

**THE NORTH CAROLINA RAILROAD CORPORATION AND  
NORTH CAROLINA RAIL TRAILS HAVE A MUTUAL INTEREST!**

At the Rails Issues Hearing of the Governor's Goals Policy Board meeting held October 10th at the Spencer Shops Transportation Museum, Al Capehart of NCRT and Chafin Rhyne of the Corridor Coalition in Lincolnton spoke with Steve Stroud, President of the NCRR, regarding the preservation of rail corridors and trails.

The NCRR is owner of ten percent of North Carolina rail corridors and the state is 75% shareholder of the NCRR. Stroud said that the NCRR supports rail corridor preservation and can envision rail-trails but only where there is no feasible rail service the foreseeable future. He added "Our first objective is to preserve rail operations in North Carolina."

When asked what NCRR could do to support NCRT he replied, "Our endorsement would add legitimization to the preservation efforts with private citizens and business groups." NCRT has asked NCRR to endorse and support us in preserving all abandoned RR corridors for their future transportation, historic, health, and natural resource values.

**STATE SENATOR COCHRANE, KEYNOTE SPEAKER, ADDRESSES NC TRAIL ISSUES  
AT NORTH CAROLINA TRAILS ASSOCIATION ANNUAL MEETING**

Speaking at Danbury on September 23rd, Senator Betsy Cochrane (R) of the 23rd District, gave recognition to Mountains-to-Sea Trail volunteers who "are making a difference in peoples enjoyment of our wilderness areas" by volunteering tens of thousands of hours for trail construction on segments of the MTS Trail. She encouraged citizens to continue their efforts and complete the multi-use trail by 1991.

Senator Cochrane also spoke of the differences that trail supporters are making in another arena - the legislature. In August, nearly \$6 million in repair funding was appropriated for NC State Parks. Overall, in response to trails and parks supporters, the 1989 General Assembly has appropriated \$8 million for capital improvements and land acquisition in the park system and \$935,547 for an additional 20 maintenance workers, six community service workers and two rangers for the newly created Lumber River State River.

In her closing remarks to the group she noted that trail supporters "have gotten the attention of the legislature" and that the Attorney General recently opined that designation of a trail on public property or on a privately owned trail easement does amount to an acceptance of potential liability by the Division of Parks.

**NCTA RESOLUTION SUPPORTS RAIL - TRAIL CONVERSIONS**

The Rails to Trails workshop at the NCTA Annual Meeting recommended the following to the Associations Board of Directors:

- 1) That the NCTA form a Task Force to identify, study and recommend legislative issues in preparation for the meeting of the 1991 General Assembly, including:
  - A) Rail Corridor preservation for non-motorized transportation.
  - B) Department of Environment, Health and Natural Resources use of condemnation authority on behalf of local governments to acquire and preserve, develop and maintain rail-trails.

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*The Newsletter of North Carolina Rail-trails*  
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2) That the NCTA request that the Department of Transportation broaden its definition of transportation to include non-motorized forms and to incorporate such forms in transportation and project funding.

3) That the NCTA request the Department of Environment, Health and Natural Resources (DEHNR) to assign a Rail-Trail Specialist the monitoring and communications responsibilities of alerting trail groups, user groups and appropriate citizens of rail corridor abandonments and to provide technical assistance to facilitate a rail-trail conversion.

4) That the NCTA and North Carolina Rails - Trails have themselves placed on the North Carolina State Clearinghouse mailing list for all railroad abandonments.

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**EDITOR'S WHISTLE STOP: by James Mackay, P.E.**

As former chair of the Illinois State Chapter of the Rails to Trails Conservancy, I have witnessed the positive results that can happen when there is a favorable government climate for rail corridor preservation and trail development i.e. witness the recently passed legislation that will give the Illinois Department of Conservation \$5,000,000 annually for the development of recreational bicycle facilities and has resulted in IDOC negotiating for over 100 miles of unused rail corridor.

Similar opportunities can exist here in NC, but only if a unified and organized constituency, working in cooperation with local agencies, can make corridor and trail issues a priority with state government officials. Towards those goals, we have several recommendations:

1) Appoint the Secretary of Environment, Health and Natural Resources to the Governor's Rail Issue Task Force.

2) That the responsibility for the acquisition of abandoned and railbanked corridors for transportation and recreation be shared by the respective secretaries of NCDOT and NCDEHNR.

3) Legislation is needed for both the funding and acquisition of corridors for recreational and other compatible, revenue - producing uses.

4) A favorable policy for the recreational use of abandoned corridors - including the issue of leaving the tracks in place, which seems to be peculiar to NC - be resolved.

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**SEE FOR YOURSELF WHAT A RAIL - TRAIL CAN BE!!!!**

Members of Lincoln County's Corridor Coalition are sponsoring a fact - finding trip to one of Virginia's eight rail trails: the 57 - mile - long New River Trail State Park running from Galax to Pulaski.

