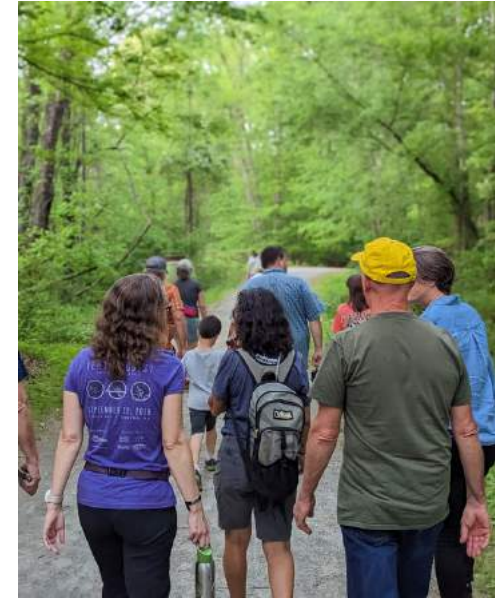


# OUTDOOR RECREATION MASTER PLAN

## ROCKINGHAM COUNTY NORTH CAROLINA

2023





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The Outdoor Recreational Use Master Plan is a citizen-envisioned roadmap for a network of trails and river access points on the Smith, Dan, and Mayo Rivers, along with county lakes, that connect people, places and events in our region. This plan continues the work of expanding and improving the outdoor recreational opportunity spectrum that will make the community a more desirable place to live, promote tourism, provide economic opportunities to attract businesses and protect the natural environment and local cultural heritage in Rockingham County, NC.

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# Outdoor Recreational Master Plan

Rockingham County, NC  
**2023**

## Prepared by

The Dan River Basin Association  
In partnership with our steering committee:  
Rockingham County, City of Eden,  
Town of Madison, Town of Mayodan,  
Town of Wentworth, City of Reidsville,  
Town of Stoneville, Rockingham County  
Tourism Development Authority,  
Friends of the Chinqua-Penn Trail

## Funding provided by

Reidsville Area Foundation



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## Introduction to the Master Plan

Master plans are tangible and often visible statements of how a community values its natural resources now, what it wants to do to protect them in the future, and what is required to get there. Think of the Master Plan as a “green road map” of proposed trails and river access points connecting the natural, cultural, historical and heritage amenities of the area. Potential connections to cross-border regional trails, parks and routes and an inventory of what outdoor recreational assets already exist in the area are also important components of a master plan. When developing a master plan, a mix of careful analysis of the existing conditions and environment, meaningful public engagement, and visionary, but practical, planning with financially feasible implementation is critical.

While processes for developing them vary, master plans are most successful when they represent a vision that brings together the ideas of multiple and diverse groups. Effective master plans are flexible and involve the community and other stakeholders from the outset, giving the plan a legitimate base, and a better chance to come to fruition. In addition, master planning for outdoor recreation can be an excellent tool to encourage citizens to actively participate in natural resource protection, conservation, and preservation.

This Outdoor Recreation Master Plan contains proposed trails and river access points recommended through public input and municipality participation combined with an evaluation of Rockingham County's natural assets, waterways, cultural resources, and rich history. This Plan contains an inventory of current assets, regional planning efforts that can have an impact on local planning, and recommendations for marketing and implementation.

## **The Need for a Master Plan**

The Master Plan provides direction in the implementation and promotion of the area's distinct natural and historic features. The plan can attract tourism to the region and provide additional opportunities for employment and commerce. The Master plan can also be utilized in the acquisition of funding for project implementation and community development.

The needs can be organized into four sustainability goals:

- Economic sustainability
- Environmental sustainability
- Physical sustainability
- Social sustainability

## **The Purpose of a Master Plan**

A number of towns, cities, counties, and states seek to provide 10 acres of park and recreation area per 1,000 residents to provide a better quality of life for citizens. This is important, but the purpose of a Master Plan is multi-faceted, and can address multiple needs:

- Assist in boosting the economy
- Help reduce health issues such as diabetes and obesity
- Provide consensus on land use
- Engage citizens to protect and preserve natural resources
- Attract tourists and businesses to the region
- Spur community partnerships and collaborative efforts
- Increase awareness of the need for healthy, livable communities

An approved Master Plan can also allow various groups and agencies to pursue funding for more detailed planning and/or trail development. Competition for state and federal funding is increasing, and funding requests continually outpace the amount of available funds. An approved Master Plan can be an important factor in successfully acquiring support for the construction of projects and future planning.

THE PLANNING, FUNDING AND CONSTRUCTION OF TRAILS AND RIVER ACCESS POINTS IS A LONG-TERM, PHASED ENDEAVOR, WITH RESULTS EMERGING OVER THE COURSE OF MANY YEARS AS OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF NEW OUTDOOR RECREATIONAL ASSETS ARISE OVER TIME.

## **Vision of the Master Plan**

When offered a remarkable experience in the outdoors, tourists will travel long distances and residents will stay in this area to immerse themselves in its unique natural assets.

## **Overall Goals of the Master Plan**

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

### **Economic Goals**

- Attraction of new business
- Retention of current business
- Attraction of tourists

### **Health Goals**

- Improved community health
- Perceived mental health
- Increase citizens' active lifestyles

### **Environmental Goals**

- Protection of waterways
- Preservation of green space
- Improved habitat

## Objectives of the Master Plan

- Serve the community's recreational and alternative transportation needs, foster healthy lifestyles, and promote outdoor assets
- Provide an inventory of the existing outdoor recreational assets
- Provide new opportunities for the development of outdoor recreational assets
- Provide residents and visitors with a strong quality of life which will help attract new businesses and people to our area
- Provide options for recreation and transportation



## Long-Term Outcomes for a Master Plan include:

- Sustainable economic growth through the promotion of nature and outdoor recreation
- Improved community health, including a reduction in obesity and diabetes
- Increased quality of life, including the provision of sought-after recreational amenities
- Preservation of Rockingham County's natural resources
- Recreation and educational programs for children and adults that encourage the widespread use of trails to be enjoyed by every sector of the community



## Municipal Introductions

Rockingham County's municipalities are at the heart of this Master Plan. While DRBA has led the design and coordination of this master plan, the municipalities and citizens of Rockingham County are to be thanked for the vision this plan provides for the future of outdoor recreation in this region. The following pages offer a short description of each of these amazing towns, and cities. For further information, please visit their websites.

### **City of Eden**

[edennc.us](http://edennc.us)

### **Town of Madison**

[townofmadison.org](http://townofmadison.org)

### **Town of Mayodan**

[townofmayodan.com](http://townofmayodan.com)

### **Town of Stoneville**

[stonevillenc.org](http://stonevillenc.org)

### **City of Reidsville**

[reidsvillenc.gov](http://reidsvillenc.gov)

### **Town of Wentworth**

[townofwentworth.com](http://townofwentworth.com)

### **Rockingham County**

[rockinghamcountync.gov](http://rockinghamcountync.gov)

## THE CITY OF EDEN

The confluence of the Dan and Smith Rivers provided an ideal location for a center of commerce and industry. The Dan's navigation led to the historic community of Leaksville, established as the market for trade between Virginia and North Carolina. Soon after, the industrious community of Spray was formed, harnessing the Smith River to power a manufacturing enterprise. The railroad brought additional opportunity to the area, and the small town of Draper was developed as a thriving textile town a few miles to the east. From their humble beginnings, Leaksville, Spray, and Draper each prospered in their own way, creating their own history, hometown life, and community. As time went by, each community had struggles and successes, ultimately realizing their symbiotic nature and the shared history and values that bound them together.

In 1967, the communities consolidated, advancing William Byrd's dream of self-sufficiency, community, and appreciation for the natural landscape that connects them. The collective community was named Eden. The last 50 years have seen a changing economy, and for each lost industry, there is an equal and opposite success. The resiliency of the community has been on display with the recruitment of Purina, as well as the renewed commitment of UNC Rockingham Health Care. While we continue to serve traditional economic development by providing jobs, commerce, and water to the businesses at Berry Hill Industrial Park, our new economy is shaped by entrepreneurial energy, one that continues to rely on our natural environment.

Today, Eden is a small city with unlimited access to the Great Outdoors. Once powering the textile mills along their banks, the two rivers now provide a natural experience second to none, whether it be paddling the Dan, floating the Smith, or simply enjoying a stroll along our greenways. We are a base camp for the region, and our residents and visitors enjoy everything from hiking, mountain biking, hunting, and fly fishing, as well as more passive exploration in parks and along trails. While Eden has changed over the past 55 years, we have retained the traditions that define the nature of our community.

## MUNICIPAL INTRODUCTIONS

## MADISON

Within 40 miles of Greensboro, Winston-Salem, and High Point in North Carolina and Martinsville and Danville in Virginia, you will find the perfect location for small-town living – MADISON! Here you find a charming, vibrant, and friendly community in close proximity to major markets and amenities without the hustle and bustle of a big city.

Currently, the Town offers a unique downtown district with shopping, restaurants, and amenities for everyone that is within walking distance from our NC Hwy 704 Dan River take-out point. At this location, you will find shuttle and tubing options for our new Madison River Park, located at 800 Lindsey Bridge Road. The Madison River Park is a new destination location along the Dan River boosting a unique ecologically engineered park that secures the Town's water supply, promotes wildlife habitation, and creates an extraordinary recreation opportunity for everyone, whether they are a diehard enthusiast or amateur rafter. The new river park is a one-of-a-kind project with man-made, strategically placed weirs to protect our water source and create that rapid experience and also includes new concrete sidewalks and ramps, a new entrance with a full parking area, a restored shoreline, natural areas, and much more.

Outside the downtown shopping area are three additional shopping centers where you will find businesses large and small, from department stores to restaurants to specialty stores. You will also find medical facilities, banking services, and numerous service businesses such as hair and nail salons, convenience stores, and auto centers.

One of Madison's greatest achievements is the quality of life presented to every individual who comes into our town. Our Town is full of friendly people, always willing to lend a helping hand to a neighbor in need. We hope you will visit Madison and enjoy our historic downtown, Madison River Park, and friendly atmosphere that will help provide a relaxing day for you and your family. We know you will be captivated by the charm, beauty, and uniqueness of our Town.

## MUNICIPAL INTRODUCTIONS



## MAYODAN

Mayodan is located in the northern Piedmont Triad area in the Mayo River valley. Our unique name comes from the location of the town, which is just north of the confluence of the Mayo and Dan rivers. Historically, Mayodan was a thriving mill town, which can still be seen in our historic mill villages and beautiful historic downtown.

Mayodan continues to be home to major manufacturing companies such as Gildan, McMichael Mills, Sturm, Ruger & Co., and Bridgestone Aircraft Tire. We are also home to commercial retail such as WalMart and Lowes Home Improvement, and locally owned businesses such as the Mayodan Outdoor Store and the Riverside Collection. Fresh local produce can be found at the Western Rockingham Farmers Market on Saturdays and Wednesdays from April through November. While you are here, enjoy the amenities of our local parks, Farris Memorial Park, Elliott Duncan Park, and Mayo River State Park. With a variety of activities, each park offers a unique experience for visitors and residents alike.



## REIDSVILLE

Conveniently located just minutes from Greensboro, NC, Reidsville provides an escape from the hustle and bustle of the city. Reidsville may be listed as a small city, but that doesn't stop it from offering big opportunities to both residents and visitors.

Reidsville boasts two public lakes that provide several options for enjoyment and recreation. There are trails and greenways, parks, historic homes, farmer's markets, community events, concerts, outdoor movies, and more. Best of all you don't have to fight large crowds to shop at your favorite downtown boutique or stand in line to eat at your favorite restaurant. Explore all the city has to offer and see why so many choose to make Reidsville their home.

Reidsville boasts a number of trails and parks throughout the city that provide a variety of activities for people of all ages and abilities.

Most of our parks offer a combination of activities such as playgrounds, athletic fields, picnic spots, and walking trails. Our Reidsville Greenway is located at Jaycee Park and is a local favorite for walking, running, and biking while also enjoying all the sights and sounds nature has to offer along the path. In 2022 Reidsville announced plans to add an all-inclusive park to the downtown area. It will be the first of its kind in Rockingham County and allow children of all ages and abilities the opportunity to explore and play.



## WENTWORTH

First chartered in 1798, Wentworth has functioned as the county seat for Rockingham County from that day forward even after the original charter lapsed. The new charter, enacted in 1998, returned the community to municipality status; however, the desire for rapid, progressive change within the municipality has remained quite low, with intentions of deliberately keeping the area rural-focused.

Three Rockingham County traditional, public schools (Wentworth Elementary, Rockingham County Middle, and Rockingham County High) and Rockingham Community College are all within the Town's borders. Consequently, many people, other than full-time residents, visit, work, study, and play here during the work week.

Even so, the Town of Wentworth, in addition to building its Town Hall in 2008, completed a seven-acre Town Park next door in 2021. The Town also owns and, in 2015, renovated the Wentworth Community Center, the current home of the Wentworth Post Office. With help from the Dan River Basin Association (DRBA) and community volunteers, the Town added the Wentworth Post Office Trail connecting the Post Office to the Governmental Center and the existing Animal Shelter Trail. In addition to developing the park, the Town acquired the Wentworth Consolidated School site to restore the baseball fields and the gymnasium for additional recreation uses.

The Wentworth Park includes a shelter, an amphitheater, handicap-accessible restrooms, a children's age 5-12 playground, a gravel driveway with on-site parking, benches, picnic tables, charcoal grills, ash receptacles, a 24/7 camera surveillance system, public WiFi, and a wooded walking trail. Open from sunrise to sunset and patrolled by the Sheriff's Office deputies, Wentworth Park has proven a popular addition to the Town.

## MUNICIPAL INTRODUCTIONS



## STONEVILLE

Settlers came to the ridge between the Mayo and Dan Rivers in the northwest Piedmont region in the early 1800s. Some early families who formed the tiny community were Dodd, Joyce, Martin, Means, Hamlin, Stone, and Sims. The first post office was designated as "Mayo" on May 8, 1821.

In the late 1850s, brothers Thomas and Pinkney Stone bought a parcel of land that was to become the town of Stoneville. The community grew around the brothers' general store located at the intersection of Henry and Main Streets; the center of today's business community. Closed for the Civil War, the post office reopened on July 7, 1869, when it was renamed the Stoneville Post Office. On March 5, 1877, the town was officially incorporated. The N.C. General Statutes of 1876-1877, Chapter 183, Section 2 states that "the Corporate limits of said town shall include all the territory within one-half mile of P. M. Stone's brick storehouse in said the town". Francis Stone, brother of the storekeepers and elder in the Matrimony Baptist Church, was elected Mayor.



## ROCKINGHAM COUNTY

A part of North Carolina's Piedmont Triad, Rockingham County offers both residents and visitors a laid-back and relaxed quality of life, with beautiful natural resources and a welcoming hometown feel. Currently, the County is experiencing exciting growth. With two interstates flanking both sides of the County, a regional workforce capable of meeting all employment needs, and a favorable cost-of-doing business environment, it is no wonder that companies like Pella, Ontex, Purina, and Farmina have recently chosen to locate new facilities within our borders. From thrilling adventures on the water to wilderness hikes, family playdates, and colorful nightlife, Rockingham County is the perfect place to work, live, and play. When you're in Rockingham County, you're in a good place.



## Local Planning History & Regional Planning

### **Eden Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Plan-June 2017**

Based on the existing inventory of parks and recreational facilities combined with public input received during the comprehensive plan process, there will be a need for establishing new park facilities as well as updating existing neighborhood park facilities to meet the standards of the centrally located Freedom Park. The following improvements in the coming years would help to fulfill recreation and park needs in the City.

