



Vol 18 No 1

# Little Toot

Spring 2009

## Web initiatives give NCRT new face

North Carolina Rail-Trails took a major step toward strengthening its Web presence at its April board meeting by agreeing to solicit proposals for a new Web site design as part of a 12 to 18-month ramp-up.

Plans to significantly redesign the current NCRT Web site [www.ncrailtrails.org](http://www.ncrailtrails.org) is the latest in a series of changes since Curt Devereux became Web master in the fall. Devereux succeeds Dan Arrasmith who handled publication of Little Toot and established NCRT's Web presence.

"As NCRT has fine-tuned its focus, it's only logical for the Web site to reflect that," says Devereux, a Durham resident who finished a long career at EPA several years ago. "The new design will present the new initiatives in a way that are easily accessible and give traction as NCRT moves forward.

"The content and usefulness of the new site will better tell the story of why NCRT is an organization worth belonging to and supporting. It's a group that can play a critical role in finding and preserving unused corridors. As this message is better understood, support for NCRT and

**Web initiatives** (Continued on page 3)

## New board begins new year

North Carolina Rail-Trails settled in under the leadership of its new chair, John Morck, at its January board meeting and pushed along several long-standing initiatives: completion of a business plan and approval of a concept to ramp up NCRT's Web site (see accompanying story).

The April board meeting was devoted to looking at the future of NCRT and coming to a

consensus on organizational priorities. The day-long meeting in High Point was assisted by a professional facilitator as NCRT positions itself to respond to new state and federal initiatives. The business plan, the result of a \$10,000 study, has been under consider-

**New board** (Continued on page 3)



Photo by Dave Connelly

In January NCRT presented a Purple and Silver Spike award to Roseboro and Sampson County officials for their plans for the 1.7-mile Roseboro Rail-Trail. (L to R) AL Capehart president of NCRT; David Alexander, Roseboro town commissioner; Ali Turpen, Sampson County's director of parks and recreation; and John Morck, chair of NCRT's board. Purple and silver were colors of the Atlantic Coast Line Passenger Service.

## More trails: A matter of life and girth

By day Dave Connelly is a library assistant at Duke University's Fuqua School of Business. The four-year NCRT board member has also developed a few ideas about the necessity of rail-trails, which he shares here.

I have a message for both my greenway friends and my fellow fiscal conservatives: We simply can't afford not to build trails — lots of them in every community in

North Carolina. This summer Jacksonville completed the extension of their rail-to-trail project. Local comments ranged from eager anticipation to derision over, um, wasting tax dollars.

[www.jdnews.com/news/trail\\_57533\\_\\_article.html/city\\_base.html](http://www.jdnews.com/news/trail_57533__article.html/city_base.html)

North Carolina can no longer afford to be a laggard in developing trails and greenways. We rank among the leaders in obese adults (seventeenth in the nation) and overweight youths

(fifth!). A Center for Disease Control study estimates that it costs our state \$2.138 billion per year in medical costs associated with obesity and being overweight. ([www.cdc.gov/](http://www.cdc.gov/))

**Life and girth** (Continued on page 2)

North Carolina Rail-Trails  
<http://www.ncrailtrails.org>

## West Pender Rail-Trail Alliance formed



Photo by AL Capehart

In April Pender County rail-trail supporters voted to incorporate into the West Pender Rail-Trail Alliance and seek 501(c)(3) nonprofit status. The Alliance will work to reopen the old ACL railroad bed running across Sampson County to New Hanover County as a bicycle connection to Wilmington. Officers are (L to R) 2nd Vice Chair Marlyn Mears, Secretary Ben Andrea, Treasurer Dee Turner and Chair Susan Bullers, PhD.

[www.flickr.com/photos/9986245@N05/2392744033/](http://www.flickr.com/photos/9986245@N05/2392744033/)

Imagine for a moment that we North Carolinians had the determination to match one year's cost of treating obesity with an equal investment in new trail construction. NC-DOT offers several numbers for construction of 10-foot wide, multi-use trails, including a figure of \$510,000 per mile for rail-trails.

