

What is a greenway?

"All this, at the time I embarked upon my long walk through these deserted regions, was barren and colorless land.

Nothing grew.....

Abandon village.....

After three days' of walking, found myself in the midst of unparalleled desolation.....

A shepherd.....

There he began....

Making a hole in which he planted an acorn then he refilled the hole. He was planting oak trees. I asked him if the land belonged to him. He answered no. Did he know whose it was? He did not. He supposed it was community property, or perhaps belonged to people who cared nothing about it. He was not interested in finding out whose it was. He planted his hundred acorns (one hundred a day for more than 30 years) with the greatest care."

Excerpts from Jean Giono, The Man who Planted Trees

Most of us are familiar with the Blue Ridge Parkway. It's a long, thin park with a road through the middle that's used for recreation and transportation. Now imagine a trail open only to foot and bicycle traffic serving the same purposes....
that's a greenway!

***Greenways
are linear
parks, often
running
along a
river.***

Cities and small towns across the United States have built greenways for recreation and transportation.

Nearby towns such as Boone and Morganton already have greenways similar to the one planned for Wilkes County by the Yadkin River Greenway Council.

Blazing the Trail

The Yadkin River Greenway is a citizen inspired initiative. In the mid 1990's a diverse group of Wilkes County residents began brainstorming ways to preserve the natural beauty of the Yadkin Valley. The Yadkin River Greenway Council formed as an incorporated, 501(c)3, non-profit organization dedicated to making a riverside greenway a reality for the citizens of Wilkes County. To date, the Council has made many strides toward blazing the trail.

Feasibility Study Greenways, Inc., the Nation's foremost greenway design firm, conducted a feasibility study to determine if the Yadkin Valley is suitable for a greenway. These experts, involved in the famous San Antonio River-Walk and The Grand Canyon Trail System, said the answer is a definite yes.

Land Landowners are excited about the benefits of a greenway. Land has been surveyed and is currently being appraised so acquisition can begin.

Master Plan Greenways, Inc. has produced a conceptual master plan of the Greenway. It will link the Wilkesboros with a bridge over the Yadkin River near West Park and a bridge over the Reddies River near its confluence with the Yadkin. Sites to be linked include the current YMCA, the Wellness Center at West Park, Old Wilkes Jail, and Bicycles Extreme.

Government Support The Yadkin River forms a natural boundary between the towns of Wilkesboro and North Wilkesboro, a historic divide that will now be bridged as a result of an intergovernmental agreement that provides a means to preserve the natural beauty of this shared resource. The County of Wilkes and the two towns have pledged financial support to the project and will be an integral part of its construction. The North Carolina Department of Transportation is donating construction plans for a portion of the Greenway.

"In 1933 he received a visit from a forest ranger who notified him of an order against lighting fires out of doors for fear of endangering the growth of this *natural* forest. It was the first time, the man told him naively, that he had ever heard of a forest growing of its own accord.....

In 1935 a whole delegation came from the Government to examine the "natural forest."

It was decided that something must be done and, fortunately, nothing was done except the only helpful thing: the whole forest was placed under the protection of the State, and charcoal burning prohibited. For it was impossible not to be captivated by the beauty of those young trees in the fulness of health, and they cast their spell over the deputy himself. "

Excerpts from Jean Giono, The Man who Planted Trees

Rewards

The Yadkin River Greenway will showcase and preserve the natural beauty and history of our community by providing a 2.59-mile riverside trail.

"On the site of ruins I had seen in 1913 now stand neat farms, cleanly plastered, testifying to a happy and comfortable life. The old streams, fed by the rains and snows that the forest conserves, are flowing again. Their waters have been channeled. On each farm, in groves of maples, fountain pools overflow on to carpets of fresh mint. Little by little the villages have been rebuilt. People from the plains, where land is costly, have settled here, bringing youth, motion, the spirit of adventure. Along the roads you meet hearty men and women, boys and girls who understand laughter and have recovered a taste for picnics. Counting the former population, unrecognizable now that they live in comfort, more than ten thousand people owe their happiness to Elzeard Bouffier."

Excerpts from Jean Giono, The Man who Planted Trees

Recreation/Health Greenways promote healthier lifestyles by encouraging outdoor physical activity. Whether biking, hiking, or paddling, everyone will enjoy a scenic, natural environment—free from traffic—on which to exercise. The Greenway is purposefully designed to be wheelchair accessible. Baby strollers will move freely on the trail. Future Greenway phases will link facilities such as River's Edge Park (soccer and softball fields), and the Wellness Center at West Park.

Education The Greenway will link to existing historic sites such as Old Wilkes Jail and The Ben Cleveland Home in Old Wilkes. Interpretive displays and kiosks will showcase the rich history of the area.

