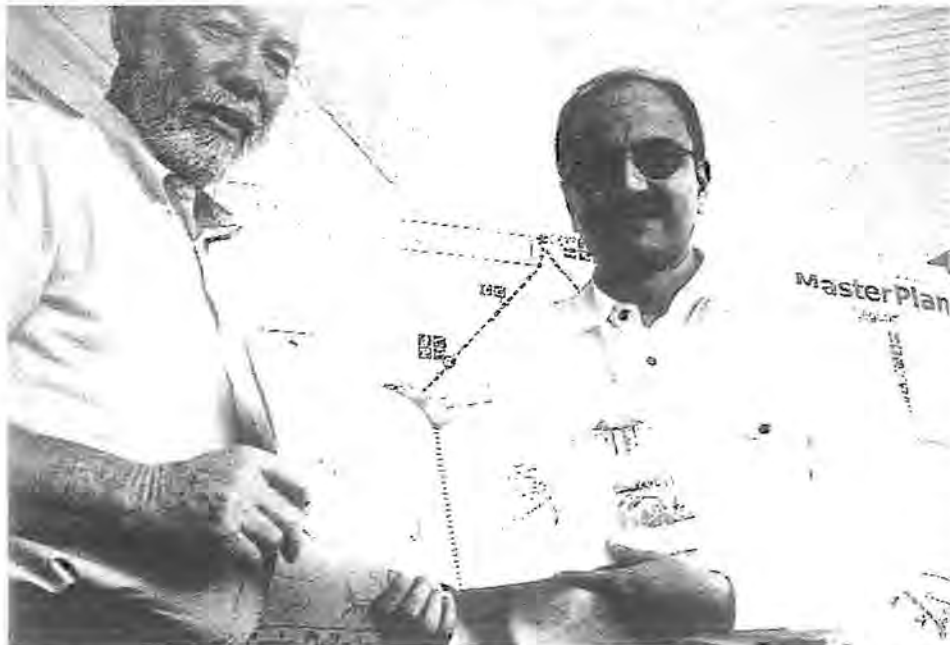




# Little Toot



Trail Boss Tom Jernigan (left) accepts NCSU-prepared Dunn-Erwin Rail-Trail master development plan from Vice Chair Shishir Raval at NCRT annual meeting in Erwin.

## Dunn-Erwin Rail-Trail plan moves forward

Steps were taken at NCRT's annual meeting to move forward with development of the Dunn-Erwin Rail-Trail in Harnett County. The Aberdeen and Rockfish Railroad donated the 5.3-mile corridor property to NCRT last year when the rail bed was put in the federal railbank.

A trail development masterplan, prepared by the NC State University School of Design, was presented to the Dunn-Erwin Trail Committee by Shishir Raval, NCRT vice chair and NCSU design professor.

NCRT awarded an engineering contract to Lambert Engineering for implementing traffic bollards, bridge railings, safety fencing, signage, mileage markers and benches to be financed by a National Recreational Trails Grant.

Tom Jernigan, DET trail boss, advised the board that the local trail committee

was moving toward becoming a non-profit corporation, with intent to accept the property from NCRT and provide on-going trail management. Part of the goal is to establish a maintenance endowment.

Jernigan also represented the DET committee in presenting a plaque to NCRT as a gesture of appreciation for organizational support.

## Silver Comet a new long distance trail for South

Cyclists looking for a long rail-trail ride now can put 38 miles on their bikes by headings south to the Silver Comet Trail in northern Georgia. As of last summer, the Comet is continuously paved for 38 miles from just outside the Atlanta Beltway at Smyrna to Rockmart.

