

Little Toot

Rec Trails Funding: Where's The Beef?

This is the second in a series of articles to make trail proponents aware of the opportunities and challenges contained in the federal Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA). The first in the series was on Transportation Enhancements (Section 132), the primary source for alternative transportation funding. -- Ed.

The newly authorized National Recreation Trails Fund Act (Section 141) is part of the six-year ISTEA legislation. It holds out the prospect for on-going recreational funding, as opposed to alternative transportation funding.

Congress failed to appropriate funds for 1992 and adjourned without providing funds for 1993, although \$15 million was put into the Senate version of the appropriations bill.

The trails trust fund act authorizes \$30 million to be allocated annually by the following formula:

Fifty percent to be divided equally among the states that apply. (\$300,000 per state.)

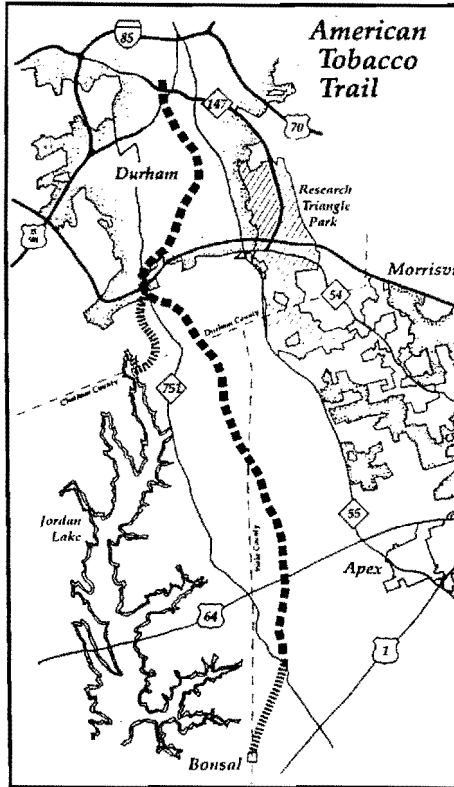
Fifty percent to be distributed proportionally to the amount of non-highway recreational fuel used in each state during the previous year. (More on this later.)

Of the funds each state receives, the first 40 percent must be allocated for joint-use trails, 30 percent for motorized trails and 30 percent for non-motorized trails.

During the first three years the states have only to comply with the "permissible uses" provisions. After three years the states must comply with permanent provisions for administering the funds.

The permissible uses include seven percent for administration, five percent

Continued on next page



The proposed American Tobacco Trail extends from downtown Durham south to Bonsal, a total distance of 26.6 miles. A 3.3-mile spur in Durham County connects to Jordan Lake. The New Hope Valley Railway operates an excursion train on the 3.6 miles north of Bonsal. Map prepared by Greenways Inc.

State Workers Can Help!

State employees now can contribute to furthering state trails by designating North Carolina Rail-Trails through the State Employees 1993 Combined Campaign. Look for NCRT as a member of the North Carolina Environmental Fund drive on the contribution form.

In the past, some confusion has existed as to the Earth Shares checkoff, which does benefit the Rail-to-Trails Conservancy, the national lobby, in Washington.

Regional Rail-Trail Center Of Planning

Coming soon, the American Tobacco Trail project master plan is near completion and appears to be the springboard for launching allied projects in the Triangle area.

Greenways Inc., the plan developer, and the Triangle J Council Governments Open Space Subcommittee are considering the creation of a Regional Parks and Open Space Authority. The American Tobacco Trail would be the model regional project for this authority.

The trail also is being included as an off-road transportation facility in the Regional Bicycle Plan for Durham and Orange counties. This is one of the first Metropolitan Planning Organization programs in the nation to be based on ISTEA recommendations.

Meanwhile, the NCDOT Public Transportation and Rail Division and the DEHNR Division of Parks and Recreation are drafting a memorandum for interim use and management of the abandoned rail corridor. The NCDOT division is currently negotiating to purchase the corridor from Norfolk Southern.

Triangle Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, the project instigator, is working with a Durham law firm to search the property titles. The group also has conducted a clean-up on the Durham section.

"What turns you on?"

"Running rail-trails!"



Greenways Conference Heavy On Trails Development Topics

Tony Hiss, author of "The Experience of Place," will be the keynote speaker at the fifth North Carolina Greenways Conference, Sept. 9 - 11 at the Brownstone Hotel in Raleigh. Also to be featured is the North Carolina Greenways Advisory Panel Report.

A number of the workshops will appeal to rail-trail advocates, including "Regional Trail Planning" and "Rail-Trail Benefits and Adjoining Landowner Acceptance." Workshop subjects also include citizen involvement, land protection, wildlife corridors, greenway economics and land trusts.

For additional information and registration materials, call Debbie Mouberry at 919-733-6376.

Trails Fund . . . continued from front

for environmental protection and safety education, then urban trail linkages, existing trail maintenance, trail damage restoration, trail facilities development, disability access, easement acquisition, property acquisition, new trail construction and new trails crossing federal lands.

Not allowed are property condemnation, construction of motorized trails in National Forests and upgrading non-motorized trails to motorized uses.

To receive NRTFA funds after the first three years a state must appoint a funds administrator, have a recreational trails advisory board in place, have a permissible uses plan and reserve a "reasonable" amount of state non-highway recreational fuel tax revenues for trails.

