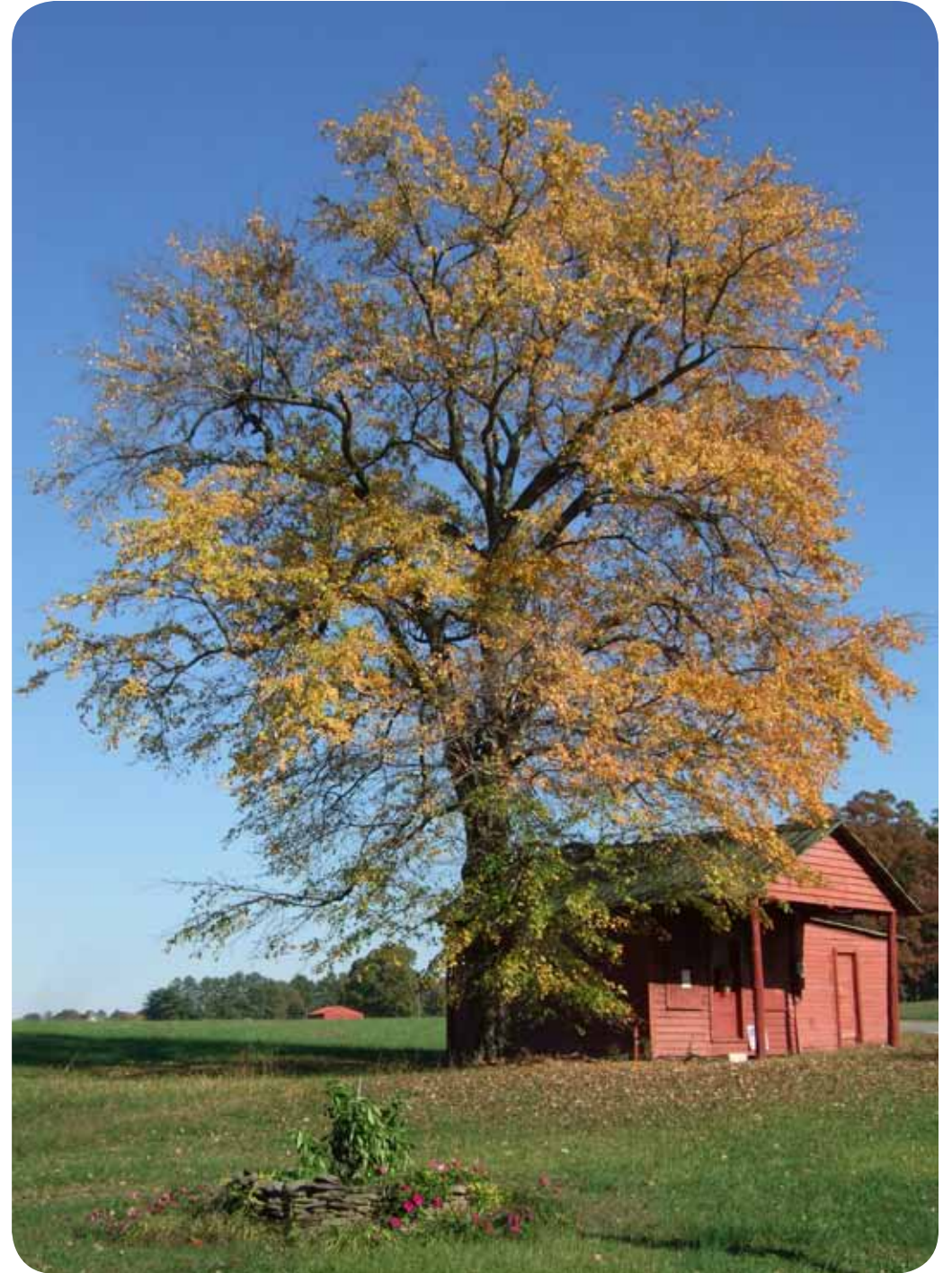


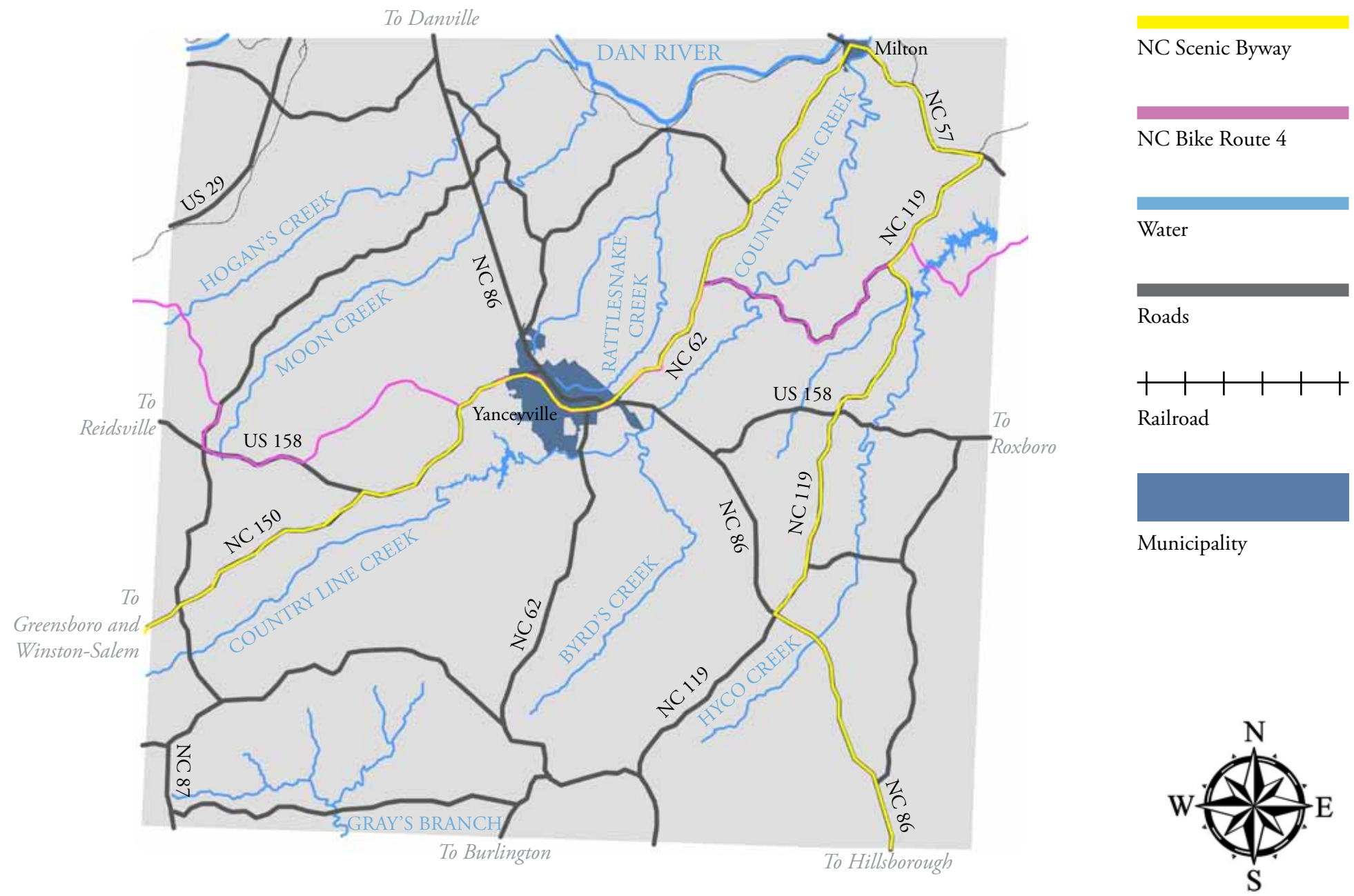
HERITAGE TRAILS MASTER PLAN



CASWELL COUNTY, NC



CASWELL COUNTY, NC



Heritage Trails Master Plan for Caswell County, NC 2012

Prepared by:

The Dan River Basin Association

www.danriver.org

Funding provided by:

The Danville Regional Foundation

www.danvilleregionalfoundation.org

Guidance provided by:

Caswell County Parks and Recreation Commission

www.caswellcountync.gov



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This Heritage Trails Master Plan was prepared by the Dan River Basin Association (DRBA) and its affiliate, the Caswell County Parks and Recreation Commission in cooperation with the Caswell County Rivers and Trails Committee, the Town of Yanceyville, the Town of Milton and the County of Caswell. Funding for plan development and distribution was provided by the Danville Regional Foundation.

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A special thank you to all who contributed to the Master Plan; to Dr. Forrest Altman for his dedication to recreation and for initiating the plan; to Mike Stanley for plan oversight and for time spent developing public trails at the Caswell County Senior Center; to Caswell County for local GIS data; to Karen Oestreicher with the Caswell County Historical Association; to Tiffany Haworth, Katherine Mull, Jenny Edwards, Brian Williams, T Butler and Wayne Kirkpatrick of DRBA for their support during the creation of this Master Plan.

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DAN RIVER BASIN ASSOCIATION

History

Outdoor enthusiasts and concerned citizens organized the Dan River Basin Association in 2002 to preserve and promote the wilderness-like rivers of this border region of Piedmont North Carolina and Virginia. Faced with the decline of tobacco and textiles, our traditional economic bases, leaders in the Basin’s counties recognize the increasing importance of the abundant high-quality water in this 3300-square-mile region. In addition to its economic value as a water source and its historical significance as a means of transportation, this river system can provide excellent recreational opportunities to the 1.5 million citizens who live within an hour’s drive.

The Association’s founders are promoting the rivers for multiple uses, including recreation and commercial and municipal growth. We believe that, with careful planning, natural and cultural preservation and economic development can occur hand-in-hand. The unspoiled rivers, the region’s unique and greatest resource, will be at the center as the sixteen counties of the Basin build a diverse economy, which must be based in part on new ideas. The Dan River Basin Association believes that providing outdoor recreation is essential to the region’s quality of life and its ability to draw new investment.

The Dan River Basin Association is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization incorporated in North Carolina and Virginia, with basin-wide membership and directors representing both states.

Mission

The Dan River Basin Association preserves and promotes the natural and cultural resources of the Dan River Basin through stewardship, recreation and education.

Vision

The Dan River Basin Association envisions an economically vibrant bi-state community with a regional identity, where people enjoy easy access to healthy rivers, parks, trails and heritage attractions.

Goals

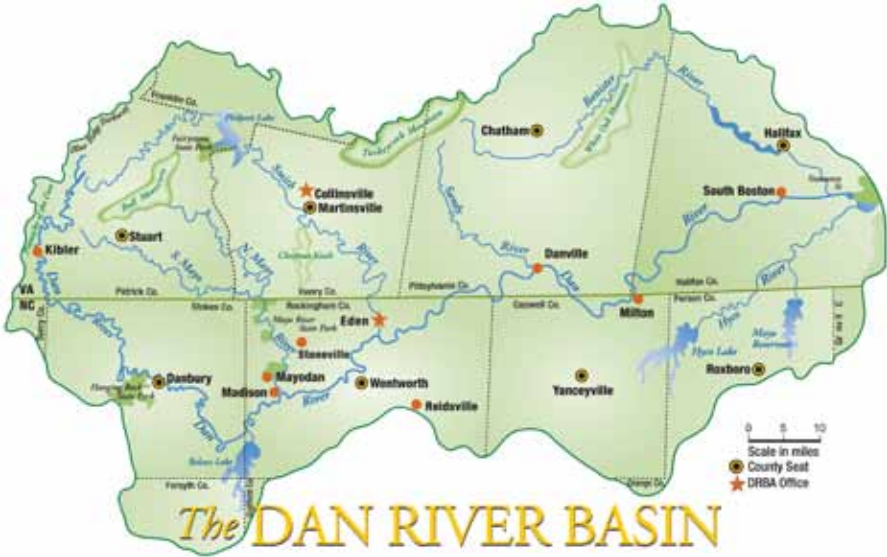
The Dan River Basin Association works to: preserve the river corridor with a series of municipal, county, and state parks and trails; increase public access to rivers; build constituency for the rivers and outdoor recreation through monthly outings; protect water quality by instituting stream monitoring across the Basin; promote regional nature and heritage tourism; and bridge boundaries to create a bi-state borderland community.

The Dan River Basin Association has four key program areas:

- Stewardship
- Recreation
- Education
- Regional Identity

The Dan River crosses the North Carolina-Virginia state line eight times on its way from the Blue Ridge Mountains to John H. Kerr Reservoir. The 3300-square-mile Dan River Basin comprises approximately one-third of the Roanoke River Basin. Major tributaries of the Dan River are the Mayo, Smith, Sandy, Banister, and Hyco rivers.

The Dan River Basin includes all or most of eight counties: Patrick, Henry, Pittsylvania, and Halifax in Virginia, and Stokes, Rockingham, Caswell and Person in North Carolina. Smaller portions of eight more counties lie in the Dan River Basin: Floyd, Franklin, and Mecklenburg in Virginia, and Surry, Forsyth, Guilford, Orange, and Granville in North Carolina.



DANVILLE REGIONAL FOUNDATION

The Danville Regional Foundation (DRF) focuses on transforming the regional economy and creating a prosperous culture to benefit all Dan River citizens. It does this by making long-term investments to improve education, economic vitality, community wellness, financial stability and civic capacity for citizens throughout the City of Danville, Virginia; Pittsylvania County, Virginia; and Caswell County, North Carolina.

Since its establishment in 2005, DRF has invested more than \$40 million through over 40 grants. DRF is committed to fostering collaboration, establishing partnerships and working across borders and with many types of organizations to rethink tomorrow and create solutions, positioning the Dan River Region as a place of opportunities. DRF encourages and supports new approaches, and believes that initiative and courage to view things from fresh and different perspectives enables everyone working “Together to Build a Brighter Future.”

Vision

The Danville Regional Foundation envisions a thriving Danville region that works well for everyone.

Mission

The Danville Regional Foundation is a catalyst for innovation and an agent for transformation. Understanding that significant community change takes time, the Foundation invests for the long term in efforts that promise sustained positive impact for the Dan River region. The Foundation is committed to development, promotion, and support of activities, programs, and organizations that address the health, education, and well-being of the region’s residents.

Values

The Foundation officers and Board believe in the ability and necessity of individuals to work together to advance the common good. We partner with people who share our commitment to expanded opportunity and increased well-being for all the region’s residents.

We intend for our work to be guided by and exhibit these values:

- **Equity:** We work to eliminate unfair gaps between groups in health, education, and economic opportunity so that residents can thrive in an economy equal to thriving regions elsewhere.
- **Excellence:** We encourage innovation which inspires regional pride and produces excellent outcomes for present and future residents.
- **Engagement:** We seek active partnerships with all segments of the community.
- **Openness:** We operate with fairness, encouraging dialogue to build trust and understanding.

Areas of Focus

- The Danville Regional Foundation serves as the region’s lead community investor, pioneering creative strategies in the following focus areas:
- **Economic Transformation** to produce a rising standard of living, including increased income, assets, and economic security across the community;
- **Educational Attainment** to ensure that educational readiness, in-school achievement, and post-secondary success are the community norm;
- **Health and Wellness** to produce “healthy people in healthy communities” and
- **Community Engagement** to build deep civic support for community innovations and to broaden and deepen the leadership base.
- The Foundation believes long-term investments in these areas are among the most beneficial.

CASWELL COUNTY RECREATION COMMISSION

It is the mission of the Caswell County Recreation Commission to support the diverse recreational needs and interests of the citizens of Caswell County.

PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT

The Caswell County Parks and Recreation Department offers a variety of activities for youth and adults.

The gym and office is located at the Caswell County Recreational Park on County Park Road in Yanceyville.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

THE MASTER PLAN

At the heart of any successful public plan is public input. For the Heritage Trails Master Plan, Dan River Basin Association (DRBA) staff met with the public - citizens and business owners as well as elected town and county officials - to explore ideas and other considerations for an off-road trails system throughout Caswell County.

In early 2010, the Dan River Basin Association hosted public visioning workshops for the Heritage Trails of Caswell County. From February 16-18, the GIS maps were rolled out and the sleeves were rolled up as 35-40 people sat down over 3 days to discuss Caswell County trail options and ideas. This rapid cycle of information gathering and exploration was beneficial to all participants as we all learned the real and perceived issues and opportunities facing the county and the role trails can play. This collaborative research and planning revealed many wonderful trail visions.

The resulting Heritage Trails Master Plan is a public envisioned community-based blueprint for a county-wide network of trails, greenways and blueways to connect people, places, and events around the county.

The Heritage Trails, or Trails of the Master Plan, will be a county-wide network of trails linking natural, historical and cultural heritage sites, activities and tourism facilities. The trails are to be created with a well-defined product identity and purpose for rural regeneration through sustainable tourism.

The Trails of the Master Plan are intended to benefit Caswell County in a multitude of ways.

Research in Caswell County trends illustrate the growing need for positive improvements in the physical and economic health of the county. The aim of the Trails of the Master Plan is to provide such benefits.

These — and many other — benefits can be organized by four general headings:

- Economic Benefits
- Environmental Benefits
- Physical Benefits
- Social Benefits

The Heritage Trails Master Plan will promote Caswell County's distinct natural and historic features and rural heritage. It is aimed at attracting tourism to the region and providing additional opportunities for employment and commerce.

The Heritage Trails Master Plan and the trails that will develop over time will strengthen Caswell County's identity in the region. They also promote a desired quality of life enhanced by memorable trail experiences for locals and visitors alike.

How will the trails benefit Caswell County? They will:

- Support economic prosperity by attracting and retaining new employers to the area (economic benefit)
- Promote tourism (economic benefit)
- Foster the joining of diverse communities (social benefit)
- Provide an improved quality of life (economic and social benefits)
- Serve as an alternative means of transportation (economic, environmental and physical benefits)
- Encourage healthy lifestyles (physical benefit)
- Aid in clean air and water preservation (environmental benefit)
- Promote conservation of nature and wildlife habitats (environmental benefit)
- Promote conservation of Caswell County's rural heritage (environmental, economic and social benefits)
- Increase awareness and visitation of cultural and historic venues (social and economic benefits)
- Create a sustainable Dan River basin legacy for generations to come (economic, social and environmental benefits)
- Educate our children and connect them to nature (social, environmental and physical benefits)

Therefore, the Master Plan satisfies several needs by providing a guiding document for funding, development, programming and long-range planning.

TRAILS OF THE MASTER PLAN

The trails of the master plan are conceptualized off-road trails and trail systems for Caswell County. A guiding principle for developing the master plan was to have a trail in each sub-basin of the Dan River. In analyzing the county’s natural and cultural landscape while adhering to this principle, the trail routes emerged. These proposed trails were visualized in full or in part during the Public Planning and Design Workshops.

The trails of the master plan are realistic opportunities for creating a fibrous network of trails along creeks and rivers throughout the county. Particularly when coupled with local and state-wide bike routes and the scenic byway, the result is a tourism-based heritage and recreational identity featuring the county’s culture, history and natural beauty.

All of the trails of the master plan are large trail networks and all are of significance and importance. Certain trail systems will have links to historical and cultural sites and/or the other trail systems in the region, thus increasing opportunities for marketing and programming and therefore deemed of greater importance. Each proposed trail system’s significance in terms of heritage tourism led to a grading system.

The classifications of trails are:

- Keystone trails
- Gold Leaf trails
- Green Leaf trails

Keystone trails are essential to providing tourism-based economic growth in Caswell County. They connect to state-wide trail efforts in both North Carolina and Virginia. The reference to a “keystone” underscores their value, validity and vitality.

The two proposed Keystone Trails are:

- The Dan River Trail
- The Country Line Creek Trail

Gold Leaf trails are locally significant and will also serve as a destination within the region due to their heritage links. The “gold leaf” designation for a trail system reinforces its significance to Caswell County and pays homage to the golden “bright leaf” tobacco color.

The proposed Gold Leaf Trails Systems are:

- The Rattlesnake Creek Heritage Trails
- The Hyco Creek Heritage Trails

Also considered to be Gold Leaf trails are the:

- Yanceyville Town Trails, featuring a Farmer Lake to Yanceyville Greenway
- Milton Town Trails

Green Leaf trails are locally significant and will be an attraction on their own but do not link to any identified historic or cultural sites (per this master plan process). The “green leaf” classification does not suggest that these trails are any less important. They just do not connect to historic sites or routes.

The Green Leaf trails are:

- The Hogan’s-Moon Trail System
- The Byrd’s Creek Trail System
- The Cherry-Chapel Trail System

IMPLEMENTATION

The implementation of this Plan will depend on action being taken to:

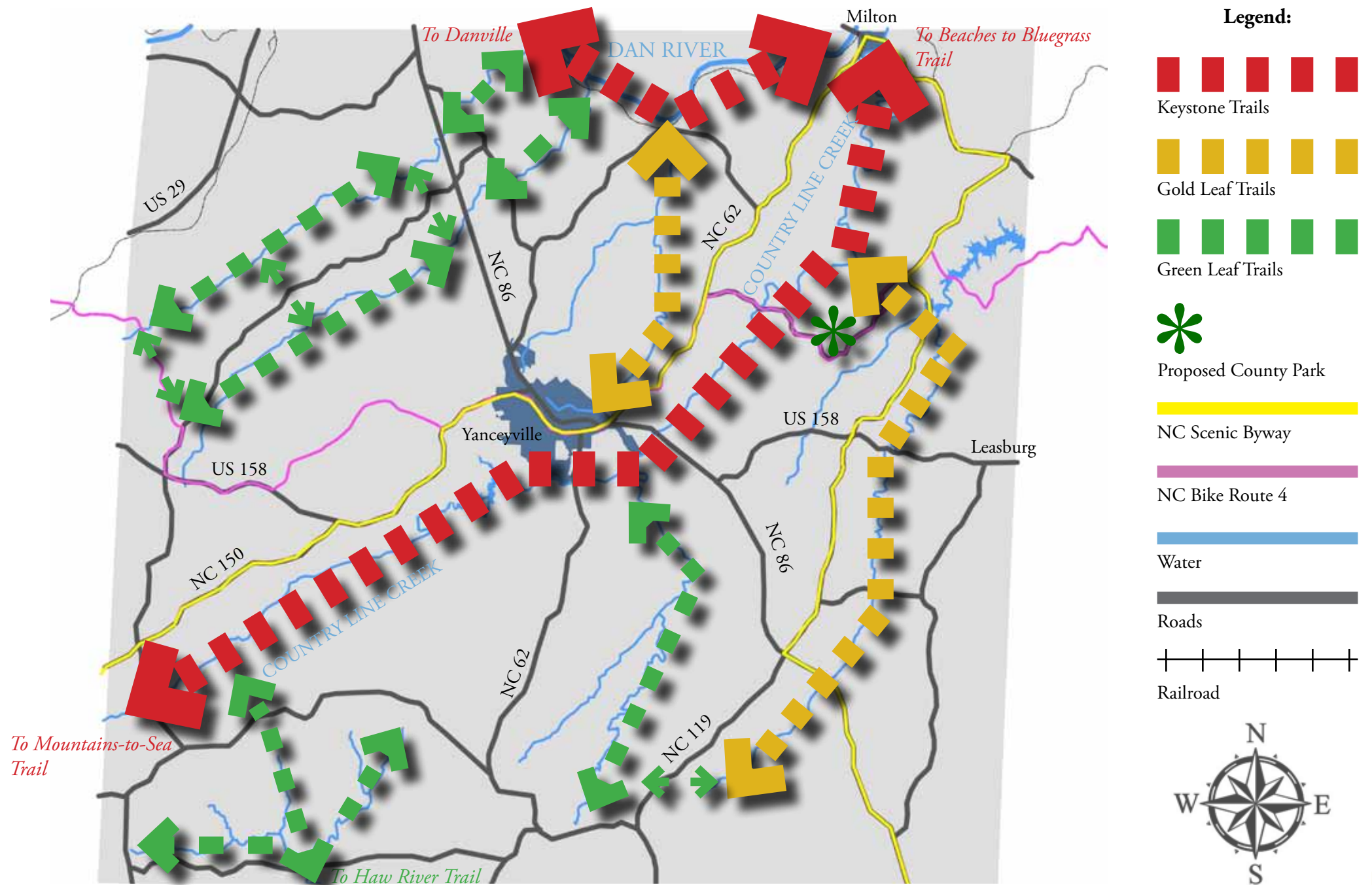
- Undertake more detailed studies to resolve and explore the opportunities and constraints identified by this Plan
- Promote and assist specific objectives
- Make green infrastructure investments

The execution of the implementation steps will likely be phased and is subject to a variety of factors, which determine their timing. These include:

- The availability of personnel and financial resources necessary to implement specific trail proposals
- Whether an implementation step is a necessary precursor to or component of a new trail project
- The degree to which implementing one item is dependent upon the successful completion of another item
- The relative importance of the trail in which a particular implementation task is designed to connect

To help facilitate these projects, the county needs:

- Additional access easements granted or purchased by government agencies or private organizations for trails and river access
- Funding resources and/or in-kind donations of labor and materials to create trails, river access and facilities
- Funding for staff to coordinate the projects and programs related to them
- Continuing collaboration with state, city and county agencies and partner programs





HERITAGE TRAILS MASTER PLAN

CASWELL COUNTY, NC

PART ONE:
THE MASTER PLAN





1 INTRODUCTION

The keys to a successful Master Plan include a balanced mix of a careful analysis of the existing conditions and environment; meaningful public engagement; visionary but practical planning; and financially feasible implementation.

The Heritage Trails Master Plan for Caswell County is a community-based blueprint for a county-wide network of trails, greenways, and blueways to connect people, places, and events. The Trails of the Master Plan have been developed with public input and through an evaluation of Caswell County's natural assets, waterways, cultural resources, and rich history.

Within the county, the Plan identifies key trail routes and includes, where appropriate, proposed sites for parks and river access.

The Plan also features proposed connections to cross-border regional trails and routes.

Based on a community vision, the trails are meant to be built and owned by the community.

The planning, funding and construction of the heritage trails is a long-term, phased endeavor, with results emerging over the course of many years as opportunities for implementation of trail segments arise over time.

CHAPTER 1

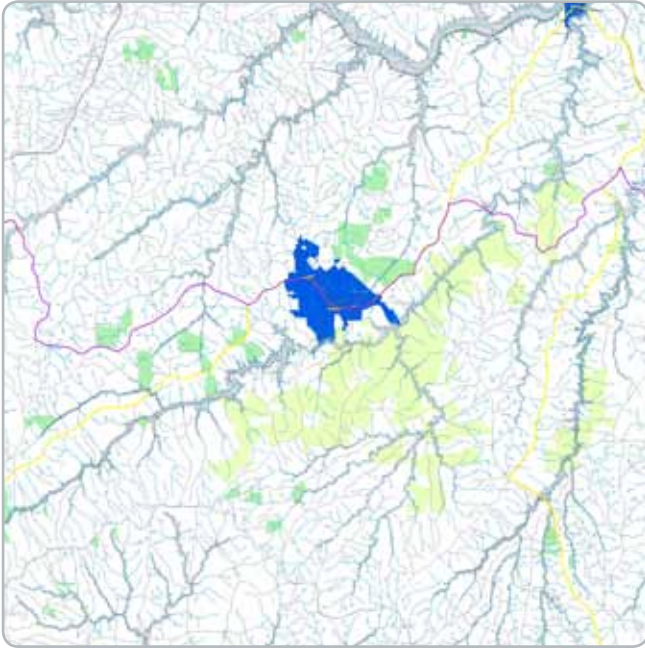
1.1 What is a Heritage Trails Master Plan?

1.2 What is a Heritage Trail?

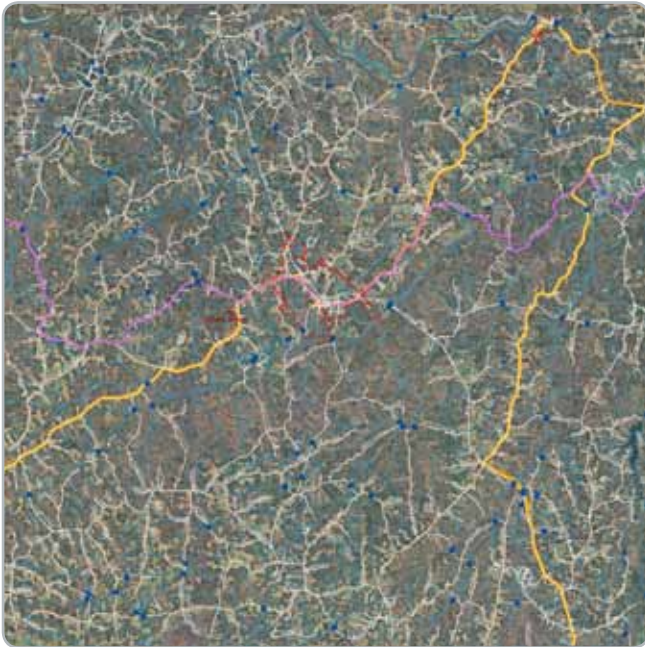
1.3 Why do we need a Plan?

1.4 Vision

1.5 Goals



Maps utilized during public planning and design workshops



1.1 WHAT IS A HERITAGE TRAILS MASTER PLAN?

The Heritage Trails Master Plan is a community envisioned blueprint for a county-wide network of trails, greenways and blueways to connect people, places, and events around Caswell County.

Think of the Master Plan as a “green road map” of proposed trails connecting the “not-to-miss” natural, cultural, historical and heritage amenities of the county. These would include trails connecting historic sites, cultural events, civic locations and other features. The Plan also illustrates proposed connections to cross-border regional trails, parks, and routes.

While Caswell County’s array of winding country roads has been promoted for driving tours and bicycling, the county is also increasingly interested in protecting and promoting its rural and nature heritage. The development of off-road “heritage trails” will recognize special heritage areas, complement Caswell’s bicycle routes, create alternatives to driving and provide another reason for visitors to come to Caswell.

This plan will begin work toward a system of trails, greenways and blueways to serve the community’s recreational and alternative transportation needs, to foster healthy lifestyles and to promote Caswell’s rich heritage.

TRAIL TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

TRAILS are off-road multi-purpose paths, typically of natural surface, and are separate from a roadway. Users include equestrians, mountain bikers, joggers, hikers, nature watchers, and walkers.

GREENWAYS are off-road multi-purpose paths, typically paved and grade-separated treatments that are separate from a roadway.

ON-ROAD CONNECTORS AND ROUTES are “trails” that run within the public right-of-way along the shoulder of roads.

BLUEWAYS are water-based trails, meaning they can accommodate canoes and/or kayaks. With the exception of the Dan River in Caswell County, any creek passage will also require hiking and carrying of vessels at various times.

1.2 WHAT IS A HERITAGE TRAIL?

More than a hiking trail or bike path, a Heritage Trail can help preserve natural areas and become another place for the exploration of nature, culture, science and history.

The Heritage Trails, or Trails of the Master Plan, will be a county-wide network of trails linking natural, historical and cultural heritage sites, activities and tourism facilities. The trails are to be created with a well-defined product identity and purpose for rural regeneration through sustainable tourism.

These Heritage Trails are envisioned to be off-road hiking, biking and horse riding trails. Ideally, these run along vast floodplains, meandering streams and through legacy forests, and to enhance the quality of life for visitors and residents alike.

As often as possible and plausible, these connect to historic sites and community anchors, such as a general store.

They will often work in conjunction with driving tours and bike routes as alternate and/or short-term route options and, later, to complete a fibrous network of heritage experiences in Caswell County.

Not every local trail will be part of the Heritage Trails system. Other trails canb have great value on their own, particularly if they connect neighborhoods to schools where parents can walk or ride a bike with their child to school. While not necessarily providing a heritage link, trail options such as these will be particularly attractive to technology oriented young adults considering places to live and/or locate a business.

The Heritage Trails will emerge over time as neighbors work together to plan and build trails reflecting community character, aspirations and priorities.



1.3 WHY DO WE NEED A PLAN?

The Parks and Recreation Department provides Caswell County youth with “something to do.” Its comprehensive program of team sports reaches many children, and its program for seniors includes games, sports and entertainment. However, there is an increasing need to provide more recreational opportunities for the whole family, of which hiking, bicycle and horseback riding, camping and water sports could be a part.

But the health of Caswell County is more than physical. The Heritage Trails Master Plan will promote Caswell County’s distinct natural and historic features and rural heritage. The goal is to attract tourism to the region and provide additional opportunities for employment and commerce.

The Heritage Trails Master Plan and the trails that develop over time strengthen Caswell County’s identity in the region. They promote a desired quality of life enhanced by memorable trail experiences for residents and visitors alike.

Outdoor recreation trends and higher gasoline prices are keeping people closer to home, and now is the time to build on the growing interest in nature and heritage activities and growing interest in bicycling, hiking, riding and walking.

The purpose of the Heritage Trails Master Plan for Caswell County is multi-faceted, but will address two urgent needs:

- To aid in boosting the economy in Caswell County
- To help thwart the obesity problem, particularly in children in the county

- These two needs can be organized into four Sustainability Goals:
- Economic Sustainability
 - Environmental Sustainability
 - Physical Sustainability
 - Social Sustainability
- The long-term outcomes for the Heritage Trails Master Plan include:
- Sustainable economic growth through the promotion of nature and heritage tourism
 - Improved community health, including a reduction in childhood obesity
 - Increased quality of life, including the provision of sought-after recreational amenities
 - Preservation of Caswell’s rural heritage
 - Recreation and educational programs for children and adults that encourage the widespread use of nature trails to be enjoyed by every sector of the community

An approved Heritage Trails Master Plan will allow various groups and agencies to pursue funding for more detailed planning and/or trail development. Construction and implementation grants in the public and private sector rely more and more on established trail plans that support multi-jurisdictional, regional and state trail systems. Funding requests and needs continually outpace the amount of available funds, making regional trail planning an important component in prioritizing funding.

Grant funding does not just have to be for trail construction and development. It can also be used for programming to offer engaging outdoor experiences for children and adults, to be developed in conjunction with agencies now serving Caswell County.

2007 CASWELL COUNTY COMMUNITY HEALTH ASSESSMENT

- Respondents were asked to rank currently unavailable recreation facilities that would have the greatest impact on them or their family.
- They are listed below in order of importance with 1 having the most impact.
1. Walking/hiking trails
 2. Air conditioned gymnasium
 3. Outdoor basketball courts
 4. Soccer/football fields
 5. Other (included aquatic facility, bridle path/ horse trails, weight training facility)

Therefore, the Master Plan satisfies several needs by providing a guiding document for funding, development, programming and long-range planning.

And residents have asked for the Master Plan. The 2007 Caswell County Health Assessment revealed the number one priority for recreational facilities in the county to be “walking/hiking trails.”

1.4 VISION

“I have a dream,” said the trails advocate. “Wouldn’t it be great if every family in the county could walk, ride bicycles or float boats to its neighboring community or to the county library without being in danger from traffic?”

It’s not an impossible dream. Caswell County is blessed with mixed woodlands, active fields, rolling hills, meandering streams and the Dan River. The County’s two incorporated towns, Milton and Yanceyville, have ready access to wooded hills and open country ripe for the planning and development of land- and water-based trails. Following streams, old trading paths and old coach roads, in addition to the modern scenic byway and bike routes, a trail system can connect communities to each other highlighting the county’s beauty and its cultural heritage: the “cultural landscape.”

Experts recognize the physical and mental health benefits of walking in nature versus walking on a treadmill. In rural and small town environments, nature walks occur daily. City dwellers aren’t so fortunate, but they’ll travel to it, particularly when given a remarkable experience. And if it’s remarkable enough, they’ll keep coming back, bringing friends and telling others. With an increased visiting population, convenience stores, restaurants, farmer’s markets and farm stands can see an increase in sales. Over time, the emergence of the trails of the master plan will begin to make an economic impact. All the while, these trails will continue to benefit physical and physiological health.

This is the dream and the vision.

The following are statements of vision as crafted during the Heritage Trails Master Plan public workshops (see Appendix: Public Planning and Design Workshops):

- *We will have a vibrant, attractive, walk- and bike- friendly community that is financially, socially and environmentally sustainable*
- *Our country heritage will be honored through our access to aesthetic beauty, promotion of our culture, and protection of our natural resources*
- *Residents and visitors will be offered a strong quality of life which will help attract new businesses and people and will help to retain the current and forthcoming population of the County*
- *We will be a healthy community with options for recreation and transportation, including but not limited to trails, greenways, and blueways*
- *Our steps to success will begin with our schools and trails on school campuses for physical, social and environmental education*

VISION FOR MASTER PLAN

The Caswell County Heritage Trails Master Plan reflects the ambitions of the Caswell community and provides direction and forward momentum to the Heritage Trails Program.

The Heritage Tails Master Plan is widely supported and adopted by the Caswell County Recreation Commission and Board of Commissioners and the town councils of Yanceyville and Milton.

1.5 GOALS

The overall goal of the Heritage Trails Master Plan project is “Sustainability.” This means that carrying out the plan will lead to a multitude of positive results at each phase of implementation. The Master Plan is to be phased to allow for the county, and each community in the county, to act at their own level of readiness and desire. However, given particular recent health and wealth data for Caswell County, clear needs have been presented which demand immediate attention. Trails can help.

The goal of the Trails of Master Plan is two-fold:

- To provide physical, educational and social facilities in the form of trails, trail heads and parks as places for communities to recreate and gather; and
- To create economic development via tourism and associated affiliations while preserving corridors for nature and nature exploration

Coined by author John Elkington, the term “Triple Bottom Line” has come to be known as “a balance of environmental, social, and economic sustainability” for organizations. The same logic can be applied to municipalities, communities and even families.

By recognizing community needs and organizing them under these categories (and adding “physical”) we can ensure that the goals of the Master Plan are sustainable.

Every trail identified in the Heritage Trails Master Plan will correspond to two or more of these sustainability elements:

- Economic Sustainability
- Environmental Sustainability
- Physical (Health) Sustainability
- Social Sustainability

ECONOMIC

The economic goals of the Master Plan are the most ambitious and will take the longest time to see a return of investment. For trails to help make an economic impact, the trail system will need to be expansive. It will also need to be a pleasurable experience, meaning that trail surface conditions and amenities will be anticipated. It will also mean that a vast majority - if not all- of the trail system will need to be off-road and not along roadways (on or along road shoulders).

Some of the most meaningful elements of historic cultural landscapes are found in changing settlement patterns constructed in that location over time; they can tell a vivid story of the origins, growth and sometimes decline of urban and rural communities. Besides being the repository of historical and community memory, historic clusters of buildings, barns and farmlands can also function as an engine for economic development. They can often stimulate a profitable growth in heritage tourism to support the local economy.

The economic goals are:

- Sustainable economic growth through the promotion of nature and heritage tourism
- Increased quality of life, including the provision of sought-after recreational amenities and the preservation of Caswell County’s rural heritage
- Attraction of tourists, visitors, “stay-cationers” and businesses

ENVIRONMENTAL

The environmental goals of the master plan are to ensure a sustainable impact on the land and benefit to property owners who allow trails to be built. This goal can be achieved by allowing access to significant heritage features, including natural amenities, for the purpose of education. This access includes exploration, viewing and maintenance.

The environmental goals are:

- To provide access to waterways for boaters and to keep waterways clear of obstructions
- To accommodate as much as feasible the needs of hikers, bicyclists and equestrians on an off-road trail system
- To create as often as feasible multi-use trails that accommodate more than one category of users
- To make use of natural corridors such as stream valleys and ridges in connecting the sections of the county
- To provide healthy streams and rivers for education via buffers, stream bank stability and appropriate water temperatures
- To aid in clean air and water preservation

PHYSICAL

Physical exercise is essential to good health. Trails provide opportunities for outdoor exercise and recreation for adults and children and can contribute to healthy lifestyles.

Relieving stress in life has long been welcomed. Exercise or just spending casual time in nature has been linked to additional mental benefits as compared to similar activities indoors.

The physical goals are:

- Improved community health
- Reduced childhood obesity
- Reduced adult obesity
- Perceived mental health

SOCIAL

Satisfying social needs is fundamental in creating a fabric of community. A desired place to be - and be seen - breeds community interaction and increases opportunities for social interaction with neighbors. For years in rural communities, the community store has been that place; just stop by on a rainy day and see all the farmers. Like a village green or town hall, it is the community gathering spot.

Parks, trail heads and heritage places along a trail can serve as these gathering spots in communities, particularly in areas where other such amenities may not be present. Heritage features such as historic properties and cultural events fall within this category.

The social goals are:

- To connect each community in the county with every other and with the county seat at Yanceyville
- To enable each child in the county to walk or ride to school or to the county library by trail facilities with minimal risk from motor vehicle traffic
- To connect important natural and cultural sites to a fibrous trail system and thus to each other
- To create the opportunity for trail-based recreational and educational programs for children and adults
- To encourage widespread use of new trails by every sector of the community

For more information on the “Triple Bottom Line”, see *Cannibals with Forks: the Triple Bottom Line of 21st Century Business*.



2 TRAILS OF THE MASTER PLAN

INTRODUCTION

The Trails of the Master Plan are conceptualized off-road trails and trail systems for Caswell County. A guiding principle for developing the master plan was to have a trail in each sub-basin of the Dan River. In analyzing the county's natural and cultural landscape while adhering to this principle, the trail routes emerged. These proposed trails were visualized in full or in part during the Public Planning and Design Workshops (*see Appendix*).

The trails of the master plan are realistic opportunities for creating a fibrous network of trails along creeks and rivers throughout the county. Particularly when coupled with local and state-wide bike routes and scenic byway, the result is a tremendous tourism-based heritage and recreational identity featuring the county's culture, history and natural beauty.

The benefits of the trails range from the physical health and social gathering to environmental protection and economic development. Analysis has demonstrated a need in Caswell County to create positive change in each of those areas. Trails can assist in all aspects, particularly when multiple continuous trail systems are in place.

For the most part, each proposed trail network is based upon the local watershed sub-basin. This approach ensured that, at a minimum, each area of the county would be in relatively close proximity to at least one major trail system. Other trails may, in time, branch off from the central spines which are included in this plan. The creation of the trail system is aimed at providing a

high quality of life for the entire community. Each new trail should be welcomed as a new addition to the life of the entire community through its contribution to the public realm.

Each proposed trail system's significance - in terms of heritage tourism - led to a grading system. It should be noted that all of the trails of the master plan are large trail networks and all are of significance and importance. Certain trail systems will have links to historic and cultural sites and/or other trail systems in the region, thus increasing opportunities for marketing and programming and therefore deemed of greater importance.

The classifications of trails are:

- Keystone trails
- Gold Leaf trails
- Green Leaf trails

Keystone trails are essential to providing tourism-based economic growth in Caswell County. They connect to state-wide trail efforts in both North Carolina and Virginia. The reference to a "keystone" underscores their value, validity and vitality.

Gold Leaf trails are locally significant and will also serve as a destination within the region due to their heritage links. The "gold leaf" designation for a trail system reinforces its significance to Caswell County and pays homage to the golden "bright leaf" tobacco color.

CHAPTER 2

Introduction

2.1 Dan River Trail

2.2 Country Line Creek Trail

2.3 Rattlesnake Creek Heritage Trails

2.4 Hyco Creek Heritage Trails

2.5 Hogan's-Moon Trail System

2.6 Byrds Creek Trail System

2.7 Cherry-Chapel Trail System

2.8 Yanceyville Town Trails

2.9 Milton Town Trails

2.10 Caswell County Heritage State Park

2.11 Composite Map

2.12 Additional Trail and Trail Related Opportunities

2.13 Additional Trail Related Ventures

Green Leaf trails are locally significant and will be an attraction on their own, but do not link to any identified historic or cultural sites (per this master plan process). The "green leaf" classification does not suggest that these trails are any less important; they just do not connect to historic sites or routes.

Other trails will most likely be more local in nature and may even be site specific. These can be referred to as "Historical" or "Nature" trails.

These classifications may also be utilized to guide a marketing strategy or fund-raising campaign.

KEYSTONE TRAILS

The Keystone Trails are essential to providing tourism-based economic growth in Caswell County. There are two trail opportunities of state and regional significance in Caswell County.

The two proposed Keystone Trails are:

- The Dan River Trail
- The Country Line Creek Trail

The Keystone designation underscores their essential nature since each, when complete, will connect to already active state-wide hiking and biking trail systems which are proving to be tourism-based economic engines in both North Carolina and Virginia.

