

Little Toot

The Newsletter of North Carolina Rail-trails



"To Preserve rail corridors and promote Rail-Trails"

Vol. 1 No. 1 September 1989 Suite 124, 703 9th St., Durham, NC 27705

2nd National Rails to Trails Conference

Dayton, Ohio from a "Down Home Point of View"

by Al Capehart

"Trailblazing for Tomorrow; A Network of Greenways in Our Future" was the theme of the National Conference July 26-29. Five Tarheels were in attendance, James Mackay, NC Rails to Trails, Carol Vilas, Triangle Rails to Trails Conservancy, Vonda Frantz, Durham City-County Planning, Chuck Flink, American Trails and Greenways Inc. Raleigh, and Al Capehart, Durham Urban Trails and Greenways. It was gratifying and inspirational to meet and hear about the successful experiences of those from Illinois, Florida, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Utah and Washington. In addition to the 31 workshops, 7 field trips, 5 keynote speakers and 300 attendees, my highlight was meeting Genny Young, the Norfolk and Southern Corp. attorney and giving her a copy of NC's new rail corridor preservation act, and hearing Chuck Montage, National Rail to Trail Conservancy legal counsel interpret the NC law as state "railbanking." Over the Friday night's chicken BBQ, I was delighted to hear Beth Dillon, National Park Service Rails to Trails Coordinator say, there is an interest in the Research Triangle as an experimental site for their "Metro Recreation Corridor Planning."

Ohio Governor Richard Celeste's keynote address set rails-to-trails on the frontier for the nature preservation and urban related recreation, J.J. Simmons, Vice Chair Interstate Commerce Commission (former oil man), declared American import oil dependence requires rail corridor preservation as essential to protect a national security infrastructure. National Park Service Director, James Ridenour, sees rail-trails

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National Conference (Con't)

as a partial response to the changing recreation patterns of Americans to shorter, closer at home vacations. Professor Bruce Ronick, consultant US Forest Service spoke of partnership building from user-groups to multi-levels of government and business. The President of the National Parks and Conservation Association, Paul Pritchard, pointed to the reduced spending on the environment and conservation over the past 10 years including parkland, recreation, air and water quality. As a Target for "Earth Day", April 22, 1990, he challenged us to have local and state politicians open new greenways, rail-trails and pollution control facilities. He also said, "We have to enjoy the process, ascribe to the goals in order to find the energy to persevere in this conservation."

In the Southern Caucus, Marianne Fowler, National Rails-to-Trails Southern Regional Coordinator, set goals for each state in rail-trail conversions before the next national conference in the spring of 1991. Virginia expects nine, Florida eight, South Carolina five and North Carolina...? two? The North Carolina group caucused and decided that we need a more aggressive preservation effort, active state-wide organization and communications. To these ends the Triangle Rails to Trails Conservancy will conduct monthly meetings and publish a brochure, the North Carolina Rails to Trails will continue with its quarterly meetings, start a state rails to trails newsletter and membership drive. Each Tarheel representative had considerable personal expense in getting to Dayton thereby expressing their commitment to rail corridor preservation as essential in the future of the "Down Home" State.

Rails-to-Trails in State Government

The recent reorganization of State Government has created an opportunity to advance rail-trails. The new department of Environment, Health and Natural Resources is headed by Bill Coby. The assistant secretary Dr. Lynn Muchmore is responsible for state parks and recreation. Mr. Tom Potter, NC trail specialist, has been assigned the state-wide responsibility of being the rail-trail expert. Unfortunately his participation in speciality training and information gathering has had to come at his own expense. The General Assembly in its 1989 session ratified a bill (Chapter 600, Senate Bill 466) which authorizes the DOT to condemn property for railroad corridor preservation, to expand the authority of the department to provide rail revitalization funds, and to permit cities and counties to preserve railroad corridors. The legislation also provides for the lease of such corridors for interim compatible uses - read trails. North Carolina is one of three states that is in the railroad business. The recent merger of the Atlantic & North Carolina and the North Carolina Railroad according to Gov. Jim Martin creates a "Unified ribbon of steel" from Charlotte to Morehead City. He can say that because the state is 75 percent owner of both companies. Again unfortunately, the governor's appointees Howard Clement, Chairman of the state rail-passenger task force and Steve Stroud, Chairman of the NC Railroad Co. are not yet in favor of rails-trails or compatible trail uses. The issue is who who will decide which corridors to preserve?? The legislation suggests city and county governments, but the concept requires multi-jurisdiction action, at both state and local levels.