- Update and rehabilitate key neighborhood parks and recreation centers
- Complete the next phase of Freedom Park by constructing the Aquatic Facility, Splash Pad, and Recreation and Senior Center Facility, as well as expanding the existing Freedom Park trail system
- Identify and find ways to fund the expansion of the Smith River Greenway and connecting trails to build the trail network throughout Eden

### **Wentworth Land Use Plan- January 2006**

Establishment of a Recreation and Wellness Committee to identify recreational needs, sponsor and promote healthy activities in the town, plan for recreational facilities and seek grants for project funding. Securing local business and institution support for recreational activities. In an effort to more fully meet the parks, recreation, and open space needs of citizens in Wentworth, and to make necessary connections among greenways and other land uses, the Town may consider regulations requiring open space, greenways, and pedestrian facilities as land development and transportation improvements occur. Conservation corridors and proposed greenway corridors were included on the Proposed Land Use Map.

# MADISON

## *Rivers & Trails*

February, 2018



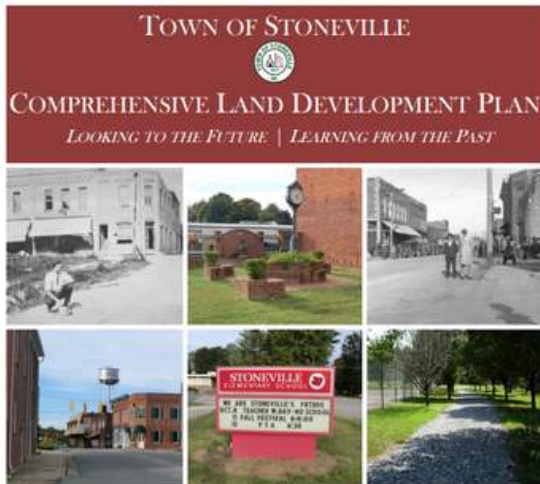
### **Madison Rivers and Trails- 2018**

Ultimately, the study area will create an “emerald necklace” around Madison and Mayodan, connecting several State Park properties, municipal park properties (current and potential), Big Beaver Island Creek (“schools district”), historic downtowns, existing and potential river access points, and NC designated Natural Heritage sites.

### **Stoneville Comprehensive Land Development Plan**

Promote active living by building upon existing recreational programs and developing additional walking trails, bicycle routes, and outdoor recreational facilities. As a small community, this plan allows the Town of Stoneville to be able to use all of its land to its maximum potential while ensuring there are improvements that will be sustainable and environmentally sound.

Land development suggestions include a range of recommendations in phases. Short-term goals, within 1-2 years, include updating programming, branding, and signage. Mid-term recommendations are improving sidewalk and trail infrastructure and promoting town regionality. Long-term goals, averaging 11+ years in length, are to build trails along the river to Mayo River State Park and improve façades with an improvement program.



## **Beaches to Bluegrass – Mountains-to-Sea Connecting to the Dan River Basin Master Plan**

Cross-State Trail Systems in both Virginia and North Carolina, major trails, river access points, blueway, and greenway efforts are underway to link communities and counties from one end of the state to the other. In North Carolina, 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 major trail systems will have a significant impact on Rockingham County through added trails, visitors, and quality of life.

### **Mountains-to-Sea Trail, NC**

North Carolina's longest trail, the North Carolina Mountains-to-Sea Trail, is an ambitious project to provide a footpath linking the Mountains in the West to the Coastal Plain in the East. The trail, when completed, will be over 900 miles in length. It's also the longest trail in the State and one of the longest in the Appalachian region.

Today, more than 500 miles of footpath are built, with temporary connectors on back roads and state bike routes. The footpath is nearly complete in the western part of the state - the mountains - and includes many sections that make for excellent day hikes. For now, only sections of the footpath are completed farther east, and these footpath sections are linked with roads and state bicycle routes to form the entire route. People can now hike across the state.

## **Beaches to Bluegrass - Mountains to Sea Connecting to the Dan River Basin Master Plan**



2020



## Beaches to Bluegrass Trail, VA

Of regional significance to Rockingham County is the routing of a spur for the Mountains-to-Sea Trail planned to pass through Rockingham and Guilford counties. This spur is a short distance from the state line in Ridgeway, VA. This proposed statewide shared-use path and the multi-use trail is intended to connect communities between the Virginia Beach oceanfront and Cumberland Gap. It will provide southern Virginia residents and visitors with increased opportunities to walk, bike, and ride horseback. Comprising many trails existing or underway, this network will connect the mountains to the sea and is envisioned to stimulate ecotourism across rural Southern Virginia.



## Rockingham County Pathways Plan- 2013

The Pathways Plan was completed and adopted by the Rockingham County Commissioners in 2013 and has served as a roadmap for the planning and building of walking and mountain biking trails, parks, and river access points in Rockingham County, NC. The plan also was created to protect open space, streams, and rivers while supporting economic development. This was the first master plan that focused on river access development and local waterway protection in Rockingham County.

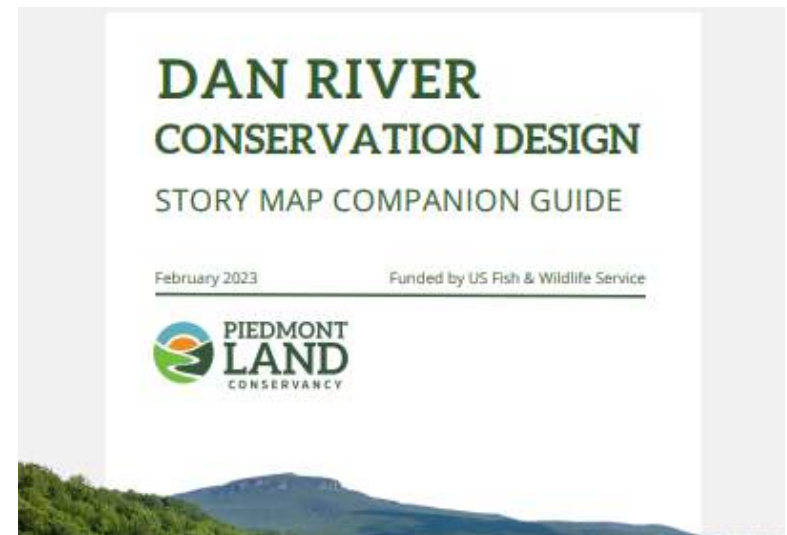
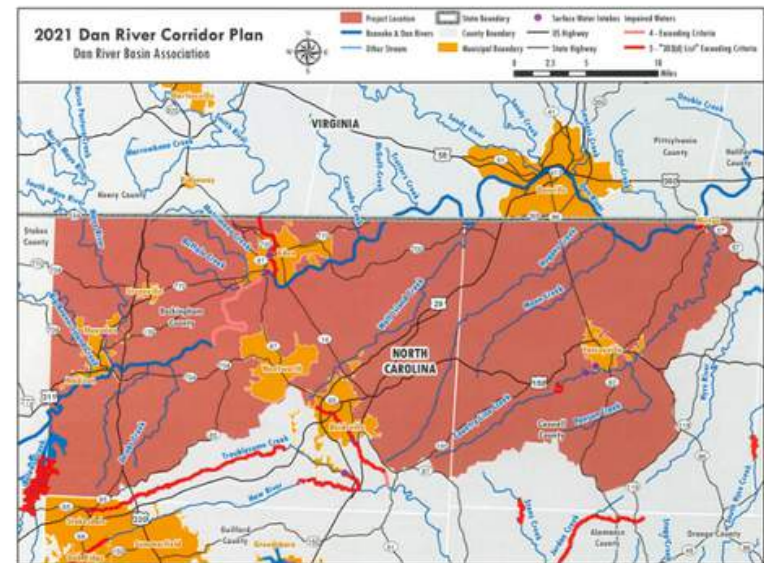


## Dan River Corridor Study

The Dan River Recreation & Stewardship Plan - Phase II - compiled and analyzed land use, outdoor recreation, and resource data along the Dan River from the Stokes/Rockingham County line to the Virginia border of Caswell County in order to rank and prioritize land for conservation, recreation, and restoration. The project will help protect and improve water quality within the Dan River Basin and its tributaries, restore impaired riparian buffers and habitat areas, conserve critical land from development, and improve river access and recreational opportunities. This project will build upon the Dan River Recreation & Stewardship Plan that was completed for Stokes County in 2018 and also funded by the NC Land & Water Fund.

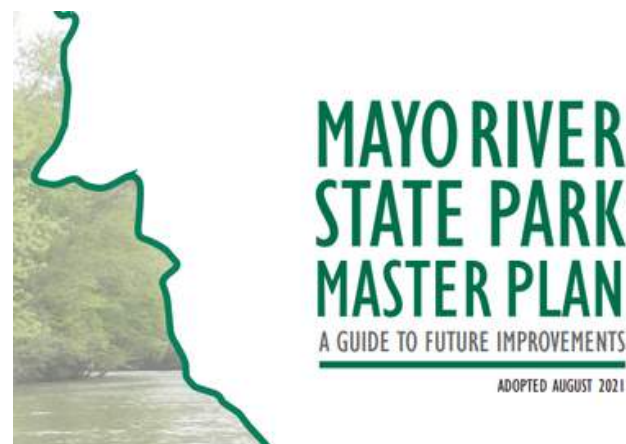
## Dan River Conservation Design

This Dan River Conservation Design prioritizes 10 target areas for impactful land protection and restoration projects from Virginia headwaters to the confluence with the Mayo River in Rockingham County, NC, designated a Dan River Conservation Partnership Area. These short- and long-term opportunities will help ensure species resiliency and preservation of cultural heritage and help increase public access to the Dan River.



### **Mayo River State Park Plan- adopted August 2021**

The North Carolina Division of Parks and Recreation has completed a Master Plan for Mayo River State Park in Rockingham County. This planning effort focused on the park property encompassing approximately 2,500 acres. The property is linear in nature (16 miles of river corridor) and not contiguous. DPR analyzed the needs of the park, the opportunities, and the constraints of the properties, and provided recommendations for the future of the park. In addition to the documentation and planning process, a public involvement process allowed input from local communities, stakeholders, and the general public. The final planning document provides direction and probable cost estimates for future camping, trail system, paddle access, and day-use improvements to Mayo River State Park for the next 20 years.



### **Mayo River Recreation Access Action Plan Phase I- August 2016**

The Mayo River Recreation Access Action Plan was created for the purpose of improving recreational opportunities and access to the Lower Mayo River in Rockingham County. The Mayo River is a tremendous natural asset for the area with the potential to provide recreational opportunities for residents and visitors, but access is currently limited due to an active rail line, lack of public ownership of properties adjacent to the river, hydroelectric dams, and steep topography. This plan assesses existing conditions and makes recommendations for increased access and trail development for the area.

### **MAYO RIVER RECREATION ACCESS ACTION PLAN PHASE I**





## Current Inventory

Many of the projects in this plan are extensions or reworking of existing trails and river access locations. The following is an inventory of the current trails and river access points in Rockingham County. This inventory works in conjunction with the proposed projects and will make connections that will extend our local trails and create a county-wide system that is more attractive to economic development, both locally and regionally. Local municipal governments have recreation groups in their list of departments that help maintain and add to the health and beauty of their area:

### **Eden Parks and Recreation**

1718 Mill Avenue  
Eden, NC 27288

### **Madison- Mayodan Recreation**

300 S 2nd Avenue  
Mayodan, NC 27027

### **Mayodan Parks Department,**

210 W Main Street,  
Mayodan, NC 27027

### **Reidsville Parks and Recreation**

201 N Washington Avenue  
Reidsville, NC 27320

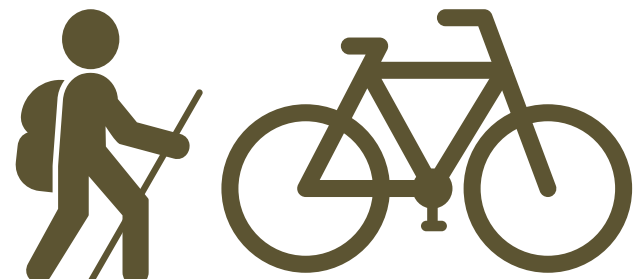
### **Stoneville Parks and Recreation**

101 Smith Street  
Stoneville, NC 27048



Current Trails	Type	Length (miles)	Walking Track	Basket ball	Ball field	Play ground	Shelter	Restroom	Parking	ADA	Trailhead sign	Address	Town/City
Freedom Park	natural	1	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	121 N Edgewood Rd	Eden
Smith River Greenway	gravel	1.7					X	X	X	X	X	368 W Stadium Dr	Eden
Matrimony Creek Greenway	gravel	1.56					X	X	X	X	X	1335 Washington St	Eden
Haw River State Park	natural	6.14						X	X	X	X	339 Conference Center Dr	Haw River State Park
Idol Park	natural	0.5	X	X	X	X	X					500 Westview Dr	Madison
Madison River Park Trail	paved	0.5	X					X	X	X		642 Lindsey Bridge Rd	Madison
Mayo River State Park-Deshazo Mill	natural	2.3							X			500 Old Mayo Park Rd	Mayo River State Park
Mayo River State Park-Anglin Mill Trail	natural	2					X	X	X		X	Anglin Mill Rd	Mayo River State Park
Farris Memorial Park	natural	1.1			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	2919 Park Rd	Mayodan
Farris Park Mountain Bike Trail	natural	4			X	X	X	X	X		X	2878 Park Rd	Mayodan
Chinqua-Penn Walking Trail	natural	1.6						X	X		X	2138 Wentworth St.	Reidsville
Jaycee Trail (Reidsville Greenway)	Paved	1.44								X	X	125 JayCee Dr	Reidsville
Rockingham County, Wentworth NC Animal Shelter	natural	0.33							X		X	250 Cherokee Camp Rd	Reidsville
Lake Reidsville Trail	natural	4							X			630 Waterworks Rd	Reidsville
Moss Street	natural	0.5	X	X	X	X			X		X	419 Moss Street	Reidsville
Annie Penn Walking Trail	paved	0.25	X									618 S Main St	Reidsville
Sherwood Trail	Paved	0.78							X	X	X	Sherwood Dr	Reidsville
Lake Reidsville Bike Trail	natural	4						X	X		X	630 Waterworks Rd	Reidsville
Rockingham County Veterans Park	paved	1							X	X	X	425-433 NC-65	Reidsville
Hogans Creek Park	natural	0.5							X		X	128 Stanley Road	Rockingham County
Knight Brown Nature Preserve	natural	2.9							X		X	221 Waterfield Ln	Rockingham County
High Rock Ford Historic Trail	natural	1							X		X	Near 1319 High Rock Rd	Rockingham County
Stoneville Downtown Connector Trail	natural	1.3							X	X		Main Street Stoneville	Stoneville
Rockingham Community College	natural	5	X		X	X		X	X			568 County Home Rd	Wentworth
Wentworth Post Office Trail	gravel	0.2							X		X	200 County Home Rd	Wentworth
Wentworth Town Park	gravel	0.2				X	X		X		X	126 Peach Tree Road	Wentworth