What is a "reasonable" amount of fuel tax revenues remains a cloudy issue. The federal DOT has yet to issue guidelines and North Carolina has no formula for determining total recreational fuel tax revenues. If formulated correctly and the legislature sets the revenues aside to qualify, the state could end up with well over a million dollars per year in combined trail funding under this section of ISTEA alone.

North Carolina does have a jump on complying with other permanent program requirements. The state does have an appointed Trails Committee which reports to the governor through the Environment, Health and Natural Resources secretary. To fully comply, the Trails Committee will have to be balanced with motorized trail representatives.

The Trails Committee has broad latitude in granting NRTFA funds to state departments, local governments, organizations and even individuals. The state's present Adopt-A-Trail Grant Program would be able to fund more of the dozens of requests it receives each year.

Local trail projects that want more information on applying for NRTFA funding can contact state Division of Parks and Recreation trail specialists. The division's rail-trail specialist is Tom Potter at 919-778-9488. The address is Route 2, Box 50, Seven Springs, NC 28578.

Next Issue: ISTEA Pedestrian and Bicycling Programs.

Transportation - Conservation - Recreation - Preservation

Psychepaths



psychepath [*si-ke-path*] *n.* 1: a linear space or corridor away from automobile traffic and urban clutter 2: a retreat for people and nature 3: a converted railroad corridor 4: individual people who crave such environments

Psychepaths support rails-to-trails initiatives. In the Tarheel State, contact North Carolina Rail-Trails, Suite 124, 703 Ninth Street, Durham, NC 27705. Call 919-493-6394 or 704-495-4472.



Lincolnton, NC 28092

Orders 800-729-0570

The above advertisement is to appear twice this size in a coming issue of the American Bicycling Federation magazine "Cycling USA". MARKETEX of Hickory created the ad and Chafin Ryhne, owner of Ride-A-Bike in Lincolnton, donated advertising space in the national publication.

Coalition Presses Corridor Defense, Stalls Lincolnton Bridge Removals

With one of three bridges down, demolished and filled, the Corridor Coalition continues the fight to keep the corridor alive for the proposed Lincolnton Railroad Greenway.

Coalition leaders Gary Cornwell and Chafin Ryhne have kept up a communications round-robin with city government, NCDOT, Norfolk Southern and newspapers. At this writing there are indications that their efforts have slowed down demolition of the two remaining corridor-crossing bridges and have made the railroad aware of the community's interest. The coalition has proposed leasing the corridor for a interim period until such time that the railroad moves to dispose of the property.

NCRT joined the letter writing campaign after Lincolnton city officials repeatedly refused to confirm to NCDOT the community's interest in keeping the corridor open with passageways in the road grade fills. The first bridge fill now blocks the corridor near the north end of the proposed greenway. The remaining two bridges are in the center of the corridor.



Whistle Stops:

ISTEA Needs Brisk Stir

The Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) is brewing. Congress has issued mandates for greater local involvement and planning. State DOTs have been directed to establish or modify public involvement procedures no later than Oct. 1.

Meanwhile, the North Carolina DOT is merrily plugging ISTEA funding into its own spending agenda.

Since printing our first ISTEA article on transportation enhancements, we have been contacted by private citizens and local officials. Concerned citizens ask how to get the local planning process in motion? All ask how to open up NCDOT's planning process?

We don't have a simple answer, but we have some suggestions:

First, contact your local government or regional Council of Governments transportation specialist. Find out if your community has an existing plan and what is in it. Also, find out if your community is part of a Metropolitan Planning Organization and who is on the committee.

Second, study ISTEA. For a set of advisory bulletins, call the Surface Transportation Policy Project at 202-939-3470. You'll soon be a local "expert."

Third, put your own ideas on paper and submit them to all of the above government units. At least that puts you on record.

Fourth, sell your ideas through letters to the editor. Contact elected officials and community improvement organizations.

Fifth, network. You're not alone. Citizen transportation, recreation and environment organizations, such as NCRT, also are struggling to get ISTEA openly implemented. Join one and become active at the state level. Realize that it will take a coalition of concerned organizations and local governments to change the way NCDOT sets priorities and policies.

Last, keep in mind that ISTEA encourages new approaches and mandates local inputs. Your personal efforts are important. -- DA

THIS SPACE RESERVED

For Your Valued Letters, Suggestions and Opinions

Foundation Supports NCRT Newsletter

NCRT has received its third grant of the year, \$2,000 from the Mary Duke Biddle Foundation of Durham, to underwrite the publication of this newsletter.

Two previously announced grants from the state's Adopt-A-Trail program are being applied toward a public information program and to study the feasibility of extending the Virginia Creeper Trail into Ashe County, NC.

Talent Search

Got a few hours, even minutes, to spare? NCRT and its affiliated projects across the state need your talents.

Attorneys for consultation

Property Paralegals

CPA in Triangle area

Civil Engineers

Data Entry in Triangle area

Computer guru in Triangle area

Mailing help in Triangle area

Public speakers, everywhere

Recording Secretary

Leave a message at 919-383-5371 or 919-493-6394.

FALL COLOR RIDE

Saturday, Oct. 17

VIRGINIA CREEPER

Meet at 10 a.m.

DAMASCUS, VA

City Park



ENLIST TODAY IN THE NORTH CAROLINA RAIL-TRAILS MOVEMENT!

Name _____ Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Telephone: Home _____ Work _____ Best Time _____

Reason for interest in rail-trails _____

ANNUAL MEETING REGISTRATION AND INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIP OPTION : \$25 () Check Space

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

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