

The Greenway News



The Yadkin River Greenway Council Newsletter

AN EXCITING YEAR ON THE GREENWAY

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Message from the President's Chair –

The Greenway experienced yet another exciting year of progress and, more importantly, expansion!

This great project continues to grow, thanks in part to our partners in interest: the Towns of Wilkesboro and North Wilkesboro, the County of Wilkes, and a host of volunteer groups who maintain the various greenway segments and assist in beautification and improvement projects.

The Friends of the Greenway contributors continue to provide the much needed financial support for the daily operation of the organization.

Further details of this year's successes will be provided by the various committee Chairpersons in this update.

The expansion of the Greenway hinges primarily on the generosity of landowners who share access to the Yadkin and Reddies Rivers through the granting of easements. While many landowners have readily co-operated in the use of their land, others remain apprehensive or reluctant to do so. We hold out hope, that as the Greenway continues to expand, those landowners will recognize the benefit the Greenway provides to the community at-large and to the improvement of their property as well.



The members of the Greenway Council are anticipating yet another year of progress and, as always, we look forward to seeing YOU on the Greenway!

Charlie White, President,
Yadkin River Greenway Council

President Charlie at Lover's Leap rock bluff

NEW GREENWAY TRAIL SECTIONS

In 2008, the construction of Phase II, Segment 2 (River's Edge Segment) was basically completed connecting the Wilkes YMCA with a continuous trail of approximately 1.7 miles in length to a new trailhead near the confluence of Moravian Creek and the Yadkin River. The highlight of the construction for this phase included a 190 ft. long section of cantilevered greenway over the riverbank behind the old Golden Needles facility. This cantilevered greenway featured a weathering steel structural frame with treated wood decking and an 8 ft. high privacy fence separating the greenway from the property owners. A newly constructed paved parking area, at the easternmost point of this segment, highlights the new Moravian Creek Trailhead. The new trailhead sign is on order and is expected to be installed shortly.



Boardwalk near Moravian Creek

In the latter part of 2008, we began the construction improvements to the Jefferson Turnpike segment of the Yadkin River Greenway. A grant for \$45,700 from the NC Recreation Trails Program (NCRTP) was procured for this work. This grant and a previously approved \$30,000 grant from the Lowe's Charitable and Education Foundation have been applied to the work ongoing at the Jefferson Turnpike segment. Approximately 90% of the improvements for this segment have been completed. The work includes upgrading of the existing road bed with new rock screening surface, erosion control measures and new drainage to protect the trail in the future. A new trailhead with parking facilities has been created near the Suncrest Orchard Road access to the Jefferson Turnpike segment. In the coming year, we plan to complete the necessary signage as well as the remaining 10% of the trail which is dependent on the completion of dredging operations at the spillway by the Town of North Wilkesboro.

The top priority for 2009 for the Yadkin River Greenway Construction and Planning is the Phase V, Segment 1 (Lover's Leap) trail which will extend from the existing Moravian Creek Trailhead to a new trailhead at Curtis Bridge Road. This segment has been on the NC Department of Transportation-Transportation Improvement Project (NCDOT-TIP) listing since 2004 awaiting a feasibility study. That study began in October 2008 with a visit from the NCDOT representatives. We have begun preliminary planning with the local NCDOT office in order to plan for encroachments under the Highway 421 bypass bridge, as well as the Curtis Bridge Road bridge. We are hopeful that the NCDOT-TIP funding for this segment will be forthcoming for 2009 so that we may begin concrete planning for the construction of this segment.



Jefferson Turnpike Greenway Trail

The Phase III, Segment 1 (Smoot Park-Memorial Park) part of the Yadkin River Greenway has been in consideration for the past two (2) years. The Yadkin River Greenway, in conjunction with the Town of North Wilkesboro, has applied for PARTF grants with the State of North Carolina for construction of this trail. For the second year in a row, the grant has not been approved. The High Country Council of Governments is rewriting a grant request to be resubmitted for this coming year.