Each trail is very different in feel and scope but is equally important to the economic vitality of the county. Having two different experiences helps to promote and market each trail individually while each also draws its own type of tourist and visitor.

GOLD LEAF TRAILS

Trails that are also critical in the tourism aspect are the local historical heritage trails, or Gold Leaf trails. These trails and trail systems are locally significant but may also serve as a destination within the region because of their historic links. They satisfy a major goal in linking education, history and nature.

The proposed Gold Leaf Trails Systems are:

- The Rattlesnake Creek Heritage Trails
- The Hyco Creek Heritage Trails

Also considered to be Gold Leaf trails are the:

- Yanceyville Town Trails, featuring a greenway linking Yanceyville and Farmer Lake
- Milton Town Trails

The Gold Leaf designation pays homage to Caswell County's rich history, particularly referencing the "golden days" of the "Boom era" when the golden leaves of tobacco brought prosperity. These trails augment the regional Keystone Trails and anchor Caswell County's local heritage trail system.

GREEN LEAF TRAILS

"Green Leaf" trails are other heritage trails that are locally significant and may be an attraction on their own due to their nature and wildlife viewing opportunities, but these trails do not typically link to sites with identified State historical markers. This is the distinguishing difference between Green Leaf and Gold Leaf trails. They do, however, feature extensive nature-based tourism opportunities and provide local opportunities for physical fitness and social gathering.

The Green Leaf trails are:

- The Hogan's-Moon Trail System
- The Byrd's Creek Trail System
- The Cherry-Chapel Trail System

The Green Leaf designation refers to a natural heritage oriented trail system. These trails supplement the historical Gold Leaf Trails and complete Caswell County's local heritage trail system.

HISTORICAL AND NATURE TRAILS

Other trails developed throughout the county, such as those at the Caswell Senior Center, on school campuses and at other sites may have their own names or may be known as historical or nature trails. These are generally site specific trails, but may also link with heritage trails. An example would be a local historical trail at a site with a historical marker, yet this trail could link to a trail such as the Country Line Creek Trail, which is a heritage trail.

ALTERNATIVE ROUTES

Several alternative routes may be explored as options for extending trail systems. In this document, these are primarily indicated as on-road alternative routes. Another option to also be explored is easements. There are several gas, sewer/water and power easements that cut across Caswell County. An agreement to allow for a trail within the existing easement would need to be made with the utility provider as well as each property owner whose land the easement crosses, but it is another alternative to routes that follow roads.

AMERICAN DISABILITIES ACT - ACCESSIBILITY AND TRAILS

To the fullest extent plausible, local trail opportunities should adhere to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Design Standards. It should be noted, however, that not every trail will be able to provide access for every person due to topography and trail surface material. Historic sites, greenways and trail facilities such as public rest room areas should fully accommodate all user groups to the fullest extent possible.

Two proposed trails in this master plan are designated as fully ADA accessible greenway trails, that is having a paved surface. These are the Dan River Trail and the greenway linking Farmer Lake and Yanceyville. Of those, only the Dan River Trail is routed along a relatively flat corridor. Other trails are to be natural surface (dirt) trails, unless or until there is a demand from the public for improvements.

TRAIL CLASSIFICATIONS

- Keystone Trails:** Regionally significant for economic development; connect to major trail systems in North Carolina and Virginia
- Gold Leaf Trails:** Regionally significant and tie to Caswell County historic marker sites
- Green Leaf Trails:** Locally significant with access to nature and other cultural sites
- Historical and Nature Trails:** Site specific trails

INTERPRETATION OF MAPS AND READING THE LEGEND

The Heritage Trails Master Plan was conceptualized by taking citizen input and mapping it with known historical, cultural and natural assets of the community. While certain conversations during the master plan process required studying parcel specific opportunities and constraints, the master plan itself does not recognize property lines. As a conceptual plan, its purpose is to propose the vision of a green infrastructure with links within the cultural landscape.

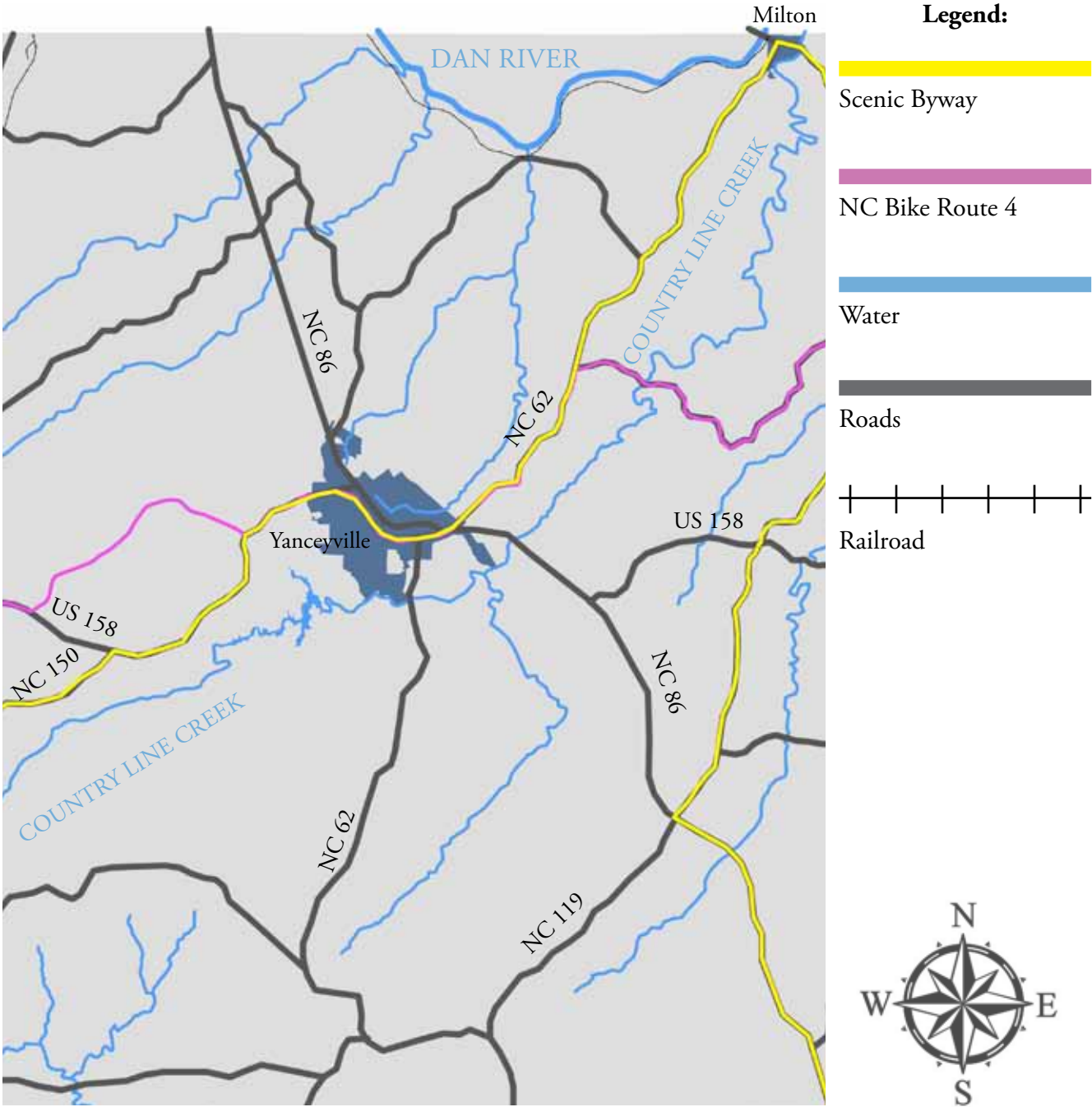
The mapping of the trails of the master plan chapter is a visualization exercise: a graphic way of recording ideas. These ideas will be illustrated over a base map (right).

The Heritage Trails Master Plan maps are used to indicate general corridors rather than parcel-specific locations for future trail alignment.

By mapping ideas, conceptual investigation can occur which ascertains real opportunities and constraints and pros and cons of a trail idea. It also allows for a finer grain thought process where hierarchy and phasing can be evaluated. This type of analysis couldn't properly be conducted without mapping.

This mapping and analysis exercise allows community members, planners and designers to understand more clearly the human and physical context within which they live and work. This analysis creates a useful record of local history and culture as it relates to the landscape.

In places where new trails are proposed, the analysis of these physical and social networks can focus on locations that reconnect with the historic roots of settlement in a community while preserving sites that have special cultural significance.



2.1 DAN RIVER TRAIL

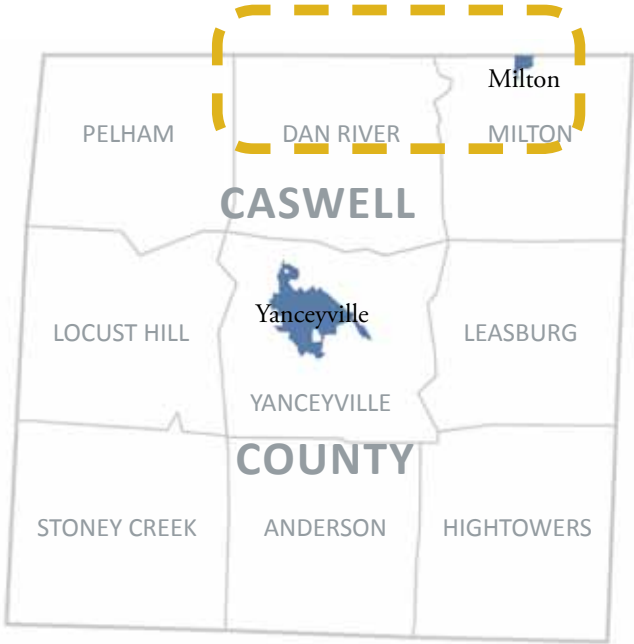
Located along the north fringe of Caswell County, the proposed Dan River Trail will connect Danville to Milton, as the river flows, along the Dan River.

Connecting to the river district in Danville on one end and historic Milton on the other, the Dan River Trail would extend the efforts of the Danville River Walk through northern Caswell County. This is a tremendous economic tourism opportunity, particularly for Milton, to be along such a trail. Milton would also benefit from additional tourism if the trail was extended to Virginia International Raceway (VIR).

Beyond Milton, the Dan River Trail will link with the Virginia Tobacco Heritage Trail, a portion of the Beaches to Bluegrass state-wide trail along southern Virginia.

The proposed off-road trail would be about 10 miles in length in North Carolina. In Virginia, it's another 1.5 miles to reach the existing trail systems at Angler's Park.

A major trail system such as this would also most likely breed other trails-based business opportunities such as campgrounds, bike shops and other outdoor recreation-based businesses.



DAN RIVER TRAIL QUICK FACTS

Length: +/- 10 miles in North Carolina

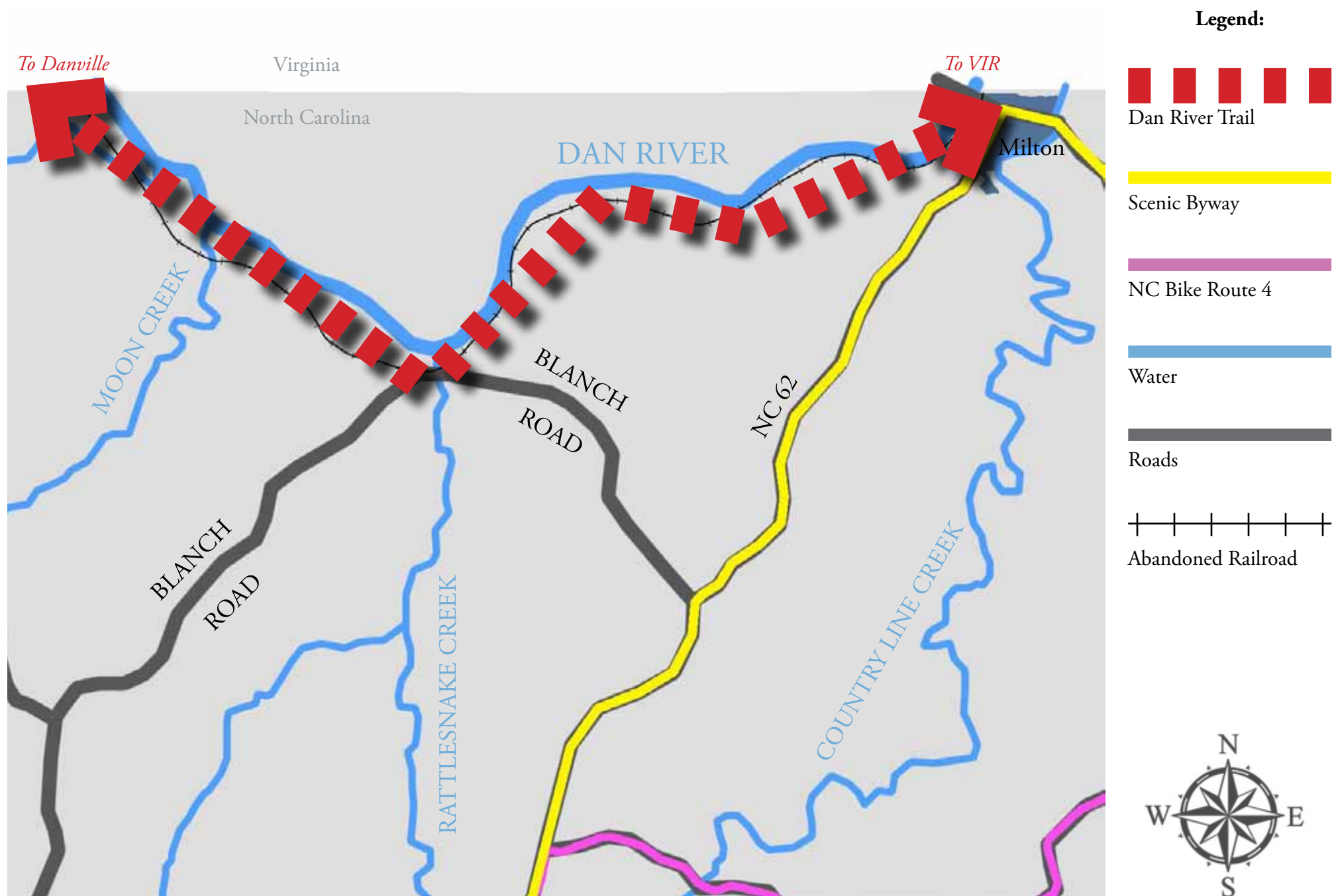
Trail Classification: Keystone

Purpose: Connects the river district in Danville with historic Milton (possible extension to VIR)

Character:
Trail: Paved multi-modal greenway trail at a width of at least 8 feet

Blueway: The Dan River is canoe and kayak friendly. From Danville to Milton is an 11-mile float and is rated Class 1. Current access points are Angler's Park in Danville, VA and in Milton, NC

User Groups: Multi-modal, as the paved surface allows for a variety of user groups and the Dan River will accommodate canoe and kayak



ROUTE

Historic Danville and the town of Milton are located on the southern side, or “river right” of the flow of the Dan River. Therefore, all routing options are encouraged to remain on the south side.

The abandoned Atlantic and Danville rail line on the south side of the Dan River is the most practical and logical route. The benefit of following the abandoned right-of-way is that it is flat and has been already disturbed. Even with any overgrowth, it just needs to be reclaimed and cleared. Trestles are already built and offer significant infrastructure savings through adaptive re-use as a trail. The abandoned right-of-way, however, has reverted back to property owners so no public right-of-way or easements for the corridor currently exist.

As is the case with most rail lines, the proposed route will locate the trail just beyond the Dan River’s floodway fringe. This ensures reduced maintenance costs by reducing the likelihood of the trail being covered with sediment or destroyed by flood events.

Another benefit of following the abandoned rail line is the presence of existing trestles over other streams and associated wetlands feeding the Dan River. From an economic perspective, following the old rail corridor is the most logical route to take.

The route of the abandoned rail line does bisect certain properties as it follows the floodplain away from the river banks of the Dan and nears farm structures and homes. It will be vital to work with property owners to find satisfactory trail routing solutions that to the fullest extent agreed upon do not disrupt their current use of their property or disrupt their current livelihood.

Previous trail planning efforts in both North Carolina and Virginia illustrate or allude to the Dan River Trail and its connections and all planning logic supports this idea. *See Chapter 7: Status of Trails* for more information on Virginia’s Beaches to Bluegrass Trail and the Heritage Tobacco Trail.

PHASING

The Dan River Trail can be broken into two sections:

- Milton Section: Dan River from Milton to confluence with Rattlesnake Creek
- Danville Section: Confluence at Dan River and Rattlesnake Creek to NC/VA Border

The most logical starting point is in Milton and developing westward. This would allow Milton to promote the trail, bringing visitors to the area.

Simultaneously, trail development could extend from Virginia into North Carolina and work eastward.

The midpoint of the Dan River Trail is at Rattlesnake Creek. In this location, the abandoned rail line is within 50 feet of Blanch Road while the Dan River itself is about 1,000 feet away. This location makes for an excellent merger of on- and off-road trail systems. Mergers such as these also spawn other trails-based business and recreation opportunities. Trail and river access is of a high priority here.

PILOT TRAIL

The first section of the Dan River Trail to be constructed should begin in Milton. From here, the trail would extend westward until ultimately connecting with Danville.

Another option is to extend the trail northeast into Virginia to connect with the Virginia International Raceway - which is less than a mile to the north of Milton.

The Dan River Trail should follow the abandoned rail line on the south side of the Dan River. In Milton, this route passes by the old depot station which is at the bridge with VA Highway 62.

CHARACTER

In order to continuously draw visitors and trail users, it will be important to provide them with the best user experience possible. To do so, the Dan River Trail should be a greenway trail, meaning that it should be a paved multi-modal trail at a width of at least 8 feet.

It is important to note that, other than at local sites, the Dan River Trail is one of only two Heritage Trails

FEATURES

- Historic Milton
- Historic Danville
- Abandoned rail line
- Old depot building
- Railroad trestles (existing)
- Dan River access
- Possible connection to Virginia International Raceway



which are proposed to be paved greenways. And due to its relatively flat route via the abandoned rail corridor, it will be truly ADA accessible. This is one of the key reasons for the Dan River Trail to be a high priority or Keystone Trail.



2.2 COUNTRY LINE CREEK TRAIL

Caswell County has a magnificent natural feature in Country Line Creek. This creek bisects the county passing by historic sites, historic towns, natural heritage areas, Game Lands, and many farmlands. A trail along its banks and floodway fringes could benefit the county in many wondrous ways, including connecting to state-wide trail systems in both North Carolina and Virginia.

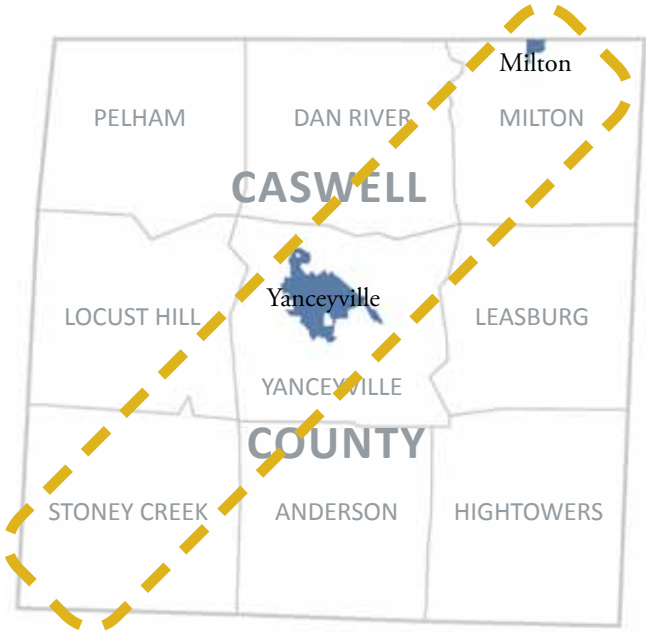
Country Line Creek rises in the southwest corner of the county and feeds into the Dan River in the northeast corner, at Milton. The creek feeds Farmer Lake, lies on the fringes of NC Game Lands, boasts vast floodplains at times and is also recognized as a significant NC Natural Heritage Area, particularly from Yanceyville to Milton.

Most importantly, a trail along Country Line Creek would connect North Carolina’s Mountains-to-Sea Trail spur in southeast Rockingham County to the Tobacco Heritage Trail portion of Virginia’s Beaches to Bluegrass trail system via Milton.

This ability to connect to statewide trail systems in both NC and VA is highly significant to Caswell County. The opportunity to link these super economic tourism engines with a trail offers a major potential for tourism in the county.

This route through the county also roughly parallels the scenic byway route of highways 150 and 62. Therefore, it presents a great opportunity to program and market bike rides and/or races, marathons and 5K races and other outdoor recreational activities.

From an economic development standpoint, this trail may take the longest to develop, but this should be the county’s highest priority trail related to tourism. Its development and progress should be monitored



in comparison to development of each adjoining section of trail that it would connect to: the spur of the Mountains-to-Sea trail in Rockingham County and the Beaches-to-Bluegrass Trail.

It is important to note that the connection to the Mountains-to-Sea Trail in Rockingham County would require cooperation with their county government and land owners. Rockingham is currently developing a trails master plan and a draft version promotes this connection with Caswell County.

At nearly 50 miles long, a trail system along Country Line Creek could serve the county in a plethora of ways. At such length, it could easily be the “flagship” trail for the county. While the Dan River Trail will be significant, it will also be the continuation of other trail systems. The Country Line Creek Trail would be unique to Caswell. Bisecting the county from southwest to northeast, a

COUNTRY LINE CREEK TRAIL QUICK FACTS

Length: +/- 50 miles

Trail Classification: Keystone

Purpose: Connects North Carolina’s Mountains-to-Sea Trail spur in southeast Rockingham County to the Tobacco Heritage Trail portion of Virginia’s Beaches-to-Bluegrass trail system near Milton

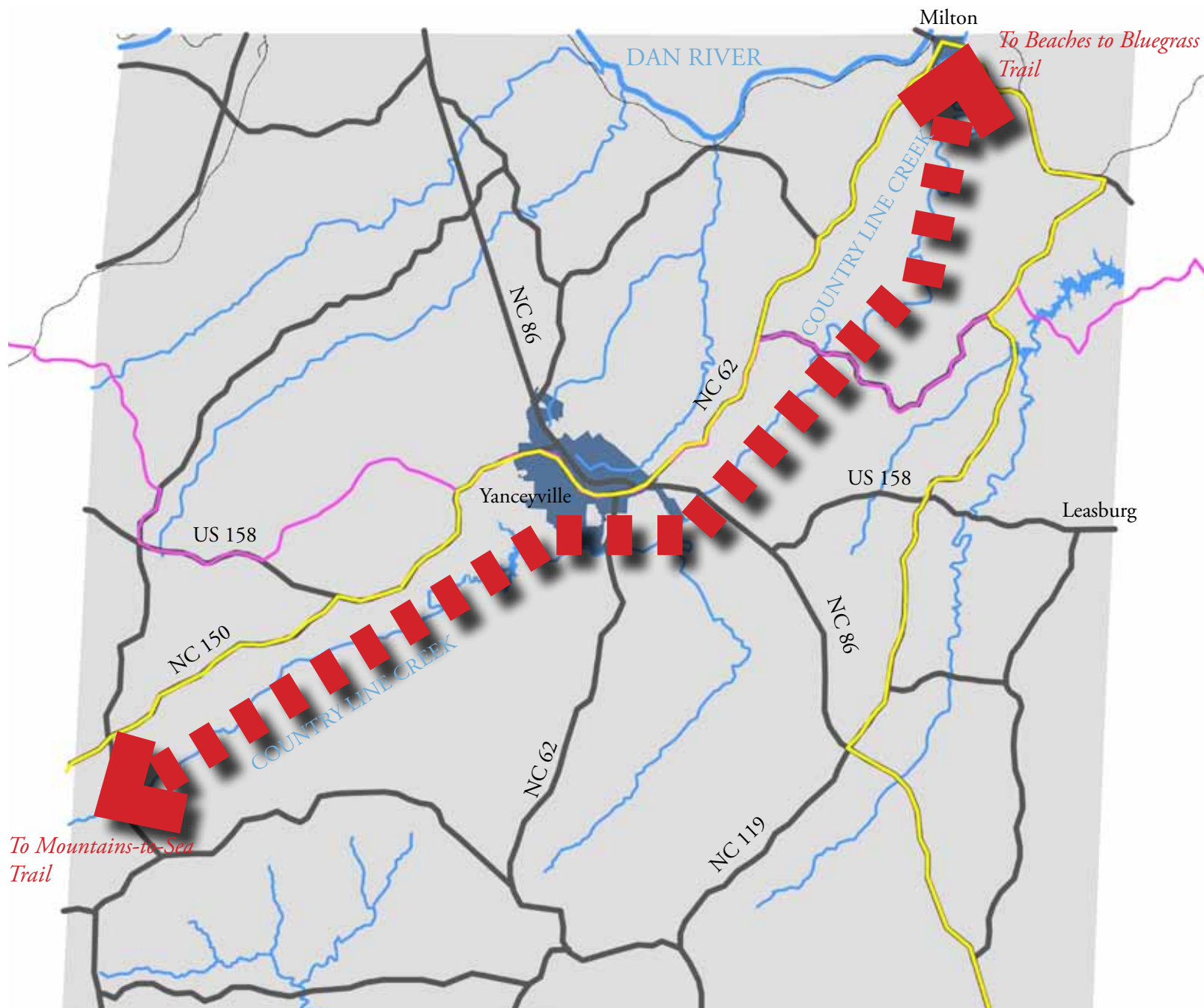
Character: Natural surface trail at 5-8 feet wide, depending upon location; may be improved based upon usage, feedback, and demand

User Groups: Braided trail system accommodating equestrians, mountain bikers, hikers, walkers and nature watchers







major trail system along Country Line Creek could be the central spine of a county-wide trail system and host many “feeder trails” which could help connect neighbors and businesses in several Caswell County communities.

It is meaningful that the Country Line Creek Trail would connect to both Yanceyville and Milton en route to the Mountains-to-Sea and Beaches to Bluegrass trails. The ability to attract tourists and funnel them through Caswell County presents notable economic development potential.

A major trail system such as this would also most likely breed other trails-based business opportunities such as campgrounds, bike shops and other outdoor recreation based businesses.



Legend:

-  Country Line Creek Trail
-  Scenic Byway
-  NC Bike Route 4
-  Water
-  Roads
-  Railroad



ROUTE

The Country Line Creek Trail can be categorized under two headings:

- Upper Portion
- Lower Portion

Country Line Creek has two distinctly different characteristics. Tributaries feed the beginning of Country Line Creek in southwestern corner of Caswell County. The creek remains fairly narrow and stays within its sandy banks in heavy rain events as it falls over 300 feet before it feeds Farmer Lake, just to the west of Yanceyville. This is the “Upper Portion.”

After Farmer Lake, though, Country Line Creek only falls another 80 feet over nearly the same length en route to Milton. This is the “Lower Portion.” Under normal conditions or drier weather, there isn’t much noticeable change in the appearance of Country Line Creek. However, when flooding events occur, the relatively flat route from Yanceyville to Milton yields some vastly wide floodplains. This will need to be taken into consideration when planning the exact routing for a trail. Therefore, the exact routing of the Country Line Creek Trail is fluid in nature and can shift from either side of the creek, depending upon location.

PHASING

The Country Line Creek Trail should, generally, be broken into sections between bridge locations for phases of development. Bridge locations are logical places of merger between off- and on- road transportation systems. These locations also can provide for trail head locations.

There are 12 sections for which to break down the Country Line Creek Trail:

- Section 1: Yarborough Mill Road to NC 57
- Section 2: Long’s Mill Road to Yarborough Mill Road
- Section 3: High Rock School Road to Long’s Mill Road
- Section 4: NC 86 to High Rock School Road
- Section 5: NC 62 to NC 86
- Section 6: Badgett Sisters Parkway to NC 62
- Section 7: Boy Scout Camp Road to Badgett Sisters Parkway
- Section 8: Stoney Creek School Road to Boy Scout Camp Road
- Section 9: Wagon Wheel Road to Stoney Creek School Road
- Section 10: Turner Road to Wagon Wheel Road
- Section 11: Camp Springs Road to Turner Road
- Section 12: Camp Springs Road to the southeast to connect with the Mountains-to-the-Sea Trail in Rockingham County, NC

Sections 1-6 make up the “Lower Portion” and sections 7-12 comprise the “Upper Portion” of Country Line Creek.

Priorities for developing the Country Line Creek Trail should begin with the lower portion by connecting Farmer Lake and Yanceyville to Milton. This trail would run along Game Lands and private properties as it passes through the Significant Natural Heritage Area that envelopes Country Line Creek between the two towns. It can begin in either town and, ideally, will grow from both ends at once.

Other priority sections should involve areas where Country Line Creek is in close proximity to historic and/or cultural sites.

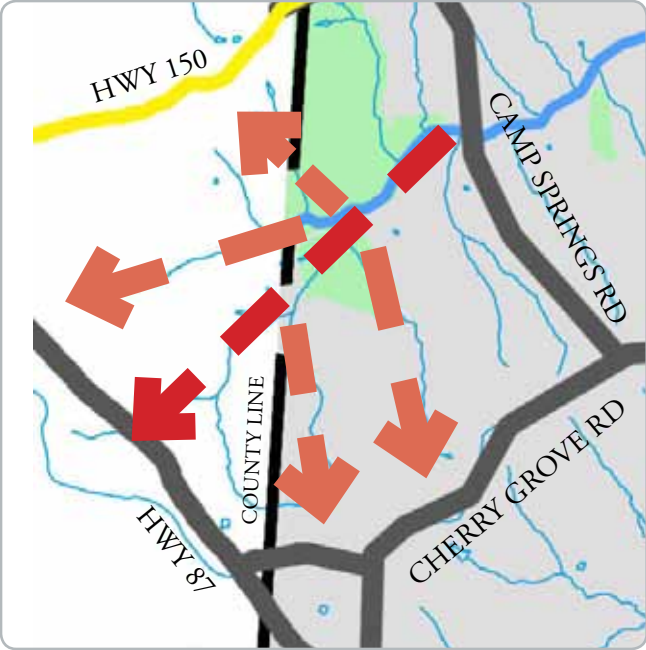
PILOT TRAILS

Upper Portion:
A pilot trail project on the upper portion (between Farmer Lake and the headwaters of Country Line Creek near Rockingham County) may be considered for one of the shortest trail sections between bridges. This occurs between Stoney Creek School Road and Wagon Wheel Road (Section 9). In the same area, the historic Calvin Graves plantation has frontage along Country Line Creek. A joint trail project would be ideal for a pilot project. Parking could be located on the Calvin Graves property.

Lower Portion:
A pilot trail project for the lower portion of Country Line Creek could begin at several locations, but the most significant initial advancement of the trail would occur between Badgett Sisters Parkway and NC 62 (Section 6). This would demonstrate a sincere adoption of the master plan by working with Yanceyville to create the beginning of a greenway and by working with the State of North Carolina to develop a trail along the periphery of the Game Lands. Parking may be located at Farmer Lake and off of NC 62.

The following pages contain an expanded discussion on each trail section. They are presented in descending order, or “as the creek flows” from southwest to northeast through Caswell County.

SECTION 12: Camp Springs Road to the Mountains-to-the-Sea Trail



From Camp Springs Road, there are many ways to extend the Country Line Creek Trail to NC 87. The preferred final section of the trail is illustrated in darkest red. Other options along tributaries are shown faded. Not all of these options would be required.

On-road trail route options include following NC 150 (Scenic Byway) or Cherry Grove Road to NC 87. From NC 87, the trail may continue cross country along streams to link with the Mountains-to-the-Sea Trail along the Haw River (preferred) or it may follow NC 87 south to link with the MST in Alamance County.

Cooperation will be required to extend the Country Line Creek Trail beyond NC 87 to the Haw River Trail by property owners in Rockingham County. A connection in Rockingham County is the most direct link from the Country Line Creek Trail and this would encourage usage.

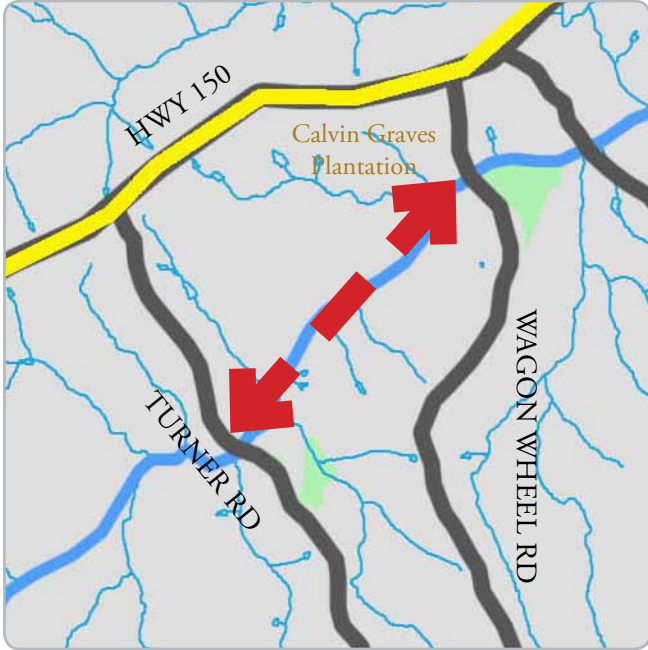
SECTION 11: Camp Springs Road to Turner Road



In Section 11, between Camp Springs Road and Turner Road, the Country Line Creek Trail can occur on either side of the creek. The best route should be determined by amenities in the area and the cooperation of property owners.

An on-road trail route option would follow NC 150.

SECTION 10: Turner Road to Wagon Wheel Road



Between Turner Road and Wagon Wheel Road, the Country Line Creek Trail can occur on either side of the creek, but it is encouraged to be located on the north side near Wagon Wheel Road. The historic Calvin Graves Plantation borders Country Line Creek, Wagon Wheel Road and NC 150. Across NC 150 from Calvin Graves plantation is the historic Comb's property with the historic Comb's store. A great trails opportunity exists between the historic properties while linking to the Country Line Creek Trail.

An on-road trail route option would follow NC 150.

Legend

Proposed Trail Concept

Scenic Byway

NC Bike Route 4

Water

Roads

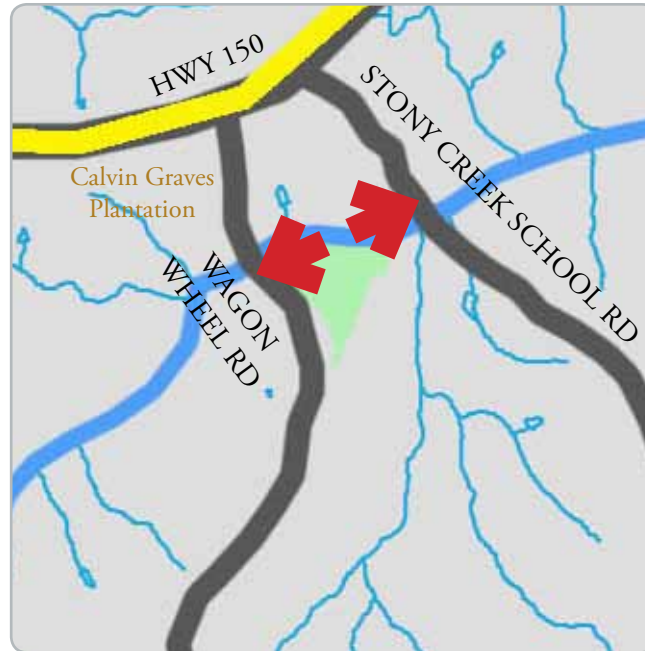
Railroad

Farmland Preservation Site

State Owned Lands

Municipality

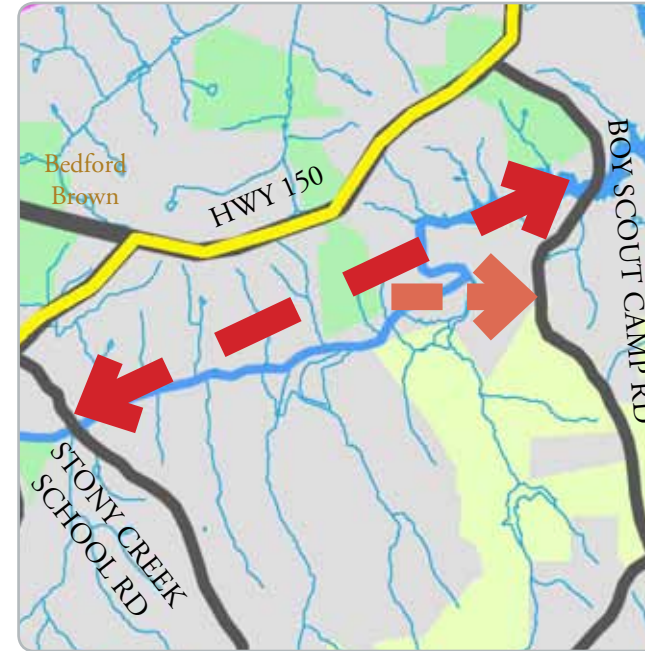
SECTION 9:
Wagon Wheel Road to Stoney Creek School Road



Section 9, from Wagon Wheel Road to Stoney Creek School road, is the shortest section of the Country Line Creek Trail. Measuring just over 1/2 mile, it can occur on either side of the creek and would serve well as a pilot trail even though it doesn't connect "destinations." The best route should be determined by connections to other amenities in the area and the cooperation of property owners.

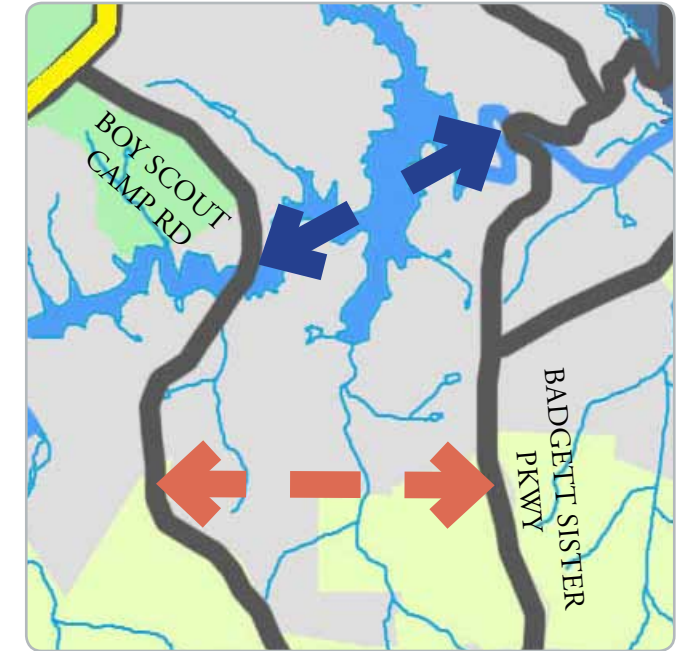
An on-road trail route option would follow NC 150.

SECTION 8:
Stoney Creek School Road to Boy Scout Camp Road



From Stoney Creek School Road to Boy Scout Camp Road, the trail can exist on either side of the creek. A decision will need to be made nearing Boy Scout Camp Road whether to follow the shoreline of the lake or to use an on-road route. The shortest route option would veer off from the lake shore and link with Boy Scout Camp Road (see faded arrow). This trail section may be along or through Boy Scouts of America owned land.

SECTION 7:
Boy Scout Camp Road to Badgett Sisters Parkway

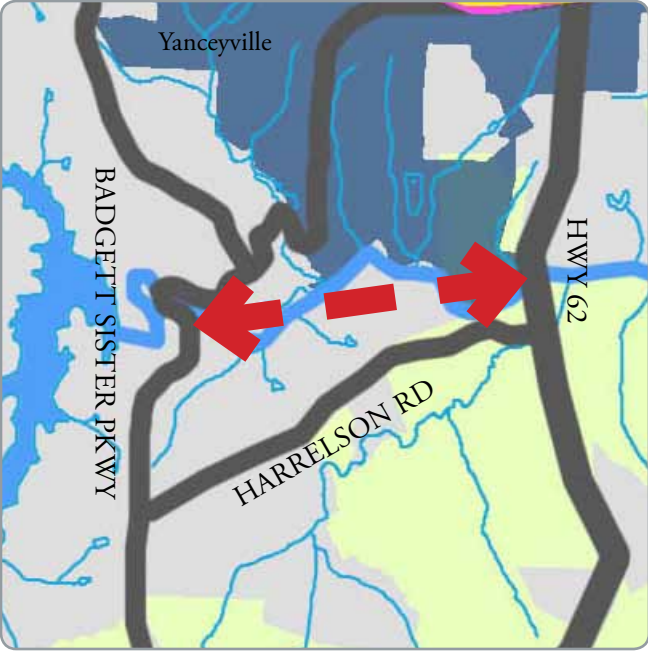


Section 7, between Boy Scout Camp Road and Badgett Sisters Parkway, is composed of Farmer Lake. Much of the shoreline has been sold off for private development. In lieu of a trail along the shoreline, which would be preferred, other options for trails in this area still exist.

One option is to promote a "blue-way," or water trail, across the lake from the bridge at Boy Scout Camp Road and the dam at Farmer Lake. See blue arrows.

Another option would be to continue an on-land trail across land owned by the Boy Scouts of America and by the state of NC, south of Farmer Lake, to connect to Badgett Sisters Parkway. See red arrow.

SECTION 6:
Badgett Sisters Parkway to NC 62



The Country Line Creek Trail section between Badgett Sisters Parkway and NC 62 should occur on the north side of the creek. This would link with the eventual trailhead of the Yanceyville and Farmer Lake Greenway (see Chapter 6.8 - Yanceyville Town Trails).

Alternative routes include using the Yanceyville to Farmer Lake Greenway. Beneficial to Yanceyville businesses, the greenway creates a round trip to get back to this trail section.

Harrelson Road should be designated as an on-road route, even with the trail along Country Line Creek. This would create a breathtaking loop, especially including Badgett Sisters Parkway.

Another on-road possibility is along Badgett Sisters Parkway into Yanceyville. From there, the trail would most likely extend to the bridge on NC 86 at Country Line Creek.

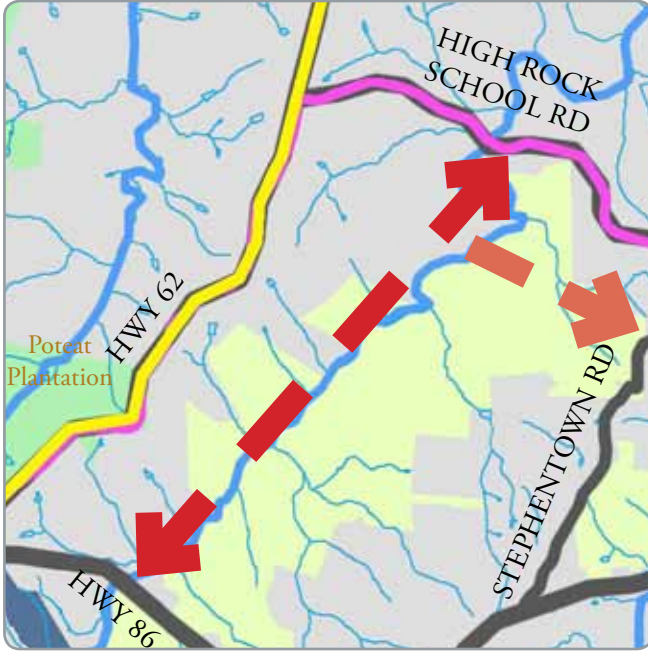
SECTION 5:
NC 62 to NC 86



Between NC 62 and NC 86, the trail can occur on either side of Country Line Creek. There is one key advantage to locating the trail on the south side; all of the land on the south side is owned by the State of North Carolina. Albeit Game Lands, a trail on the Game Lands perimeter adjacent to the creek, with private property on the other side of the creek, should not create a conflict of interest. This is particularly true when augmenting the trail with a restricted hunting zone or buffer.

