



Chester receives \$100,000 thread trail grant

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By Travis Jenkins

Gloria Kellerhals attended Monday's Chester County Council meeting and Tuesday's Lowrys Town Council Meeting and brought good news with her.

"Hopefully you saw that the more than \$500,000 in grants were awarded for the Carolina Thread Trail," Kellerhals told the council in Lowrys. "Well, congratulations. You got a fifth of it."

The Carolina Thread Trail Governing Board has approved a trail grant worth \$100,000, which will be used on a stretch of the trail from McConnells, through Lowrys and on to Oliphant Lake.

Kellerhals said she has not put together a steering committee yet, because she didn't know "if there would be any money to steer." Now that there is, she said a committee would be put together.

The money will be used, primarily, for the legal legwork that has to be done for the trail. Kellerhals said easements have to be obtained on 572 properties. Allowing an easement does not mean that a property owner is giving up land, Kellerhals said, it simply indicates consent to use the property and can be tax-deductible. Each easement covers an area 30-foot-wide. The process of collecting the signatures needed will start immediately, Kellerhals said.

Kellerhals said the thread trail could bring tourists, campers and outdoor enthusiasts to Chester. She noted that last weekend, 4,000 people walked on the riverwalk portion of the thread trail in York County.

The Carolina Thread Trail 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 is growing together to link more than 2.3 million citizens.

According to a release on the grants, trail implementation grants are reviewed by the board on an annual basis to provide catalytic funding to communities to assist with trail corridor design, land acquisition and construction.

"Seven counties have created trail master plans and lots of local momentum," said Ruth Shaw, chair of the Carolina Thread Trail Governing Board. "This round of funding will help put trail miles on the ground -- a great example of thinking regionally and acting locally."

Grants will contribute to approximately 43 miles of trails that weave throughout the Carolina Thread Trail 15-county system. These projects will take place in Cabarrus, Chester,

Cleveland, York, Gaston, Lincoln and Mecklenburg counties. All counties that were eligible by virtue of having completed Carolina Thread Trail master plans at the time of application are represented.

Grant recipients include local governments, two land trusts and two local trail non-profits. To date, the Thread has awarded more than \$1.5 million in catalytic grants to Carolina Thread Trail communities and trail projects.

During her presentation to county council, Kellerhals, who wrote the grant, was lauded by Councilman Alex Oliphant.

"I wish we had a dozen of you," Oliphant said.

Kellerhals also helped secure a \$125,000 USDA grant to help transform the McKeown Building into a market building, job incubator and sales point for locally grown produce and locally produced artisan's crafts.

<http://www.onlinechester.com/content/chester-receives-100000-thread-trail-grant>