



# *Building Connections...*

## 2008 Tennessee Greenways and Trails Plan

Greenways and Trails Program  
Recreation Educational Services Division  
Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation



# Commissioner's Greenways and Trails Advisory Council

to  
**Governor Phil Bredesen**  
and  
**Commissioner James H. Fyke**

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October 2008

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Third Photo is from the City of Knoxville Greenways Program

### Back Cover Photo

The photo is Knoxville Mayor Bill Haslam walking with children on Victor Ashe Greenway during the Power-U Healthy program in 2007. Photo by Leslie Karnowski.



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# BUILDING CONNECTIONS...

## TENNESSEE GREENWAYS AND TRAILS

### INTRODUCTION

The 2001 Tennessee Greenways and Trails Plan guided our state and federal land managing agencies and local governments to develop greenways and trails. The 2008 Plan builds on those successes and provides new ways to promote greenways and trails across Tennessee. This plan also encouraged planning, development and implementation from the grass roots level utilizing numerous public-private partnerships. Much has been accomplished. **Now, Tennessee is ready to take the next step!**

The next step is to continue to create more greenways and trails and look for the connections they provide. With a serious crisis in obesity and diabetes rates among Tennesseans and a wider societal search for stress relief in daily living, the need and demand for greenways and trails is greater and more relevant than ever.

A statewide system is slowly taking shape as greenways and trails connect inside city limits, expand into the surrounding county areas, and the county greenways and trails make connections to adjoining counties. This is actually taking place in Knoxville, Knox County and Blount County with the vision of connecting Knoxville to

the Great Smoky Mountains National Park by way of Alcoa, Maryville and Townsend.

**Greenways**, for the purpose of this plan, are linear corridors of protected land along waterways, ridgelines and railroad or utility corridors used for or converted to recreation purposes. These greenways usually contain hard surfaced (paved) trails that serve multiple users: walkers, runners, bicyclists, skaters and hikers. **Trails**, for purposes of this plan, refer to all other types of non paved trails such as backcountry hiking trails, mountain bike, equestrian trails and Off Highway Vehicle (OHV) trails.

Whether as a stand alone project in a park or as a multi-phased development of greenways, greenways and trails have direct relevance to the health and vitality of Tennessee residents and visitors. They provide recreation, exercise opportunities, tourist and business attractions, and important environmental and societal benefits.

The Tennessee Greenways and Trails Program, Recreation Educational Services Division and the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation are committed to realizing the many benefits greenways and trails provide.



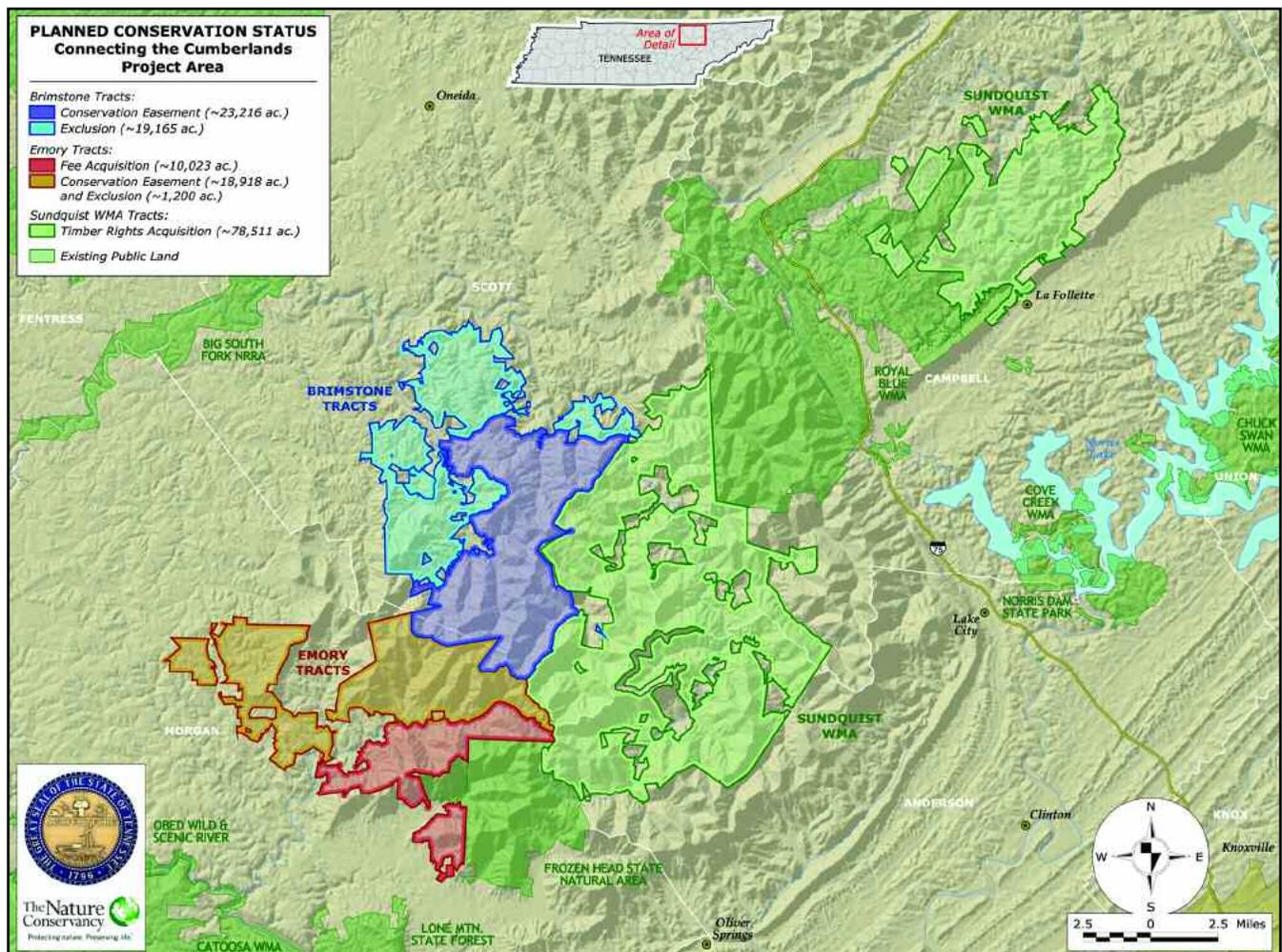
Murfreesboro Stones River Greenway Arts Fair

## Overview of Existing Greenways and Trails

Tennessee boasts of a solid foundation of greenways and trails at the federal, state and local government levels. Tennessee has 11 National Park Service Areas, 2 U.S. Forest Service managed areas, 7 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service managed areas, 12 Tennessee Valley Authority Small Wilds Areas and 7 U.S. Army Corps of Engineers reservoirs. There are 53 Tennessee State Parks, 79 State Natural Areas, 15 Tennessee State Forests and 119 Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency managed areas. There are 140 city and county parks and recreation departments listed in the Tennessee Recreation and Parks Association directory, and the great majority of these parks feature trails. These trails range from the short self-guided nature trails in local parks to the 800-mile trail system found in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. See page 6-7 for a map of the hard surfaced greenway trails found in Tennessee.

A recent significant addition to the greenways and trails system was the North Cumberland Land Acquisition project. This project has the potential to increase both motorized and non-motorized trails in a four county area. Governor Bredesen summarized the completion of this historic 127,000-acre conservation acquisition on the northern Cumberland Plateau saying, "I believe the best things are accomplished when people with a shared vision work together toward a common goal. We were able to do just that, successfully leveraging our resources to make an investment that will support tourism and the economies of some of our most rural areas, while at the same time ensuring this land is protected for the benefit of Tennesseans for generations into the future."<sup>1</sup>

Go to: [www.tn.gov/environment/northcumb](http://www.tn.gov/environment/northcumb) for more details.



## North Cumberland Conservation Acquisition (127,000 acres)

<sup>1</sup> <http://state.tn.us/environment/news/release/2007/Nov/cumberlands.shtml>

## DEFINITIONS

**Greenways**, for the purpose of this plan, are linear corridors of protected land along waterways, ridgelines and railroad or utility corridors used for or converted to recreation purposes. These greenways usually contain hard surfaced (paved) trails that serve multiple users: walkers, runners, bicyclists, skaters and hikers. **Trails**, for purposes of this plan, refer to all other types of non paved trails such as backcountry hiking trails, mountain bike, equestrian and Off Highway Vehicle (OHV) trails.

For more details on the types of Greenways and Trails, refer to **Appendix A**.

## BENEFITS AND OPPORTUNITIES

The Greenways and Trails Advisory Council believes Tennessee will realize the following benefits by taking actions included in this plan:

- The number of greenways and miles of trails available to citizens will increase.
- Lifestyle changes will occur as greenway and trails make it easier for citizens to get on the move and enjoy the natural world outdoors.
- Individual and public health will improve due to increased fitness and recreational activities available through local greenways and trails.

- Greenways and trails will create connections between locations to encourage walking and bicycle riding to school, work and shopping.
- Greenways and trails will protect open spaces that promote environmentally sustainable economic development.
- Improved awareness and information about greenways and trails will increase participation with activities involving and advocacy for greenways and trails, e.g. National Trails Day events.
- More partnerships between parks and recreation departments, schools, health agencies and local law enforcement agencies will support the expansion of greenways and trails.
- More programs will be available to organize trail user volunteers to build and maintain the state's trail system.
- Connecting greenways and trails throughout Tennessee will result in creating positive linkages between communities.

This coordinated plan seeks to develop greenways and trails across Tennessee to provide expanded trail access for all user groups. Our success will enable citizens to experience an active outdoor lifestyle that contributes to an increased quality of life for individuals, families and communities.





The following sections define the many benefits of greenways and trails.

## Economic

State and local governments understand that investments in land, parks and trail systems are becoming critical infrastructure components like new roads, utilities and new schools. Agencies realize the local economic and tourism benefits as well. The Economic Impact of Travel on Tennessee Counties 2006<sup>2</sup> states that the direct impact of domestic and international travel in Tennessee generated the following benefits:

- \$13.4 billion spent in 2006;
- \$5.1 billion in Payroll Income;
- Generated 181,300 jobs in Tennessee;
- One job was generated with every \$73,747 spent in Tennessee;
- \$2.8 Billion in direct tax revenue for federal, state and local governments, up 5.0% from 2005.