An on-road option should pass through historic Yanceyville. This could be coupled with the on-road alternative routes in Section 6 to follow the Yanceyville to Farmer Lake Greenway or Badgett Sisters Parkway to the lake as a marketing opportunity for Yanceyville.

SECTION 4:
NC 86 to High Rock School Road



Between NC 86 and High Rock School Road, the trail can occur on either side of Country Line Creek. There is one key advantage to locating the trail on the south side; all of the land on the south side is owned by the State of North Carolina. Albeit Game Lands, a trail on the Game Lands perimeter adjacent to the creek, with private property on the other side of the creek, should not create a conflict of interest. This is particularly true when augmenting the trail with a restricted hunting zone or buffer.

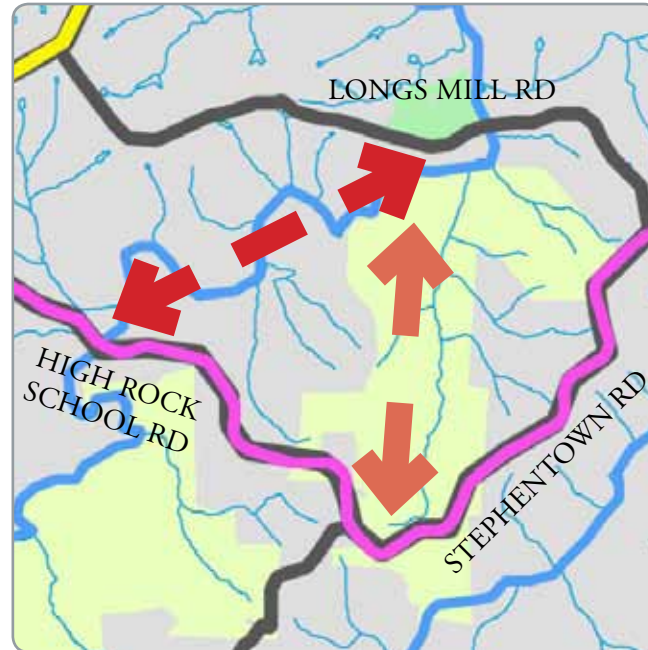
At High Rock School Road, all land is in private ownership and either cooperation with property owners will be needed or alternate routes may need to be explored. This could include a connection to Stephentown Road (shown in faded red).

An on-road option would be along NC 62, which hosts both the Colonial Heritage Byway and NC Bike Route #4 and passes Potear Plantation.

Legend

- Proposed Trail Concept
- Scenic Byway
- NC Bike Route 4
- Water
- Roads
- Railroad
- Farmland Preservation Site
- State Owned Lands
- Municipality

SECTION 3:
High Rock School Road to Long's Mill Road

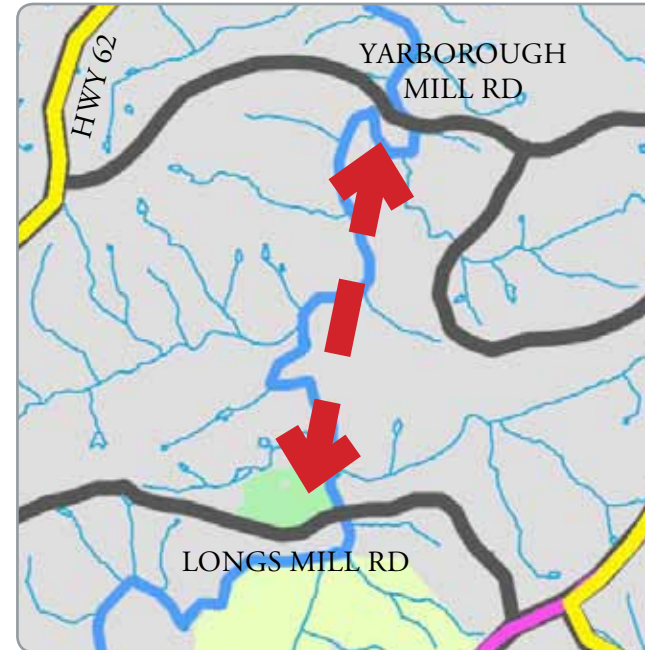


Section 3, between High Rock School Road and Long's Mill Road, may be one of the most difficult sections of the lower portion to complete due to a vast majority of land along Country Line Creek being under private property ownership. This is particularly the case near the intersections of the creek and roadways (at bridges). Along Country Line Creek, though, is the preferred route given its significant natural communities.

In lieu of a creek trail, an on-road route along Stephentown Road to Long's Mill Road is encouraged. This will link with trails of the Hyco Creek Heritage Trail (see Chapter 6.5).

Another consideration is trails along NC State owned property east of John Long Road (faded red arrow). Access to Long's Mill Road would still need to be arranged, but trails through these public lands could be a strong alternative. This would also be an excellent location for a County Park (see Chapter 6.11).

SECTION 2:
Long's Mill Road to Yarborough Mill Road

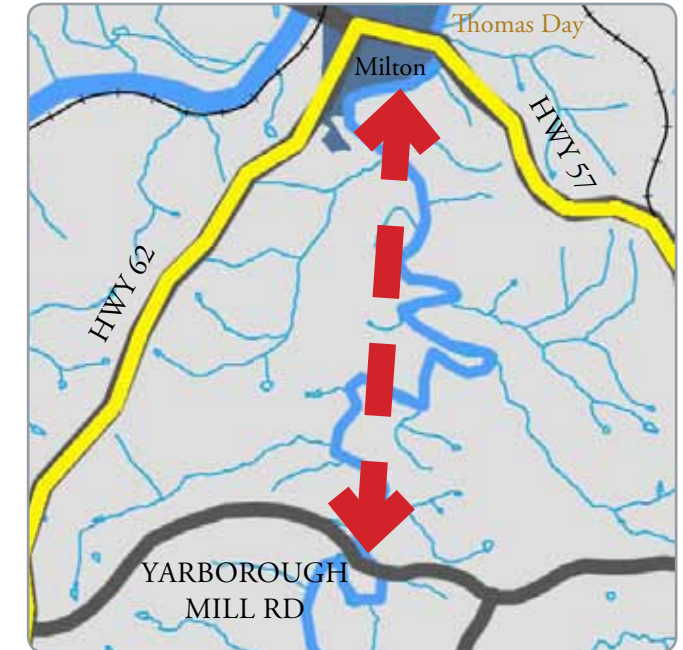


Between Long's Mill Road and Yarborough Mill Road, the trail can occur on either side of the creek. The trailhead on Long's Mill Road would be located closer to the Hyco Creek Trail System if located on the eastern side.

At this point, Country Line Creek is midway between parallel roads featuring the Colonial Heritage Scenic Byway and NC Bike Route #4. Those routes, however, are a substantial detour for the hiker, therefore on-road alternative routes are not recommended. If needed, utilizing Jack Pointer Road is suggested.

The floodplain for Country Line Creek is wide and shifts from side to side in this section. Either access to or protection there of Natural Heritage Features may also require shifting from one side of the creek to the other. Working with property owners to find the safest and most acceptable route will be essential for completion of this section of trail.

SECTION 1:
Yarborough Mill Road to NC 57



Between Yarborough Mill Road and NC 57, the trail can occur on either side of the creek. Historic Milton and the Dan River Trail are west of the creek. The best route should be derived by cooperation of property owners.

At Yarborough Mill Road, Country Line Creek is midway between parallel roads featuring the Colonial Heritage Scenic Byway and NC Bike Route #4. Those routes are, however, a substantial detour for the hiker so on-road alternative routes are not recommended for this section.

The trailhead in Milton would link with the Milton trails and/or walking tour (see Chapter 6.9). This would include a link to the Dan River Trail via NC 57 and VA 62 or by extending the Country Line Creek Trail to meet the Dan River Trail in Virginia. Cooperation with property owners in Virginia will be required to extend the Country Line Creek Trail beyond NC 57 to the Dan River Trail.

CHARACTER

The Country Line Creek Trail is encouraged to be a natural surface trail at an approximate width of five to eight feet. This design suggestion ensures minimal impact on the natural and cultural landscape while allowing for multiple user groups to easily share the trail. Certain sites along its route may incorporate other trail surface materials, but the continuum of the trail should be similar in nature and marking and should only be improved for purposes of environmental preservation, such as building a boardwalk through a wetland.



In the future, upgrading the trail surface should be by demand from the users and the greater community in which the trail is located.

FEATURES

- Connection to North Carolina’s Mountains-to-Sea Trail in Rockingham or Alamance County
- Connection to Virginia’s Beaches to Bluegrass Trail via the Tobacco Heritage Trail north of Milton
- Connections to NC historical marker sites such as Calvin Graves Plantation, Bedford Brown, Poteat Plantation, Romulus Saunders and Thomas Day
- Connections to the historic towns of Yanceyville and Milton
- Connections and access to natural features such as Farmer Lake and a NC Natural Heritage Area between Yanceyville and Milton
- Link to the Dan River Trail
- Link to the Hyco Creek Trail system
- Link to NC Game Lands
- Link to Boy Scouts of America lands
- An upper and lower section of Country Line Creek; lower portion is Significant Natural Heritage Area
- Close proximity to NC Colonial Heritage Scenic Byway and NC Bike Route #4 - North Line Trace
- Possible “Race to the Dan” Route

The Country Line Creek Trail presents an opportunity for Caswell County to tell the tale of Nathaneal Greene’s “Race to the Dan.” Before the 1781 Battle of Guilford Courthouse, General Cornwallis led his British forces through Caswell County pursuing General Greene, whose “retreat” probably won the Revolutionary War. This was part of the famous “Race to the Dan.” Cornwallis is believed to have marched through the Camp Springs area.



2.3 RATTLESNAKE CREEK HERITAGE TRAIL

The proposed Rattlesnake Creek Heritage Trail system will link Yanceyville with the Dan River Trail and also proposes access to the Dan River.

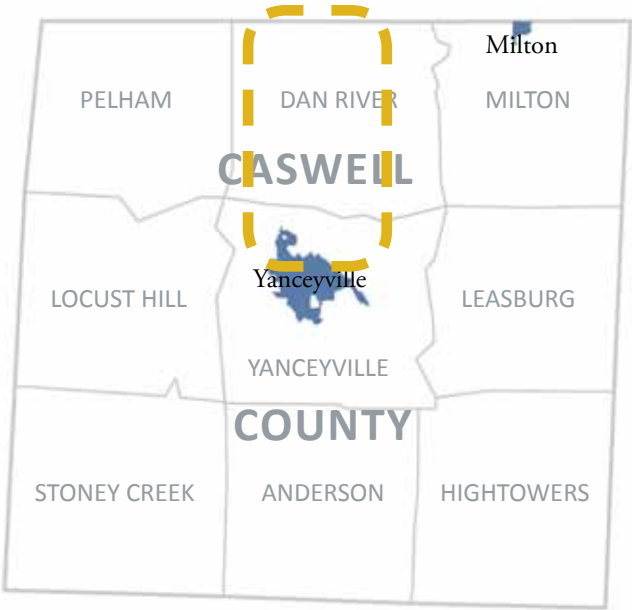
This trail will link current trail development at and near Oakwood Elementary School, the Caswell County Senior Center, Maud Gatewood Park and Yoder’s Market to Historic Sites G5 (Bright Leaf Tobacco) and G75 (William Poteat). Furthermore, the creek merges with the Dan River at its closest point to Yanceyville.

The two forks of Rattlesnake Creek flow north-northeast from Yanceyville, the geographic center of Caswell County. North Fork Rattlesnake Creek and South Fork Rattlesnake Creek bracket County Home Road before merging together north of Slade Road.

From this merger, Rattlesnake Creek proper runs north until it joins the Dan River in the community of Blanch.

At Blanch Road, access to the Dan River Trail is within 50 feet of the road and 1,000 feet of the Dan River along Rattlesnake Creek. Access to the Dan River in this area is highly desirable.

The utilization of Maud Gatewood Park as a trailhead is highly encouraged as the existing park has restroom, picnic and parking facilities.



RATTLESNAKE CREEK TRAIL QUICK FACTS

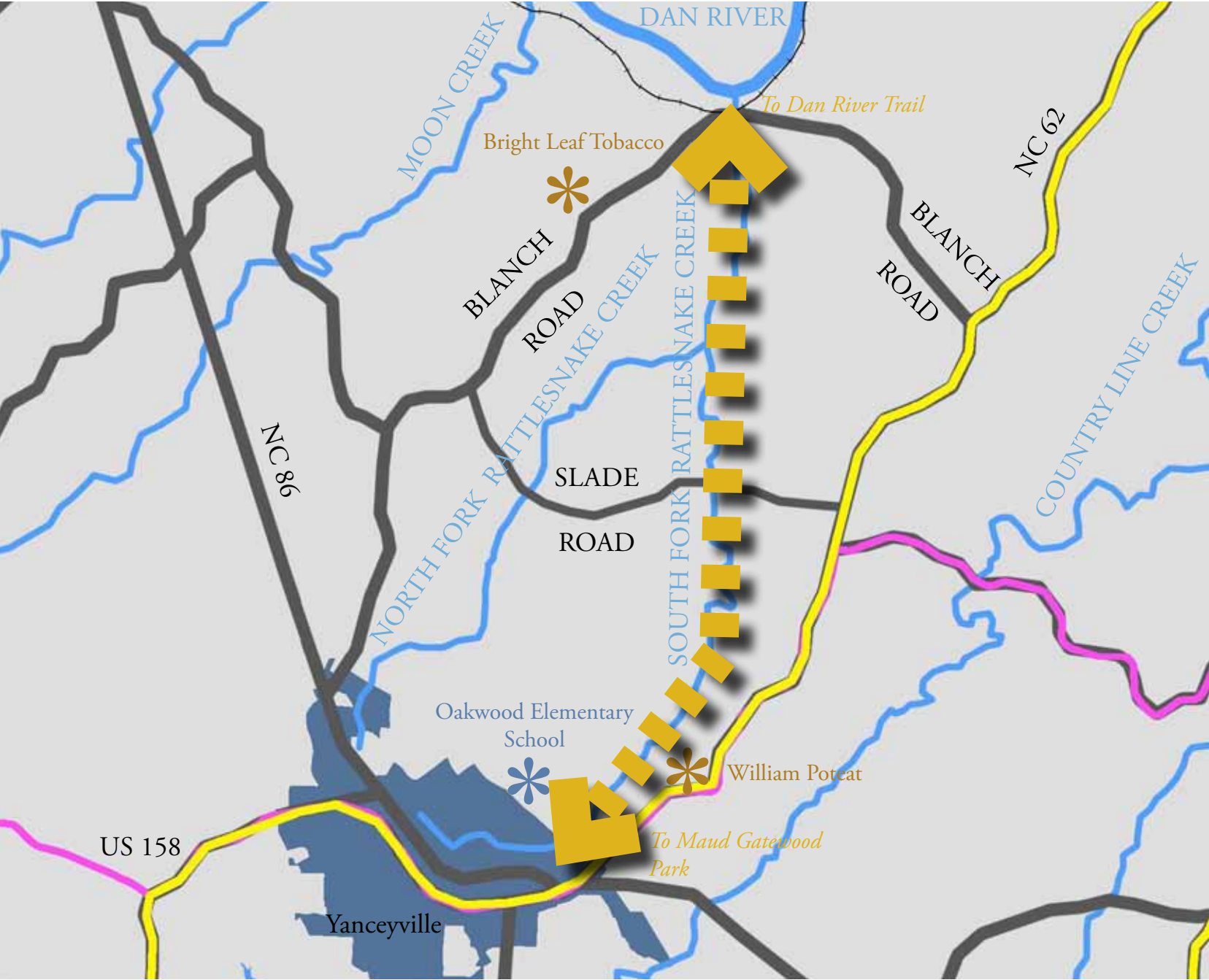
Length: About 9 miles along South Rattlesnake Creek (preferred route); varies dependent upon route

Trail Classification: Gold Leaf

Purpose: Connects trails at and near Oakwood Elementary School, the Caswell County Senior Center, Maud Gatewood Park and Yoder’s Market to Historic Sites G5 and G75 and to the Dan River at its closest point to Yanceyville


Character: Natural surface trail at 4-6 feet wide, depending upon location; may be improved based upon usage, feedback, and demand

User Groups: Braided trail system accommodating equestrians, mountain bikers, hikers, walkers and nature watchers



Legend:



Rattlesnake Creek Trail


Scenic Byway


NC Bike Route 4


Water


Roads


Railroad

 Historical Marker

 School Site



NORTH FORK RATTLESNAKE CREEK TRAIL ROUTE

North Fork Rattlesnake Creek begins near the intersection of NC Hwy 86 and US Hwy 158 at County Home Road just northwest of Yanceyville. Traveling north and then northeast, it skirts the Dan River Prison Work Farm before crossing under Slade Road.

From here, North Fork Rattlesnake Creek winds through lush woodland until it merges with South Fork Rattlesnake Creek another 2.5 miles downstream.

Because of its proximity to the prison, the trek along North Rattlesnake Creek is the least desirable route. However, north of Slade Road, either route is acceptable - though a continuum along South Rattlesnake Creek is preferred.

SOUTH FORK RATTLESNAKE CREEK TRAIL ROUTE

South Fork Rattlesnake Creek begins on the west side of Firetower Road in Yanceyville. As the south fork, it is the closest trail route option to Yanceyville's historic downtown.

The current trail development and recreational opportunities along Firetower Road are abundant. Miles of trail are planned and under development at the new Caswell County Senior Center. Recently, a trail has been built connecting the senior center property with Yoder's Amish Market, linking with a hotel along the route. A plan for recreational fields behind the senior center is under development; trails are to be located along the perimeter of the playing fields. Connections from these trails will link Oakwood Elementary School and a day care center to the senior center property. And over 2.5 miles of multi-use natural surface trail is being built

adjacent to Oakwood Elementary School.

In short, there is a cluster of civic open space and trails already developing along Firetower Road. This is relevant as South Fork Rattlesnake Creek works east across Firetower Road along the perimeter of yet another civic amenity: Maud Gatewood Park.

A mile east of Maud Gatewood Park, the creek enters the historic William Poteat property (NC Historical Marker G75).

This cluster of activity around a potential trail head area is why the South Fork Rattlesnake Creek is the preferred trail route option from Yanceyville.

In addition, if alternate on-road routes are employed, South Fork Rattlesnake Creek roughly parallels NC 62, which hosts the Colonial Heritage Scenic Byway as well as NC Bike Route 4. North of Slade Road, the Rattlesnake Creek Heritage Trail route should be exclusively off-road.

From Slade Road, South Fork Rattlesnake Creek flows north 1.5 miles until it merges with North Rattlesnake Creek.

AFTER THE FORKS MERGE

The two forks of Rattlesnake Creek merge north of Slade Road, so any trailhead will need to be located near the intersection of either fork and Slade Road. The South Fork Rattlesnake Creek route is preferred.

After the merger of the two forks, the distance is about 2.75 miles to the Dan River and Blanch Road area.

It is also in this area where NC Historical Marker G5 is located, marking the birthplace of brightleaf tobacco.

PILOT TRAIL

The first section of trail to be developed as the Rattlesnake Creek Heritage Trail is between Maud Gatewood Park and Poteat Plantation. This would link a civic amenity with a historic property. Parking would be available at Maud Gatewood Park.

Note: Some pilot trail development is already occurring at the Caswell County Senior Center property and includes a link to Yoder's Market. Other trails are being built adjacent to Oakwood Elementary School. These are nature and fitness trails within the Yanceyville trails system. The trail from Maud Gatewood Park to Poteat Plantation would link history with a trail, particularly with the full trail system to the Dan River in place.

At Blanch Road, the Rattlesnake Creek Trail should link with the Dan River Trail. Access to the Dan River itself is another 1,000 feet from Blanch Road, but is highly encouraged.

DAN RIVER ACCESS

Access to the Dan River, particularly near a midpoint between Danville and Milton, can occur at the confluence of Rattlesnake Creek and the Dan River. This is also the closest point of the Dan River to Yanceyville.

This will require working with property owners as it is 1,000 feet from Blanch Road to Dan River. Land on the west side of Rattlesnake Creek between Blanch Road and the Dan River is under conservation. Land on the east side is actively farmed.

A Dan River access in this location was mentioned numerous times during the public workshops.

PHASING

The Rattlesnake Creek Heritage Trail can be broken into two primary trail sections:

- Yanceyville Section: Between Firetower Road and Slade Road
- Blanch Section: Between Slade Road and Blanch Road

The Yanceyville section of the Rattlesnake Creek Heritage Trail, along South Rattlesnake Creek, would connect the current trail development at and near Oakwood Elementary School, the Caswell County Senior Center, Maud Gatewood Park and Yoder’s Market to Historic Site G75: William Poteat. Continuing north, it makes its way to Slade Road.

On-road options for the Yanceyville section include NC 62 (preferred) and County Home Road.

For the Blanch section, either prong of Rattlesnake Creek would be acceptable for trail, though it makes sense to continue utilizing South Rattlesnake Creek, locating this section of off-road trail nearest the preferred

on-road route of NC 62.

Priorities for developing the Rattlesnake Creek Trail should begin in Yanceyville and work to Poteat Plantation and beyond. Once development of the Dan River Trail has reached the Blanch area, the trail can grow from Blanch toward Yanceyville.

The Rattlesnake Creek Heritage Trail is to merge with the Dan River Trail near Blanch Road. Working with property owners, this location could also serve as a Dan River access point.

CHARACTER

The Rattlesnake Creek Trail is encouraged to be a natural surface trail at an approximate width of four to six feet. This design ensures minimal impact on the natural and cultural landscape while allowing for multiple user groups to easily share the trail.

Certain sites along its route may incorporate other trail surface materials, but the continuum of the trail should be similar in nature and marking and should only be improved for purposes of environmental preservation, such as building a boardwalk through a wetland.

In the future, upgrading the trail surface should be by demand from the users and the greater community in which the trail is located.

FEATURES

- Connections to Maud Gatewood Park and other trails at the Caswell Senior Center and Oakwood Elementary School
- Passes through or along historic William Poteat property along South Rattlesnake Creek
- Near Bright Leaf Tobacco historical marker
- Will connect with Dan River Trail
- May provide access to the Dan River



2.4 HYCO CREEK HERITAGE TRAIL

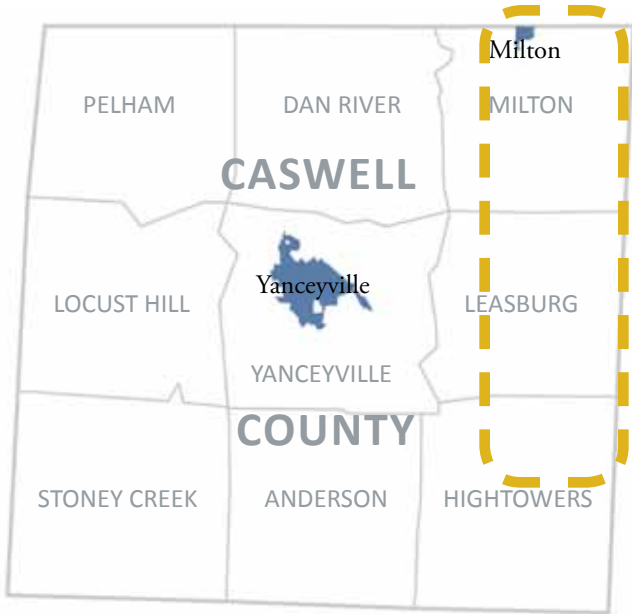
The Hyco Creek Heritage Trail is located on the eastern side of Caswell County and will create a trail system linking the Hightowers, Leasburg and Milton townships.

Leasburg, by way of a spur along US 158, is the centerpiece of this trail. Caswell County’s first county seat produced such notables as Solomon Lea (1807-1897), first president of Greensboro College, and Jacob Thompson (1810-1885), Secretary of the Interior under President James Buchanan. The oldest post office in Caswell County, built in 1794, still stands at Leasburg.

History and scenery are plentiful with key features including historic Leasburg, Griers Presbyterian Church and a link with South Elementary School. Other accessible amenities in the area include Red House Church and the Woodside House (Stephen Dodson Ramseur historic marker). Paralleling the proposed off-road route along Hyco Creek is NC Highway 119, which also hosts the Colonial Heritage Scenic Byway. Additionally, NC Bike Route 4 (North Line Trace) crosses this proposed trail system along its northern section.

The Hyco Creek Heritage Trail will also link with the Country Line Creek Trail to provide access to Milton and Yanceyville.

Note: Some texts refer to the course of water as Hyco River. The North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources (NCDENR) and Division of Transportation (NCDOT) refer to it as Hyco Creek. Therefore, this document will also refer to it as a creek.



HYCO CREEK TRAIL QUICK FACTS

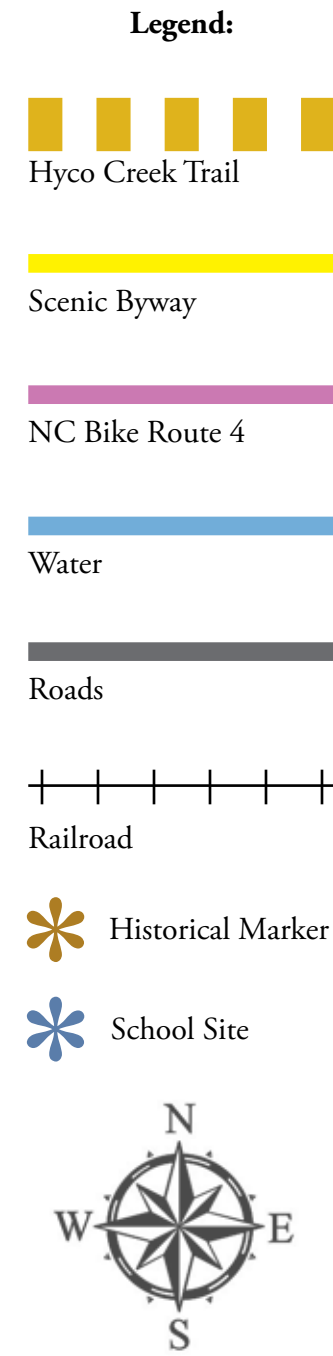
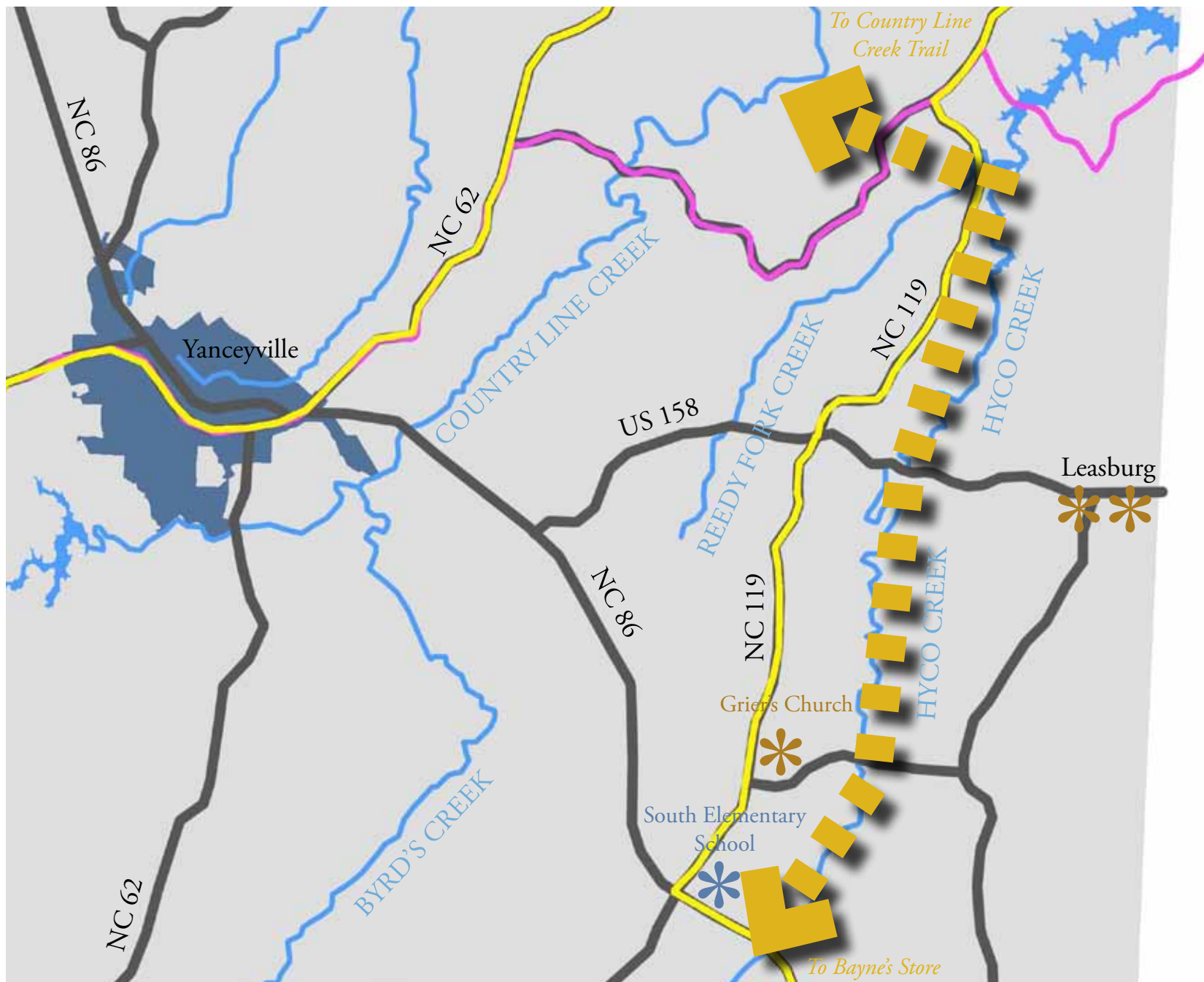
Length: Varies dependent upon primary and alternative routes

Trail Classification: Gold Leaf

Purpose: Connects South Elementary School near Historical Marker G77 (Grier’s Church) to Leasburg. Also connects Leasburg to Milton via the Country Line Creek Trail and/or via the Colonial Heritage Scenic Byway

Character: Natural surface trail at 4-6 feet wide, depending upon location; may be improved based upon usage, feedback, and demand

User Groups: Braided trail system accommodating equestrians, mountain bikers, hikers, walkers and nature watchers



ROUTE

The Hyco Creek Heritage Trail should, generally, be broken into sections between bridge locations. Bridge locations are logical places of merger between off- and on- road transportation systems. Therefore, these are reasonable locations where there may be alternate route options. These locations also can provide for trailhead locations and parking.

There are 3 primary sections to the Hyco Creek Trail. These sections are:

- Section 1: US 158 to NC 119
- Section 2: Grier’s Church Road to US 158
- Section 3: NC 86 to Grier’s Church Road

Section 3 is the shortest of the three sections of the Hyco Creek Heritage Trail and it links education with nature and history. South Elementary School is located near Grier’s Presbyterian Church on the southern limits of this trail system, creating a wonderful opportunity for a pilot trail project. It should be noted, however, that this proposed trail route passes through NC Game Lands.

A major extension of Section 3 would include a link to Bayne’s Store.

Section 2, between Grier’s Church Road and US 158, will create significant historic links between Grier’s Presyterian Church and historic Leasburg. Many of the oldest structures in the county are on this eastern portion.

Section 2 trails can occur on either side of the creek.

Section 1 between US 158 and NC 119 is intended to link Leasburg and Milton. Section one should be constructed on the west side of the creek, at least near

NC 119 where the trail would veer from Hyco Creek to follow the Reedy Fork Creek tributary to NC 119. In this area, the trail route could then follow an on-road connector along Long’s Mill Road to link to the Country Line Creek Trail, providing an off-road link to Milton. An on-road option would pass through Semora and the community of Red House.

Any on-road alternative route for the Hyco Creek Heritage Trail north of NC 86 is suggested to follow the Colonial Heritage Scenic Byway route.

PHASING

Priorities for developing the Hyco Creek Heritage Trail should begin north of US 158 to NC 119. The goal here is connecting Leasburg and Milton. This trail would include a roadside link along Long’s Mill Road to the Country Line Creek Trail, which passes through the Significant Natural Heritage Area between Yanceyville and Milton. An on-road alternative route for the Hyco Creek Heritage Trail would follow the Colonial Heritage Scenic Byway route.

Creating a connection between South Elementary School, Hyco Creek and Grier’s Presbyterian Church satisfies a major goal of the master plan by linking education, nature and history. This, too, could be a pilot project. The opportunity to expand to other trail systems is limited in this location, however.

PILOT TRAILS

A pilot trail project for the Hyco Creek Heritage Trail should begin north of US 158 to NC 119. This trail would include a roadside link along Long’s Mill Road to the Country Line Creek Trail. An on-road alternative route for the Hyco Creek Heritage Trail would follow the Colonial Heritage Scenic Byway route.

CHARACTER

The Hyco Creek Trail should be a natural surface trail at an approximate width of four to six feet. This design suggestion ensures minimal impact on the natural and cultural landscape.

Certain sites along its route may incorporate other trail surface materials, but the continuum of the trail should be similar in nature and marking and should only be improved for purposes of environmental preservation, such as building a boardwalk through a wetland.

In the future, upgrading the trail surface should be by demand from the users and the greater community in which the trail is located.

FEATURES

- Historic Grier’s Presbyterian Church
- South Elementary School
- Historic Leasburg

Connects to:

- Country Line Creek Trail
- Colonial Heritage Scenic Byway
- NC Bike Route 4
- Historic Milton and up to 5 Historical Marker sites
- Baynes’ Store



2.5 HOGAN'S-MOON TRAIL SYSTEM

The Hogan's-Moon trail system features Hogan's Creek and Moon Creek. Together, along with on-road routes including Park Springs Road and Allison Road, a fibrous system of loops can be created. Additionally, the system can grow to incorporate the tributaries of East Prong Moon's Creek and Bear Branch.

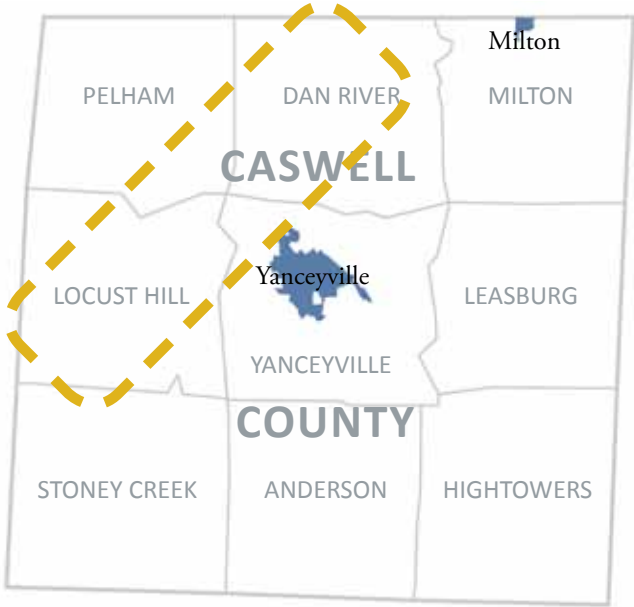
The Hogan's-Moon trail system can be broken into two sections:

- West of NC 86
- East of NC 86

West of NC 86 is the largest portion of the Hogan's-Moon trail system. Hogan's Creek enters Caswell County from Rockingham County and can be a blue-way, as a majority of the creek is navigable by canoe and kayak. A trail along Moon Creek will be the centerpiece of the trails system while the east prong of Moon Creek can also be added to expand its length and relevance. Local roads can create connections from one creek to others. These roads include Big Oak Farm Road, Henderson Road, Jones Road and Mineral Springs Road.

About three miles northwest of Yanceyville, on a small tributary of Moon Creek, there is a natural formation identified as "The Indian Rock" which is traditionally said to have been used as a fortress by the Indians. The entrance to this small cave faces the branch just fifteen feet away. It has been reported that this site is on the east prong of Moon's Creek, though others have stated it is along Bear Branch. Field research should be conducted to verify this location and incorporate it into the trail system.

East of NC 86, there is the opportunity to link North Elementary School with Washington's Tour historical



marker site (G110). George Washington spent the night of June 3-4, 1791 in Caswell County at the home of Dudley Gatewood. The house stood approximately one mile northeast of the present historical marker. That marker is found on the east side of NC 86 near the intersection with the Walters Mill Road (very near North Elementary School).

The ruins of Walter's Mill are located where Walter's Mill Road crosses Hogan's Creek, near where the new Walter's Mill Road and the old Walter's Mill Road meet.

The Hogan's-Moon system will also connect with the Dan River Trail. Additionally, it is in close proximity to historical marker G5 (Bright Leaf Tobacco).

NC 86 is a high-volume traffic corridor between Yanceyville and Danville. Any crossings should be clearly marked for the safety of all.

HOGAN'S-MOON TRAIL SYSTEM QUICK FACTS

Length: Varies dependent upon primary and alternative routes

Trail Classifications:
Gold Leaf (east of NC 86)
Green Leaf (west of NC 86)

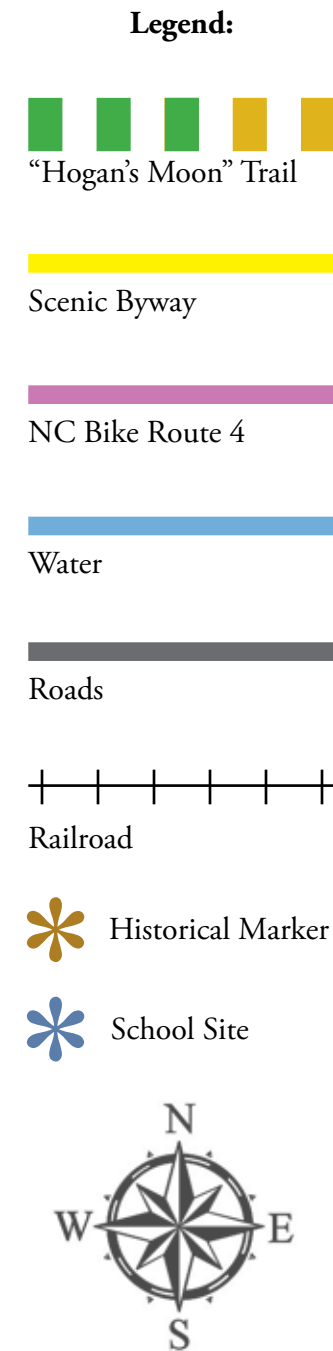
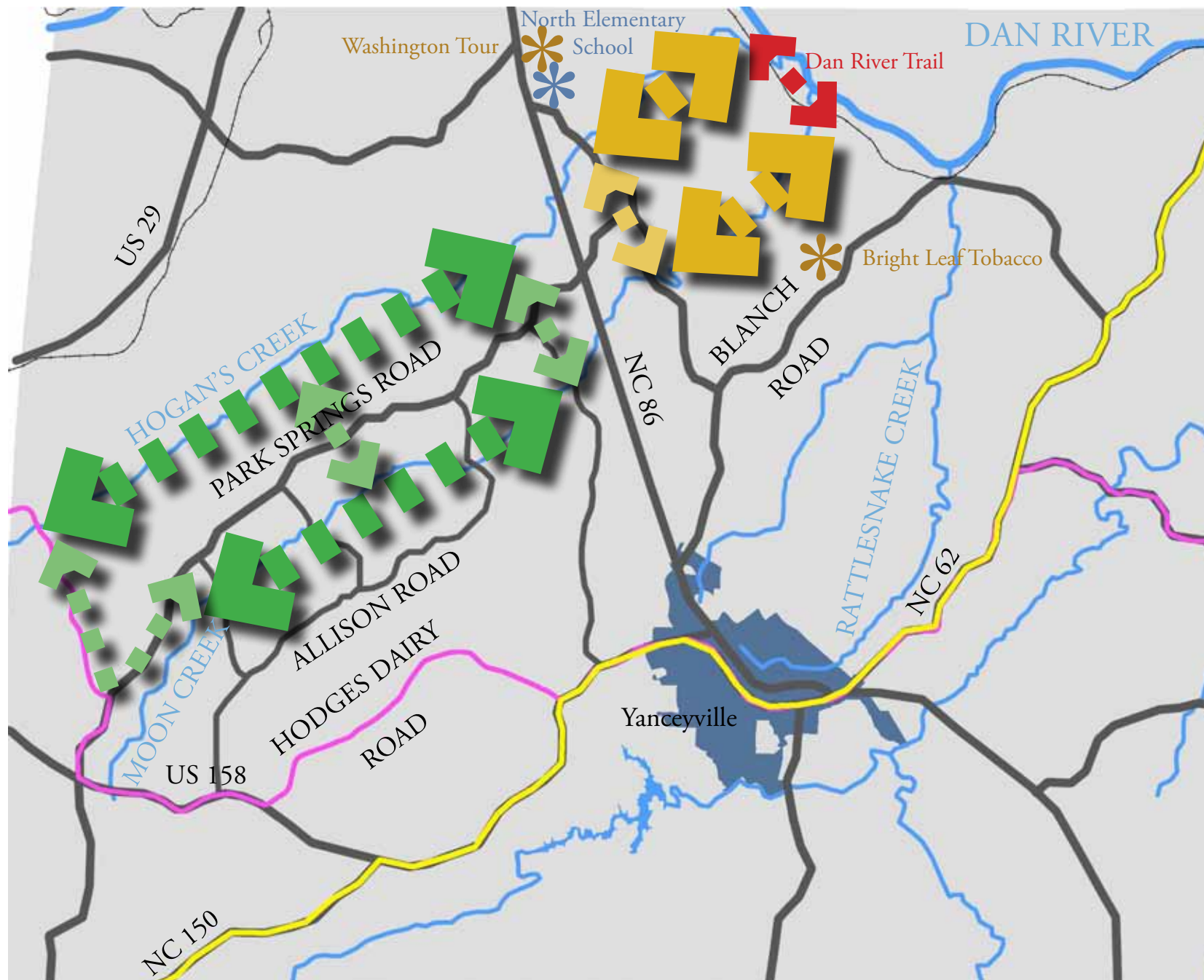
Purpose:
East of NC 86: Connects North Elementary School to Historic Site G110 and to the Dan River Trail

West of NC 86: Ties together 2-3 creeks with local road routes and features many natural and cultural amenities

Character:
Trail: Natural surface trail at 4-6 feet wide, depending upon location; may be improved based upon usage, feedback, and demand

Blueway: Hogan's Creek is also canoe and kayak friendly, though some portage may be required to avoid downed trees (strainers) or other obstacles; these routes should be explored ahead of time and any permission to utilize private property for portage and/or access should be sought

User Groups: Braided trail system accommodating equestrians, mountain bikers, hikers, walkers and nature watchers



ROUTE

The Hogan’s-Moon trail system route will vary greatly dependent upon willing property owners to allow for a trail on their land and the utilization of on-road routes as connectors.

PHASING

Priorities for developing the Hogans’-Moon trail system should begin with the “Gold Leaf” portion of the trail system east of NC 86. The goal here is connecting North Elementary School and Washington’s Tour site with the Dan River Trail (red arrow), most likely via Hogan’s Creek. On-road routes and links include Old NC 86 (faded gold arrow) and Walter’s Mill Road.

West of NC 86 is the “Green Leaf” portion of the trail system.

The distance between bridges of Hogan’s Creek is much greater and may take longer to plan, gather permission for trails and construct, but priorities for off-road land-based trails on the west side of NC 86 begin here. Utilizing Hogan’s Creek as a blueway for canoes and kayaks should be able to occur immediately. The opportunity to extend the Hogan’s Creek blueway and trail into Rockingham County is also appealing.

The geographic centerpiece of the Hogan’s-Moon trail system is Moon Creek. Trail development can begin on any section between bridges from Big Oak Farm Road to Foster Road. On-road routes should follow Park Springs Road and/or Allison Road.

Note: Not all of the roads in this area are represented on the map. The faded green arrows indicate the concept of using roads as connectors. Please consult a more detailed Caswell County road map or atlas that illustrates all roads and creeks for planning actual routes.

CHARACTER

The Hogan’s-Moon trail system is recommended to be a natural surface trail at an approximate width of four to six feet. This design suggestion ensures minimal impact on the natural and cultural landscape.