Transportation Unlike a typical walking track, a greenway actually *goes* somewhere, providing an alternative mode of transportation. The Greenway will follow the Yadkin River through the heart of the Wilkesboros, providing a safe way for people to go to work, to school, or to shopping areas.

Rewards *continued*

Environmental Visitors to the Greenway will be reconnected to the land and its natural treasures. Spring bursts forth with new life as native wildflowers such as trillium, bluets, violets and ferns unfurl beneath a canopy of green. Summer's end is marked by the bloom of the jewelweed, a brightly colored plant that dots the river's edge and provides a homespun cure for poison ivy. Autumn provides a virtual fireworks display of color which is a vivid contrast to winter's calm. These seasons provide for a rich variety of both flora and fauna. By reconnecting with the land, we provide an opportunity to understand better the need to be its protector. The Greenway will serve as a natural buffer—helping to filter out pollutants that are collected by rainwater before they reach the river.

Economic Greenways are community amenities that make good business sense.

- Property values go up when associated with greenways.
- Quality of life in an area is more important than purely business-related factors when it comes to attracting new businesses, concluded the Joint Economic Committee of the U.S. Congress. A seemingly small factor like a greenway can tip the balance as companies consider otherwise similar communities.
- Restaurants and other retail establishments flourish near popular greenway projects.

What it May Cost

Greenway experts emphasize that successful greenway projects are public-private partnerships. Public funds, private donations, and landowner contributions are all part of the mix required to build a quality project.

The County of Wilkes, the Yadkin River Greenway Council, the Town of North Wilkesboro, and the Town of Wilkesboro have negotiated an Inter-Governmental Agreement which enables the North Carolina Department of Transportation to grant federal highway funds for Yadkin River Greenway construction reimbursement in the amount of \$400,000.00. However, grant programs alone will not build the Yadkin River Greenway.

Donations from individuals and businesses are required to match state funds/grants. Such money could also be used to provide special amenities along the Greenway, such as playgrounds, gardens, picnic areas and fishing piers.

Greenways Incorporated, a planning and landscape architecture firm, submitted a master plan for the Yadkin River Greenway with construction cost estimates of \$785,000. This estimate was made in December of 1997. Since then, inflation has raised the estimated cost. Not included in the cost were survey, legal, and appraisal fees. Based on this information, the Yadkin River Greenway Council Board of Directors has set a project goal of \$1,000,000. The following gift table identifies the giving structure necessary to meet successfully a project goal of \$1,000,000.

Proposed Gift Table for Capital Project

| Number of Gifts | Gift Amount | Total |
|-----------------|------------------|--------------|
| 1 (NCDOT) | \$400,000.00 | \$400,000.00 |
| 1 | \$120,000.00 | \$120,000.00 |
| 1 | \$90,000.00 | \$90,000.00 |
| 3 | \$30,000.00 | \$90,000.00 |
| 10 | \$10,000.00 | \$100,000.00 |
| 16 | \$5,000.00 | \$80,000.00 |
| 26 | \$3,000.00 | \$78,000.00 |
| 28 | \$1,500.00 | \$42,000.00 |
| Many | Below \$1,500.00 | + |

86 totaling \$1,000,000.00.

Help Blaze the Trail

The Yadkin River Greenway Council is committed to raising \$1,000,000.00 in private, public, and corporate contributions. Pledges are being accepted through October 2002.

Named Gift Opportunities are as follows:

- Yadkin River Bridge \$120,000
- Reddies River Bridge \$90,000
- Reddies River Trailhead \$30,000
- Wilkesboro Park Trailhead \$30,000
- YMCA Trailhead \$30,000
- Mile Markers \$10,000

Gifts of \$1,500.00 or more will be permanently commemorated.

We are asking you to consider a leadership gift toward this important community service project and to join us in our effort to ensure the success of this campaign.

“When I reflect that one man, armed only with his own physical and moral resources, was able to cause this land of Canaan to spring from the wasteland, I am convinced that in spite of everything, humanity is admirable. But when I compute the unfailing greatness of spirit and the tenacity of benevolence that it must have taken to achieve this result, I am taken with an immense respect for that old and unlearned peasant who was able to complete a work worthy of God.”

Excerpts from Jean Giono, The Man who Planted Trees

Further Information

"We need your help now to build the Greenway. When the Greenway is completed and opens up the beauty of the Yadkin River in the center of our community, wouldn't it be great to know that you helped make it happen? Join us in giving a gift, a permanent gift, to our children, our grandchildren, and our community."

*Keith Johnston, Campaign
Chairman*

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