## TRAILS





Current River Access	Type	River	Parking	Picnicing	Fishing	Trail	Shelter	Address	Town
Draper Landing	Hand Carry, Metal Steps	Dan	X		X			700 NC-700	Eden
Klyce St	Hand Carry, Metal Steps	Dan	X	X	X			1098 Klyce St	Eden
Leaksville	Hand Carry, Metal Steps	Dan	X	X	X			S. Hamilton St	Eden
Madison River Park	Hand Carry, ramp	Dan	X	X	X	X		642 Lindsey Bridge Rd	Madison
NC 704	Hand Carry, Metal Steps	Dan	X		X			100 Water St	Madison
Settle Bridge	Hand Carry, Steps	Dan	X		X			Settles Bridge Rd	Rockingham County
Boat Landing (Wildlife Access)	Paved Trailer Ramp	Dan	X		X			587 Bethlehem Church Rd	Eden
Eden Game Lands Access	Hand Carry, Concrete steps	Dan	X		X			498 Woodpecker Road	Eden
High Rock	Hand Carry, Metal Steps	Haw	X		X	X		Near 1319 High Rock Rd	Rockingham County
US 220 Business Access	Hand Carry, Steps	Mayo	X		X			3100-3110 US-220 BUS	Mayodan
NC Hwy 135	Hand Carry, Bank	Mayo	X		X			NC 135	Mayodan
Mayo River State Park-Anglin Mill	Hand Carry, Steps	Mayo	X		X	X		Old Anglin Road/Mayo Beach Rd	Stoneville
Mayo River State Park-Deshazo Mill	Handy Carry	Mayo	X		X	X		113 Deshazo	Stoneville
Island Ford	Hand Carry, Metal Steps	Smith	X	X	X	X	X	368 W Stadium Dr	Eden

Current Lake Access	Type	Restroom	Parking	Picnicing	Fishing	Trail	Shelter	Address	Town/City
Lake Reidsville Park	Marina	X	X	X	X	X	X	620 Water Works Rd	Reidsville
Lake Hunt Park	Marina		X	X	X	X	X	551 Iron Works Rd	Reidsville
Belews Lake	Marina	X	X	X	X		X	548 Shelton Rd	Stokesdale
McCoy Rd Lake Reidsville Blueway Access	Kayak Access		X					1266 McCoy Rd	Reidsville

## BOATING ACCESS



Current Parks	Acres	Walking Track	Basketball	Ballfield	Trail(s)	Playground	Shelter	Restroom	Parking	ADA	Wifi	Address	Town/City
Freedom Park	60.93		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		121 N Edgewood Rd	Eden
John E Grogan Park	11.81	X					X		X	X		308 E Stadium Dr	Eden
Matrimony Creek Greenway	1.56				X		X	X	X	X		1335 Washington St	Eden
Blue Creek Park/Peter Hill Park	5.95	X	X	X		X	X		X	X		201 Peter Hill Rd	Eden
Smith River Greenway	25.17				X		X	X	X	X		901 River Dr	Eden
Washington St Park		X								X		Washington St.	Eden
Dehart Park/Spray Park	6.7			X		X			X			516 Gresham St	Eden
Stoneville Memorial Park	14.48	X	X	X		X	X	X	X		X	Intersection of Price St and Priddy Rd	Stoneville
Farris Memorial Park	270			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	2878 Park Rd	Mayodan
Elliott Duncan Memorial Park	2.65	X				X				X		500 West Main Street	Mayodan
Mayo River State Park	2778				X		X	X	X	X	X	500 Old Mayo River Rd	Mayodan
Idol Park	16.65	X	X	X		X	X					Westview Dr	Madison
Wentworth Town Park	7.4				X	X	X	X	X	X	X	126 Peach Tree Raod	Wentworth
Lake Reidsville	85.22		X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	630 Water Works Rd	Reidsville
Lake Hunt	5.97				X		X	X	X	X		551 Ironworks Rd	Reidsville
Courtland Park	8.91					X	X		X	X		1200 Courland Ave	Reidsville
Cambridge Park	2.52		X			X	X		X	X		1401 Windsor Court	Reidsville
Jaycee Park	46.34		X		X	X	X	X	X	X		2010 South Scales St	Reidsville
H.K. Griggs Park	~1.4 & 1.1		X			X	X		X	X		400 Marcellus Place	Reidsville
Barnes St Park	~.8					X	X		X	X		1102 Barnes St	Reidsville
Glendale Park	~.3		X			X	X		X	X		328 Roanoke St	Reidsville
Jaycee Ball Park	40.3			X	X			X	X	X		125 Jaycee Park Rd	Reidsville

## PARKS



Current Parks	Acres	Walking Track	Basketball	Ballfield	Trail(s)	Playground	Shelter	Restroom	Parking	ADA	Wifi	Address	Town/City
Oaks Park	8.84			X		X			X	Yes	No	640 Northwest Market St	Reidsville
Woodland Park	~0.5					X			X	Yes	No	2212 Woodland Dr	Reidsville
Bridge Street Rec	4.13	X	X			X	X	X	X	No	Yes	319 Bridge St	Eden
Mill Ave Rec	18.64	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	Yes	Yes	1722 Mill Ave	Eden
Governor Morehead Park	3.36				X				X	Yes	No	W Meadow Rd	Eden
Jacobs Creek Batteau Landing	14									Yes	No	Planters Rd	Madison
Morgan Road Community Center	2.6	X	X			X	X	X	X	Yes	Yes	Morgan Rd	Eden
Friendship Park	0.15									No	No	N Henry St and Main St	Stoneville
Clearwater Park	2.25				X					No	No	Bridge St	Eden
Madison & Mayodan Park and Rec	2.84					X		X	X	Yes	Yes	300 S 2nd Ave	Mayodan
Nat Wall Park	0.5		X			X				No	No	Gene Hariston St & Cardwell Ave	Madison
The Carlyle Lewis Tennis Courts	2.64			X					X	Yes	No	Cure Drive	Madison
Rockingham County Veterans Park	~0.5				X				X	Yes	Yes	425-433 NC-65	Reidsville
Reidsville Parks & Recreation Gym	1		X					X	X	Yes	No	201 Washington Ave	Reidsville
Haw River State Park	1485				X	X	X	X	X	Yes	Yes	339 Conference Center Dr	Browns Summit
Knight Brown Nature Preserve	148.8				X					No	No	221 Waterfield Ln	Stokesdale
Hogans Creek Park	110				X			X	X	No	No	128 Stanley Road	Rockingham County

## PARKS



## State and Federal Land in Rockingham County

In the Dan River Basin, there are approximately 46,000 acres of state and federal land. In Rockingham County, there are five areas owned and managed by state governments: Mayo River and Haw River State Parks by North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources, 835 acres by NC State at the Upper Piedmont Research Station (UPRS) at the former Chinqua-Penn Plantation, Dan River Game Land and NC Leaksville Boat Landing managed by NC Wildlife Resource Commission.

### **Federal Lands**

United States Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) manages about 89.1 million acres of federal land. FWS-administered land is primarily for the conservation and promotion of wildlife; however, some other uses (such as resource extraction) are permitted under certain conditions and in certain areas. National Park Service (NPS) manages about 79.8 million acres of federal land. There are slightly over 417 official NPS units, including national parks, national monuments, national historic sites, national recreation areas, and national battlefields. United States Forest Service (FS) manages about 192.9 million acres of national forests. Together, the BLM, FWS, NPS, and Forest Service manage 97% of federal land. Federal agencies that control smaller amounts of land include the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Bureau of Reclamation, the United States Postal Service, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, and the U.S. Department of Energy. Ultimately, the American public owns all federal public lands and every citizen decides with their vote how these special places are maintained and respected.

## **State Lands**

By contrast, state lands are held by state governments, and most of the land is required to generate revenue. North Carolina state lands are governed by different rules than federal public lands. Citizens do not have a right to be on state lands, or the same voice as to how they are managed and sold. The following are state-owned properties in Rockingham County, NC.

**Mayo River State Park** - offers various recreational opportunities at the main Mayo Mountain access and at multiple accesses along the Mayo River. At the main access, visitors can enjoy hiking trails, four river access points, fishing ponds, a picnic area and shelter, and a group campsite.

**Haw River State Park** - centers on The Summit, a residential environmental education and conference center, accommodating retreats and conferences for groups big or small. Trails and a boardwalk offer a journey into wetlands and a floodplain swamp. The park also houses the Iron Ore Belt Access, with views of wetlands rich in flora and fauna.

**Chinqua Penn Plantation/The Upper Piedmont Research Station** - Consists of 900 acres of land that is home to 400 acres of pasture and grasslands and 75 acres of crop and rotational land. The rest of the property is covered with native hardwood trees. The station is located adjacent to the Chinqua-Penn mansion, the Betsy-Jeff Penn 4-H center and also has a cattle sale facility located on-site for the North Carolina Angus Association. At the site is also a scenic 1.6-mile-long nature trail that is accessible to the public 7 days per week which winds along the borders of the station and among riparian buffer zones between cattle pastures.

**Dan River Game Land**- The Dan River Game Land, managed by the North Carolina Wildlife Resource Commission, was created thanks to a 1,068-acre land transfer from the Piedmont Land Conservancy. The Rockingham County game land provides the Triad area with public access to fishing and hunting opportunities. This game land also includes a small craft boat launch for recreational paddlers.

**Leaksville Landing**- The North Carolina Wildlife Resource Commission manages this boat ramp for motorized and non-motorized boats with a large parking lot and the last exit to the river before the Duke Energy Dam.



## Proposed Project Summary

### TRAILS

- Jacobs Creek Batteau Landing Trail
- Lake Hunt Trail
- MST Connection at LKRDVL
- Stoneville Memorial Park Connections
- Wentworth Trail Connections
- Eden Industrial Park
- Eden Rail Trail
- Madison River Park Connections
- Mayodan Connector Trails

### PARKS

- Washington Mills Park
- Clearwater Park
- Madison River Park
- Downtown Madison River Park
- Downtown Madison Pocket Parks



### BOATING ACCESS

- Smith River- HWY 14 Access
- Downtown Madison River Park
- Draper Landing Ramp
- Berry Hill Road Access
- Lake Hunt Access
- Lake Reidsville Access
- Dan Valley Road Mayo River Access

## TRAILS

Trails have a vast impact on Rockingham County. With these proposed 9 additional trails, Rockingham County will be considered a more desirable hiking county. Extending trails that are currently built and improving their amenities are key to developing a trail culture in our county.

The following proposed trails are to be considered as such; proposed. Along with trail development, trail maintenance is key to continuing an enjoyable experience for years to come. This master plan includes information about the importance of maintenance and ideas to consider while planning for a beautiful trail to sustain over the years.

Please refer to page 93 for suggestions on sustainable trail building and maintaining trails.



## PROPOSED PROJECTS

## LAKE REIDSVILLE GREENWAY

Lake Reidsville is a popular attraction for the community and visitors alike. Along with a beautiful trail network, the park provides a marina for the lake for motor boats or small crafts, RV and tent camping, and many sports fields for the recreation departments and for gathering spaces. The Lake Reidsville Greenway Trail is a four-phase natural surface trail build that will connect the banks of Lake Reidsville from Reid Lake Road to Monroeton Road. Phase one of the trail has been completed thanks to volunteer work, grant funding, and assistance from the City of Reidsville. Enjoy a paddle or hike around Lake Reidsville and you will find many highlights of wildlife and beautiful flora.

**LOCATION:** Lake Reidsville Park

**DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT:** The four phases include:

Phase 1 - Connection from Lake Reidsville Park to Reid Lake Rd, 2.12 miles

Phase 2 - Lake Reidsville Park to a planned trailhead at McCoy Rd. 2.94 miles

Phase 3 - McCoy Rd. connection to US 158. 2.63 miles

Phase 4 - US 158 to a planned trailhead and parking area at Iron Works Rd and will continue a spur to Haw River State Park to connect the Mountains to Sea Trail 1.2 miles, 0.77-mile spur

In total, this trail will be 8.5 miles of multi-use trail around Lake Reidsville.

**POTENTIAL PARTNERS:** Property owners, Dan River Basin Association

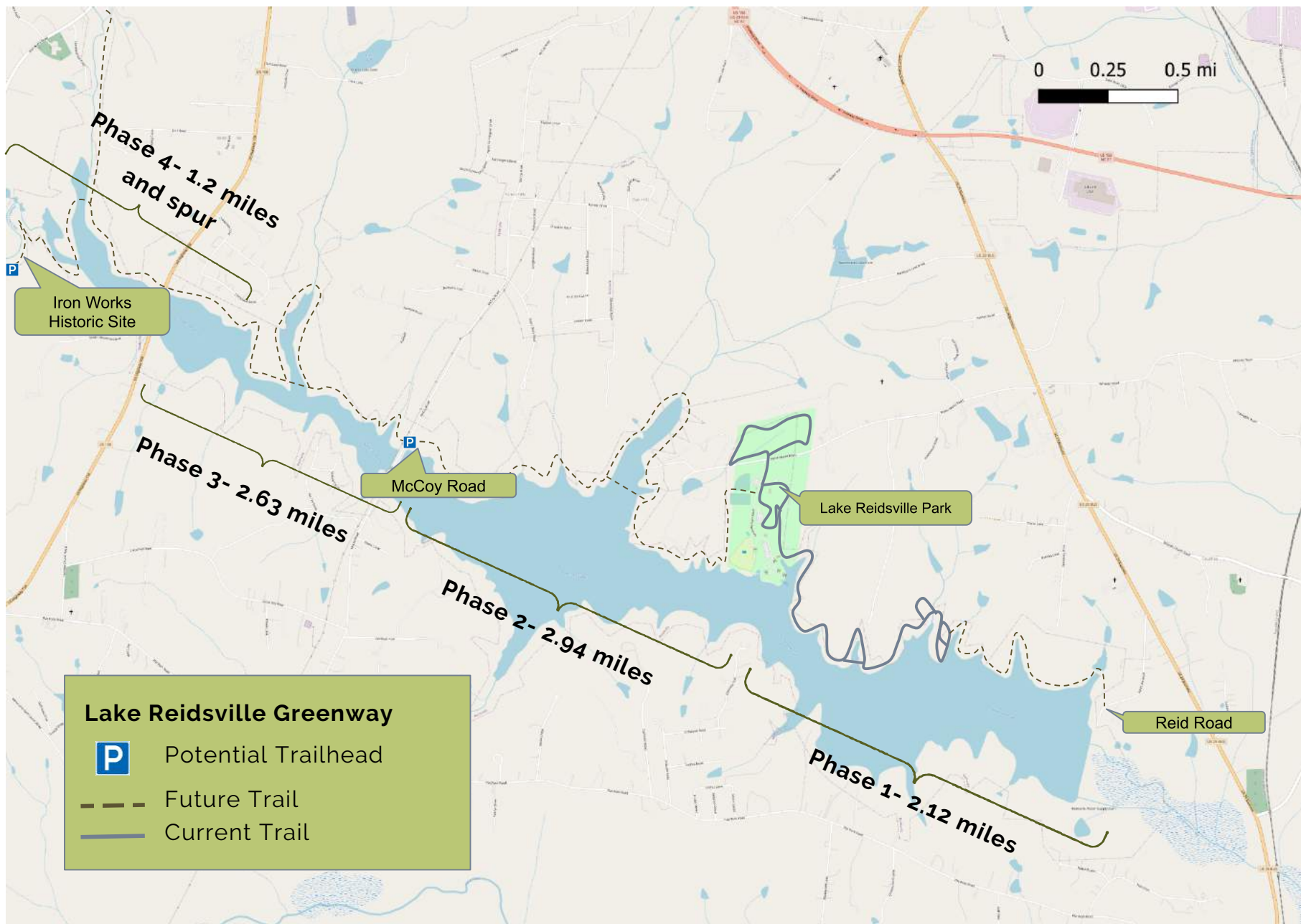
**COST ESTIMATE:** In 2019- estimated at \$2 million

**FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES:** City funds, private donations, PARTF, RTP, Tourism groups

**TIMELINE:** Determined by budgets

**ISSUES:** Areas crossing Lake Reidsville will need boardwalks and additional maintenance, Easements from private landowners will need to be acquired. High water line permits will be required.

