

Greenville axes Greenways Committee

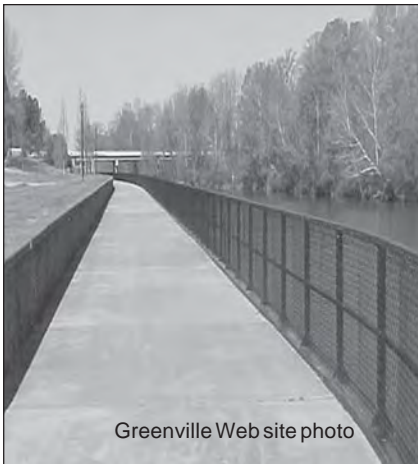
Greenville plans to complete a 2.9-mile extension to the South Tar River Greenway by the end of 2007. But the citizens' committee involved in formulating a master plan of which the greenway is a part died in January when an advisory commission decided against renewal of the Greenways Committee.

"We can reappoint at any time...if the old group feels they want to get back together," Dr. Ulrich Alsentzer, chairman of the environmental advisory commission, told *The Daily Reflector* in Greenville.

The South Tar River Greenway extension is part of about \$2.6 million in federal earmarks the Greenville Greenways Committee had been looking forward to seeing implemented.

Alsentzer figured that the newly formed non-government group, Friends of Greenville Greenways (FROGGs), "is much more interested in fund raising and expanding the greenways and these kinds of things than a sub-committee of the city or an appointed commission could ever be."

"I think it's extremely ill-advised," Charles Farley, North Carolina Rail-Trails board member and former chairman of the



Greenville Web site photo

2.9 mile extension begins at Town Common.

defunct Greenways Committee, said of the demise of the committee. "The Greenways Committee had been in existence for almost two decades, much longer than the EAC (Environmental Advisory Commission).

"Chairman Alsentzer is sadly mistaken if he thinks an ad-hoc civilian group can replace the regulatory and oversight func-

tions that the Greenways Committee had. All that has been accomplished over the years would never have come to pass if left solely up to city staff to implement," Farley added.

Last summer the Greenville Greenways Committee was riding high after \$1.48 million in federal money was presented to the city thanks to the work of a lobbying firm and local U.S. Rep. G. K. Butterfield. Farley, a 10-year member of the committee, had to resign in the summer because he moved outside of the city limits. With Farley's resignation, the committee was inactive until it was axed in January.

The committee worked with the city and its consultant on an updated master plan approved in 2004. The master plan more than tripled the 35 miles of trails and paths in the original plan and linked city green spaces and parks. The plan also charted buffers against commercial and residential development by identifying easements for greenways.

The 2.9-mile extension will begin at Town Common, cross Town Creek on historic Greenville Bridge and run along

Greenway (Continued on page 3)

\$491,000 for Southside Virginia Rail-Trail

After a hefty harvest of grants in 2005, Roanoke River Rail-to-Trails (RRRT) Inc. recently received additional grants totalling \$491,000 to put trails on the ground on the Tobacco Heritage Trail, a planned 150-mile trail in Southside Virginia.

RRRT received a TEA-2 Enhancement Grant of \$391,000 and \$100,000 from Virginia's Tobacco Commission to develop a master plan and economic impact study of the Tobacco Heritage Trail. A contract has already been signed for the master plan.

"We are excited about the two grants that we have received," said Sandra Tanner, executive director of RRRT. "Without the expertise from Carol Corker of Southside Planning District Commission, we wouldn't be where we are today."

Tanner hoped that RRRT would close on the purchase of 46 miles of abandoned railroad right of way in Mecklenburg and Brunswick counties in late June. Former Gov. Mark Warner sub-

mitted a request for \$950,000 for rail-trails in Southside Virginia in his 2007 budget. RRRT is waiting to see what cuts the Virginia General Assembly will make on Warner's request.

RRRT was formed in 2003 and opened the first two sections of the Tobacco Heritage Trail in the fall. In 2005, RRRT received grants totaling over \$1.3 million.

<http://www.NCRail-Trails.org>

2005 Annual Report

North Carolina Rail-Trails (NCRT) Inc. took concrete steps toward all five of its goals in 2005 with efforts that varied from putting trails on the ground to networking financial sources and the halls of government.

"The year 2005 is our 16th year and reflects our growing presence across the state," said Carolyn Townsend, chair of NCRT's board. "We got the word out on rail-trails from the mountains to the sea."

The activities and accomplishments under each of NCRT's five goals are summarized below.

Goal 1: Promote beneficial use and connectivity of rail corridors by the public.

Involvement in projects in the following counties: Harnett, Dunn-Erwin Trail; Rutherford, Thermal Belt Rail-Trail; Transylvania, Brevard Bike Path; Lincoln, Marcia Cloninger Rail-Trail and South Fork Catawba River Rail-Trail; Durham, Wake and Chatham, American Tobacco Trail; Beaufort, Martin and Pitt, Coastal Carolina Trail; Granville, Oxford to Clarksville, Va. trail; Franklin, Louisburg to Franklinton Bike Trail; Pasquotank, Weeksville Spur.

