

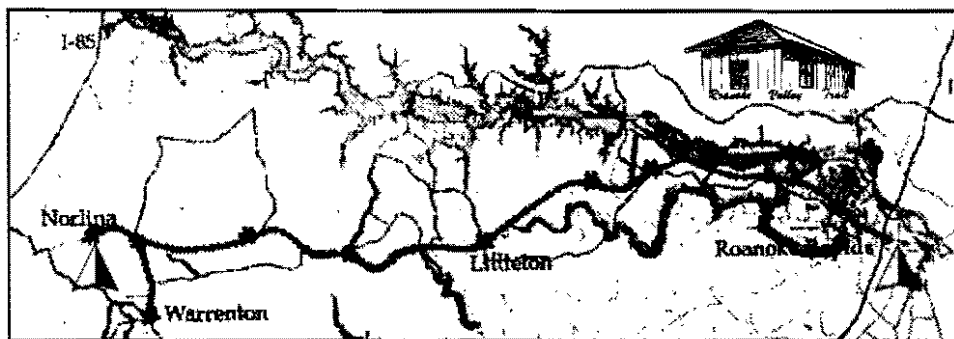
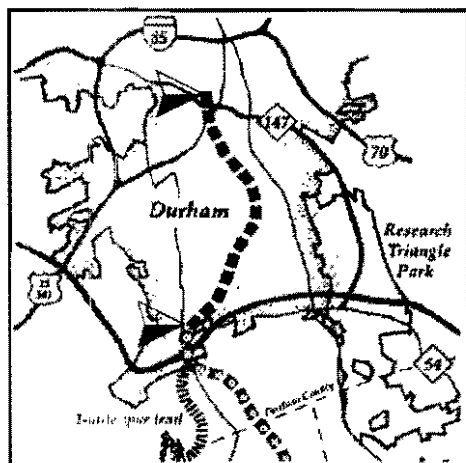
Durham ATT Report For Annual Meeting

An encouraging update on the first stage of the much-delayed American Tobacco Trail will be the highlight of NCRT's Sixth Annual Meeting, Saturday, Sept. 9, in Durham. The public presentation will be made at 12:15 p.m. in the Community Room of the Woodcroft Professional Building at Fayetteville Road and just off the Woodcroft Parkway.

The NCRT business meeting will convene at 10:30 a.m. at the same site. A sandwich board lunch will be offered at noon and the meeting will conclude with a walk on the project corridor, which is adjacent to the Woodcroft meeting site.

NCDOT approval for the project has been in place for over two years as acquisition negotiations and compliance with federal funding regulations dragged on. The regulatory hurdles have been reportedly cleared and both the NCDOT Rail Division and Norfolk Southern expect to close on the first stage of the railbanking deal in the near future, possibly before the NCRT annual

DURHAM ATT *Cont. Page 2*



Roanoke Valley Project Completes Study, Moves To Form Land Trust For Rail-Trail

The Roanoke Valley Trail feasibility study on retrieval and conversion of the old Raleigh and Gaston Railroad in Warren and Halifax counties and the connecting Warrenton Railroad has been completed. Action is now being initiated on the recommendations.

The subject was the 32-mile corridor between Norlina and Roanoke Rapids. Much of the line parallels NC 158.

The study started in the spring of 1994 as a committee of inquiry convened by Charles Archer, Roanoke Rapids planner, with help from the NC Division of Community Assistance and NCRT. It moved ahead this year under an NC Travel and Tourism Division rural tourism development grant to the Roanoke Rapids Chamber of Commerce. Matching funds were supplied by the chamber and contributions from other corridor communities, individuals and corporations.

The Roanoke Valley Trail Steering Committee was formed and chaired by Tommy Semler of Littleton. NCRT was contracted to provide technical assistance and coordination.

The study included four community-based citizen design workshops con-

ducted by NC State University graduate landscape architecture students under direction of Assist. Prof. Shishir Raval and Landscape Architect Alan Glines.

The Raleigh and Gaston was one of the state's earliest railroads, dating back to 1836 when wooden rails were capped with iron strips.

A tangle of founding charters and both state and private ownership during the line's colorful early history left a complicated legacy hanging over the question of corridor ownership. It was merged with the Seaboard AirLine in 1901 and operated by successor CSXT until 1985.

In the face of these complications, the study recommends formation of the Roanoke Valley Trail Association as a nonprofit land trust to negotiate acquisition of the right-of-way and to secure funding for trail development and maintenance.

The steering committee has initiated action to begin incorporation with the first meeting of an executive committee Aug. 10 in Littleton.

Copies of the study are available for \$10 each from either the Roanoke Rapids Chamber of Commerce or NCRT.

NC Rural Center And Law Firm Applauded For Rail-Trails Support

A final report luncheon, held June 21 at the Raleigh offices of Bailey & Dixon, also provided NCRT an opportunity to present a Golden Spike to the NC Rural Economic Development Center, which was accepted by Jeanne Bonds, senior policy associate, at right.