## PROPOSED PROJECTS



## JACOBS CREEK BATTEAU LANDING

In the late 1700s and early 1800s, this property belonged to Alexander Martin, "A Founding Father of North Carolina and the Nation." During that period, the river was used to transport goods up and down local rivers on batteaux, long, shallow draft boats capable of maneuvering interior waterways. A historic batteau "landing" or dock, is located on the edge of the river bank just below the observation deck. Follow the trail from the parking area to the overlook or enjoy a short hike to the river where hand-carried boats can be launched or retrieved.

**LOCATION:** 558 Planters Road, Madison, NC 27025

**DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT:** There are plenty of acres of the property that serve themselves as a beautiful opportunity for a trail system. A trail with a view of the Dan River, along with historical information, will assist the county in tourism opportunities and unique experiences at each trail.

**POTENTIAL PARTNERS:** Dan River Basin Association, Museum and Archives of Rockingham County

**COST ESTIMATE:** \$55,000 per mile of the trail is estimated.

**FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES:** County funds, private donations, PARTF, RTP, Tourism groups

**TIMELINE:** When funding is available

**ISSUES:** Ensuring that the trail does not disrupt the historic batteau landing.



## LAKE HUNT TRAIL

Smaller than Lake Reidsville, Lake Hunt provides a private getaway for water and nature lovers. Spend the day fishing with a friend or just enjoying the view. Lake Hunt is managed by the City of Reidsville and requires an annual pass to access.

Lake Hunt is a hidden treasure that offers scenic beauty and tranquility.

**LOCATION:** 551 Ironworks Road, Reidsville, NC 27320

**DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT:** This 3.05-mile planned natural surface trail would connect Lake Hunt Park to a planned parking area at Irvin Farm Road. This would allow fishermen, hikers, and bikers the opportunity to enjoy the lake without needing a boat.

**POTENTIAL PARTNERS:** Dan River Basin Association, Property Owners, Bike Associations

**COST ESTIMATE:** \$55,000 per mile of the trail is estimated.

**FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES:** City funds, private donations, PARTF, RTP, Tourism groups

**TIMELINE:** When funding is available

**ISSUES:** Areas crossing Lake Hunt will need boardwalks and additional maintenance, Easements from private landowners will need to be acquired. High water line permits will be required.



## HAW RIVER TRAIL CONNECTION AT LAKE REIDSVILLE

Lake Reidsville has many opportunities for future connection with larger trails along the Rockingham and Guilford County lines. The Haw River Trail connection would highlight the beauty of Lake Reidsville and offer camping, resupply, showers, and camp store facilities. An additional trail connection from the High Rock Historic Trail to the Haw River Trail on the southeast side of the county could add another connection in Rockingham County.

**LOCATION:** Connection to Lake Reidsville: 551 Ironworks Road, Reidsville, NC 27320

**DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT:** Part of the Lake Reidsville Greenway extension. This approximately 3.5-mile spur trail would connect the Haw River State Park and the Haw River State Trail.

**POTENTIAL PARTNERS:** Dan River Basin Association, Property Owners, Haw River State Trail Partners, Bike Associations, State Parks

**COST ESTIMATE:** \$150,000 estimated for mileage

**FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES:** City funds, private donations, PARTF, RTP, Tourism groups, Connecting Small communities to State Trails

**TIMELINE:** When funding is available

**ISSUES:** Areas crossing waterways will need boardwalks or bridges which will add to cost, property owner discussions



## STONEVILLE MEMORIAL PARK CONNECTOR TRAILS

Just a small walk away from downtown, Stoneville Memorial Park is located at the intersection of Price Street and Priddy Road. The scenic park includes picnic shelters, walking trails, a performance stage, a lighted ball field, a basketball court, a tennis court, and a playground. A beautiful creek runs through the park and allows a bridge to a shelter that patrons are able to enjoy during the heat of the summer.

**LOCATION:** Priddy Drive, Stoneville, NC 27048

**DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT:** Connector trails are important for alternative modes of transportation. There are opportunities to connect to Sharon Baptist Church and the Mayo River for users to enjoy a longer-distance trail. A potential half-mile trail is available to connect to Sharon Baptist, and a 0.75-mile trail could run along the creek found in the park, all the way to the Mayo River. Connection to the Mayo River State Park is viable from this creek drainage. Watershed informational signage will be encouraged to share with users the importance of small creeks to our area.

**POTENTIAL PARTNERS:** Dan River Basin Association, Property Owners, Local Community Groups, Churches, Mayo River State Park

**COST ESTIMATE:** \$55,000 for trail building, not including landowner negotiations or easements

**FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES:** Town funds, private donations, PARTF, RTP, Tourism groups

**TIMELINE:** Planning Stage

**ISSUES:** Landowner easements, highway under bridges,



## WENTWORTH CONNECTOR TRAILS

Along with the Town of Wentworth's beautiful park in the center of the town, Wentworth is the epicenter of the community through Rockingham County Governmental Center, Rockingham Community College, and Rockingham County High School. This community is important for the connection of the town to other areas in the county. Connecting these trails can be an additional mode of transportation for those who do not drive and lack sidewalk access.

**LOCATION:** 8286 NC-87, Reidsville, NC 27320

**DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT:** Connector trails are important for alternative modes of transportation. Wentworth Town Park can be connected to different assets in the community such as Rockingham County High School Trails (1/4 mile), the RCC Trails (1 mile), and Trails at the Governmental Center (1 mile).

**POTENTIAL PARTNERS:** DRBA, Local Community Groups, Churches, RCC, Rockingham County High School, Rockingham County Government, Town of Wentworth

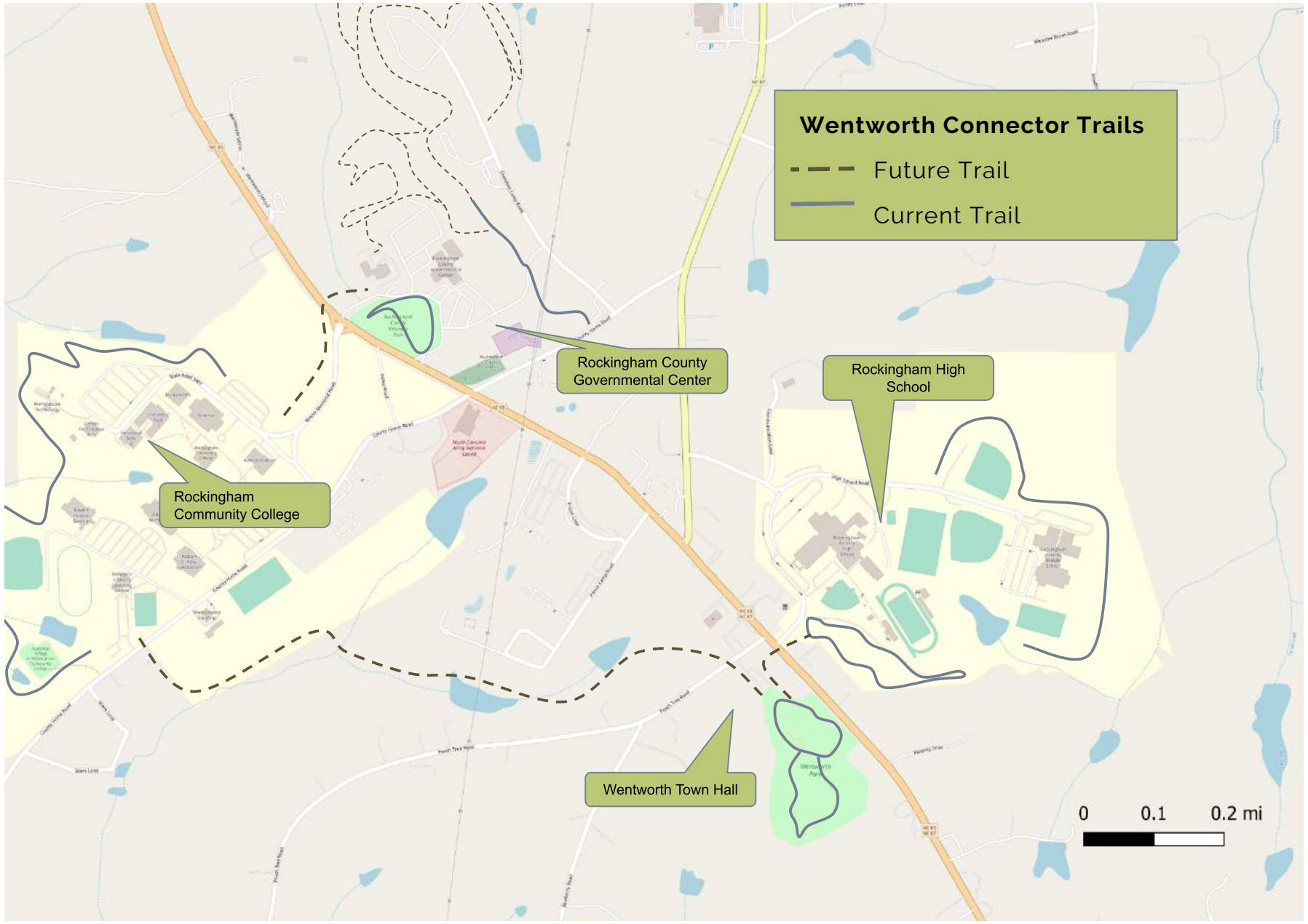
**COST ESTIMATE:** \$150,000 for trail building, not including landowner negotiations or easements

**FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES:** Town funds, private donations, PARTF, RTP, Tourism groups

**TIMELINE:** Planning Stage

**ISSUES:** Landowner easements, road crossings

## PROPOSED PROJECTS



## EDEN INDUSTRIAL PARK

City of Eden partnered with Rockingham County and other local partners to purchase a property previously owned by Fieldcrest Textiles and then Duke Energy. Historically, this was Tutelo, Saponia, Occaneechi, and Saura land. There is interest and potential to develop a portion of the property for public use. The property has some existing assets that could be utilized for development. Several "roads" and/or cleared areas already exist on the parcel that may be developed into trails. The topography is fairly flat which would appeal to most outdoor recreational users. There is some low-level sloping that would appeal to beginner mountain bikers. There are opportunities for viewscape of the Dan River. There is a grassy area on the property that could be developed into a parking area.

**LOCATION:** South New Street, Eden, NC

**DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT:** It is recommended this is a multi-phase development plan:

1) Designate a portion of the property permanently to be used as a park/public use. 2) Construct a parking area, kiosk, short trail utilizing the current roads/paths on the property, and interpretive signage funded by the City of Eden resources. 3) Determine usage over a period of 1-year. If heavily used, explore mountain biking, river overlooks, benches, and other enhancements to the property. If minimally used, consider keeping the asset as is, or adding a pavilion for rental opportunities.

**POTENTIAL PARTNERS:** DRBA, City of Eden, Local Community Groups, Rockingham Government,

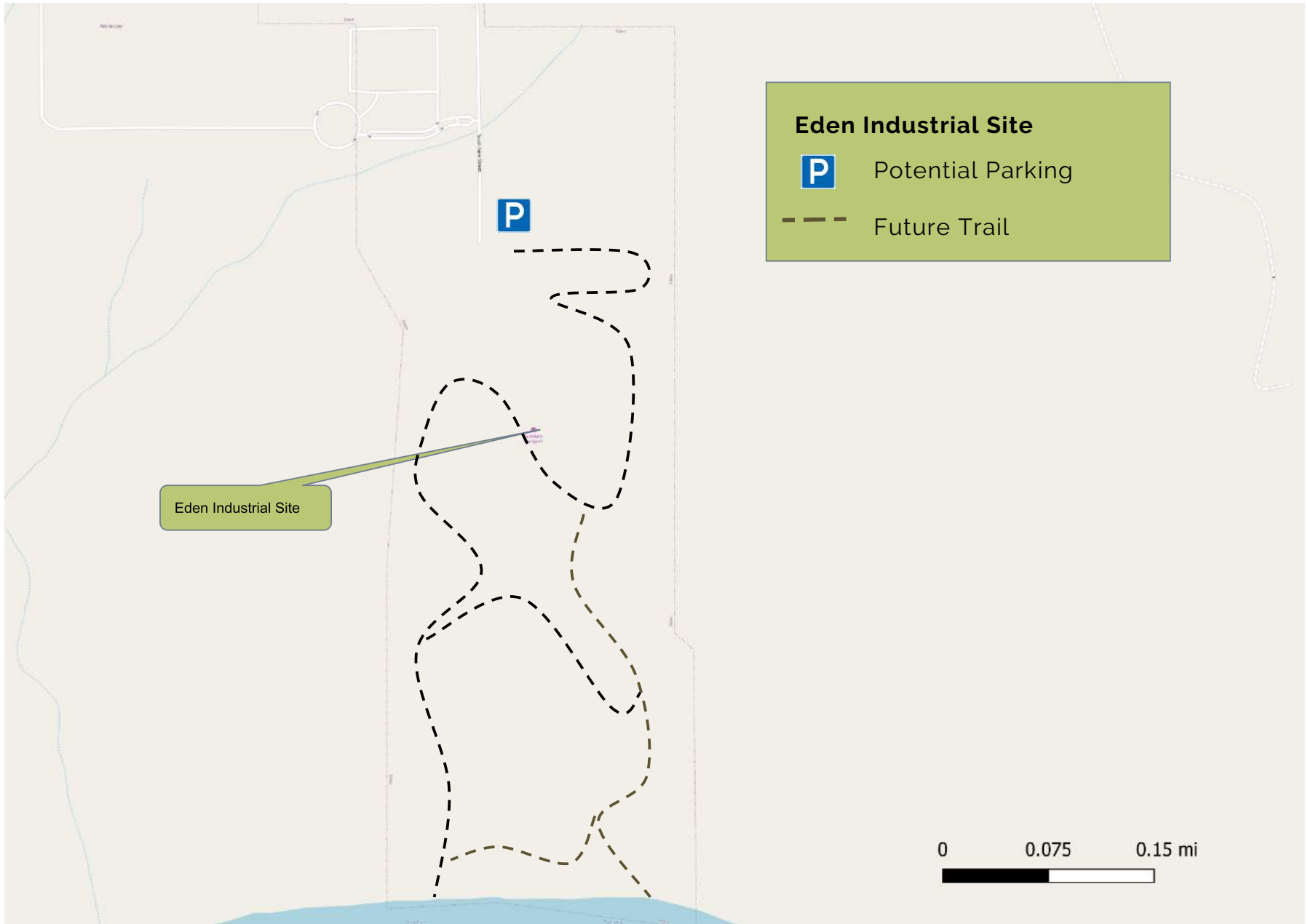
**COST ESTIMATE:** Throughout phases, estimated to be about \$200,000

**FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES:** City funds, private donations, PARTF, RTP, Tourism groups

**TIMELINE:** Planning Stage

**ISSUES:** Landowner easements, road crossings

## PROPOSED PROJECTS



## EDEN RAIL TRAIL

An unused section of the Norfolk Southern Railway is prime real estate for an additional rail-to-trail project. Rail-to-trail projects create beautiful trails on abandoned railways as a way to repurpose them. Additionally, information regarding the previous train tracks and the history behind them is always enticing to bring new people to them. These trails are great multi-use paths that are usually paved to allow as many users as possible to access them as they would like. This trail would be close to the newly renovated Nestle Purina Plant, the Gildan Factory, and many neighborhoods that could use it at all times of the day as transportation and to promote healthy lifestyles.