In development efforts, a \$1,000 grant was awarded to Durham's Carol Thomson whose interactive CD-ROM *Bridging Rails to Trails* explores the 100-year evolution of the American Tobacco Trail from a railroad crucial in tobacco manufacturing to a unique linear park. Thomson's yet to be completed project is part of her course work at Duke University's Center for Documentary Studies.

There are 78 miles of rail-trails in use in North Carolina with an additional 21.2 miles under development.

Goal 2: Increase the number of rail-trail miles in North Carolina. The Rail

Corridor Round Table works for "the best possible use of the state's rail corridor assets." The Round Table drafted and proposed state legislation to make available for rail-trail development 100 miles of N.C. Department of Transportation (NC DOT)-owned railroad corridors in six counties: Catawba, Cherokee, Gaston, Franklin, Nash and Pender. The legislation, HB-1230, which is crucial for using rail corridors for alternate transportation, died in committee as opposition prevailed.

The push to establish public transportation corridors in railroad rights of way was strengthened through partnerships with organizations and agencies promoting physical activity, tourism, and alternate transportation. Contacts included Foundation for the Carolinas, which focuses on 14 counties to preserve open space; Coastal Carolina Trail Committee; Dunn-Erwin Trail Authority; Connect Gaston; Brevard Bike Path Committee; Triangle Rail to Trails Conservancy; and American Tobacco Trail management team.

Upcoming rail abandonments were monitored. NC DOT recently filed to purchase the Rocky Mount and Western Railroad Co.'s 4.7-mile rail line in Nash County. Other corridors being monitored include: Gastonia to Dallas; Albemarle; Whitney to Baden; and in McDowell County, 3.5 miles of Norfolk Southern corridor in downtown Marion.

Goal 3: Promote rail corridor preservation through advocacy and outreach. Contacts included a presentation to faculty of N.C. State University Department of Landscape Design; Coastal Carolina Trail Committee; Railway Association of North Carolina; official opening of the 1.3-mile South Fork Catawba River Rail-Trail; official opening of the first section of the planned 150-mile Tobacco Heritage Trail in Southside Virginia; N.C. Association of County Commissioners; N.C. League of Municipalities; Land Trust Assembly; Land Trust Council; Blue Ridge Greenway Conference; and Virginia West Piedmont Trails Symposium, "Connecting Our Common Wealth." Two issues of the newsletter, "Little Toot" were published.

Goal 4: Have an active knowledgeable, diverse and supportive board of directors.

The Board of Directors met quarterly — in January, April, July and October — and heard presentations on the Catawba Lands Conservancy, Trust For Public Land, Coastal Carolina Trail, Greensboro Greenway Trail's

plans to connect with Winston-Salem and Caldwell County's recreation plan. The board adopted the 2004 Revised Land Trust Standards and Practices. As an active, specialized federal rail banking land trust, NCRT has accepted its responsibility to comply with 2004 Land Trust Standards and Practices.

New members elected for three-year terms were Robert Segal, a CPA and bicyclist from High Point and Dave Connelly, a research librarian and avid bicyclist from Durham. Members re-elected to the board for three-year terms were William (Bill) Causey, industrial sales representative from Sanford; Harry Clapp, retired engineer (railroad industry) from Greensboro; Merlin Perry of Lenoir, retired from information services; and Carolyn Townsend of Pittsboro, a RN who until her recent retirement worked for the state promoting public health.

Goal 5: Attain sufficient human and financial resources to reach goals.

Efforts included, monitoring funding sources, i.e., Safe Routes to School (SR2S) program of NC DOT; and participation with Earth Share of North Carolina, N.C. Center for Non-Profits, N.C. Conservation Council, N.C. Conservation Network, Land Trust Alliance; Land Trust Council; and Earth Share of North Carolina, a federation of environmental and conservation nonprofits participating in workplace giving through the State Employees Combined Campaign, Combined Federal Campaign, City/County Employee Campaign (Greensboro/Guilford) and the Triangle United Way.

Karen Miller, P.A., keeps NCRT's books, and Minor & Associates, P.A., CPA, conduct the annual audit. The IRS annual review of 2004 exempted NCRT from federal income tax. NCRT'S solicitation license was renewed.

2005 (Continued on page 3)

North Carolina Rail-Trails
participates in workplace campaigns with



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Charter Member

Resource Contacts

NC Parks Trails Program	Darrell McBane	919-846-9991
NC DOT Rail Planner	David Bender	919-733-4713
NC DOT Bike-Ped. Div.	Tom Norman	919-715-2342
NPS Field Office, RTCA	Deirdre Hewitt	828-271-4779 X-272
Rails-to-Trails Conservancy	Betsy Goodrich	202-974-5122

Marion begins railbanking efforts

Norfolk Southern on May 18 filed for exempt abandonment of 3.5 miles from downtown Marion south to I-40 in McDowell County.