Small communities such as Gatlinburg, Pigeon Forge and Sevierville near the Great Smoky Mountains National Park have benefited from the 9 million annual visitors to the National Park for the past 30 years. Other areas of Tennessee such as the Mississippi River Corridor - Tennessee, a not-for-profit organization which includes the six counties along the Mississippi River in West Tennessee, is inventorying the natural and cultural resources in each county and developing a regional effort to promote and market destination travel opportunities.

Just across the Virginia state line is the 35-mile long Virginia Creeper Trail that goes from Abingdon through Damascus and terminates at White Mountain, Virginia. The U.S. Forest Service did a study in 2005<sup>3</sup> and found that:

- 150,000 people used the trail in 2003
- Generated \$1.6 million in direct expenditures
- 27 new jobs were created.

Johnson County, Tennessee is now developing a connection to the Virginia Creeper Trail which could one day extend to Johnson City, Tennessee.

## Health

In 2005, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) ranked Tennessee as 48th in the nation in terms of overall health. More than 62% of the state's population is overweight or obese and nearly 30% of the state's population reports no physical activity.<sup>4</sup> Rebecca Ruiz stated in her November 26, 2007, Forbes.com article, about "America's Most Obese Cities" that the city of Memphis is ranked No. 1 and Nashville is No. 7 on the list of the most sedentary cities in the United States. One of the best assets to combat this epidemic is through Tennessee's vast, emerging network of greenways and trails.

## Planning

Large metropolitan areas like Nashville-Davidson County have developed a strategic plan for parks and greenways along with a separate sidewalks and bikeway plan.<sup>5</sup> Since 2003, Nashville added or repaired 124 miles of sidewalks, developed 94 miles of bike lanes and created more than 7,000 accessible sidewalk ramps. Nashville currently has 36.5 miles of existing greenways, 11 miles under construction and 14 more miles being planned for development.<sup>6</sup>

## Preservation/Conservation

Another major issue in Tennessee is the conversion of forest and farmland into large subdivisions or large commercial retail developments. This suburban growth, often called sprawl, depletes open greenspace by substantially removing trees for a site to be developed; increases the storm water runoff by paving large areas; and increases the cost of local government with the demand for additional public services such as roads, sewers, schools, and emergency services. Groups like the Cumberland Region Tomorrow have recognized the problems that sprawl causes and have developed a "Quality Growth Toolbox" to help cities and counties understand the need to work regionally on issues such as water supply, sewers and alternative transportation methods to insure there is economic vitality through quality growth.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.tnvacation.com/industry/research/> study prepared by the Research Department of the Travel Industry Association, Washington, D.C.

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.srs.fs.fed.us/trends/present.html>

<sup>4</sup> Center for Disease Control, <http://apps.nccd.cdc.gov/brfss/display.asp?yr=2005&state=TN&qkey=4409&grp=0&SUBMIT3=Go>

<sup>5</sup> [http://www.nashville.gov/parks/master\\_plan.htm](http://www.nashville.gov/parks/master_plan.htm), [http://www.nashville.gov/mpc/sidewalks/finalplan\\_march03.htm](http://www.nashville.gov/mpc/sidewalks/finalplan_march03.htm)

<sup>6</sup> Metro Greenways Commission and Greenways for Nashville newsletter, greenprint, Winter 2008, No 14.

<sup>7</sup> Information taken from <http://www.cumberlandregiontomorrow.org/>



## Recreation

There are numerous opportunities in Tennessee to utilize greenways, trails, rivers and streams in order to spend more time outdoors, stay healthy, or connect with family, friends and neighbors. From the simple dirt path made by a fisherman walking to the old fishing hole to the State Park trail where a family listens to the park staff educating them about nature or history; from the hard surfaced bicycle and pedestrian trails that people use for exercise to the Harpeth River paddlers enjoying a leisurely afternoon or weekend. Providing convenient places to walk, hike, bike and paddle help people to live healthier lives and build connections with their communities.

## Resource Protection

Greenways help to preserve linear open spaces, protect our streams and help keep the quality of our drinking water sources safe. Tennessee is blessed with thousands of miles of streams and rivers as well as numerous impounded reservoirs on both the Tennessee and Cumberland Rivers. Many municipalities take advantage of these water sources. Greenway lands adjacent to streams and reservoirs add a buffer zone to slow down storm water runoff, filter the silt out of the storm water and help preserve game and non-game wildlife habitats. Water is becoming a scarce and valuable commodity in Tennessee. The size of the city doesn't matter - from Monteagle to Memphis - protecting surface and ground water sources, conserving water supplies and maintaining high quality streams and rivers is a high priority for Tennessee.

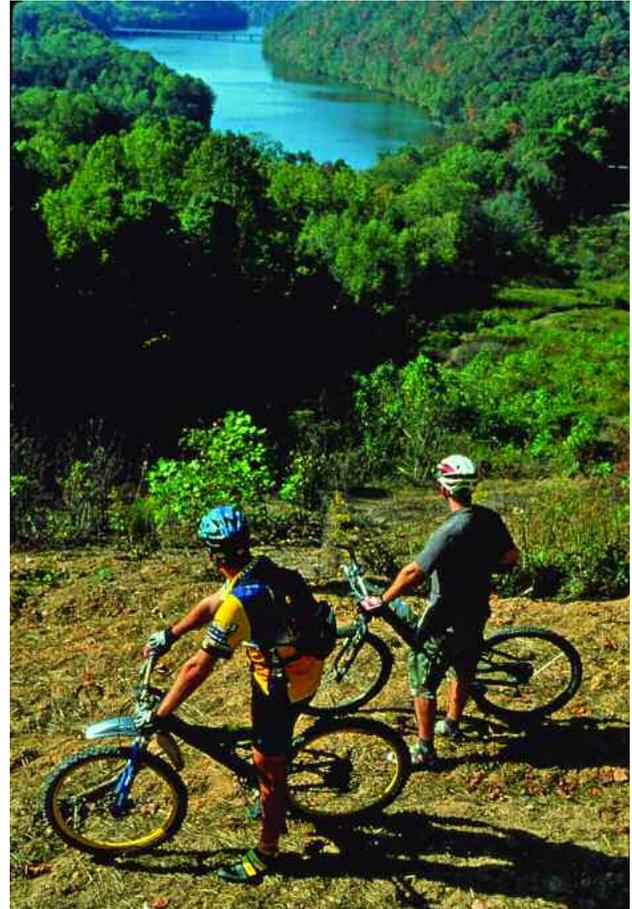
## Alternative Transportation

Greenways and trails also make our communities more attractive and safe by creating alternative modes of transportation. New transportation programs such as TDOT's Safe-Routes-To-Schools provide funds to improve the safety of our children to walk and bicycle to school.<sup>8</sup> The program funds both safety education and infrastructure improvements. Other TDOT programs such as the Transportation Enhancements Program have provided funding for many bicycle and pedestrian facilities and greenway trails throughout Tennessee.<sup>9</sup>

## Summary

The primary goal of the 2008-2010 Tennessee Greenways and Trails Plan is to plan for and develop greenways and trails in every county in Tennessee. The Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation, the Commissioner's Greenways and Trails Advisory Council and Recreation Education Services staff will continually strive to address the issues and priorities outlined in this Action Program.

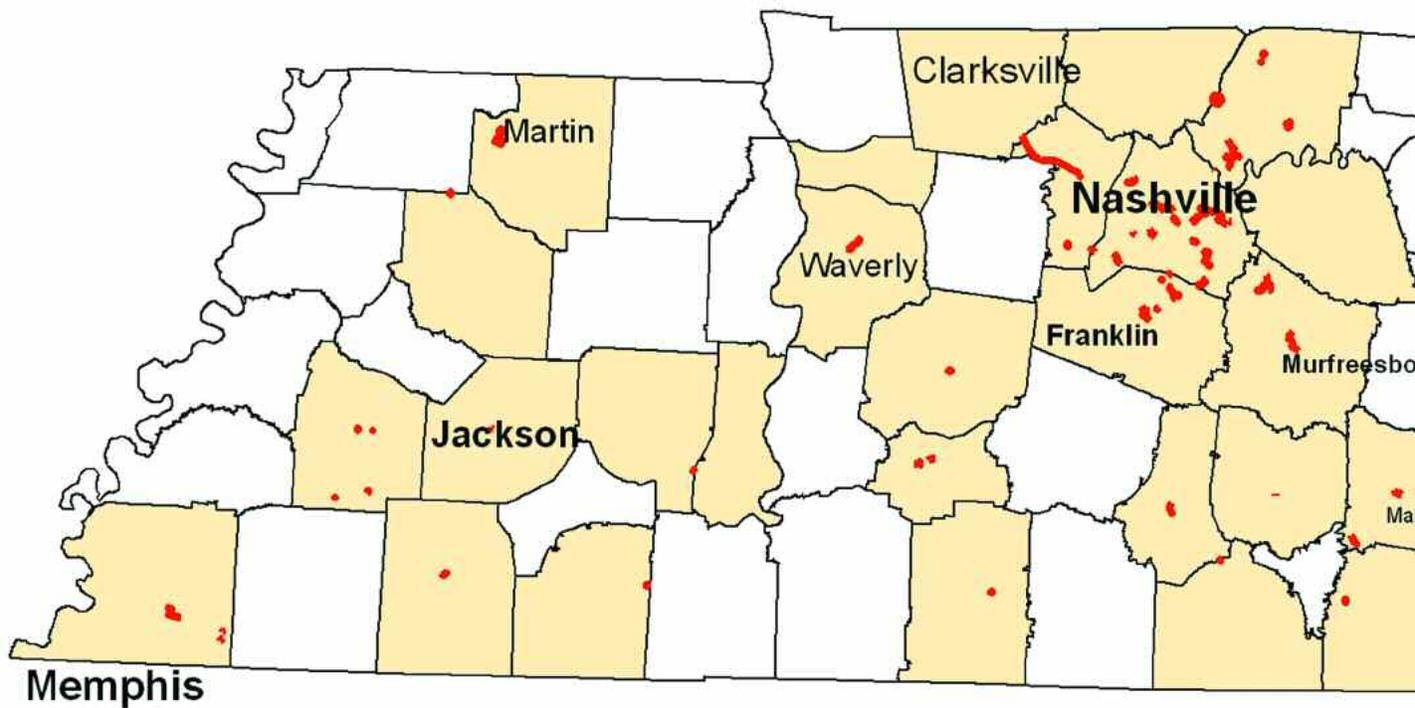
Please join in *Building Connections* in your community to create opportunities to build trails in all 95 counties across Tennessee! The Council hopes that you will read the guiding principles and key actions, share them with others and start to work improving yourself, your family and your community! Help us have a greater story to tell when 2011 arrives.