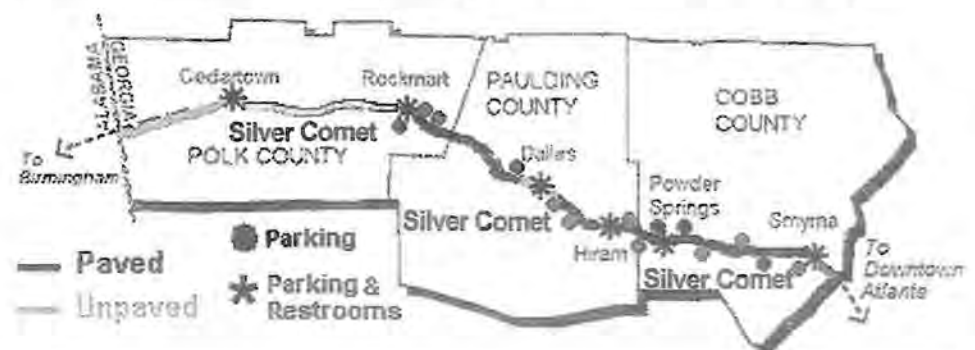
But wait! There's more. When completed next year the Comet will stretch a total of 57 miles to the Alabama border. There it will connect with the Chief Ladiga Trail to Jacksonville in Alabama, a total distance of 90 miles. Twenty-two miles of the Ladiga are presently paved and a nine-mile connector to the Georgia line is in the works.

Additional plans for an eastern connector into Atlanta will bring the total distance to a nice, round century ride. Much of the push for the Comet comes from the 10-year-old, Atlanta-based Path Foundation.

The Comet is built on a state-acquired Seaboard line with a combination of federal, state, county and private funds. The projected price tag for the entire project is \$13 million.

From Smyrna west the first 25 miles thread the fabled Atlanta urban sprawl.

Silver Comet - continued on page 3



## Federal rail-with-trail study near complete

Rail-with-trail (RwT) is gaining more attention as a way to establish public trails and commuting paths.

RwT is not all that new. This writer grew up biking almost daily the Cinder Path in Ames, IA. It was a smooth, eight-ft. wide path that had once been a trolley line beside an active railroad track. The Cinder Path connected a city divided in two by a flood plain. It was the only safe, all-weather, off-road route and heavily used by college students before cars became campus parking headaches.

At UNC, a similar solution was implemented over 10 years ago. The Libba Cotton Bikeway shares an active rail spur between downtown Carrboro and the Chapel Hill campus. Up to 4,000 users bike and walk the Libba Cotton each day. It takes bike traffic off city streets and encourages leaving cars parked at home.

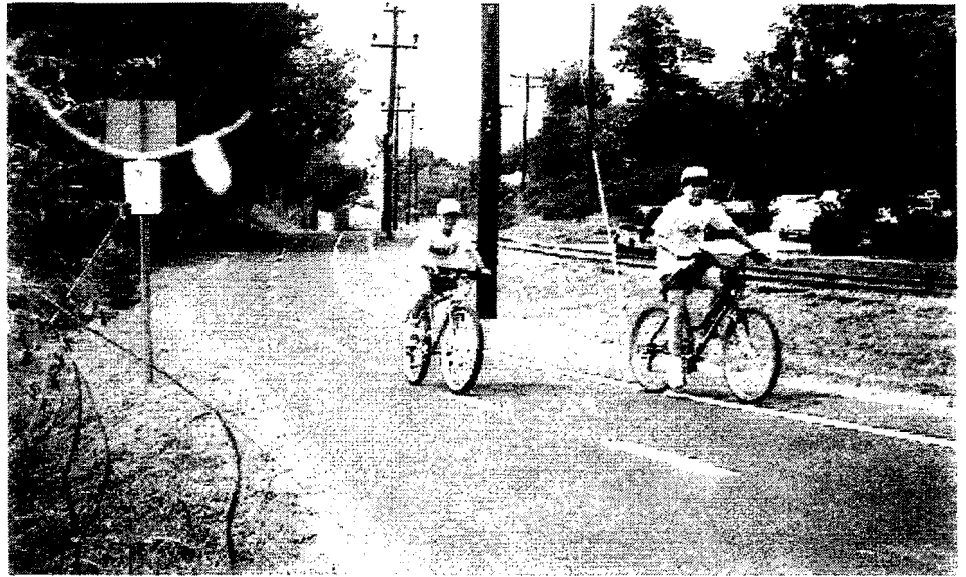
Like rail-to-trail, RwT is simple in concept but complex in the doing. Safety and liability head the list of issues.

The federal government is addressing those issues. The U.S. DOT has commissioned a three-year study for a 'best practices' report. The current 150-page draft studies case histories, laws, liability, design, management and operations.

