

## Dunn-Erwin trail development underway

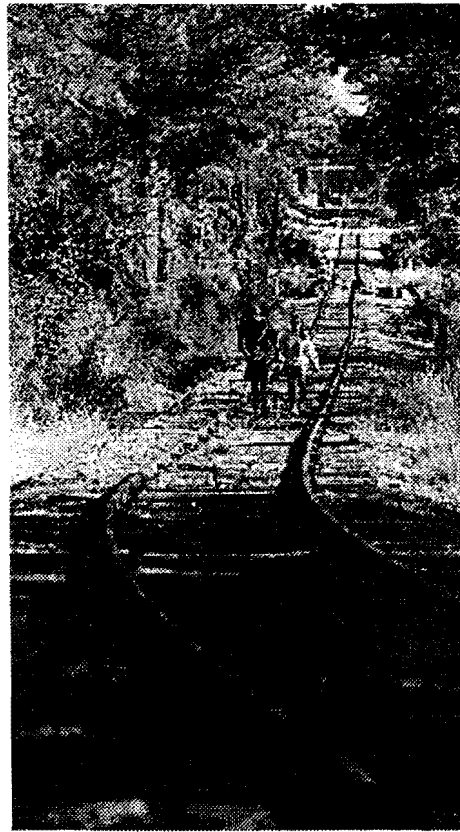
The Dunn-Erwin Connector Rail-Trail is now in the development process. Recovery of the reusable rails and ties has been completed from the 5.3-mile rail bed. A&K Materials, the recycler, windrowed the ballast in preparation for the FAHR Industries Forester C 2000 Roadcrusher that converted the ballast into the crushed gravel base for the rail-trail.

This was the Roadcrusher's debut in the Southeast. Previously used in Canada and the American Northwest, the Roadcrusher is an economical way of using the existing materials without moving them and risking environmental damage. The crushed material created a nominal 7-ft. wide trail base.

The Dunn-Erwin Connector was railbanked last April by the Aberdeen & Rockfish Railroad Co. NCRT received the rail corridor as a donation from the railroad and assumed management under a federal interim trail certificate. Proceeds from the tracks salvage are being used in part for primary trail development.

Meanwhile, the DERT Advisory Committee identified its leadership core at a Jan. 11 meeting in the offices of the Dunn Area Chamber of Commerce. Erwin Town Manager Charles Simmons appointed Don Annis of Good Hope Hospital to be Erwin's representative. Annis will serve along with Tilghman Pope and John Snipes as co-vicechairs. The other officers are Chairman Granville Tilghman, Secretary Dana Cochran and Trail Boss Thomas Jernigan.

Dunn City Manager Carl Dean was not present at the January meeting, saying,



**Planned Jacksonville rail-trail corridor crossing Northeast Creek near NC 24.**  
*Althouse Photo*

"eight a.m. is too early to be doing business". The Dunn City Council has yet to endorse the rail-to-trail conversion and that was a factor in the project not receiving TEA-21 funding.

The project also weathered the "too late" assault of a rail enthusiast, who persuaded the former Harnett County Commission to pass a resolution requesting NCRT to discontinue plans for the tracks removal. A threatened court injunction did not materialize. The rail fan proposed using the tracks for freight, rail excursion and railroad training. The local governments were asked to fund the last-minute scheme.

## Jacksonville rail corridors a spine for trails network

Jacksonville is busily negotiating multiple agreements that will string together an 11-mile rail-trail project intended to become the spine of a planned 172-mile trail and environmental corridor system in the Onslow County community.

Starting with the one mile of trail it currently owns from downtown to U.S. 17 North, the city expects to obtain additional property from CSX, Norfolk Southern and the U.S. Marine Corps, which has an existing trail network on the Camp Lejeune Base. To connect with the city trails, the Marine base is expected to donate 45 acres of rail property between US 17 and NC 24, plus lease 15 more acres alongside NC 24.

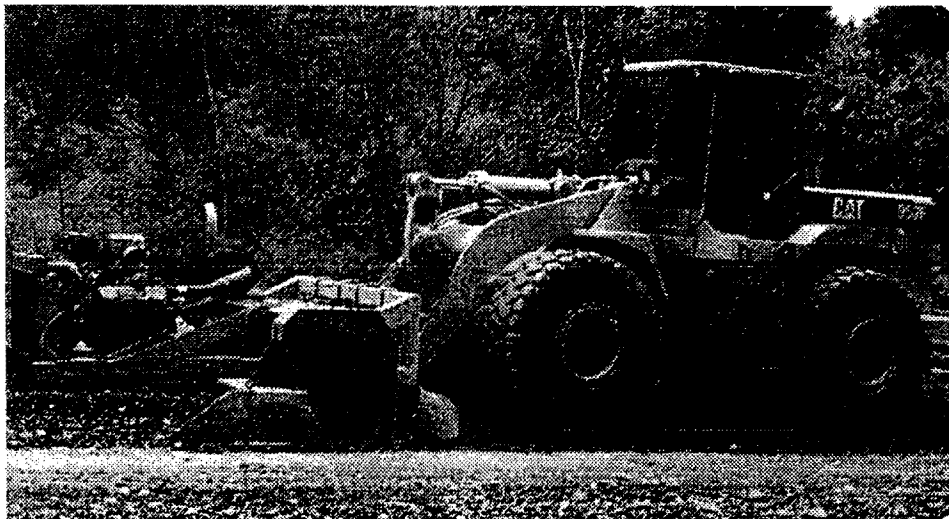
The project will involve innovative bridge design to span a six-lane divided highway and the rehabilitation of an existing railroad bridge.