<sup>8</sup> <http://www.tdot.state.tn.us/bikeped/saferoutes.htm>

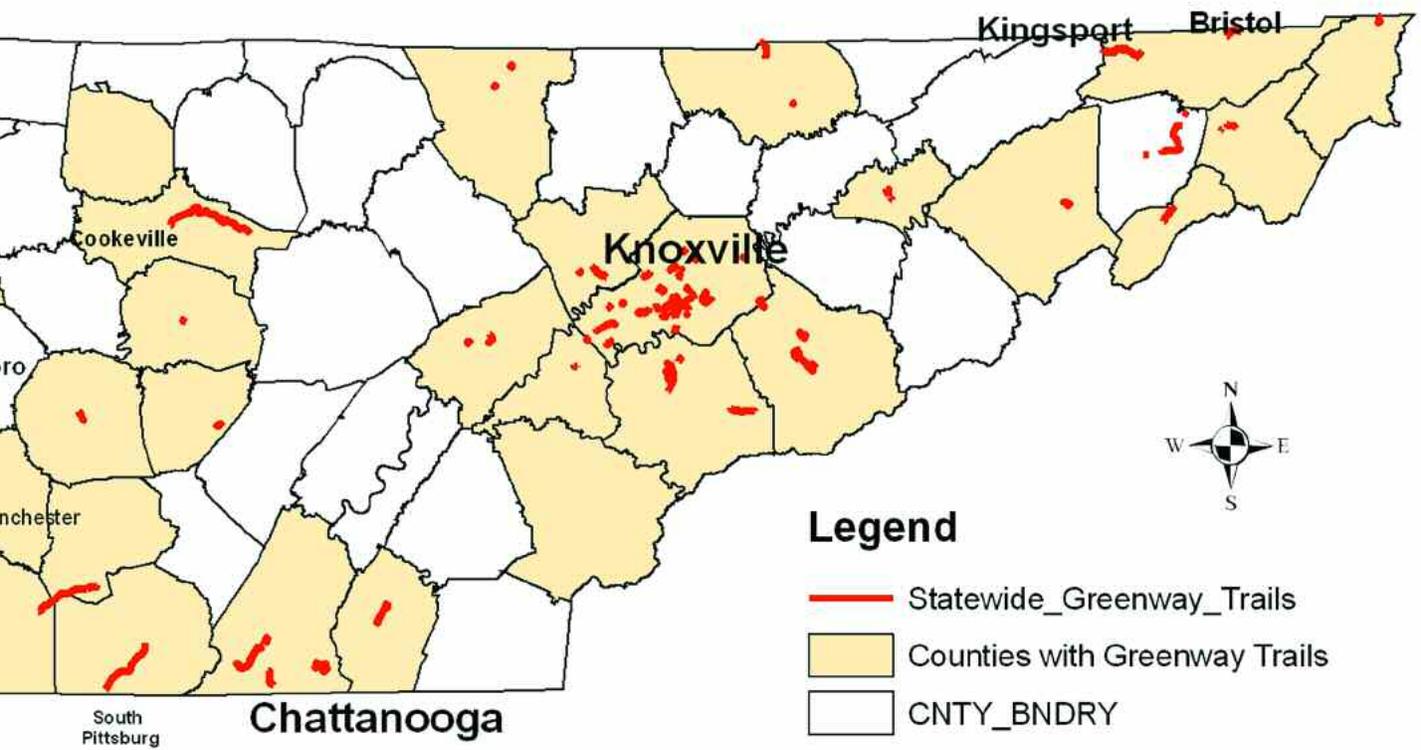
<sup>9</sup> <http://www.tdot.state.tn.us/local/grants.htm>

# 2008 Tennessee Greenway Hard Surfaced Bicycle



Map prepared by Robert (Bob) E. Richards  
Greenways and Trails Program Coordinator  
TDEC - Recreation Educational Services  
June 30, 2008

# ay Trail Master Map /Pedestrian Trails



# ***Building Connections... Tennessee Greenways and Trails***

## **ACTION PROGRAM 2008-2010**

### **SCOPE AND PURPOSE**

This action program is the result of more than 12 months of planning by the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation (TDEC), Recreation Educational Services Division (RES) and the Commissioner's Greenways and Trails Advisory Council (Council). Council members and RES staff worked throughout 2007 to analyze and document the accomplishments of the 2001 Tennessee Greenways and Trails Plan, identified continuing priorities and new issues for the Tennessee Greenways and Trails program. This 2008-2010 Action Program builds on those successes and provides innovative solutions and progressive potential for action through the main theme, "*Building Connections...Tennessee Greenways and Trails.*" Working together, this Action Program will serve as a guide to establishing and implementing a new, dynamic vision for Tennessee, while continuing to pursue our long-term goal of realizing a statewide system of greenways and trails.

The Council also utilized several citizen involvement methods to gauge users' interests and to determine current needs for trails and trail facilities across the state. In the summer of 2007, over 650 responses to a greenways and trails survey were received from trail user groups, city and county officials and the general public. Numerous local, state and federal land managing agencies were also involved in the overall plan development process.

The 2008-2010 Action Program is designed to address current deficiencies, provide proactive resolutions to critical shortcomings and new approaches to achieving a statewide system of greenways and trails. The key objectives are organized into the following Action categories:

- Connections: People to Trails...Trails to Community
- Health and Safety
- Economic Development and Tourism
- Alternative Transportation
- Natural Resource Conservation & Education
- Off Highway Vehicles (Motorized Trails)
- Educational Outreach and Technical Assistance
- Trails for the Future

The last action category is an implementation strategy, which outlines methods for accomplishing and evaluating the outcomes of this document.

There are many innovative strategies and proactive ideas highlighted in the Action Program. These examples help illustrate how current state policies and programs have benefitted development of greenways and trails at the local government level. These models can motivate the greenways and trails movement in Tennessee and contribute to making our communities more healthy and livable.

Planning for Greenways and Trails will continue with TDEC-RES creating the new ten-year 2020 Tennessee State Recreation Plan with a 2009-2014 State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) component to maintain eligibility for Land and Water Conservation Funds. The planning process will include the creation of Roundtables to continue the review of greenways and trails and to help with the implementation of the 2008 Tennessee Greenways and Trails Plan. These Roundtables will meet periodically to discuss the many issues involved with greenways and trails.



Photo by Bob Richards

**Hamilton County-Chattanooga South  
Chickamauga Creek Bridge**

## CONNECTIONS: PEOPLE TO TRAILS...TRAILS TO COMMUNITY

**Guiding Principle: Every community in Tennessee will have access to technical resources and the knowledge necessary to develop their own system of greenways and trails.**

Greenways and trails promote connections between people and the places they go to everyday and can be an integral part of building a sense of community among citizens and improving the level of livability. "In the past, recreational trails were typically located outside cities," says Richard Killingsworth, director of Active Living by Design.<sup>1</sup> "This didn't allow them to connect destinations of interest. But now we're entering a new kind of paradigm, looking at how trails can be used as alternative transportation routes located in dense residential areas where they connect people to places they want to go."<sup>2</sup>

Tennessee currently has 50 of 95 counties with a hard surfaced greenway trail used by pedestrians or bicyclists. Several counties and cities have completed greenway trail systems of 20 miles or more and there are even some multi-county regional systems underway. TDEC-RES will strive to assist communities with technical assistance, resources and grant funding to establish new greenways and trails in 65 of the 95 counties by 2011. This will be accomplished by adding and/or developing greenways and trails in five new counties per year. **Ultimately, our vision for Tennessee is to have a greenway or trail planned in every county of the state by the year 2016.**

### Actions

1. Encourage development and implementation of comprehensive, county-wide trail plans in Tennessee local government jurisdictions by providing "Planning Grants" through the Recreational Trails Program (RTP) in the 2008 and 2010 grant application process cycles.
2. Provide updated information and technical resources through an interactive Web site, database and maps of Tennessee's greenway and trail systems (both hard and natural surfaced).
3. Utilize the comprehensive Web site and GIS database tools to identify new trail and linkage possibilities. The Council plans to add 15 new counties to the state-wide database by 2011, bringing the total to 65 counties in Tennessee with greenways and/or trail opportunities.

4. Implement Phase I of the Tennessee Greenway and Trail Branding/Marketing Plan in 2008-2009 to build statewide awareness to create sustained synergy for greenways and trails. This is a multi phase project spanning several years to identify techniques to assist local governments and trail user groups in building a strong grassroots support base for greenways and trails in Tennessee.
  - Phase I includes the development of a Greenways and Trails brand/logo,
  - Development of billboard, radio and television advertising,
  - Development of brochures and publications that local communities can utilize,
  - Development of a Greenways and Trails information website designed to promote use of greenways and trails by the general public and visitors to Tennessee.
5. Provide a clearinghouse for greenways and trails information statewide. This will include motorized and non-motorized trails on local, state and federally managed public lands as well as motorized trails on private lands.
6. Provide trail technical assistance, through the Tennessee Greenways and Trails Program Coordinator, to trail user groups and governmental agencies in the areas of planning, design, construction and maintenance of all types of trails.
7. Increase information and improve awareness of the importance/use/location of greenways and trails by actively promoting local National Trails Day (NTD) events in Tennessee. TDEC-RES and the Council will partner with local, state and federal agencies and trail user groups to implement one major Tennessee National Trails Day event or activity each year in cooperation with the Governor's office.