Future phase planning is ongoing with the Yadkin River Greenway Council. The Brown's Ford to the Wilkes YMCA Greenway Trail segment has been placed on a lower priority, and further study and review will be required. The Yadkin River Greenway was unable to procure the necessary property easements for construction of this segment and, consequently time ran out and the \$235,000 Division of Water Resources grant was surrendered. We are continuing to review the available options for routing other future greenway segments since several roadblocks have been encountered to procure easements in our preferred routes.

2008 has expanded our Yadkin River Greenway. We look forward to 2009 in the planning of additional Yadkin River Greenway trails. We are also very grateful to all the "Friends of the Greenway" and their ongoing support that will be indispensable in the coming year.

By: Frank Taracido, Construction Chair

THE BIGGER PICTURE—YADKIN RIVER HERITAGE CORRIDOR

History is replete with examples of impressive achievements that conventional wisdom would have considered impossible only a few years before they were realized. Eighty years ago, who might have envisioned the construction of the Blue Ridge Parkway? Sixty-five years ago, who expected that a small North Wilkesboro hardware store could grow to become one of the largest corporations in the world? Even twenty years ago, who would have predicted the creation of a beautiful greenway along the banks of the Yadkin River in the Wilkesboros?

Similarly, an audacious goal that may seem ahead of its time is the Yadkin River Heritage Corridor, which is envisioned to be a dozen times longer than the planned length of our local Yadkin River Greenway. The YRHC is conceived as a continuous pedestrian greenway/blueway from the river's headwaters in Catawba County, running downstream through Wilkes, Surry, and Yadkin Counties for a total of 129 miles. At present the only part of the Corridor that has been constructed is the approximately five miles of the Yadkin River Greenway in the Wilkesboros.

While our local greenway was conceived in the mid-1990s, the Heritage Corridor evolved out of regional planning efforts that began with the creation of the Blue Ridge National Heritage Area, designated by Congress in 2003. The BRNHA encompasses 25 counties in Western North Carolina requiring each of the counties to prepare a 10-year Heritage Tourism Plan. Wilkes County's plan included an initiative to involve multiple counties in planning the Heritage Corridor.

The YRHC collaboration began in earnest with the formation of a task force in the fall of 2005 involving numerous stakeholders from the four counties of the Upper Yadkin Valley. This task force produced the YRHC Partnership which continues to the present. It is headed by Eddie Barnes, who is also Director of Planning for Wilkes County.

The Partnership applied for and received a grant from the National Park Service in 2006 to assist with the preparation of a master plan for the YRHC. In this same timeframe they applied for and received a grant from the BRNHA to conduct a feasibility and economic impact study for creating the envisioned 129 mile greenway along the Yadkin River. This study, completed in 2007, projected an enormous positive impact for the region.

Quoting from the YRHC Master Plan, "The mission is to provide leadership and encourage collaboration among local governments, public/private partnerships and organizations seeking to preserve, protect, enhance and sustain the cultural, natural, historic and recreational assets of the Yadkin River corridor. Through collaborative leadership, the Partnership will promote and facilitate a coordinated approach to the regional planning and facility improvement of the YRHC. In addition, it will foster economic development, while promoting water quality, air quality, and view shed protection."

"The Partnership envisions a regional tourism destination centered by a system of multi-use greenways and trails to establish connectivity among major historic and cultural-heritage sites and link the many communities within Caldwell, Surry, Wilkes and Yadkin counties. Ultimately, the Partnership will provide the regional leadership to: preserve local heritage, preserve scenic landscapes, natural resources and open spaces, provide alternative forms of transportation linking communities through multi-use greenways, trails, and paddle trails, stimulate local economies through tourism and business development, provide recreational and fitness opportunities that promote healthy lifestyles, encourage outdoor educational opportunities for our youth, and enhance social capital and community development across generations and diverse groups".

The Master Plan subdivides the Corridor into eight planning sectors, from west to east: 1)..Happy Valley: Patterson School & Fort Defiance, 2)..Happy Valley: Laura Foster & Whippoorwill Academy, 3)..Kerr Scott, 4)..The Wilkesboros, 5)..Ronda, 6)..Elkin, 7)..Surry/Yadkin, 8)..East Bend/ Shallow Ford.

