

\$1,100 NCRT grant for Brevard Bike Path

A mile at a time. That's how the Brevard Bike Path is hitting the ground. And North Carolina Rail-Trails is doing its part.

At the July NCRT board meeting in Brevard, the board authorized a \$1,100 grant to Brevard toward completion of the five-mile path that will eventually run from Main Street in downtown Brevard northwest to Davidson River Campground in the Pisgah National Forest.

"The city is extremely grateful for this grant," said town planning administrator Josh Freeman. "Every penny helps us get closer to our goal. We really appreciate the opportunity to work with an organization like North Carolina Rail-Trails."

Freeman said the money will most likely be used to help complete a mile addition currently under construction from Blue Ridge Community College to McLean Road in the direction of the downtown. NCRT prefers that the money be spent on some part of the section that is on the old Norfolk Southern



NCRT board members Mike Domonkos and CR Townsend walk Domonkos' Airdaile, Belle, on Brevard Bike Path.

rail bed. The current phase is scheduled for a late August completion.

By 2010 the .5 miles from McLean Road to Main Street and the final mile leading northwest into Pisgah National Forest should be completed. Brevard is still waiting for a sign-off from state DOT to run the bike path under the US 64 overpass.

One alternative use of NCRT's \$1,100 grant could be for the Carr Lumber Railway roadbed on the northwest end, which at some point will require a National Forest Service study of the portion of the trail entering the Pisgah National Forest.

Brevard is a summer resort town of 7,000 residents noted for its summer music festival, arts community and retirees. The Brevard Bike Path is part of a long-range plan for a network of trails stretching northeast to Asheville (28 miles) and Hendersonville (23 miles).

Brevard (Continued on page 4)

Rhonda Parker writes

Rhonda Parker, Jacksonville's former planning administrator, spearheaded the town's 5.2-mile Rails-to-Trails Greenway, for which ground was broken in December. In 1990 North Carolina Rail-Trails got involved in the \$4.1 million project, which is the first step in a planned 172-mile trail system in eastern North Carolina.

Rhonda resigned her position with Jacksonville in July to move with her daughter and new husband to Chesapeake, Va., where he has orders with the Navy in Virginia Beach. She sends this letter.

I was employed with the City of Jacksonville 10 1/2 years and began work on converting the abandoned railroad into a pedestrian facility in 1997 not too long after I came to the city. The Jacksonville rails-to-trails project has truly been a labor of love.

This project had so many complex issues ranging from action by Congress allowing the Department of Navy to convey the property to the city to base security issues post 9/11.

Once completed, this trail will afford the citizens of Jacksonville, which include our men and women in uniform, safe access to our parks, waterways and shopping areas. I am very interested in whether the trail will be utilized as an alternative to the automobile for travel to work by military personnel and dependents.

I currently do not have a job lined up in Virginia and plan on staying home for a little while to help my daughter, Maggie, transition to a new community and school.

AL and Carolyn have been such advocates for our project that I have to say a huge "THANKS" to them for their support.

If possible, I would like to continue to receive "Little Toot" in Virginia.

Briefs

Leza Mundt has been hired as the new coordinator for the state's **Safe Routes to School** program. She will work in the Bicycle and Pedestrian Division of DOT, which encourages school children to walk or bicycle to school. She can be contacted at 919-807-0774 or lwmundt@dot.state.nc.us

The \$612 million federal program will bring \$15 million to North Carolina over the next four years to build sidewalks and bike paths. Where applicable, former railroad corridors will be used. The program aims at improving air quality and reducing childhood obesity.

New maps for the American Tobacco Trail are at the Web site:

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<http://www.NCRail-Trails.org>

2006 Annual Report

In 2006 North Carolina Rail-Trails claimed a court victory for a rail-trail in Western North Carolina, pushed the distribution of its newsletter to over 1,000 copies quarterly and worked to increase the state's 78.1 miles of rail-trail.

"It's been a busy year and will be busier," said Carolyn Townsend, chair of NCRT's board.

"We were particularly encouraged by the decision by the N.C. Court of Appeals on the Thermal Belt Rail-Trail. We're gearing up to push the Coastal Carolina Trail in the East, and we like the good things happening in and around Brevard."

Below are summaries of NCRT's work in 2006.

Goal 1: Promote beneficial use and connectivity of rail corridors by the public.

