

NC GREAT TRAILS STATE COALITION

BRANDING NORTH CAROLINA AS THE GREAT TRAILS STATE



Thank you to the General Assembly for a historic state investment in trails, parks, and conservation in the 2021 budget, particularly the Complete the Trails Fund.

2022 LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

- 1 Support NC Year of the Trail:**
 - \$350,000 one-time marketing funding for NC Year of the Trail
- 2 Complete the Trails Fund:**
 - \$50,000 capacity building grants for each of the State Trail nonprofit partners to ensure continued development progress for FY 2022-2023, and a request this funding become recurring starting in 2023-2024
- 3 Adopt-a-Trail:**
 - \$1M nonrecurring funding for the Adopt a Trail program for small projects that are NOT State Trails (unfunded since 2013)
- 4 Investing in Paved Greenways (Shared-Use Paths):**
 - \$38M one-time gap funding to make up shortfalls on current Strategic Transportation Investments Program (STIP) projects
 - A separate competitive grant process outside of Strategic Transportation Investments (STI) for trail projects
- 5 Support continued funding of the conservation trust funds as recommended by Land for Tomorrow.**

WHY TRAILS?



Economic Benefits



Health Benefits



Free, Accessible Recreation

Return on Investment

Every \$1.00 spent on trail construction generates \$1.72 annually from local business revenue, sales tax revenue, & benefits related to health & transportation.

(Evaluating the Economic Impact of Shared-Use Paths in North Carolina. Institute for Transportation Research and Education. 2018.)



\$350,000 IN ONE-TIME MARKETING FUNDS

A year-long statewide campaign to celebrate, promote and highlight trails all across North Carolina

NC Year of the Trail offers a once in a generation opportunity to focus public attention on the benefits trails provide to communities all across the State. North Carolina's hiking, biking, paddling, and equestrian trails showcase our natural and urban landscapes, boost physical and mental health, fuel local businesses and tourism, inspire environmental stewardship, and nurture community pride.

We are building a brand for all of North Carolina to be recognized as "The Great Trails State". We will continue to brand outdoor recreation assets to boost tourism and provide healthy recreation for residents.

NC YEAR OF THE TRAIL LEGISLATIVE LEADERS

- Rep. Hugh Blackwell
- Rep. Pat Hurley
- Rep. Larry Strickland
- Rep. Dean Arp
- Senator Brent Jackson

NC YEAR OF THE TRAIL HONORARY COMMITTEE

- Seth Alvo
- Lori Bush
- Jennifer Pharr Davis
- Kate Dixon
- Chuck Flink
- Bill Flournoy
- Sig Hutchinson
- Howard Lee
- Chuck Neely
- Pat McCrory
- Chuck McGrady
- Mitchell Silver

KEY ASPECTS OF THE YEAR

1 Public Engagement

- Encourage every North Carolinian to get outside on a trail
- Host at least one trail event in each of NC's 100 counties
- Provide tool kits for local communities to plan and execute Year of the Trail events (including tools to promote economic impact of trails)
- Recognize Volunteers

2 Media Attention

- Highlight NC trails and their benefits through broadcasts, print and digital media, billboards, social media, TV, and other advertising venues statewide
- Partnership with PBS NC for quality original content
- Messaging about health benefits of trails

3 Legislative Connections

- Invite members of the NC Legislature to events taking place along trails in their district including ribbon cuttings

COMPLETE THE TRAILS FUND



NORTH CAROLINA'S 12 Officially Designated STATE TRAILS

NC TRAILS



STATE TRAILS

- | | |
|---------------------|----------------------|
| Dan River | Mountains-to-Sea |
| Deep River | Northern Peaks |
| East Coast Greenway | Overmountain Victory |
| Fonta Flora | Roanoke River |
| French Broad River | Wilderness Gateway |
| Hickory Nut Gorge | Yadkin River |

MAP LEGEND

- Planned state trail segments
- Existing state trail segments
- City
- State Park

2021 Complete the Trails Fund distribution schedule: (Funds not yet distributed)

- Summer 2022 – one-time \$50,000 capacity building grants
- Fall 2022 – allocated \$15M in project funds available
- January/February 2023 – \$10M in competitive land acquisition funds available
- Spring 2023 – \$2M connecting to small communities funds available

2022 ASK

- \$50,000 in 2022-2023 capacity building grants for each State Trail nonprofit partner
- \$50,000 recurring starting in 2023-2024

The 2021 \$29M Complete the Trails Fund will provide critical resources to make significant progress on developing the 12 authorized State Trails.

Effective, on the ground nonprofit partners for each State Trail have signed MOUs and developed 5-year project plans, prioritizing high impact, ready to be implemented projects. Future progress depends on additional capacity building grants.

ADOPT-A-TRAIL (Unfunded since 2013)

\$1,000,000

Existing program that supports local and regional trails that are not State Trails with small project grant funding.

- Investment Ready projects identified across the State
- \$50,000 cap on projects
- Administered by the NC Trails Program in State Parks



INVESTING IN PAVED GREENWAYS (Shared-Use Paths)



1. One time State Capital and Infrastructure Fund (SCIF) Directed Grant to bridge budget shortfalls for trail projects in the current STIP

- \$38,000,000**
 - 10% of the current Federally funded projects in STIP
- Construction cost escalation / Inflation
- Lack of past investment in feasibility studies

2. Competitive grant process to access Federal funds

- Outside of STI process
- Paved Trail projects have a much shorter “life cycle” than a highway project. Streamlined process gets projects to construction faster.
- STI doesn't allow for regional trail projects (projects that cross divisions)
- Longer term goal: Great Trails State Fund
 - Recurring state funding for paved trails to implement North Carolina Great Trails State Plan vision connecting all 100 counties with expanded capacity at NC DOT Integrated Mobility Division to leverage historic levels of federal infrastructure funding.