<sup>1</sup> A program of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation in partnership with the National Recreation and Park Association

<sup>2</sup> Happy Trails, by Ross Atkin, <http://www.americantrails.org/>

## Connecting People to Trails

In 2007, there were 26 Tennessee events registered on the American Hiking Society's **National Trails Day** with over 1,000 people participating across the state. TDEC-RES staff, in partnership with the Friends of Beaman Park, Tennessee Parks and Greenways Foundation, Metro Nashville Parks and Recreation Department and the Tennessee Trails Association built a 56-foot long by 4-foot wide wooden hiking bridge across Henry Creek in Beaman Park. Over 50 volunteers showed up on **National Trails Day** (June 2-3, 2007) to build the bridge. Financial assistance in the form of donations and in-kind services were made by Friends of Beaman Park, Tennessee Parks and Greenways Foundation, Metro Nashville Parks and Recreation Department and the Tennessee Trails Association, along with a generous donation from the Beaman family. **Total cost of the bridge was \$4,000.00 for materials and zero cost for labor.**



Photo by Bob Richards

Start of the Beaman Park Trail Bridge Project, building the main beams



Photo by Bob Richards

Start of the Beaman Park Trail Bridge Project, building the main beams across the creek.



Photo by Nancy Dorman

Picture of completed Beaman Park Trail Bridge With some of the volunteers who participated.

## HEALTH & SAFETY

**Guiding Principle:** Greenways and trails are tangible ways to increase the health benefits in communities. Therefore, government agencies will assume a proactive leadership role as responsible advocates for cost-effective programs that enhance human health.

Greenway and Trails advocates and park and recreation professionals in Tennessee have a prime opportunity to be proactive and address the health and fitness challenges of citizens through community facilities such as our greenways and trails.

**According to an article by Stuart McDonald for American Trails Magazine,** the following challenges exist; *First*, what makes a trail ideal for exercise? Trail designers need to evaluate and create elements and features that encourage use and at the same time tie other facilities together, such as parks, playgrounds and schools. *Second*, is to learn from the inactive people, as well as from the active ones. We must help people take those first steps towards activity by showing them the benefits. *Third*, we must reach out and partner with other community agencies and professionals who have that same interest in achieving a healthy community. Hospitals, regional health councils, schools – should always be involved not only in programming activities/events on trails but also in developing and promoting trails.<sup>3</sup>

State and local agencies have talked and planned for years about the use of greenways and trails, but can we document that more people are walking more miles? Do they live more productive, healthier lives, less dependent on medications? Engaging the right methods to measure the positive health outcomes from walking and using trails/greenways will help in the promotion of healthy lifestyles.

### Actions

1. Encourage local and state government health departments to partner with parks and recreation departments to promote and educate their citizens about the health benefits derived from developing and using greenways and trails.
2. Develop partnerships with other agencies, for-profit and non-profit organizations to increase financial resources and information available to Tennesseans, especially in the areas of health promotion conveyed by the positive impacts of using trails and greenways.

3. Contract with a higher education institution for a study that analyzes safety factors and issues related to crime on community greenways to provide statistics that correlate the decrease in crime that occurs with increased use of local greenway trails.
4. Promote the new Off Highway Vehicle (OHV) helmet law recently passed (2007 SB 1994/HB 1974) by having the information on TDEC-RES Greenways and Trails website. There were 120 deaths (2003-2006) from the use of 3 and 4 wheeled All Terrain Vehicles in the state of Tennessee. Nationwide, 29% of these deaths were children under the age of 16 and 12% of these deaths were children under the age of 12.<sup>4</sup>
5. Develop and promote fitness programs for individuals and local/state government agencies such as schools, parks and recreation departments and state parks that utilize Greenways and Trails.



<sup>3</sup> quote taken from [www.americantrails.org](http://www.americantrails.org) web site

<sup>4</sup> Streeter, Robin A., Ph.D., M.P.H.; Directorate of Epidemiology, Division of Hazard Analysis, U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, Washington, D.C. 20207, 2006 Annual Report of ATV-Related Deaths and Injuries; February, 2008; <http://www.cpsc.gov> .

## Health and Fitness

### Blue Cross Blue Shield – WalkingWorks Program

**Blue Cross and Blue Shield (BCBS)**, the largest health insurance company in Tennessee, has created two very simple personal health and fitness programs based on an activity people do every day and any Tennessean can sign up! It's easy to become a participant, go to: [www.bcbs.com/innovations/walkingworks/](http://www.bcbs.com/innovations/walkingworks/) to find out more about this exciting program to IMPROVE your health. The program is collaboration between BlueCross BlueShield of Tennessee, the Governor's Council on Physical Fitness and Health, Tennessee Department of Health (TDH), and the Tennessee Department of Education (TDE). **The President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports** recommends 30 minutes per day, or 10,000 steps five or more days per week.

Also, in 2005, the WalkingWorks for Schools pilot program was introduced in Tennessee schools and 35 schools participated with 13,000 students and 1,045 teachers and administrators starting to walk. This was a collaboration of the Governor's Council on Physical Fitness and Health, TDH, TDE and the Health, Physical Fitness, Recreation and Dance Council. The program was such a success that in the fall of 2006, it was rolled out statewide in 390 schools engaging 160,000 students. To find out more how your child's school can plug in, go to [www.WalkingWorksForSchoolsTN.com](http://www.WalkingWorksForSchoolsTN.com).



Photo provided by Blue Cross-BlueShield of Tennessee

**WalkingWorks  
for Schools**



Photo provided by Blue Cross-BlueShield of Tennessee

**WalkingWorks  
for Schools**

## Health and Fitness

### Strollercize

What is Strollercize? It's a great new fitness program developed by the City of Murfreesboro's Greenways Program to get moms and their kids back outdoors, meeting new people and walking for fitness using your child's stroller as portable exercise equipment.

For information call the Murfreesboro Greenways Program at 615-893-2141 or go to [www.murfreesborotn.gov/government/parks\\_rec/greenway.htm](http://www.murfreesborotn.gov/government/parks_rec/greenway.htm).



Photo by Murfreesboro Greenways Program staff

Working out on the Murfreesboro Stones River Greenway Trail

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TOURISM

**Guiding Principle:** As more people seek outdoor recreation opportunities, we must also educate local governments and other agencies about the economic benefits associated with new and existing trails.

Many national studies demonstrate that parks, greenways and trails increase nearby residential and commercial property values, thus increasing local property tax revenues. These increases in annual local tax revenues often exceed the initial one time greenway acquisition and development costs. Local communities can market their greenway trails with events like Craft and Arts Fairs, Fun Runs and runs and walks benefitting local non-profit organizations.



Photo by Ella Bunlin

**Murfreesboro Stones River Greenway Arts Fair**

Chattanooga and Hamilton County are leaders in combining the development of greenways and trails with the development of new infrastructure and community facilities. These two local governments have developed strong partnerships with for-profit development companies and non-profit organizations in the development of the Tennessee Riverpark Greenway and the redevelopment of the downtown riverfront.

It all started back in the early 1970s with the passage of the Clean Air and Clean Water Acts in the United States Congress. Chattanooga was a highly industrialized town with a number of heavy industries that were under pressure to meet the new federal standards. A number of these industries chose to close as opposed to spending the required investment to clean up their plants.

With this change becoming apparent, Chattanooga and Hamilton County recognized that a new direction was needed. In 1982, a comprehensive and inclusive master planning effort was initiated by the Moccasin Bend Task Force. Over the course of the next two years, hundreds of community meetings were held with thousands of local citizens participating. The Tennessee Riverpark Master Plan was completed in March 1985 and later presented to an overflow crowd at the Chattanooga-Hamilton County Convention and Trade Center.

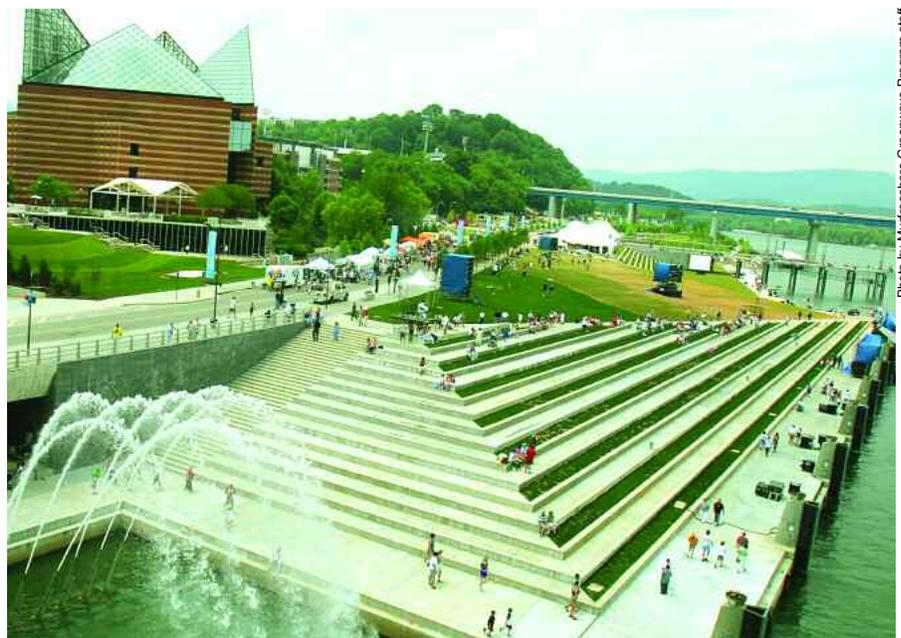


Photo by Murfreesboro Greenways Program staff

**Chattanooga Downtown Riverfront**

Since that time, 10 miles of the Riverpark greenway trail have been constructed on the south side of the river between Chickamauga Dam and the downtown Riverfront. The Riverpark Trail crosses the Walnut Street Bridge, renovated and reopened as a bicycle and pedestrian only crossing for the Tennessee Riverpark, and the greenway trail is now being planned on the north shore of the Tennessee River to return back to Chickamauga Dam. The Riverpark Trail connects neighborhoods with parks, educational institutions, commercial and retail businesses, restaurants and other downtown attractions such as the Tennessee Aquarium and the IMAX Theater. These two destinations now have more than 1,000,000 visitors annually. Work is continuing to develop greenway trails up the tributaries of the Tennessee River such as South and North Chickamauga Creeks. <sup>6</sup>