Information about rail-trails in the following counties was distributed: Martin, Skewarkee Trail; Harnett, Dunn-Erwin Trail; Durham, Chatham and Wake, American Tobacco Trail; Orange, Libba Cotton Bikeway (rail-with-trail); Guilford, Lake Brandt Trail; Franklin, Louisburg Bike Trail; Rowan, Troutman Greenway (rail-trail); Rutherford, Thermal Belt Rail-Trail; Lincoln, Marcia Cloninger Rail-Trail and South Fork Catawba River Rail-Trail; Transylvania, Brevard Bike Path; Madison, Laurel River Trail.

To date 78.1 miles have been developed into rail-trails in the state. A total of 309 acres have been identified for rail-trails; 52 acres are held in easement; and 257 acres have been or are under development.

NCRT representatives participated in the following events: December, groundbreaking for the Jacksonville Rail-Trail in Onslow County; May, celebration recognizing Harnett County receiving the

North Carolina Rail-Trails
participates in workplace campaigns with



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Dunn-Erwin Trail from NCRT; annual meetings of N.C. Association of County Commissioners and N.C. League of Municipalities; and meetings of the Piedmont Authority for Regional Transportation, Land Trust Assembly, Land Trust Council and Piedmont Collaborative of Regional Land Trusts.

Goal 2: Increase the number of rail-trail miles in North Carolina.

Initiatives included support of the Granville Greenway plan, which includes a rail corridor from Oxford to Clarksville, Va.,



and 221 miles of utility and rail easements that are feasible as greenways;

Strategies to promote "The best possible use of the state's rail corridor assets" through the Rail Corridor Round Table, which was hosted by the Raleigh law firm Bailey & Dixon, LLC (The Round Table met six times during the year.); support of efforts by Albemarle and Marion to convert Norfolk Southern's abandoned lines into trails;

Strategies to preserve the Norfolk Southern corridor from Gastonia to Dallas; monitoring the discontinuation of service of Laurinburg & Southern Railroad (Gulf and Ohio); NCDOT's preservation of the 4.5-mile corridor from Spring Hope to Momeyer;

Convening the Coastal Carolina Trail Committee to develop the CCT, which traverses Pitt, Beaufort and Martin counties (Representatives of the three counties met seven times during the year to develop easement language, work with NCDOT-RPO for inclusion of the 32-mile CCT in the next transportation improvement plan and bring new municipal and county administrators to the discussion.);

Working with the Brevard Trail Committee, Triangle Rails-to-Trails Conservancy and the American Tobacco Trail management team;

A letter of support for the Yadkin River Historic Corridor Partnership (lands include the Yadkin Valley Railroad) in their application to NPS for trail funds;

Helping develop the regional Thread Trail in the North and South Carolina counties adjacent to Mecklenburg, Union and Gaston counties; monitoring the status of the Weeksville Spur in Elizabeth City.

NCRT's greatest challenge remains getting NCDOT to recognize public transportation corridors in railroad rights of way.

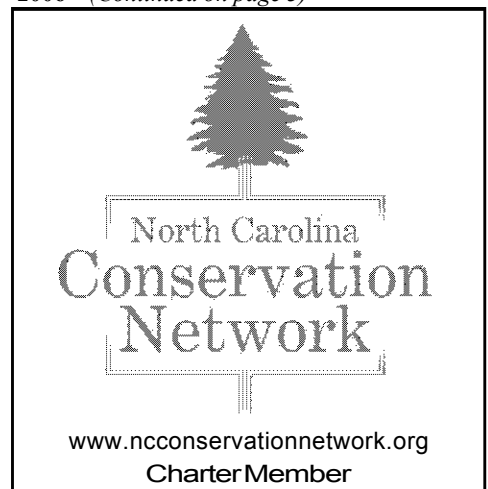
Goal 3: Promote rail corridor preservation through advocacy and outreach.

In 2006 the N.C. Court of Appeals ruled unanimously that the landowners adjacent to the Thermal Belt Rail-Trail in western North Carolina cannot claim the sub-surface or aerial rights to the rail corridor, collect fees for utilities in the rail corridor or collect revenues for possible fiber-optic lines laid in the rail corridor.

NCRT board member Mike Domonkos, an attorney, argued the case for the Raleigh firm of Bailey & Dixon, LLC, which does pro-bono work for NCRT. Fee simple determinable became fee simple absolute after 1976 as a result of the N.C. Marketable Title Act as it applied to the original rail corridor deed.