Members of the Rural Center Rail-Trail Project Advisory Committee were presented copies of the NC Rail-Trail Project Guide, briefed on the state Future Search conference and given progress reports on the Pender and Ashe county trail projects.

Alan Miles and David Coats, far right, also accepted the Golden Spike presented to Bailey & Dixon for extensive legal support the firm has contributed to NCRT and the state rail-to-trail effort. The firm



sponsored the NC Rail-Trail Plenary Committee, which drew together diverse

interests to study corridor preservation issues.

Corridors Round Table Committee Establishes Goals

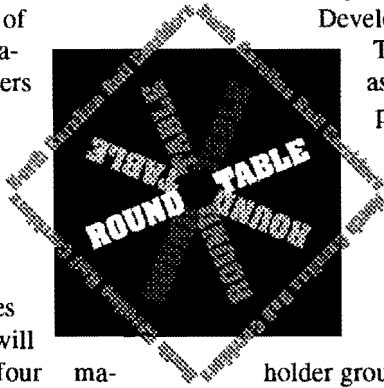
Two planning sessions for the North Carolina Rail Corridors Round Table have established the goal of engaging broad representation of corridor stakeholders on the issue of achieving the best possible use of the state's corridor assets.

Toward that end, the executive committee has proposed four round tables for the coming year and will ask representatives in four major stakeholder categories to present their views on corridor utilization. The proposed categories are (1) Rail Industry,

- (2) Government (3) Recreation/Heritage/Greenways, and (4) Economic/Development Interests.

The host groups will be asked to share their purposes, roles and goals and how those fit into a statewide transportation, economic, preservation and recreation strategy. Round table dates and sites will be announced later this year. Stake-

holder groups that would like more information on participation can fax David Coats, the committee chair, at 919-828-6592.



Dan River Gets VDOT Okay For Development Funding

The Dan River Trail Association's Richmond and Danville Rail-Trail project passed two major milestones this summer with development funding approved by the Virginia transportation board and VDOT. DRTA originated in Caswell County and still draws many project supporters from North Carolina.

The VDOT has slotted \$450,000 in development funding for first-stage from the Ringgold depot, near Danville, east to the Halifax County line. From that 5.8-

mile start, DRTA's second-stage ambitions stretch northeast across Halifax County to the Staunton River Trail that continues through Charlotte County to Keysville.

The development funding hinges on a 20 percent local match and acquiring the corridor. DRTA has asked Norfolk Southern to donate the line to the trail project. The railroad has yet to respond to the request.

Durham ATT Report

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meeting.

The first stage of the Durham-to-Bonsal rail-trail is the Durham urban section that starts downtown at the old American Tobacco Co. factory, across from the new Durham Bulls Ball Park, and stretches southeast to NC 54.

The NCDOT Bicycle and Pedestrian Program has been invited to showcase its development plan at the NCRT meeting. Durham planners will be on hand to discuss how the rail-trail relates to the city's greenway trails master plan.

When the second stage gets underway, the American Tobacco Trail will provide safe, fast bicycle commuting to Research Triangle Park and beyond. To accommodate trail corridor integrity, the NCDOT Highway Division has added a large box culvert under the new four-lane US 64 near Apex.

The total 26-mile project will eventually connect in New Hill with four miles owned by the New Hope Valley Railway, a rail hobby excursion line to Bonsal in Wake County. NCRT and the Triangle Rails-to-Trails Conservancy began promoting the project in the late 1980's.

Whistle Stops:

Just Ask, Okay?

Does this logo look familiar? It appears in the upper left corner on the front page of every issue. It's to remind you that NCRT is a charter member of EFNC, the Environmental Federation of North Carolina.



You can help NCRT and more than 20 other state environmental groups by letting us know if your workplace has a giving or matching gift program. It works much like and in cooperation with United Way campaigns. Individual contributions can be directed to specific environmental causes.

Pssst, Looking For A Hot Bike Market?

Where do all those new off-road bicycles go? You know, the 90 percent or more that never get introduced to technical courses, single tracks or TV commercial free falls?

To keep the mountain biking boom going, the bicycle industry better take a good look at this.

Mountain bikes are tremendous utility vehicles. Sure, you see some of them parked at schools, at malls and occasionally mixing with on-road traffic. But where are the rest of them? Hanging in storage sheds?

Many individuals and families buy into off-road biking, yet the vast majority lack desire or stamina to trek the boonies. Most would like to ride off-road, but only on flat, wide paths that don't put major strain on mind and body. They seek relaxing recreation, not athletic challenge.

All we ask you to do is to find out if your company will consider a presentation on how it can help North Carolina's grassroots environmental organizations. EFNC will do the rest. It makes the presentations and helps employers set up the deduction program.

