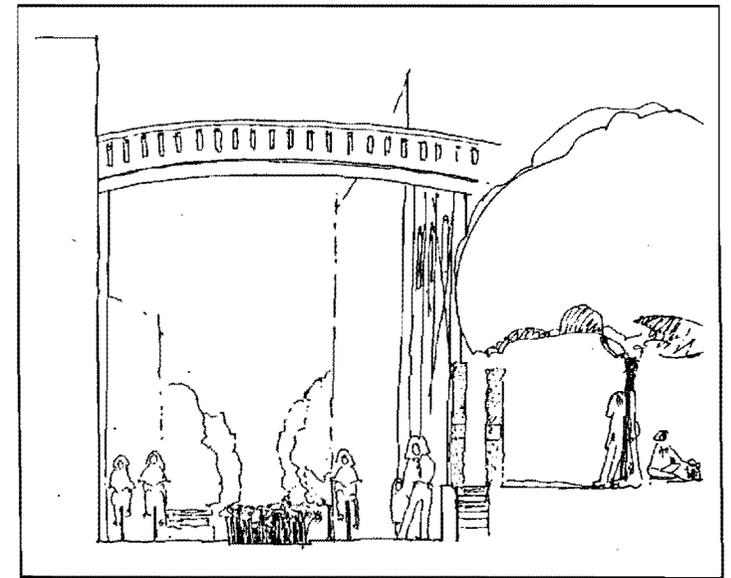
(Continued on back page)

Guide Lists Winston-Salem Strollway As North Carolina Rail-Trail

The latest edition of A Guide to America's Rail Trails lists the 1.2-mile Winston-Salem Strollway as the first Tarheel state rail-trail. The strollway links downtown Triad Park with Old Salem Village and with ongoing redevelopment of the Brookstown area.

The strollway concept was first advanced in the early 80s as "an element of the overall mosaic" in an aggressive Central Area Action Plan, according to Jack Seelman, Winston-Salem Economic Development Coordinator. That plan has resulted in the development of Triad Park, a Convention Center expansion and the Salem Towers project. Additional office and commercial projects could bring the adjacent economic development package to over \$100 million.

The strollway follows the Winston-Salem Southbound Railroad corridor, which was utilized through partial city ownership and creative landswaps with private



One of several hundred preliminary concept sketches developed by UNCC seniors creatively splits pathway under Lincolnton Main Street bridge. Original rail bed becomes plantings.

developers. The total project cost, including acquisition, development and lighting was \$1.2 million, all funded by the city from 1985 to 1988.

The path serves as a pedestrian and bicycle link to the downtown area, as well providing recreation space in the city center. The strollway connects with the Salem Greenway, provides access to Salem Lake and could be linked to the North Carolina School of the Arts campus with a proposed expansion.

The rail-trails guide which lists the strollway is published by the national Rails-to-Trails Conservancy. For more information on the strollway, contact Jack Seelman at 919-727-2741.

**INSIDE: Parks head offers project liaison.
Planners show interest in trail study.**

"To Preserve Rail Corridors and Promote Rail - Trails"

Whistle Stops:

Now Keep That Interest Growing

There is growing evidence that rail-trails supporters are gaining the interest of North Carolina DEHNR Division of Parks and Recreation administration and staff. Elsewhere in this issue is detailed how Parks Director Dr. Phil McKnelly is offering his department's liaison services in rail-trail developments. This represents a tremendous leap forward and a validation of NCRT's efforts.

The August issue of The Courier, a Parks and Recreation staff publication, made mention of DEHNR Assistant Secretary Dr. Lynn Muchmore's assessment that "rail-trail conversions are among the most important concerns facing the trails community," a statement made to a North Carolina Trails Committee.

The Courier September issue also reported Dr. McKnelly's keynote address to the NCRT annual meeting in which he stressed the need to educate landowners adjacent to potential rail-trail corridors.

Rail-trail supporters also should be aware that legislators and officials are sensitive to adjoining landowners' concerns. Here is an opportunity to follow through with Dr. McKnelly's recommendation:

The North Carolina State Parks and Recreation Legislative Study Commission, five senators and three representatives, will be traveling Florida to study park developments and specifically to learn how Florida is developing its rail-trail opportunities.