Certain sites along its route may incorporate other trail surface materials, but the continuum of the trail should be similar in nature and marking and should only be improved for purposes of environmental preservation, such as building a boardwalk through a wetland.

In the future, upgrading the trail surface should be by demand from the users and the greater community in which the trail is located.

FEATURES

- Hogan’s Creek as a blueway (canoe and kayak)
- North Elementary School
- Washington’s Tour historic site

Connects to:

- Dan River Trail
- NC Bike Route 4: North Line Trace
- Historical marker area of Bright Leaf Tobacco via Bertha Wilson Road

PILOT TRAIL (GOLD LEAF)

The first section of trail to be developed in the Hogans’-Moon trail system should begin east of NC 86. The goal here is connecting North Elementary School and Washington’s Tour site with the Dan River Trail. This is the “Gold Leaf” portion of the trail system.

PILOT TRAIL (GREEN LEAF)

Hogan’s Creek:
Either of the two sections between Quick Road and Seamster Road.

Moon Creek:
Trail development can begin on any section between bridges from Big Oak Farm Road to Foster Road.

2.6 BYRD'S CREEK TRAIL SYSTEM

The Byrd's Creek trail system is located in southern Caswell County, south of Yanceyville, between NC 62 and NC 86. Byrd's Creek, Burkes Creek, Penson Creek, South Country Line Creek and two of its tributaries may contribute to this trail system.

This is a "Green Leaf" trail system, meaning that it connects with nature and culture more so than to history. Baynes' Store, however, is located at the southernmost terminus of the trail and is a community feature and gathering place.

A significant portion of NC Game Lands is in the vicinity of this trail system. Careful consideration and cooperation will be required to avoid disrupting hunting activities.

Roads in the area include NC 119, NC 62, Bayne's Store Road, Roscoe Dameron Road, Fitch Road, Burton Chapel Road, George Russell Road and Mary Jane Bigelow Road.

Note: South Country Line Creek is the predominant stream and trail in this system. The reference to the system as Byrd's Creek is to avoid confusion with the keystone Country Line Creek Trail.

ROUTE

The Byrd's Creek trail system route will vary greatly dependent upon willing property owners to allow for a trail on their land and the utilization of on-road routes as connectors.

PHASING

Priorities for developing the Byrd's Creek trail system should begin at Bayne's Store and should connect the store to Roscoe Dameron Road.

From Baynes' Store, a connection to the east can also link with an extension of the Hyco Creek trail system.

North of Roscoe Dameron Road, all routes following the streams in the area cut through NC Game Lands. Either South Country Line Creek or Byrd's Creek is the most logical option to extend to Burton Chapel Road, though both pass through the Game Lands.

The link from Burton Chapel Road to the Country Line Creek Trail will be the most difficult portion of the system to build due to its passing through a major portion of the Game Lands. With Country Line Creek being a priority trail in the county that will require cooperation from the State to allow, any further disruption of the current use of Game Lands is discouraged. However, it may be possible to follow South Country Line Creek north for two to three miles before diverging from the creek to follow the Game Lands property line to NC 86, near Cobb Road (faded green arrow).

Note: Not all of the roads in this area are represented on the map. The faded green arrows indicate the concept of using roads as connectors. Please consult a more detailed Caswell County road map or atlas that illustrates all roads and creeks for planning actual routes.

CHARACTER

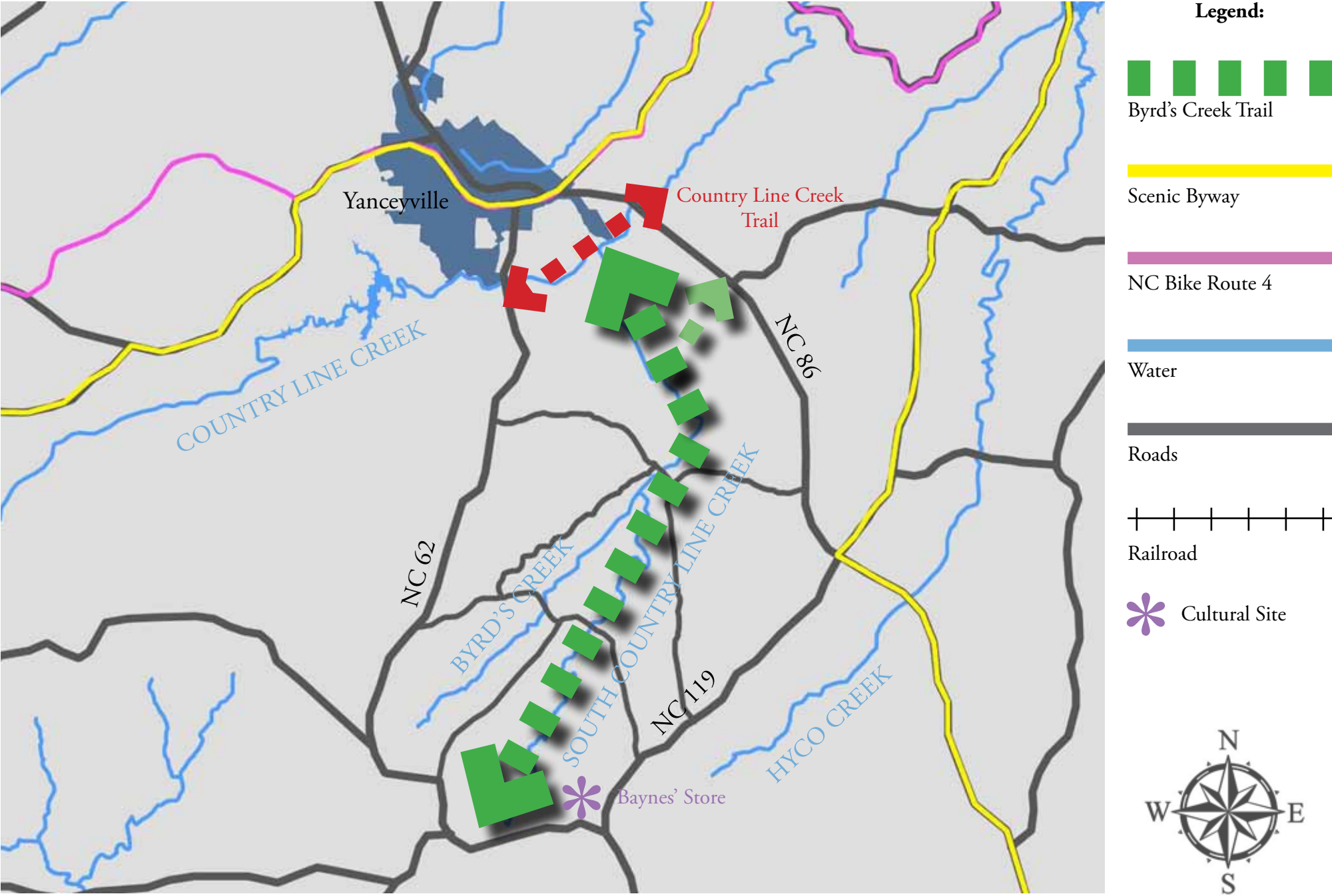
The Byrd's Creek trail system is recommended to be a natural surface trail at an approximate width of four to six feet. This design suggestion ensures minimal impact on the natural and cultural landscape.

Certain sites along its route may incorporate other trail surface materials, but the continuum of the trail should be similar in nature - and marking - and should only be improved for purposes of environmental preservation, such as building a boardwalk through a wetland.

In the future, upgrading the trail surface should be by demand from the users and the greater community in which the trail is located.

FEATURES

- Baynes' Store
- Several creeks and tributaries
- NC Game Lands



2.7 CHERRY-CHAPEL TRAIL SYSTEM

The Cherry-Chapel Trail system includes creeks and streams generally located south of Cherry Grove Road and north of Kerr’s Chapel Road. These are located outside of the Dan River and Roanoke River basin and are in the Cape Fear River basin.

Several water bodies feed Gray’s Branch (as identified per Caswell County GIS data) that flows into Alamance County. This branch eventually feeds into the Haw River.

There are many active farms, such as “you pick ‘em” establishments in this area of the county. Connecting farms with trails presents and excellent marketing opportunity.

ROUTE

The Cherry-Chapel Trail route will vary greatly dependent upon willing property owners to allow for a trail on their land and the utilization of on-road routes as connectors.

There are many options. Streams which could be utilized include Gray’s Branch and a couple of its tributaries, Benton Branch and a couple of its tributaries and Stony Creek.

Stony Creek is the central feature, so the primary trail route is suggested to follow it (large green arrow). Other trails may also be utilized (small green arrows).

In addition to Cherry Grove Road and Kerr’s Chapel Road, other on-road routes include Underwood Road, Pagetown Road, Stadler Road and Milesville Road.

PHASING

With so many off- and on-road options, there are many places in which to begin development of the “Cherry Chapel” trail system. Stony Creek is the central hydrological feature, flanked by Gray’s Branch and Benton Branch. All of these merge near the intersection of Stadler Road with Kerr’s Chapel Road. Therefore, it makes sense to begin on Kerr’s Chapel or Stadler Road and work along Stony Creek to Moore Road. Another option is to work from this same area toward Milesville Road. In either case, these trails can continue north to Cherry Grove Road. From there, on-road links (faded green arrows) via Turner Road or Wagon Wheel Road can provide a link to the Country Line Creek Trail. Massey Road can also provide a link from Milesville to Stadler Road.

Any trails along Gray’s Branch or any of its tributaries up to Cherry Grove Road may also link to Country Line Creek by way of Camp Springs Road.

To the south, the trail can follow the outflowing stream into Alamance County to later connect with the Haw River Trail (green arrow).

Note: Not all of the roads in this area are represented on the map. The faded green arrows indicate the concept of using roads as connectors. Please consult a more detailed Caswell County road map or atlas that illustrates all roads and creeks for planning actual routes.

CHARACTER

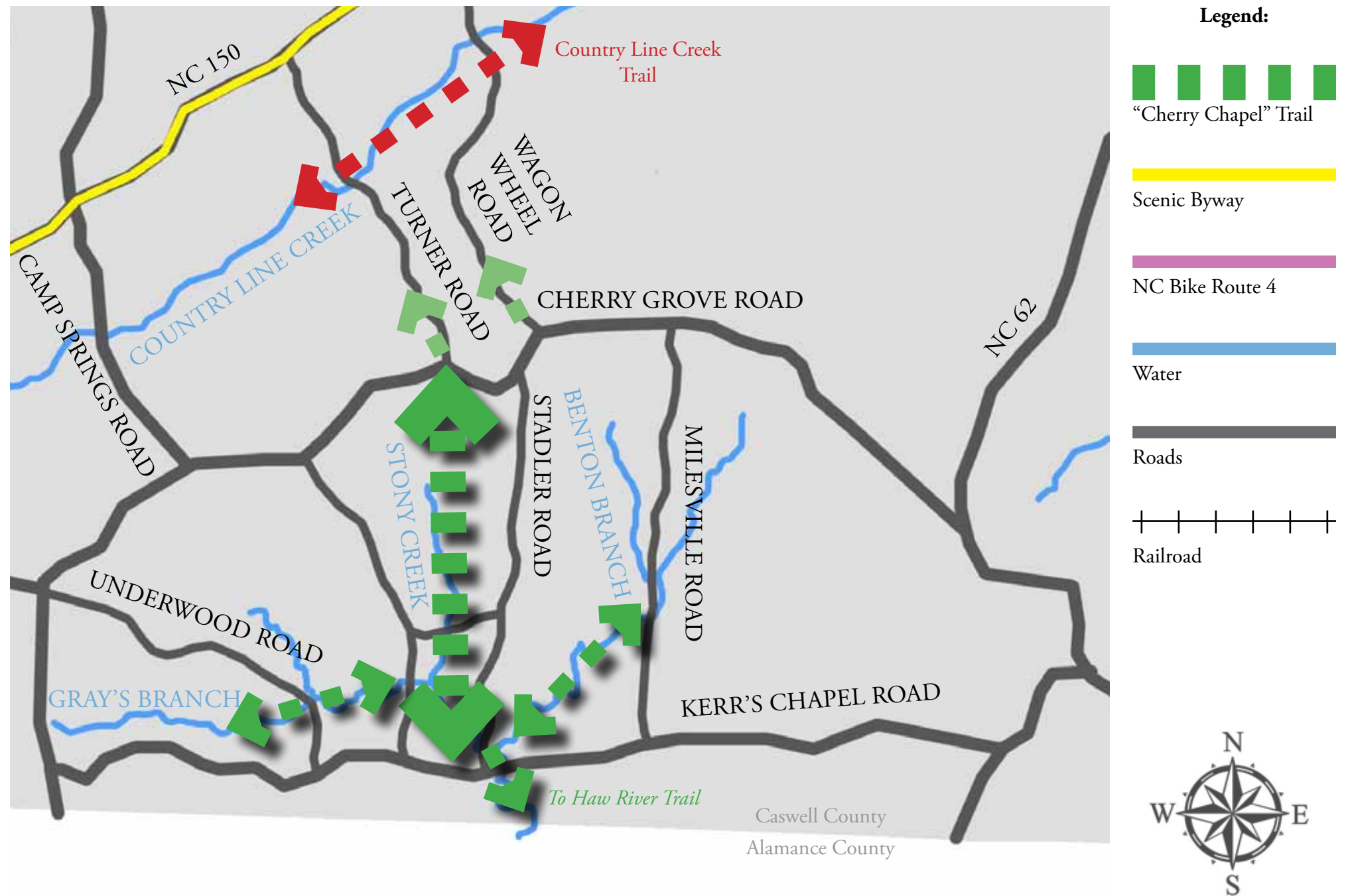
The “Cherry Chapel” trail system is encouraged to be a natural surface trail at an approximate width of four to six feet. This design suggestion ensures minimal impact on the natural and cultural landscape.

Certain sites along its route may incorporate other trail surface materials, but the continuum of the trail should be similar in nature and marking and should only be improved for purposes of environmental preservation, such as building a boardwalk through a wetland.

In the future, upgrading the trail surface should be by demand from the users and the greater community in which the trail is located.

FEATURES

- Connection to the Country Line Creek Trail via on-road routes
- Farms
- Connection into Alamance County to the Haw River Trail network



2.8 YANCEYVILLE TOWN TRAILS

The Town of Yanceyville has wonderful examples of architecture in addition to dining and shopping. The current walking tour features over 21 places of interest in and around the historic district and there are tours of the historic courthouse, old jail and one-room schoolhouse.

The town is also making sidewalk improvements and expansions to make the community more walk and bike friendly.

Beyond these efforts, there are three additional trails and links that should occur in Yanceyville:

- Yanceyville Greenway
- Senior Center Connector
- Bartlett-Yanceyville Trail

YANCEYVILLE GREENWAY

A Farmer Lake to Yanceyville Greenway, or just “Yanceyville Greenway,” would provide a great service to the community by linking the natural beauty of Farmer Lake to the historic awe of the downtown. The greenway is to be paved and at a width of 8 feet, making it usable by families of walkers, hikers, bikers and equestrians. Easements and old road beds make for excellent options for trail locations. An on-road option would follow Badgett Sisters Parkway.

This amenity would be a great way to market “a day in Caswell County” to the region. Take a canoe paddle on the lake and enjoy a scenic stroll to the historic downtown and its shops.

This trail should be a high priority for the Town.

This trail is marked with number 1 on the map.

SENIOR CENTER CONNECTOR

The Caswell County Senior Center is located near Oakwood Elemetary School and Maud Gatewood Park on Firetower Road, just north of Yanceyville’s downtown. A trail would link these civic amenities with the historic downtown. This trail should be paved and at a minimum width of 5 feet in order to make it usable to as many people as possible. Its form may be a sidewalk along Firetower Road or an off-road paved trail.

This trail is marked with number 2 on the map. It was originally illustrated in the Piedmont Triad Regional Council Senior Center Trails Plan.

There are many trails in this area, including trails linking the Senior Center to Yoder’s Market, trails adjacent to Oakwood Elementary School and the trails at Maud Gatewood Park. At Maud Gatewood Park, this sidewalk or trail will link with the Rattlesnake Creek Trail.

BARTLETT YANCEY HOUSE TO DOWNTOWN YANCEYVILLE

A nature trail should link the Bartlett Yancey historic site near Dillard Middle School with downtown Yanceyville. It could be called the “Bartlett-Yanceyville Trail.” It will connect education, history and nature.

While sidewalks already form most of this walk along roadways, an off-road portion to form a loop would create a nice amenity for the downtown. A natural trail width of 5 feet wide is recommended.

The nature trail would also provide an “outdoor classroom” for science and nature observation by students at the school.

This trail is marked with number 3 on the map.

Legend



Yanceyville Trails



Scenic Byway



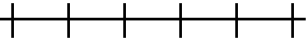
NC Bike Route 4



Water



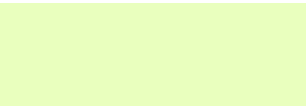
Roads



Railroad



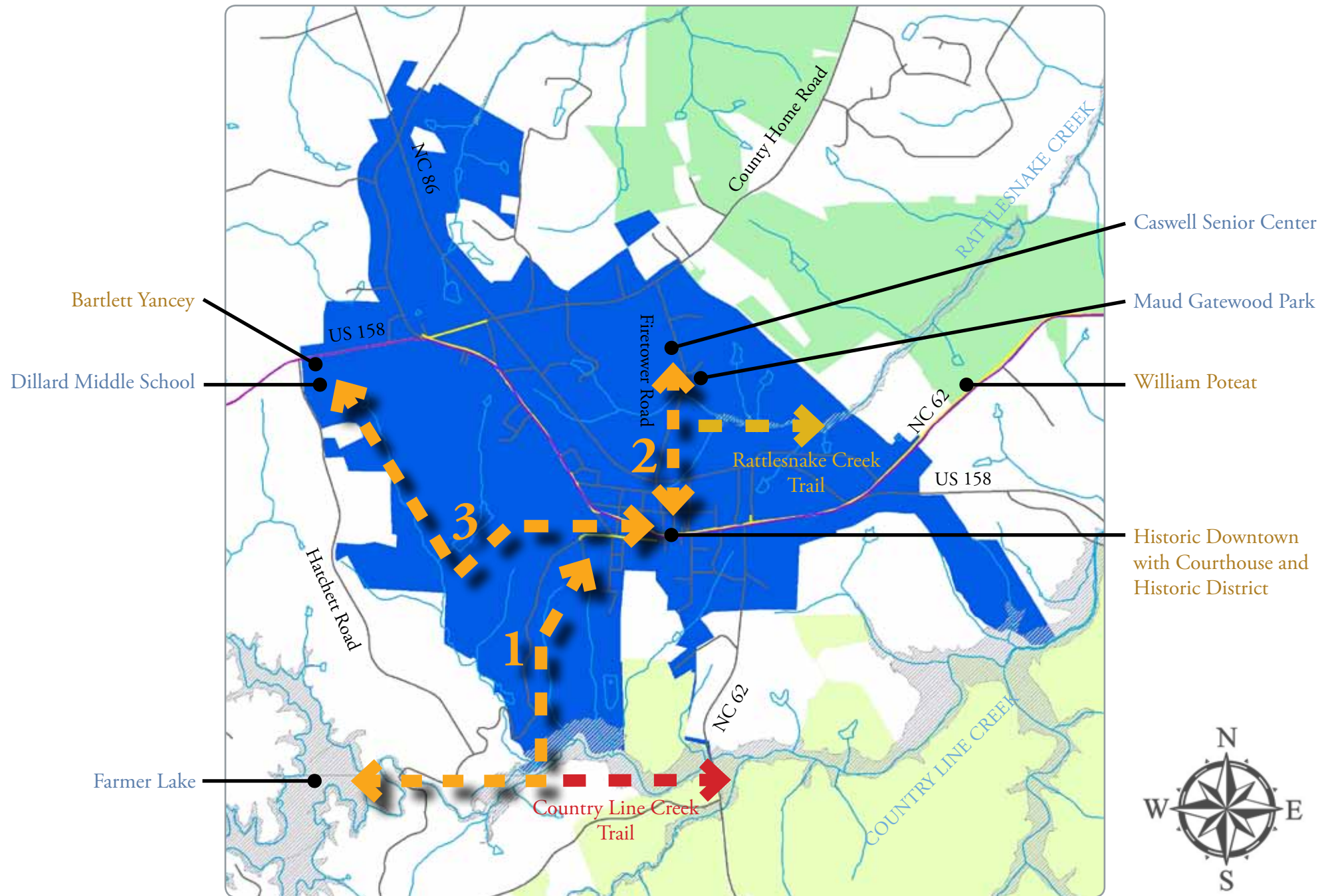
Farmland Preservation Site



State Owned Lands



Municipality



2.9 MILTON TOWN TRAILS

The Town of Milton boasts many marvelous features, including the shop and home of Thomas Day, historic commercial row, Cedar’s Cemetery and the Dan River. Additionally, there is a wealth of architecture to behold.

Milton will host two significant trails, referred to as “keystone” trails:

- The Dan River Trail
- The Country Line Creek Trail

Both of these trails link to statewide trail efforts, promoting vast tourism through Milton.

Along with the historic commercial row, antique shops and eateries, Milton’s walking tour features 28 locations along its historic streets.

East of Milton is to be the connection with the Country Line Creek Trail, which traverses Caswell County and part of Rockingham County to link with North Carolina’s Mountains-to-Sea Trail.

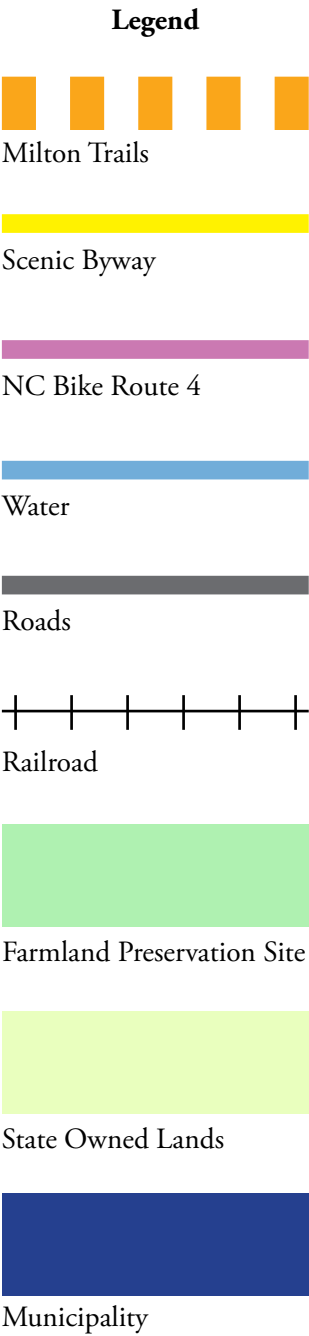
West of Milton is to be the connection with the Dan River Trail, which ultimately links with Danville farther west.

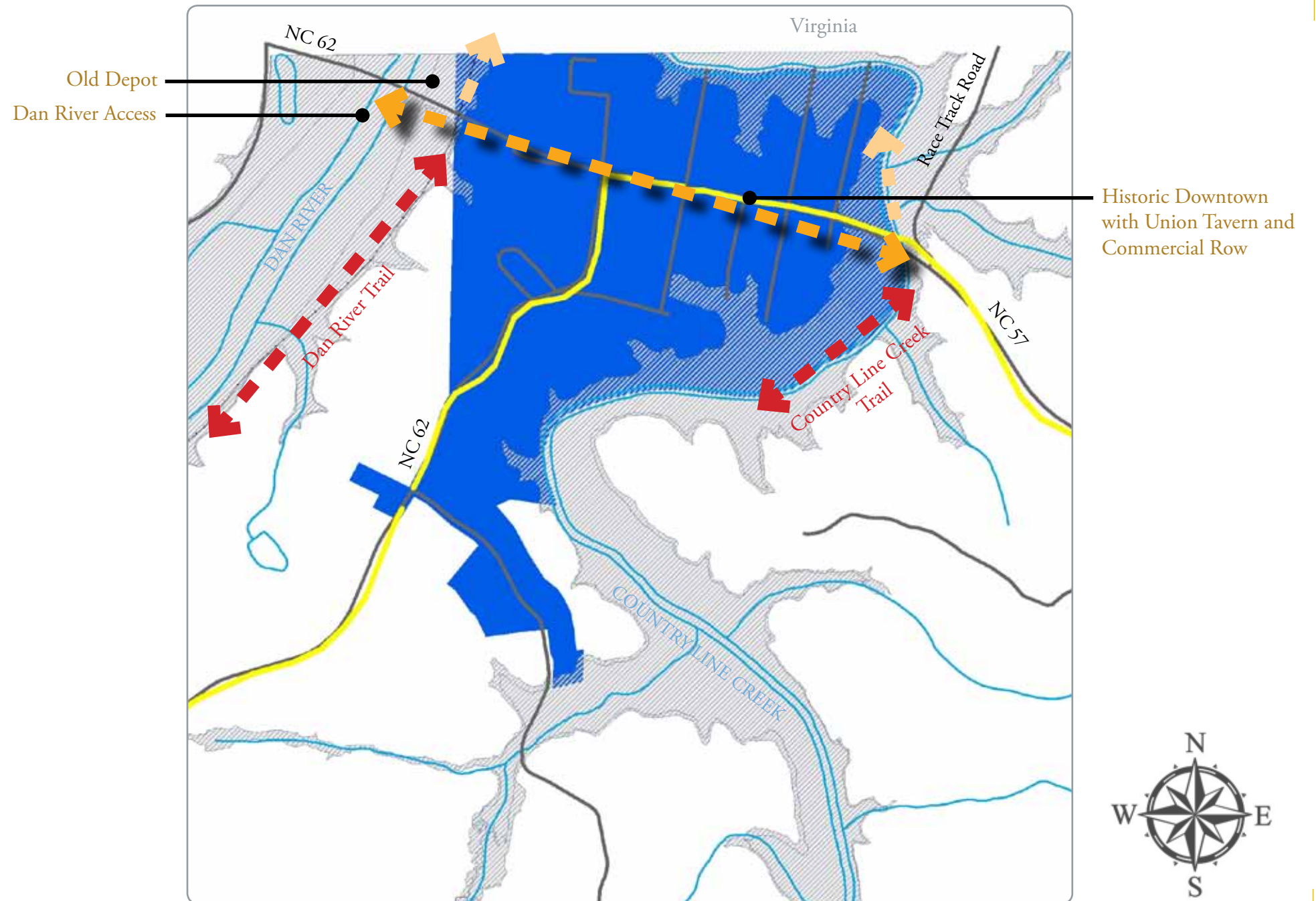
The Virginia state line is just north of Milton. With cooperation with Virginia property owners, the Dan River Trail should proceed north to link with the Virginia International Raceway. The Country Line Creek Trail could also extend northward and meet with the Dan River Trail just north of Milton. Beyond VIR, this trail will link with Virginia’s Beaches to Bluegrass Trail.

These are regionally significant trails. Milton will become a significant trailhead by hosting both trails, which will promote tourism and aid the businesses in Milton.

The primary local trail for Milton will be a link between the Dan River Trail and the Country Line Creek Trail (orange arrow with dashes on map) along Main Street (NC 57), occurring on either side of NC 57 and possibly switching sides. The purpose is to bring people through Milton between the two trails and the Dan River access, perhaps via sidewalk.

A local loop trail following Country Line Creek to tie in with the Dan River Trail is highly recommended (see faded orange arrows). This connection would occur in Virginia.





2.10 CASWELL COUNTY
HERITAGE STATE PARK

Caswell County has abundant beauty with its rolling hills, active farmland, thick forests and antebellum architecture. Several flowing streams feed the Dan River along the Virginia border. History, culture and nature exist in harmony in this landscape.

While there are thousands of acres of NC Game Lands, there is a need for a singular location to celebrate the heritage of Caswell County and recreate freely, other than on private lands.

Therefore, a Caswell County Heritage State Park is proposed.

Located central to the three historic towns of Yanceyville, Milton and Leasburg, the proposed Caswell County Heritage State Park would utilize state-owned land (currently active Game Lands) north of Stephentown Road and south of Long’s Mill Road. This would constitute over 1,300 acres of land dedicated exclusively to family-oriented recreation and camping.

It is important to note that there is land north of Country Line Creek and south of Long’s Mill Road that is under private ownership.

A portion of the state-owned land, in its northwest corner, abuts Country Line Creek and the proposed Country Line Creek Trail. Country Line Creek is identified as having a Significant Natural Heritage Area between Yanceyville and Milton.

The Caswell County Heritage State Park could also begin on the south side of Stephentown Road on state-owned land. This southern portion is adjacent to land of historic value and abuts Reedy Fork Creek. If utilized, the park

on the south side of Stephentown Road could begin with a ranger station, exhibits and an amphitheater. The north side could be used exclusively for trails, shelters, cabins, camp sites and a nature preserve.

One such exhibit could include a Heritage Tobacco Barn Village and Museum. This concept has been proposed for various locations in the county. In the birthplace of Bright Leaf Tobacco, this could be a wonderful opportunity to draw visitors to Caswell County, Yanceyville and Milton, especially during the annual Bright Leaf Hoedown.

A key consideration of the selection of this piece of land is that it is removed from additional NC Game Lands, thereby escalating safety for users. It is also mostly owned exclusively by the state of North Carolina, minimizing any need for the purchase of property. There is also significance in that this location is centered among the three historic towns of Caswell County.

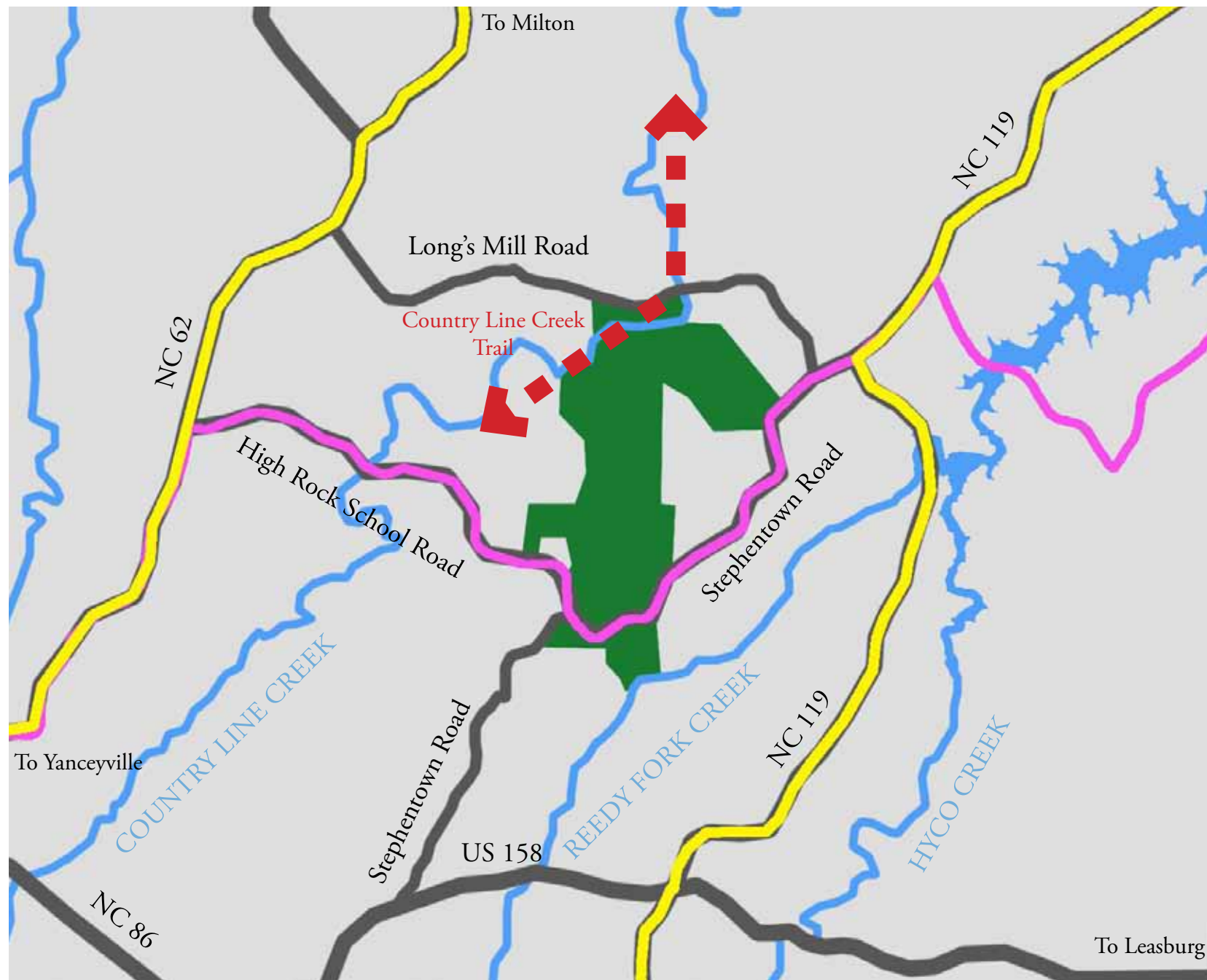
By also having a Significant Natural Heritage Area along Country Line Creek and the Country Line Creek trail, this central location boasts a cornucopia of Caswell County’s cultural and natural landscape.

CASWELL COUNTY
HERITAGE STATE PARK







Location: Central to the three historic towns of Yanceyville, Milton and Leasburg; north of Stephentown Road and south of Long’s Mill Road

Acreage: +/- 1,300 acres

Purpose: There is a need for a singular location removed from NC Game Lands to celebrate the heritage of Caswell County and recreate freely, other than on private lands



Legend:

-  Proposed State Park
-  Scenic Byway
-  NC Bike Route 4
-  Water
-  Roads
-  Railroad



2.11 COMPOSITE MAP

The following Heritage Trails Master Plan Composite Map illustrates each sub-basin initiative by its type. The classifications of trails are:

- Keystone trails
- Gold Leaf trails
- Green Leaf trails

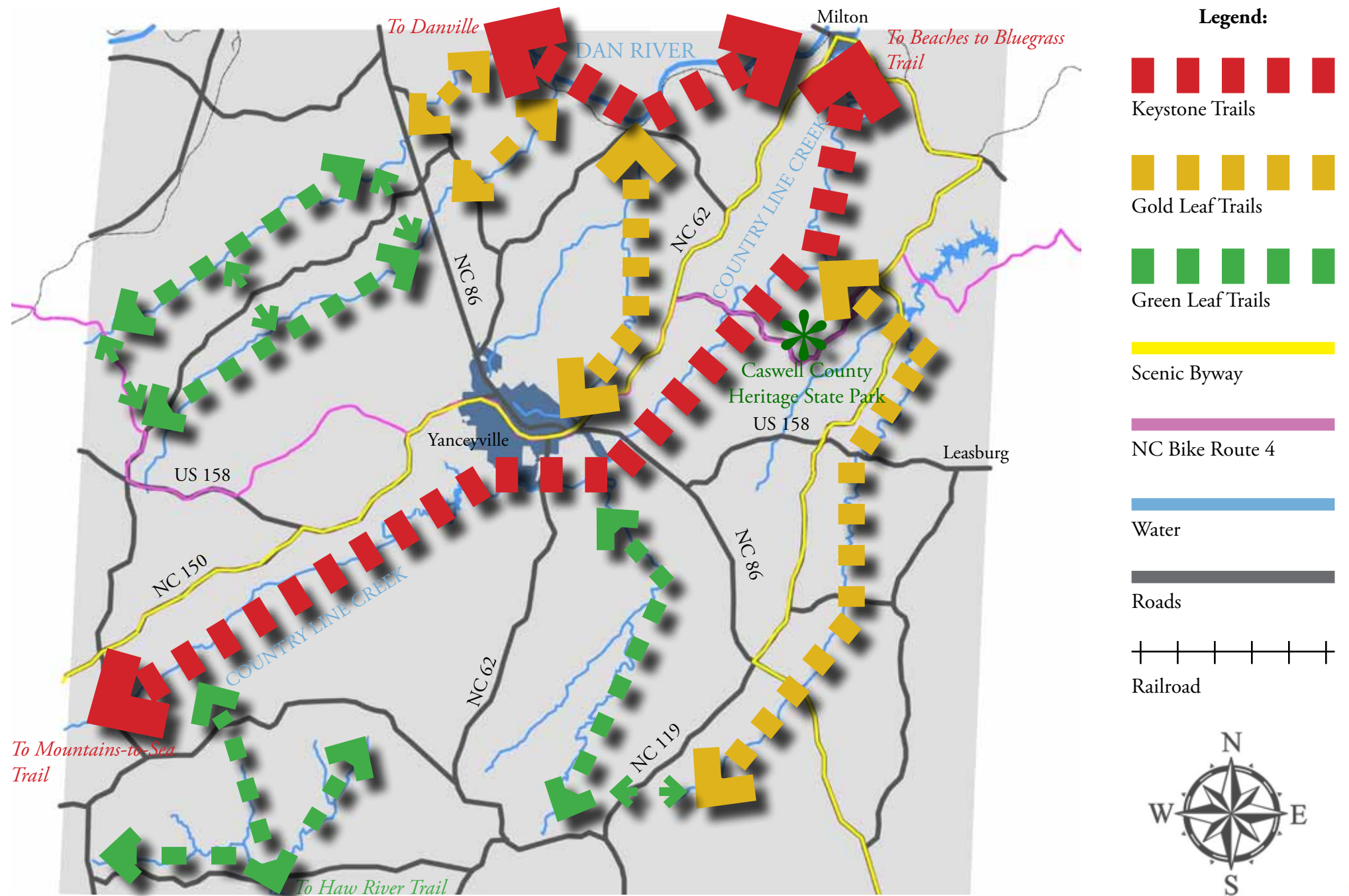
Keystone trails are essential to providing tourism-based economic growth in Caswell County. They connect to state-wide trail efforts in both North Carolina and Virginia. The reference to a “keystone” underscores their value, validity and vitality.

Gold Leaf trails are locally significant and will also serve as a destination within the region due to their heritage links. The “gold leaf” designation for a trail system reinforces its significant to Caswell County and pays homage to the golden “bright leaf” tobacco color.

Green Leaf trails are locally significant and will be an attraction on their own, but do not link to any identified historic or cultural sites (per this master plan process). The “green leaf” classification does not suggest that these trails are any less important. They just do not connect to historic sites or routes.

The location for the Caswell County Heritage State Park is also illustrated.





2.12 ADDITIONAL TRAIL AND TRAIL RELATED OPPORTUNITIES

Beyond the Heritage Trails, there are other trail options to be explored within and through Caswell County. These include driving tours as well as more local nature trail opportunities.

The county will want to pursue all of these! Someone researching furniture may not know about the Race to the Dan, and vice versa. With more overlap of trails, trail types and themes, then there is a greater likelihood of additional tourism due to the diversity of experiences offered.

DRIVING TOURS

Caswell County already has a driving tour for sites within the county. More regional driving tours will provide exposure for Caswell County. Coupled with more heritage trails and amenities as they come on-line, this can create a wealth of tourism opportunities.

Examples of additional driving tours include:

- Nathanael Greene’s “Race to the Dan” route from Guilford Courthouse in Greensboro, NC to South Boston, VA
- A “Furniture Trail” linking Milton/Thomas Day to High Point, NC
- A large scale “Racing Circuit” driving tour linking Virginia International Raceway (Milton), Martinsville, Mooresville/Charlotte and Rockingham (complete loop back to VIR)
- Know-Your-Farm or Farm-to-Plate theme tours

BIKE ROUTES

Caswell County should sign local bike routes, establish dedicated links to bike routes in surrounding counties, such as Alamance and Rockingham, and promote bike rides and races in Caswell County,

GREENWAYS AND TRAILS

The trails listed below were promoted during the Heritage Trails Planning Workshops. However, due to the site-specific nature of some of these trails, they are not indicated on the trails of the master plan maps. These trails should only be promoted with property owner participation and consent to public access either in full or requiring scheduled visits.

These include:

- Washington’s Southern Tour route
- Stephentown Stagecoach Trail
- A trail from Milton to Virginia International Raceway (VIR)
- Trails on historic properties such as Calvin Graves Plantation

These historic site trails are significant as they add to the experience of the visitor when these properties are opened up to the public. They add the natural element to the historic and cultural significance of the site.

BLUEWAYS

“Blueways” are water-based trails for canoe and kayak enthusiasts and anglers. A regional Dan River Trail, linking Danbury, NC to South Boston, VA will be a major draw in the region.

The County should work with NCDOT to sign all creeks at bridges so that creek names can become a part of the daily vocabulary in the county.

GATEWAY ZONES AND ELEMENTS

A Gateway Zone is an area of threshold, such as a county line or town limit. These zones are usually related to on-road experiences, such as driving tours and biking routes.

The gateway can be marked with landscaping and/or a sign, as is the case along roads leading into the county. The gateway zone can include adjacent fields, forests, and other attributes that flaunt the county’s amenities and character.

As part of a driving tour or bike ride, upon a first visit to Caswell County, the tone of the experience and visit can be set right at the county line and/or town limits.

If a rural tour has been promoted, then arrival into the county should support those expectations. This is due to the fact that there is an emotional response to the gateway over and above the mere sign. This is the first “welcome” to visitors on bike or in car. And it is a “welcome home” to those that have travelled.

Caswell County, for the most part, has very rural gateway zones and their preservation is encouraged.

Milton and Yanceyville each have Gateway Elements - monumental signs - supplemented with landscaping announcing arrival to their town limits.

Yanceyville appears to have sufficient right-of-way to add roundabouts on NC 86 on each end of the town, signalling arrival.

2.13 ADDITIONAL TRAIL RELATED VENTURES

Trails can create various alternative business opportunities. This has proven true in both rural and urban environments. Many of the county’s first public trails have recently been built and many more trails are planned and are under development.

With the loss of the textile industry and the decline of tobacco farming in the county, Caswell County should consider alternative businesses that will enable the area to retain its beauty and rural way of life while appealing to the “stay-cationer.”

Therefore, many trail-related business ventures may be considered as viable future enterprises in Caswell County, including but not limited to:

- Bicycle sales/rental and repair shops
- River Outfitters
- Cabins and camp ground sites
- Bed and breakfast

Other recreational ventures to be considered include:

- Geocaching
- Zip-line tours
- Disc golf courses

Ecotourism also creates jobs in food service, accommodation, transportation and other industries.

ARTIST OVERLOOK

At almost any point of the year, there are places in Caswell County that are spectacular to view. Blooms in an orchard or the geometry of freshly plowed land in the spring. Cows grazing near an old home place on a hazy summer morning. Autumn harvests and the splendor of fall colors in the background. Red barns standing out amongst veils of white snow over the landscape in the winter.

Such scenes are places where photographers, writers and artists love to visit and spend time.

Developed for public use, the creation of a series of “artist overlook” sites would feature various locations and/or viewsheds throughout the county for use by photographers, painters and other artists.

Just like a trail, an easement or another type of use agreement would need to be made with a property owner to allow for the facility.

Any ornamentation of the artist overlook facility should be rustic in appearance. These overlooks are to be separated pull-off areas, not just on the shoulder of the road, with room for two to three parking spaces and areas for painters and artists to set up tripods, easels and other related equipment.

Works from artists could be used for yearly competitions and exhibits, calendars, or other heritage promoting paraphernalia.

A pilot project for an artist overlook may include the area around the intersection of Ashland Road and Bethlehem Church Road. This site features the old store and tree image found on the cover of this Heritage Trails Master Plan.





3 TRAIL AGREEMENTS, GUIDELINES AND FACILITIES

There are numerous ways in which a trail becomes a reality and amenity in the natural environment. From the agreement with the property owner to allow for the trail to the final alignment and aesthetic details, discussions and many decisions have to be made.

From the property owner perspective, any trail should not compromise, to any extent agreed upon, current property use. The trail should also not cause concern of liability for the property owner.

From the trail user standpoint, the trail needs to be safe. It needs to be clearly marked and delineated. This is advantageous to the property owner as well. It also needs to be a complete and pleasurable experience.

And for all interested parties, the trail needs to be routed and located in such a way as to minimize constant maintenance and up-keep, other than regularly scheduled pruning and occasional repair from use.

The complete Heritage Trails System will involve many components.