Like NCRT, most EFNC members are all-volunteer organizations that share a critical need for a stable funding source. This is the "united way" to met those needs. For more information, call Carolyn Townsend, 919-542-5422, or Al Capehart, 919-693-6493.

Rail-trails, utility corridors and other potential greenways are the perfect venues for many mountain bike owners. These corridors can provide paths suited to group and family outings.

An alert bicycle industry should have this figured out. That's where the big numbers are.

State and federal governments won't build those marketing-boosting trails. Very few states have aggressive rail-trail or greenway development programs.

As in many states, North Carolina's likely state agencies are all but out of the game. The state bicycle program, operating on federal ISTEA funds, can only develop transportation corridors, such as urban commuting paths or lanes. That keeps the bike program out of recreation trails. The state

Look, Ma, We Made TV

Did you see it? *North Carolina NOW* aired a feature piece on the state's potential rail-trails the evening of July 28 over NC Public Television. Scenes were included of the Winston-Salem Strollway, the Durham American Tobacco Trail corridor and the Virginia Creeper. It was produced for public TV by Rick Grindstaff. NCRT is working on making VHS copies available to local initiatives.

trails program, not having access to the necessary funds, has to resort to an advisory role and small planning grants. State travel and tourism understands the potential and is testing the trails turf with a couple of local-match study programs.

The bottom line is that bike trail development depends on advocates generating public/private partnerships with local governments. North Carolina Rail-Trails, an all-volunteer, nonprofit organization, has devoted seven years to developing state interest and local partnerships.

This grassroots effort will benefit the bicycle industry well into the future. The volunteers would like to see the bicycle industry invest some time, effort and resources in what is, to the industry's advantage, a market development program.

Hello you bike retailers, distributors and manufacturers: Corporate members are welcomed. Active business partners are greatly appreciated. Let's talk business. Your business. Call or fax 704-495-4472.

JOIN THE NORTH CAROLINA RAIL-TRAILS INITIATIVE, NOW!

Name _____ Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Telephone: Home _____ Work _____ Best Time _____

Reason for interest in rail-trails _____

Member of other conservation/recreation/historical organization? _____

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

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

THANK YOU FOR JOINING NCRT

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Trailbuilder Notebook

Railroad corridors title searches often go undone until a rail-trail initiative gets asked embarrassing questions . . . that it cannot answer. Yes, it does take some effort.

Another reason title searches get put off is that many people think you need a lawyer, which is expensive. While it helps to have a legal or real estate background, it can be done by the layman. (Note: An attorney's title opinion *will* be needed before acquisition negotiations begin.)

If you are comfortable looking up titles and authors in a public library, you can probably conduct title research. It is another form of public information that is kept by the county registrar of deeds.

It's a matter of pouring through indexes and studying the recorded deeds . . . or determining the absence of deeds.

An appendix in the *North Carolina Rail-Trails Project Guide* takes you through the process, step-by-step. The guide is available for \$6 per copy from NCRT. Call or fax 704-495-4472.

Parks Land Dedicated Funding Source

State parks now have a long-needed stable funding source with the passage of House Bill 718, which designates deed transfer tax revenues for parks and natural heritage.

The new NC Parks and Recreation Authority is the administrator. The trust funds serve as repositories for appropriations, grants, revenues and donations. Parks and recreation funds can be used for land acquisitions and capital improvements.

A steady income is assured by assigning the state's half of the deed transfer tax to the trust funds, with the parks and recreation fund receiving 75 percent and the natural heritage fund getting 25 percent.

It is projected that the parks and recreation fund will receive \$10.7 million each year, with \$7 million for state programs, \$3.2 million going to match local parks and recreation projects and \$.5 million for beach access. The allocation split is 65-35-5 percent of available annual funds.

NORTH CAROLINA RAIL TRAILS INC. BOARD

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Director	Vonn Stone, MM	704-624-9248

*Primary phone or fax contacts

PROJECT CONTACTS

Anson County	Myla Warfel	704-851-3231
Ashe County	Priscilla Brown	910-982-9848
Caswell County	Forrest Altman	910-234-8556
Chatham County	Margaret Jordan-Ellis	919-898-4814
Cleveland County	Fred Blackley	704-484-1731
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Stokes County	David Simpson	910-969-6121
Transylvania County	Mike Domonkos	704-884-7648
Wake County	Leslie Kennedy	919-362-4011
Warren/Halifax County	Tommy Semler	919-586-2032

RESOURCE CONTACTS

NC Parks Trail Spec.	Tom Potter	919-778-9488
NCDOT Rail Planner	Mark Sullivan	919-733-4713
NCDOT Bike-Ped. Prog.	Curtis Yates	919-733-2804
Rails-to-Trails Cons.	Marianne Fowler	202-797-5400
NPS SE Reg. Rail-Trails	Chris Abbett	404-331-5838



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