



NORTH CAROLINA
RAIL-TRAILS

newsletter spring 2011
(formerly *Little Toot*)

"Connecting people & communities"

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Photo © Nancy Pierce

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- 2** | The ATT's a Business-Booster Too
American Tobacco Trail User FAQs
- 3** | UPDATE: Rail-Trail Projects
Executive Director's Message
- 4** | Membership
Upcoming Trail-Related Events in North Carolina

WWW.NCRAILTRAILS.ORG

NORTH CAROLINA'S PREMIERE RAIL-TRAIL: The American Tobacco Trail

It's the longest rail-trail in North Carolina and still growing. When a four-mile gap is closed with a bridge over I-40 in mid-2012, the American Tobacco Trail (ATT) will offer users 22 contiguous miles from downtown Durham south through Durham, Chatham and Wake Counties.

The former Norfolk Southern Rail corridor was so popular as an unofficial trail after its abandonment in 1979 that Durham City and County resolved in 1987 to protect all unused or abandoned rail corridors for trail use. North Carolina Rail-Trails' co-founder, AL Capehart, was

THE CHATHAM COUNTY SECTION OF THE ATT FEATURES A DUAL SURFACE AND BOARDWALK BRIDGES OVER MULTIPLE CREEKS AND WETLAND AREAS.

instrumental in garnering early support for the trail and the creation of the Triangle Rails to Trails Conservancy. TRTC (formed in 1989) continues to be the primary advocate and volunteer base for the ATT. In 1992, an ATT master plan was approved by the counties and NCDOT. Eight years later, in 2000, the first major

continued on page 2...

The ATT's a Business- Booster Too



Jason and Kim Page opened Bull City Running Company just around the corner from the ATT at Southpoint Crossing in September, 2008. From the start, the ATT has been integral to the store's identity, says Kim. "We host events to give back to the community, we do regular training programs, and you couldn't ask for a better training spot than the ATT at our back door." And it works both ways: Kim says that people coming off the end of the trail come into the store, generating new customer traffic, "It was the ideal place to open the business."

The American Tobacco Trail *continued from page 1...*

section (3.2 miles) opened in Durham.

A tremendous diversity of users, ranging from young kids on bikes and families with strollers to spandex-clad cyclists and runners-in-training, use the current

19.5 miles of the ATT. All ethnicities, age groups and abilities are represented. The ATT and its spurs connect many destinations including downtown Durham, Solite Park, Southpoint Crossing, NC Central University and Jordan Lake. It's wide, flat, smooth, straight and safe, with good visibility and accessibility for wheelchairs.

American Tobacco Trail User FAQs

>> What's a central parking spot?

Southpoint Crossing trailhead just north of NC 54 at Fayetteville Road.

>> How many miles is it?

There are 19.5 miles in two sections. Northern (above I-40) is 6.5 miles, all asphalt. Southern (below I-40) is 13 miles, asphalt and compact granite screenings with 2 miles dirt/gravel.

>> What about the gap?

Fayetteville Road is unsafe for peds or bikes. If you're an experienced cyclist, going south get on-road when the northern section quits at Hwy 54. Wind your way south and west to Hwy 751 using Highgate, Audobon Lake and Southpoint Autopark Blvd. Go south on Hwy 751, then east onto Massey Church. You'll see the trail on your right. Total gap distance: just under 3 miles.

>> Where's the dirt/gravel part?

It's from Massey Church Road south for two miles. South of that you'll be on new, smooth surface for 11 miles all the way to the southern terminus.

>> Where's a connecting trail?

Durham's North - South Greenway, 5 miles of asphalt trail, connects to the north terminus of the ATT via a safe 1 mile road route.

>> Best bets for retail, food and services?

Southpoint Crossing near the trailhead and restaurants at the northern terminus, the historic American Tobacco Campus.

>> Best scenic interlude?

Eagle Spur off the south section. Natural 2.3 mile trail (no bikes) to Jordan Lake.

>> A place to shower?

Out-of-towners or Y members contact Durham Uptown YMCA at the ATT north terminus.

>> Do I need a map?

Not for the ATT, but probably so for the on-road connections, spurs and the Durham Greenway. Get a free one at the Bull City Running Company, Southpoint Crossing

>> Where can I get more information?

www.triangletrails.org



NCRT BOARD MEMBERS TOURING
THE DEEP RIVER RAIL-TRAIL SITE
IN FRANKLINVILLE.

