

December 2017

Dear Friends of the American Tobacco Trail,

Season's greetings and happy holidays from Triangle Rails-to-Trails Conservancy (TRTC)! It's almost the end of the year and we would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your help in the past, keep you up to date on what we have been doing this year, and ask you for your continuing support. Any amount you can spare will be welcome as we continue to maintain selected ATT facilities and to promote and improve the American Tobacco Trail and local rail-trails. Here is some of what we have been doing in 2017 with your donations and support:

Special Projects: We continued our long term advocacy for expanded parking at Scott King just east of the trail crossing on Scott King Road. ATT user parking along the road has seen a steady increase for several years and additional capacity is clearly needed. Due to staffing limitations, the City of Durham only begun their site planning for this facility in October 2015, even though funding became available in July 2014. We provided comments on the initial site plan and design for this facility completed by a contractor in the Fall of 2016. During 2017 the city solicited bids for construction twice but proposals received exceeded funds available. City staff are requesting additional funds and hope to go out for bids again by Spring 2018. TRTC has offered to provide safety fencing if the City faces a modest shortfall. Due to this deferred start and larger than expected costs for design and building, it appears this facility will not be completed until late in 2018.

Trail Safety: We continued efforts to seek improvements at the O'Kelly Chapel Road crossing to make crossing this very busy road safer for trail users. We continued our contacts with the Town of Cary and Chatham County to obtain user activated signal lights. Earlier this month we met with staff from NC DOT, Town of Cary and Chatham County and learned that the Town has agreed to install signal lights at this crossing during the Spring of 2018. These lights will be similar to those at several Cary crossings and at Morrisville Parkway but will have signals about 400' from the crossing as well as at the crossing.

Trail Maintenance: We maintained the Pittard Sears parking lot including plumbing support needed to open the water fountain in early April and shut it down for the winter in late November. Funds from donations were used to pay the monthly water bill for this very popular ATT amenity. Our Pittard Sears lot saw lots of use this year and provided a safe (and legal) alternative to parking on O'Kelly Church Road. Donations to TRTC and funds from the Tobacco Road Marathon were key to allowing this long term ATT facility to happen. In the Fall of 2016 we were notified by NC DOT that this lot is not in compliance with requirements of the federal Americans with Disabilities Act (commonly referred to as the ADA). The construction approvals we received in 2012 did not specify the need to have 2 paved parking spaces and a hard surface trail from the trail to the lot and from the paved parking spaces to the fountain. During 2017 we made good progress in clearing a 175' long area where a new hard surface connector trail will be constructed in 2018. This involved cutting down 10 pine trees, grinding the stumps to ground level, and installing a 20' long culvert on the west side of the trail where the new connector will access the ATT. During 2018 we need to complete detailed specs for the hard surface parking

spaces and connector trail, solicit construction proposals and complete all the required improvements at the Pittard Sears lot.

We held eight targeted workdays this year. These included maintenance of the access trail and grassy areas at the Fayetteville Road trailhead. In the area north and south of Scott King Road we swept or shoveled sand and blew off sand and pine needles several times to augment the somewhat irregular sweeping done by Durham. We also held four workdays on the 2.2-mile Eagle Spur rail-trail south of Stagecoach Road, to remove downed trees, widen the trail and carry out trash. Eagle Spur is an unimproved rural wooded trail corridor leading to Jordan Lake on land now managed by the NC Fish and Wildlife Commission; it is popular with fishermen, hunters and hikers. In January 2017 we held a workday to carry in 3 very large plastic culverts to be installed as replacements for three badly damaged drainage culverts crossing this trail. These culverts will improve user safety and allow trail usage even in very wet conditions. Since then we have held several smaller workdays to remove stumps and other materials that will allow these new culverts to be installed. Installing these culverts will be large efforts involving substantial digging and covering that will need numerous volunteers. We hope to install 2 of these in 2018 and the final one in 2019.

Outreach Events: TRTC volunteers once again manned a rest stop at Bikefest, an annual fund raising event put on each August by the Carolina Tarwheels.

Maps: Printable PDF files for the 2015 ATT maps were made available on our site early in the year. During 2017 we provided over 1500 copies of our maps to users via the ATT map boxes at Scott King, O'Kelly Chapel and at the New Hope Church trailhead and at the Cary and Durham REI stores and several other outlets.

Trail Support Summary: In summary, we continue to work as volunteers to make the American Tobacco Trail (and its little sibling the Eagle Spur Trail, originally part of the same rail line) great places to get out and enjoy the outdoors. Your donations help us to build connector trails, do maintenance, create and print trail maps, fund important special projects and provide water for trail users. All of us at TRTC thank you for your continued support. Please consider us in your holiday giving, by purchasing or renewing a membership and making a tax-deductible donation to TRTC.

You can donate online by going to www.triangletrails.org/membership and paying via PayPal, or you can send us a check payable to Triangle Rails-to-Trails Conservancy Inc. (TRTC)
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If you have any questions about joining or making a tax-deductible contribution to TRTC, or if you have any questions about your existing or past membership, please contact our TRTC Treasurer at: michaelforte@hotmail.com

With thanks for your support,

Curt Devereux

President, Triangle Rails-to-Trails Conservancy



Finishing up work on covering culvert for new connector at Pittard Sears