[www.ncdot.org/transit/bicycle/safety/programs\\_initiatives/Transportation\\_Plans/Albemarle/Appendix-E\\_Cost\\_Estimates.pdf](http://www.ncdot.org/transit/bicycle/safety/programs_initiatives/Transportation_Plans/Albemarle/Appendix-E_Cost_Estimates.pdf)

Our state spends money every year on infrastructure — schools, hospitals, military bases, prisons and roads (We especially like bigger highways!). We gripe about the costs, but we keep spending the money, because it's infrastructure. We "gotta have 'em."

As trails advocates and wise investors, we must get this message out to the people: Trails are not a luxury, they're infrastructure. We "gotta have 'em."

For many citizens, weight and exercise have become a matter of life and girth. A preventive infrastructure of rail-trails and greenways could actually save taxpayer money.

Imagine what a \$2 billion plus investment could provide in infrastructure for weight reduc-

*(Continued in next column)*

## Life and girth

*(Continued from page 1)*

[nccdphp/dnpa/obesity/economic\\_consequences.htm](http://nccdphp/dnpa/obesity/economic_consequences.htm)

The study used 1998-2000 data. I'm guessing both obesity and health care costs have continued to trend upward since then. So that's at least \$2 billion spent each year alone that is solely attributable to weight problems.

The key to improving one's health is to move our lifestyle from sedentary to active. Having a convenient place to walk/jog/bike is essential for getting fit and shedding pounds. The American Tobacco Trail, which first opened in 2000, draws more people with each passing year.

*(Continued in next column)*

**North Carolina Rail-Trails** participates in workplace campaigns with



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800-200-6311 or 919-687-4840

## Briefs

North Carolina Rail-Trails has two new board members.

**Steve Smutko** is a Ph.D. extension specialist at NCSU and director of the Natural Resource Leadership Institute. The Institute trains corporate and nonprofit leaders in conflict resolution around environmental issues. Smutko will serve a three-year term.

**Alison Carpenter** is a bicycle and pedestrian planner specializing in programs, coordination and planning studies. Among her professional affiliations, she is a charter member and board member of the N.C. Active Transportation Alliance. She will serve a two-year term with NCRT.

The extension of the **Brevard Bike Path** into the Pisgah National Forest should be completed (or at least be well underway) this summer. Most of this extension will be on the crown of the dismantled rail bed of the defunct Carr Lumber Railroad.

NC-DOT stimulus enhancement funds are being used to fund a safe crossing of the wide and busy Asheville Highway. The path will connect with the Art Loeb Trail. The latter trail is a connector to and part of the Mountains-to-Sea Trail.

tion and health improvement: Over 4,100 miles of paved, multi-use trails in North Carolina. That's 41 miles of new trail for every county in the state.

Every county and municipality in the state should have a trails master plan. Every Metropolitan Planning Organization Transportation Improvement Program should ask for greater investment in trails. Multi-use trails are not just enhancements, they're essentials.



[www.nccconservationnetwork.org](http://www.nccconservationnetwork.org)  
Charter Member

### Resource Contacts

NC State Trails Program  
NC DOT Rail Planner  
NC DOT Bike-Ped. Div.  
NPS Field Office, RTCA  
Rails-to-Trails Conservancy

Darrell McBane  
Pam Davis  
Tom Norman  
Deirdre Hewitt  
Kelly Pack

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919-715-2342  
828-271-4779 x-272  
202-974-5148

# Web initiatives

(Continued from page 1)

other groups fostering trail development should increase.”

Devereux will play a significant role in the new design that will have a new look, improved navigation and archival features, in addition to expanded and more current content.

“We are building in capabilities for features to be implemented over the next 12 to 18 months,” Devereux says. “This will include displaying trail maps, a large gallery of digital images and a resources section of largely searchable PDF files.” NCRT expects to solicit proposals for the new web site by early May and to have the Phase I features accessible by late summer.

Under Devereux’s direction, the NCRT Web site has recently added two new features that accelerate the reporting of new developments to the rail-trails community.