Let's broaden their rail-trail education by letting these legislators know of your experiences on rail-trails in other states. Let them know of the positive impact rail-trails have on communities and how adjoining landowners react to established rail-trails.

The parks legislative study commission members are:

Senators Austin Murphy Allran, R-Catawba; Betsy Lane Cochrane, R-Davie; Ted Kaplan, D-Forsyth; Robert G. Shaw, R-Guilford; Jim Kemp Sherron, D-Wake.

Representatives Narvel Jim Crawford, D-Buncombe; Daniel Howard DeVane, D-Hoke; Jo Graham Foster, D-Mecklenburg.

Address your support and experiences to:

The Honorable _____
General Assembly of North Carolina
Raleigh, NC 27611

Trail Sampling: Tarheel Creeper

Coasting down White Top Mountain on the Virginia Creeper Trail toward Damascus, reveling in peak fall color, following white water rivers, stopping on a multitude of bridges to take in awesome scenery. A great environment in which to spawn creative solutions.

You know, perhaps the easiest way to bring rail-trails to North Carolina is to simply annex a 25-mile deep strip across southwestern Virginia. By redrawing a single line on the map the Tarheel state could join a list of three dozen states that boast of successful rail-trail conversions.

That strip, the Virginia Annex, as it would come to be known, would include the scenic Virginia (Tarheel?) Creeper Trail and the New River State (of North Carolina) Trail. Both trails would attract tourists from Virginia and elsewhere to the Old North State.

Do you suppose Virginia would miss a little bit of territory out of the far corner? After all, Virginia still has some great rail-trails in the northern part of the state and is busily developing more.

Sure, there would be minor problems with switching around telephone area codes and postal ZIP codes. But even those pale in comparison to the problems of building rail-trails from scratch in a state that doesn't have any. Isn't it funny how just setting foot across a state line can make a proven concept seem so threatening, foreign and totally impractical?

Oh, well, it was just an idea.

GRANT TO SERVE AS LEGAL ADVISOR

Attorney Bill Grant of Durham has volunteered to serve as NCRT legal consultant, replacing Bryan Lessley, who moved from Greensboro to Oregon.

Grant formerly served as an assistant district attorney and has experience in forestry and public land use issues.

Parks Head: Educate Landowners, Lawmakers

Educating adjoining landowners to the benefits derived from public use of railroad corridors is a primary step in developing support for rail-trails, advised Dr. Phil McKnelly in an address to the first annual meeting of North Carolina Rail Trails in Durham.

"Education of the adjoining landowners can help ease their fears. Address their concerns as quickly as possible, as this will help arrest their opposition," said McKnelly, Director of North Carolina State Parks, a division of the Department of Environment, Health and Natural Resources (DEHNR). Following additional advice for gaining public and political support, McKnelly offered his department's liaison services to rail-trail initiatives.

He first noted the successes of rail-trails across the nation and then that North Carolina is lingering behind with over 1,900 miles of rail corridors already lost and another 210 miles presently being considered for abandonment. In the face of this the state Division of Parks and Recreation and the Department of Transportation are reviewing a drafted Memorandum of Understanding which provides a format for potential trail development on preserved railroad corridors. McKnelly noted that DEHNR Sec. William Coby has a strong personal interest in rail-trails and formerly was in NCDOT administration.

McKnelly went on to recommend the following ways of gaining support for rail-trails:

- *Develop a broad coalition of trail users, such as bicyclists, joggers, equestrians, walkers, senior citizen, handicapped groups, civic and youth groups.*
- *Educate politicians and local governments. Get them to appreciate what is going on in rail-trail development and to be aware of corridor opportunities in their areas.*
- *Be sure that trail projects are of high quality so that there are no regrets later on.*
- *Stage hikes with prominent business, community and government leaders.*
- *Organize the diverse interest of potential trail users.*

Observing that local groups have not met with great success in their attempts to get responses from railroad companies and to effectively utilize the jurisdictional

authority of the Interstate Commerce Commission, McKnelly offered the following liaison roles by his department:

- *To establish contacts and working arrangements with railroad companies.*
- *Provide assistance in filing papers with the ICC.*
- *Make people aware of the published three-year railroad abandonment listings as they affect communities.*
- *Make DEHNR a partner in a cooperative venture to prioritize railroad corridor preservation efforts.*
- *Provide assistance to local groups on determining rail corridor ownership questions.*
- *Assist in determining corridor values before negotiating purchases.*
- *Assist in funding strategies directed at businesses, grants and other sources.*

McKnelly concluded his remarks by pointing out that North Carolina State Parks has limited resources but that the department's liaison functions can enhance the efforts of local groups as they develop their coalitions and strategies.



Newly-elected NCRT Chairperson Carolyn Townsend presents bicycle helmet door prize to annual meeting keynote speaker Dr. Phil McKnelly, Director of North Carolina State Parks.

NCRT Picks Townsend To Head New Board

Carolyn Townsend, who has been coordinating efforts on the Deep River project in Chatham County and an active NCRT Steering Committee member, has been elected to chair the NCRT board for the 1991 term. This will be the first full year of NCRT's status as a non-profit corporation and to operate under new bylaws with a board of directors.

Al Capehart of Durham and James Mackay of Raleigh step down as NCRT co-chairs and will continue to serve on the new board. Mackay will serve as secretary with John Stratton of Durham continuing in the treasurer slot. Dan Arrasmith of Hickory was elected vice chairperson at the NCRT annual meeting.

Filling out the board positions are Forrest Altman, Bob Appleby, Gary Cornwell, Chuck Flick, Frances Jackson and Vonn Stone.

Trail administrators from Florida and Virginia were on hand at the NCRT annual meeting to relate their experiences with birthing rail-trails in their states and to offer insights to developing effective programs.

Marianne Koos, Florida State Trails Coordinator, related how that state's first rail-trail, The St. Marks, cost \$200,000 to acquire and another \$300,000 to litigate the claims of adjoining landowners. A year after the trail was put into use the project now has neighboring landowner support, has served as a focal point for community cleanup efforts and is a source of community pride.

The Florida Department of Natural Resource now has an agreement with with the Florida DOT which allows FDNR to manage rail corridors that FDOT acquires. While this relationship has had initial growing pains, said Koos, it is now gaining the pro-active interest of the

NEXT MEETING DEC. 15

NCRT will next meet Saturday, Dec. 15 at the Presbyterian Church in Gulf, 12 miles west of Sanford on U.S. 421. Following the 10:00 am meeting an inspection hike will be conducted along the Deep River corridor in Chatham County. For more information, call Carolyn Townsend at 919-542-5422 during the evening.



Tom Potter (right), State Parks Trail Specialist, receives Golden Spike Award from retiring Chair Al Capehart for Tom's continuing efforts to develop rail-trails in state.

FDOT staff.

The early efforts in Florida have provided valuable experience in land appraisals, environmental assessments, purchase negotiations and trail development issues, said Koos.

Scott Flickinger, Superintendent of the New River State Trail, spoke of acquisition and development of the 57-mile rail-trail in southwestern Virginia. He reported that the linear park has had tremendous community support from service clubs and trail users. With the state providing construction materials and taking advantage of volunteer labor, development funds have been stretched significantly, said Flickinger. One local group decked over 900 ft. of bridge in a single day.

Funds from the North Carolina Trails Association helped bring Koos to the NCRT meeting. Other supporters contributing to event's success included Irregardless Restaurant of Raleigh, Ole NC Bar-B-Que of Durham, Durham Arts Council, Durham Convention and Visitors Bureau, Jon Parker Real Estate of Durham, NCSU Recreation Resource Services and the City of Durham.

Door prizes were contributed by Flythe Schwinn and All Star Bicycle of Raleigh, and Performance, Inc. and The Trail Shop of Chapel Hill.

Firm Interested In Producing Durham-Bonsal Trail Study

Believing that North Carolina is ripe for rail-trail development, the Silver Springs, MD, planning firm of Hoffman, Williams, Lafen and Fletcher has told NCRT that it is interested compiling a master plan for development of the downtown Durham to Bonsal line.