The Nashville Riverfront Concept is an excellent example of an economic development based on the local environment and the natural and cultural resources found there. This

20-year plan reflects a dramatic transformation of the downtown riverfront and the east banks of the Cumberland River in Nashville by cleaning up more than 190 acres of degraded land while providing a new place for Nashville residents to recreate and celebrate. The plan calls for expanded parks, trails, water recreation, and environmental preservation, and provides for both residential and commercial opportunities in the heart of Nashville. This project has value for everyone. It will provide Nashville a world class waterfront and enhances the quality of life for Nashville residents. It can create huge economic development opportunities with the potential to generate over \$1.4 billion in private investment. The estimated public investment is \$40 million in Phase I, \$200 million in Phase 2 and \$150 million in phase 3. The economic consultants calculate that for every dollar spent of public funds, Nashville gets three to four dollars back in private investment and the project could bring in an additional 1 million visitors per year. <sup>7</sup>



Photo by Bob Richards

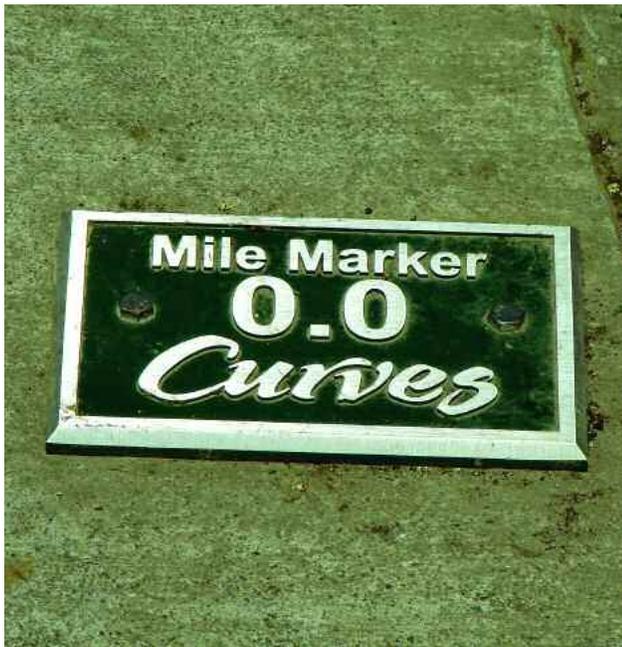
## Nashville Riverfront Park

<sup>5</sup> Source: <http://www.hamiltontn.gov/riverpark/Default.aspx>

<sup>6</sup> discussion with RES staff

<sup>7</sup> Source: <http://www.nashville.gov/parks/riverfront/>

In Lenoir City, the mayor and city council have mentioned on several occasions that the Town Creek Greenway is one of the best additions to their city. Parks and Recreation Director Steve Harrelson says that “the number of citizens walking the trail has astounded many of them. Some citizens had no idea when we first started talking about developing a greenway that it would be such a popular addition to our park system. Comments from trail users made us realize that our greenway system has improved the overall fitness of our community and many have commented how they enjoy the natural beauty of our trails and that’s what makes them want to get outside and walk.”<sup>4</sup> The Curves, Inc. store, which is adjacent to the Town Creek Greenway, has sponsored the pavement markers for the paved trail, another public private partnership.



## Actions

1. The Commissioner of TDEC will make additional state agency appointments to the Greenways and Trails Advisory Council to include representation from the Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development (ECD).
2. Complete the statewide GIS Trail Inventory and Map. TDEC-RES should then use this map to work with the ECD to identify areas of the state that are economically distressed to target greenway and trail tourism and revitalization opportunities.
3. Encourage ECD to include trails in their grant programs, such as industrial park developments and community revitalization efforts. These are key economic development indicators in an active, vibrant community.
4. Direct and facilitate important greenway and trail studies for Tennessee. The results of these studies will help guide the State when making decisions in many of these key areas of the Action Program.
  - a) First, conduct a survey of Tennessee residents with a comprehensive set of questions concerning greenways and trails.
  - b) Second, work with higher education institutions and the Tennessee Department of Tourist Development to cooperatively fund an Economic Benefits study of greenways and trails in several communities in Tennessee.

## Economic Development & Tourism

### CITY of GATLINBURG – Greenways and Trails Investments

In late 1993, the City was awarded an Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) Transportation Enhancement grant for \$180,000 and the overall project budget for Phase I of the Riverwalk was \$225,000. The firm Barge, Waggoner, Sumner and Cannon was hired to do the design and construction management for the project, however, during a new review the project was determined to not be feasible as originally designed. After a redesign, the new concept plan was presented to several groups within the city and enthusiasm began to build. The redesign included putting the utilities underground and cantilevering the sidewalks over the river when possible. Costs for the project had increased and community leaders knew something dramatic had to happen to gain local community support.

In order to begin Phase I, private funds were needed to meet the budget. A fundraising drive was successful in raising \$560,000 in pledges. The drive was spearheaded by local businessman, Mr. Jim Gerding, and when he presented the results of the private fundraising drive, the City Commission voted unanimously to proceed with Phase I of the Riverwalk with a new estimated cost of \$1.8 million. Construction of Phase I began in December 1996 and was completed on time and in budget in May 1997.

In 1998, Ripley's Entertainment announced their intent to build a \$40 million aquarium in Sevier County. Multiple sites in the County were under consideration and due to the recent construction of Phase I, Ripley's chose Gatlinburg. One condition was that the City of Gatlinburg must build Phase II of the Riverwalk. Public investment included Phase II and two new parking garages, a Transit Center at the Aquarium and a Visitor's Center at one parking garage. The City of Gatlinburg approved the development of Phase II and total public and private investment approached \$60 million at the end of Phase II.<sup>8</sup>



Impacts of the 1993 city of Gatlinburg Flood

City of Gatlinburg Riverwalk Phase I completed



Photo by Steve Fritts

<sup>8</sup> Power Point presentation by Steve Fritts, Barge, Wagoner, Sumner and Cannon, at 2007 TRPA Annual Conference in Gatlinburg, TN

## Economic Development & Tourism

### Germantown Leverages Greenway Development

The City of Germantown is a leader in achieving local greenway and trail objectives. Germantown city leaders have passed an aggressive parkland dedication ordinance and developed its first City Greenway Master Plan in 1990. This initiative required developers, when beginning a new construction project, to build the section of trail (at the developer's expense) that has been planned for greenway development or dedicate funds toward a park or greenway development in another area of the community if a portion of trail is not designated for their property. The result is a growing system of greenways and a remarkable achievement. Germantown now has a park or trail within five miles of every citizen in the city. This foresight on behalf of community officials has made Germantown a leader in Tennessee greenway and trail development, helping them achieve national recognition.



Photo by Bob Richards

Germantown Trailhead for Wolf River Trail

## ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORTATION

**Guiding Principle:** Greenways and trails connections should be used as alternative transportation modes -- they promote health and fitness, energy conservation, improved air and water quality, reduction of noise pollution and create safe bicycle/pedestrian corridors.

The most exciting and viable places to live are communities where walking and biking take place every day. People that live in these communities take great interest in their personal fitness, have improved air quality, and safe paths for children to go from home to school and back, not to mention savings on gasoline expenses.

**Greenways and Trails are more than a circular trail in a park.** The focus of Building Connections... Tennessee Greenways and Trails is to stress the importance of making those trail connections within the community, and when possible, to other nearby communities. Each community should develop their local area plan and then assess the different components and possible funding sources for each component. Communities must remember that planning and design of their greenway trails for transportation purposes requires more technical specifications than trails with a primary function of recreation.

The City of Knoxville has promoted alternative transportation since the early 1970s with the development of the Third Creek Greenway Trail that connected the married student apartments to the University of Tennessee campus. Since then, 16 miles of connected trails and more than 40 miles total of greenway trails now exist in Knoxville and are used by walkers, runners and bicyclists to make their way to work, school, shopping or visit parks.<sup>9</sup>

TDEC must maximize cooperation with our partners, specifically TDOT and ECD, and work collaboratively to promote alternative transportation opportunities in communities throughout Tennessee.

### Actions

1. The Transportation Enhancements (TE) Program is a key funding source for pedestrian and bicycle paths within TDOT. TDEC and TDOT should continue working together in partnership with local governments to promote the TE program.
2. The Safe Routes to Schools (SRTS) Program is a key program within TDOT to improve child safety when walking and bicycling to school. TDEC and TDOT should continue working together in partnership with local governments to promote the Safe Routes to Schools Program throughout Tennessee.
3. Include the representatives of the Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO) and Rural Planning Organizations (RPO) as members of the Commissioner's Greenways and Trails Advisory Council to provide information and increase their understanding and knowledge of greenways and trails.
4. Provide technical assistance to communities on greenways and trails system planning and encourage local governments to apply for TE Program grants to develop interconnecting trail systems.
5. Partner with the ECD and the Development Districts to add greenway and trail planning as an important component of any future local government planning efforts.

<sup>9</sup> Knoxville's greenway system grows, Brittany Bailey, WBIR.Com, at <http://www.wbitr.com/printfullstory.aspx?storyid+55133>

## Alternative Transportation

The Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT) has an important role in creating hard surfaced bicycle and pedestrian trails with their Transportation Enhancements (TE) grant program. The TE program has an annual grant cycle and there is approximately \$15 million available to government agencies for grants in several categories. The TE grants are 80% federal funding with 20% local matching funds. Contact Neil Hansen, 615-741-5314 or [Neil.hansen@state.tn.us](mailto:Neil.hansen@state.tn.us) for more information on the TE grant program.