Planning for development of each of these sectors is described in considerable detail in the Master Plan, which is available at the Wilkes County Planning Office. The plan is fifty pages in length.

Over the long term, the Master Plan calls for connecting and integrating the Yadkin River Heritage Corridor with other regional and statewide trail and greenway networks, including the Overmountain Victory National Historic Trail (which already includes the Yadkin River Greenway), the North Carolina Mountains to Sea Trail, the Western NC Birding Trail, and NC Civil War Trails.

The YRHC Partnership is not intended to replace locally focused organizations such as the Yadkin River Greenway Council, but to collaborate with them to achieve the regional YRHC vision. In recent months the YRHC Partnership and the YRGC have entered into an administrative assistance agreement that will leverage the established capabilities and experience of the Council to help the Partnership succeed in its future efforts to obtain and administer grants.

In conclusion, the conventional wisdom may consider completion of the YRHC to be an uphill climb, but this is not deterring the YRHC Partnership from pushing ahead with its ambitious agenda. The Yadkin River Greenway Council will remain an active and involved contributor to this long term vision in our community.

THANK YOU TO OUR VOLUNTEERS AND DONORS

The Yadkin River Greenway Council is very proud and appreciative of the many volunteers who participate in keeping the Yadkin River Greenway trail attractive, safe, and clean. We are especially grateful and thankful to the Adopt-A-Trail group formed in 2007 that have worked their areas most effectively and efficiently. A newly formed garden club called the Master Gardeners joined the Adopt-a-Trail and has revitalized areas along the Reddies River trailhead. A group of 8 to 10 people, led by Diane Stephens, weeded, sprayed, planted flowers, grasses, and beautiful roses for our community to enjoy. The Master Gardeners is a division of the North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service. The Wilkes County Extension Director is Bill Hamlin.

The Yadkin River Greenway Adopt-a-Trail groups consist of the following very devoted individuals and organizations. The Master Gardeners - area around the Reddies River Trailhead. Sonny Church – confluence of the Yadkin and Reddies Rivers. In 2008 he installed a trellis and planted a flowering vine in memory of his parents. Alison Pipes – area around the recognition wall. Charles White – Weeds and sprays areas when needed. Bill Holland – a new volunteer with the Adopt-A-Trail will do trash pick-up along the Jefferson Turnpike. John Battle & family – trail behind Duncan Electric to the Coffee Tavern Harvey and Ginger Barlow – area at the beginning of the trail at Coffee Tavern Parking lot. Lisa Laufenberg and family – area at the intersection of the greenway trail near junction of rivers, which now includes picnic tables and newly planted blueberry bushes. .

Gary Johnson and his Tyson Foods, Inc. “Earth Day” clan are to be commended for their continued efforts in keeping their Adopt-A-Trail region looking so beautiful. On April 18 this group gathered at the Tyson Trailhead in Wilkesboro and trimmed bushes and trees, planted flowers, and donated a picnic table which was placed near the landscaped area of the Tyson Trailhead. Latter in the summer they again weeded and pruned flowers.

We are so fortunate to have two of our community churches donate their time to caring for our greenway trails. The North Wilkesboro Presbyterian Church local mission group included the greenway in their volunteer work week in August. The First United Methodist Church Youth worked to pickup trash as one of their local projects. Elliott Hincer is working on an Eagle Scout project to replace bird and duck houses along the Mulberry Fields greenway trail.

Some of our community conscious people have made donations in honor and memory of friends and family members. Two concrete benches donated by Jimmy Hayes were placed at each end of the Rivers Edge trail. Also located at the YMCA area and the at the Moravian Creek Trailhead are granite mileage markers installed in memory of Gwyn Vannoy and in honor of Diane and Lanny Stephens. We are most grateful for these gracious contributions to the greenway.