Marion petitioned the Surface Transportation Board for federal Section 8(d) railbanking and interim trail use. In May 2006 Norfolk Southern filed for exempt abandonment of 3.5

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Resource Contacts

NC Parks Trails Program
NCDOT Rail Planner
NCDOT Bike-Ped. Div.
NPS Field Office, RTCA
Rails-to-Trails Conservancy

Darrell McBane
Pam Davis
Tom Norman
Deirdre Hewitt
Betsy Goodrich

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919-733-7245 x-274
919-715-2342
828-271-4779 x-272
202-974-5122

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miles from downtown Marion south to I-40 in McDowell County.

NCRT President AL Capehart spoke before the N.C. House Select Committee on Expansion of Rail Service. Rail corridors serve a transportation, communication and commercial purpose. The state's public highway doctrine recognizes transportation as a public purpose and, therefore, a responsibility of the state. The Rail Corridor Round Table and NCRT propose retrieval of selected, unused rail corridors for transportation purposes.

Capehart, with James Rhodes of Pitt County, presented the rail-trail development plan of the CCT and the multi-jurisdictional countywide greenway plan at the NCAPA Summer Institute hosted by East Carolina University.

NCRT representatives spoke before the Land and Water Conservation public meetings in Winterville and Jamestown.

NCRT increased publication of its newsletter, "Little Toot," from two editions each in 2004 and 2005 to four editions in 2006. Over 800 copies were mailed quarterly at bulk rates while an additional 200 to 300 copies were distributed with each edition. "Little Toot," which has been published in hard copy since its inception, can now be viewed and downloaded from the NCRT Web site at www.NCRail-Trails.org as a PDF file.

The board of directors met four times to conduct business and hear reports: January, in Elizabeth City for an update on the Paths of Pasquotank; April, in Oxford for a program on Granville Greenways; July, in North Wilkesboro to learn about the Blue Ridge National Heritage Area and the Yadkin River Heritage Corridor; and October, in Durham to elect board members and corporate officers.

NCRT has identified a need for a digital map of active and inactive rail corridors to facilitate preservation and identify potential trails. The rail transportation industry, economic developers, land trusts, local and regional planners and community groups need such a resource in order to identify rail-trail options.

Goal 4: Have an active, knowledgeable, diverse and supportive board of directors.

Shellie Pfohl of Durham, chief operating officer for the non-profit Be Active North Carolina, was elected to the board for a three-year term. Members re-elected to the board for three-year terms include AL Capehart, David Coats and Jean Middleton. Officers for NCRT include board Chair Carolyn Townsend, Secretary Bill Causey, Treasurer Bob Segal, Vice-Chair Dave Connelly and President AL Capehart. Membership chairman is Jean Middleton.

Two new local contacts have been identified: Dave Connelly for Durham County and Martin Beach for Pender County.

Goal 5: Attain sufficient human and financial resources to reach its mission.

The property of the Dunn-Erwin Trail was transferred to Harnett County in June for \$128,000. Its appraised value was \$160,000.

NCRT participates with Earth Share of North Carolina in workplace giving campaigns in the State Employees Combined Campaign, Triangle United Way, Greensboro City-County Campaign, Combined Federal Campaigns and local and state corporate campaigns.

NCRT continues membership in the N.C. Center for Non-Profits, Conservation Trust of North Carolina, N.C. Conservation Council, N.C. Conservation Network, Land Trust Alliance and Land Trust Council.

Karen Miller, PC, is contracted for accounting. Minor, Anglin & Associates, PA, holds the contract for the annual audit.

NCRT qualifies for exemption from federal income tax as a 501 3(c) non-profit and successfully renewed its N.C. Solicitation License.

The NCRT board of directors works toward implementation of current Land Trust Alliance Land Trust standards and practices.

NCRT continues to maintain its knowledge and skills as an active, specialized federal rail banking land trust.

2006 Financial Report

Revenue	
Direct Public Support	\$7,745
Indirect Public Support	\$11,347
Interest	\$3,705
Gain Sale of Asset	\$49,570
Other	\$66
Total Revenue	\$ 72,433

Expenses	
Program Services	\$19,000
Management and general	\$4,535*
Fundraising	\$444
Total Expenses	\$ 23,979

*Insurance premium payments made in 2005 were for both calendar years 2005 and 2006 for a total of \$5,680 (\$1,591 was prepaid in 2005).