The government-sponsored study strives to achieve a balanced view by looking at the railroads' operational and safety concerns. It goes into more depth than the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy's recently updated look at 60 existing RwTs. RTC primarily relates trail managers' experiences and views.

Both documents show that RwT has a remarkably safe history. The safety issue is clouded by the high number of pedestrian fatalities caused by trespassing on tracks where managed side paths do not exist. The rail industry is exposed to over 900 trespassing injuries and nearly 500 deaths per year.

The federal study covers a broad range of situations. The 61 existing RwT are located in 20 states and total 239 miles. Over half of the trails run along Class 1



Libba Cotton rail-with-trail, Carrboro to University of North Carolina campus, Chapel Hill.

railroad lines, with the remainder split between short lines and public transit.

There is considerable variance in train frequency, from just a few trains per week up to nine trains per hour. Separation of trail from rail is as little as four ft. up to 100 ft., with an average of 30 ft. Seventy percent of the trails have some form of barriers between track and trail. Fencing is the most common barrier at 35%, followed by vegetation at 21%,

grade separation at 16%, ditches at 12% and cement walls at 3%. The remaining trails without barriers are separated by an average distance of 20 ft. between trail and track centerline.

The current 60-page draft of the federal study can be download at [www.altaplanning.com/projects/fhwa/index.html](http://www.altaplanning.com/projects/fhwa/index.html) in the Adobe Acrobat PDF format.



### Special delivery

NCRT co-founder James Mackay received a personalized silver spike from NCRT Chair Carolyn Townsend during a stop in Denver on the way to the West Coast. Mackay was a bicycle facilities engineer for the NC DOT in 1988. Shortly thereafter he went on to become bicycle facilities engineer for Denver. During his decade in Colorado, Denver's bikepaths and trails have undergone major expansions.

## Coastal Carolina planning receives second award

The Coastal Carolina Trail Master Plan and Feasibility Study has been awarded a Merit Award in the category of Research and Communication by the North Carolina Chapter of American Society of Landscape Architects.

The award was presented at the NCASLA Fall Conference in Blowing Rock. Although CCC entered the Planning Category, the jury was attracted to the communication aspect of the CCC project and therefore changed the category.

Last summer CCC won the Multi-Jurisdictional Comprehensive Planning Award from the North Carolina Chapter of the American Planning Association.

The plan is for a 30-mile section of the former Wilmington & Weldon Railroad in Beaufort, Martin and Pitt counties.

## Environmental Federation becomes Earth Share NC

As of this fall the 10-year-old Environmental Federation of NC, along with over 20 other state Environmental Federations, became part of the national Earth Share workplace giving campaign. NCRT is a charter member of the EFNC.

Under the Earth Share of NC (ESNC) banner, the 28 EFNC organizations will gain broader public exposure through national marketing. It also makes it possible for NC-based employees of participating national and multinational corporations to support NC environmental causes.

As under EFNC, workplace donations can be applied across all programs or, optionally, be designated for specific campaign recipients, such as NCRT.

The change adds 44 environmental groups to the NC campaign roster, many of them with national programs.

For example, both NCRT and Washington-based Rails-to-Trails Conservancy (RTC) will both be part of present and future Earth Share campaigns.

"North Carolinians have been generous in supporting NCRT over the past decade through EFNC," said Carolyn Townsend, NCRT board chair. "There is a common misconception that NCRT is a chapter of RTC. NCRT and RTC operations are separate non-profit organizations. We hope Carolinians will make the distinction and continue to support NCRT's specific goals: preserving North Carolina railroad corridors and helping create rail-trails for North Carolinians."