Photo © Nancy Pierce

UPDATE: Rail-Trail Projects

Rail-trail projects are typically driven by localities with heavy participation from nonprofit organizations and volunteers. NCRT provides technical assistance when requested. Here is a look at a few trail initiatives across the state.

Deep River Trail, Randolph County. The Deep River Trail in Franklinville has been designated a State Blue Trail. A rail-trail on the Atlantic & Yadkin rail corridor could prove to be an important state model for rail corridor usage and State partnerships. NCRT has been providing technical assistance to the Town of Franklinville.

Rail-trail on the Elkin and Alleghany Corridor, Surry County. NCRT is working with a group of local citizens and the town of Elkin to complete remaining parts of the 2.3 mi. trail, with the biggest challenge being the installation of several bridges.

Thermal Belt Rail-Trail, Rutherford County. This existing 8-mile trail is about to undergo change in ownership from Rutherford Railroad Development Corporation (Bechtler Development Corp-operator) to Rutherford County. Jerry Stensland, Recreation, Cultural and Heritage Planner for the County, is forming a community partnership to improve and maintain the trail. NCRT is monitoring progress and will offer technical support as needed. Contact Jerry.Stensland@rutherfordcountync.gov if you would like to help!

Washington-Greenville Greenway, Beaufort and Pitt Counties, Cities of Greenville and Washington. Efforts are underway to complete local bike plans which will facilitate State trail funding for this trail which will link the ECU campus and Washington's waterfront. NCRT meets bi-monthly with the local committee.

West Pender Rail-Trail, Pender County. This proposed 10-mile rail-trail on the Atlantic Coast Line corridor would connect Moores Creek National Battlefield and the USS North Carolina Battleship in Wilmington. NCRT is a member in the West Pender Rail-Trail Alliance, lending technical assistance as needed.

Ecusta Trail, Henderson & Transylvania Counties. A proposed rail-trail on the inactive 18-mile Norfolk Southern rail line from Hendersonville to Brevard is the subject of a planning and economic impact study in process. NCRT Board Member Michael Domonkos is an active member of the Friends of the Ecusta and alerts NCRT staff when assistance is needed.

Executive Director's Message

Hello and welcome to the new North Carolina Rail-Trails Newsletter. I hope that you will enjoy our new layout and approach to your newsletter.



Each 2011 newsletter has a theme, showcasing how rail-trails connect people and communities. The theme for this issue is economic development, focusing on the American Tobacco Trail. Our newsletter isn't the only thing receiving a face-lift. We are also pleased to introduce you to the new North Carolina Rail-Trails logo. We hope that you like it! We will be rolling out our new image to the public and the media soon, but we wanted you, our members, to see it first! Please keep in touch and let us know what you think of the changes. Your energy and support make it all possible.

See you on the rail-trail,

Carrie Banks

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WWW.NCRAILTRAILS.ORG



THE WAKE COUNTY SECTION OF THE
AMERICAN TOBACCO TRAIL

Photo © Nancy Pierce

MEMBERSHIP

Join North Carolina Rail-Trails!

Go to WWW.NCRAILTRAILS.ORG
and click on the “become a
member” link to join.

OR you may mail a check
(\$25 membership dues) to:

North Carolina Rail-Trails
PO Box 61348
Durham, NC 27715

NCRT is a 501(c)(3) public non-profit.
Your membership dues and any additional
contributions tax deductible to the fullest
extent of the law.

Thank you so much for your support.

Upcoming Trail-Related Events in North Carolina

April 16-17th: **Kings Drive Art Walk**

Little Sugar Creek Greenway, Charlotte. www.festivalinthepark.org/kingsdrive.htm

April 30th: **Owls Roost Rumble**

Greensboro. www.owlsroostrumble.com

May 7th: **East Coast Greenway Ride**

Durham. www.crosstrianglegreenway.org

May 14th: **Ruby Ride and Run**

Franklin. www.therubyride.com

June 4th: **National Trails Day**

everywhere. www.americanhiking.org/ntd.aspx

July 2nd: **Firecracker 5 & 10k**

Lenoir. www.caldwellcountypathways.com/events.php

July 16th: **Habitat Bull Moon Ride**

Durham. www.durhamhabitat.org/volunteer/bike.html

member:



charter member:

