TRAIL GROUPS WORKING TOGETHER TO SUCCESSFULLY INFLUENCE POLICY

Palmer McIntyre

Piedmont Land Conservancy/Piedmont Legacy Trails
WHO WE ARE

• A broad, diverse coalition committed to bringing the benefits of trails to all of North Carolina
• All trail types: Hike / Bike / Walk / Run / Paddle / Ride
• All 100 Counties
• Advising partners: NC State Parks, NCDOT, NC Outdoor Recreation Industry Office, Visit NC
THE BIG BOLD VISION

• Secure sustained state funding for trails
• Brand North Carolina as “The Great Trails State”

WHY

• Historically, very little direct state investment in trails and greenways
FLORIDA

Since 2015, State Legislature appropriates $25M annually to implement projects in the Florida Greenways and Trails System Plan.

NEW YORK

In 2017, a plan was announced by the Governor to create a continuous 750 mile trail connecting New York City to Canada and Buffalo to Albany and appropriated $200M for project.
The Great Trails State Coalition Builds & Expands Upon NCDOT’s Plan

**THE PLAN**
Led by NCDOT & focuses on shared use paths connecting all 100 counties

**THE COALITION**
Led by broad-based coalition & focuses on investment-ready trail projects of all types throughout NC
OUR STEPS TO SUCCESS

GATHER THE PARTNERS

SET THE GOALS

MAKE THE CASE
  Data:
  • economic
  • health
  • safety
  • unmet demand

BUILD THE INFRASTRUCTURE
  • Webpage
  • Briefing
  • Paper/Handouts

BUILD RELATIONSHIPS
OUR STEPS TO SUCCESS

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BUILD RELATIONSHIPS
### THE GOALS

#### BUILDING NATURE TRAILS
- NC State Parks
  - Recurring Funding: $2.3M to strengthen the NC Trails Program and support official State Trails
  - Non-recurring Funding: $18M for trail construction and land purchase dollars

#### BUILDING GREENWAYS
- NCDOT/OREC
  - Non-recurring Funding: $45M to leverage federal dollars for paved greenways and $2M for rural feasibility studies

#### SUPPORTING TOURISM
- Visit NC
  - Recurring Funding: $100,000 to help rural communities promote tourism
  - Non-Recurring Funding: $150,000 to create a Great Trails State web portal

#### DESIGNATE 2023 YEAR OF THE TRAIL
- In the 2021 long session both the House and Senate passed a bill declaring 2023 the Year of the Trail. It was signed into law on August 18, 2021.

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**FUNDING SUCCESS!**
OUR STEPS TO SUCCESS

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BUILD RELATIONSHIPS
WHY TRAILS?

**HEALTH**
- Facilitates physical activity
- Improves psychological health
- Improves social health and connections
- Reduces negative health effects of air pollution

**ECONOMY**
- Increases property values
- Promotes tourism
- Reduces cost of pollution cleanup
- Enhances ability to attract and retain business

**ENVIRONMENT**
- Preserves wildlife habitats
- Preserves natural areas in the face of rapid development
- Improves air quality
- Improves water quality

**COMMUNITY**
- Provides neighborhood and community connections
- Reconnects children with nature
- Promotes regional thinking
A NCDOT study of a one-time $26.7M investment in just 4 NC trails created the following economic impacts:

- **$19.4M**: Estimated annual sales revenue at local businesses along the four greenways.
- **$25.7M**: Estimated annual savings due to more physical activity, less pollution and congestion, and fewer traffic injuries from greenway use.
- **$48.7M**: Estimated business revenue from greenway construction.
- **790 JOB**: Are supported annually through greenway construction.

Every $1.00 spent on trail construction generates **$1.72 ANNUALLY** from local business revenue, sales tax revenue, & benefits related to health and transportation.

"Outdoor Recreation is a $28 Billion Industry in North Carolina. Our greenways and blueways are the infrastructure that supports that industry. Outdoor recreation is going to play a huge role in the COVID recovery process. There is no question that a project like this is great for the health of our residents and the health of our economy."