North Carolina Rail-Trails participates in workplace campaigns with



**Earth Share**  
OF NORTH CAROLINA

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For more information call  
800-200-6311 or 919-687-4840

Agencies and companies with ESNC workplace campaigns (alphabetically): All federal government, all NC military bases, all state government agencies, all Triangle United Way campaigns, American Airlines, B&S Enterprises, Bass Pro Shops, Bailey & Dixon, Catawba College, City of Raleigh, City of Durham, City of Greensboro, CNA Insurance, Duke University and Medical Center, Durham County, Earth Fare, EuroSports/Sports Endeavors, FGI, Garrett & Davenport, General Parts/Car Quest, Great Eastern Sun, Guilford College, Guilford County, Intermec Corp., Lotus Development Corp., Microsoft Software Corp., Midwest Research Institute, Nike, North Carolina Biotechnology Center, Orange County, Patterson, Harkavy & Lawrence, Pitney Bowes, Queens College, Radiator Specialty Corporation, Recreation Equipment Inc. (RED), Roy Weston, Sears, Town of Apex, Town of Cary, Town of Carrboro, Town of Chapel Hill, Town of Garner, Town of Hillsborough, Town of Wake Forest, Triangle J Council of Governments, UnitedHealth Group, University of North Carolina System, USA Today/Gannett, Wake County, Waste Management, Wellspring/Whole Foods Market, West Marine Products Inc, and World Span.

## Gray, Wilson join board

Two new directors from eastern NC where voted onto the NCRT board at the fall meeting.

Berry Gray of Greenville is with the Pitt County Planning Department and is active in the Coastal Carolina Trail



**Berry Gray**

project to establish a trail from Washington to Oak City. The project recently won two statewide planning awards. Paul Wilson of Fayetteville is the Cumberland County contact who initiated the Overhills Project, a proposal to establish a public rail-trail on the former Rockefeller estate which is now part of Fort Bragg. Wilson is on the Methodist College faculty.

Going off the board are Herb Carlton of Greenville and Myla Warfel of Morven.

Carlton has been active on the Coastal Carolina Committee. Warfel has been leading the Carolina Heartlands Trail project in Anson County.



  
**Paul Wilson**

## Silver Comet - continued from page 1

Then, in Paulding County, sprawl gives way to rural Piedmont scenery.

The developed portion roughly parallels U.S. 278 from Smyrna to Rockmark. Numerous access parking lots and public facilities are along the route. The paved surface is 12 to 14 ft. wide.

## JOIN THE NORTH CAROLINA RAIL-TRAILS INITIATIVE, NOW!

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_

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Telephone: Home \_\_\_\_\_ Work \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

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

(Fall 01)

THANK YOU FOR JOINING NCRT

**"To Preserve Rail Corridors and Promote Rail - Trails"**

## Power line threatens trail environment

Triangle Rails-to-Trails Conservancy has learned that the American Tobacco Trail is one of several alignments Carolina Power and Light is considering for a high voltage transmission line from a substation along U.S. 1 near the Friendship Community in southwestern Wake County, north to a new substation to be built adjacent to the Cary-Apex Water Treatment Plant near Green Level. The project is known as the Apex-Green Level Transmission Enhancement Project.

This would require the entire 100 ft. width of the ATF corridor to be completely cleared of trees and large plants for several miles. It would effectively halt the migration of deer and other wildlife that use the corridor in a rapidly developing area. Wildlife access to the culvert under U.S. 64 would only be by the denuded corridor. TRTC also believes the barren trail would diminish the outdoor experience for human users.

You can express your concerns by:

Filling in the form at the CP&L website, [www.cpl.com/about/transmissions/apex.html](http://www.cpl.com/about/transmissions/apex.html)

Send email to [transmission.questions@pgnmail.com](mailto:transmission.questions@pgnmail.com)

Voice mail at CP&L public access 919-546-7500

Writing to Marty Clayton, CP&L Community Relations, 3000 Spring Forest Rd., Raleigh, NC 27616

### NCRT Winter Meeting

10:30 a.m. Jan. 12, Asa Biggs House, 100 E. Church, Williamston, Martin County. One block behind Town Hall. Call Crystal Baity 252-792-6605 (daytime) for more information.

NC Parks Trails Program	Darrell McBane	919-846-9991
NC DOT Rail Planner	David Bender	919-733-4713
NC DOT Bike-Ped. Prog.	Curtis Yates	919-733-2804
NPS SE Region RTCP	Chris Abbett	404-730-2311
Rails-to-Trails Conservancy	Betsy Goodrich	202-974-5122

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\*Primary information contacts: Phone and Fax

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