The anticipated completion date is January 2003.

Estimated cost of the project is \$2.2 million. NC DOT has approved \$1.5 million Transportation Enhancement federal funding.

The current project is operating in a more favorable climate than when, in 1994, first Jacksonville and then Onslow County turned down a completed Section 8(d) federal railbanking agreement with Norfolk Southern. That 5.5-mile section of rail corridor, from Lejeune Junction to Kellum, has since reverted to adjoining property owners.

For news updates  
stop by the Info Depot:  
<http://www.NCRail-Trails.org>



### **Railroad ballast recycled in place**

The FAHR Forester C 2000 Roadcrusher makes a useable trail surface out of railroad ballast. Made in Canada, the mobile crusher was used for the first time in the Southeastern U.S. on the Dunn-Erwin Connector Rail-Trail in Harnett County.

## **Rutherford launches Thermal Belt Rail-Trail project with surfacing**

Thermal Belt Rail-Trail volunteer crews have been cleaning the right-of-way this winter and a crushed gravel surface is now being spread. Surfacing started in Spindale and will continue through Rutherfordton and Ruth, and then on into the county to Gilkey as weather permits. Approximately \$225,000 in National Recreation Trail Program funding was made available for development.

The eight-mile section of the Thermal Belt Railroad was placed in the federal railbank last year. That shortline continues freight service from Bostic to Forest City.

The interim trail use certificate is held by the Bechtler Development Corp., a non-profit established to manage economic development properties in Rutherford County. The rail-trail project has enjoyed support from the towns, the Rutherford Economic Development Corp., the Rutherford Tourism and Development Authority and the Rutherford Committee of One Hundred.

A trail opening date is yet to be established.

### **Coastal Carolina prepares spring easement drive**

The Coastal Carolina Trails Committee has completed conservation and recreational easement forms, one for a five-year easement and second for a perpetual easement.

A concise description of each was developed by Barry Gray of the Pitt County Planning Department. The easement descriptions are being developed from deeds of the current 15 property owners along the first 3.5-miles south of Stokes.

Three of the deeds will require additional research which will be performed by the legal staff of the county's Recovery Operations Center established after the Hurricane Floyd flood.

The land owner contact committee continues to refine its acquisition strategy with contact expected to begin in the spring.

## **Durham, Wake move ATT development**

Work continues on development at both ends of the 23.5-mile American Tobacco Trail in the Triangle. The first 3.5 miles were opened in Durham last June.

A design contract for the Phases C and D in Durham was awarded in November and that work is well underway. The construction contract was scheduled to be awarded in early February. These portions of the ATT, from Cornwallis Road to NC 54, and the Riddle Road spur, are still scheduled for completion on National Trails Day, June 2.

Currently, the ATT is unfunded in Durham south of the Southpoint development to Scott King Road. Triangle Rail-to-Trail Conservancy is working to find funding alternatives to get this portion of the trail open.

TRTC also is completing negotiations for a Chancellor's Ridge parking area that will be held by the Triangle Greenways Council as part of its land trust function.

Meanwhile, Wake County's Department of Parks, Recreation and Open Space is working with GeoScience Group of Raleigh to do an analysis of five bridges on the ATT, three in Wake County and two in Chatham County. National Recreational Trails funding for the \$50,000 study was previously obtained by TRTC.

GeoScience Group will analyze the

existing bridges and pilings to determine their usability. At the same time they will evaluate the necessary environmental aspects of the bridges, provide schematic designs and furnish cost estimates for each bridge with construction drawings.

Wake County has also applied for a \$129,000 / 50-50 local match NC Parks And Recreation Trust Funds grant to construct an access area at the south end of the ATT on the U.S. Army Corps of Engineer land administered by North Carolina Wildlife Resources. Having renegotiated the lease, NC DOT is now the owner of the transportation right-of-way on the old railway, thus allowing for the trail. This trailhead is about a mile north of the New Hill terminus of the New Hope Valley Railway based in Bonsal.

And on the mid section, TRTC and the Chatham Trails Committee are working with the Chatham County Recreation Department to find planning funds in Chatham County. The Chatham County section has received a \$5,000 state Adopt-a-Trail grant for traffic control gates and bollards where the ATT crosses roadways.

For news updates  
stop by the Info Depot:  
<http://www.NCRail-Trails.org>

## Land Trust Account

North Carolina Rail-Trails is asking members and supporters to consider an additional special gift this year to build the Land Trust Account.

The new Land Trust Account is currently funding conversion of the Dunn-Erwin Connector Rail-Trail, which was obtained by NCRT last year through federal railbanking and property donation from the Aberdeen & Rockfish Railroad.