In order to establish a functional, efficient, and usable Heritage Trails system in Caswell County, a network of trail facilities is needed linking off-road paths, trails and greenways with on-road bicycle routes, along shoulders and in bike lanes. This also includes sidewalks and crosswalks. As part of this effort, several key variables for Heritage Trail users need consideration, including:

- Trail safety, including design and signage
- Connectivity of routes and facilities
- Directness of routes
- Attractiveness of routes and facilities
- Comfort for all types of trail users

Trails and Greenways: Trails and Greenways are off-road rail-trails, multi-purpose paths, and grade-separated treatments that are separate from a roadway. Trails and greenways include rail-trail conversions, multi-purpose paths adjacent to or parallel to roadways, and greenways along stream corridors or other natural features.

On-Road Bikeways: The On-Road Bikeway System facilitates travel connections for bicyclists, including movement between destinations. An extensive on-road system of bikeways provides interconnections to major destinations and to trail systems.

Sidewalks: Consideration should be given to selective modification of existing roadways to include sidewalks. Consideration is also needed to ensure that new local, collector, and arterial roads are designed to include pedestrian facilities. This includes providing connections between dead end streets and cul-de-sacs to the road network.

CHAPTER 3

3.1 Easements

3.2 Memorandum of Understanding

3.3 Liability

3.4 Trail Route Planning and Design Guidelines

3.5 Trail Development Guidelines

3.6 Trail Use Guidelines

3.7 Trail Facilities

3.8 Maintenance

Safe Crossings: Crosswalks and other pedestrian infrastructure will be particularly important in towns, villages, and corridors where many destinations exist in close proximity.

A network of on-road and off-road trail facilities will enhance the quality of life in this rural landscape. A range of facility types will permit trail users of all types to travel safely and comfortably throughout the county and other trails in the region.

The following chapter features a sampling of common practices related to trail agreements as well as design and use guidelines.

3.1 EASEMENTS

To understand exactly what an easement is, it is best to define what is meant by “ownership” of a piece of property. This may best be described as a “bundle of rights,” which includes the right to occupy, use, lease, sell, and develop the land. An easement thus involves the exchange of one or more of these rights from the landowner to someone who does not own the land. An easement permits the holder certain rights regarding the land for specified purposes while the ownership of the land remains with the private property owner.

An easement is either voluntarily sold or donated by the landowner and constitutes a legally binding agreement that prohibits certain types of development or activities from taking place on the land while protecting its underlying conservation value. Easements are drawn up as permanent deeds and are recorded with the county Register of Deeds. Easements correlate with the title of the land in perpetuity or for a specified period of time so that present and future owners of the land will be required to respect the terms of the easement.

Typically, the landowner conveys the easement to a qualified organization such as a local land trust, local government agency, or other non-profit organization designed to hold it as a long-term stewardship responsibility and guarantee that the terms of the easement will be respected. (An example of such an organization is the Piedmont Land Conservancy.) The landowner retains ownership of the property, with the rights to sell the land or pass it along to his or her heirs. The terms of any easement transfer intact to new ownership. Whether the easement holder is a public or non-profit organization, the holder has the responsibility to enforce and abide by and adhere to the requirements stipulated in the easement.

TRAIL EASEMENTS

Trail easements are legally enforceable agreements between a landowner and a trail organization or local or state agency through which the owner of land promises to preserve a linear corridor in its natural state and keep it substantially free of future development. This action is often referred to as “removing the development rights” from a given piece of land, or in the case of trail easements from a specific linear corridor that travels across a piece of land.

For trail purposes, such an agreement should include language stipulating public access for trail use. Such a restriction constitutes an “interest in land” that runs with the land and is binding on future owners. The trail corridor remains the property of the owner and can be sold or disposed of, but the trail easement is in perpetuity.

This agreement to preserve identified land and allow public access along the trail can be donated or sold for its appraised value to a trail group, town, county or public agency. Donations of land or development rights are usually tax deductible, with the amount of the deduction depending on the individual circumstances of the owner.

A trail access easement is much like a right-of-way. Trail easements usually consist of a linear corridor 12 to 20 feet wide, though abandoned paths, routes and rail lines may be substantially wider. The actual trail is cleared of brush and is usually just 4 to 8 feet wide, depending on terrain and users. It is good to have a wider corridor beyond the trail “tread” so that a buffer exists between trail users and other uses of the land and to ensure the safety and quality of the trail experience. The easement assures connectivity for the trail from one side of the property to the other as it passes onto neighboring properties.

Easements usually contain a provision for the relocation of the trail, either permanently or temporarily, at the landowner’s request. In this case, responsible agencies will work with the landowner to relocate in a way that maintains connectivity and accommodates both a quality trail experience and the land-management needs.

Trail easements are the best tool for permanent trail protection, short of outright acquisition of the property by a non-profit or government agency. They are permanent and appear on the title of the property.

PERMANENT CONSERVATION EASEMENTS

One method of open space conservation is for land to be purchased for public recreation and preservation by federal or state agencies, such as the U.S. Park Service or Forest Service. However, this possibility applies only to a small proportion of land in America, and other important ecological or scenic land can best be protected by being placed under “permanent conservation easements” by the property owner, most likely in collaboration with a local land trust.

If an easement is granted in perpetuity as a charitable gift, some federal income and estate tax advantages usually accrue. These tax savings may be substantial, and are often cited as a major factor in landowners’ decisions to donate easements. The 1997 federal tax law specifies estate easement donation options for farms within 25 miles of a metropolitan area; however, the Economic Growth and Tax Relief Reconciliation Act of 2001 expanded an estate tax incentive for landowners to grant conservation easements by removing the geographic eligibility requirements. Property tax benefits are determined by the locality and the state and may vary. The easement may also lower or eliminate federal estate taxes and state inheritance taxes after the death of a landowner.

Federal regulations regarding tax benefits from conservation easements require that conservation values be associated with the donation. The four values are:

- Wildlife habitat
- Open space
- Scenic easements
- Agriculture

Easements donated for tax deductions must also fall within five categories outlined by the Internal Revenue Code:

- Public Recreation and/or Education
- Significant Natural Habitat
- Open Space for Scenic Enjoyment
- Open Space pursuant to local governmental policy (may include farmland and forest land)
- Historic Preservation

Information in this section is adapted from the Mountain Landscapes Initiative: Region A Toolbox produced by The Lawrence Group - Architects and Town Planners

DAN RIVER BASIN ASSOCIATION POSITION ON EMINENT DOMAIN

The following is the Dan River Basin Association’s position statement regarding eminent domain:

- The Dan River Basin Association is a private non-profit entity that has no governmental power, such as eminent domain.
- Any decision to exercise eminent domain is at the discretion of the community’s governing body. It is very seldom utilized for trails.
- While the decision to exercise eminent domain is not within the DRBA’s purview, our organization does not support its use for creating trails and greenways.
- Some local governments choose to adopt trail plans with language indicating that they will not utilize eminent domain in the development of their trails.
- The trails built by DRBA are to be planned, built and used by the communities. Community participation is voluntary and planning is collaborative and based on citizen input.
- A basin-wide trail system is a long-term project that will continue as opportunities for implementation of trail segments arise over time.

LAND TRUSTS

Land trusts are local, regional, statewide or national organizations that are established to protect land and its resources. They may also be referred to as conservancies, foundations, or associations. Their main purpose is to protect land that has natural, recreational, scenic, historic, or productive value. They are the fastest growing arm of the conservation movement today, with approximately 1,200 established and 50 new ones being formed every year in the United States.

Land trusts are different from other conservation or preservation organizations by means of their direct involvement in land transactions. They initiate, implement, and monitor land protection devices for individual pieces of property or for larger land areas, depending on the trust’s specific goals. Sometimes their land protection efforts are combined with other conservation organizations, but their major objective is the preservation of the land itself so that it may continue to be a resource for future generations. Land trusts often are formed to protect particular land related resources: forests, farmland, open space, wetlands, or historic districts.

Land trusts protect land through several tools, including conservation easements, acquisition of land through direct purchase or bargain sale, land donation, life estate plans, and limited development strategies. Some land trusts own land outright and are responsible for its preservation and management while others own no land, but are primarily involved in monitoring easement restrictions. Land trusts also provide technical assistance to landowners deliberating on land preservation options as well as planning and educational services for local communities and the general public.

A land trust is usually organized as a private, non-profit, incorporated organization. This enables the land trust to hold titles to real estate and to accept charitable donations. The private, non-profit land trust has the advantages of prompt response time, fewer regulatory/statutory restraints, confidentiality, a tax exempt status, and professional stewardship services. In some states, including North Carolina, public agencies can perform a similar function as private land trusts. The advantages of the public agency include less time and paperwork to get the organization started and a greater likelihood that it will continue to exist to serve its function in perpetuity.

Sometimes publicly supported land preservation programs require that both a private, non-profit land trust and a public local or state agency hold conservation easements to provide maximum protection for preservation strategies.

Land trusts are usually started by a group of citizens in a community where an interest in the preservation of land has emerged as an issue with local significance. Technical help is available from several national land conservation organizations including: the Land Trust Alliance, the Nature Conservancy, American Farmland Trust, and the Trust for Public Land.

This information on Land Trusts is adapted from Ohio State University’s “Extension Fact Sheet /Land Trusts,” CDFS 1262-98, Land Use Series, by Peggy Schear and Thomas W. Blaine, available at ohioline.osu.edu/cd-fact/1262.html

LAND TRUST RESOURCES

Conservation Trust for North Carolina:
www.ctnc.org

Piedmont Land Conservancy:
www.piedmontland.org/

The Nature Conservancy:
www.tnc.org

American Farmland Trust:
www.farmland.org

Land Trust Alliance:
www.lta.org

Trust for Public Land:
www.tpl.org

3.2 MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is a document describing a bilateral or multilateral agreement between parties. It expresses a convergence of will between the parties, indicating an intended common line of action. It is often used in cases where parties either do not imply a legal commitment or in situations where the parties cannot create a legally enforceable agreement.

It is a more formal alternative to a “gentlemen’s agreement.”

An MOU can be employed where a property owner does not wish to record an easement but will allow for the trail anyway. The MOU will constitute a “hand shake” of understanding between any entity constructing and maintaining the trail, trail users and the property owner.

The MOU should state that the trails are open to the public for educational and recreational purposes and that the property owner is relieved of liability in such case. However, it should require a property owner allowing hunting to post notice of such conflict or danger. It should also specify who is responsible for maintenance. Lastly, it should list the purpose for the trail.

Many agreements can be added into the Memorandum of Understanding, but the document itself is not a legally binding document. To satisfy agencies that provide funds to build trails, either easements or MOUs with property owners are typically required.

See more on NC State Statute Chapter 38A in Section 3.3: Liability.

Memorandum of Understanding in Support of the Development of “NAME OF TRAIL”
In PLACE, Caswell County, NC

WHEREAS, property owners including and in between END POINT A to END POINT B in LOCATION, CASWELL COUNTY, NC have agreed to allow for development of a nature trail to be referred to as “NAME OF TRAIL” (“Trail”), and

WHEREAS, access to the Trail is in keeping with Landowner Liability provision as found in NC State Statute Chapter 38A which states landowners shall not be liable so long as the Trail shall be available to the public (dawn ‘til dusk) at no cost for educational and recreational purposes, and

WHEREAS, creation of the Trail does not limit current landowner property use rights, including sale of land, but does require notification and advertisement or warning of any hunting dangers or conflicts, and

WHEREAS, easements for the Trail are not required to be recorded, and

WHEREAS, development, maintenance and upkeep of the Trail, including any structures, are not the responsibility of landowners, and

WHEREAS, provision of the Trail may promote physical and economic health,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that in the interest of increasing both the physical and economic health potential of Caswell County and TOWN OR TOWNSHIP, NC

_____ does hereby express support for development of “NAME OF TRAIL”.

In witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Memorandum of Understanding Template - to be used as a guide for drafting MOUs for trail development in Caswell County

3.3 LIABILITY

Liability related to trails is covered in North Carolina General Statutes Chapter 38A. Section 38A-4 is specific to liability, but the entire Chapter is presented here:

§ 38A-1. Purpose.

The purpose of this Chapter is to encourage owners of land to make land and water areas available to the public at no cost for educational and recreational purposes by limiting the liability of the owner to persons entering the land for those purposes. (1995, c. 308, s. 1.)

§ 38A-2. Definitions.

The following definitions shall apply throughout this Chapter, unless otherwise specified:

- “Charge” means a price or fee asked for services, entertainment, recreation performed, or products offered for sale on land or in return for an invitation or permission to enter upon land, except as otherwise excluded in this Chapter.
- “Educational purpose” means any activity undertaken as part of a formal or informal educational program, and viewing historical, natural, archaeological, or scientific sites.
- “Land” means real property, land, and water, but does not mean a dwelling and the property immediately adjacent to and surrounding such dwelling that is generally used for activities associated with occupancy of the dwelling as a living space.
- “Owner” means any individual or nongovernmental legal entity that has any fee, leasehold interest, or legal possession, and any employee or agent of such individual or nongovernmental legal entity.
- “Recreational purpose” means any activity undertaken for recreation, exercise, education, relaxation, refreshment, diversion, or pleasure. (1995, c. 308, s. 1.)

§ 38A-3. Exclusions.

For purposes of this Chapter, the term “charge” does not include:

- Any contribution in kind, services or cash contributed by a person, legal entity, nonprofit organization, or governmental entity other than the owner, whether or not sanctioned or solicited by the owner, the purpose of which is to (i) remedy damage to land caused by educational or recreational use; or (ii) provide warning of hazards on, or remove hazards from, land used for educational or recreational purposes.
- Unless otherwise agreed in writing or otherwise provided by the State or federal tax codes, any property tax abatement or relief received by the owner from the State or local taxing authority in exchange for the owner’s agreement to open the land for educational or recreational purposes. (1995, c. 308, s. 1.)

§ 38A-4. Limitation of liability.

Except as specifically recognized by or provided for in this Chapter, an owner of land who either directly or indirectly invites or permits without charge any person to use such land for educational or recreational purposes owes the person the same duty of care that he owes a trespasser, except nothing in this Chapter shall be construed to limit or nullify the doctrine of attractive nuisance and the owner shall inform direct invitees of artificial or unusual hazards of which the owner has actual knowledge.

This section does not apply to an owner who invites or permits any person to use land for a purpose for which the land is regularly used and for which a price or fee is usually charged even if it is not charged in that instance, or to an owner whose purpose in extending an invitation or granting permission is to promote a commercial enterprise. (1995, c. 308, s. 1.)

NOTES

Trails adjacent to or near a potential conflict of interest, such as between hunters and trail users, should have highly visible posted information that hunting occurs on adjacent properties to remind people not to trespass. Signage at trail heads and educational materials, along with a clearly marked corridor, can ensure any such conflicts or accidents do not occur. There may also be the posting of signs along the trail easement periphery at regular distances.

Property owners will also need to post signs on their property establishing a safety zone between the trail and the active hunting land.

It is encouraged that property owners and the trail implementing entity work closely together in marking the corridor and safety zones.



Signage warning hunters to avoid hunting near a trail

3.4 TRAIL ROUTE PLANNING AND DESIGN GUIDELINES

The Heritage Trails Master Plan was conceptualized by taking citizen input and mapping it with known historical, cultural and natural assets of the community. While certain conversations during the Master Plan process required studying parcel specific opportunities and constraints, the Master Plan itself does not recognize property lines. As a conceptual plan, its purpose is to propose the vision of a green infrastructure with links within the cultural landscape.

However, it must be recognized that the conceptual ideas in the Master Plan can have a real effect on a property and on a property owner. This is particularly true in an environment where generations have walked the same fields and there is deep emotional attachment to the land.

Therefore, certain guidelines are offered as a way to best route and design a trail at a more precise level.

These are only guidelines, but subscribing to them as completely as possible can provide the best sustainable trail experience with the least amount of maintenance for a community.

Planning guidelines encourage routing trails across public land, rights-of-way or easements acquired from willing landowners. Existing easements, such as sewer and gas easements, would require a land owner to update said easement to allow for a trail, but this may be an excellent alternative route option for several trail sections. Some easements may end up as the permanent route. This decision will need to be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

PROCESS

First and foremost, a trail route must adequately take measures to protect major ecological systems including but not limited to legacy forests, surface water bodies, riparian corridors, viewsheds, historic landscapes, prime agricultural land and endangered species habitats. It is also necessary to identify those areas where human trespass is permissible and where it should be minimized. This will require “boots on the ground” planning in cooperation with property owners for every section of Heritage Trails.

Protecting flora and fauna that are significant contributors to the region’s natural beauty - the area’s primary potential economic resource - is fundamental as a foundation of the county’s cultural landscape.

A simple and consistent process for “on the ground” trail route planning will yield informed decisions. In the end, all trail routes should be walked, with property owner participation and/or permission, to verify any decisions based on maps and to capitalize on “in the field” attributes such as significant trees, rock outcroppings and other natural features.

The Mapping Process:

- Identify endpoints of trail or any phase of a trail.
- Determine if endpoints need to be on same side of any river, lake, creek or other heritage area. This will help inform any decisions on crossings. It should be remembered that crossings also equal additional costs!
- The Trail route corridor should then follow any Flood Plain Fringe.
- Then work with the property lines/owners for best workable options and feasibility.

Whenever possible, trails should be located along or uphill from the edge of the floodway fringe. Advantages to following the floodway fringe:

- Ensures longevity of trail (any surface) by avoiding damages during extraordinary flood events
- Allows property owners an easy access to observe flood events and monitor conditions and land
- In extreme flood events, it creates a zone where sand bagging can occur through easy transport and staging (needed if near homes, not along whole corridor)

Beginning with the floodway fringe route, work to find best final route options while working with what is best for the property owner.

Bridges are logical places for trail heads. It is here that a trail along a stream or floodway meets the on-road bike and driving corridors. Rights-of-way along road shoulders will be employed as an alternate to routing along creeks, streams and rivers. On-road routes and connectors may be utilized to link to other trails or may help provide short-term linkages in an incomplete trail system.

If a trail can extend only a partial distance between bridges, getting permission to route a trail along a property line to connect with the public right-of-way is a suitable, though less preferred, alternative. Other options include creek crossings and extending the trail along the other side of the creek with property owner permission. Bridges add cost, though, and therefore a trail should be value-engineered to determine costs and feasibility.

3.5 TRAIL DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES

The Heritage Trails Master Plan describes the establishment of a safe, two-way, non-motorized trail with secure trailheads. Trail visibility and safe travel clearances for all trail users should dictate trail design.

There are three goals to strive for when designing and building trails:

- Limit environmental impacts
- Ensure a trail will have minimal maintenance, other than routine upkeep or occasional rerouting
- Provide a pleasurable and memorable experience for the user, including avoiding user conflicts

Creating the pleasurable experience is more than providing the story at a historic or cultural site; it involves the space between destinations. In an expansive system, the trail can become the destination itself with the other amenities being “bonus” opportunities to socialize, learn and contribute to enjoyment.

Creating the “experience” of the trail requires an intimate knowledge of the natural and cultural landscape of the corridor and necessitates maximizing opportunities to route the trail along unique features, or “control points”, such as:

- Rock outcroppings
- Legacy trees or forests
- Scenic vistas and viewsheds

Where new trails are planned, it is important to harmonize their appearance with the environmental, ecological and visual attributes of the landscape.

CRITICAL TRAIL BUILDING TIPS

- Avoid the Fall Line: Fall-line trails usually follow the shortest route down a hill, the same path that water flows. The problem with fall-line trails is that they channel water down their length. The speeding water strips the trail of soil, exposing roots, creating gullies, and scarring the environment.
- Avoid Flat Areas: Flat terrain lures many trailbuilders with the initial ease of trail construction. However, if a trail is not located on a slope, there is the potential for the trail to become a collection basin for water. The trail tread must always be slightly higher than the ground on at least one side of it so that water can drain properly.

OTHER TIPS:

- Approach stream crossings at the least gradient possible
- Locate trails to avoid steep slopes and provide an adequate buffer between trails and bodies of water
- As much as possible, trails should have good visibility to reduce user conflicts

CONTOUR TRAIL

A contour trail is a path that gently traverses a hill or sideslope. It is characterized by a gentle grade, undulations called grade reversals, and a tread that usually tilts or outslopes slightly toward the outer edge. These features minimize tread erosion by allowing water to drain in a gentle, non-erosive manner called sheet flow. When water drains in thin, dispersed sheets, soil stays where it belongs: on the trail.

Contour Trail Tips:

- Do everything you can to keep the water off the tread, and users on it
- Build on the contour and use frequent grade reversals (“surf the hillside”)
- Follow the half-rule: A trail’s grade shouldn’t exceed half the grade of the sideslope
- Maximum grade should be 15 percent (except for natural or built rock structures)
- Average grade should stay under 10 percent (with grade reversals)
- Route trails to positive control points (viewpoints, water, other attractions)
- Use bench-cut construction, and excavate soil from the hillside
- For reroutes, reclaim old trail thoroughly: the visual corridor as well as the trail tread
- For highly technical trails where grade will sometimes exceed 15 percent, use natural rock, rock armoring or other rock features to add challenge and improve sustainability

Sources: Trail Solutions: IMBA’s Guide to Building Sweet Singletrack and Managing Mountain Biking and IMBA’s Guide to Providing Sweet Riding

3.6 TRAIL USE GUIDELINES

The trails of the master plan are planned to be off-road trails. They are intended to be utilized by all members of the community and visitors alike but are not planned or intended for “four-wheeler” or other “all terrain vehicle” (ATV) access. There are inherent conflicts of users of motor-based trail recreation with equestrians and other user groups on the same trail. It is not the intent of this plan to suggest that “four wheel” or ATV trails do not have a place in Caswell County, but they would be better accommodated at isolated sites which are not along or do not cross sensitive stream environments.

The trail systems are intended to be “braided” or shared by walkers, joggers, nature observers, hikers, mountain bikers and equestrians. Where possible, though, it is best to isolate equestrian trails. Opportunities for kayaking and canoeing are limited in Caswell County, other than the Dan River, but certain opportunities still do exist depending upon water levels.

This “multi-modal” approach prescribes a balance with many different user groups occupying the same trail in a manner that is both safe and efficient. It does require a hierarchy of use.

USER GUIDELINES FOR RECREATIONAL TRAIL

The following is a general list of common trail guidelines:

- Trail hours: Dawn to Dusk
- Be respectful of private property and do not trespass.
- No motorized vehicles allowed
- No firearms, and no hunting
- Use the right side of the trail unless otherwise designated.
- Pass on the left, and announce when passing.
- Ride/skate at a safe speed. Wear a helmet or headgear.
- Pets must be kept on a leash and must be controlled
- Remove all pet feces from the trail and dispose of properly.
- Vehicles always have right of way at road crossings.
- Always be aware of hazards on the trail. Branches, rocks, damaged pavement, gravel and debris can cause serious accidents.
- Be especially cautious when passing or overtaking children. Children may lack the experience and knowledge about recreational trail use and may move in an unpredictable manner. Always slow down when near children!

TRAIL COURTESY

Trail courtesy is as follows:

1. Everyone yields to horses
2. Bikers yield to hikers and walkers
3. Walkers yield to each other



Examples of Trail Courtesy Signs to be placed at Trailheads



3.7 TRAIL FACILITIES

As use and demand persist, it will be necessary to invest in facilities such as bathrooms, rest stops, shelters, and fountains for drinking water. The location of these facilities can be determined by the community and usually are developed as one of two types:

- Trailhead
- Wayside

Waysides and trailheads are great locations for historical, cultural and natural interpretation panels and are also appropriate locations for other types of information, such as a bulletin board of current community events and a map of the surrounding area, its businesses and the trail system.

They can be incorporated into larger sites of historical, cultural and natural significance or may stand alone.

Any facilities and/or trailheads built as part of the Heritage Trails Master Plan effort should fit in to the community in which they are located. As civic areas, they should be positive and desired amenities in the community and the landscape and should:

- Enhance compatibility with local architecture and landscape in facility design
- Utilize traditional materials and methods in facility design
- Use local/indigenous landscape and construction materials

Cottages, various barn types and “ole timey” general stores or storefronts are vernaculars that can work in scale and scope for Caswell County trailhead and wayside facilities.

Restroom facilities are encouraged to be composting toilets that are low maintenance and open year-round.

TRAILHEAD

Trailheads provide starting and ending points for use of the trail, and may be locations where motor vehicle and bicycle parking are provided.

There are usually two classifications of trailheads:

- Regional Trailhead
- Local Trailhead

REGIONAL TRAILHEAD

Regional trailheads should include vehicle parking, public restroom facilities, benches, seat walls, bicycle parking, informative exhibits and maps, water fountains, sanitation resources for pet owners and other features.

Regional trailhead locations are to be located:

- At a connection with the Mountains-to-Sea Trail and the Beaches to Bluegrass Trail
- In Yanceyville, at Farmer Lake and at Maud Gatewood Park
- In Milton
- At the Caswell County Heritage State Park

LOCAL TRAILHEAD

Local trailheads occur at intersections with roadways. They typically have a sign or gateway element indicating the presence of the trail and may include additional features such as benches or seat walls and informative exhibits and maps. Trail use rules are typically posted at each local trailhead. Parking is along road shoulder.

WAYSIDE

Waysides provide places to stop and rest along the way. Located between trailheads, waysides may stand alone or may link to larger sites of historical, cultural and natural significance. They can include the same amenities found at trailheads or may simply be a bench and covered area.



Examples of trailhead and wayside facilities



LIGHTING

One of the main attractions of living in rural areas is the absence of city lights. This is a major factor for the enjoyment of the night sky. As trails and trail related facilities such as regional trailheads are built on previously natural areas, the incidence of light pollution can become an important issue. Adequate lighting is essential for security and public safety, but the careful design, selection and placement of lighting fixtures can do a lot to minimize the spread of lighting into previously dark landscapes.

It is important to realize that “dark skies” does not mean dark ground. Rather it means adequate yet subtle lighting to illuminate public spaces for safety.

The appropriate selection of light fixtures and their correct placement in public spaces can do much to promote safety as well as a desirable ambience. The International Dark-Sky Association has produced a comprehensive Outdoor Lighting Code Handbook that contains much “best practice” advice.

Information in this section is adapted from the Mountain Landscapes Initiative: Region A Toolbox produced by The Lawrence Group - Architects and Town Planners

BIKE PARKING

Just as the provision of motor vehicle parking has been shown to induce driving, the provision of safe and convenient parking for bicycles can have the same effect on bicycling. Bicycle parking can be provided at a fraction of the cost of automobile parking and in a fraction of the space – 10 to 12 bicycles can be parked in the area of one car parking space at a cost of tens of dollars per bicycle space versus hundreds or thousands of dollars per motor vehicle space. Many avid cyclists state that their decision to travel particular routes relies on safe areas to park and lock bikes. Yanceyville, Milton and other regional trailheads or places to stop and visit could add and promote bicycle parking as a way to draw in additional visitors.

3.8 MAINTENANCE

The Heritage Trails were planned with citizen input. The resulting Heritage Trails Master Plan is collaborative and based upon community aspirations. Therefore, the trails are meant to be built and owned by the community until such time as a town, county or state agency assumes maintenance.

In most cases, “Friends” groups can be formed to assist with volunteer maintenance of the trail. The “Adopt-a-Trail” program and volunteers may also be utilized to assist in maintenance, repair and refuse removal.

TRASH REMOVAL

Trash cans, recycling containers and related paraphernalia should be located at each trailhead and wayside. At those locations, volunteers or staff will be responsible for monitoring and maintaining trash and litter control.

ADOPT-A-TRAIL

Adopt-a-Trail is an all-volunteer program that will give the public an opportunity to be actively involved in conserving and maintaining the natural wealth and beauty of the Heritage Trails system. Volunteers will assist Parks and Recreation or other Authority staff with the vital task of improving and maintaining the many trails throughout Caswell County.

Adopt-a-Trail grant opportunities are provided through the North Carolina Division of Parks and Recreation State Trails Program.



4 MARKETING AND WAYFINDING

4.1 MARKETING

The Heritage Trails of Caswell County will be an emerging trails system; therefore, there is the marketing opportunity to create “brand equity” in the trail system from the very beginning. While some view Caswell County as a “simple old farming community,” it has much more to provide. This is especially true for those that aren’t just driving through or driving home, but for those that wish to explore all that there is to see and do in the county.

There are several key destinations in the county, such as businesses (Yoder’s Market and Aunt Millie’s Pizza) and recreation sites (NC Game Lands, Dan River Access, Farmer Lake and Caswell Pines Golf Club). There’s also quite a bit of history and culture! Much of that storied past is still physically intact. And nature abounds in the rolling hillsides and deep forests. The Heritage Trails system will be the first attempt to marry and promote all these seemingly disparate Caswell County amenities under an umbrella of tourism via trails.

With homage to Caswell legacy, any marketing and branding strategy for the Heritage Trails must start with a community-wide promotion strategy rooted in the heritage of the community, which has been deeply tied to the land.

Coupling the promotion of Heritage Trails with farmer’s markets or farm-to-market/restaurant programs will make the marketing strategy even stronger.

As trails come online, they can be promoted by various types of on- and/or off-road races and benefit walks. Programs can be conducted at historic sites or along new nature trails and greenways. With most of the Heritage trails systems connecting culture, history and nature in their routes, all aspects of the community get promoted.

The primary goal is to market the county, its history, culture and nature to promote tourism. Local trails and programs should feature the physical benefits of trails.

The Heritage Trails Master Plan calls for several trail systems and recommends a State Park. Four of these facilities should be viewed as fundamental to make Caswell County a true destination for outdoor and recreation-based tourism. These are:

- The Dan River Trail
- The Country Line Creek Trail
- The Yanceyville Greenway
- A Caswell County Heritage State Park

Land and nature based tourism is one of the largest growing industries in the United States and Caswell County can market itself as a destination.

It is a landscape ripe for farming, which it has proven time and time again over the years. It has historical treasures strewn throughout the landscape. Life in Caswell County seems to slow down a bit, perhaps due to the rustic scenery. And it could provide a respite to millions living in cities just an hour or two away. A place to engage, learn and explore history, culture and nature. A place for “stay-cations” and day trips. A place

CHAPTER 8

4.1 Marketing

4.2 Wayfinding

grounded by its historical roots and pride in its sense of community. Where community stores are a farmer’s “facebook” network. A place that art and technology can call home. A place to live.

This is Caswell County.

The Trails of the Master Plan will draw even more people to visit Caswell County.

Through many different internet, media and print resources, the Heritage Trails can be marketed. Before going public, though, it is recommended that a brand be developed with a logo that can be used throughout the region that will quickly refer to and identify the Caswell County Heritage Trails.

Clothing such as shirts and hats and items such as reusable cloth shopping bags are great places to begin disseminating the Heritage Trails logo to the public.

LOGO

A key marketing opportunity in the beginning of developing the Heritage Trails Master Plan is the creation of a logo for the trails system. There needs to be one primary logo for the Heritage Trails. Other systems can have their own identity or may couple with Heritage Trails.

Suggestions for the logo (as derived during public workshops):

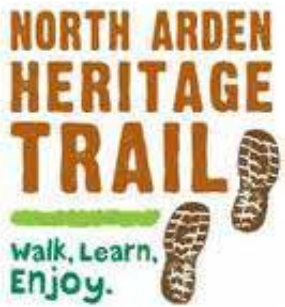
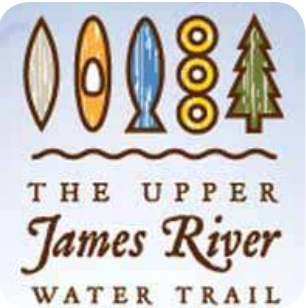
- Horticultural or natural theme
- Rustic in Appearance
- Unique and distinguishable

TRAIL NAMING

Actual trail and trail system naming should be a version of local branding. It can promote the community or refer to local landmarks or other features in the area. The “Name” should state location to easily promote the system. For example, another name for the proposed Country Line Creek Trail could be “Caswell County Crossing.”

Trail names should refer to natural or historical aspects or may refer to the surrounding area. These are “given” and typically will remain.

The trail names for systems as presented in this Master Plan are primarily based upon the creek or natural feature being followed. This is for educational and geographic reasons and may be altered if desired.



Examples of Trail Logos

4.2 WAYFINDING

The Heritage Trails product will be marketed with a logo. Therefore, the Heritage Trails should employ the logo throughout the system. This will help differentiate the Caswell County Heritage Trails from other regional trails.

TRAILHEAD SIGN

A gateway sign is a formal pronouncement of the trail or trail system. These are located at the intersections of trails with roadways and may also be placed at the intersections with other trails. In rural settings, depending upon design, trailhead elements may be preferred over actual signage. Major trailheads, however, should always have a gateway sign in addition to any other element.

TRAILHEAD ELEMENT

A trailhead element can be a type of signage, but does not necessarily have to use words or advertisement. It can simply be a common element located in the landscape and repeated at various locations to indicate its presence, such as an archway or other type of architectural feature or landscaping located along wood lines or at trailheads. This could also double as a type of wayfinding device when dispersed throughout the county, in addition to any trail logo.

A kiosk may serve as a trailhead element and may also incorporate signage.

TRAIL MARKING

A common and repeated “sign” language will need to be used to mark - and market - the Heritage Trails and other trails in the county. This methodology can vary from simple color markers on trees to a complete brand and sign package featuring a logo that can also be used for marketing purposes.

Trail marking can occur in a variety of ways. Often, early in projects, trails are simply marked with a color. The color should be bright and visible in all weather conditions and seasons. This is adequate for short-term trail marking and for local trails.

Additional information could be added to trail marking, such as mile markers. This could be particularly important in emergency situations to alert authorities to an exact location.

The more significant the trail within an area or trail system, the more important it is to adequately mark the trail with the brand or logo. In doing so, a transformation from simply marking to marketing occurs.



Trailhead Sign



Trailhead Element



Trail Marking and Wayfinding



5 IMPLEMENTATION

CHAPTER 5

- 5.1 Footsteps to Success*
- 5.2 Implementation Strategies*
- 5.3 Implementation Matrix*

The keys to a successful Master Plan include a balanced mix of a careful analysis of the existing conditions and environment; meaningful public engagement; visionary, but practical planning; and financially feasible implementation.

For the Heritage Trails vision and recommendations to be realized, specific implementation steps will need to be taken. These steps seek to provide a guideline under which the vision can be achieved. This includes sensible planning and promotion, certain public investments and the development of appropriate programs.

The implementation of this Plan will depend on action being taken to:

- Undertake more detailed planning with “boots on the ground” to explore and resolve the opportunities and constraints identified by this Plan
- Promote and assist specific objectives
- Make green infrastructure investments

The execution of the implementation steps will likely be phased by and is subject to a variety of factors, which determine their timing. These include:

- The availability of personnel and financial resources necessary to implement specific proposals
- Determining whether an implementation step is a necessary precursor to or component of a new trail project
- The interdependence of the various implementation tasks; in particular, the degree to which implementing one item is dependent upon the successful completion of another item
- The challenge which a particular implementation task is designed to address

In view of these factors, it is not possible to put forward a precise timetable for the various implementation items.

Therefore, the prescribed time line is suggestive and its parts can be implemented at the community’s level of readiness.

The output of the Plan is listed in an implementation matrix that coordinates tasks with responsible parties.

5.1 FOOTSTEPS TO SUCCESS

To promote the Heritage Trail Master Plan and the benefits of trails in the community, a county-wide “Footsteps to Success” campaign should be launched. Alternative names could include “Trailways to Success” or “Steps to Success.” The promotion should be aimed at two outcomes:

- Physical Health Success
- Economic Health Success

Physical Health Success will be achieved when Caswell County has a reduction in obesity rates to below 20%. This is a long term goal, but results can begin to be seen almost immediately as levels of exercise and physical fitness increase. Healthier living and reduced maladies related to obesity will also aid in reduced costs, helping to achieve economic success.

Economic Health Success will be achieved when Caswell County sees economic return via tourism, new residents and businesses. It is difficult to prescribe a benchmark in terms of incoming revenue, but prolonged sustainability and profit are indicators of such progress.

YEAR ONE

One of the very first steps in the “Footsteps to Success” campaign will be to form an implementation oversight committee for the Heritage Trails Master Plan. This can be a “River and Trails Committee” or other Committee and should consist of trail and nature advocates, elected officials and representatives from Parks and Recreation, the Health Department, Schools (fitness and health), the Historical Association, the Chamber of Commerce, scouts, bikers, equestrians, ruritans and others.

This Rivers and Trails Committee should be created under purview of the Parks and Recreation Department, guided by the Recreation Commission, to undertake the task of:

- Trail Maintenance
- Trail Development

In addition, the committee should be responsible for co-op marketing, launching the trail branding and event series coordination. The group will also be responsible for fund-raising and creating partnerships in the community. Events, seminars, and activities related to the heritage trails of Caswell County and related activities will be increasingly important in continuing the branding and marketing of the trails in the community.

Goals:

- Advertise the “Footsteps to Success” campaign
- Adopt a logo for marketing and branding of the Heritage Trails System. The purpose is to have an image that is used on signage, marketing and branding. It should be unique within the community and the region
- Launch a Visitor Friendly Website. This should be launched in concert with the logo and can be integrated into the town’s and/or county’s existing web sites
- Begin to raise funds and/or create partnerships for the development of the heritage trails. Identify grants to secure funding for trail development
- Create a quarterly newsletter to announce the Master Plan, implementation plan, trail vision, future programs and projects and events to recruit volunteers

Additionally, there should be a focus on trail development and maintenance:

- Start conversations with local, state and regional entities regarding trails on those public properties, such as the NC Game Lands. Trail efforts should start with municipalities so as to demonstrate willingness and belief in the project
- Work with school campuses to ensure each school site has access to a nature trail
- Start conversations with local land owners regarding trails on their properties. This should be conducted as it relates to “pilot trails” or as approached by any property owner. It should always be remembered that the land owner is “giving” to allow for the trail and that trail development is not a “taking” task
- Initiate an “Adopt-A-Trail” Program with the local community for the care and upkeep of existing trails

YEARS 2-5

While off-road trail development is on-going, the “Footsteps to Success” effort can help promote regional tourism through driving and walking tours, bike tours and races and other special events in the county. These should be volunteer-staffed by the Rivers and Trails Group with additional staffing support from other partners in the community.

Goals:

- Implement a Spring and Fall Event Series. These should be small, regularly scheduled events centered on nature, history and culture. In time, these may grow into opportunities to include music, art and food. Nature oriented themes, such as a “Caswell County in Bloom” series for the Spring and a “Caswell County Harvest” series for the Fall may be employed
- Partner for the creation of a Farmer’s Market and promote a Farm-to-School or Farm-to-Plate program. Support local farmers by encouraging patronage of restaurants offering locally produced food, roadside stands or community food stores
- Continue conversations with local land owners regarding trails and/or events on their properties;
- Promote biking tours of the county and connect to other bike routes in adjacent counties. A bike race, with a smaller family-friendly component, can generate visitors to the community
- Continue to promote the Caswell County Heritage Trails brand

YEARS 5-10

By year five of the promotion, the Rivers and Trails Group should begin working on co-op ads that are strategically placed in both resident- and visitor-oriented publications. Local real estate publications are good ways to gain access to the population moving into the community while local newspapers and neighborhood newsletters are excellent options to reach existing residents.

Goals:

- Sign the Heritage Trail. The logo for the network as a Heritage Trail should begin to be signed in the landscape as sections are complete, including in-town links through Yanceyville and Milton
- Host a “Familiarization Tour” of Caswell County for regional press. By year five, the Heritage Trails focus in the community will be well underway. At this point, the regional press should be offered a chance to learn more about the Heritage Trails Master Plan and programs and how tourism can be a “step to success”. The goal here is “free marketing” for the new and evolving trail system(s)

YEARS 10+

After the first ten years of the “Footsteps to Success” campaign, it should be an on-going effort with replication of steps that occurred in years 1-10. This will be a good time for the Rivers and Trails Group to prepare a new strategic plan for ensuing years.

5.2 IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

The development of the trails of the master plan will be subject to two primary objectives:

- Land Acquisition
- Funding

There are four main types of land acquisition techniques encouraged for the Heritage Trails projects:

- Public Fee Simple Ownership
- Access Easements
- Land Leases
- Land Donation

Land in fee simple ownership is land that has been purchased outright.

Access easements can be acquired by a municipality or private entity, such as a land trust or private organization. The landowner retains ownership of the land but allows public access to private land. Access easement can be set for a period of time, but an easement in perpetuity is preferred.

Land leases may also be provided by an owner or the land may be donated to a public entity.

The funding for trails can come from a variety of sources, including but not limited to:

- Grants
- Capital Campaigns
- In-Kind Donations
- Monetary Donations
- Government Funding

To market the project, the internet and television and radio media should be utilized in addition to a number of print sources.

5.3 IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX

The following pages lay out a matrix for implementing the Heritage trails Master Plan.

The priority for implementation will be listed by the period in which items should be completed. Year 1 items are the highest priority while Year 10+ projects could be completed as resources allow.

Tasks that extend beyond a 10-year time horizon are typically more difficult to accomplish than those within a more constrained 5-year period. As a result, it is important to revisit the implementing tasks every 2 or 3 years to ensure that they are being fulfilled.

Each matrix is independent. This allows for multiple projects to occur simultaneously over several matrices.

The prescribed time line is suggestive and its parts can be implemented at the community’s level of readiness.