The Safe Routes to Schools (SRTS) Program is a new program created under the 2005 Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act – a Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU). The SRTS provides 100% grant funding to city/county governments working in partnership with local school boards to develop safety education and infrastructure projects within a two mile radius of K-8 schools. Contact Diana Benedict, 615-253-2421 or [Diana.benedict@state.tn.us](mailto:Diana.benedict@state.tn.us) for more information on the SRTS grant program.

The Town of Nolensville worked in cooperation with the Williamson County School System when the Town made its Safe Route to School grant application. This partnership was successful and the Town of Nolensville received a grant for \$250,000 to create a system of sidewalks from old and new subdivisions to the Nolensville Elementary School. The Town is already implementing some of the safety programs such as the walking school bus. The pictures below show the opportunities that any community can do when the city, the school system, the parents and the students work cooperatively. Contact Mayor Beth Lothers at 615-776-6680 or [mayorbethlothers@comcast.net](mailto:mayorbethlothers@comcast.net).



Photo by Dianne Calahan

City of Nolensville Walking School Bus day



Photo by Dianne Calahan

City of Nolensville Walking School Bus day

## NATURAL RESOURCE CONSERVATION & EDUCATION

**Guiding Principle: The use of greenways and trails provides opportunities for all Tennesseans to be outdoors and these inherent benefits should be infused into nature-based education offerings.**

There are numerous ways to improve the opportunities for conservation education and the protection of Tennessee's natural and cultural resources. The state's Greenways and Trails Program promotes and supports the establishment of healthy remedies and helpful solutions to the current societal shift away from outdoor education and outdoor recreation. This Action Program pays special attention to initiatives that connect people with nature including the awareness of using Tennessee's water trails (also known as Blueways).

Tennessee State Parks staff took the lead in establishing a statewide program for children in cooperation with many government, non-government and corporate partners. The launching of **Tennessee Children Enjoying Our Good Nature One Step at a Time** incorporates the mission of State Parks "to preserve and protect, in perpetuity, unique examples of natural, cultural, and scenic areas and provide a variety of safe, quality, outdoor experiences through a well-planned and professionally managed system of State Parks."

There are spectacular water resources available in Tennessee that provide quality outdoor experiences and are a great way to bring people back to nature. The Council states it is also important to emphasize the role of water trails in protecting the quality of life in our communities. It is a natural tie to natural resource conservation and conservation education.

**In the six years from 1997 to 2003, the National Resources Inventory states that Tennessee has lost 245,800 acres from farm or forest lands to development. This is an average of 41,000 acres annually. The growth rates for middle Tennessee counties (Williamson and Rutherford) are in the top 10% in the nation.** Nashville is starting to blend into one large urban area as you go south and east down the I-24 corridor towards Murfreesboro with LaVergne and Smyrna expanding both towards Nashville and Murfreesboro open space is disappearing.

Tennessee's population reached 6 million in 2006<sup>10</sup> and more people and businesses are moving to Tennessee each month. This growth is putting increased pressure and demand on Tennessee's natural and cultural resources. We need to address the disconnect between people and nature by giving them opportunities to get back into the natural environment close to home!

From thousands of miles of streams and rivers, to dozens of reservoirs that are used as means of transportation and recreation; from mountains of East Tennessee to

meandering rivers and snowy fields white with cotton in West Tennessee, the legacy of Tennessee's land and water conservation efforts shapes what Tennessee will become in the future.

The Tennessee greenways and trails system – throughout our federal and state parks and forests, local government parks and recreation agencies, private for profit and non-profit organizations – strives to provide these critical outdoor experiences to children and adults alike.

### Actions

1. Develop a statewide initiative to connect Tennesseans with Nature and Conservation. The focus would be on children and families because the current nation-wide initiative is meant to reconnect children with nature.
  - a) Work with Project CENTS to initiate a pilot program within a county to assist parents and educators in increasing time spent outdoors by children of all ages.
  - b) Incorporate greenway and trails activities into the new, upcoming Tennessee State Parks statewide initiative – "Tennessee Children - Enjoying Our Good Nature One Step at a Time."
  - c) TDEC staff and Council will actively participate in The Children & Nature Network (C&NN), which was created to encourage and support the people and organizations working to reconnect children with nature. C&NN provides access to the latest news and research in the field and a peer-to-peer network of researchers and individuals, educators and organizations dedicated to children's health and well-being.
2. Enable the expansion of conservation education for all Pre K-12 students by incorporating greenways and trails activity curricula into Project CENTS for use by local parks and recreation departments, state parks, and schools.

<sup>10</sup> Division of Health Statistics, Office of Policy, Planning and Assessment, Tennessee Department of Health

3. Promote the conservation of native plants or the restoration of native plants along greenway corridors in an attempt to re-establish suitable wildlife habitat and *eliminate invasive, exotic plant communities*. The Division of Natural Areas within TDEC should partner with local government and non-profit organizations to develop Best Management Practices (BMPs) to remove exotic invasive plants.
4. TDEC and TWRA should work together to promote the expansion of blueways and blueway education, as well as developing new river access sites, campsites and other water based facilities.
  - a) The Council should identify one educational priority for blueways and/or water resource issues and work with governmental and non-governmental partners to develop specific materials/media such as the Harpeth River video.<sup>11</sup>
  - b) Incorporate water resource issues and priorities for blueway development into the TDEC grant selection process for local governments.
5. TDEC Division of Natural Areas shall work to promote and expand the Scenic Rivers Program through working cooperatively with local government agencies and non-profit organizations to preserve Tennessee's high quality streams and rivers.



<sup>11</sup> <http://www.tennessean.com/includes/publicus/INTERACTIVES/harpeth/harpeth.shtml>

## Natural Resource Conservation & Education

**Project CENTS** (Conservation Education Now for Tennessee Students) was reignited as a joint project of TDEC and the Tennessee Department of Education in 2005. Since that time, Project CENTS has been working to enhance the scope and quality of environmental education in Tennessee by

- Training teachers in quality environmental education materials;
- Introducing teachers to the TP3 Green Schools Program;
- Working with teachers to cross reference academic curriculum with Project CENTS materials and Green Schools activities in an effort to increase environmental literacy;
- Encouraging the creation and use of outdoor classrooms by offering 'how to' information and seed grants for educators;
- Organizing and launching the website [www.eeintennessee.org](http://www.eeintennessee.org) which functions as a clearinghouse of environmental education resources and activities in Tennessee.

In April 2008, Project CENTS, the Tennessee Environmental Education Association (TEEA) and the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency will hosted the Tennessee Outdoor Classroom Symposium. This event brought educators, parents and resource professionals together for a day of sharing ideas on creating, maintaining and using outdoor learning areas on school grounds. For more information about Project CENTS, contact Tami Coleman, 615-741-6055 or [Tamara.coleman@state.tn.us](mailto:Tamara.coleman@state.tn.us) .



Project CENTS 2008 Training Workshop

# Natural Resource Conservation & Education

## Water, Water Everywhere, but Where Can I Get On?

Tennessee is blessed with an abundance of scenic, historic, and alluring waterways, offering great opportunity for experiencing nature close up and personal from a canoe or kayak. But not knowing exactly where safe and legal public access exists can at times discourage would-be paddlers.

Enter “**Blueways.**” Also known as water trails, blueways - a spin-off the term “greenway”- are designated paths on water for which put-ins, take-outs, and various points of interest have been pre-identified. In essence, blueways make waterways more accessible to non-motorized users.

Several blueways currently exist in Tennessee. These include the French Broad Blueway linking Asheville to Knoxville via the French Broad River and the Tennessee River Blueway for which an initial 50-mile section near Chattanooga was first designated in 2002. It is anticipated that more of the Tennessee River and its tributaries will be developed as blueways in the future, making our state’s waterways more accessible to future generations of paddlers.

For more information contact the National Park Service’s Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program at (423) 266-1150 or [jeff\\_duncan@nps.gov](mailto:jeff_duncan@nps.gov) .



Photo by Hamilton County Parks and Recreation Department

**Chattanooga’s Coolidge Park Grand Opening  
Tennessee River Access Area**



Photo by Dr. Jeff Duncan

**Tennessee  
River Boat  
Ramp and  
rest spot**

## OFF HIGHWAY VEHICLES (MOTORIZED) TRAILS

**Guiding Principle:** The State of Tennessee should continue to work with state and federal agencies, local governments and trail user organizations to provide trails for user types with significant unmet needs.

The need to address motorized recreation trails is real in Tennessee. According to the **2001 Tennessee Greenways and Trails Plan**, Off Highway Vehicle (OHV) trails are a high, unmet recreational need. Go to [www.tn.gov/environment/recreation/plan](http://www.tn.gov/environment/recreation/plan). More motorized dirt bikes, all terrain vehicles (ATVs) and 4 x 4-wheel drive vehicles are sold each year. Yet, there are no new trails, and in many areas, *lands once available for OHV use are being closed to these trail uses.*

In order to better manage this type of use and to minimize the environmental damage, the United States Forest Service has completed several research projects on trail design techniques that can produce low maintenance, sustainable OHV trails. An example of long term OHV trail use can be found at the 2,300 acre Turkey Bay OHV Area located in the Land Between the Lakes area between the Tennessee and Cumberland Rivers in Kentucky and Tennessee.

The **2002 State of Tennessee Governor's Off Highway Vehicle (OHV) Study**<sup>12</sup> presented a high unmet need for permanent OHV recreation parks with trails on state owned lands. These state owned OHV areas should be located regionally so the OHV trail users can drive 1-2 hours to reach an OHV park. The study also emphasized that the potential estimated direct economic impact was \$1.76 billion, with the total for both direct and indirect impacts being \$3.43 billion (**1998 prices**). OHV recreation in Tennessee generates a large amount of tax revenue for local and state government through state gas taxes, state and local sales taxes and other permit and use fees. It is a big business in Tennessee and can be even larger.