On Sunday, November 12th, the group will depart from Lincolnton's Citizens Center Parking lot at 8:00 AM. Upon arrival at New River State Park, Park Supt. Scott Flickinger will present a program, conduct a trail and facilities tour and answer questions. The group should return to Lincolnton by 5 PM. Call Katie Wood at (704) 735-5347 for more info. (Editor's Note: this field trip should be quite useful for us to show trail opponents and "undecideds" what a successful RT looks like and what it can do for a community - see you there!!)

**NORTH CAROLINA RAILS TO TRAILS MEMBERSHIP FORM**

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

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Numbers Home(\_\_\_\_\_) - \_\_\_\_\_ Work(\_\_\_\_\_) - \_\_\_\_\_

Areas of interest in trails and rail corridor preservation: \_\_\_\_\_

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Mail to: North Carolina Rail Trails, Suite 124, 703 9th St., Durham N.C. 27705. NCRT Membership Annual Dues: Individual -- \$15 Family -- \$20 Corporate-- \$100

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**THE NEXT NRTC MEETING WILL BE SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 18th at 10 AM in Durham at the Edison Johnson Rec. Center, 600 E. Murray Ave. (next to the NC Museum of Science). Please Come! You are important in the volunteer effort - we need help with membership, recruitment, advocacy and other issues.**

**NORTH CAROLINA RAIL TRAILS STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS:**

Co-Chair	Al Capehart	(919) 493-6394
Co-Chair & Consulting Engr.	James Mackay, P.E.	(919) 851-5017
Legal Consultant	Bryan Lessley, Atty.	(704) 274-2992
Project Liasons - Durham	Jon Parker	(919) 286-1455
Chatham County	Carolyn Townsend	(919) 542-5422
Lincolnton County	Chafin Rhyne	(704) 735-1746
Caswell County	Forrest Altman	(919) 234-8556

**NOTEWORTHY RESOURCE PEOPLE**

NCDOT Rail Planner	Mark Sullivan	(919) 733-2806
NC Govt. Liason/Trail Spclst.	Tom Potter	(919) 778-9488
Rails to Trails Conservancy-	Marianne Fowler	(202) 797-5400
↳Southern States Coordinator		

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**RAILS TO TRAILS CONSERVANCY - SOUTHERN REGION REPORT**

by Marianne Fowler, Southern Coordinator RTC

"Every Southern child now falls asleep to the call of a faraway whistle and the dream of a distant land." This sentiment, expressed early in the century, marked the peak of railroad development in the South. By 1920, over 40,000 miles of track crisscrossed the region. Its role in the growth and history of the South is legendary. But now, over 25,000 miles of once active rail corridor lie abandoned. We face the challenge of preserving, protecting, and transforming this unexpected heritage from the 19th Century.

The Rails-to-Trails Conservancy was founded just over three years ago to help people and public agencies working to convert abandoned corridors into public-use trails. We have established two initial goals for each southern state: a major rail-trail in each state and a state rail-trail program.



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Fowler (cont.)

The South currently has 190 miles of rail-trail. Virginia leads with seven trails, highlighted by the 44 - mile Washington & Old Dominion which stretches from Alexandria to the foot of the Blue Ridge. Florida has two, including St. Marks running 16 miles from Tallahassee to the Gulf of Mexico, and is contracting with CSX for the acquisition of three additional rail-trails. North Carolina, South Carolina, Louisiana and Georgia have some exciting projects underway and Kentucky will dedicate its first rail-trail this October.

At RTC's recent conference in Dayton, we counted the South's existing rail-trails. There are 17. But our Southern Caucus projected by state how many more rail-trails we plan to have by the next Conference. We have set our southern strategy: 30 new rail-trails by 1991.

**CASWELL COUNTY COMMITTEE FORMS: HOPING TO CREATE A RAIL - TRAIL IN THE DAN RIVER BIOREGION OF NORTH CAROLINA AND VIRGINIA**

As a result of their October 20th meeting, the Caswell County Committee will be negotiating with the property owners who adjoin a rail corridor previously used by NS in order to gain permission to use the corridor for trail purposes. The newly formed steering committee - made up of equestrians, runners, bicyclists, conservationists and lawyers - are offering to clean up the corridor in exchange for the privilege to use the corridor as a trail. Newly elected committee chair, Dr. Jesse Wall, said, "Many issues remain to be explored, but our first concern will be to regain local control of a valuable resource: the corridors that once carried trains."

Also speaking to the group of twenty-five trail enthusiasts from both NC and Virginia was Vonda Frantz, Environmental Coordinator for the City of Durham, who offered the group valuable insights gained as a result of Durham's efforts to preserve several rail corridors, including gathering legal and historical information.

The next meeting of the Caswell group will be on November 16th at the Woodside Inn near Milton NC on NC route 57. Dinner will be at 6:30 PM and the meeting will be at 7:30.

**AS WE GO TO PRESS: The NC Department of Transportation Board will be considering the purchase of the Durham to Roxboro rail corridor. If purchased, this 100' wide corridor may provide the opportunity for the creation of a recreational trail. For more information, contact Vonda Frantz at (919) 493-5777.**