POLICY AND PLANNING						
Project/Task	Responsible Party	Year 1	Years 2-5	Years 5-10	Years 10+	On-Going
Create a Rivers and Trail Committee to oversee the Heritage Trails Master Plan implementation and seek to fund a full-time position to conduct Heritage Trails development	Caswell County Parks and Recreation Commission, Rivers and Trails Committee	✗				
Establish and implement a regular trail construction schedule with “Friends of...” groups to begin and continue pilot trail projects	Caswell County Rivers and Trails Committee	✗				✗
Establish and implement a regular trail maintenance schedule with “Adopt-a-Trail” groups for trails developed throughout the county	Caswell County Rivers and Trails Committee	✗				✗
Begin to raise funds and/or create partnerships for the development of the heritage trails	Caswell County Rivers and Trails Committee	✗				
Start conversations with local, state and regional entities regarding trails on those public properties	Caswell County Rivers and Trails Committee	✗				
Start conversations with local land owners regarding trails on their properties	Caswell County Rivers and Trails Committee	✗				
Staff Caswell County Office of Economic Development and Tourism	Caswell County	✗				

TRAIL DEVELOPMENT: DRIVING TOURS						
Project/Task	Responsible Party	Year 1	Years 2-5	Years 5-10	Years 10+	On-Going
Promote the Caswell County Heritage Driving Tour	Caswell County Historical Association	✗				
Expand the Caswell County Heritage Driving Tour; expansion does not necessarily mean adding additional sites, but expanding the access to and story told at each driving tour stop	Caswell County Historical Association		✗			
Update the Caswell County Heritage Driving Tour	Caswell County Historical Association			✗		✗
Explore other driving tour options, such as a “Race-to-the-Dan,” Racing Circuit and/or Furniture Trail	Caswell County Rivers and Trails Committee		✗			
Re-route NC Colonial Scenic Byway in Yanceyville from Main Street to W. Main Street and Hooper Avenue, passing through the historic district and by the courthouse	Town of Yanceyville, North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT)	✗				
Create Caswell County “Know-Your-Farm” or “Farm-to-Plate” Tours, including “you pick ‘em” farms as well as restaurants that support local farms; support Farmer’s Market	Caswell County Rivers and Trails Committee		✗			
Develop and promote Artist Overlook pilot location	Caswell County Rivers and Trails Committee		✗			
Sign all creeks at bridge crossings so that the creek names can become part of the everyday vocabulary of the county	NCDOT	✗				

TRAIL DEVELOPMENT: BIKE ROUTES AND TOURS						
Project/Task	Responsible Party	Year 1	Years 2-5	Years 5-10	Years 10+	On-Going
Sign local bike routes as identified in the Caswell County Bike Plan and promote these bike routes in adjacent counties	Caswell County Rivers and Trails Committee, Caswell County, North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT)	✗				
Develop an on-road bike event (and/or a 5K run with a shorter family run/walk)	Caswell County Rivers and Trails Committee		✗			✗

TRAIL DEVELOPMENT: WALKING TOURS						
Project/Task	Responsible Party	Year 1	Years 2-5	Years 5-10	Years 10+	On-Going
Sign Yanceyville Historic District with appropriate historic district signage and actively promote the district with a walking tour, either self-guided or guided	Caswell County Historical Association, Town of Yanceyville, Arts Council	✗				✗
Actively promote Milton walking tour, either self-guided or guided	Town of Milton	✗				✗
Promote “artist walk” between Richmond-Miles Museum and Caswell County Civic Center	Caswell County Artists League, Richmond-Miles Museum	✗				✗
Develop a 5K run with a shorter family run/walk; make annual event	Caswell County Rivers and Trails Committee		✗			✗
Host “Strut-a-Mutt” or aid in “Walk for Animals” events which get people out and moving on trails	Caswell County Rivers and Trails Committee, Caswell County Animal Protection Society	✗				✗

TRAIL DEVELOPMENT: BLUEWAY TOURS						
Project/Task	Responsible Party	Year 1	Years 2-5	Years 5-10	Years 10+	On-Going
Begin canoe/kayak event ending in Milton; could couple with bike and/or run events	Caswell County Rivers and Trails Committee	✗				
Dan River access in Blanch at confluence of Rattlesnake Creek and the Dan River	Caswell County Rivers and Trails Committee, NC Wildlife Commission, NCDOT			✗		

TRAIL DEVELOPMENT: DAN RIVER TRAIL						
Project/Task	Responsible Party	Year 1	Years 2-5	Years 5-10	Years 10+	On-Going
Assemble property owners and conduct a trail route specific workshop; walk potential trail routes; assemble land and record easements or use agreements	Caswell County Rivers and Trails Committee, 21st Century Committee	✕				✕
Milton Section: Trail along south side of Dan River from Milton to confluence with Rattlesnake Creek	Caswell County Rivers and Trails Committee, Town of Milton		✕			
Danville Section: Trail along south side of Dan River from confluence at Dan River and Rattlesnake Creek to NC/VA Border; coordinate planning with Danville to determine any river crossing locations	Caswell County Rivers and Trails Committee, City of Danville			✕		
Extend the trail northeast from Milton into Virginia to connect with the Virginia International Raceway; may have a trailhead link from Country Line Creek Trail extension north of NC 57	Caswell County Rivers and Trails Committee, Representatives from appropriate State of Virginia and county agencies, delegates from Virginia International Raceway (VIR)		✕			
Extend the trail northwest into Virginia from NC/VA Border to connect with Danville River Walk	Caswell County Rivers and Trails Committee, Representatives from appropriate State of Virginia and county agencies, City of Danville			✕		
Promote blueway connection from Angler's Park in Virginia to Milton, NC	Caswell County Rivers and Trails Committee	✕				
Dan River access in Blanch at confluence of Rattlesnake Creek and the Dan River	Caswell County Rivers and Trails Committee, NC Wildlife Commission, NCDOT			✕		

TRAIL DEVELOPMENT: COUNTRY LINE CREEK TRAIL						
Project/Task	Responsible Party	Year 1	Years 2-5	Years 5-10	Years 10+	On-Going
Assemble property owners and conduct a trail route specific workshop; walk potential trail routes; assemble land and record easements or use agreements	Caswell County Rivers and Trails Committee, 21st Century Committee	✗				✗
Section 6: Pilot Project for Lower Portion: Badgett Sisters Parkway to NC 62 Note: Part of Yanceyville Greenway	Caswell County Rivers and Trails Committee, State of North Carolina (NC Game Lands), Town of Yanceyville		✗			
Section 9: Pilot Project for Upper Portion: Between Stoney Creek School Road and Wagon Wheel Road	Caswell County Rivers and Trails Committee		✗			
Section 5: Between NC 62 and NC 86	Caswell County Rivers and Trails Committee, State of North Carolina (NC Game Lands)		✗			
Section 8: Stoney Creek School Road to Boy Scout Camp Road	Caswell County Rivers and Trails Committee			✗		
Section 7: Boy Scout Camp Road to Badgett Sisters Parkway	Caswell County Rivers and Trails Committee			✗		
Section 4: NC 86 to High Rock School Road (NC Bike Route 4)	Caswell County Rivers and Trails Committee, State of North Carolina (NC Game Lands)				✗	
Section 3: High Rock School Road (NC Bike Route 4) to Long's Mill Road	Caswell County Rivers and Trails Committee				✗	
Section 2: Long's Mill Road to Yarborough Mill Road; links Hyco Creek Trail and Milton	Caswell County Rivers and Trails Committee			✗		
Section 1: Yarborough Mill Road to NC 57 (NC Colonial Heritage Scenic Byway); links Hyco Creek Trail and Milton	Caswell County Rivers and Trails Committee			✗		
Section 10: Turner Road to Wagon Wheel Road	Caswell County Rivers and Trails Committee				✗	
Section 11: Camp Springs Road to Turner Road	Caswell County Rivers and Trails Committee				✗	
Section 12: Camp Springs Road to the Mountains-to-the-Sea Trail in Rockingham County, NC	Caswell County Rivers and Trails Committee, Rockingham County, Piedmont Triad Regional Council (PTRC), NC Parks and Recreation				✗	
Connection along Country Line Creek to Dan River Trail, north of NC 57 in Milton (includes Virginia property owners)	Caswell County Rivers and Trails Committee, Representatives from appropriate State of Virginia and county agencies			✗		

TRAIL DEVELOPMENT: RATTLESNAKE CREEK HERITAGE TRAIL						
Project/Task	Responsible Party	Year 1	Years 2-5	Years 5-10	Years 10+	On-Going
Assemble property owners and conduct a trail route specific workshop; walk potential trail routes; assemble land and record easements or use agreements	Caswell County Rivers and Trails Committee, Caswell Ruritans, Boy Scouts	✗				✗
Between Maud Gatewood Park and historic Poteat plantation along South Fork Rattlesnake Creek	Caswell County Rivers and Trails Committee, Town of Yanceyville Planning	✗				
Between Poteat Plantation and Slade Road along South Fork Rattlesnake Creek	Caswell County Rivers and Trails Committee		✗			
Between Slade Road and Blanch Road along South Fork Rattlesnake Creek	Caswell County Rivers and Trails Committee			✗		
From Blanch Road to Dan River Trail along Rattlesnake Creek	Caswell County Rivers and Trails Committee, Caswell County Parks and Recreation, State of North Carolina (Division of Parks and Recreation)		✗			
From Blanch Road to Dan River along Rattlesnake Creek; New Dan River Access	Caswell County Rivers and Trails Committee, Caswell County Parks and Recreation, State of North Carolina (Division of Parks and Recreation)		✗			
Between Slade Road and Blanch Road along North Fork Rattlesnake Creek; may be used as option to following South Fork Rattlesnake Creek; may also be in addition in order to create a local loop	Caswell County Rivers and Trails Committee				✗	
Dan River access in Blanch at confluence of Rattlesnake Creek and the Dan River	Caswell County Rivers and Trails Committee, NC Wildlife Commission, NCDOT			✗		

TRAIL DEVELOPMENT: HYCO CREEK HERITAGE TRAIL						
Project/Task	Responsible Party	Year 1	Years 2-5	Years 5-10	Years 10+	On-Going
Assemble property owners and conduct a trail route specific workshop; walk potential trail routes; assemble land and record easements or use agreements	Caswell County Rivers and Trails Committee, Caswell Ruritans, Boy Scouts	✕				✕
Section 1: Between US 158 and NC 119 (NC Colonial Heritage Scenic Byway), beginning an off-road link between Leasburg and Milton	Caswell County Rivers and Trails Committee		✕			
Develop a roadside link along Long's Mill Road to the Country Line Creek Trail; encourage use of Scenic Byway as alternative route to Milton in lieu of Country Line Creek Trail if incomplete	Caswell County Rivers and Trails Committee		✕			
Section 3: Between NC 86 (NC Colonial Heritage Scenic Byway) and Grier's Church Road, creating a connection between South Elementary School, Hyco Creek and historic Grier's Presbyterian Church	Caswell County Rivers and Trails Committee, Grier's Church			✕		
Section 2: Between Grier's Church Road and US 158	Caswell County Rivers and Trails Committee, Grier's Church				✕	
Create Hyco Creek Heritage Trail extension southwest to Bayne's Store (see also Byrd's Creek Trail System)	Caswell County Rivers and Trails Committee, Caswell Ruritans, Boy Scouts				✕	

TRAIL DEVELOPMENT: HOGAN'S MOON TRAIL SYSTEM						
Project/Task	Responsible Party	Year 1	Years 2-5	Years 5-10	Years 10+	On-Going
Assemble property owners and conduct a trail route specific workshop; walk potential trail routes; assemble land and record easements or use agreements	Caswell County Rivers and Trails Committee, North Elementary School personnel	✗				✗
Promote Hogan's Creek as a blueway; create access along US 158 in Rockingham County, NC	Caswell County Rivers and Trails Committee, Rockingham County, North Elementary School personnel	✗				
Begin trail system east of NC 86, utilizing Hogan's Creek and Moon Creek to connect North Elementary School and Washington's Tour site with the Dan River Trail; on-road route follows Old NC 86	Caswell County Rivers and Trails Committee		✗			
Between Quick Road (NC Bike Route 4) and Law Road along Hogan's Creek	Caswell County Rivers and Trails Committee			✗		
Between Law Road and Seamster Road along Hogan's Creek	Caswell County Rivers and Trails Committee			✗		
Trail extension to US 158 in Rockingham County from Quick Road along Hogan's Creek	Caswell County Rivers and Trails Committee, Rockingham County			✗		
Between Foster Road and Allison Road along Moon Creek	Caswell County Rivers and Trails Committee				✗	
Between Allison Road and Henderson Road along Moon Creek	Caswell County Rivers and Trails Committee				✗	
Between Henderson Road and Big Oak Farm Road along Moon Creek	Caswell County Rivers and Trails Committee				✗	
Between Big Oak Farm Road and US 158 (NC Bike Route 4) along Moon Creek	Caswell County Rivers and Trails Committee				✗	
Trail connection across NC 86; should occur at either Hogan's Creek or Moon Creek, but may occur at both and should be clearly marked	Caswell County Rivers and Trails Committee				✗	

TRAIL DEVELOPMENT: BYRD'S CREEK TRAIL SYSTEM						
Project/Task	Responsible Party	Year 1	Years 2-5	Years 5-10	Years 10+	On-Going
Assemble property owners and conduct a trail route specific workshop; walk potential trail routes; assemble land and record easements or use agreements	Caswell County Rivers and Trails Committee	✕				✕
Between Bayne's Store Road and Roscoe Dameron Road	Caswell County Rivers and Trails Committee, Bayne's Store		✕			
Following either South Country Line Creek or Byrd's Creek, between Burton Chapel Road and Roscoe Dameron Road	Caswell County Rivers and Trails Committee, State of North Carolina (NC Game Lands)			✕		
From Burton Chapel Road, follow South Country Line Creek north for two to three miles before diverging east from the creek to follow the NC Game Lands property line to NC 86; bisecting NC Game Lands is discouraged	Caswell County Rivers and Trails Committee, State of North Carolina (NC Game Lands)				✕	
From Bayne's Store, a connection to the east to link with an extension of the Hyco Creek Heritage Trail system	Caswell County Rivers and Trails Committee				✕	

TRAIL DEVELOPMENT: CHERRY CHAPEL TRAIL SYSTEM						
Project/Task	Responsible Party	Year 1	Years 2-5	Years 5-10	Years 10+	On-Going
Assemble property owners and conduct a trail route specific workshop; walk potential trail routes; assemble land and record easements or use agreements	Caswell County Rivers and Trails Committee	✗				✗
Between Kerr's Chapel or Stadler Road and Moore Road along Stony Creek	Caswell County Rivers and Trails Committee		✗			
Between Moore Road and Cherry Grove Road along Stony Creek	Caswell County Rivers and Trails Committee		✗			
On-road trail routes along Turner Road or Wagon Wheel Road from Cherry Grove Road provide a link to the Country Line Creek Trail from either Stony Creek or Benton Branch tributaries	Caswell County Rivers and Trails Committee		✗			
Between Kerr's Chapel or Stadler Road and Milesville Road, then follow Benton Branch tributaries to Cherry Grove Road (Optional Route)	Caswell County Rivers and Trails Committee				✗	
Trails along Gray's Branch or any of its tributaries near Cherry Grove Road may also link to the Country Line Creek Trail by way of Camp Springs Road (Optional Route)	Caswell County Rivers and Trails Committee				✗	
To the south, the trail can follow the outflowing Gray's Branch into Alamance County to later connect with the Haw River Trail system	Caswell County Rivers and Trails Committee, Alamance County			✗		

TRAIL DEVELOPMENT: YANCEYVILLE TOWN TRAILS						
Project/Task	Responsible Party	Year 1	Years 2-5	Years 5-10	Years 10+	On-Going
Assemble property owners and conduct a trail route specific workshop; walk potential trail routes; assemble land and record easements or use agreements	Caswell County Rivers and Trails Committee	✗				✗
Yanceyville Greenway: Between Farmer Lake and Yanceyville following a route roughly parallel to Badgett Sisters Parkway	Caswell County Rivers and Trails Committee, Town of Yanceyville		✗			
Senior Center Connector: Along Firetower Road to downtown Yanceyville, passing by Maud Gatewood Park and the Rattlesnake Creek Heritage Trail trailhead	Caswell County Rivers and Trails Committee, Town of Yanceyville		✗			
Bartlett-Yanceyville Trail: From the Bartlett Yancey historic property on US 158 to downtown Yanceyville	Caswell County Rivers and Trails Committee, Town of Yanceyville, Yancey House ownership			✗		
Sign Heritage Trail connection to the Country Line Creek Trail along US 158 east of Yanceyville as an on-road alternate route from Farmer Lake as needed	Caswell County Rivers and Trails Committee		✗			
Sign Yanceyville Historic District with appropriate historic district signage and actively promote the district with a walking tour, either self-guided or guided	Caswell County Historical Association, Town of Yanceyville, Arts Council	✗				

TRAIL DEVELOPMENT: MILTON TOWN TRAILS						
Project/Task	Responsible Party	Year 1	Years 2-5	Years 5-10	Years 10+	On-Going
Assemble property owners and conduct a trail route specific workshop; walk potential trail routes; assemble land and record easements or use agreements	Caswell County Rivers and Trails Committee, Town of Milton	✗				✗
Between the Dan River Trail and Country Line Creek Trail along NC 57 (Main Street) through Milton; most likely will only need signage to create this "trail"	Caswell County Rivers and Trails Committee, Town of Milton	✗				
Extend the Dan River Trail northeast from Milton into Virginia to connect with the Virginia International Raceway; may have a trailhead link from Country Line Creek Trail extension north of NC 57	Caswell County Rivers and Trails Committee, Town of Milton, Representatives from appropriate State of Virginia and county agencies, Virginia International Raceway (VIR)		✗			
Extend Country Line Creek to Dan River Trail, north of NC 57 in Milton (includes Virginia property owners)	Caswell County Rivers and Trails Committee, Town of Milton, Representatives from appropriate State of Virginia and county agencies		✗			
Actively promote Milton walking tour, either self-guided or guided	Town of Milton	✗				

CASWELL COUNTY HERITAGE STATE PARK						
Project/Task	Responsible Party	Year 1	Years 2-5	Years 5-10	Years 10+	On-Going
Assemble property owners and conduct a trail route specific workshop; walk potential trail routes; assemble land and record easements or use agreements	Caswell County Rivers and Trails Committee	✕				
Promote Caswell County Heritage State Park initiative to be located central to the three historic towns of Yanceyville, Milton and Leasburg; gather support	NC Parks and Recreation, Caswell County government		✕			
Assemble lands for a Caswell County Heritage State Park - mostly north of Stephentown Road and south of Long's Mill Road	Caswell County Rivers and Trails Committee, State of North Carolina (Division of Parks and Recreation, NC Game Lands)		✕	✕		
Launch Caswell County Heritage State Park	NC Parks and Recreation, Caswell County government			✕		

MARKETING AND BRANDING						
Project/Task	Responsible Party	Year 1	Years 2-5	Years 5-10	Years 10+	On-Going
Promote the Heritage Trails Master Plan and Footsteps to Success campaign	Caswell County Rivers and Trails Committee	✗				
Create Heritage Trails of Caswell County logo design competition	Caswell County Rivers and Trails Committee	✗				
Incorporate the new logo into way-finding signage and displays in the region; build the brand specific to Caswell County	Caswell County Rivers and Trails Committee	✗				
Create a quarterly newsletter to announce Master Plan, implementation plan, trail vision, future programs and projects, events and look for volunteers	Caswell County Rivers and Trails Committee	✗				
Launch a visitor friendly website	Caswell County Rivers and Trails Committee	✗				
Advertise for “Friends” groups to construct, maintain and help raise funds for trails	Caswell County Rivers and Trails Committee		✗			
Publicly advertise each newly completed section of Heritage Trails	Caswell County Rivers and Trails Committee, WYNC, Caswell Messenger and other media outlets					✗
Promote various driving tours, walking tours and biking tours; incorporate appropriate signage	Caswell County Rivers and Trails Committee		✗			
Create identifiable features throughout the county including gateways, gateway landscaping, trailheads and associated elements, logos, and signage	Caswell County Rivers and Trails Committee, Town of Milton, Town of Yanceyville, Caswell County		✗			
Initiate Adopt-a-Trail Programs; may grow to Adopt-a-Spot, such as a gateway and Adopt-a-Road, such as an on-road trail link	Caswell County Rivers and Trails Committee	✗				
Implement Spring and Fall Event Series; develop and conduct consistent annual events in the county	Caswell County Rivers and Trails Committee		✗			
Implement a comprehensive wayfinding system	Caswell County Rivers and Trails Committee		✗			
Host a familiarization tour of Caswell County for regional press	Caswell County Rivers and Trails Committee		✗			



HERITAGE TRAILS MASTER PLAN

CASWELL COUNTY, NC

PART TWO:
SUPPORTING MATERIAL





6 BACKGROUND

6.1 A BRIEF HISTORY OF CASWELL COUNTY

Caswell County, North Carolina, is located in the Northern Piedmont area of the State and is bordered by the state of Virginia to the north. A majority of Caswell's landscape consists of acres of mixed forest, rolling fields, miles of winding country roads and meandering streams which feed the Dan River.

Caswell County was formed on May 9, 1777 when it was carved from Orange County. It was named in honor of Richard Caswell, member of the first Continental Congress, Major General in the Revolutionary army and first Governor of North Carolina after the Declaration of Independence. On February 1, 1792, Caswell County was reduced in size when Person County was formed from its eastern half. Leasburg was the county's first county seat.

The county has a total area of 424.7 square miles, is divided into nine townships, and includes two municipalities: Yanceyville and Milton. The largest municipality in Caswell County is Yanceyville, the current county seat.

Caswell County is conveniently located within easy driving distance of Greensboro and the Research Triangle Park (RTP) of Raleigh, Durham, and Chapel Hill. Over 2 million people live within an hour's drive of and 4 million live within a 2-hour's drive. Its rural nature and rich history make Caswell County an excellent destination for a day trip and for "stay-cations."



Caswell County Townships and Municipalities

CHAPTER 6

- 6.1 A Brief History of Caswell County
- 6.2 Traversing Caswell County
- 6.3 Heritage Features of Caswell County
- 6.4 Population, Wealth and Workforce Trends
- 6.5 Health Trends

When Caswell County was carved from Orange County in 1777 it was much larger than the present county, and the county seat was established at Leasburg. However, fifteen years later, when Person County was created from the eastern half of Caswell County, Leasburg was no longer at the geographic center of Caswell County. In 1792, surveyors found the geographic center of the newly reduced Caswell County and purchased land for the new county seat, which became Yanceyville. From 1792 until 1833 the village was merely called Caswell Court House. Construction of the first courthouse was completed in 1794.

The period between the turn of the nineteenth century and the Civil War was a golden time for Caswell County. However, the Civil War ended the prosperity, and the Reconstruction period that followed guaranteed a lengthy period of depression.

Had Yanceyville not been the county seat, it might have become a ghost town after the Civil War. Because there was no geographic or commercial reason for its existence, it could have disappeared. Without a railroad, a major waterway, or an ability to attract commerce, Yanceyville relied almost exclusively on the agricultural enterprises in the surrounding county, and those businesses, mostly tobacco-based, were at the mercy of markets beyond the county.

Agriculture has been a vital historical part of Caswell’s history. The Brightleaf Tobacco Curing Process originated in Caswell and tobacco production remains an important industry in the county. The Brightleaf Process was developed in 1839 in the community of Blanch by Stephen, the slave of Abisha Slade. Caswell County has continued as a hub of brightleaf tobacco until the recent decline in demand for tobacco products.

With its storied past, Caswell County has a vast history set in a gorgeous rural landscape. Yanceyville, Milton and Leasburg all have unique tales and attributes to contribute to the lore and lure of Caswell County. The county also boasts many other cultural, historical, and natural treasures and hosts many festivals and events.

Portions of this section were adapted from the Caswell County Historical Association’s website at: www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~ncccha

CASWELL COUNTY QUICK FACTS

Population: 23,719 (July 2010)
Land Area: 424.7 square miles

2 Municipalities:
Yanceyville (County Seat)
Milton

9 Townships:
Yanceyville, Milton, Leasburg, Hightowers,
Anderson, Stony Creek, Locust Hill, Pelham, Dan
River

Borders Virginia to the north

Boasts the Dan River along the northern edge of
the county

Formed on May 9, 1777
Carved from Orange County
Leasburg was the county’s first county seat
In 1792, Caswell was reduced in size when Person
County was formed from its eastern half

Over 2 million people live with an hour’s drive
of Caswell County and 4 million live within a
2-hour’s drive

CASWELL COUNTY CALENDAR OF EVENTS

February:
The Crossing of the Dan
Black History Month

March:
Annual Rural Farmers Briefing
Women's History Month

April:
Providence Spring Fling Festival
Earth Day

May:
Caswell Artists League Spring Studio Tour

July:
Independence Day in Milton

September:
Caswell County Brightleaf Hoedown

October:
Mountains-to-Sea Month
Pelham Pork Jam

November:
National American Indian Heritage Month

December:
Yanceyville Parade
(First Saturday in December)
Casville Lights

Note: These are annual events that have a significant draw to the area and which are commonly promoted throughout the county. There are many other local and community festivals. The Civic Center also has a rotating display of arts and artists.





YANCEYVILLE

Geographically centered in Caswell County, the town of Yanceyville has been the county seat since 1792. Other than being the county seat, there was no reason for Yanceyville's creation. It does not sit on a major stream nor were its roads major thoroughfares. While the town sat between two creeks (Rattlesnake to the north, and Country Line to the south), those waterways were just that, creeks. The town's purpose was for government, hence it was simply "Caswell County Courthouse" for years. The surrounding boom of agriculture - mainly tobacco - enabled the growth of Yanceyville. The town was officially incorporated in 1986.

Featuring a classic town square in front of the architecturally unique historic courthouse, the quaint downtown presents several businesses and places to dine.

There are, however, some vacant shop fronts, indicating a need for economic stimulus to help attract additional businesses and people: citizens, employees and tourists.

While many Caswell County structures are older, none has the physical and historic presence of the magnificent Caswell County Courthouse. It is listed as a National Historic Landmark.

The old courthouse itself has many stories to tell, but the courthouse area also features many other attributes and amenities:

- Old jail behind historic Caswell County Courthouse
- Poteat one-room schoolhouse
- Arboretum
- Historic District

The National Historic District of Yanceyville features striking architecture. It was during the roughly thirty-year boom period (1830s-1861) that these houses were constructed, which include among others:

- Jeremiah Graves's Dongola
- Thomas D. Johnston's Clarendon Hall
- Paul Haralson House
- Graves-Florance-Gatewood House
- Kerr Hotel
- Dr. Allen Gunn House

The Caswell County Historical Association is located along the town square in an historic home. It features the Richmond-Miles Museum and also lines its walls with the varied artwork of Maud Gatewood. The association can host a walking tour if desired.

Today, Yanceyville boasts many features:

- National Landmark: Caswell County Courthouse
- Courthouse area: Arboretum, Poteat School, Old Jail
- National Historic District
- Other historic marker sites
- Richmond-Miles Museum
- Yanceyville Walking Tours
- Restaurants and other shops
- Maud Gatewood Park
- Parks and Recreation Fields, Courts and Office
- Caswell County and Yanceyville Government
- Caswell County Civic Center
- Caswell County Senior Center
- NC Colonial Heritage Scenic Byway Route
- NC Bike Route 4 Route
- Bartlett Yancey High School, Dillard Middle School, Oakwood Elementary School

Portions of this section were adapted from the Caswell County Historical Association's website at: www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~ncccha

MILTON

The town of Milton, in northeast Caswell County, was incorporated in 1796 as a center for warehousing and inspecting tobacco and flour. It was a natural site with a fine location on the Dan River. The property of Asa Thomas was selected and, according to Bartlett Yancey, Jr., by 1810 the young town had two stores, a saddler's shop, a hatter's shop, a tavern, and fifteen to twenty houses. Presumably, one or more warehouses also had been constructed. Because the new town was to have been located near the mill owned by Asa Thomas, it naturally was named Milltown or Milton. The small town was alive with commerce, including numerous mills on the Dan River.

While post-Civil-War Yanceyville probably would have become a ghost town were it not for the business of county government, Milton, in comparison to its boom years, effectively did become a ghost town. Milton's population dropped from 1,000 people in 1896 to only 240 in 1974.

Known as a "museum without walls," Milton boasts what has been called one of the most perfectly preserved examples of 19th century commercial districts.

Listed in the National Register of Historic Places, Milton today is taking advantage of increased heritage tourism. The famous Union Tavern, now a National Historic Landmark, is being restored to reflect how it was when Thomas Day lived and worked there. Other structures are being preserved and restored as businesses return and Milton looks optimistically to the future.

The town of Milton also lays claim to the fine furniture workmanship of Thomas Day, a free black cabinetmaker who ran the largest furniture factory in antebellum North Carolina.

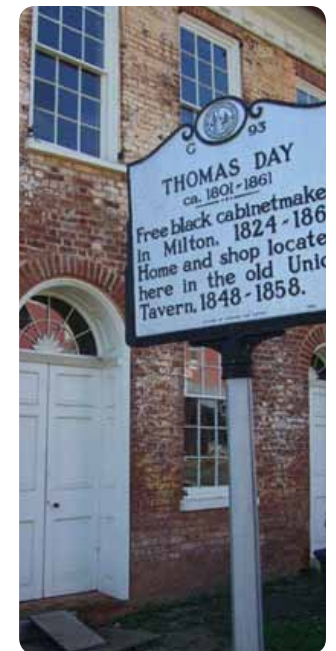
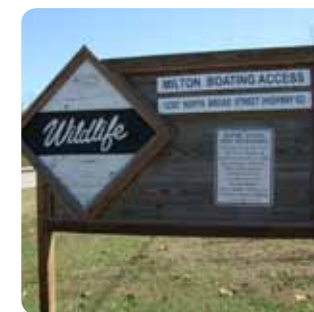
Thomas Day left behind an incredible legacy in his furniture, cabinetry, and other woodwork. His pieces can be found at the University of North Carolina and in museums and fine homes throughout North Carolina and beyond. His Union Tavern, now a National Historic Landmark and on the National Register of Historic Places, is being restored. It is remarkable that his products were in demand for almost forty years. His work regularly is shown in special exhibitions, featured in publications covering black artisans, and, of course, remains evident in many Caswell County homes. The North Carolina Museum of History in Raleigh has a special collection of his work.

Also located in historic downtown Milton is the Milton Studio Art Gallery, owned and operated by three local professional artists. It is surrounded by antique shops that have long been a draw to this quaint town.

Milton features:

- National Historic District
- Thomas Day
- Antique Shops and Restaurants
- Studio Art Gallery
- Cedars Cemetery and old churches
- Dan River Access
- Milton's Historic Walking Tour
- Thomas Mill ruins
- Old Milton Depot
- Close proximity to Virginia International Raceway

Portions of this section were adapted from the Caswell County Historical Association's website at: www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~ncccha



6.2 TRAVERSING CASWELL COUNTY

Caswell County contains a matrix of primary and secondary travel routes. Its highway system contains over 580 total miles of paved roads and almost 46 miles of unpaved secondary roads. Yanceyville and Milton have incorporated extensive sidewalk systems in their towns. However, because the county is rural in nature, pedestrian traffic is limited elsewhere.

MAJOR ROADS

The major routes in Caswell County include:

- US 29
- NC 150
- US 158
- NC 62
- NC 86
- NC 57
- NC 119
- NC 87

For the driver and biker, there are two state routes that traverse the county:

- North Carolina Colonial Heritage Scenic Byway
- North Carolina Bike Route 4

SCENIC BYWAY

The NC Colonial Heritage Scenic Byway roams through over 2/3 of Caswell County. Its route includes:

- NC 150
- US 158
- NC 62
- NC 57
- NC 119
- NC 86
- and additional alternate routes

See more on the Scenic Byway in Chapter 7: Status of Trails and Planning.

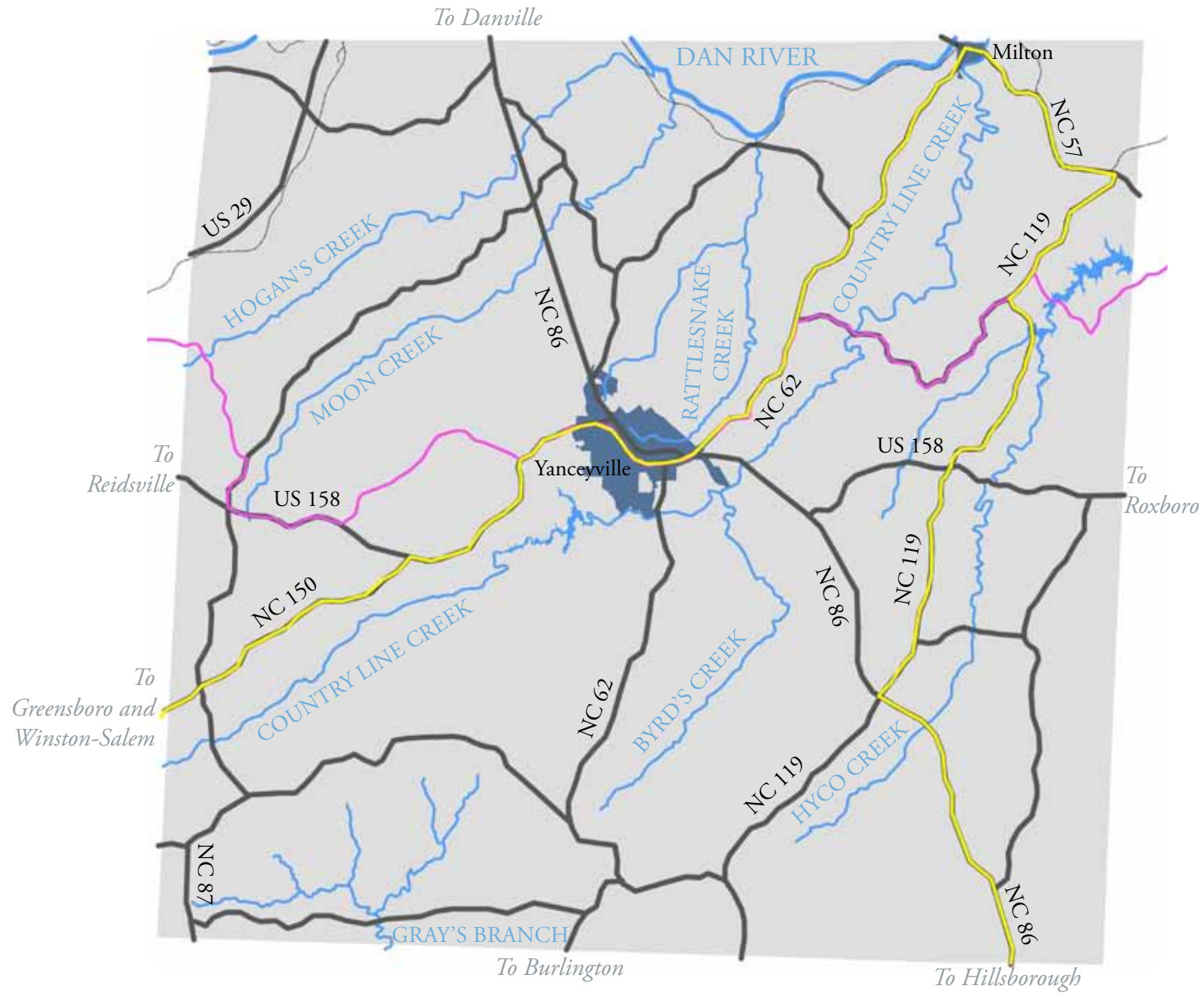
NC BIKE ROUTE 4

The NC Bike Route 4, known as the North Line Trace, primarily runs east-west through the County.

See more on Bike Route 4 in Chapter 7: Status of Trails and Planning.

DAN RIVER

The Milton, the NC Wildlife Resources Commission boat landing is the first downstream Dan River access after Danville, VA. From Danville to Milton is an 11-mile float on the Dan River and is rated as Class 1; 8.5 miles are located in Caswell County.



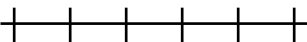
Legend:

 NC Scenic Byway

 NC Bike Route 4

 Water

 Roads

 Railroad

 Municipality



6.3 HERITAGE FEATURES OF CASWELL COUNTY

A good trails plan should promote the history and culture of the area so that its unique and defining characteristics can be visited, preserved and possibly protected. This is especially important in Caswell County with its rich historical and cultural traditions within a breathtaking landscape.

Many communities wish they had amenities such as those within Caswell County!

This section highlights significant features of Caswell County grouped under three categories:

- Historical Features
- Cultural Features
- Natural Features

The following lists are not meant to be exhaustive and, as expected, may change over time by adding new features based on newer data and public demand.

HISTORICAL FEATURES

Caswell County hosts fifteen historical markers throughout its cultural landscape, including the birthplace of brightleaf tobacco, Washington’s southern tour, Griers Presbyterian Church and Red House Church, and Caswell County Courthouse.

Many sites exhibit fabulous architecture and fine examples of plantation settlement.

But the history goes much deeper and further than these markers. Of note are the 1870 murder of Senator John W. Stephens and the Kirk-Holden War.

Nathanael Green’s “Race to the Dan” crossed Caswell

County, too. Before the 1781 Battle of Guilford Courthouse, General Cornwallis led his British forces through Caswell County pursuing General Greene’s army. Greene’s “retreat” across the Dan River near South Boston, VA, saved the American army, which then met Cornwallis at Yorktown and won the Revolutionary War.

Evidence of Indian activity is also abundant in many parts of Caswell County. Bits of pottery, arrowheads, bird points, and other stone objects have been found in widely scattered areas, often in fields when freshly plowed each spring. There’s an extensive display at the Richmond-Miles Museum in Yanceyville.

There are a multitude of historical attractions and features of note in the county, such as:

- Yanceyville (historic courthouse and downtown, historic district, museum)
- Milton (historic downtown, Dan River access, Cedars Cemetery, Thomas Day)
- Leasburg (first County seat)
- Historic Marker location sites
- American Revolution and Civil War sites and Routes, such as Greene’s Race to the Dan
- Routes such as Washington’s Southern Tour and Stagecoach Road routes
- Remnants of plantations and/or underground railroads
- Churches and cemeteries
- Historic homes and buildings per historic association and public survey

HISTORICAL MARKERS IN CASWELL COUNTY

In 1935 the General Assembly authorized the establishment of the North Carolina Highway Historical Marker Program (Public Laws, Chapter 197). The silver and black markers have become a familiar part of the state’s landscape since the first one was put in place in Granville County on January 10, 1936. To date over 1,400 state markers have been erected. At least one stands in every county.

There are 15 Historical Markers in Caswell County:

- G-5 Bright Leaf Tobacco
- G-6 Caswell Courthouse
- G-8 Bedford Brown
- G-12 Romulus M. Saunders
- G-18 Bartlett Yancey
- G-25 Red House Church
- G-43 Calvin Graves
- G-61 Solomom Lea
- G-67 Bethesda Church
- G-71 Jacob Thompson
- G-75 William L. Poteat
- G-77 Griers Presbyterian Church
- G-93 Thomas Day
- G-104 Archibald Debow Murphey
- G-110 Washington’s Southern Tour



CULTURAL FEATURES

The combination of physical locations, buildings and memories that together make places resonate with historical significance are best described by the term “cultural landscapes.” This term embraces issues of history and culture, scenic beauty, architectural quality, economics, environmental management and biodiversity, patterns of kinship, neighboring associations and community life. It is this “visual and cultural character” of the community which often evokes the strongest emotions from those who discuss it.

Above all, cultural landscapes provide a record of human settlement and the attitudes of the people who live and work in a particular location. Each piece should always be viewed in relation to the whole, and never in isolation.

Some of the most meaningful elements of historic cultural landscapes are found in settlement patterns constructed in that location over time; they can tell a vivid story of the origins, growth and sometimes decline of urban and rural communities. Besides being the repository of historical and community memory, historic clusters of buildings, barns and farmlands can also function as an engine for economic development. They can often stimulate a profitable growth in heritage tourism to support the local economy.

The County retains more than 300 historically significant buildings and sites. Over 100 general stores were located in the county; a few survive and are community gathering spots. And with nearly 150 church sites, there are several tours or artists’ stops that could be marketed. Coupled with events, farms, and other cultural amenities, there’s never a shortage of things to do or places to see in Caswell County.

CASWELL COUNTY CULTURAL FEATURES

Cultural features of note include, but are not limited to, the following:

Yoder’s Market, Yancey House, Sleepy Goat Farm, Triple Creek Ranch and other stables; Hall Farm and farming operations open to the public such as Century Farm Orchards; Stanley Woodworks and other artists in the County; the Indian Rock along Moon Creek; current and former general stores, significant crossroads, corridors, and gateways; Voluntary Agricultural Districts (especially with historic barns, homes, and/or ruins), old/rustic barns; remnants of settlement patterns; exceptional vernacular architecture; streams with ruins; and events such as the Bright Leaf Hoedown, Casville Lights at Christmas, and the Providence Spring Fling Fest

There are several festivals and events on the Caswell County calendar throughout the year. Anchored by the Annual Brightleaf Hoedown in Yanceyville in September, other regular events include the Spring Fling in Providence, several “you pick ‘em” fruit harvests, corn mazes in the Fall and the Casville Lights in December.



NATURAL FEATURES

In appearance, Caswell County has predominantly remained a farming community since the Civil War. In essence, the County has retained a relatively untouched landscape. From Game Lands to rolling hills to flowing streams, creeks and rivers, Caswell County is a natural gem.

All but the southwestern corner of Caswell County falls within the Roanoke River Basin. The Dan River Basin is a sub-basin to the Roanoke River Basin. The southwestern corner falls within the Cape Fear River Basin.

The major natural attraction in Caswell County is the Dan River. Located along the Virginia border, there is an access in Milton, NC.

A vast majority of Caswell County falls within the Dan River Basin of the Roanoke River Basin. There are five significant creeks in the County:

- Hogan's Creek
- Moon Creek
- Rattlesnake Creek (North and South branches)
- Country Line Creek (North and South branches)
- Hyco Creek

Hogan's, Moon, Rattlesnake and Country Line creeks all run southwest to northeast and feed the Dan River. Hyco Creek is a significant natural feature on the eastern side of the county; it does not meet the Dan River until near Staunton River State Park in Halifax County, Virginia.

S. R. Farmer Lake is a major lake located just southwest of Yanceyville. It is fed by Country Line Creek. It is a pristine lake open March 1 - October 31 for fishing and canoeing.

CASWELL COUNTY NATURAL FEATURES

Natural Features of note include, but are not limited to, the following:

Dan River (sluices and access); Country Line Creek and other significant streams (and streams with mills/ruins); Farmer Lake, NC wildlife preservation and Game Lands; NC Natural Heritage Inventory sites; and Bursted Hill

The other major natural attraction in Caswell County is the NC Game Lands sites.

Caswell County is home to one of the largest and most well managed Game Lands in the state. Totaling over 16,000 acres, the Caswell Game Lands boasts the state's largest population of wild turkeys. The Caswell Game Lands also has an abundance of deer and other wildlife and has several Game Land ponds for fishing.

And not to be left out is the rural landscape with rolling fields of grass, hay, corn, tobacco and soybeans. While intertwined with cultural amenities, this landscape defines Caswell County and is the essence of its beauty.

For more information on the NC Wildlife Resources Commission visit their website at: www.wildlife.state.nc.us/



6.4 POPULATION, WEALTH AND WORKFORCE TRENDS

In 2010, the County population was 23,719. The per capita income in the county was \$17,443 and the Median Family income was \$34,028.00 compared to the U.S. average of \$43,754. 22.6% of Caswell County's total population lives below the poverty level compared to the national average of 16.2%. Caswell County's average weekly wage for 2005 was \$396, while the average weekly wage for surrounding counties was \$550. The current average weekly wage standard is \$417, still one of the lowest in the state.

Caswell County was once one of the wealthiest counties in the state. This was in Caswell County's "Boom Era" from approximately 1830 until the Civil War.

Agriculture has been a vital historical part of Caswell's history. The Brightleaf Tobacco Curing Process originated here, and tobacco production remains an important industry in the county. The agriculture industry in Caswell also includes soybeans, corn, grains, and livestock. Many farmers have recently switched from tobacco to beef and specialty crops.

Other agricultural opportunities have been realized through horticultural nurseries, strawberry patches and other assorted fruit orchards. Only 1.6% of the Caswell workforce, however, belongs to the agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting industry groups.

The 18-34 year old labor force within thirty miles of Yanceyville is over 85,000. This labor force is predominantly composed of workers experienced in traditional manufacturing including textiles, metal fabrication, food processing, and electronics. Over 68% of workers living in Caswell County work outside the county. They have an average drive of 30 minutes.

6.5 HEALTH TRENDS

Health officials are increasingly concerned about the growing rate of obesity among Caswell County's school children and adults of all ages.

A survey in 2003 by the Caswell County Health Department found that 54.6% of teenagers considered themselves overweight. In 2004 the Health Department's Healthy Weight Initiative reported that more than one in four youth ages 12-18, more than one in five ages 5-11, and more than one in eight pre-school children (2-4) were affected by the obesity epidemic. The picture was little changed in 2005 or 2006.

Even more recent data suggests that the obesity epidemic among Caswell County children continues to worsen. The Dan River Region's 2010 report card revealed that obesity in children increased in Caswell County to 30.4 percent of 5- to 11- year olds from 2003 to 2009.

The trend is also prevalent in adults. There is a seven percent increase in obesity among adults when compared to the North Carolina average. For Caswell County, this amounts to an additional 1,670 citizens.

Why is this so important? In 2007, according to Health Department officials, \$1,441,627 of Caswell County Medicaid spending was attributed to maladies resulting from overweight and obesity.

Portions of sections 2.4 and 2.5 were adapted from the U.S. Census Bureau at: <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/37/37033.html>

CASWELL COUNTY HEALTH REPORT CARD

Overweight or Obese: F
Meets physical activity recommendation: F

Obese Children and Youth in US:

- Ages 6-12:
 - 1960's: 4%
 - 2003/2004: 19%
-
- Ages 12-19:
 - 1960's: 4.5%
 - 2003/2004: 17.5%

Obese Children and Youth in NC:

- Overweight or Obese: 30%

Obese Adults in NC:

- Adults Overweight or Obese: 63%
- Adults Overweight or Obese (Caswell): 70%
- +1,670 Caswell Residents

*Caswell County: Eating Smart and Moving More
Report Card (2006 data)*



7 STATUS OF TRAILS AND PLANNING

Caswell County has seen various efforts related to creating regional and local trails. Most of these, however, are related to on-road experiences such as driving tours and bike routes. Certain off-road trails and trail plans have emerged more recently, illustrating the growing demand and need for trails.

Since 2009, over two miles of trails have been constructed near the Caswell County Senior Center in Yanceyville. These local trails will benefit nearby neighbors and institutions such as a day care and elementary school and can stand alone as their own trail system.

