The East Coast Greenway Becomes a State Trail

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East Coast Greenway Alliance
Today’s Presentation:

- Overview of the ECG
- Specifics on the ECG in NC
- State Trail designation process
- Lessons Learned
- Q & A
The East Coast Greenway is a walking and biking route stretching 3,000 miles from Maine to Florida.
We connect urban and rural, north and south, along the most populated corridor of the United States.
In 2020, we reached 35% traffic-protected trail, more than 1,000 miles.
The East Coast Greenway is more than a trail.
It’s transportation.
It’s a gym, free and open to all.
It’s a community center.
It’s a tourism attraction, good for local business.
It’s a park, encouraging environmental stewardship.
East Coast Greenway by the numbers:

- 3,000 miles
- 15 states + Washington, DC
- 450 communities
- 25M people within 5 miles of route
The Triangle Region is the **most complete** metro area along the entire East Coast Greenway.
What are State Trails?
• Trails of statewide significance, offering regional connectivity & public access

• Multiple, connected sections: each section sponsored by government agency, nonprofit, or private landowner

• NC Trails program responsible for overall corridor planning and coordination
Why ECGA Pursued State Trail Status:

• ECG 30% complete in NC, 70% left to complete

• Makes ECG eligible for a wider variety of funding mechanisms (for planning & construction)

• Recognition via:
  • NC Department of Natural & Cultural Resources
  • NC State Parks
  • NC General Assembly

• Technical assistance from NC State Parks

• A plus for many grant applications for trail funding
Part of NC ECG Strategic Plan

Increase investment in greenways and speed overall project delivery.

**OBJECTIVE**

**STRATEGIES**

A. Pursue federal funding.

B. Gain NC State Parks State Trail Designation.

C. STI Change to bring back state match.

D. Explore non-governmental funding opportunities.

**ACTIONS**

1. Apply for BUILD Grants.

2. Explore other federal grant opportunities.

3. Increase national legislative awareness of trail return on investment.

1. Draft language and find sponsor for bill.

2. Partner with local agencies to submit letters of support to representatives.

3. Continue to coordinate with State Parks.

1. Partner with NC advocacy organizations to influence for change.

2. Provide examples of how STI law impacts rural communities.

3. Increase state legislative awareness of trail return on investment.

1. Explore public/private partnership models.

2. Coordinate with ECG and other non-profit partners to utilize development resources.

3. Explore fundraising opportunities.
Step 0: Coordination with NC DNCR & State Parks
Step 1: Spreading the Word About the ECG
Step 1.5: Coordination with Advocacy Partners
Step 2: Identifying Champions and Securing Legislative Sponsors
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Step 3: Drafting House Bill 130

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2021

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HOUSE BILL DRH40094-MH-57

Short Title: East Coast Greenway/State Trails. (Public)

Sponsors: Representative White.

Referred to:

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A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT TO AUTHORIZE THE ADDITION OF THE EAST COAST GREENWAY IN
CENTRAL AND EASTERN NORTH CAROLINA TO THE STATE PARKS SYSTEM.
The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

SECTION 1. The General Assembly finds that a multiuse trail across Central and
Eastern North Carolina would provide a multitude of economic, recreational, health,
environmental, community, and transportation benefits. The General Assembly further finds that
federal, State, local, and private partners have expressed substantial interest in completing such
a trail, that such a trail would be a recreational resource of statewide significance, and that
including such a trail in the State Parks System as a State Trail would be beneficial to the people
of North Carolina and further the development of North Carolina as "The Great Trails State."

SECTION 2. The General Assembly authorizes the Department of Natural and
Cultural Resources to add the portion of the East Coast Greenway traversing North Carolina to
the State Parks System as the "East Coast Greenway State Trail," as provided in
G.S. 143D-135.54(b). The Department shall reserve permits, fees, and facilitate the

Step 4: Building Support for HB130

Honorable _____
North Carolina State Senate
16 West Jones Street
Raleigh, NC 27601

Dear Senator _____:

The importance of greenways and trails has never been more evident than during the covid-19 pandemic. Communities across North Carolina have come together to explore these trails, providing a healthy and safe way for individuals to connect with nature and take part in physical activity. Greenways and trails are essential for improving public health and promoting social cohesion. We urge you to support HB130, which will help ensure the continued growth and development of greenways and trails in our state.
Step 5: HB130 Passing the NC House & Senate
Last Step: Governor’s Signature
Recap of Lessons Learned:

• Iterative process, not a task on a to-do list
• Relationship building, not cold-calling
• Importance of partnerships
• Timing of legislative process
• Know your audience
Thank You!

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