The state legislature passed the 2004 Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) Act (SB 875) which establishes an OHV program in the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency (TWRA). However, the OHV Act does not have a dedicated funding mechanism, such as an OHV title fee or an annual registration fee. Additional revenues could be generated from a daily, weekly or annual site use permit. TWRA oversees the OHV pilot program at Royal Blue Wildlife Management Area which has been developed using federal Recreation Trails Program (RTP) motorized funds and there are now over 30 miles of rehabilitated OHV trails for dirt bikes, ATV's and 4x4's. These initial trails at Royal Blue have been signed and marked and a map is available at [www.tn.gov/twra/gis/gis\\_r4\\_wma.html](http://www.tn.gov/twra/gis/gis_r4_wma.html), Royal Blue-Riding Area Map, OHV/4x4.

### Actions

1. Create an equitable state funding mechanism to finance public land acquisition and trail development for Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) trails, focusing on a regional approach involving local government entities, OHV trail users and public/private partnerships.
2. The State of Tennessee shall fund a full-time, permanent state funded position of Off Highway Vehicle Program Coordinator to provide technical assistance to public and private OHV Parks in the areas of proper trail construction and environmental protection.
3. TDEC will develop an inventory of all OHV trails (legal and publicly available) and place the information on the Greenways and Trails web page.
4. The Greenways and Trails Advisory Council should discuss and propose solutions to address Tennessee's OHV program based on a policy statement developed by land management agencies and statewide OHV trail advocates.
  - a) This group should also review the existing Tennessee Code Annotated for legislation affecting OHVs and the 2002 TDEC OHV Feasibility Study to clarify needed strategies or direction.
  - b) Funds need to be appropriated for the TDEC OHV Study to be repeated to assess the new needs of OHV trail users and the potential economic benefits to small, rural cities and counties.
  - c) Discuss the feasibility and development steps for a Grant-in-Aid program targeting construction and operation of OHV trail systems by local governments to increase the number of OHV trails and promote local area economic benefits.
  - d) Plan an OHV forum to continue the dialogue and address solutions among cooperating agencies.
  - e) Advocate the development of Best Management Practices (BMPs) and environmentally sound construction designs suitable for OHV trails in Tennessee.

<sup>12</sup> Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation, Recreation Educational Services Division website, Item 4, number 2, <http://state.tn.us/environment/recreation/plan/>.

## OFF HIGHWAY VEHICLES (MOTORIZED) TRAILS

One of the premier OHV areas in the eastern United States is the Hatfield-McCoy Trail System in West Virginia. Ten years in the making, legislation was passed in 1996 creating the Hatfield-McCoy Regional Recreation Authority and included a seven county region in southern West Virginia. In 2007, this number increased to nine counties with six communities passing local ordinances to allow OHV use on local roads and thoroughfares. There are now approximately 1,000 miles of interconnected trails in the 9-county region.

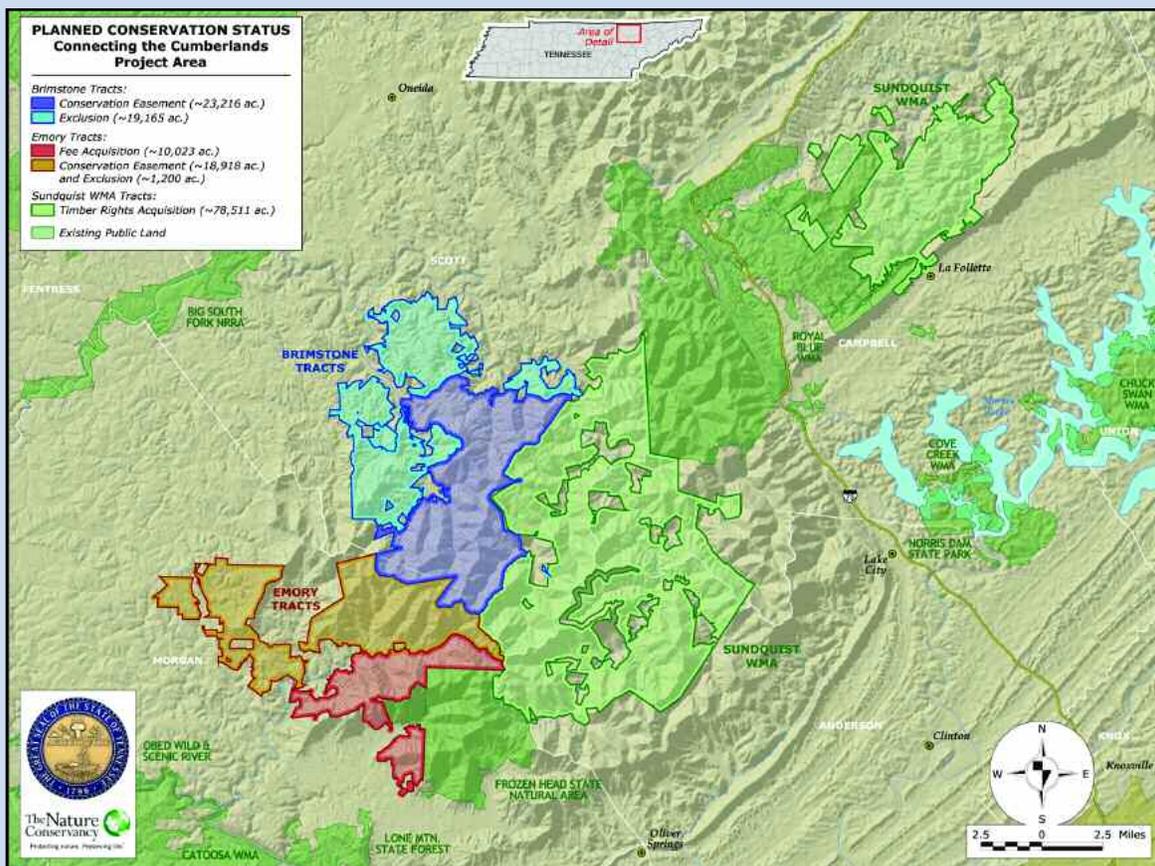
The Center for Business and Economic Research Department of Marshall University in Huntington, WV conducted an Economic Impact Study for the calendar year 2005<sup>13</sup> of the Hatfield-McCoy Trail. They highlighted the following results:

- 24,285 trail users purchased permits.
- Trail users spent \$2,798,036 in local communities.
- 146 Full Time jobs were created.
- These activities had a direct impact of \$ 622,752 in state and local government tax revenues.

For more information on the Hatfield-McCoy project, go to [www.trailsheaven.com](http://www.trailsheaven.com).

This type of system is slowly being created in the Campbell, Scott, Morgan and Anderson counties of Tennessee. The North Cumberland Purchase added over 127,000 acres of lands in these four counties and these lands are contiguous to the Sundquist and Royal Blue Wildlife Management Areas. The private company, Brimstone Recreation, LLC, manages and promotes recreational trail use of 19,196 acres of land in Scott County. The company will be working with the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency to continue to manage this area for recreational OHV trail activities.

Go to: <http://tennessee.gov/environment/northcumb/> for more details.



<sup>13</sup> Hatfield McCoy Trail System Economic Impact Study for 2005, Marshall University, Charleston, WV.

## EDUCATIONAL OUTREACH & TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

**Guiding Principle:** TDEC-RES believes that if Tennesseans have access to a broad range of educational opportunities they will embrace the importance of greenways and trails to community health and well-being. They will build more trails, use more trails and connect more trails.

One of the most effective actions the State of Tennessee can take to assure the future of Tennessee's greenways and trails is to provide education and technical assistance. In order for local communities and other state/federal organizations to succeed in building trails, the State of Tennessee must continue improving the support structure, resources and methods of outreach in order to direct sustainable planning and development of these facilities.

The Commissioner's Greenways and Trails Advisory Council believes that education and promotion of trails initiatives should be a priority for the next three years. With their guidance, the state will focus on using creative partnerships and seek out all funding sources available to develop the most effective programs and resources. We will see the citizens of Tennessee become more involved in our efforts because they will be leading plans and projects in their own communities!

### Actions

1. The State of Tennessee shall fund a full-time, permanent state funded position of Greenways and Trails Program Coordinator to provide educational outreach and on site technical assistance to public government agencies and trail groups in proper trail construction and environmental protection.
2. The state greenways and trails program will be the focal point for education and public information dissemination relating to greenway and trail resources by focusing outreach efforts, educational seminars and distribution of informational resources to local governments and other non-profit organizations. Cooperative efforts with Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development, Development Districts, Tennessee Municipal League, Municipal Technical Advisory Service, County Technical Assistance Service and local Convention & Visitors Bureaus and Chambers of Commerce can make this happen.

3. Create a "Backpack" tool kit that would provide educational materials and resources for grants and funding sources, Pathways to Trail Building publication (trail design and construction guidelines for all types of non-motorized trails), health programs and marketing tools and promotion of events for greenways and trails.
4. TDEC and the Council will play an integral role in planning and sponsoring the 2010 National Trails Symposium with American Trails and Hamilton County-Chattanooga, TN – by serving on committees, establishing special events, identifying potential sponsors and coordinating educational sessions and off site workshops.
5. Develop a mobile workshop using a statewide-team approach. TDEC-RES will increase the knowledge of community leaders and staff by conducting four one-day technical seminars across the State.
6. TDEC-RES has resources available such as the "Pathways to Trail Building" booklet which focuses on the design and construction of non-motorized trails.

Go to:

[www.tn.gov/environment/recreation/greentrails](http://www.tn.gov/environment/recreation/greentrails) to either request a 5.5" x 11" two color copy or download an 8.5" x 11" four color copy.

7. The Greenways and Trails Program Coordinator will act as the primary contact for trail management and construction issues and for trail design and construction management. Call 615-532-0753 for more information.

## Educational Outreach & Technical Assistance

### CUMBERLAND TRAIL CONFERENCE

The Cumberland Trail Conference (CTC) works in partnership with the Tennessee State Parks in the trail construction and maintenance of the 300-mile Cumberland Trail State Scenic Trail. The CTC has several training opportunities for volunteers each year as a component of their trail building projects. **Breakaway** is the early spring (Feb-March) construction period that in 2008 partnered with 17 colleges and universities. Each week brought new groups of volunteers that hike into the job site, get sweaty, dirty, rained on and muddy, BUT love every minute and are incredibly proud of what they have accomplished.

