

NC Department of Natural and Cultural Resources, Parks and Recreation

North Carolina Trails Annual Report (G.S. 143B-135.102)

October 2017



North Carolina Trails Program

The NC Trails Program originated in 1973 with the North Carolina Trails System Act and is dedicated to helping citizens, organizations, and agencies plan, develop, and manage all types of trails, ranging from greenways and trails for hiking, biking, and horseback riding, to river trails and off-highway vehicle trails.

The staff of the NC Trails Program and the North Carolina Trails Committee work together to enable volunteers, nonprofit organizations, and government agencies to develop trail plans, preserve land, and manage trails for all trail users. Staff provides technical assistance, offers grant opportunities, and develops successful partnerships with local conservation and recreation advocates.

New Mountain Bike Trails

The state trails program staff has been working on several trail design and construction projects in state parks.

- Progress continues on a 10-mile segment of multi-use trail at Carvers Creek State Park;
- A 7.1-mile beginner mountain bike loop at Raven Rock State Park is under construction with approximately 10 miles of trail being designed to add an intermediate and advanced loop;
- The 10.5-mile mountain bike trail project at Medoc Mountain State Park is nearing completion and will include beginner, intermediate, and advanced loops;
- At Hanging Rock State Park, 8.4 miles of mountain bike trail is also scheduled for construction in 2017.

These projects will add over 35 miles of single-track, mountain bike trails in state parks. The in-house design and layout of trail by staff have resulted in significant cost savings for the division.

Recreational Trails Program (RTP) Grants

The Division of Parks and Recreation, through the North Carolina Trails Program, received 75 grant requests totaling \$6,311,336 for projects in 2016. The North Carolina Trails Committee recommended funding for 26 projects totaling \$1,995,573, and grants were awarded by the Secretary of the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources. These projects will leverage \$1,738,087 of grantee matching funds to provide economic development and recreational resources to 17 counties.

2016 Recreational Trail Program Grant Awards

Applicant	Grant Award
Chatham County	100,000
Burke County	100,000
Town of Jonesville	100,000
USDA Forest Service - Uwharrie National Forest	100,000
USDA Forest Service - Uwharrie National Forest	100,000
USDA Forest Service - Tusquitee Ranger District	100,000
Triangle Land Conservancy	100,000
Dan River Basin Association	85,900
Town of Elkin	85,000
USDA Forest Service - Uwharrie National Forest	79,900
NC High Peaks Trail Association, Inc.	60,575
Sound Rivers, Inc.	60,487
USDA Forest Service - Uwharrie National Forest	60,000
City of New Bern	56,000
USDA Forest Service - Nantahala Ranger District	45,000
Appalachian Trail Conservancy	42,451
USDA Forest Service - Uwharrie National Forest	41,500
USDA Forest Service - Grandfather Ranger District	37,000
USDA Forest Service - Nantahala Ranger District	24,003
Davidson County Government	100,000
Town of North Wilkesboro/Yadkin River Greenway Council	100,000
USDA Forest Service - Uwharrie National Forest	100,000
McDowell County	80,000
USDA Forest Service - Cheoah Ranger District	100,000
Town of Mayodan	37,760
Carolina Mountain Land Conservancy	99,997
26 Projects Funded:	\$ 1,995,573

State Trails

State Trails are units of the State Parks System, authorized by the General Assembly pursuant to G.S. 143B-135-54(b). State Trails epitomize partnerships. While a State Park is operated and managed by the Division of Parks and Recreation, a State Trail is comprised of multiple connected sections, and each section of the trail is sponsored by a state or federal agency, local government, or private landowner.

Fonta Flora State Trail

The first 11.3 miles of the Fonta Flora State Trail were officially designated as 2016 came to a close, and there are additional trail miles ready for designation in 2017. The newest state trail, the Fonta Flora will encircle Lake James and reach from Morganton to Asheville when completed. These segments of the Fonta Flora State Trail were designated in 2016:

- Burke County: 2.0 miles in Fonta Flora County Park East
- Town of Black Mountain: 0.5 miles of the Oaks Trail
- City of Marion: 1.4 miles of the Catawba River Greenway
- USDA Forest Service: 3.6 miles of Point Lookout Trail
- City of Morganton: 3.8 miles of the Catawba River Greenway

Mountains-to-Sea State Trail

The Mountains-to-Sea State Trail (MST) is an effort to connect Clingmans Dome in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park to Jockey's Ridge State Park on the Outer Banks. The concept of a trail reaching across the state from the mountains to the sea was first proposed in 1977.

The 40th anniversary marks a major milestone as the MST grows closer to completion. In 2016, three new segments of the MST extended it to 642.5 miles. A 15.5-mile mountain section hand-built by Carolina Mountain Club volunteers is a particularly impressive addition. These new segments are the result of partnerships with land managers and volunteers:

- National Park Service: 15.5 miles from Hintooga Road to Balsam Gap, hand-built by Carolina Mountain Club volunteers;
- City of New Bern: 2.1 miles of the New Bern Riverwalk;
- Classical American Homes Preservation Trust of Hillsborough: 0.5 miles of Oxbow Connection Trail and 95 foot-long bridge over the Eno River;
- National Park Service: 80 foot-long Boone Fork Bridge built by the Friends of the MST with funds from a Recreational Trails Program grant and donations by the Blue Ridge Parkway Foundation;
- Town of Elkin: 178 foot-long bridge over Big Elkin Creek built by the Elkin Valley Trails Association with funds from a Recreational Trails Program grant.

Each of these projects is a milestone toward completion of the vision. The National Park Service addition is an important step toward closing a gap in an otherwise continuous section from Clingmans Dome to Stone Mountain State Park. The Friends of the Mountains-to-Sea Trail, a non-profit support group, is partnering with the division in planning events to celebrate the 40th Anniversary of the MST concept.

Total miles for all State Trails

- MST – 642.5 miles designated
- Fonta Flora State Trail – 11.3 miles designated
- Yadkin River State Trail – 130 miles designated
- French Broad State Trail – 117 miles designated
- Deep River State Trail – (Hybrid hiking and paddle trail) No mileage has been submitted for designation by land managers, but several miles have been built by a coalition of local and county government officials.

State Park Trails

Total trail mileage within state park boundaries (hike, bike, equestrian, paddle) is 580.5 miles. Twenty three of the 580 miles are sections of the MST within state parks.