

Susie Post Rust pauses as she rides with daughter Rosie, in carrier, and son John on the Durham portion of the American Tobacco Trail near the Durham Bulls Athletic Park.

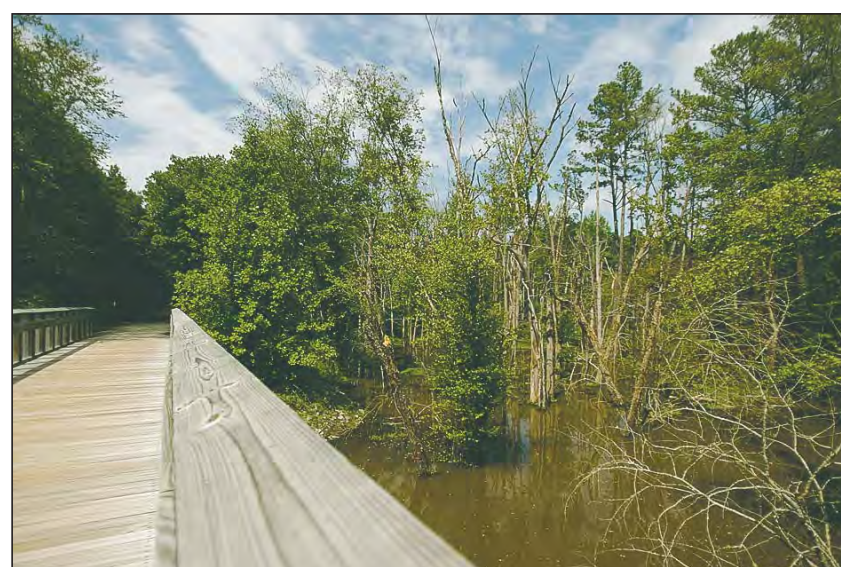
AMERICAN TOBACCO TRAIL

When completed, the American Tobacco Trail will be the longest trail in the Triangle, stretching 22 miles from western Wake County north to downtown Durham. At present, about 20 miles of trail are open: 6.7 miles in Wake County, 4.7 miles in Chatham County and 9 in Durham County. The main hurdles to completion: two bridges using old railroad trestles in Chatham County and a pedestrian bridge over Interstate 40 in Durham near the Streets at Southpoint mall. Because of these breaks, the trail is divided into four sections.

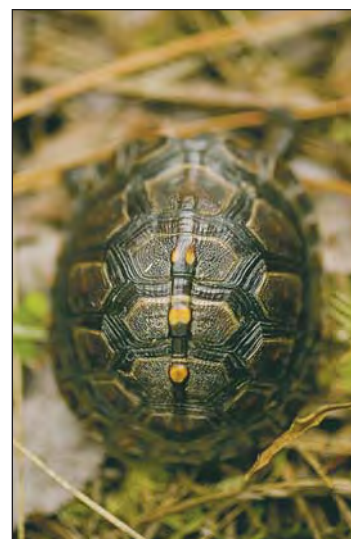
The ATT is the backbone of a Triangle-wide effort to link as many cities and neighborhoods by greenway and bike path as possible. In one such scenario — a scenario that is about three-quarters complete — using ATT and other greenways, it will be possible to ride a bike, run or walk from Raleigh, through Umstead State Park, Cary and Apex, then catch the ATT to downtown Durham.

We made the Wake County end of the trail our starting point at the bottom of the map at left so the mileage marks are from south to north.

STAFF PHOTOS BY JULI LEONARD

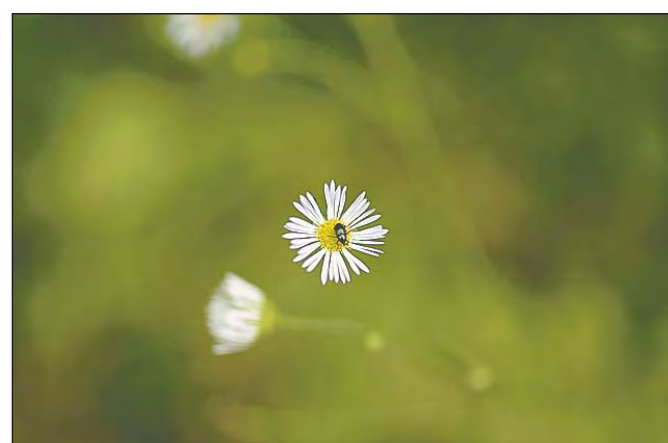


On the Wake County end, the ATT runs across Beaver Creek in New Hill. Other bridges need to be built to make the 22-mile trail complete.



In the Jordan Lake Game Lands you might spot a box turtle. The Chatham County section is the wildest part of the trail.

If you are out for a nature walk, try the part of the trail marked in blue in the map. But be sure to carry your own water.



Robert Frye of Apex walks his dogs, Willy, left, and Jake, on the ATT at New Hill. Frye walks the trail two or three times a week.