The corridor, which Triangle rail-trail supporters have advocated for several years, skirts Research Triangle Park and Lake Jordan for approximately 25 miles. The Maryland firm said it is interested in demonstrating its planning expertise on a high visibility proposal. NCRT is applying for a state Adopt-A-Trail grant to defray the firm's expenses in developing the corridor analysis.

A HWL&F representative, David Lillard, said that the firm has compiled a comprehensive three-volume study on railbanking with a completed a rail and river corridor inventory for the state of Illinois.

Project Briefs

The Deep River Park Associated has voted to incorporate as a step toward making a purchase offer for the 2.2-mile Gulf to Cumnock line and tressel over the Deep River. Legal assistance is being given by Attorney Paul Adcock, Jr. of Sanford. The Chatham and Lee historical societies also are assisting in development of a project brochure.

Earlier this year the Chatham County Commissioners allocated \$5,000 toward the corridor purchase. The state

Adopt-A-Trail program also has granted \$500 for title research.

* * *

The Triangle Rail-to-Trail Conservancy has elected John Goebel as president of the group, replacing Jon Parker as the Durham project contact. Goebel can be reached at 919-489-7063.

The Triangle group has adopted a Fayetteville project, a corridor running between Barbee Road and NC Highway 54. The corridor connects two schools with residential areas.

The group also is planning a new brochure and a newsletter.

* * *

Leslie Kennedy of Apex has volunteered to be project contact for the Wake County section of the Durham to Bonsal line. She is helping advocate an underpass culvert at U.S. 64, which is being widened by two lanes over the rail right-of-way. The NCDOT wants to fill the gradeline, thus blocking the corridor. NCRT spokespersons addressed the issue at a public hearing in Apex on Oct. 30. Kennedy's address is 1217 Goodwin Road, Apex, NC 27502. Her number is 919-362-4011.

* * *

Artie Wilson, 704-883-2450, has volunteered to be project contact for Transylvania County, where he is working to preserve the Brevard to Pisgah Forest line for community economic interests. Wilson's address is Box 1578, Brevard, NC 28712.

NORTH CAROLINA RAIL TRAILS MEMBERSHIP FORM

Name _____ Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Telephone: Home _____ Work _____ Best Time _____

Reason for interest in rail-trails _____

Member of other conservation/recreation/historical group? _____

NCRT annual memberships: Individual - \$15, Family - \$20, Corporate - \$100

Mail to North Carolina Rail Trails, Suite 124, 703 9th St., Durham, NC 27705

THANK YOU FOR JOINING NCRT

"To Preserve Rail Corridors and Promote Rail - Trails"

UNCC Lincolnton Plan - (Cont. from Page 1)

The project got off to a fast start in September after preliminary discussions between the Lincolnton Corridor Coalition and UNCC Landscape Architecture Instructor Deborah Ryan, a graduate of the Harvard landscape architecture school and a practicing architect with the Wahler Design Group of Charlotte.

The design students first conducted a detailed site study, a site resources inventory, compiled a community and railroad history, and conducted interviews with civic and governmental leaders. The senior studio was then divided into five design groups which each created its own preliminary proposal. A composite proposal is being readied for the final presentation.

Prominent features of the proposal include an earthen amphitheater adjoining a partially-developed city park, a downtown community area, multi-use recreation facilities and public art projects which can be constructed by community service groups.

The project corridor is part of a 15-mile Norfolk Southern abandonment between southern Lincolnton and the Catawba County community of Maiden. The Corridor Coalition has offered to assist in acquisition of the Lincolnton section and is awaiting a response from the Norfolk Southern, which says that it must first appraise the corridor.

NORTH CAROLINA RAIL TRAILS INC. BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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NOTEWORTHY RESOURCE PEOPLE

NCDOT Rail Planner	Mark Sullivan	919-733-2306
NC Govt. Liaison/Trail Spec.	Tom Potter	919-778-9488
Rails-to-Trails Consevancy	Mariane Fowler	202-797-5400
National Park Service	Beth Dillion	202-343-3766

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