



Public's voice needed for trails network

Weaving communities together

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[Cassie Tarpley](#)

Public Open House

SHELBY - As Cleveland County Planning Director, Bill McCarter works knee-deep amid maps of all kinds.

Posters and maps in shades of light blue and brown, covering one wall, are of particular interest right now. Little dotted lines suggest where Cleveland County's portion of The Carolina Thread Trail might go.

The Carolina Thread Trail (The Thread for short) is a 15-county, two-state initiative designed to inspire and facilitate the creation of a regional network of trails, blueways and conservation corridors that will grow together over time, linking more than 2.3 million citizens.

"This is an idea to try to regionalize all the efforts in different counties," McCarter said, "and make sure they try to coordinate."

On May 7, local residents will have a chance to see the concept up close, at a public drop-in session at the Dover YMCA in Shelby. Presentations and experts on hand will help explain, then visitors will have the opportunity to register their thoughts, McCarter said.

"There will be four stations you can move through, rolling PowerPoint presentations, videos ... and then prompts will allow visitors to provide input at each station."

Lincoln County has been through the information/input process and Gaston and York (South Carolina) are just finishing up - their draft plans are on the CTT Web site.

"We're really looking for input from citizens," McCarter said. "If you want a trail, where do you want to go on that trail?"

Kim Duren, Broad River Greenway director, is secretary of the Cleveland County Steering Committee/Carolina Thread Trail.

"This is a wonderful new initiative," Duren said.

Carl Spangler, the president of the steering committee, was instrumental in the Spangler Foundation giving \$1 million to this project, with the stipulation it be spent on Cleveland County.

Catawba Lands Conservancy is the lead agency for The Thread, working in partnership with the Trust for Public Land, Foundation for the Carolinas, and many local partners.

At the open house, representatives from Cleveland County, its municipalities and the Carolina Thread Trail, along with local project consultant LandDesign, will be on hand to talk about the project vision and goals.

After this first open house, a public input Web site will go online, McCarter said.

The project is being funded primarily by grants, he said.

On the Web: www.carolinathreadtrail.org

More questions? Contact Bill McCarter, Cleveland County Planning Department, 311 E. Marion St., Shelby; 704-484-4947; bill.mccarter@clevelandcounty.com

http://www.gastongazette.com/news/public_33261_article.html/plan_house.html