A memorial for Reverend Carter Shelley was given by the Yadkin River Greenway Council. A cluster of blueberry bushes was planted at the river’s junction. The Reverend Carter Shelley’s husband, Dr. Tom Frazer, is a founding member of the Yadkin River Greenway Council.



County and town maintenance crews continue to maintain the greenway in a very unselfish and positive way. They are always willing to do what is needed and asked of them to keep the greenway “a world class facility”. The Wilkes County crew mows grass regularly, and along with the two towns, removes downed trees, sprays weed killer, cuts brush, trims along river banks, repairs sink holes, fences, bollards, and removes rock slides.

It is apparent that all these groups of individuals and organizations have a sense of what it is to volunteer for our community. A community where people come together for the greater good, having concerns for others and sharing common interest and goals, working together to help maintain and keep the Yadkin River Greenway alive for future generations.

The Yadkin River Greenway Council would like to thank all the volunteers who have participated in so many ways. If you are interested in volunteering for a project for the betterment of the greenway, please contact the Yadkin River Greenway Council office at 651-8967 or Freida Matthews at 838-4938.

By: Freida Matthews, Volunteer Coordination Chair

GRANTS FOLLOW EASEMENTS

The two most challenging aspects of building a greenway are obtaining easements and construction grants. Without the generosity of landowners to give easements we are powerless to obtain grants for construction. As a result of our inability to get easements from Brown's Ford Road down the south bank of the Yadkin River to the Wilkes Family YMCA, we had to surrender a \$235,000 grant previously awarded to us by the NCDENR Division of Water Resources. We will continue our pursuit of these easements and hopefully we can obtain new grant funding.

In our quest to build a greenway segment from Memorial to Smoot Park in North Wilkesboro, we submitted for a second time a \$320,000 grant application to the NC Parks & Recreation Trust Fund. This was part of a grant submitted by the Town of North Wilkesboro that included upgrades to Smoot Park. Again our grant application was not approved. We are preparing our 3rd application for this grant that will be submitted in January. Also we are preparing a grant application to the NC Division of Water Resources for this segment.

Upgrade of the Jefferson Turnpike Reddies River Trail is nearing completion. This work was made possible through a \$30,000 grant from Lowe's Charitable & Education Foundation, a \$45,700 grant from NCDENR Recreational Trails Program, and a \$2,000 grant from Wilkes Community Foundation.

We are seeking grants to add amenities to the Moravian Creek Trailhead at the north end of Collegiate Avenue in Wilkesboro. A \$4,000 grant was awarded by the Wilkesboro Tourism Development Authority and a matching \$4,000 grant application has been submitted to the NCDENR "Adopt-A-Trail" for these amenities. In addition a \$17,000 grant application to help fund this trailhead and to extend the greenway to Moravian Creek is waiting approval from the National Park Service Overmountain Victory National Historic Trail.

The NCDOT Bicycle & Pedestrian Division is currently conducting a "feasibility study" to build a greenway segment from the Moravian Creek Trailhead down the south bank of the Yadkin River passing under "Lover's Leap" to a proposed trailhead near Curtis Bridge Road. We hope this will result in a grant that will largely fund this trail segment.

In support of the Yadkin River Greenway Council administration and operations the County of Wilkes, Town of North Wilkesboro, and Town of Wilkesboro again provided funding totaling \$14,500. Major contributions for Greenway construction included donations from the Gwyn Vannoy Estate, the Kulynych Family Foundation, the Mr. & Mrs. James N. Andrews Family Foundation, Blake & Julia Lovette, and Dwight & Anne Pardue. NC Sales Tax refunds during 2008 totalled \$6,791. We also received a grant reimbursement of \$2,685 from the National Park Service Over Mountain Victory National Historic Trail.