**LOCATION:** Summit Road, Eden, NC 27288

**DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT:** The building of a 1.4-mile rail trail is a difficult process but frequently has the highest use out of all trails in an area. This trail could be paved, or graveled, and share historical information about the City of Eden.

**POTENTIAL PARTNERS:** DRBA, City of Eden, Local Community Groups, Gildan, Nestle Purina

**COST ESTIMATE:** Trail surface is dependent on cost. Between 500k - 1 million.

**FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES:** City funds, private donations, PARTF, RTP, Tourism groups, Nestle Purina, Gildan Group.

**TIMELINE:** Planning Stage

**ISSUES:** Landowner easements, road crossings, Spray Cotton Dam

## PROPOSED PROJECTS



## MADISON RIVER PARK CONNECTIONS

Proposed in 2018, a multipurpose trail system would link the town of Madison and the Dan and Mayo Rivers, schools, historical features, retail, and restaurants, the town of Mayodan, the Mayo River State Park and other recreational facilities. The development of the Madison River Park stemmed from this proposal and several other plans surrounding trail design.

**LOCATION:** 800 Lindsey Bridge Road, Madison NC 27025

**DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT:** Construct a multi-use path from Madison River Park to the 704 Madison River Park Access. Completion of the trail would lead visitors to downtown Madison. Future trails could connect the Madison River Park Trail with the proposed Mayo River State Park Trail systems.

**POTENTIAL PARTNERS:** Madison-Mayodan Recreation Center, DRBA, Mayo River State Park, Town of Madison, Rockingham County, Rockingham Community College, PTRC, Norfolk Southern Railroad.

**COST ESTIMATE:** Trail surface is dependent on cost. Between 500k - 1 million.

**FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES:** PARTF, The National Park Service Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance program, RTP, NCDOT Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning Grant

**TIMELINE:** Phase I: Improve existing conditions at the Idol Park trail, enhance and update parking and recreational features (playground, bathroom facilities, and picnic shelters); Phase II: Connect the 704 Madison River Park Access and Beach to the Idol Park Trail. An additional proposed trail could connect 704/Water Street Access to the Mayo River and the Mayo River State Park trail system; and Phase III: Trail from Big Beaver Island Creek to Madison River Park.

**ISSUES:** Private property easements, Lindsey Bridge replacement.

## PROPOSED PROJECTS



## MAYODAN CONNECTOR TRAIL

Mayodan is a beautiful town in Western Rockingham County where the scenic Mayo River runs behind the town. This connector trail would lend itself to another form of transportation for walkers and bikers alike to areas such as Mayo River State Park to the north, to the south, joining up with the future mill site park, and continuing down to the HWY 135 Mayo River Access, all the way to the confluence of the Mayo and Dan Rivers in Madison. Mayodan is a golf cart town that allows these motorized devices on the roads, this would allow man-powered transport to be navigated away from the busy streets.

**LOCATION:** Mayodan, NC

**DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT:** Construct a multi-use path from Mayo River State Park, connecting to the sidewalks in Mayodan, through to M & M Recreation, past the Mayo River Access on HWY 135, to Madison, where the confluence of the Mayo and Dan Rivers arrive.

**POTENTIAL PARTNERS:** Madison-Mayodan Recreation Center, DRBA, Mayo River State Park, Town of Madison, Rockingham County, Rockingham Community College, PTRC, Private Property Owners, Norfolk Southern Railroad, Landowners, and Citizens

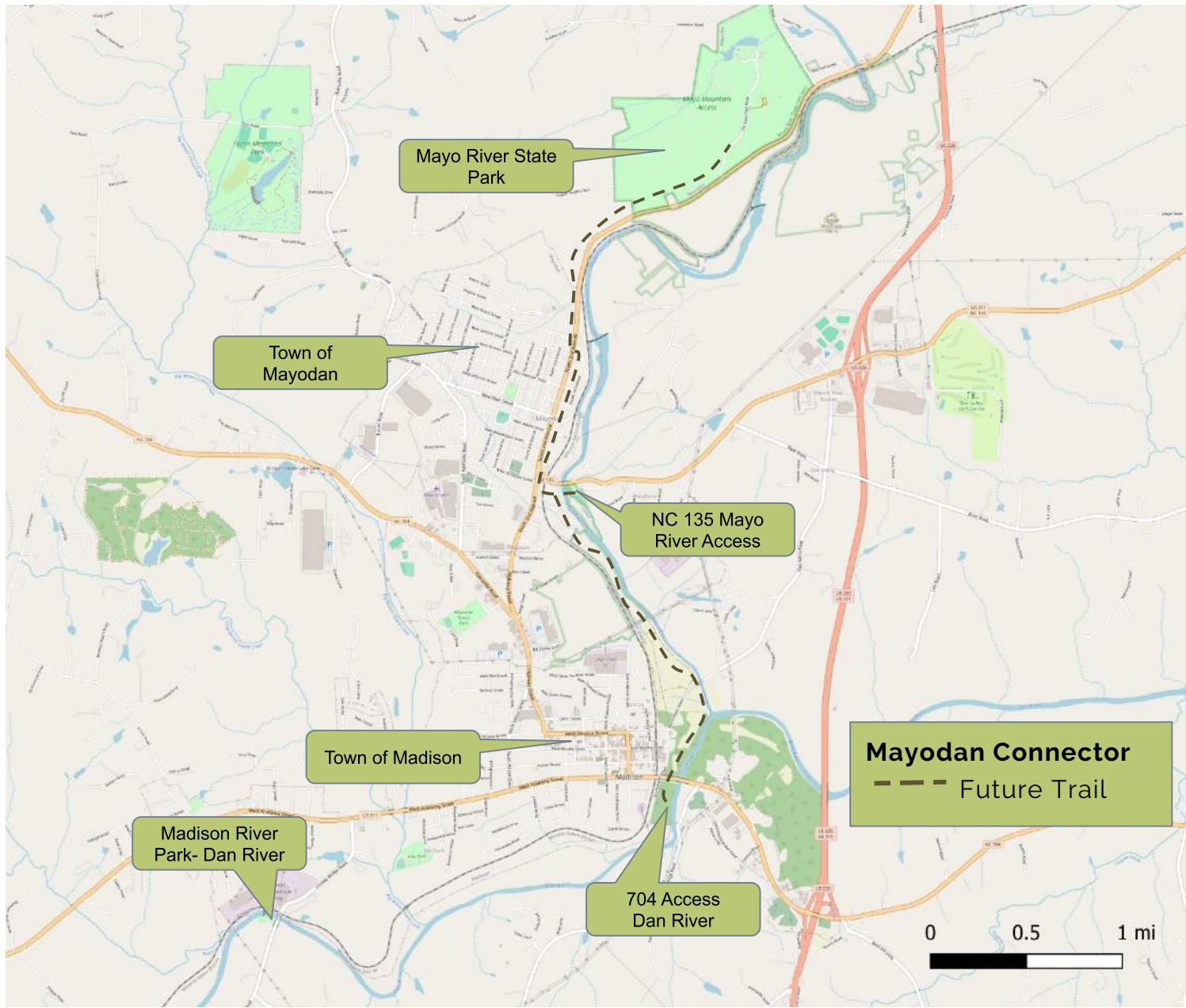
**COST ESTIMATE:** Trail surface and phases are dependent on cost. Between 500k - 1 million.

**FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES:** PARTF, The National Park Service Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance program, RTP, NCDOT Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning Grant, DOT

**TIMELINE:** Feasibility study application submitted.

**ISSUES:** Property easements, long-term phase plan needed

## PROPOSED PROJECTS



## PROPOSED PROJECTS

## PARKS

Parks are considered a waypoint in municipalities and increase the amount of public spaces citizens are able to enjoy in the county. While many find them lacking of use, plenty of people use them as gathering spaces for a vast quantity of groups, including those who are disadvantaged. These places act as a social place where people of all backgrounds are able to enjoy one place that is for everyone in the community.

While working on park development, there are a few key elements that create a more inviting place for everyone. In this master plan, there are suggested opportunities for additional amenities or layouts that will attract more people to parks. Many of these suggestions can be added to current parks to fit the needs of citizens without a full remodel.



## PROPOSED PROJECTS

## WASHINGTON MILLS PARK

In 2016, several riverfront re-development opportunities were proposed. And in 2018, a conceptual master plan was created that highlighted key improvements, recreation and entertainment additions, and several other amenities to create riverfront opportunities. However, due to existing debris and cost of removal, it makes more sense to convert the site to include a river access to the Mayo River, green space and a walking/bike trail that would connect to the walking/bike path at the Madison-Mayodan Recreation Center and to any future foot and/or bike lanes that lead into both Madison and Mayodan.



**LOCATION:** 36°24'28.5"N 79°58'00.9"W

**DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT:** Create an open and green space/park, with a crushed stone trail and river access at the Washington Mills site.

**POTENTIAL PARTNERS:** Madison-Mayodan Recreation Center, DRBA, Mayo River State Park, Town of Mayodan, Rockingham County, Rockingham Community College, PTRC

**COST ESTIMATE:** \$250,000 for Phase 1 improvements.

**FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES:** PARTF, The National Park Service Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance program, RTP

**TIMELINE:** Dependent on debris removal and remediation periods

**ISSUES:** Potential environmental contamination

## CLEARWATER PARK

Clearwater Park was envisioned by a local landowner who donated the parcel to the City in order to protect the viewscape of the historic Leaksville Covered Bridge Piling. Thanks to this donation and work by RoundRock Design and the local Boy Scout Group, trails and benches were installed to create a beautiful pocket park that is close by the Dan River Greenway and uptown Leaksville.

**LOCATION:** S. Bridge Street, Eden, NC 27288

**DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT:** Create and install City of Eden signage for Clearwater Park. Additional amenities can be added to connect to the Dan River Greenway and uptown Leaksville

**POTENTIAL PARTNERS:** Dan River Basin Association, City of Eden, Local Community Groups

**COST ESTIMATE:** Estimate depends on the projects chosen

**FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES:** City funds, private donations, PARTF, RTP, Tourism groups

**TIMELINE:** Planning Stage

**ISSUES:** Road Crossings, Parking Area

**PROPOSED PROJECTS**



## MADISON RIVER PARK

Madison River Park is a beautiful entrance to the Town of Madison. This park was created with many partners to remove a dam and create an ecological corridor for the endangered Roanoke Logperch. Stakeholders worked together to create a community plan that would provide fish weirs and the community's needs.



**LOCATION:** 800 Lindsey Bridge Rd, Madison, NC 27025

**DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT:** Phase II Plans involve expansion of the parking area, additional picnic tables, and a paved trail around the park that will be extended once bridge replacement is complete.

**POTENTIAL PARTNERS:** Town of Madison, KB Engineering, Tourism, DRBA

**FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES:** Town funds, private donations, PARTF, RTP, Tourism groups

**TIMELINE:** To be completed after Lindsey Bridge is updated

**ISSUES:** Bridge work, rerouting of the parking area

## DOWNTOWN MADISON RIVER PARK

Downtown Madison River Park is an extension of the park on Lindsey Bridge Road, this will include more amenities and additional fish weirs for stream restoration.



**LOCATION:** Water Street, Madison, NC 27025

**DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT:** Includes natural beach area for users, raised trail through the natural wetland area, additional parking, and improved river accesses.

**POTENTIAL PARTNERS:** Town of Madison, KB Engineering, Tourism, DRBA

**FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES:** Town funds, private donations, PARTF, RTP, Tourism groups

**TIMELINE:** In progress, the area has been cleared of underbrush, and surveying completed.

**ISSUES:** Flood plain- everything has been engineered with this in mind.

## DOWNTOWN MADISON POCKET PARKS

Pocket parks in a downtown area are a great way to add interest and keep people downtown longer. Family-friendly areas such as parks provide intrinsic environmental, aesthetic, and recreational benefits. It has also been noted that they increase property values and municipal revenue in the area. With a downtown as vibrant as Madison, this is not an opportunity to miss!

**LOCATION:** Downtown Madison, NC

**DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT:** Small parks in alleys or areas where buildings are no longer present

**POTENTIAL PARTNERS:** Town of Madison, Tourism, DRBA, and other local community groups

**COST ESTIMATE:** No cost estimated

**FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES:** Town funds, private donations, PARTF, RTP, Tourism groups

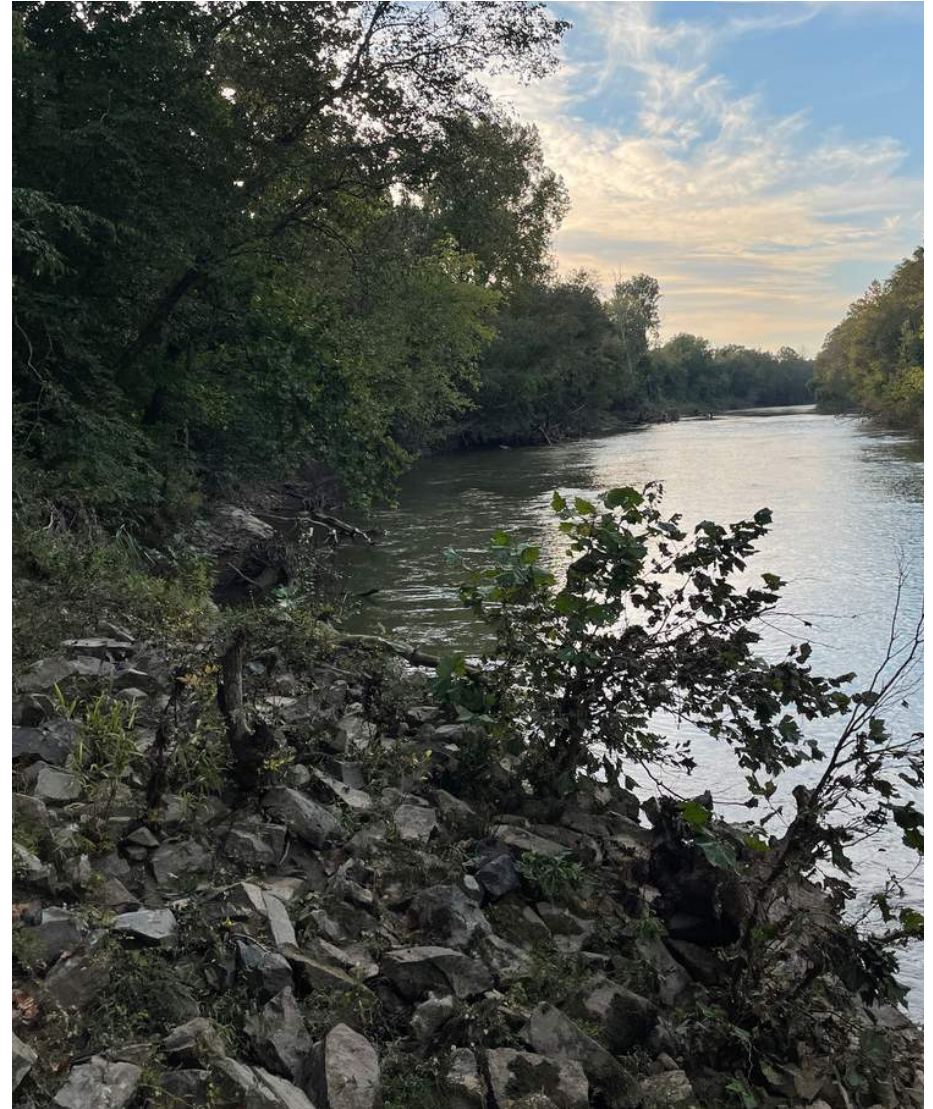
**TIMELINE:** One is in the process of being completed.