- AMY ALLISON, NC OUTDOOR RECREATION INDUSTRY OFFICE

Photo: Bicycle Tourism and Outdoor Recreation Spending in Duck, NC by Jason Reyes, Alta
# WHY TRAILS?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STATE DOT</th>
<th>ANNUAL BUDGET</th>
<th>POPULATION IN 2019 (IN MILLIONS)</th>
<th>BIKE/PED $S SPENT PER PERSON</th>
<th>% OF BUDGET FOR INDEPENDENT BIKE/PED PROJECTS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>$1 million - $5 million</td>
<td>10.62</td>
<td>$0.09 - $0.47</td>
<td>0.1% to 0.5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tennessee</td>
<td>$10 million - $50 million</td>
<td>6.83</td>
<td>$1.46 - $7.32</td>
<td>0.05% to 0.1%</td>
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<td>Florida</td>
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<td>21.48</td>
<td>$0.46 - $2.33</td>
<td>&gt;2%</td>
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<td>Montana</td>
<td>$5 million - $10 million</td>
<td>1.07</td>
<td>$4.67 - $9.35</td>
<td>1% to 2%</td>
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<td>Louisiana</td>
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<td>$1.08 - $2.15</td>
<td>0.5% to 1%</td>
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<td>Arkansas</td>
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<td>3.02</td>
<td>$1.66 - $3.31</td>
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<td>Virginia</td>
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<td>Missouri</td>
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<td>&lt; $0.16</td>
<td>&lt;0.05%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>North Carolina</strong></td>
<td>&lt; $1 million</td>
<td>10.49</td>
<td>&lt; $0.10</td>
<td>&lt;0.05%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Benchmarking Non-motorized Policies and Project Delivery, 2020*
MAKING THE CASE

STATE FUNDING WILL LEVERAGE FEDERAL INVESTMENT FOR HARD SURFACE TRAILS

- To serve as local match to leverage new federal dollars
MAKING THE CASE

STATE FUNDING FOR RURAL TRAIL PLANNING

THE MISSING LINK

- Many rural NC communities need this type of “seed” funding to get their projects construction-ready through planning, feasibility, and preliminary design work.

- This is key to meeting many Federal requirements for construction funds, serving as a catalyst for rural economic development.

The Deep River State Trail, Ramsuer
MAKING THE CASE

STATE FUNDING FOR NATURAL SURFACE TRAILS

- Hiking, Mountain Biking, Paddling, and Horseback
- To support the authorized State Trails as well as local natural surface trails

Mountains-to-Sea Trail, Balsam Grove
Communities have invested in planning and identified trail projects in all 100 counties.
OUR STEPS TO SUCCESS

GATHER THE PARTNERS

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BUILD THE INFRASTRUCTURE

- Webpage
- Briefing
- Paper/Handouts

BUILD RELATIONSHIPS
BUILD THE INFRASTRUCTURE

INFRASTRUCTURE/SUPPORTS

Develop the messaging

- Clarifying the messaging
- Writing scripts

Develop the delivery processes

- Webpage
- Handouts

WWW.GREATTRAILSNC.ORG
BUILD THE INFRASTRUCTURE

The Great Trails State Coalition

Who We Are: A broad, diverse coalition committed to bringing the benefits of trails to all of North Carolina.

All Trail Types • All 100 Counties
Hike | Bike | Walk | Run | Paddle | Ride

Why Trails

Healthy Residents

Thriving Economy

Statewide Impact

Transportation Choices

Build the Infrastructure

RETURN on INVESTMENT:
Every $1.00 spent on trail construction generates $1.72 annually from local business revenue, sales tax revenue & benefits related to health & transportation.

A NCDOT study of a one-time $26.7M investment in just 4 NC trails created the following economic impacts:

$19.4M Estimated annual sales revenue at local businesses along the four greenways

$25.7M Estimated annual savings due to more physical activity, less pollution and congestion, and fewer traffic injuries from greenway use

$48.7M Estimated business revenue from greenway construction

790 Jobs Are supported annually through greenway construction

The Great Trails State Coalition recommends building upon NC’s trail legacy by investing in and expanding our current trail system.

Next Steps

NC DOT greenways
Build Nature Trails NC State Parks
Build Greenways DOT Greenways
Support Tourism NC DOT

$2.5M to strengthen the NC Trails Program and support official State Trails
$18M for construction and land purchase dollars
$45M to leverage federal dollars for paved greenways
$2M for rural feasibility studies
$100,000 to help rural communities promote tourism
$150,000 to construct a Great Trails State web portal

Apart from some PARTF funds, there is no current state investment in trail construction. All state dollars spent for trail construction are federal pass through funds. NC DOT has been very states in state investment in trail construction.

Officially designate 2023 as NC Year of the Trail to celebrate and spur trail growth.

Investment Ready

Investment Ready Projects

NC DOT’s Great Trails State Plan identifies future projects in all 100 counties.

Investment Ready Projects
- Ready for Construction
- Ready for Design

With NC investment in trails, we can create jobs, support rural economies, create safe places for healthy recreation, and improve quality of life in communities in all 100 NC counties.

Want more information? Contact Tony Solar at (919)744-8803 or solarnovogovernmentolutions@gmail.com

www.GreatTrailsNC.org
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BUILD RELATIONSHIPS
THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS

- Role of a Lobbyist
- Identify legislative champions
  - Rep Blackwell
  - Rep Arp
  - Senator Brent Jackson
- Importance of tools
- Role of legislative departmental liaison
THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS

• Roles of Coalition Members
  • Personal visits
  • Input into bill language
  • Email campaigns
  • Letters
  • Handwritten cards

• Challenges
2021 LONG SESSION SUCCESS!

- 2023 Year of the Trail Designation
- Budget funding – first time ever
  - $29.15 M for the Complete the Trails Fund
2021-2022 BUDGET SUCCESS!

- Authorizes the Roanoke River Paddle Trail (now 12 State Trails)
- Creates the Complete the Trails Fund for State Trails with $29.25M NR
  - $25.1M in grant funding for State Trails projects
  - $50K capacity building grants for nonprofit organizations supporting State Trails (one MOU signed per State Trail)
  - $1.025M for Dan River and Roanoke River Paddle Trails
  - $425K for Yadkin River and French Broad Paddle Trails
  - $2.150M to plan and develop connector trails to small municipalities (<25K) to State Trails
- A new staff position within the NC Trails Program
- $2M for shared use path feasibility studies
2021 - 2022 STATE BUDGET

Grant funding for State Trail Projects

- Planning, design, land and easement acquisition for natural surface trails and paddle trail facilities.

- Construction/rehabilitation of natural surface trails, bridges and boardwalks, and trail facilities such as trailheads and camping sites.

- Trail signage and maintenance

- Matching funds for federal grants
But that’s not all…

- $62.7 M for LWF (plus $15 M for floodplain protection & restoration)
- $61.7 M for PARTF in FY 2021 - 22
- $3M for the Wilderness Gateway State Trail
- $50,000 for Northern Peaks Trail
- $100,000 NR for Ecusta Trail
- $750K for DuPont State Recreational Forest
- $150,000 to Blue Ridge Conservancy for the Watauga Paddle Trail
- $4 million for Vade Mecum at Hanging Rock State Park
- $550,000 for Mayo River State Park land purchase
- $4 million for Pilot Mountain Bean Shoals Trail
- $3.1 million for Rendezvous Mountain Park, to be a satellite annex of Stone Mountain SP
- $110,000 Town of Connelly Springs for multiple purposes including trails
- $465,000 NR to Western Piedmont Council for Trails Development
- $2,000,000 NR Town of Shelby Trails
- $1,000,000 NR Moonshine and Motorsports Cultural Trails
- $500,000 to BRC for Middle Fork Greenway
- $450K to Archdale for greenway expansion and maintenance
- $1.7M to Fayetteville for trail upgrades
- $50K to Kings Mountain for Kings Mountain Gateway Trail
- $93,100 to Lincolnton for the Lincolnton Rail Trail
- $40K to Lansing for upgrades to the Creeper Trail
- $250K Macon County Greenway
- $500,000 Cape Carteret Trail
- $50,000 Ramseur for the Deep River State Trail
- $1,850,000 City of Gastonia Catawba Creek Greenway

$149.2 M
2023 YEAR OF THE TRAIL

• Public engagement
• Media attention
• Educational tracks
• Legislative connections

• NC State Parks Interpretive Theme
• Trail events in all 100 counties
• Corporate sponsorships

SHOWCASE
PROMOTE &
CELEBRATE Trails
2023 YEAR OF THE TRAIL

- Engage with PR firm
- Logo, colors, and branding guide to share
- Central Website to promote Events, sell YOTT branded merchandise, and share other info about trails
- Promotional video(s) (Will distribute)
- Social media handles (IG, Twitter, FB, YouTube) to promote the Year of the Trail events and information and inspiration to get on NC’s trails
- Banners and signs for Year of the Trail events
- Billboard Advertising
- Conference Booth set-up
- Partnership with PBS NC
- Toolkits for local governments – how to create a YOTT event
2023 YEAR OF THE TRAIL

“Year of the Trail will be a tremendous opportunity to highlight North Carolina’s exceptional network of trails, and educate the public and elected officials about their value to our residents and communities.”

- Kate Dixon, Executive Director, Friends of the Mountains-to-Sea Trail
MOVING FORWARD

• Building Coalition Structure
• Year of the Trail - 2023
• Trails Caucus – launch in 2023
• Sustained trail funding for all trails
MOVING FORWARD
FEDERAL SIDE

• ARPA
• Infrastructure Bill
• Build Back Better
• 2021 RAISE Projects
HOW CAN YOU SUPPORT THE EFFORTS?

• Become a member of the Great Trails State Coalition
• Get involved with Year of the Trail
  ○ State level
    ▪ Fundraising
    ▪ Planning
  ○ Regional/Local level
    ▪ Organize events
Help us celebrate trails in North Carolina in 2023, and together, let's show why North Carolina is THE GREAT TRAILS STATE

www.greattrailsnc.org