GREENWAY COUNCIL CONTINUES STRONG

During 2008 the Yadkin River Greenway Council retained its competent membership. The Council consists of Charles White, President & Chairman, Carl McCann, Vice President, Gary Cogdill, Treasurer, Vicki Church, Secretary, and other Council members: Lee Bentley, Shelmar Blackburn, Janet Lyon-Cardwell, John Gygax, Gary Johnson, Keith Johnston, Mike Kerhoulas, Lisa Laufenberg, Steve Mathis, Freida Matthews, Carolyn Frazier-Pardue, Alison Pipes, Chuck Smithey, Steve Steele, Sam Stroud, Frank Taracido, and Roy Williams. Executive Director is Bill Clifton..

Look us up on the internet www.yadkinrivergreenway.com to learn more "About Us", when the YRGC meets (always 4th Tuesday of the month), dates of events, etc.

FUND RAISERS INVOLVE TURTLES, CHICKENS & GOLF

Our primary fund raisers in 2008 were again the Turtle Regatta, Chicken Sale, and Golf Tournament. These not only provided needed funding for the administration and operation of the Yadkin River Greenway Council, but they also provided an opportunity for involvement of our council members and “Friends of the Greenway” to meet with members of the community to express our thanks and to update them on the progress we have made.

The Tyson Chicken Sale held on Saturday, March 29 met with great success and yielded a net income of \$8,011. Again we thank Tyson Foods for their generous support. Our 6th annual Turtle Regatta was held Saturday, May 17. 1820 toy turtles were adopted and floated down the Reddies River at “crawl speed”. 22 prizes were awarded with 1st place being a bicycle donated by Cook’s. Pam Mathis provided music at the finish line prior to award of prizes by YRGC President Charlie White. Hank Perkins, Town of North Wilkesboro Manager, and Charlie Sink, Wilkes County Commissioner, were again our judges. The event netted \$9,275.

Thursday September 11 was the date of our 5th annual Yadkin River Greenway Charity Golf Tournament held at Oakwoods Country Club. 64 golfers participated and hole sponsors numbered 50. The “hole-in one” prize of a motorcycle sponsored by CrossRoads Harley Davidson went unclaimed. We netted \$4,993.

Thanks to all who participated in these fund raising events and for your support in building a greenway from W. Kerr Scott Reservoir to Smoot Park.



Dumping Turtles off bridge

Over the years the Yadkin River Greenway has become a focal point for our

GREENWAY EVENTS IN OUR COMMUNITY

community. The Greenway provides wonderful opportunities for a variety of activities for individuals and groups. This past Halloween 32 local organizations passed out treats to thousands of youthful cowboys, ghosts, and princesses during the Trail of Treats. The event was successfully sponsored by North Wilkesboro Police Department and Samaritan Ministries. Participants donated food that was distributed to needy families in our community.

This past fall a photographer from Southern Living Magazine visited to capture the natural beauty of the Greenway. In the coming months a Southern Living writer will visit to research the Greenway for an upcoming article. In May the Greenway received official certification as a North Carolina Birding Trail. There will signs installed on the Greenway designating it as a birding trail. In September the Yadkin River Greenway Council participated in the NC DOT Health & Wellness Fair by distributing information on all the Greenway has to offer.

A segment of the Yadkin River Greenway was recently certified as part of the Overmountain Victory National Historic Trail. This segment of Greenway extends from the east end of the old airport runway to the Trailhead at Moravian Creek. It includes a 190 ft. boardwalk behind the old Golden Needles Glove factory. Featured speaker at the certification was Senator James Broyhill who was instrumental in founding the Overmountain Victory National Historic Trail initiative in 1980 to recognize the 1780 Patriot march to Kings Mountain.

Planning is underway for a Greenway day in May 2009 to dedicate the recently completed sections of the Greenway. This will include the Rivers Edge Park trail from the YMCA to Moravian Creek and the Jefferson Turnpike on the Reddies River from 13th Street to Suncrest-Orchard Road. A variety of activities will be offered to create an interesting day for all those attending the event.



Greenway Council members accept OVNHT Certification Plaque

By: Lisa Laufenberg, Special Events Chair

GREENWAY; PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

Beginning in the mid-1990's, the Yadkin River Greenway Council set a lofty long-term goal to build a Greenway from W. Kerr Scott Dam to Smoot Park, connecting as many public and park areas as possible with a walking trail. The Yadkin and Reddies Rivers run through the heart of our community. This Greenway would open up the beauty of these natural treasures for everyone to enjoy.