**ISSUES:** Property owners, maintenance

## BOATING ACCESS

The rivers in our county have long been a key point of recreation in our community and add a sense of place to our municipalities as well. While our four rivers have been key for our industries throughout the centuries, many people have seen them as a place of solace and comfort while recreating. Our three lakes also share an important impact on our community through drinking water and recreational opportunities.

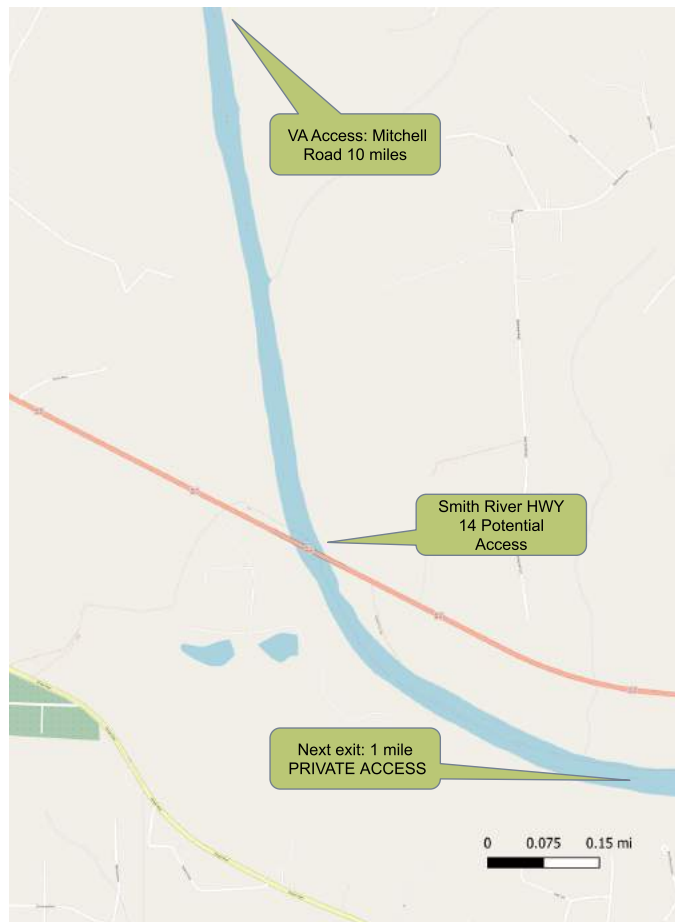
Public boating access is key to further expanding our reach to our community and beyond. Whether it is a lake or a river, each access must be thought out in a meaningful way. Access development includes consideration of erosion control, flooding impacts, and accessibility for users. Mapping and kiosks are integral to creating a streamlined user experience and allow newer users to learn more about safety and access information.



## PROPOSED PROJECTS

## SMITH RIVER- HIGHWAY 14 ACCESS

The Smith River does not currently have public river access in North Carolina. The closest river access is Mitchell Bridge Road in Virginia which is ten river miles away. An additional access on the Smith would provide a connection from North Carolina and Virginia and the potential for connectivity to the Dan River State Paddle Trail.



### PROPOSED PROJECTS

**LOCATION:** NC HWY 14, Eden, NC 27288

**DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT:** River Access with stairs and/or ramp and parking with trailhead kiosks.

**POTENTIAL PARTNERS:** Dan River Basin Association, Property Owners, Eden Rivers and Trails

**COST ESTIMATE:** Dependent on location and development type

**FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES:** Town funds, private donations, PARTF, RTP, Tourism groups, Future Dan River State Paddle Trail Extension

**TIMELINE:** Planning Stages

**ISSUES:** DOT Right-of-way, easements, new bridge installation

## DAN RIVER- DOWNTOWN MADISON RIVER PARK

These two accesses on the Dan River would allow for a quick paddle or tube trip down the river for users who might want a shorter route. The river restoration will also assist in the repatriation of the endangered Roanoke Logperch.



**LOCATION:** Water Street, Madison, NC

**DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT:** Additional two river accesses on the Dan, one by the natural beach area and another where the current access is at the 704 bridge near Downtown

**POTENTIAL PARTNERS:** Dan River Basin Association, Property Owners, Kris Bass Engineering, Backwater Environmental, Town of Madison

**COST ESTIMATE:** Cost has been budgeted

**FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES:** Town funds, private donations, PARTF, RTP, Tourism groups

**TIMELINE:** Surveying and underbrush clearing have been completed

**ISSUES:** User conflicts

## DAN RIVER- DRAPER LANDING RAMP

Draper Landing is the only public access below the Duke Energy Steam Plant Dam. While working with rescue groups, this would be a place where ramped access is needed. In partnership with NC Wildlife Resource Commission and the City of Eden, this updated access will be hardened and ramped appropriately for boaters and rescue squads alike.



**LOCATION:** 763 South Fieldcrest Rd Eden, NC 2728

**DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT:** A ramped entrance to the Dan River for boaters and rescue squads.

**POTENTIAL PARTNERS:** City of Eden, NC Wildlife Resource Commission, DRBA

**COST ESTIMATE:** Cost has been budgeted

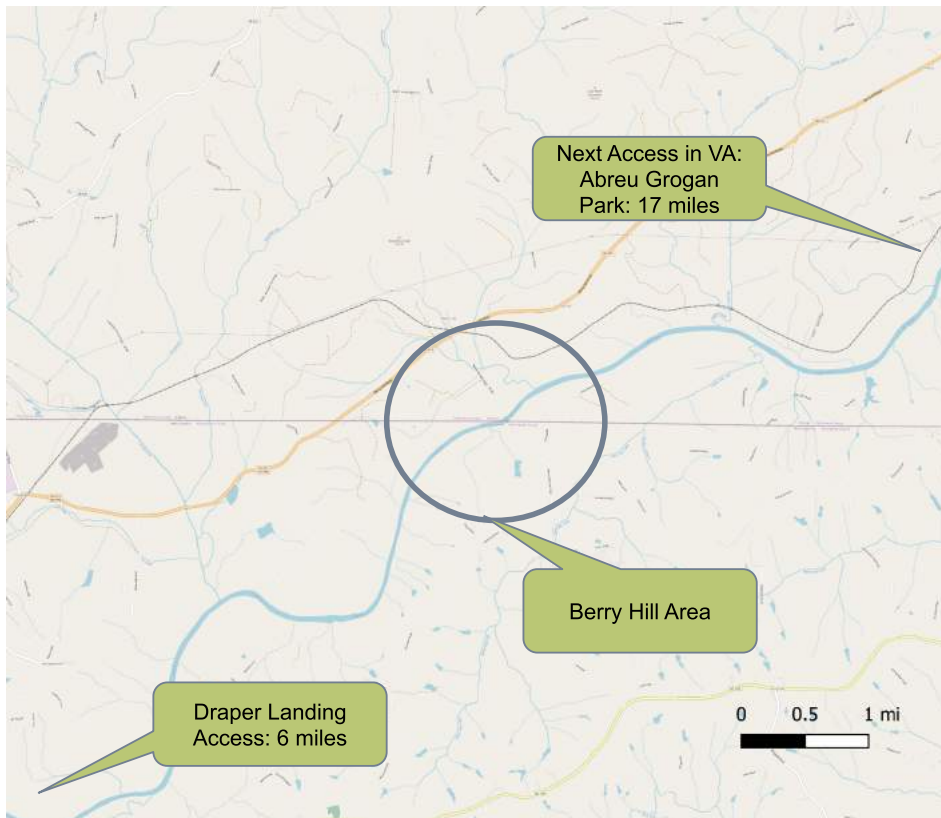
**FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES:** Budgeted

**TIMELINE:** Groundbreaking is estimated in February 2024

**ISSUES:** Additional user conflict

## DAN RIVER- BERRY HILL ROAD ACCESS

Berry Hill Bridge is the next exit downstream from Draper Landing. Although private property is on either side of the bridge, many are able to gain user access for a paddle trip. If added, this would be the last river access on the Dan River until it crosses into Virginia, six miles downstream from Draper Landing, and reduces the mileage to Abreu Grogan Park to 17 miles in Danville, VA.



**LOCATION:** Berry Hill Road, Eden, NC 27288

**DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT:** A new additional access for the Dan River State Paddle Trail with an easement or land purchase.

**POTENTIAL PARTNERS:** City of Eden, DRBA, NC Wildlife, Tourism Groups, Pittsylvania County

**COST ESTIMATE:** \$80-100,000 in development

**FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES:** City funds, private donations, PARTF, RTP, Tourism groups, DNST

**TIMELINE:** Planning Stages

**ISSUES:** Landowner easements, road crossings

## LAKE HUNT ACCESS

Lake Hunt is a popular fishing area. Creating additional river access on the Lake would allow people to paddle point-to-point or enjoy a different section of the lake.



**LOCATION:** 551 Ironworks Road, Reidsville, NC 27320

**DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT:** An additional river access on Lake Hunt at Irvin Farm Road, either metal grade steps, paved or natural surface ramped entrance. River access signage with a map of blueway.

**POTENTIAL PARTNERS:** City of Reidsville, DRBA, Additional community paddling or hunting groups

**COST ESTIMATE:** Dependent on access type

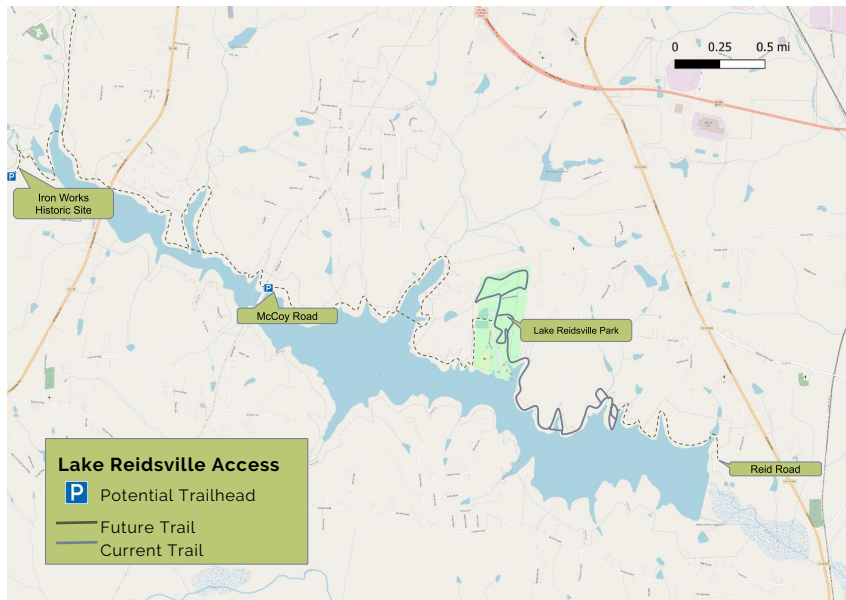
**FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES:** City funds, private donations, PARTF, RTP, Tourism groups

**TIMELINE:** Planning Stages

**ISSUES:** Access development and property possibilities

## LAKE REIDSVILLE ACCESS

Similar to Lake Hunt, this access would be additional access that would assist with paddlers and congestion of other user groups, like motor boats. Additionally, this access would share a beautiful connection to the new Iron Works site that would serve as a new area for public use.



**LOCATION:** Water Works Road, Reidsville, NC 27320

**DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT:** Additional river accesses on Lake Reidsville, either metal grade steps, paved or natural surface ramped entrance. River access signage with a map of blueway. Historic informational kiosks could be added for the importance of the area. Potential sites include McCoy Road and the Iron Works Historic Site.

**POTENTIAL PARTNERS:** City of Reidsville, DRBA, Additional community paddling or hunting groups

**COST ESTIMATE:** Dependent on access type

**FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES:** City funds, private donations, PARTF, RTP, Tourism groups

**TIMELINE:** Planning Stages

**ISSUES:** Access development and property possibilities

## MAYO RIVER- DAN VALLEY ROAD ACCESS

Dan Valley Road is right before the confluence of the Mayo and Dan Rivers. This access being added would assist with the upstream NC 135 Access on the Mayo River and the next downstream access on the Dan River at Jacobs Creek Batteau Landing.

**LOCATION:** Dan Valley Road, Madison, NC

**DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT:** River access on the Dan River, either metal grade steps, paved or natural surface ramped entrance. River access signage with map of blueway. Historic informational kiosks could be added for the importance of the area.

**POTENTIAL PARTNERS:** Dan River Basin Association, Property Owners, Kris Bass Engineering, Backwater Environmental, Town of Madison

**COST ESTIMATE:** Dependent on access type

**FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES:** Town funds, private donations, PARTF, RTP, Tourism groups

**TIMELINE:** Planning Stages

**ISSUES:** Private property, potential to add to Mayo River State Park and paddle trail on the Mayo River



## PROPOSED PROJECTS



## Proposed Enhancements and Initiatives

The proposed enhancements to our trails, blueways, and parks are an important addition to the Master Plan. Whether a 100-foot trail extension or a comprehensive program that will impact the entire county, this ensures all projects and initiatives are integrated.

### PROPOSED ENHANCEMENTS

Chinqua-Penn Trail  
Dan River Greenway Extension  
Emergency Service Ramp Access  
Farris Memorial Park Trail Extension  
Freedom Memorial Park Signage  
Governmental Trail Network  
High Rock Historical Trail Extension  
Hogans Creek Park  
Jacobs Creek Batteau Landing  
Mayo River Beach Access  
Mayo River 220 Access

### PROPOSED INITIATIVES

Family Friendly Improvements  
Trails K12  
Lifejacket Borrow Stations  
Water Safety Check  
Climate Resiliency  
Anti-litter Campaigns  
Trail Culture

## CHINQUA-PENN TRAIL

The Chinqua-Penn Walking Trail, on the property of North Carolina State University, was built in 1997 by the NC Upper Piedmont Research Station (UPRS) for the benefit of the public. The boardwalk and deck were built of treated lumber in 2006. Time and moisture have taken their toll on both structures since they tend to be shaded and damp. While piecemeal repairs are ongoing as necessary, a replacement of both structures will be needed in the near future. Building new structures with a combination of recycled plastic boards (i.e., Trek) and treated posts should increase their lifespans beyond 16-23 years.



## DAN RIVER GREENWAY EXTENSION

Dan River Greenway stretches from Leaksville Landing to Bridge Street. An extension to Klyce Street and up toward Matrimony Creek would allow users to hike or bike into Downtown Leaksville. Using the sewer easement that runs along the Dan River in that section, could allow for future extension to other areas as well.



## HIGH ROCK TRAIL EXTENSION

Additional trails on the historic property and extension to the Haw River State Paddle and Hiking Trail are needed. More hikers and an extended trail network would bring more attention to this hidden gem. The historic grist mill and the campsite of Nathaniel Greene are of note for the preservation of this property. Educational signage depicting this could be included.



## HOGANS CREEK PARK TRAIL EXTENSION

A community-led master plan has been created for this project to come to life. Currently, there is a need for more trails. Mountain bikers and hikers alike are looking forward to additional trails that run near the creek bed and different areas around the property.



## FARRIS MEMORIAL PARK TRAIL EXTENSION

Well-loved and well-developed Farris Memorial Park trails are used yearly for mountain bike races for the National Interscholastic Cycling Association (NICA), and other organizations. Updating and extending these trails will allow for additional routes and user experiences. Along with the extension, this could assist with user conflicts between newer bikers and hikers and more experienced bikers.