On the same date the City of Marion petitioned the Surface Transportation Board for federal Section 8(d) railbanking and Interim Trail Use. In its filing, the railroad acknowledged the city's previously

stated interest and expressed consent to negotiate with Marion under Public Use Condition.

The newly formed McDowell Trails Association supports Marion's railbanking and trail intent.

The abandonment is a remnant of the Charleston, Charlotte & Chicago Railroad line which connects with Norfolk Southern's Western North Carolina Railroad in downtown Marion. It has been an unused spur since Norfolk Southern abandoned most of line from Shelby to Marion in the 1980s. The Thermal Belt Railway operates on the line in Forest City and the 8-mile Thermal Belt Rail-Trail from Spindale to Gilkey is in the federal railbank.

2005 Financial Report

(Continued from page 2)

Revenue

Direct Public Support	\$ 8,041
Indirect Public Support	\$ 8,000
Interest on Savings	\$ 424

Total Revenue \$16,465

Expenses

Program Services	\$18,522
Management & General	\$ 7,125
Fundraising	\$ 410

Total Expenses \$ 26,057

Insurance premium payments of \$5,680 were made in 2005 for the calendar years 2005 and 2006.

NCRT is a 501-c(3) nonprofit, tax-exempt organization. Donors who give \$25 or more receive individual memberships. NCRT is an all-volunteer, state-wide nonprofit supported by individual memberships, contributions and workplace contributions. All contributions are tax-deductible.

Greenways

(Continued from page 1)

the south bank of the Tar River following existing streets and trails until it meets Green Mill Creek. The trail follows Green Mill Creek until it plugs into Green Springs Park, which has trail links back to the East Carolina University campus.

Carson Fisher, a civil engineer with Greenville's Department of Public Works, said a second public meeting will be held in August to firm up design plans. The project will be let for contract in the fall. Plans call for construction to begin in January.



Carolyn Townsend

Townsend Retires

Carolyn Townsend, chair of North Carolina Rail-Trails (NCRT) board since 1990, retired May 31 as a public health nurse for the State Department of Public Health ending a 32-year career that earned her numerous accolades.

The state awarded her the prestigious Order of the Long Leaf Pine for her exemplary service and commitment. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention presented a special commendation for her contributions to the WISEWOMAN Project.

A RN and native of California, Carolyn began her public health nursing career in 1974. By 1978 she was public health nurse director of the Caswell, Chatham, Lee, Person District Health Department. She held that position for 10 years until the district was dismantled at which point she became nurse supervisor in Chatham County. In 1990 Carolyn joined the state's Division of Health Promotion where she worked until her retirement.

Carolyn now plans to travel in the United States and serve as a full-time volunteer for NCRT.

JOIN THE NORTH CAROLINA RAIL-TRAILS INITIATIVE, NOW!

Name _____ Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Telephone: Home _____ Work _____ E-mail _____

Reason for interest in rail-trails _____

NCRT annual memberships: Individual - \$25, Corporate - \$100

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

(Summer '06)

NCRT is a 501-c(3) public non-profit tax exempt organization founded in 1990. All contributions and donations are tax deductible to the fullest extent of the law.

Trails in Triad's future

Biking and walking trails are in the emerging plans for a mixed use 7,500-acre business and residential park planned between three of the Piedmont's economic engines: Greensboro, Winston-Salem and High Point.

The mileage for bike paths and walking trails along the streams and roads in Heart of the Triad (HOT) has yet to be determined, said Mark Kirstner, assistant director of community initiatives for Guilford County's Department of Community and Economic Development.

But, he said, the three plans that were considered in public discussions in early June included biking and walking paths. "The concepts of mixed use and traditional development is something everyone is hooked into," he said. The public pushed for "an alternative style of development based on town centers, placing people near their employment as opposed to haphazard development."

No date has been projected for opening HOT, which must hack its way through an administrative and bureaucratic jungle that could last years. Six governments, four chambers of commerce and the current residents are involved in the decisions on water and sewer service for the area as well as governance of the park.

Some Triad residents want entertainment venues and athletic fields along with office parks and research facilities. Business interests and real estate developers say such ideas ignore the practical needs for one of the Piedmont's major distribution centers. Others argue that a concentration of warehouses sends the wrong marketing message about the Triad.

The projected park straddles the Guilford/Forsyth county line and runs north and south of the confluence of the I-40 Bypass and I-40 Business. A Dell computer plant is located in the projected park boundaries. A FedEx air cargo hub is planned.

HOT is the result of a \$400,000 study funded by the local chambers of commerce, local governments and the state. A total of 53,000 acres is included in the study, which projects maximums of 113,000 for population and 148,5000 for employment, depending on the plan followed.

NCRT Fall Board Meeting

Saturday, Oct. 14, 10:30 a.m.
Woodcroft Community Room
5501 Fortunes Ridge Dr.
Durham N.C.



PO Box 61348
Durham, NC 27715-1348

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NORTH CAROLINA RAIL TRAILS INC. BOARD

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