NCRT is a 501 (c) (3) nonprofit organization. Donors of \$25 or more receive individual memberships. NCRT is an all volunteer, statewide non-profit supported by individual memberships, contributions, workplace contributions and grants from private and state resources. All contributions are tax-deductible.

The **American Tobacco Trail** was featured on a segment of UNC-TV's North Carolina Weekend on July 20.

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NCRT annual memberships: Individual - \$25, Corporate - \$100
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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.

Brevard

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The town is currently spearheading local efforts for state acquisition of 18 miles of unused Norfolk Southern rail corridor between Brevard and Hendersonville, if the rail company files for abandonment. At a May meeting in Asheville about a dozen trail advocates and state and local officials agreed to ask the state Department of Environment and Natural Resources to acquire the property for use as a linear park. Private interests are also eyeing the property, according to reports.

NCRT board member Mike Domonkos, an attorney, was asked to write a preliminary memo that will be used in a presentation to DENR outlining the legal basis for a state rail-trail corridor and illustrating various other states' experience with similar state rail-trails. The memo will also advocate ways for the state to create a rail-trail system.

Freeman expects Brevard to formally ask Transylvania County, Henderson County, Hendersonville, Flat Rock and Laurel Park to join the effort in late August.

While the current emphasis is on a trail network to the northeast of Brevard, Freeman did not rule out bike paths and trails to the south in the direction of Rosman and Lake Toxaway. "We would be just as excited to see something in the South," he said, although those communities do not have sidewalks.

Briefs

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www.triangletrails.org/ATT.HTM

A 6.5-mile section of abandoned rail bed between Franklinville and Ramseur in eastern Randolph County is receiving strong local support to become a rail-trail in the state park system. The proposed **Franklinville Rail-Trail** would tie into the Deep River State Trail/Park, which the General Assembly recently created (S.B.1431).

The river originates in Guilford County, travels through Randolph, Moore and Chatham counties and empties into the Haw River near Moncure.

NCRT Fall Board Meeting

Saturday, Oct. 13, 10:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.
Community Room
Woodcroft Community Association
5501 Fortunes Ridge Drive
Durham, NC 27713

NORTH CAROLINA RAIL-TRAILS INC. BOARD

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Director	AL Capehart, PhD	* 919-542-0022
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Director	David Coats, JD	919-828-0731
Director	Michael Domonkos, JD	828-884-7648
Director	Charles Farley	252-355-6474
Director	John Morck, AICP	919-362-9822
Director	Merlin Perry	828-754-7362
Director	Shellie Pfohl	919-765-7172
Director	Tony Reeve	919-416-0965

*Primary information contacts

LOCAL CONTACTS

Ashe County	Joe Baccardy	336-982-9828
Beaufort County	Charles McClure	252-974-2071
Caswell County	Forrest Altman	336-234-8556
Chatham County	Margaret Jordan-Ellis	919-898-4814
Cherokee County	Frank Mason	828-835-3812
Cleveland County	Fred Blackley	704-484-1731
Columbus County	Terry Mann	910-642-5029
Cumberland County	Paul Wilson	910-323-4986
Durham County	Dave Connelly	919-544-6372
Gaston County	Richard Duren	704-822-6113
Granville County	Jackie Sergent	919-693-2141x146
Guilford County	Joe Best	336-834-8382
Harnett County	Thomas Jernigan	910-892-6260
Lincoln County	Chafin Rhyne	704-735-1746
Martin County	Marsha Wyly	252-792-2563
New Hanover County	Chris O'Keefe	910-798-7165
Onslow County	Mike Carter	910-938-5313
Pasquotank County	Dave Copley	252-330-4514
Pender County	Martin Beach	910-259-2151
Person County	Christy McCoy	336-322-0153
Pitt County	Charles Farley	252-355-6474
Rutherford County	Eric Wells	828-286-9673
Rockingham County	Katherine Mull	336-627-6270
Stanly County	Lindsey Dunavent	704-984-9560
Stokes County	David Simpson	336-969-6121
Transylvania County	Mike Domonkos	828-884-7648
Wake County	Leslie Kennedy	919-362-4011
Warren/Halifax County	Howdy Tomlinson	252-586-6270

Newsletter: David Newton 919-416-9499 dnewtonis@verizon.net



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