## PROPOSED ENHANCEMENTS

## FREEDOM MEMORIAL PARK

Freedom Memorial Park installed beautiful art sculptures on their trails. Along the trails, there are also tree identification posts about the abundant tree species in the area.

In addition to these beautiful accessories, a trailhead kiosk and directional signage would assist with wayfinding in the area. Since the park's trails extend to different streets and sections of the park, this information would assist in users understanding the additional amenities in the park and beyond.



## GOVERNMENTAL TRAIL NETWORK

By connecting the new governmental worker health center, the old Boy Scout Camp Pond, the Fine Arts building, and the current Veterans Park Trail, Animal Shelter Trail, and Post Office Trail, this 3.5-mile connection would add invaluable amenities to the area and the local workers who walk in the parking lot to get their outdoor exercise.



## EMERGENCY RIVER ACCESS RAMPS

The need for additional river access improvements for emergency services should be considered when creating or improving any future river accesses. Additionally, there could be discussion with local landowners with more desirable areas for emergency ramps by the river with a sort of memorandum of understanding that allows access during times of emergencies.



## JACOBS CREEK BATTEAU LANDING

In addition to updates and enhancements to the current river access, like a closer put-in area or ramp, additional steps down to the river, and steps off of the batteau landing, there are plenty of undeveloped, protected acres of land that are available for trail building and other future asset development on this historic land.

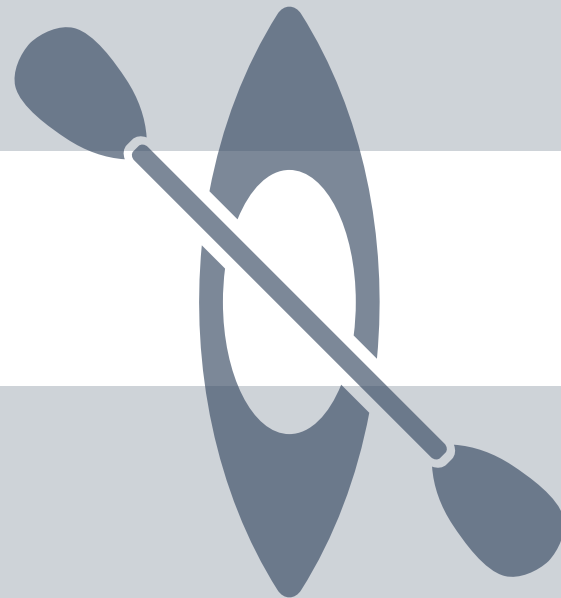


## HWY 220 ACCESS AND HWY 770 ACCESS ON THE MAYO RIVER

Both of these bridge accesses are difficult to use and have either been a 'DOT right of way' access or very primitive and subject to flooding. Improving these accesses to include metal-grated steps to assist in the accumulation of sediment decreases maintenance needs. Additionally, an extension of the river access kiosks and information about downstream dams are needed for additional education and safety measures.

## MAYO RIVER BEACH ACCESS

Now owned by North Carolina State Parks, additional safety features such as a timed gate for closing hours, cell service, and restrooms are planned to be added. It is proposed that the river access kiosks similar to Rockingham County be placed on all State Park River Accesses to improve continuity throughout the County.



## PROPOSED INITIATIVES

### FAMILY- FRIENDLY IMPROVEMENTS

Updates to all river accesses, parks, and trails can be improved upon with additional amenities that families enjoy and seek. Picnic tables, restrooms, water fountains, and lighted entrances should be added to these areas. The addition of smaller trails or loops allows children to explore on their own, gain confidence, and experience the outdoors.



### TRAILS K12

Trails K12, co-founded by Rockingham County Education Foundation and RoundRock, is a comprehensive initiative aimed at increasing access to natural learning environments and empowering educators and students to fully utilize these spaces. The trails are designed in close collaboration with teachers to meet the needs of academic achievement, athletics, and improved childhood health. The trails open the joys and benefits of the natural world for the next generation and situate their childhoods and education in the great outdoors. Trails K12 pays dividends now in improved academics, and later in life, as they mature into adults with an appreciation for the great outdoors.



### LIFEJACKET BORROW STATIONS

Rockingham County being a Tier 1 County shares that the population in this county is more poverty-stricken and has less availability to money that might be used for a life jacket. An opportunity to allow people and children to borrow lifejackets will save lives. In addition, users will be able to try out a few that might fit their needs or bodies better.



## WATER SAFETY CHECKLISTS

River Accesses in the City of Eden has included an additional attachment to the kiosks that includes a Water Safety Checklist with reminders of planning before you go, potential hazards in the river, and other helpful tips. It is proposed that these signs could be added to all accesses in Rockingham County.



## CLIMATE RESILIENCY

It is recommended that all river accesses, trails and other amenities listed in this master plan include climate resiliency in their plans for these additions and improvements to Rockingham County. This can include additional riparian buffers, climate-smart infrastructure, and future maintenance planning for climate disasters.



## ANTI-LITTER CAMPAIGNS

Any beautiful, and well-used area will have trash. However, working together to promote a different culture of littering through an initiative like this will reduce pollution and maintenance of areas. Ideas such as free trash days and reduced prices for electronic disposal are ways to reduce such issues.



## TRAIL CULTURE

Trail culture represents the spirit of the community. This includes inclusivity of all, creating a community by building enduring and healthy relationships, sharing efforts, and serving as stewards for the trails. Trail culture is positive-sum, and gives back through volunteering, crewing, trail work, or inviting new people onto the trail. Rockingham County offers a perfect landscape for trail culture to endure.



## PROPOSED INITIATIVES

# Project Implementation

For the Master Plan vision and recommendations to be realized, implementation steps are recommended. These recommendations include sensible planning and promotion, public and private investments, and the development of appropriate programs.

The implementation of this Master Plan requires these progressive actions including:

- Undertaking 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: marketing, tourism, community building
- Make green infrastructure investments
- Acquire local, state, and national funding



Each phase of planning is subject to a variety of factors, which determine their timing and include the availability of personnel and financial resources necessary to implement a specific proposal; determination of whether an implementation step is a necessary precursor to or component of an outdoor recreational amenity; 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; and the challenge which a particular implementation task is designed to address.

Although timelines are useful in planning for a specific project, it is suggested not to put forward a precise timetable for overall implementation. Therefore, the suggested timelines and their parts should be flexible and can be implemented at the community's level of readiness.

Rockingham County and all municipalities need to collaborate to successfully implement the Master Plan. For this to work, an outside, independent organization, such as the Dan River Basin Association, is recommended to coordinate and manage this collaboration and manage the projects outlined in this plan.



Other recommendations to consider before implementing the Master Plan include:

- Making contact with agencies and organizations to determine the feasibility of creating partnerships to make recreational facilities and programs more accessible to local citizens.
- Planning efforts should be coordinated with local governments to decrease duplication of effort and leverage resources and volunteers.
- Provide a professional law enforcement presence through effective conservation law enforcement training.
- Expand educational programs offered to the public that emphasize awareness of local natural resources and safety associated with hunting, fishing, boating, and wildlife viewing.
- Increase angling access and opportunities, including shoreline fishing, wheelchair-accessible facilities at fishing areas where conditions are suitable, and sound fisheries management.
- County and municipal planners should utilize comprehensive land conservation plans and expand the funding source for land conservation to ensure representation on protected lands for all of the local natural community types and rare species.
- Unprotected conservation sites- and all unprotected portions of partially protected sites, should be targeted for future land conservation efforts.



## **Steps to Success**

In order for the Master Plan to succeed and be useful to the community, the plans must be made public and the benefits of outdoor recreational amenities in the community promoted. The promotion should be aimed at two major outcomes that address Quality of Life factors: physical health success and economic health success.

Physical health success is achieved by the reduction in obesity and diabetes rates. 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 is achieved when the area sees economic returns 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.

Rockingham County citizens have realized the direct results of economic and physical health success with the inception of the original Pathways Master Plan and the completion and implementation of many of the initial plan projects. The continuation of this success lies within the ability of the local municipalities to work together in partnership with organizations that can produce results for the community.

Building upon a successful campaign, the implementation phase should include the recruitment of an active committee of nature advocates, elected officials and representatives from Parks and Recreation, the Health Department, schools (fitness and health), business leaders, and others. The committee would undertake the tasks of trail and river access point maintenance and trail and river access development. In addition, the committee should be responsible for marketing, launching the branding, and event series coordination. The group will also be responsible for fundraising and creating partnerships in the community.

## Marketing

The Master Plan implementation can build upon an already implemented marketing campaign of the RoCo Blueway Guide. Any marketing and branding strategy moving forward should start with a community-wide promotion strategy rooted in promoting tourism. Nature-based tourism is one of the largest growing industries in the United States, Rockingham County can and has been marketing this region as a destination to millions of people living in cities just an hour or two away. It is a place to explore history, culture, and nature, a place for “stay-cations” and day trips, and a place grounded by its historical roots and pride in its sense of community.

## Trail & River Access Point Naming

Actual trail and river access point naming should continue to follow the trend of local branding with an overall strategy for regional identity. The current use of the RoCo Blueway System encompasses both trails and river access locations and uses a prominent local feature that is readily identified. Specific names for trails should reflect the regional identity and the local references. 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 a natural or historic feature. These names may be altered for educational and geographic reasons.



## Signage & Element

A gateway sign is a formal pronouncement of the trail, trail system, river access point, or blueway water trail. In rural settings, depending upon design, trailhead elements may be preferred over actual signage. A trailhead element can be a type of signage but does not necessarily have to use words or advertisements. 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. A kiosk may serve as a trailhead element and may also incorporate signage.





### Trail & River Access Marking

A common, repeated, and cohesive "sign" language should be used to mark trails and river access points that can be readily identified to users. The methodology varies from simple color markers on trees to a complete brand and sign package featuring a logo that can also be used for marketing purposes. Marking can occur in a variety of ways. Often, early in projects, outdoor recreational assets 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 marking.

Additional information can be added to trail marking, such as mile markers or the name of the trail. Mile markers or identifying road names can also be posted along blueway bridges and access points. Currently, all bridges over the Dan River have road signs attached with the road name and GPS coordinates of the bridge. This could be particularly important in emergency situations to alert authorities to an exact location.



## Agreements, Guidelines, and Facilities

### Trail Agreements

There are numerous ways in which a trail becomes a reality. 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's perspective, any trail should not compromise current property use to any extent agreed upon. The trail should also not cause concern of liability for the property owner.

From the trail user's 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. For all interested parties, the trail needs to be routed and located in such a way as to minimize constant maintenance and upkeep, other than regularly scheduled pruning and occasional repair from use.

In order to establish a functional, efficient, and usable trail system, 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 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

**The following is a sampling of common practices related to trail agreements, as well as design and use guidelines.**

### **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 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 specific 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. 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. The landowner retains ownership of the property, with the right to sell the land or pass it along to his or her heirs. The terms of any easement will transfer intact to new ownership. Whether the easement holder is a public or non-profit organization, the holder has the responsibility to enforce, abide by, and adhere to the requirements stipulated in the easement.

Trail easements are legally enforceable agreements 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 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.



## 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 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, public agencies can perform a function similar to 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.

At times, 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.



## **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.

An MOU can be employed where a property owner does not wish to record an easement but will allow for the trail. The MOU will constitute a “handshake” 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 cases. However, it should require a property owner to allow hunting to post notice of such conflict or danger. It should also specify who is responsible for maintenance. Many agreements can be added to the MOU, but the document itself is not a legally binding document.

To satisfy agencies that provide funds to build trails, easements or MOUs with property owners are typically required with more agencies currently leaning toward easements.



## Liability

Liability related to recreational use is found in NC General Statutes Chapter 38A, § 38A-4. Limitation of liability. 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 trailheads 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.



## Trail Route Planning and Design Guidelines

The Master Plan was conceptualized by taking citizen input and mapping it with known 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 conceptual ideas in the Master Plan can have a real impact on a property and on a property owner. This is particularly true where there is a deep emotional attachment to the land or in urban settings where privacy and space are considerations.

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.

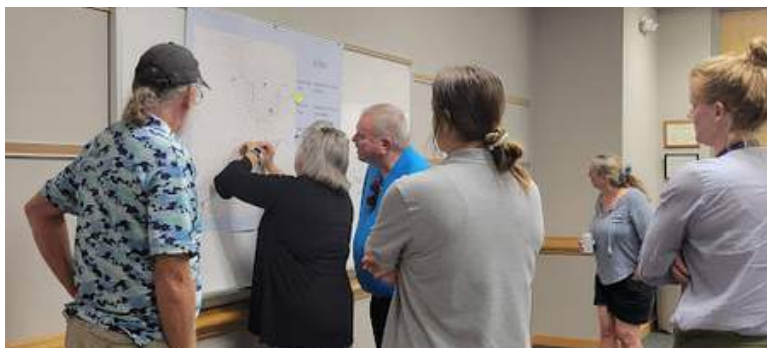
Planning guidelines encourage routing trails and building river access points across public land, rights-of-way, or easements acquired from willing landowners. Existing easements, such as sewer and gas easements, would require a landowner to update said easement to allow for a trail, but this may be 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

A trail route or river access point 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 trails and river access. 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 attributes such as significant trees, rock outcroppings, and other natural features.

- Identify endpoints of a trail or any phase of a trail
- Determine if endpoints need to be on the same side of any waterway
- Identify other crossings that can incur additional costs
- The trail route corridor should follow any Flood Plain Fringe.
- Work closely with the property lines/owners for the best workable options and feasibility.



Whenever possible, trails should be located along or uphill from the edge of the floodway fringe. This ensures the longevity of the trail (any surface) by avoiding damages during extraordinary flood events and allows property owners easy access to observe flood events and monitor conditions and land. In extreme flood events, it can also create a zone where sandbagging can occur through easy transport and staging (needed if near homes, not along the whole corridor). Beginning with the floodway fringe route, it is best to work to find final route options while identifying what is right for the property owner.

Bridges are logical places for trailheads. 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 alternative 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 the property owner's permission.

Bridges add cost though, and therefore a trail should be value-engineered to determine costs and feasibility.



## Trail Development Guidelines

The 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 a 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.