NCRT lends support to projects and initiatives statewide, from Beaufort County in the east to Cherokee County in the west. Your tax deductible gift to the Land Trust Account will reaffirm your commitment to creating more rail-trails in our state.

Simply make your donation payable to the NCRT Land Trust Account. You can send your donation to NCRT, PO Box 61348, Durham, NC 27715-1348. If you would like more information on the Land Trust Account, please call me at 919-542-0022.

Carolyn R. Townsend, Chair  
NCRT Board of Directors

## Williamston ready to build

As of the end of January, Williamston was watching the mail for a deed from CSX, all that is needed to launch development of the .8-mile Skewarkee Trail from downtown to the Roanoke River.

NC DOT engineer drawings have been completed and Transportation Enhancement funding is in place. With the deed in hand, the town can call for bids to build the rail-trail. National Trails Day, June 2, is the targeted opening.

## Court decision clears way for depot rehab

With a favorable NC Appeals Court decision in hand, the Whiteville Depot Committee is ready to move forward on the \$1.6 million restoration project. The depot is central to the community's downtown renewal and trails ambitions.

The recent court decision ends a 12-year effort by Jessie Fisher to claim title to the property. The Carolina & Southern Railroad had leased the historic structure to the Greater Whiteville Chamber of Commerce in 1999.

On the strength of an earlier District Court decision, the NC DOT had approved \$760,000 in Transportation Enhancement funding. The chamber's depot committee, headed by Leslie High, managing editor of the *Whiteville News Reporter*, is preparing to meet with NC DOT officials.

With public fundraising just beginning, over 100 citizens have already responded and the City of Whiteville has appropriated \$75,000 toward the restoration.

The restored depot is seen as a launching point for field studies of the planned Eastern North Carolina Forestry Center in Whiteville. The depot also may become a departure point for a C&S dinner/excursion train between Whiteville, Chadburn and Fair Bluff, a distance of 20 miles.

Other goals are to utilize the abandoned rail corridor from Whiteville to Lake Waccamaw. Trail advocates also are looking at possible rail-with-trail west to Fair Bluff.

A state Adopt-A-Trail grant is being used to plan a trail connection from the depot to Whiteville City Park.

## Cornwell, Mappes retire, Rodgers, Collins added

Two long-time rail-trail project advocates, Gary Cornwell and Tom Mappes, recently retired from the NCRT board of directors. Cornwell was one of NCRT's original directors and co-founder of the Corridors Coalition, which worked for a decade toward establishing the Lincolnton Rail-Trail. The trail was recently renamed in honor of the late Lincolnton City Councilwoman Marcia H. Cloninger.

Mappes is past-president of the Triangle Rail-to-Trails Conservancy, the group which continues to work for completion of the American Tobacco Trail. He took on TRTC leadership during a critical pre-development phase and successfully managed numerous issues.

New NCRT board members are Rhonda Rogers and Phil Collins. Rogers, senior transportation planner for the City of Jacksonville, is working to bring that city's rail-trail and greenways project to fruition. She has been the NCRT contact in Onslow County since 1997.

Collins is an attorney with Bailey and Dixon of Raleigh. He joins David Coats, of the same firm, on the NCRT board as legal counsel.

## In memorium

Alan J. Miles, 40, died Sept. 5 in Raleigh after a brief illness. He was associated with Bailey and Dixon and served NCRT as pro bono legislative representative at the General Assembly for more than five years. He was a 1985 graduate of the UNC School of Law.

NCRT extends condolences to his associates and family.

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Reason for interest in rail-trails \_\_\_\_\_

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

Mail to North Carolina Rail Trails, PO Box 61348, Durham NC 27715-1348

(Winter 01)

THANK YOU FOR JOINING NCRT



## Atlantic & Yadkin remembered

The Greensboro chapter of the National Railway Historical Society drew a wet and windy September day to dedicate a historical marker to the Atlantic and Yadkin Railway on the Lake Brandt Greenways Trail in northwest Greensboro.

The A&Y originally was constructed as part of the Wilmington to Mt. Airy Cape Fear and Yadkin Valley Railway in the 1880s. At the end of that decade it became the A&Y during a reorganization, running from Sanford to Mt. Airy. The last scheduled train ran on the Greensboro to Mt. Airy section in 1974. It is still in service south to Sanford.

The monument is mounted on pieces of the track. Chapter members are, from left, Judy May, Jim Patton, Joe Bundy, Bill Shoemaker and Harry Clapp, who also is an NCRT director.

### NCRT board meetings

**Spring: 10:30 a.m., April 7, Jacksonville Depot.**

**Summer: 10:30 a.m., July 14, Rutherfordton.**

**Fall: 10:30 a.m., Oct 13, Chatham County.**

**For sites and changes, check the web site at [www.ncrail-trails.org](http://www.ncrail-trails.org) or call 919-542-0022.**

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NC DOT Bike-Ped. Prog.	Curtis Yates	919-733-2804
NPS SE Region RTCP	Chris Abbett	404-730-2311

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