Our initial goal was to build the first section of Greenway from the D Street Bridge in North Wilkesboro down the Reddies River to the Wilkesboro Boulevard Bridge, then to the West Park area. To accomplish this goal, we began our first capital fundraising campaign in the summer of 2000. At that time the only Greenway trails we had were on paper. We had no land easements and not even a foot of trail on the ground.

The Yadkin River Greenway has come a long way in the last eight years.



Pardue Crossing over Yadkin River to Wilkesboro

Today we have miles of paved greenway trails along the Yadkin and Reddies Rivers. The Central section of our Greenway has 1.7 miles of paved Greenway connecting the Wilkes Heritage Museum area in Wilkesboro to the D Street Bridge area and the West Park area in North Wilkesboro.

We also have 1.7 miles of paved Greenway in the Western Greenway section from the Wilkes Family YMCA almost to Mulberry Creek near Highway 421.

We've also built a half-mile granular stone Greenway trail from the W. Kerr Scott Dam spillway nearly to Browns Ford Road. Next spring we'll complete a scenic granular stone trail along the Reddies River on what is known as the "Jefferson Turnpike", the old river road that starts behind Robby's Army Store and runs north for one mile to Suncrest Orchard Road.

Today almost every foot of trail we've built is 100% paid for. We've done all this by securing grants from many sources and by raising construction funds through contributions from local community-minded citizens. We've had the support, cooperation and many levels of assistance from the officials of the County and both North Wilkesboro and Wilkesboro, along with hundreds of other volunteers.

We are making plans to further enhance and expand our Greenway system over the next few years. We plan to connect the Central Greenway system to the Western sections, creating one extensive trail system that will be one of the finest in western North Carolina.

To accomplish this worthy goal, we plan to launch our second capital campaign in 2009 or 2010 to raise the funds to move forward. We're already working with state officials to qualify for grants that will pay for a majority of the costs of new Greenway sections. But we will need strong financial support once again from those of you in our community who want to help make the dream of a complete Greenway system become a reality.

As you consider what contribution you can make to benefit our community over the next few years, we ask you to keep the Greenway in mind. 100% of your contributions to our capital campaign will be spent on construction. Your contributions to build Greenway trails will make a lasting difference in the quality of life for all of us in Wilkes.

By: Keith Johnston, Fund Raising Chairman

**The Yadkin River Greenway
Council Newsletter**

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“FRIENDS OF THE GREENWAY” GROWS

“Friends of the Yadkin River Greenway” has completed its sixth year as a “grass roots” support organization. “Friends of the Greenway” added 17 new members during 2008 and now totals 216 who have joined. Of these, 76 have renewed their membership during the past year and we hope all will renew during 2009.

Contributions for the past 6 years to “Friends of the Greenway” now total \$55,380. These donations go along way towards covering the administration expenses to run the Yadkin River Greenway Council, thus enabling us to fulfill our mission of developing a greenway system in our community.



Annual membership is open to all people and, by being a 501(C)3 non-profit organization, membership dues are tax deductible to the extent possible.

We offer opportunities to our members to volunteer time on specific greenway events and projects, helping in the greenway office, and contacting prospective new members. This newsletter and other communications will keep our members informed of Greenway activities.

In January, based on membership anniversary date, we will begin contacting each “Friend of the Greenway” to renew their membership and to continue their support of the greenway. Regular memberships are: \$20 for individuals, \$40 for families, \$12 for youth, \$100 for businesses, and \$50 for organizations.

Also to be recognized as a “Trailblazer”, categories are: \$100 for Daniel Boone, \$250 for Sir Walter Raleigh, \$500 for Henry Hudson, and \$1000 for Lewis and Clark.

Thanks again for your continuing support. If any questions...Phone: 651-8967. Bill Clifton, Executive Director