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TDA joins Carolina Thread Trail

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By Justin Allen

The Anson County Tourism Development Authority (TDA) has agreed to participate in the planning of the Carolina Thread Trail.

According to its Web site, the "Carolina Thread Trail is a regional network of greenways and trails that will reach 15 counties and 2.3 million citizens."

TDA members unanimously approved the resolution to join the planning of the trail. So far, the planning has been completed in eight counties, according to Carolina Thread Trail community coordinator Travis Morehead.

Many members of the authority expressed hesitation about the project.

"We would be hard pressed to put tax dollars into this at this time," County Commission Chair Anna Baucom said.

Pee Dee National Wildlife Refuge manager J.D. Bricken worried that enough private property owners might not give permission to allow for the project's trails, which must be contiguous. He said he supported the trail project.

"There will be a local steering committee," Morehead said. The organization will also provide personnel to assist in the planning.

While the extent of the trail is entirely up to each county, a proposal at a previous meeting would have a waterway pass through Anson along the Pee Dee River. Morehead explained a waterway would require launch points for craft like canoes.

While Anson County planner Jennifer Baptiste recommended convening citizens to discuss the scope and time of the project, Bricken said a plan for the finished product would be necessary to show people.

"We'll find the money," Morehead said. Some phases of the project require a certain percentage match from participants. The organization has been fundraising for years.

Morehead hopes to speak to all of the elected officials in Anson County about the trail soon.

The authority created a task force to start the planning work. Jim Kennedy, Jeff Boothby, Baptiste, Bricken and Dave Smith will be on the task force.

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