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(Charlotte, N.C.) - The North Carolina Clean Water Management Trust Fund (CWMTF) has awarded the Carolina Thread Trail \$3 million for permanent land conservation and trails along regional waterways. The grant represents the largest public gift to the Carolina Thread Trail since its launch last fall, and will protect and enhance drinking water quality and public recreation on an unprecedented regional scale.

The CWMTF grant funds will be used to create buffer lands along rivers and streams in the Broad, Catawba and Yadkin-PeeDee river basins that will host sections of the Carolina Thread Trail. The effect of the strategic buffers will be to filter pollutants, recharge the water table and support the creation of wildlife habitats.

“We are thrilled and honored by the confidence the Clean Water Trustees have placed in the Carolina Thread Trail project,” said Dave Cable, executive director of the Catawba Lands Conservancy, lead agency for the project. “We will begin to work immediately with our partner communities as we invest these dollars in land that delivers the highest possible public benefit.”

With the project underway for less than a year, the private fundraising efforts of the Carolina Thread Trail already are rapidly approaching \$15 million toward a goal of \$25 million. According to Cable, the \$3 million request is intended to be the beginning of a longer-term funding partnership with CWMTF that could produce up to \$25 million over five years.

“Our ability to leverage a successful private fundraising strategy for the Carolina Thread Trail is important to all of our public funding partners, as we plan for the protection of precious land and waterways for generations to come,” he said.

Nearly 50 communities have signed resolutions of support for the Carolina Thread Trail project to date, and two pilot projects already are underway through private grants. Gaston (N.C.) and York (S.C.) counties have held a series of public meetings over the past six months and currently are considering options that will connect to neighboring counties when considered for adoption next fall. It is anticipated that private dollars will leverage both state and federal dollars at the local level, and choices for routes and trails will be entirely determined through public input.

The Trust for Public Land serves as a technical partner for the Carolina Thread Trail with overall project leadership provided through Catawba Lands Conservancy. Private funding partners include the Foundation For The Carolinas, Duke Energy, Bank of America Charitable Foundation and The Wachovia Foundation.

The Carolina Thread Trail is a 15-county, two-state greenway network that will be designed and created locally through grants funded by private contributions. The Trust for Public Land will provide technical assistance to communities throughout the planning and design process. Catawba Lands Conservancy is the lead agency for the project.

www.carolinathreadtrail.org