From the front page of the Web site, a reader can subscribe to periodic News Alerts at <http://ncrailtrails.org/mailman/listinfo/ncrt-alerts>. The Alerts update readers on upcoming and recent events, new initiatives and news of various rail-trail projects around the state. Subscribing to the Alerts list is quick and can be cancelled quickly on-line.

The second upgrade is a news page which facilitates more extended reporting of the Alerts items and other content. The news page will provide rail-trails content directly as well as provide links to information on Web sites around North Carolina. Content will be provided by NCRT Board members and from reports received from county-level contacts. The page will be updated frequently.

“These features are absolutely essential in getting out the word about NCRT and advancing our efforts,” Devereux says.



Photo by Garry Cooper

NCRT’s board met for a full day in High Point in April 4 to advance a long-term business plan and Web initiatives.

## Legal guidelines on NCRT Web site

North Carolina Rail-Trails now has on its Web site a recent very comprehensive memo on North Carolina law regarding trail and railroad property ownership issues crucial to rail-trail development.

Topics included are: state law affecting rail corridor ownership; general principles of deed construction (interpretation); construction of deed as fee versus easement; and nature of interest acquired by adverse possession without a deed.

Other topics are: abandonment of an easement; transfers of railroad rights of way; and the extinguishment of certain reversionary interests causing full property ownership by the railroad. One section covers liability issues of trail managers.

The memo was prepared in April 2008 by Andrea Ferster, general counsel of the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy in Washington D.C. Look under Laws, Court Cases and Legal Analysis at [www.ncrailtrails.org](http://www.ncrailtrails.org)

## New board

(Continued from page 1)

ation for 18 months. The results of the April workshop will be used to complete the business plan by focusing NCRT’s strategies and objectives for the next five years.

The board voted to begin the process of acquiring a part-time executive director. The executive director will bring greater focus to NCRT initiatives and will be the key to numerous new outreach efforts aimed at reaching the full range

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of citizens and groups interested in rail-trail development in the state.

Morck, 47, a chief planner with the state Department of Commerce’s Division of Community Assistance, has been on the board for 13 years.

“This is really an honor to head this organization to which Carolyn (Carolyn Townsend, former chair) and AL (AL Capehart, also a NCRT founder) have brought so much vision and energy over the years,” Morck said. “I think we’ve had a good start this year, and I’m really excited about where we’re going.”

## JOIN NORTH CAROLINA RAIL-TRAILS !

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Reason for interest in rail-trails \_\_\_\_\_

**NCRT annual memberships: Individual - \$25, Corporate - \$100**  
**Mail to North Carolina Rail-Trails, PO Box 61348, Durham, NC 27715-1348**  
**On line at [www.ncrailtrails.org](http://www.ncrailtrails.org)**

NCRT is a 501-c(3) public non-profit tax exempt organization founded in 1990.  
All contributions and donations are tax deductible to the fullest extent of the law.

**"To Protect Rail Corridors for Trail and Rail with Trail Use"**

## New trail in the works



Photo by AL Capehart

Washington-Greenville Rail-Trail, Trail and Greenway supporters unfurl the new Washington- Greenville Greenway banner at the Cycle North Carolina in Washington, N.C., the weekend of April 17-19. Check the bike map at [www.ncrailtrails.org](http://www.ncrailtrails.org)

(L to R) Philip Mobley, director Washington Parks and Recreation; Dave Connelly, NCRT vice chair and East Coast Greenway advocate; Dilys Bowman, Triangle Rails-to-Trails Conservancy; Vernon Teeter, Beaufort County Committee of 100; and Lamarco Morrison, Greenville Parks planner.

### NCRT Summer Board Meeting

Saturday, July 11  
10:30 a.m.

Tom Sykes Recreation Center  
1501 Euclid Ave.  
Dilworth Elementary/Latta Park site  
Charlotte, NC 28203

### NORTH CAROLINA RAIL-TRAILS INC. BOARD and SUPPORT

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### LOCAL CONTACTS

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Rockingham County	Katherine Mull	336-627-6270
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Stokes County	David Simpson	336-969-6121
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