NORTH CAROLINA RAIL-TRAILS MEMBERSHIP

Name _____ City _____

Address _____ State _____ Zip _____

New _____ or Renewal _____ Phone Numbers

Home (_____) _____

Mail to: Work (_____) _____

North Carolina Rail-trails
 Suite 124, 703 9th Street
 Durham, NC 27705

Please list areas of interest and concern in rail corridor preservation and trail development. _____

MEMBERSHIP ANNUAL DUES

Individual -- \$15.00, Family -- \$20.00, Corporate --\$100.00.

NORTH CAROLINA RAIL-TRAILS STEERING COMMITTEE JUNE, 1989

The Steering Committee met at the Edison Johnson Recreation Center in Durham. Mark Sullivan gave a summary of what he considers to be the best trail opportunities in NC. They are: the Durham-Timberlake, Lincolnton-Newton, Statesville-Troutmann, and Franklinton-Lewisburg. He also discussed possible sources of funds for rail project.

The meeting focused on organization and priorities for the near future. The name, North Carolina Rail-Trails, was adopted. We generally agreed that our primary purpose is to raise the consciousness of rail-trail possibilities in the state, and to encourage and aid citizens who want to do a project to evaluate and preserve local rail corridors.

NRTC Immediate goals are:

- 1) Publish a quarterly newsletter beginning in August.
- 2) Prepare a checklist for local groups to use when pursuing rail-trail projects.
- 3) Incorporate as a not-for-profit state agency.
- 4) Open a bank account; set membership fee at \$15.
- 5) Envolv Committee members who represent business and conservation interests and invite people from the other rail-trail projects to cooperate in a statewide effort.

The next MEETING IS SEPT. 16, 1989, at 10am in DURHAM, EDISON JONSHON REC. CENTER, 600 E. MURRAY AVE (next to the NC Museum of Science). Please Come! YOU are important in the volunteer effort--Get involved with rail-trail in North Carolina--Volunteer to help with membership, recruitment, advocacy and rail-trail use.

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WARNING, IMMEDIATE ACTION NECESSARY !!!!!!!

In the abandonment process the railroads are now using an exemption process with the Interstate Commerce Commission, this means that there are only 10 (ten) days of public response time once the notice of abandonment is published in the Federal Register. It is therefore important, if you have a rail-trail corridor you want to preserve, that you know about the "system diagram". Contact Mark Sullivan, Rails Program NCDOT (733-2806). The diagram is a plan of abandonment by the railroads months before the Federal Register publication. Another source is Ms. Marianne Fowler, National Rails-to-Trails Conservancy Southern Regional Coordinator (202-797-5400), 1400 16 ST. NW, Washington, DC 20036. Rail corridor preservation is a complicated process, however with new legislation and conservation insights we can preserve the rights-of-ways that our grandfathers have left for us.

Welcome Aboard *Little Toot*

LITTLE TOOT the first NCRT newsletter! The Little Engine that Could was Little Toot. So we plan to have a quarterly newsletter and quarterly meeting of the steering committee. Our purpose is to promote rail-trails in North Carolina through advice, consultation and inspiration! Consider this forum as your way of helping rail-trail to happen in NC as we network for preservation. Please send questions, ideas, articles and news of your projects to The Editor, Little Toot NCRT Suite 124, 703 9th St., Durham NC 27705.

Steering Committee

Co-chair	Vonda Frantz	493-5777	
Co-chair	Al Capehart	493-6394	
Co-chair & Consulting Engineer	James Mackay	733-2804	
Project Liaisons:	Durham	Jon Parker	286-1455
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	Chatham Co.	Carolyn Townsend	542-5422
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Abandonment Status	Mark Sullivan	733-2806	