But a more intensive trail system is needed throughout the county to link Caswell's natural, cultural and historical amenities to provide an expansive off-road journey.

And there is demand for trails in Caswell County. This is exemplified in the 2007 Caswell County Health Assessment where walking and hiking trails were deemed the number one priority for recreational needs.

While Caswell's array of winding country roads have been promoted for driving tours and bicycling, the County is increasingly interested in protecting and promoting its rural and nature heritage. The development of off-road "heritage trails" will recognize special heritage areas, complement Caswell's bicycle routes guide, create alternatives to driving and provide another reason for visitors to come to Caswell.

The following pages present a synopsis of previous trail related efforts. These will offer companion routes and opportunities for the planning of the Heritage Trails with goals of overlapping attractions and intertwining tours while also providing a new trail-based community amenity.

2007 CASWELL COUNTY COMMUNITY HEALTH ASSESSMENT

Respondents were asked to rank currently unavailable recreation facilities that would have the greatest impact on them or their family.

They are listed below in order of importance with 1 having the most impact.

1. Walking/hiking trails
2. Air conditioned gymnasium
3. Outdoor basketball courts
4. Soccer/football fields
5. Other (included aquatic facility, bridal path/horse trails, weight training facility)

CHAPTER 7

7.1 Driving Tours

7.2 Bike Tours

7.3 Walking Tours

7.4 Dan River Features and Access

7.5 Previous Caswell County Trail Plans

7.6 Other Significant Trail Efforts in the Region

7.7 Other Significant Planning Efforts in the Region

7.1 DRIVING TOURS
NC COLONIAL HERITAGE SCENIC
BYWAY

“The NC Colonial Heritage Scenic Byway provides an impressive tour of 18th and 19th century history in North Carolina,” states the NC Scenic Byway Master Plan. The tour begins in Monticello in Guilford County and ends in Durham. A vast majority of the route, though, is embedded in Caswell County as it passes by historic properties and into the towns of Yanceyville and Milton. The route winds through stunning scenery in the rural landscape, particularly from Yanceyville to Milton and back through the Game Lands.

For further information, please see: www.ncdot.org/travel/scenic/



Excerpt from NC Scenic Byway Master Plan

CASWELL COUNTY HERITAGE
DRIVING TOUR

Caswell County is a special place to visit for its storied past and beautiful landscape. The Caswell County Heritage Driving Tour focuses on the historical and common cultural aspects of the community as well as more unique opportunities. It offers an excellent day trip - or longer - for photographers and graphic artists. The listing of Heritage sites includes:

- Bartlett Yancey House and Cemetery
- Baynes Store
- Brown’s Arbor Primitive Baptist Church
- Brown’s Store
- Calvin Graves Plantation
- Caswell Council for the Arts
- Caswell County Historic Courthouse
- Caswell County Farms (various)
- Caswell County Jail, Poteat School and Arboretum
- Caswell County Training School
- Leasburg and surrounding area churches and houses
- Milton Commercial Row
- Red House Presbyterian Church
- Richmond-Miles History Museum
- Shangri-la
- Thomas Day Union Tavern
- Warren’s Store
- Yanceyville Presbyterian Church
- Yanceyville Historic District
- Yoder’s Amish Market

For more information on the Heritage Driving Tour, contact the Caswell County Historical Association



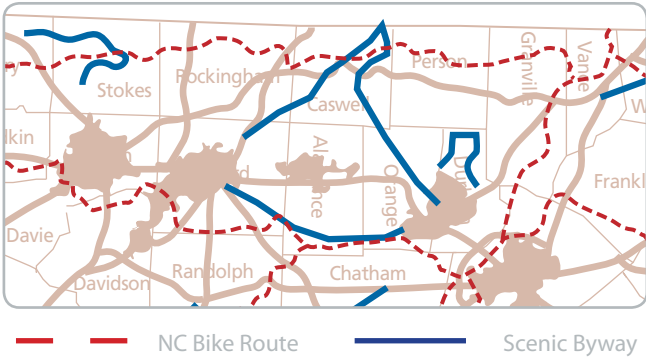
7.2 BIKE ROUTES

There are a number of opportunities to traverse Caswell County on pedal power alone. The North Carolina Bike Route #4 passes through the county as it moves east-west through the northern portion of the state.

Within the county are eight loops that make for a less strenuous ride and are short enough for families to enjoy. These routes should be signed with “local bike route” signage to promote their ability to provide family exercise and transportation options.

NC BIKE ROUTE 4

NC Bike Route 4, known as the North Line Trace, runs east-west just south of the Virginia border all the way from the mountains to the coast. This 400-mile route gives access to six state parks and several other recreation areas. Along the way are opportunities to explore areas such as Stone Mountain, Pilot Mountain and Hanging Rock State Parks, Hyco Reservoir, Kerr Lake and Lake Gaston Recreation Areas, Merchants Millpond State Park, and the Dismal Swamp and Currituck Sound areas.



The route passes through historic Yanceyville and runs with the NC Colonial Scenic Byway for a number of miles along NC 62.

Source: www.ncdot.org/travel/mappubs/bikemaps/

CASWELL COUNTY BIKE PLAN

Caswell County’s sparse rural population makes it a wonderful place to bicycle with little traffic congestion and much scenic beauty. Caswell County has 18th and 19th century dwellings and structures ranging from the grandeur of 18th century tobacco plantations to early settler log cabins and farm buildings. Caswell County automobile drivers will “share the road” with cyclists and usually move over to pass cyclists in the opposite lanes of travel.

The bike routes are divided into 8 “regions”, or routes:

- Route 1 – Bright Leaf Loop – 19.6 Miles
- Route 2 – Milton Loop – 20.8 miles
- Route 3 – Hyco Lake Loop – 22.0 miles
- Route 4 – Cherry Grove Loop – 22.3 miles
- Route 5 – Milesville Loop – 18.2 miles
- Route 6 – Game Lands Loop – 18.4 miles
- Route 7 – Park Springs Loop – 19.8 miles
- Route 8 – Pelham Loop – 15.8 miles

There are also connectors that link these loops, greatly expanding the on-road bike experience in Caswell County.

For more information and to view the bike map, please see: http://caswellchamber.com/images/stories/bike_route.pdf

7.3 WALKING TOURS

Walking is the best way to take in a town or any new environment. By walking, one can get a sense of the fabric of community and can explore the past. From the details of the architecture, one can gauge the level of sophistication and wealth of the original family. Standing in the historic courtroom or in the old jail in Yanceyville, or along the fabled streets of Milton, you can feel the rich history of Caswell County.

YANCEYVILLE HISTORIC DISTRICT WALKING TOUR

The Yanceyville Historic District Walking Tour was developed by the Caswell County Historical Association. This self-guided tour begins at the historic Caswell County Courthouse. From Court Square, the easy walk follows West Main Street out-and-back on a 3/4 mile tour of architectural splendor. Ending back at the courthouse, the tour ends with the Poteat One-Room Schoolhouse. An arboretum and trail also add to the experience of the walking tour.

For more information, please visit:

www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~nccchal/index.html

There are a total of 21 sites along the route:

- Caswell County Courthouse
- Clarendon Hall
- Dr. Allen Gunn House
- Barzillai Shufford Graves Home
- Senator John W. Stephens burial site
- Abisha Slade home site
- Sallie Martin House
- Samuel P. Hill Law Office
- Walter Harrelson House
- Dr. Albert Gallatin Yancey Home
- Rucks-Kerr Cottage
- Azariah Graves Storefront
- Harrelson-Watlington Building
- Old Ford Building
- East side of Court Square Buildings
- Yanceyville Presbyterian Church
- Clerk of Court Haralson's Home
- Poteat One-Room Schoolhouse
- Kerr Hotel
- Old Jail
- Dongola



Yanceyville Historic District Walking Tour



(Richmond-Miles History Museum)

September 24-25, 2005

Yanceyville, North Carolina

**Presented by
The Caswell County
Historical Association**

Begin your tour at (1) the historic Caswell County Courthouse, which was completed in 1861.



Note the historic marker at the southwest corner of the courthouse grounds. It tells of the murder of State Senator John Walker ("Chickadee") Stephens at the courthouse on May 23, 1876. During Reconstruction after the Civil War, Caswell was occupied by troops sent by Governor William W. Holden to find and bring to justice those responsible for the political assassination. Not until 1955 was it revealed that the Ku Klux Klan, led by John G. Lee, had garroted and stabbed the Radical Republican leader Stephens in his former office in the Caswell County Courthouse.

Continue your walk by taking the sidewalk from the Court House marker and head west on West Main Street past the old doctor, barber shop, and offices.



Look south through the formal alley of oaks that frame your view of stately (2) Clarendon Hall, built in 1842 for banker Thomas Donoho Johnston and meticulously restored by him and Margaret Williams, to showcase this Federal dwelling, with Greek Revival details.

Continuing onward, you reach (3) the stucco-over-brick Dr. Allen Gunn House, featuring a Mid-Victorian and Federal design with delicate ornamentation over the front doors. The builder, Dr. Allen Gunn, was influential in both the town and county, and was once offered the office of sheriff in return for considerable cash, by Senator John W. Stephens. Unlike the court house, the Gunn House did not receive its coat of stucco until years after 1850.



The next house on the tour is down two lanes west on West Main Street from the Dr. Allen Gunn house. This is (4) the typically Gay 90's home of Barzillai Shufford Graves and his wife Miss Mull, which is set on a generous lot with many old trees (a starting site in autumn). It retains high ceilings with some original wallpaper and woodwork.

Excerpt from Yanceyville Historic District Walking Tour

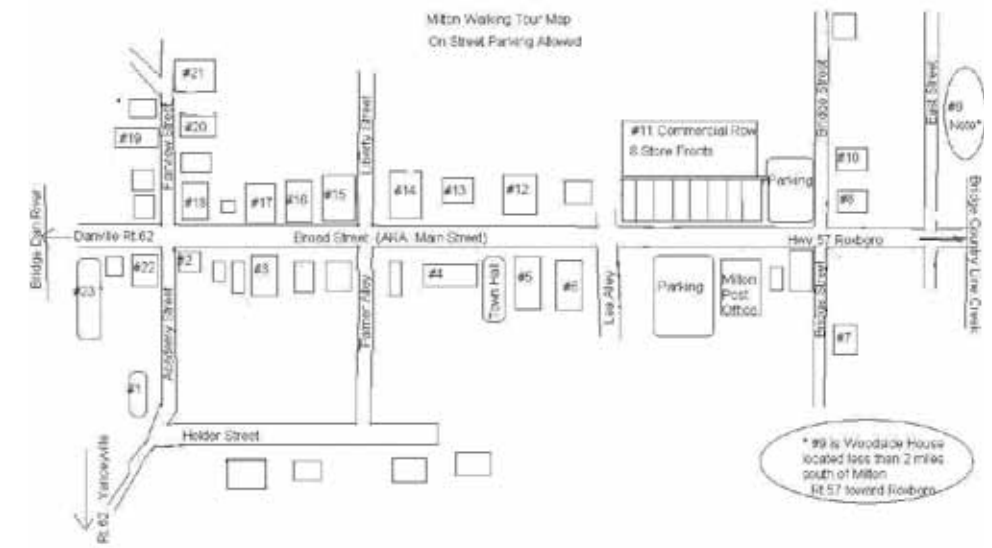
MILTON WALKING TOUR

Milton's Historic Walking Tour begins near the intersection of NC 62 and NC 57. It features 28 locations along the 3/4 mile walk along Broad Street (AKA Main Street or NC 57).

The current sites on the self-guided walking tour are:

- High Street Baptist Church
- Episcopal Church/Milton Woman's Club
- Presbyterian Church
- Union Tavern/Thomas Day House
- Friou/Hurdle House
- Terry/Jones House
- Wooding Place
- Oliver House
- Woodside House (Ramseur House)
- Baptist Meeting House
- Commercial Row
- Milton State Bank
- Watkins House Site
- Thomas Store (Milton General Store)
- Thomas House
- Winstead House
- Mehaffey House
- Clay-Lewis-Irvine House
- Robert L. Walker House
- Methodist Church of Milton
- Fairview
- Patterson/Dodson House
- Cedars Cemetery
- Milton Hotel (site only)
- Holder Farm
- Town Hall/Milton Fire Department
- Plug Tobacco Warehouse
- Liberty Warehouse (site only)

For more information, please see:
www.miltonnc.com/townmap.html



Map for Milton Walking Tour



7.4 DAN RIVER FEATURES AND ACCESS

The Milton Boat Landing is the first downstream Dan River access after Danville. It is owned by the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission, but is also open to Virginia boaters and anglers. The ramp is at the Route 62 bridge crossing of the Dan River. It is located only a half mile west of shops and eateries in historic Milton.

It is a 10.5-mile float on the Dan River from Danville, VA to historic Milton, NC. Rated as Class 1.

The float, which can vary from 4-8 hours dependent upon water levels, passes through six navigation sluices built in the early nineteenth century to deepen the channel for massive batteaux that carried cargo on the river. These structures still provide easy passage through the rapids, as well as colorful names from the era when the river served as the only highway into the region: Julius Allen's Sluice, Noble's Shoal Sluice, Dix's Shoal Sluice at Hogan's Creek, Wilkinson's Shoal Sluice at Moon Creek, Thomas's Fish Dam Sluice below Rattlesnake Creek, and Dodson's Fish Dam Sluice.

Fish dams, built by Native Americans and early settlers, are low V-shaped or W-shaped rock structures that funneled fish into waiting nets or baskets as they returned seaward from their massive spawning runs. Descendants of these huge fish populations, now trapped by the dam at John H. Kerr Reservoir, are celebrated with the striped bass tournament each April at Angler's Park in Danville.

About a mile below Angler's Park is the site of Dix's Ferry where President George Washington crossed the Dan on his southern tour on June 4, 1791. Farther downstream is Burstled Hill, a cone-shaped hill rising

130 feet on river right, first reported in a paper before Benjamin Franklin's American Philosophical Society in Philadelphia in 1790.

Take-out is at the public boat landing at Milton, which was founded as a batteau port.

If putting in at Milton, the next public access is in South Boston, which is approximately 20 miles following the Dan River.

For more information and illustrations of the surrounding region, see Maps 27-32 of "An Insider's Guide to the Dan River." (www.danriver.org)

For further information about the Dan River, see The Dan River Book by Caswell County resident Dr. Forrest Altman.



7.5 PREVIOUS CASWELL COUNTY TRAIL PLANS

The Piedmont Triad Regional Council (PTRC) has produced two trail plans which are pertinent to Caswell County:

- The Piedmont Regional Trail Plan
- The Caswell County Senior Center Trail Plan

The Piedmont Regional Trail Plan is a regional trail inventory and plan and therefore only features major trail options for Caswell County. The Caswell County Senior Center Trail Plan, on the opposite end of the spectrum, identifies specific trail routes on county-owned property.

PIEDMONT REGIONAL TRAIL PLAN AND INVENTORY REPORT

The Piedmont Regional Trail Plan includes an inventory of existing and currently proposed trails and identifies new proposed regional trail connections throughout the Piedmont Triad. Building on existing local trail planning efforts, recent Mountains-to-Sea Trail (MST) and open space planning efforts, PTRC proposed regional trails or the Piedmont. The Plan was finalized in 2011 and is produced by the Piedmont Triad Regional Council.

This Piedmont Regional Trail Plan proposes two trails in Caswell County - with one of them being labelled “high priority” by workshop attendees.

The highest priority trail in Caswell County as indicated by the PTCOG Plan is the “Dan River Trail.” The proposed Dan River Trail is a blueway and/or greenway trail that would connect Danville to Milton.

The other proposed trail is one connecting the NC Mountains-to-Sea Trail with Virginia trails such as the Tobacco Heritage Trail and/or Beaches to Bluegrass Trail. This trail essentially follows Country Line Creek, parallels the NC Scenic Byway and compliments a regional Race-to-the Dan route.

Please see Chapter 2: Trails of the Master Plan for a more detailed discussion on the Dan River and Country Line Creek trails.

Additional information on the Piedmont Triad Regional Council can be found at: www.ptrc.org/

CASWELL COUNTY SENIOR CENTER TRAILS MASTER PLAN

The Caswell County Senior Center Trail Plan materialized out of discussions with the Caswell County Senior Center, the Piedmont Triad Council of Governments Aging and Planning Departments, Caswell County Parks and Recreation Department, Health Department, and Recreation Commission.

This plan, when implemented, will show citizens of Caswell County the community value of tying together parks, schools, and the new Senior Center, while encouraging the development of other trail connection projects across the County.

Dan River Basin Association staff has provided oversight on the pilot trails from 2009-2012.



In both North Carolina and Virginia, major trail efforts are underway linking communities and counties from one end of the state to the other. In NC, the Mountains-to-Sea Trail will link Clingman's Dome in the Great Smoky Mountains to Jockey's Ridge on the Outer Banks. The Virginia Beaches to Bluegrass Trail is a proposed statewide trail that will eventually stretch west to east from the Cumberland Plateau to the Chesapeake Bay. Each of these significant trail systems is just footsteps away from Caswell County.

MOUNTAINS-TO-SEA TRAIL (NC)

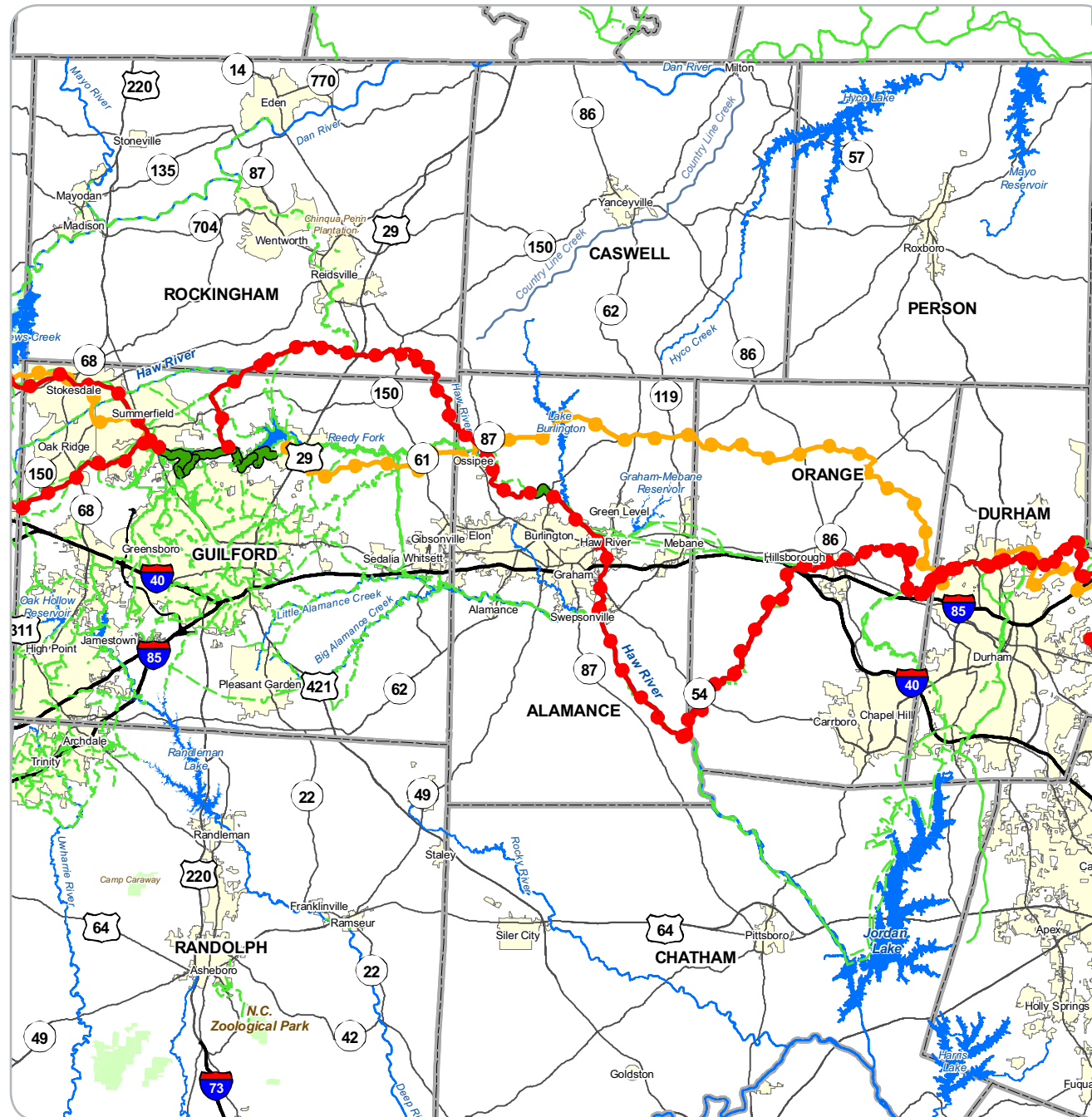
The Mountains-to-Sea Trail stretches 1,000 miles from
Clingman's Dome in the Great Smoky Mountains to
Jockey's Ridge on the Outer Banks.

Today, more than 500 miles of footpath are built. With temporary connectors on back roads and state bike routes, people can now hike across the state.

Of regional significance to Caswell County is the routing of a spur for the Mountains-to-Sea Trail that is planned to pass through southeastern Rockingham County and northeastern Guilford County. This spur is a short distance from the rise of Country Line Creek in Caswell County.

The official Mountains-to-the-Sea Trail map on this page illustrates the primary route in red and the alternative routes in orange.

For more information, please see: www.ncmst.org/



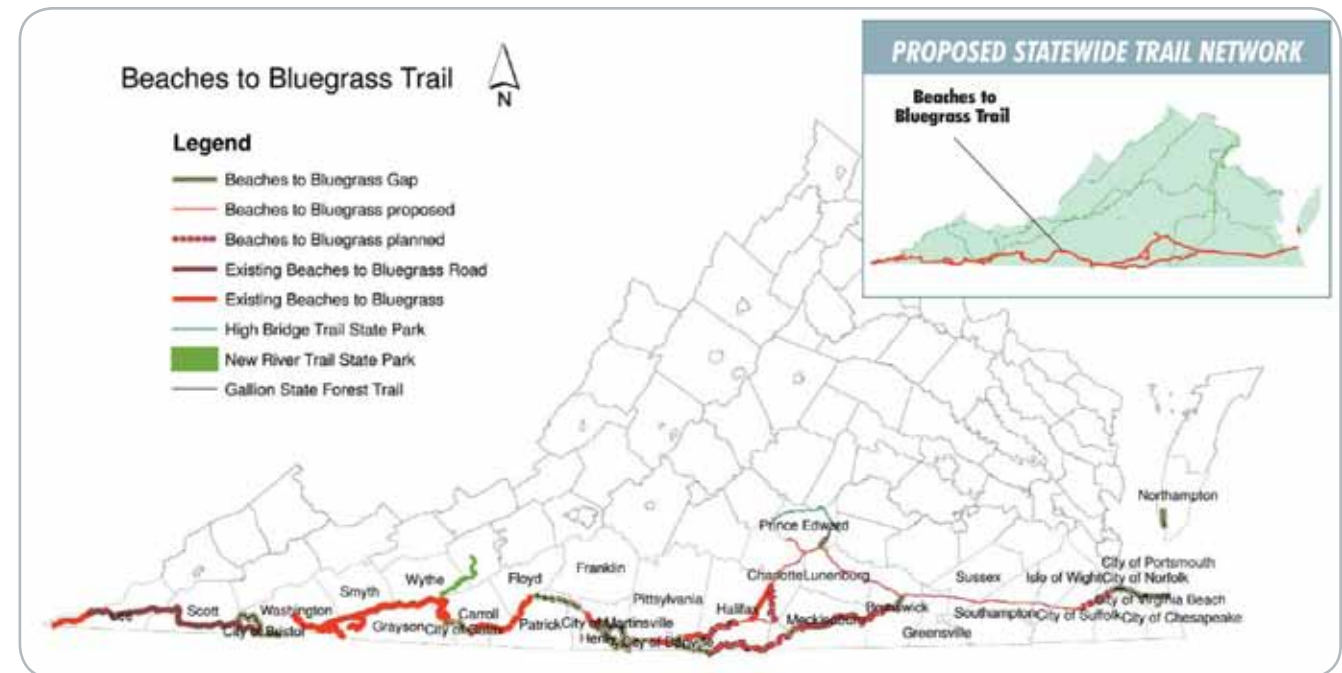
BEACHES TO BLUEGRASS (VA)

The Virginia Beaches to Bluegrass Trail is a proposed statewide trail that will eventually stretch west to east from the Cumberland Plateau to the Chesapeake Bay. Comprised of many trails existing or underway, this network will connect the mountains to the sea and is envisioned to stimulate ecotourism across rural southern Virginia.

The proposed Tobacco Heritage Trail will form the central piece of this trail network, with its multipurpose rail-to-trail through Brunswick, Mecklenburg and Halifax counties.

Caswell County is adjacent to Danville and Pittsylvania County. Access to the Beaches to Bluegrass Trail could occur via Milton.

*For more information, please see:
www.dcr.virginia.gov/recreational_planning/trailb2b.shtml*



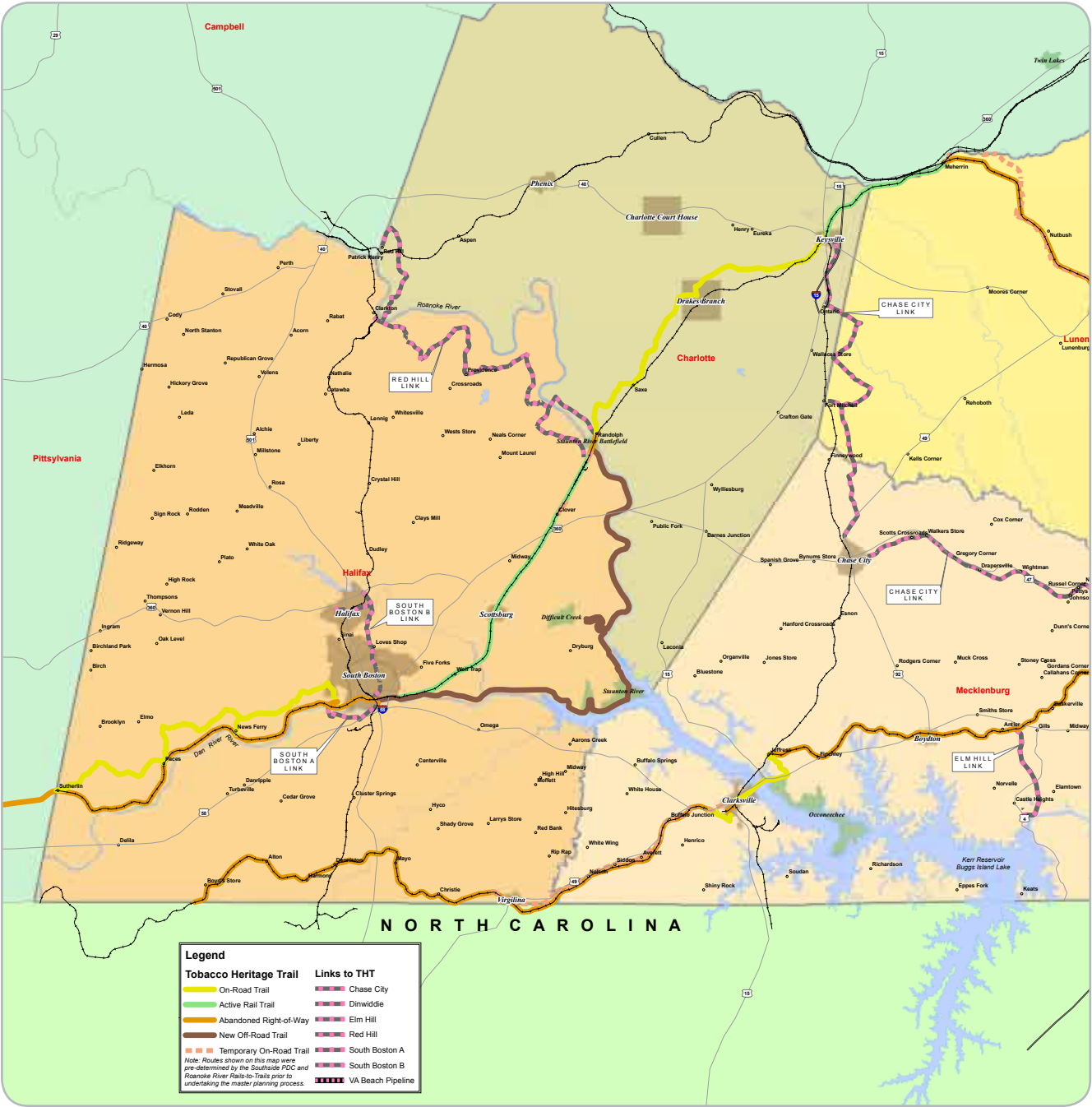
TOBACCO HERITAGE TRAIL (VA)

The Tobacco Heritage Trail is a regional trail network encompassing over 160 miles of abandoned railroad right-of-way linked with more than 110 miles of on-road trail, new trail and active rail right-of-way.

The Tobacco Heritage Trail will connect existing trail segments and create new trail within five counties: Brunswick, Mecklenburg, Halifax, Charlotte, and Lunenburg Counties, with a potential spur trail connection to Dinwiddie County.

The relevance of the Tobacco Heritage Trail to Caswell County is that one of its routes follows an abandoned Atlantic to Danville rail line. This is the same abandoned rail line that works its way into Milton and to Danville. While the Virginia-based Plan does not illustrate any proposed trail in North Carolina, planning logic suggests a continuation of the trail system.

For more information, please see:
www.tobaccoheritagetrail.org/



HAW RIVER TRAIL

Following Gray's Branch in the southern portion of Caswell County, a link can be made to the Haw River Trail in Alamance County. The Haw River Trail is a 70-mile long multi-use trail following the path of the Haw River from Haw River State Park to Jordan Lake State Recreation Area. For over half of that stretch, the Haw River Trail will combine with the statewide Mountains-to-Sea Trail. The Haw River is within the Cape Fear River Basin.

The Haw River Trail is being built on the belief that the first step to conservation is appreciation and that allowing the public to experience the Haw River first hand via land and paddle trails will create interest in and respect for the River.

The concept and drive behind the Haw River Trail are the product of the vision and hard work of local citizens, organizations and governments dating back more than a decade. In 2006, those efforts resulted in an innovative agreement in which 10 governmental agencies signed a Memorandum of Understanding agreeing to work together for the development of the Haw River Trail and the conservation of its land and waters.

That same year, the cities of Burlington and Graham partnered with Alamance County, Elon University, Preservation North Carolina and the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation to fund a full-time position to coordinate conservation and trail efforts on the Upper Haw River. In 2009, the Haw River Trail Coordinator became a permanent position within Alamance County government, with continuing contributions from Burlington and Graham.

Source: www.thehaw.org/About_us.html

DANVILLE RIVER WALK TRAIL

The Riverwalk on the Dan may define the City of Danville for the 21st century. Historically, the Dan River was used as a catalyst for industry. Now the river's value also rests in its natural beauty and recreational opportunities. With the ability to lure walkers, bikers and parents with strollers through parks and natural areas, historic sites and businesses, this trail along the Dan River links Danville's past to its future.

The paved path is designed for use by walkers, joggers, bikers, inline skaters, dog walkers and others. This path connects to woodland trails and facilities at Dan Daniel Memorial Park and Anglers Park, the Carrington Pavilion, the Danville Science Center and historic downtown Danville. The Riverwalk is truly one successful path to the vision adopted by Danville.

Caswell County is adjacent to Danville and Pittsylvania County.

Source: Danville RiverWalk Brochure and at www.danville-va.gov/DocumentView.aspx?DID=3725

ROCKINGHAM COUNTY PATHWAYS

Rockingham County Pathways is a long range plan that strives to work with municipalities, citizens, business owners, and landowners to identify and prioritize opportunities to create recreational trails throughout the County.

The following goals can be achieved by completing the trail projects found in this plan:

- Link safe places to improve health by increasing the variety of opportunities residents have and providing more off-road venues for physical activity.
- Expand recreation opportunities and improve access, providing outdoor activities for all age groups.
- Protect open space, streams and rivers by allowing people to experience and appreciate open space on designated routes and ensuring that sensitive environmental areas are left open instead of being developed for other more intense uses.
- Support economic development by offering local destinations, attracting people to area recreational opportunities and luring industry with high quality of life for their employees.

7.7 OTHER SIGNIFICANT PLANNING EFFORTS IN THE REGION

Among planning efforts in Caswell County are two with specific relevance to the Heritage Trails Master Plan. The 21st Century Plan has many recommendations on how to improve and market the county, including several recommendations pertinent to trails.

The North Carolina Natural Heritage Program has recently completed their Significant Natural Heritage Area survey for Caswell County.

Both of these planning projects will provide necessary support and data for the Heritage Trails Master Plan.

21ST CENTURY COMMUNITY PLAN FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The 21st Century Communities Plan was sponsored by the North Carolina Department of Commerce and developed in 2005. The outcome was a 39 page strategic plan which focused on six subject areas critical to economic expansion in rural communities. These are:

- Marketing and Promotions
- Agriculture
- Outreach
- Economic Development through Industrial Recruitment
- Education
- Infrastructure Improvements

The purpose of the plan is to ensure economic and educational growth in Caswell County in the 21st century. After determining that Caswell County has the “potential to become an attractive location for tourism”

and that “the county is ideally situated geographically to the Research Triangle Park and Piedmont Triad,” the 21st century committee listed several critical areas limiting Caswell’s growth and development. Some of these needs included:

- Need to promote the agricultural potential while preserving the agricultural heritage of the county
- Need to increase funding for education programs
- Need to encourage the formation of a non-profit corporation for the promotion of new ventures

The plan puts forth recommendations for implementation in order to spur on economic development.

The following is a list of the plan recommendations relevant to trails for each subject area.

MARKETING AND PROMOTIONS

- Recommendation 1: The County should create a strong centralized tourism authority
- Recommendation 2: Obtain grants for the promotion of potential new business ventures to encourage tourism and economic development

AGRICULTURE

- Recommendation 2: Establish a Farmer’s Market and Agriculture Museum to attract shoppers and tourists to the county

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT THROUGH INDUSTRIAL RECRUITMENT

- Recommendation 3: Fund the Office of Economic Development in Caswell County

EDUCATION

- Recommendation 4: Facilities Improvements at Schools

INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS

- Recommendation 2: Expedite County-wide Zoning and Land Use Planning

NC NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM

The NC Natural Heritage Program (NC NHP) has taken the lead in creating natural heritage inventories and has identified more than 2,000 Significant Natural Heritage Areas (SNHAs) across the state. A Significant Natural Heritage Area is an area of land or water identified by the Natural Heritage Program as being important for conservation of the State's biodiversity. SNHAs contain one or more Natural Heritage elements: high-quality or rare natural communities, rare plant species, and special animal habitats.

The Natural Heritage Program documents the status and distribution of the rarest plants and animals by working closely with experts from across the state and in cooperation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Plant Conservation Program of the N.C. Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services and the Wildlife Diversity Program of the N.C. Wildlife Resources.

Caswell County's Significant Natural Heritage Survey was completed near the end of 2011. It established priorities for protection of SNHAs in Caswell County by their significance:

- Nationally Significant Sites
- State Significant Sites
- Regionally Significant Sites
- County Significant Sites

NATIONALLY SIGNIFICANT SITES

The only site of National significance in the county is the Frogsboro Flats SNHA, which is mostly on Caswell Game Land. Though not protected with a special designation, the NC WRC is aware of its significance and has kept the area outside of its timber management. It is hoped that the natural area can be protected as a Dedicated State Nature Preserve.

STATE SIGNIFICANT SITES

Five Caswell SNHAs are of State significance:

- Country Line Creek Natural Area
- Caswell Upland Hardwood Forest
- Griers Church Road Ultramafic Forest
- Hogan's Creek Floodplain and Slopes
- Wolf Island Creek/Dan River Slopes

Three of these – Country Line Creek Natural Area, Caswell Upland Hardwood Forest, and Griers Church Road Ultramafic Forest – lie completely or mostly on Caswell Game Land and are conservation lands, though not necessarily protected from timber harvest or other management practices.

One unprotected State significant site in Caswell County is Hogan's Creek Floodplain and Slopes, which straddles the Caswell - Rockingham County line. This site contains an excellent and fairly extensive bottomland forest, as well as a variety of other natural communities, mainly on the Caswell side.

The other unprotected Caswell County site of State significance, plus several of Regional significance, lie very close to the Dan River. Most of the floodplain of the river has already been converted from forests to pastures and cropland, with only a narrow buffer of hardwood trees along the levees. The Wolf Island Creek/Dan River Slopes SNHA is of State significance because of the presence of harbinger-of-spring (*Eriogenia bulbosa*), one of only two known locations for it in the state.

REGIONALLY SIGNIFICANT SITES

The Regional sites in need of conservation are (from west to east), Dan River/Blanch Levee and Slopes, Cane Creek Slopes, and Dan River/Milton Floodplain and Slopes. Another Regionally significant SNHA is in the Country Line Creek drainage area: Bigelow Road Slopes. It lies essentially within Caswell Game Land, though it has no special protection. A Regionally significant site in the Hyco Creek drainage, Hyco Lake Slopes, lies primarily outside of Progress Energy ownership (i.e., outside of buffer land for Hyco Lake).

The remainder of the Regionally significant sites are the Massey Road Hardpan Forest, Stony Creek Flats, and Stony Creek Mountain. These sites are scattered in the southern half of the county, away from the slopes of the Dan River and the creeks named above.

The last Regionally significant site is the Country Line Creek Aquatic Habitat. Fortunately, some of the banks are within Caswell Game Land, but most are not, particularly the downstream half of the creek.

COUNTY SIGNIFICANT SITES

Two additional sites close to the Dan River are considered to be of County significance. These are the Dan River/Caswell Swamp and Levee and the River Bend Road Mafic Slopes.

For more information, please see: <http://portal.ncdenr.org/web/nhp/home>



8 BENEFITS OF TRAILS

The Trails of the Master Plan are intended to benefit Caswell County in a multitude of ways. Previous chapters have illustrated the growing need for positive improvements in the physical and economic health of the county. The aim of the Trails of the Master Plan is to provide such benefits.

These and many other benefits can be organized by four general headings:

- Economic Benefits
- Environmental Benefits
- Physical Benefits
- Social Benefits

These are also sustainability categories. Every trail identified in the Heritage Trails Master Plan will correspond to two or more of these sustainability elements. While divided into different categories, there will often be overlap and shared outcomes between them. For instance, all trails encourage healthy lifestyles; trail use has the potential to foster physical and other health related benefits. But not all trails will play a role in promoting tourism, such as a trail at a local small park. Yet, creating a highly desired walking, running, hiking, biking or horse riding experience provides ample social opportunities in neighborhoods and communities. This demonstrates how the multi-faceted value of trails increase exponentially with the increase in length of the trail network and facilities.

How will the Trails benefit Caswell County? They will:

- Support economic prosperity by attracting and retaining new employers to the area
- Promote tourism
- Foster the joining of diverse communities
- Improve quality of life
- Serve as an alternative means of transportation
- Encourage healthy lifestyles
- Aid in clean air and water preservation
- Promote conservation of nature and wildlife habitats
- Promote conservation of Caswell County's rural heritage
- Increase awareness and visitation of cultural and historical venues
- Create a sustainable Carolinas legacy for generations to come
- Educate our children and connect them to nature

The following pages delve deeper into the four classifications of benefits for the Trails of the Master Plan for Caswell County.

CHAPTER 8

8.1 Economic Benefits

8.2 Environmental Benefits

8.3 Physical Benefits

8.4 Social Benefits

8.1 ECONOMIC BENEFITS

The economic impact of trails can be evaluated in short- and long- term impacts. In due time, with the emergence of the Heritage Trails system, tourism opportunities and associated business ventures will come to fruition. The investment in trails is also a long-term investment in the tourist trade.

In the short-term, however, there is the potential to have immediate returns in terms of dollars saved on public health by reducing obesity and increasing physical fitness.

In addition to creating jobs related to trail development, trails and their associated tourism create jobs in food service, accommodation, transportation and other industries.

Economic Benefits include, but are not limited to:

- Opportunity to attract tourists
- Attract, create and stimulate business, such as technology companies, where employees tend to be young and eager for outdoor recreation
- Trail construction employment opportunities
- Enhanced ability to attract and retain business through improved quality of life
- Potential for increased property values
- When incorporated into buffers, trail corridors present a less costly alternative to air and water cleanup from pollution (vs. no buffer)
- Trails and greenways offer less costly places to exercise than indoor gyms and health clubs

TOURISM

More than 4 million residents of metro areas in NC and VA live within an easy day’s drive of Caswell County. Scenery and access to natural areas are top reasons given for planning a trip, according to a recent study by *NC Tourism – NC Resident Research Study (June 2008)*.

People are becoming increasingly aware of the finite, interconnected and fragile nature of the natural environment, and tourism is becoming an increasingly popular expression of this awareness. In fact, tourism is now the world’s largest industry, with nature tourism the fastest growing segment.

Those 4 million people in the Piedmont, or a portion thereof, are travelling and spending money. One of the largest growing industries in the US is outdoor recreation. For current businesses in the county, it means sales tax and revenues. And those that travel to recreate in another community are typically keenly aware that they are helping out that place and they really do want to experience the place they are visiting. Examples of ecotourism behaviors include staying at a bed and breakfast or eating at a local restaurant versus a chain.

The potential for economic benefit can be ascertained by evaluating wildlife watcher data. There are very similar spending habits between wildlife viewers and those actively engaging nature through canoeing, kayaking, trail hiking or bike riding.

- North Carolina Wildlife Watchers data (2006):
- 2.6 million wildlife watchers (includes fishing population) spent \$916 million
 - Equates to \$352 per person, per year
 - 54% of NC population live in the Piedmont region

NC ACTIVE RECREATION ECONOMY

The NC Active Recreation Economy:

- Contributes more than 7.5 billion annually to the NC Economy
- Supports 95,000 jobs across NC
- Generates \$430 million in annual state tax revenue
- Produces \$6.1 billion annually in retail sales and services across NC

In NC in 2005, % population participating in outdoor recreation:

- Wildlife Viewing: 27%
- Trail: 26%
- Bicycling: 25% (on and off road)
- Camping: 16%
- Paddling: 15%
- Fishing: 12%
- Snow Sports: 5%
- Hunting: 4%

And these are the people Caswell County should try to attract to visit – the nature and wildlife enthusiasts with extra money in their pockets. This is in addition to marketing to all sorts of furniture and historical enthusiasts as well as hosting farm tours.

Caswell County is already reaping some rewards with visitors at the Game Lands, but Caswell is currently only serving a fraction of the bike community, the on-road biking community, and isn’t serving off-road hikers or bikers with extensive nature and wildlife trails.

A NOTE ON ECOTOURISM

In response to the increasing appreciation of nature experiences, a new travel ethic has arisen which is now called “ecotourism.” This term has become increasingly popular in both conservation and travel circles; however, it must be noted that most tourism in natural areas today is not ecotourism and is not, therefore, sustainable. A walk through the forest is not ecotourism unless that particular walk somehow benefits that environment and the citizens who live there. A rafting trip is only ecotourism if it raises awareness and funds to help protect the watershed. Ecotourism can thus be distinguished from nature tourism by its emphasis on conservation, education, traveler responsibility and active community participation.

Specifically, ecotourism possesses the following characteristics:

- Conscientious, low-impact visitor behavior
- Sensitivity towards, and appreciation of, local cultures and biodiversity
- Support for local conservation efforts
- Sustainable benefits to local communities
- Local participation in decision-making
- Educational components for both the traveler and local communities

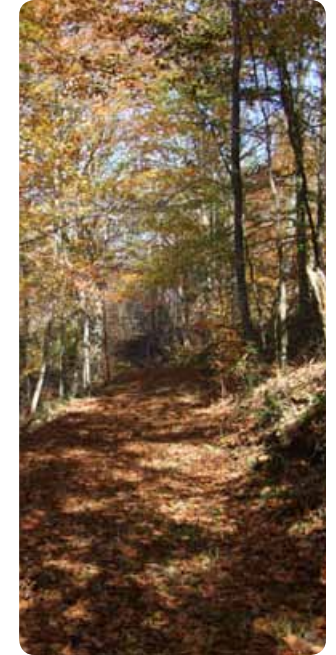
While increased tourism must be managed to avoid damage to the landscapes and ecologies that people come to visit, this same growth creates significant opportunities for both conservation and local community benefit. Ecotourism can provide much needed revenues for the protection of parks and other natural areas, revenues that might not be available from other sources. Additionally, ecotourism can provide a viable economic development alternative for local communities with few other income-generating options. Rural communities like those in Caswell

County are often rich with local knowledge and a strong appreciation of their natural and cultural heritage. Local lore and storytelling fascinate visitors, and the cultural history is conserved in the process. Moreover, ecotourism can increase the level of education and activism among travelers, making them more enthusiastic and effective agents of conservation.