Other volunteer activities happen throughout the year like the **Big Dig** (May-June) and other trail maintenance workdays in the summer and fall. For more information, go to [www.cumberlandtrail.org](http://www.cumberlandtrail.org). The CTC needs more volunteers to continue the work of constructing and maintaining the Cumberland Trail. How about you?



Photo by the Cumberland Trail Conference

2007 Breakaway Trail Crew

## TRAILS FOR THE FUTURE

**Guiding Principle: Be proactive in planning and funding greenway and trail infrastructure throughout the State of Tennessee by creating dedicated state funding each year and establishing linkages with neighboring communities.**

Citizen involvement, when combined with local leadership, can be the most important catalyst in planning and developing a system of greenways and trails for the future. Also important are dedicated funding sources available to local governments, other agencies and trail user organizations. TDEC-RES encourages facilitating citizen and trail user involvement in trail planning, construction and maintenance - citizen activism is needed to ensure funding for future trails programs.

The Butler Street section of Riverwalk in Pigeon Forge was a tremendous improvement to the neighborhood. John Wilbanks, Pigeon Forge Parks and Recreation Director, states, "Before we put the trail in there were no walks, street lights or proper drainage. Once the trail was completed, the walk, lights and drainage improved the look and quality of life for Butler Street residents. The residents actually spend time outside visiting with each other as they use the trail. The residents have continually expressed their pleasure with the improvements and how it has helped the look and quality of their neighborhood."

The State of Tennessee supports efforts for public acquisition of open space for greenways and trails through the Wetlands Acquisition Fund, State Lands Acquisition Fund, Agricultural and Forestry Land Acquisition Fund and the Local Parks and Recreation Fund. These four land acquisition programs are funded through the real estate recordation tax. In 2005, Governor Bredesen created the Heritage Conservation Trust Fund and has allocated \$10 million annually for the past three fiscal years.

Governor Bredesen has also made special appropriations of \$20 million (FY 2005-06) for acquiring Bowater Southern Paper Corporation timber lands and \$82 million (FY 2006-07) for the historic North Cumberland land acquisition.

TDEC-RES administers one federally funded source dedicated specifically for the acquisition of land for trails, planning and construction of trails and trail head facilities. The **Recreational Trails Program (RTP)** provides annual allocations of funds through the Federal Highway Administration. FY 2007-08, allocation for Tennessee is approximately \$1,250,000. The funds for the RTP come from the federal gasoline taxes paid by OHV trail users. The RTP develops new non-motorized and motorized trails and maintains trails for recreational purposes that include pedestrian, equestrian, bicycling as well as off-road motorized vehicle activities. This program also funds trail safety and education grants and provides for RTP grant administration costs.

Another critical component is the use of volunteers for the construction of new trails and the maintenance of existing trails. Government agencies at the federal, state and local levels are seeing their recreation budgets reduced, while the demand for and the use of all types of trails are increasing.

Trail user groups such as the Tennessee Trails Association, which is celebrating its 40th Anniversary in 2008, now has 14 chapters throughout the State of Tennessee. These chapters hike together and some of these dedicated trail users volunteer to build and maintain their favorite trails.

Another example of trail user groups working together is the Southern Off-Road Bicycle Association (SORBA). The southeast Tennessee chapter of SORBA has developed the 2010 Single Track Initiative. The showcase of the 2010 Single Track Initiative is the Raccoon Mountain project. The SORBA volunteers were able to secure permission from the Tennessee Valley Authority to use the lands around the Raccoon Mountain Pump Storage Project. In the past 4 years, over 12 miles of mountain bike trails have been built by the volunteers with more miles to be built in the near future.

### Actions

1. Develop the interactive statewide Greenways and Trails GIS Map on the TDEC-RES web site – make it useable and accessible to both professionals in the field and citizens/trails users.
2. The Council should focus funding priorities in the areas deemed most important in this Action Program:
  - a. The 2007 Greenways and Trails Survey revealed a high priority by all trail users for new and improved support facilities and trailhead facilities. To put a focus on this area, TDEC-RES should either concentrate a round of RTP grant funding on these type projects or give grant application bonus points for construction and rehabilitation of these types of facilities.
  - b. TDEC-RES should also concentrate RTP grant funding or give bonus points on grant applications that apply for greenways and trails where none currently exist.

3. The Greenways and Trails Advisory Council should discuss and propose **creative funding solutions for trails** and work to establish a new dedicated state funding mechanism for trails, greenways and open space. One example might be for TDEC-RES to fund small grants to communities for the development of marketing and promotional materials for local trail systems.
4. Provide proactive technical assistance to local governments to encourage and promote statewide connectivity. Examples include: GIS maps, technical assistance planning kits, facilitate local planning meetings, trailhead facility specifications and standards available on web site, etc.
5. The Cumberland Trail State Scenic Trail is a nationally significant project in Tennessee, and Tennessee State Parks shall continue to build awareness and encourage its use, future funding and completion. Develop “Gateway Communities” along the Cumberland Trail to emphasize and support the benefits to these local communities.

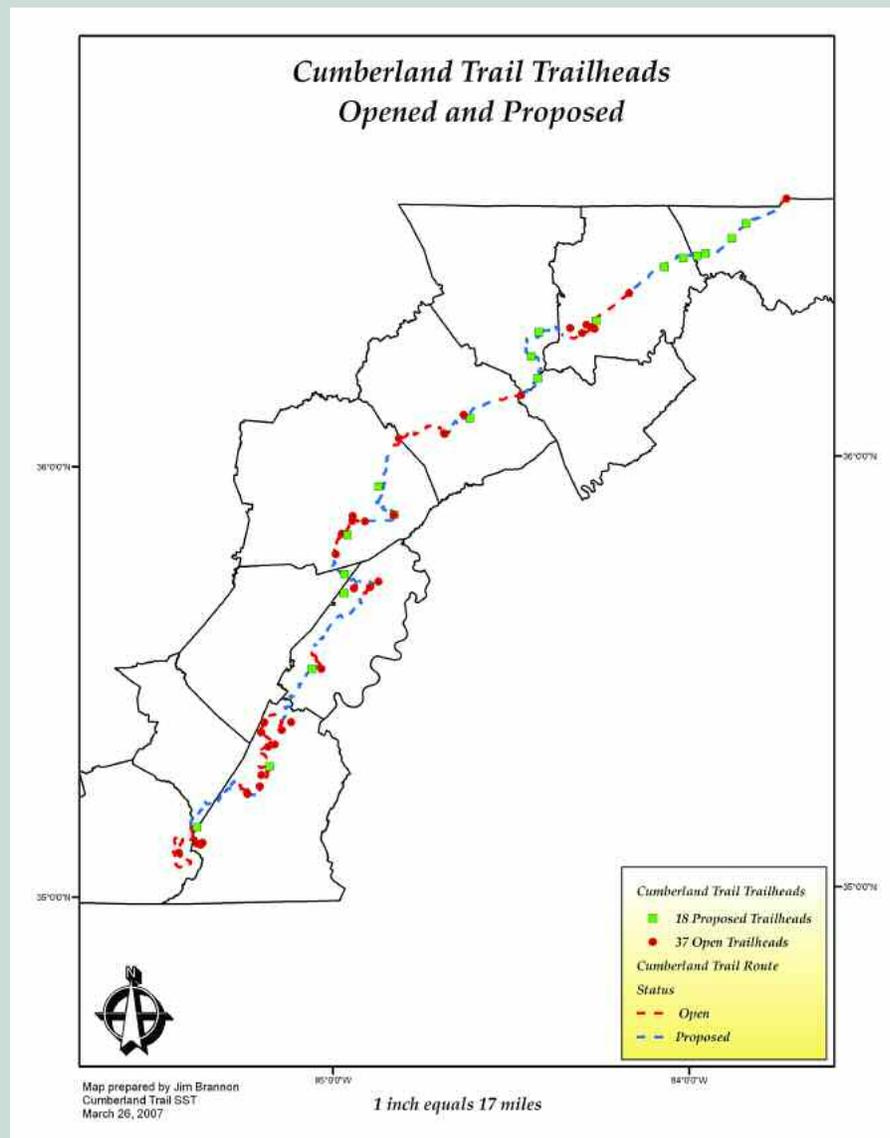


Photo by Lisa Powers

## Trails for the Future

The Cumberland Trail (CT) was a vision of the early founders of the Tennessee Trails Association and was designated as a Tennessee State Scenic Trail in the 1971 Tennessee Trails Act, and became Tennessee's 53rd state park in 1998. This State Scenic Trail is probably one of the biggest examples of what continuous volunteer involvement/support, combined with multiple funding sources, can produce. The Justin P. Wilson Cumberland Trail State Park will contain a core corridor of 300-plus miles of trail beginning in the Cumberland Gap National Historic Park (TN/KY/VA tri state corner) and stretching south on the top of the Cumberland Mountain and then on the eastern edge of the Cumberland Plateau. The southern terminus is at Signal Point Park, a component of the Chickamauga Chattanooga National Military Park near Chattanooga, Tennessee.

The Cumberland Trail State Scenic Trail connects numerous state parks and natural areas together as well as other state managed lands and National Park Service units. In addition to providing positive economic benefits to the local communities it passes through, the Cumberland Trail also provides multiple recreational opportunities, acts as a buffer to protect water quality, provides habitat for animals and plants and functions as a wildlife corridor across Tennessee.



**Cumberland Trail State  
Scenic Trail marker**

## IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

**Guiding Principle:** TDEC-RES and the Commissioner’s Greenways and Trails Advisory Council will seek input and promote partnerships between all levels of government, for-profit and non-profit organizations, communities and other key stakeholders to focus on innovative solutions and foster development of greenways and trails.

### Actions

1. The Commissioner’s Greenways and Trails Advisory Council, in cooperation with TDEC-RES staff, will annually evaluate the effectiveness of objectives and actions as outlined in this document, *Building Connections...Tennessee Greenways and Trails – Action Program 2008*.
2. Convene a statewide Greenways and Trails Roundtable to work on specific action items, research, advocacy and best management practices. Roundtable will help identify successful ways to increase intergovernmental cooperation, and improve relationships with non-profit organizations.