This resource and its approach to marrying preservation with appropriate new business can be explored as a catalyst for local tourist industries and other sources of community revenue. Ecotourism based on Caswell County’s local history, culture and scenic beauty can be both a sustainable economic companion to farming and other rural, internet or art-based businesses and also can be a successful conservation strategy. Ecotourism creates jobs in food service, accommodation, transportation, and other industries. Because it relies on healthy ecosystems, ecotourism provides a powerful incentive to protect the environment. People who earn their living from ecotourism are more likely to protect local natural resources and support conservation efforts.

One of the basic tenets of ecotourism is to engage local communities so they benefit from conservation, economic development and education. By bringing residents into the business of ecotourism, not only can local people meet their economic needs, but they also can maintain and enhance the “sense of place” that is critical for long-term conservation.

Information in this section is adapted from the Mountain Landscapes Initiative: Region A Toolbox produced by The Lawrence Group - Architects and Town Planners



SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC GROWTH

While tobacco farming has declined, Caswell County has a rich heritage and its rural landscape offers visual relief for those from urban areas. With growing dependence on the internet and a shift from traditional manufacturing to a knowledge-based economy, rural localities are recognizing that they can compete for a different type of business: one that can locate virtually anywhere. Rural counties are increasingly recognizing the need to invest in themselves to create and promote the special places, spaces and activities to attract new residents, businesses, and entrepreneurs.

Creative workers, creative enterprises and creative communities bring the entrepreneurial strengths of the private sector to economic development. In 2006, arts industry wages alone infused more than \$3.9 billion into North Carolina’s economy, according to research by Regional Technology Strategies (RTS). Creative sector employment is estimated at more than four percent of total employment in North Carolina.

Employees of technology companies and artists, for example, tend to be young and oriented toward outdoor recreation. Thus, they are looking for that “quality of life” aspect when deciding where to live, visit or even start up or move a company.

Obviously, certain farming opportunities will persist and evolve. Trails and their business and revenue potential provide yet another option.

REDUCE HEALTH COSTS

In 2007, \$1,441,627 of Caswell County Medicaid spending was attributed to maladies resulting from overweight and obesity.

In 2004, the Health Department’s Healthy Weight Initiative reported that more than one in four youth ages 12-18, more than one in five ages 5-11, and more than one in eight pre-school children (2-4) were affected by the obesity epidemic. The picture was little changed in 2005 or 2006.

Even more recent data suggests that the obesity epidemic among Caswell County children continues to rise. The Dan River Region’s 2010 report card revealed that obesity in children increased in Caswell County to 30.4 percent of 5- to 11- year olds from 2003 to 2009.

The trend is also prevalent in adults. There is a seven percent increase in obesity among adults when compared to the North Carolina average. For Caswell County, this amounts to an additional 1,670 citizens.

The provision of an extensive trail system in every community will provide an option for citizens to exercise in addition to organized recreational opportunities. Trail facilities are often the most used in a community and they cost a fraction of the expense to build formal facilities such as gyms or pools.

A 2004 study concluded that for every dollar spent on trails nearly three dollars of public health benefits are produced (*Journal: Health Promotion Practice*).

The Trust for American Health, in “Prevention for a Healthier America,” found that programs encouraging physical activity and healthy eating and discouraging smoking were a better investment than those

concentrating on treatment. “What’s been interesting is that if you make it easier for people to make better choices, they actually do.” (2008)

Trails in each community will provide such a choice.

8.2 ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS

The environmental benefits of trails are primarily associated with the trail corridor itself and factors such as being incorporated into a buffer. Other factors, including easements and their type and purpose, can also play a role in providing environmental benefits.

The trail corridors and buffers:

- Preserve public open space
- Reduce and filter stormwater runoff
- Can regulate stream and river temperatures
- Provide an opportunity to reduce air and water pollution by providing transportation alternatives
- Provide protected wildlife corridors for migration and inhabitancy

Trails and trail corridors help to preserve a public open space. Trails often encourage the preservation of forested areas which provide multiple benefits. When located as part of a streamside forest, forested trail areas help protect water and air quality and provide protection against flooding, erosion and sedimentation, and stream corridor degradation. Forested greenways offer a cool respite from summer heat, serve as corridors for wildlife and provide additional places for children to explore and learn about nature.

These vegetated corridors and buffers along streams and rivers help to filter runoff. This is essential for protecting water from fertilizers, pesticides and other harmful pollutants, particularly in heavy rain events.

In addition to impacting water quality, destruction of critical ecological areas destroys plant and animal habitats.

Healthy creek and river banks are vegetated, not only providing runoff protection and stream bank

stabilization, but also helping to maintain desired water temperatures for wildlife. Additionally, healthy streams will have pools as well as shallows. Stream bank stability ensures minimal erosion and preserves the aquatic habitats.

Plans for future trails, blueways and greenways and other linear parks can serve both to protect natural areas along streams and floodways and provide important non-motorized transportation linkages.

When trails provide safe off-road routes which cater to multiple user groups, the option to walk or bike can replace a choice to drive. This can reduce the amount of carbon dioxide released in a community. While the offset may seem minimal, it carries more weight when coupled with the physical and social benefits and also contributes to the overall goal of sustainability of the system and the community.

STREAM PROTECTION

There are three primary concerns related to the protection of streams and rivers:

- **Water Quality.** Stream buffers are vegetated boundaries alongside waterways, which are critical to filtering out sediment, nutrients and other pollutants that would contaminate water. To maintain and enhance water quality, it is critical that stream buffers remain intact along streams and rivers.
- **Flood Control.** Forested buffers supply flood control, slowing the flow of storm water and allowing it to spread out across the floodplain where it can be absorbed. Depending on the stream, soils and topography, buffers should be between 50-200 feet wide.
- **Streambank Stabilization.** In addition to filtering pollutants, forested buffers stabilize banks and prevent erosion. Removal of streamside vegetation greatly increases the rate of bank erosion. Soil Bioengineering Practices, Native Material Revetments and In-Stream Structures can all be used to help restore bank stabilization and sustainability.

8.3 PHYSICAL BENEFITS

All trails will provide physical and health benefits to those who regularly use them.

Obesity is a major problem in Caswell County. *See Chapter 6.5: Health Trends.* Exercise is a part of the solution, along with more healthful food choices encouraged and served by schools and families.

Trails provide a more affordable alternative for physical activity than traditional team sports and fitness classes. Physical activity helps to:

- Control weight
- Control high blood pressure
- Reduce risk for type 2 diabetes, heart attack, and colon cancer
- Reduce symptoms of depression and anxiety
- Reduce arthritis pain and disability
- Prevent osteoporosis and falls
- Foster healthy muscles, bones and joints
- Maintain function and preserve independence in older adults

The trails:

- Encourage physical activity
- Can provide improved psychological health
- Provide an opportunity to reduce vehicle conflicts by providing transportation options

While proximity and safety are key considerations for the use of trail and/or park areas, the provision of such an amenity is often all it takes for use to commence. The likelihood of regular trail use increases exponentially by simply eliminating the need to get into a car and drive (a long distance) to a location to recreate. Therefore, by providing trail opportunities, physical activity is encouraged.

More and more doctors are also recognizing the psychological needs that can be satisfied with outdoor recreation. A great walk through the woods or in the outdoors can trigger additional brain activity that has been observed to provide physiological relief.

Researchers have found that those who exercise in natural settings feel more restored and less anxious than those who burned the same calories in a gym. Walking on a treadmill is very systematic and lacks the soothing influence of a walk in the woods.

Some physical benefits may not seem so obvious. Safe off-road routes that cater to multiple user groups offer an alternative to driving. Choosing to use a trail instead of making a trip in the car can reduce the likelihood of accidents by reducing the total number of cars on the road and trips made in a community.



8.4 SOCIAL BENEFITS

A system of trails would benefit Caswell County through contributing to the quality of life for all citizens. Wherever trails have become a strong component in an area, parts of the community have become connected as its citizens have met and come to know one another in the outdoors.

Trails, trailheads and parks:

- Improve the quality of life and desirability of an area
- Provide a public open space
- Provide an opportunity for gathering and community interaction

The social benefits also include making connections to history and culture, tying together generations of conflict and resolution, boom and bust, and livelihoods of days gone by and those of tomorrow.

Programming and education will contribute to the social sustainability of communities. Caswell County is laced with a unique history and there are many stories to be told and experienced throughout the fabric of the county.

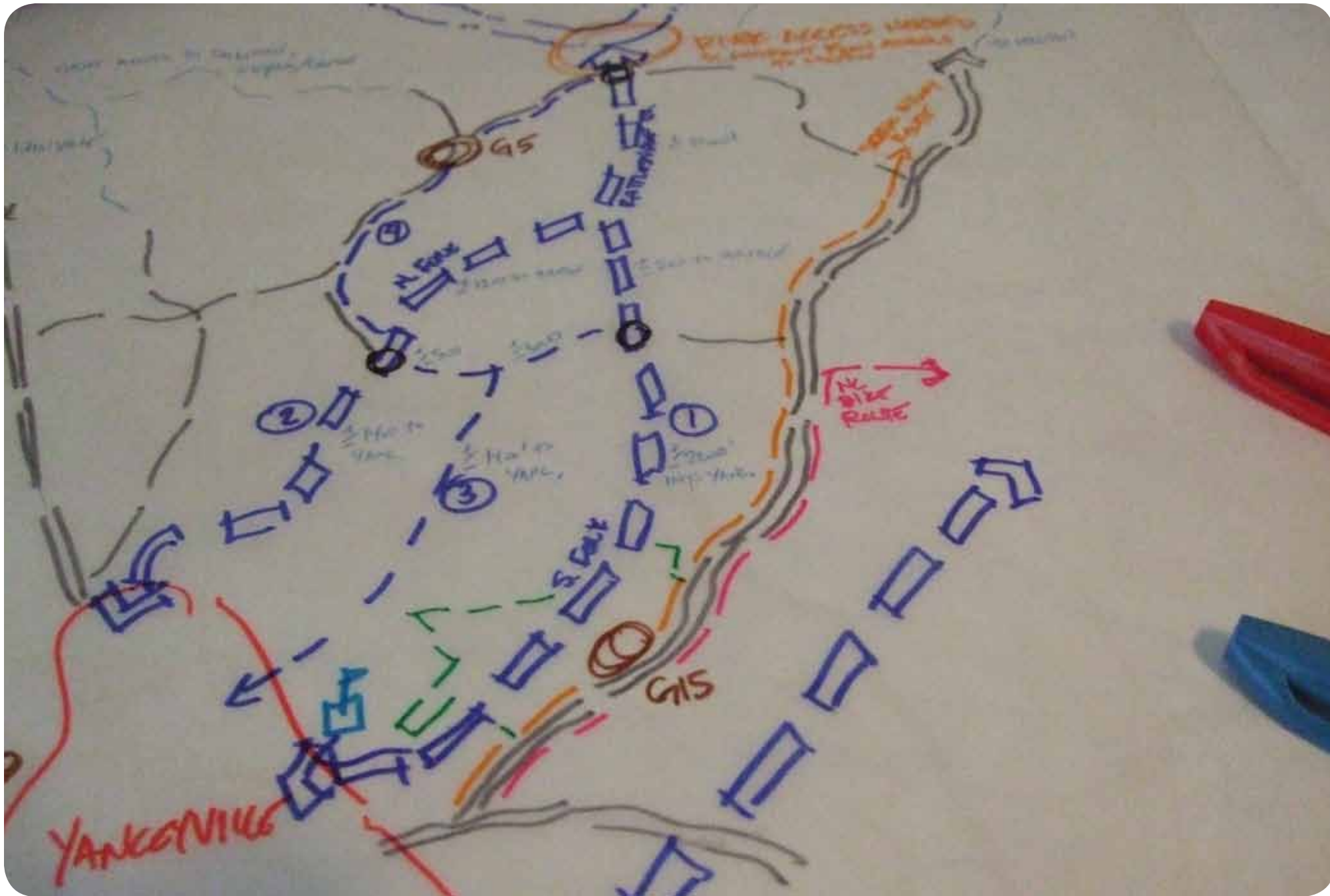
The social benefits are additionally augmented when coupled with the stories and lore of surrounding communities. These will be accessible with connections to trails and features beyond the Caswell County borders with trails such as the Mountains-to-Sea Trail and Beached-to-Bluegrass Trail.

EDUCATION AND PROGRAMMING

Educational opportunities abound with a well-planned network of trails to link children and adults with nature. These same trails can be designed and located to tell the stories of Caswell County's rich heritage. Examples include the historic Race to the Dan route and the Tobacco Heritage Trail.

History, culture, nature, art, science and health are but a few of the various programming opportunities that trails help to create.

Good marketing and programming also increases usage of trails by the public.



PUBLIC PLANNING AND DESIGN WORKSHOPS

At the heart of any successful public plan is public input. For the Heritage Trails Master Plan, Dan River Basin Association (DRBA) staff met with citizens and business owners as well as elected town and county officials to explore ideas and other considerations for an off-road trails system throughout Caswell County.

While numerous conversations related to trails had already taken place in several meetings over time in a hodgepodge nature, DRBA staff knew it would be beneficial to employ a “workshop” approach to bring everyone together.

Workshops provide an experience that’s increasingly rare for most people: they get to be involved in planning their community’s future and are there to have their ideas heard and explored immediately.

The public planning and design workshops were the first opportunity to explore new and old trail ideas in real time with a public audience in attendance.

Conducting the workshops over a condensed three-day period created a continuous multi-day format with built-in feedback opportunities for all.

The Heritage Trails Master Plan workshop schedule consisted of an opening presentation, ongoing public meetings, design sessions, evening pin-up sessions and a closing presentation.

A.1 PUBLIC NOTIFICATION

As with any effective public process, the public must not only be invited but eagerly encouraged to participate. That’s why the Dan River Basin Association staff went to great lengths to publicize the workshops, process and schedule.

HERITAGE TRAILS MASTER PLAN WORKSHOP SCHEDULE (2010)

Feb. 3: Kick-Off and Audience Activity, 7 - 8 PM
Feb. 16 – 18: Public Workshops, noon - 7 PM
Mar. 3: Closing Presentation, 7 - 8 PM

Prior to the workshops, mailings were sent to stakeholders and other interested parties and an announcement of the public workshops was placed in the Caswell Messenger so that it could be seen by every property owner in the county. These bulletins informed the public of the approaching workshops and invited all interested persons to attend and participate in the design and visioning activities. This invitation was well received and helped citizens become active participants in the exciting planning and design for the Heritage Trails Master Plan.

APPENDIX

A.1 Public Notification
A.2 Opening Presentation
A.3 Public Workshops
A.4 Closing Presentation
A.5 Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)
A.6 Process

A.2 OPENING PRESENTATION

On February 3, 2010 over a dozen citizens came to the Heritage Trails Master Plan “kick-off” meeting. This opening presentation focused on demonstrating the needs for the Heritage Trails Master Plan and explaining the purpose of the Plan. Additionally, the presentation illuminated the multitude of benefits of both trails and trail planning ranging from the micro scale (physical health) to the macro scale (economic health).

Much of the opening presentation was built upon the information found in Chapters 1-4 of this Master Plan.

Major Points from the presentation included:

- Reports have indicated immediate need in Caswell County to create positive change in trends related to the obesity epidemic in children and adults
- Caswell County has one of the lowest wages in the state and needs aid in converting its economic base
- Caswell County has retained a breathtaking visual character with its rural and active agricultural landscape
- Over 2 million people live within an hour’s drive of Caswell County
- Caswell County residents have stated they want to have access to trails



Opening Presentation

Some residents attending the Heritage Trails Master Plan opening presentation asked questions or stated concerns related to limiting the current use of their property.

“Family land, whether or not being utilized as active farm land or land for hunting, is still family land,” said an attendee.

This presented the opportunity to explain that the advancement of any trail system would need property owner cooperation. The Master Plan does not advise any taking of land. On the contrary, trail development will only occur with the cooperation of the property owner. There are many legal ways to record an agreement that will allow for a trail across a property owner’s land, but long before anything is signed there needs to be a positive relationship with the land owner who is allowing the trail. The landowners’ needs must be considered to the fullest extent; after all, everyone who uses the trail will be guests as they cross the land.

Another primary question for property owners interested in allowing for trails was liability. The question was answered by referring to NC State Statutes which state that a landowner shall not be liable so long as the provision of trails is free and open to the public for the purpose of recreation and education. *A more detailed discussion of the relevant statute can be found in Chapter 3.*

These concerns about liability were echoed over the three days of public workshops.

A.3 PUBLIC WORKSHOPS

In early 2010, the Dan River Basin Association hosted public visioning workshops for the Heritage Trails of Caswell County. The workshops were conducted at the Caswell Senior Center in Yanceyville.

From February 16-18, the GIS maps were rolled out and the sleeves were rolled up as 35-40 people sat down over 3 days to discuss Caswell County trail options, ideas, excitement and apprehension. This rapid cycle of information gathering and exploration was beneficial to residents, business owners, and elected town and county officials alike as we all learned the real and perceived issues and opportunities facing the County and the role trails can play. This collaborative research and planning revealed many wonderful trail visions.

Meetings, either one-on-one or as part of group discussions, were held throughout the day. As ideas were generated, they were sketched over maps and explored. At the end of each day, these were hung up and laid out on tables for interested citizens to view and make comment. This process of ongoing public meetings, design sessions, and evening pin-up sessions occurred during each day of planning and design.

Held over a three day period, the planning and design workshops provided the most efficient opportunity to meet with a large number of interest groups and citizens, solicit their input, and produce a series of recommendations and plans that conceptually reflect the aspirations and vision of the community.

DAY ONE

Excitement filled the room on the morning of February 16, the first day of the Caswell County Heritage Trails Planning and Design Workshops. Eager citizens rustled through county-wide maps displaying aerial photography, topography, hydrology and flood plain data. Basic maps showed roads, rail corridors and even bridge locations. Other maps revealed conserved lands, NC Game Lands and other recreational open space. Additional maps illustrated identified historic properties, schools and other civic sites. All the GIS map data helped guide the theoretical explorations of the trail ideas.

When conversations began on day one, there was a lot of discussion regarding the different focus of various trail systems. While everyone understood the role of trails in regard to physical health, it took some conceptual planning and design work to illustrate how trails can help the county from an economic perspective.

Therefore, to begin the workshops, Caswell County was studied as to how it relates to other trail efforts - both on- and off-road - in each state and in the region. Scenic byways, state bike routes and other existing or planned state-wide and regionally significant trail systems were mapped. These studies revealed how Caswell County can capitalize by connecting to other state-wide and regional tourism-based economic engines.

Two trail system ideas quickly emerged as having enormous potential to provide both physical and economic benefits to Caswell County. These are:

- The Dan River Trail
- The Country Line Creek Trail

These studies and ideas were put on display in the evening of the first day for the public to see and react to. While there was some resentment from property owners along the Dan River, reception was generally positive and many were intrigued by the possible economic impact the Country Line Creek Trail could provide.

During day one, it was also important to reinforce that this mapping exercise was in no way recommending a “taking of land” for the purpose of trail development. Trails shouldn’t be built on lands without property owner cooperation - which also means cooperation from the trail entity that wishes to construct said trail. At the level of detail required to lay out and route a trail, the property owner should be consulted at all times and made aware of routing options and the pros and cons of alternative routes. In the end, rather than anything similar to a taking of land, trails will be built when a property owner gives permission for a trail to be developed on the property.

This mapping and analysis exercise allows community members, planners and designers to understand more clearly the human and physical context within which they live and work. This analysis creates a useful record of local history and culture as it relates to the landscape.

In places where new trails are proposed, the analysis of these physical and social networks can focus on locations that reconnect with the historic roots of settlement in a community while preserving sites that have special cultural significance.



NOTES: THE DAN RIVER TRAIL IDEA

In Virginia, the Beaches to Bluegrass Trail will eventually connect the Cumberland Gap to the Chesapeake Bay. This trail runs along Virginia's southern border and is planned to go through Danville. From Danville, the Beaches to Bluegrass route is picked up by the Virginia Tobacco Heritage Trail and extends to South Boston by one route and Clarksville by another. It is this southernmost route which has the most bearing on Caswell County.

The southern route of the Tobacco Heritage Trail follows an abandoned rail line that eventually passes through Milton as it links to Danville. However, this is not indicated on the Virginia plan since a majority of this link between Milton and Danville is located in North Carolina. Instead, the Tobacco Heritage Trail plan stops at the state line. However, it makes planning sense to continue the train of thought of creating a trail linking Danville to Milton with the Tobacco Heritage Trail.

There is also a booming trail program in Danville: the River Walk. This trail gets much use and has a steady draw of visitors. Many participants in this master plan effort stated they regularly drove to Danville to use the River Walk. This comment alone demonstrates the need for local trails.

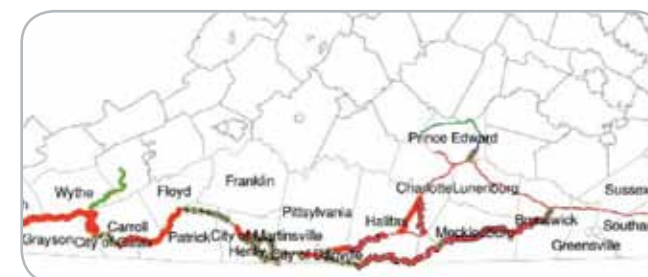
Creating a link between Danville and Milton and connecting to the Beaches to Bluegrass Trail and Tobacco Heritage Trail can be beneficial, particularly for Milton.

It is also this "Dan River Trail" idea that demanded the most attention at the Heritage Trails Master Plan workshops. Property owners along the abandoned rail line have heard through "word of mouth" for more than 20 years that there would one day be a trail "through their property." Many of the residents potentially

affected property owners present were opposed to the Dan River Trail idea.

Reasons for opposition varied, but the primary concerns were associated with restricting current land use, property rights and with liability issues.

Another key topic related to the development of the Dan River Trail idea was creating a river access near the midpoint between Danville and Milton, likely at the confluence of Rattlesnake Creek and the Dan River in Blanch, NC.



NOTES: COUNTRY LINE CREEK TRAIL IDEA
In North Carolina, the Mountains-to-Sea Trail (MST) stretches 1,000 miles from Clingmans Dome in the Great Smoky Mountains to Jockey's Ridge on the Outer Banks. The MST Trail has a proposed spur trail that will cross through the southeastern section of Rockingham County and northwestern section of Alamance County. Caswell County abuts each of these counties along its southwestern borders. An off-road link to the state-wide MST trail could be profitable in terms of tourism, especially if linked through the county to Yanceyville and Milton.

At nearly 50 miles long, a trail system along Country Line Creek could serve the county in a plethora of ways. At such length, it could easily be the “flagship” trail for the county. While the Dan River Trail will be significant, it will also be the continuation of other trail systems. The Country Line Creek Trail will be unique to Caswell.

Further augmenting its relevance and brand identity, the Country Line Creek Trail would connect to two state-wide (eco)tourism-based economic engines: the Mountains-to-Sea Trail in North Carolina and the Beaches to Bluegrass trail in southern Virginia. Its southern terminus would be a trailhead connection in Rockingham or Alamance County with the Mountains-to-Sea Trail. This occurs at the upper elevation of the trail. At the lowest elevation, Country Line Creek flows into the Dan River at Milton. It should be noted that the confluence with the Dan actually occurs in Virginia. However, in NC, a trailhead could be located near the bridge over Country Line Creek on NC Hwy 57.

Bisecting the county from southwest to northeast, a major trail system along Country Line Creek could be the central spine of a county-wide trail system and host many “feeder trails” which could help connect neighbors

and businesses in several Caswell County communities.

A major trail system such as this would also most likely breed other trails-based business opportunities such as campgrounds, bike shops and other outdoor recreation-based businesses.

By studying topographic and floodplain data, it was discovered that Country Line Creek has two distinctly different characteristics. Tributaries feed the beginning of Country Line Creek in southwestern corner of Caswell County. The creek remains fairly narrow and stays within its sandy banks in heavy rain events as it descends over 300 feet before it feeds Farmer Lake, just to the west of Yanceyville. After Farmer Lake, though, Country Line Creek descends only another 80 feet over nearly the same length en route to Milton. Under normal conditions or drier weather, there isn't much noticeable change in the appearance of Country Line Creek. However, when flooding events occur, the relatively flat route from Yanceyville to Milton yields some vastly wide floodplains. This will need to be considered when planning exact routes for a trail or trail system.

Associated with this route, but not identified, there were also conversations related to other trail opportunities with themes, such as a Race to the Dan Route.

Note: The ideas of a “Dan River Trail” and “Country Line Creek Trail” are also presented in the Piedmont Triad Regional Trail Plan and Inventory which was produced in 2011 by the Piedmont Triad Regional Council. They were identified during PTRC public workshops in the months leading up to the DRBA workshops in Caswell County.



DAYS TWO AND THREE

The second and third days of the public planning and design workshops fed from the energy on day one. With regional trail ideas in place, the focus was zoomed in to more Caswell County-specific trails. These trails are charged with providing fundamental local heritage links.

Day two began with a discussion about the vision and goals of the Master Plan. By discussing a vision for the county and the goals to be achieved, we were able to define certain challenges for the Master Plan to address.

VISION AND GOALS

The following are statements of vision as crafted during the Heritage Trails Master Plan public workshops:

We will have a vibrant, attractive, walk- and bike- friendly community that is financially, socially and environmentally sustainable.

Our country heritage will be honored through our access to aesthetic beauty, promotion of our culture, and protection of our natural resources.

Residents and visitors will be offered a strong quality of life which will help attract new businesses and new people, and will help to retain the current and future population of Caswell County.

We will be a healthy community with options for recreation and transportation, including but not limited to trails, greenways, and blueways.

Our steps to success will begin at our schools with trails on school campuses for physical, social and environmental education.

One key challenge presented at the beginning of the wokshop was to link all schools with a trail system and to heritage sites in the county. This was the starting block for the planning and design of the secondary major trails systems in Caswell County.

It was at the more fine-grained investigation when all the layers of GIS data became the most useful. Systematically, with trace paper in hand, each historic marker and each school site was recorded. These sites were then compared to hydrology (rivers, streams and tributaries), regional and local bike routes, the NC Scenic Bikeway route and to public open space data. By layering all this information onto one map, clusters of options for Heritage Trails began to emerge.

At the core of each emerging trail system is the connection of education to heritage to nature in an effort to benefit environmental, physical and social health.

As each trail system was analyzed at yet another more fine-grained level, a draft hierarchy of trails systems, or at least parts thereof, took shape.

Trails along Rattlesnake Creek and Hyco Creek, for example, would be in close proximity to historic sites and school sites. These would be of a higher hierarchy than trails such as those along Byrd’s Creek or Moon Creek since they would not have access to historic and/ or school sites.

Also discussed were ideas for the Towns of Yanceyville and Milton. The idea of a greenway connection from Yanceyville to Farmer Lake stirred much interest. Milton could reconstruct the old plank walk and connect to the old depot and Dan River access.

Many other trail opportunities were presented by members of the public during the three days of public planning and design. Often these were related to specific parcels of land. These ideas were recorded and, based upon proximity to heritage trails identified during the workshops, were explored during the development of the Heritage Trails Master Plan.

When practical, these ideas were folded into the Master Plan. These trails are important in providing local trail opportunities which encourage physical health and social gathering and may also connect with the rich heritage of Caswell County.

Another request, as part of studying for trail opportunities, was the desire to identify any potential large park sites in the county within the Master Plan.

NOTES: TRAIL PRIORITIES

Once a draft county-wide plan with a multitude of trails was assembled, a priority listing of trails was developed.

Of highest priority and importance:

- Dan River Trail (Short-term)
- Country Line Creek Trail (Long-term)

Priority list for other major trails in Caswell County:

- Connect Farmer Lake to Yanceyville (Short-term)
- Connect Yanceyville to Dan River Trail (Mid-term)
- Connect Yanceyville to Milton (Mid-term)
- Connect Leasburg to Milton (Long-term)

Driving Tour Ideas:

- Create a local tour (or multiple tours) such as a Heritage Driving Tour or themed tours such as a Farm and Barn Tour or Historic Church Tour (Short-term)
- Market the Race to the Dan (Long-term)
- Create a Furniture Tour that would link High Point and Milton (Long-term)

Other Ideas (no hierarchy):

- Connect Milton to Virginia International Raceway (VIR)
- Create Dan River Access at midpoint between Danville and Milton
- Locate potential park sites

Toward the end of day three, a discussion centered on “how to market” the heritage trails. At this point, many trail themes and additional trail route ideas were listed. These were referred to as the Master Plan developed.

NOTES: TRAIL MARKETING IDEAS

Once Heritage Trails and other trail opportunities were identified, marketing and wayfinding ideas for trails came about.

In an effort to label and market possible trails in terms of potential impact, early thoughts on trail themes were to create and brand:

- Signature Trails (Regionally Significant: within and through Caswell County)
- Signature Links (County Significant: Within, crossing multiple townships)
- Township Trails (Township Significant and specific, but also includes connectors to adjacent Townships)
- Neighborhood Trails (more helpful and healthful than “significant”)

Other ideas for organizing and marketing trails:

- Cardinal Routes (State bird and Cardinal directions)
- Township Loops: Each township should have a loop and a quadrant connector: links together townships within a quadrant. Township loop is typically 3-5 hours walk/hike time. Idea is that 3-5 hours is feasible with friends or family. More apt = chance for physical fitness more regularly
- School Loops: each to have 1/4 mile of “nature” trail
- Gateway Zones: protect for driving tours

Suggestions for a logo (as derived during public workshops):

- Horticultural theme
- Rustic in Appearance

A.4 CLOSING PRESENTATION

The message delivered at the March 3 wrap-up session was to dream big but start small. The Master Plan will have a grand vision; its implementation will depend upon the level of readiness of the county.

Caswell County residents are also in need of places to walk for exercise and health that are safe from traffic. At the workshops, residents of Yanceyville indicated that they now drive to Danville to walk. With increasing gas costs, this is having a negative economic impact on the citizens of Caswell County. Locally, if they can't afford to walk in a safe environment separated from traffic, they risk walking along winding rural roadways or choose not to walk for exercise at all. Therefore the cost outweighs the drive and regular exercise is interrupted.

The Country Line Creek Trail is the most ambitious trail for Caswell County, but it is also the most likely to spawn economic dividends in the end. While the Dan River Trail will be significant, it will also be the continuation of other trail systems in Virginia. Furthermore, its location only benefits Milton. The Country Line Creek Trail would be unique to Caswell as it connects many of Caswell's finest amenities:

- Yanceyville
- Milton
- NC Game Lands
- Farmer Lake
- Significant Natural Heritage Areas
- NC Mountains-to-Sea Trail
- VA Beaches to Bluegrass Trail

Each sub-river basin should have a trail system planned for it, thereby connecting almost all communities in the county to a significant trail system. By also utilizing local and state bike routes, each community can be connected.

Trails of highest priority and importance:

- Dan River Trail (Short-term)
- Country Line Creek Trail (Long-term)

Priority list for other major trails in Caswell County:

- Connect Farmer Lake to Yanceyville (Short-term)
- Connect Yanceyville to Dan River Trail (Mid-term)
- Connect Yanceyville to Milton (Mid-term)
- Connect Leasburg to Milton (Long-term)

At the local level, trails should begin on school campuses. These trails provide excellent opportunities for children to engage nature and participate in forms of recreation other than organized sports. As demand grows and apprehension about trails related to safety subsidies, these systems can be extended to tie to heritage and nature routes and sites.

While the Master Plan does not represent a parcel line-specific level of planning, extensive time was utilized discussing how trails can be phased: running along property lines and/or roadways until all the pieces are assembled that allow for the continuous off-road experience along water bodies or their floodway fringe.

LIABILITY

The closing presentation also featured a discussion on liability.

Many property owners currently rent their land to hunters during hunting seasons. They were shocked to discover that, by charging a price to use their land, they could be held liable in case of an accident. However, a property owner should not be liable if providing land for a trail that is free of charge and open to the public for the purposes of education and recreation.

See North Carolina General Statutes Chapter 38A; Section 38A-4 is specific to liability; a copy of the statute is also presented in Chapter 3.

A.5 FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS DURING THE PLANNING AND DESIGN WORKSHOPS

Several questions recurred over the three-day workshop period. The following questions were the most common.

HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE TO BUILD THE HERITAGE TRAILS?

The Trails of the Master Plan will develop over time as individual trail and greenway projects, guided by the Master Plan, grow together. Funding and expertise will determine individual efforts and facilitate linkages. Starting with “pilot projects,” the network will unfold over the next 10 to 20 years or more.

WHICH TRAILS WILL BE PART OF THE HERITAGE TRAILS SYSTEM?

The Heritage Trails will focus on corridors that provide a continuous and lengthy trail system. They will link individual local historic, cultural, and natural sites and trail projects through a “green interstate” network. Not every trail in a community will be a Heritage Trail, but every community should have a trail.

HOW IS LAND ACQUIRED FOR DEVELOPMENT OF TRAILS?

A guiding principle of the Heritage Trails is “respect for the land and respect for the land owners.” As communities determine the location of their segments of the Heritage Trails system, they should begin looking at routes that include public lands or property owned by willing landholders.

ARE TRAILS SAFE FOR MY NEIGHBORHOOD?

Safety along greenways and trails is of the highest importance. There is little evidence to support the fear that these natural spaces encourage criminal activity. In fact, evidence supports the notion that greenways, trails and converted rail beds may actually discourage crime and vandalism in many areas. These areas no longer serve as places for people to hang out, dump trash, vandalize or engage in criminal activity because there is too great a risk that they will be discovered. Communities refer to this “self-policing” as a form of community watch. The more frequent use of the trails, the safer these environments become.

CAN'T TRAILS JUST GO ALONG THE ROADS IN PUBLIC RIGHTS-OF-WAY?

Some have asked about simply using existing road rights-of-way instead of building trails. That's a perfectly legitimate option that will most surely be applied in certain locations, particularly in the short-term as more trails come online, yet the system itself is still incomplete. But, with the long-term objective being economic health via tourism, another question must be asked. If you were one of those 2 million people within a hour's drive of Caswell County, would you load up the family, or even go by yourself, and travel that hour to walk along the side of the road?

If Caswell County and its towns and citizens want to see any of the tourism monies, then it needs to put its best foot forward, so to speak.

That doesn't mean that trail efforts shouldn't start small, but if you only go half in, you'll probably get less than desirable results. This will be particularly pertinent to the high priority trails linking to other regional trail systems.

WHO'S LIABLE IF SOMEONE GETS

HURT ON A TRAIL ACROSS MY LAND?

Liability related to trails is covered in North Carolina General Statutes Chapter 38A. Section 38A-4 is specific to liability.

In short, “an owner of land who either directly or indirectly invites or permits without charge any person to use such land for educational or recreational purposes owes the person the same duty of care that he owes a trespasser. “ Key parts include “without charge” and “for educational or recreational purposes”. If those basic conditions are met, then the land owner is not typically liable.

The entire Statute is provided in Chapter 3 of this plan.

A.6 PROCESS

In order to identify the Heritage Trails, a common additive process was employed which produced the opportunities for the various trail systems.

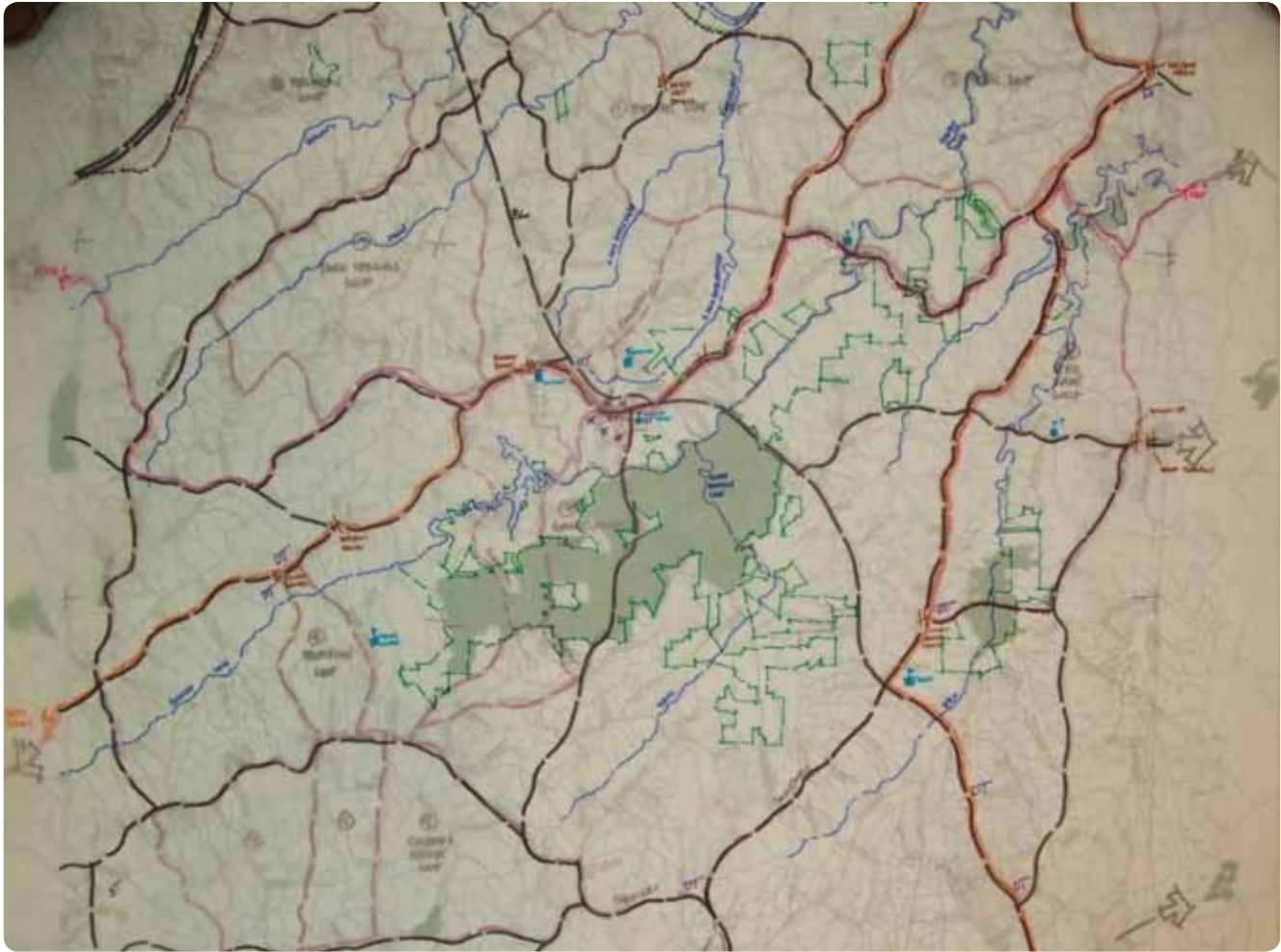
Layers of trace paper were placed atop GIS Maps and specific data was transferred to the top sheet. At the end of the process, certain “pockets” or “clusters” of heritage and nature-based tourism opportunities emerged.

The mapping process went as follows:

- 1. Map Historic Markers
- 2. Map Other Cultural and Natural Sites of Interest
- 3. Map School Sites
- 4. Trace Hydrology (Rivers and Streams)
- 5. Trace Scenic Byway
- 6. Trace NC Bike Route
- 7. Trace Relevant Roads and Mark Bridge Locations
- 8. Connect heritage sites, schools and streams

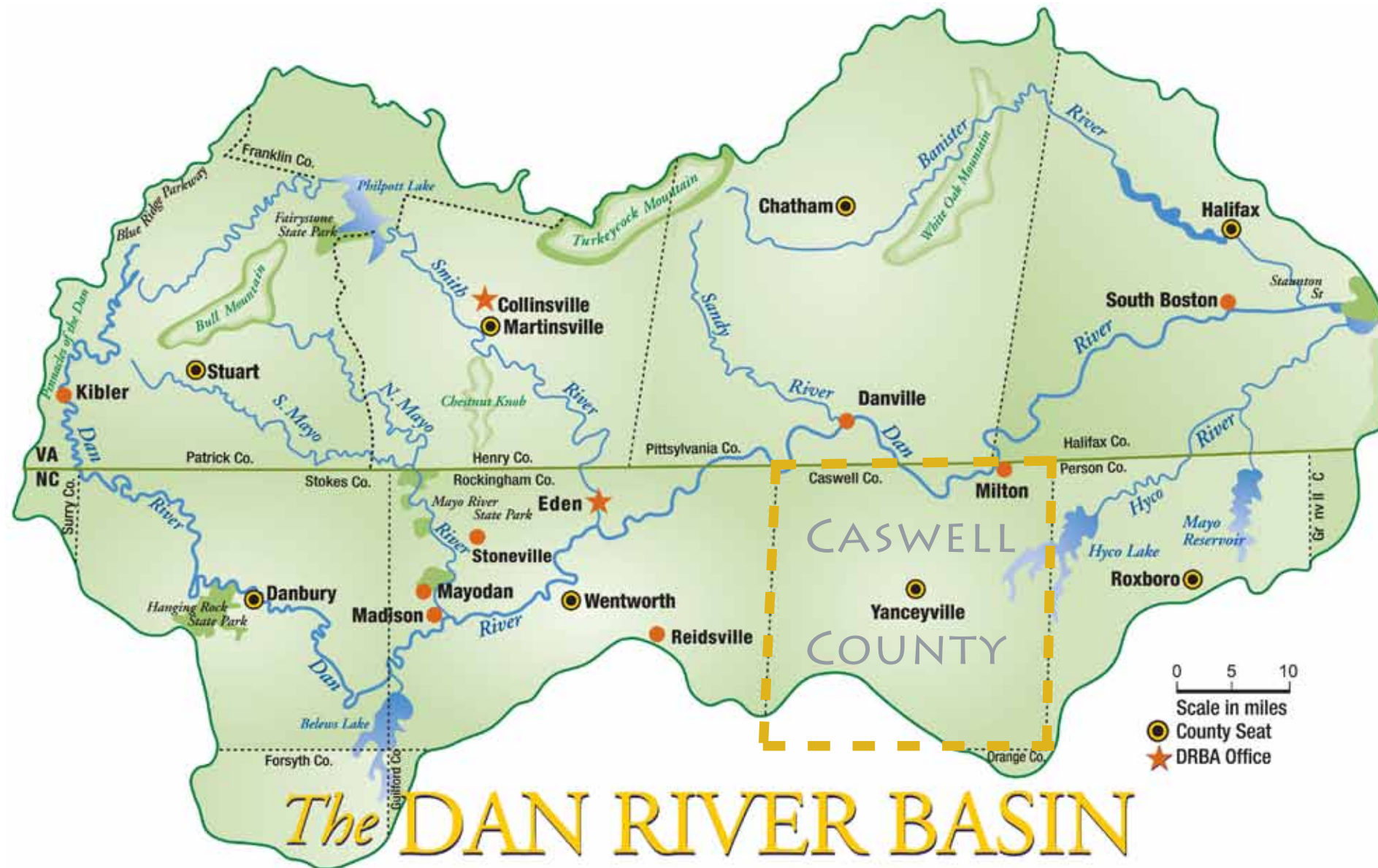
The only other guiding principle was to create at least one major trail system per watershed sub-basin.

This process yielded the Trails of the Master Plan and allowed for a hierarchy to be applied to each trail system.



Images of Analysis Maps created during public planing and design workshops to identify priority trail systems







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Danville Regional Foundation



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Caswell County Parks and Recreation

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