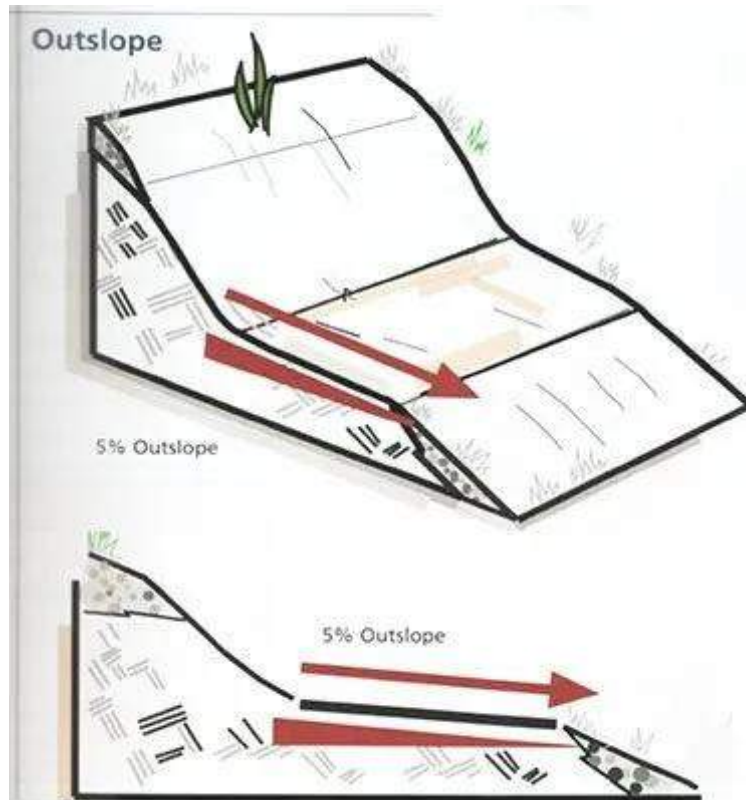
Creating the “experience” of the trail requires an intimate knowledge of the natural and cultural landscape of the corridor and necessitates maximizing opportunities to route the trail along unique features, or “positive control points”, such as:

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

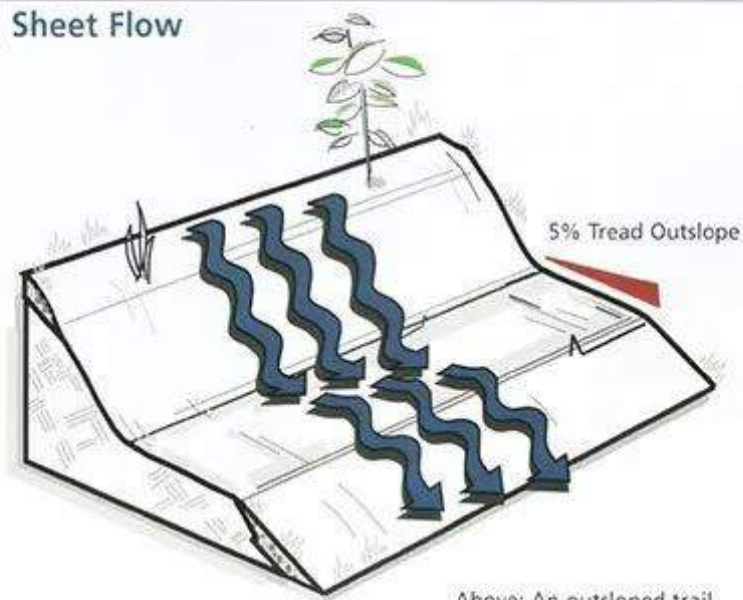
Where new trails are planned, it is important to harmonize their appearance with the environmental, ecological, and visual attributes of the landscape.

The book, Trail Solutions: IMBA's Guidelines to Building Sweet Singletrack is now known as the industry standard. Our overview of trail design and construction process can be found on the following pages.

A sustainable trail is a path that gently traverses a hill or side slope. It is characterized by a gentle grade, undulations called grade reversals, and a tread that usually tilts or out slopes 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.



### Sheet Flow

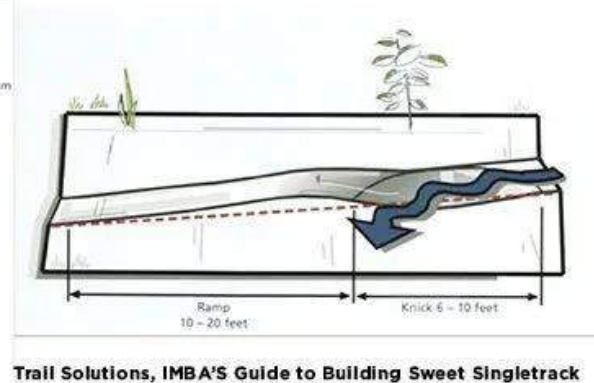


Above: An outsloped trail tread allows water to drain in a gentle, non-erosive manner called "sheet flow."

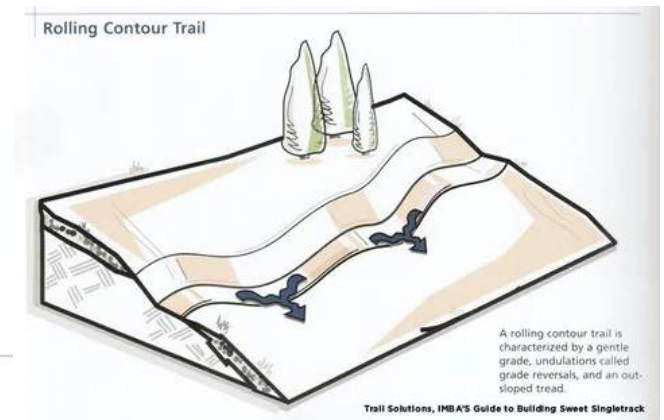
Trail Solutions, IMBA'S Guide to Building Sweet Singletrack

## Sustainable trail tips:

- 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 side slope
- Maximum grade should be 15 percent
- Average grade should stay under 10 percent (with grade reversals)
- Route trails to positive control points (viewpoints, water, other attractions)
- Route trails to avoid negative control points (boundaries, steep edges, protected species)
- Use bench-cut construction, and excavate soil from the hillside
- For reroutes, reclaim old trail thoroughly: the visual corridor and trail tread
- Use natural rock or other rock features to improve sustainability
- "Friends" groups can be formed to assist with maintenance of the trail



Trail Solutions, IMBA'S Guide to Building Sweet Singletrack



## Trail Facilities

As use and demand persist, it will be necessary to invest in facilities such as restrooms, rest stops, shelters, and fountains for drinking water. 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 Master Plan effort should fit into 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 design
- Utilize traditional materials and methods in facility design
- Use local/indigenous landscape and construction materials
- Restroom facilities are encouraged to be composting toilets that are low maintenance and open year-round.



## Trailhead

Trailheads provide starting and ending points for the use of the trail and maybe locations where motor vehicle and bicycle parking are provided. There are usually two classifications of trailheads, regional and local trailheads. 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. Local trailheads occur at intersections with roadways.

Trails 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 available along the road shoulder. 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, or natural significance. They can include the same amenities found at trailheads or may simply be a bench and covered area.



## AGREEMENTS, GUIDELINES, AND FACILITIES

## Lighting

One of the main attractions of living in rural areas is the absence of city lights. This is a major factor in 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 ambiance. The International Dark-sky Association has produced a comprehensive Outdoor Lighting Code handbook that contains much "best practice" advice.

## Bike Parking

Just as the provision of motor vehicle parking has been shown to increase 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. A dozen 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.



## AGREEMENTS, GUIDELINES, AND FACILITIES

## **Maintenance**

The trails and river access points in this Master Plan were planned with citizen input. The resulting Master Plan is collaborative and based on 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. While much 'general' maintenance can be done by volunteers, it is important to ensure quality trails by having a specialized trail builder review or update trails accordingly.



## **Trash removal**

Trash cans, recycling containers, and related materials 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.

## **AGREEMENTS, GUIDELINES, AND FACILITIES**

## 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 trails and river access points. Volunteers can assist Parks and Recreation or other Authority staff with the vital task of improvements and maintenance. Adopt-a-Trail grant opportunities are provided through the Dan River Basin Association with community partners.

The current Adopt-a-Trail program states that a trail or trail section must be adopted for a period of one year. Trail inspections may include the following: observing the condition of the trailhead parking lot, bulletin board, and trail signs, monitoring trail conditions and performing routine maintenance, picking up litter, and notifying of any problems or additional maintenance needs.

Volunteers are asked to visit the adopted trail or trail section at least six times per year (approximately once every two months). Routine maintenance involves keeping the trail surface free of loose rocks, limbs, and other debris, pruning small limbs from the trail corridor, cleaning water bars and drainage ditches, and clearing debris from benches, bridges, and other structures. Volunteers are provided information and instruction on maintaining specific trails to meet area management guidelines. Volunteers are asked to provide their own trail maintenance tools. Volunteers should also report any suspicious or illegal activity.

The safety of the volunteers is critical, and they are encouraged to dress appropriately for trail work and use gloves, safety glasses, and other protective gear when necessary. In addition, all work should take place during daylight hours and be performed with safety in mind.



## AGREEMENTS, GUIDELINES, AND FACILITIES



## Benefits of Outdoor Recreation

Outdoor recreation is an easy and affordable means of enjoyment for people of all ages. It provides a way to get outside and enjoy the natural surroundings and to breathe in the fresh air.

However, getting outside to enjoy a beautiful day isn't a personal indulgence. Enjoying outdoor recreation, such as mountain biking, hiking or kayaking provides numerous benefits for children, families, businesses, municipalities, and the environment.

Outdoor recreation has psychological benefits, including the prevention or reduction of stress; improved self-esteem, confidence, and creativity; spiritual growth; and an increased sense of exhilaration, adventure, and challenge from life. Getting outside provides physical benefits, such as aerobic, cardiovascular, and muscular fitness, as well as improved functioning of the immune system. The great outdoors afford social benefits like bonding with like-minded people who enjoy outdoor activities and feeling an increased pride in your community and nation.

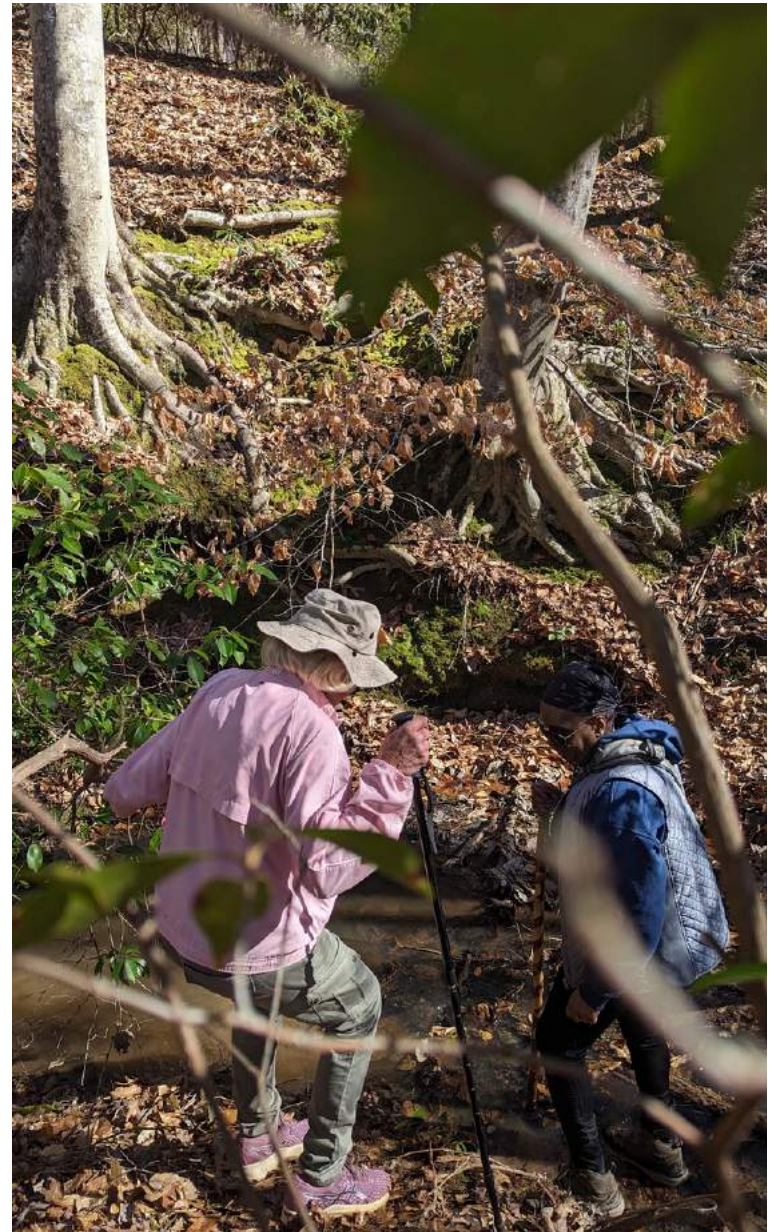
Outdoor recreation pays off with economic benefits. People who regularly participate in outdoor recreation tend to be more productive at work. Outdoor recreation creates job opportunities for others, which leads to economic growth. In addition, the preservation of the natural areas needed for outdoor recreation increases property values. Outdoor recreation provides environmental benefits, including increased environmental awareness. Concern that results from outdoor recreation can lead to increased involvement in environmental issues.

The beneficial impact of outdoor recreation amenities can be evaluated in short- and long-term impacts, including tourism opportunities and associated business ventures. The investment in outdoor recreation is 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 and river access development, their associated tourism creates a need for jobs in food service, accommodation, transportation, and other industries.

More than four million residents of metro areas in North Carolina and Virginia live within an easy day's drive of Rockingham County.

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 four million people in the Piedmont, or a portion thereof, are traveling and spending money. For current businesses, it means sales tax and revenues.



## Economic Benefits

Local governments are facing growing pressure with respect to encouraging or maintaining the quality of life, addressing social issues, and ensuring recreation and leisure services and supports remain a fundamental service for all residents, businesses, and visitors. Competing needs and conflicting priorities for limited resources are often felt in a reduction of access to the benefits of physical health, social development, community well-being, and ultimately economic vibrancy.

Outdoor recreational assets and services contribute to economic development by attracting business to communities (recreation, sport, arts, culture, outdoor/environmental). In addition, they draw tourism that contributes to local economies and can be significant employment generators. In a 2021 report from the Bureau of Economic Analysis, outdoor recreation created \$11.8 billion in value-added to the economy, accounted for 1.8% of GDP, and supported over 130,000 jobs in our state. In comparison, North Carolina ranked 11th among all states in regards to outdoor recreation's value-added economic impact and 9th among all states on employment growth, outpacing national averages.



Small investments in outdoor recreation can often yield large economic returns from events, capital development, and ongoing services. Green spaces increase property value and tax revenue on adjacent land and are often used as marketing features by developers. Cycling, boating and fishing, canoeing and kayaking, hiking and camping, and other outdoor recreational activities have all seen consistent year-over-year growth in economic impact and participation (U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis).

Economic benefits include, but are not limited to:

- Opportunity to attract tourists
- Attract, create, and stimulate businesses whose employees are 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
- Trail corridors can be less costly to air and water cleanup from pollution (vs. no buffer)
- Outdoor recreational assets offer less costly places to exercise than indoor gyms and clubs
- Trails are also excellent stormwater retention strategies and are less expensive than sewer expansion.



## **Health Benefits**

The provision of an extensive trail system and access to one of the four rivers or three lakes can 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. In the outdoor industry, it is widely believed that for every dollar spent on trails nearly three dollars of public health benefits are produced.

Outdoor exercise can have more beneficial effects than indoor exercise. Spending time in nature's silence better acquaints people with their own thoughts and feelings, leading to a sense of calm and inner peace. Walking just twenty minutes a day can improve health dramatically. Walking is a low-impact exercise that can help manage weight, lower diabetes risk, improve mood, lower cholesterol and blood pressure, and has many other health benefits. It's a simple form of exercise that is free and accessible to everyone.

Trails and access to river-related activities 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

While proximity and safety are key considerations for the use of a trail and/or river, the provision of such an amenity is often all it takes for us 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.

More and more doctors are also recognizing the psychological needs that can be satisfied with outdoor recreation. A great walk through the woods or 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 burn 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.



## Environmental Benefits

The environmental benefits of trails and public river accesses are primarily associated with the trail corridor itself and factors such as being incorporated into a buffer on the river. Other factors, including easements and their type and purpose, can also play a role in providing environmental benefits.

Trail corridors and buffers preserve public open space, reduce and filter stormwater runoff, regulate stream and river temperatures, provide an opportunity to reduce air and water pollution by providing transportation alternatives, and provide protected wildlife corridors for migration and inhabitancy.

Public outdoor recreational assets help to preserve a public open space. Trails and river access points 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 sedimentation, and stream corridor degradation. 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, the 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. Streambank stability ensures minimal erosion and preserves aquatic habitats.

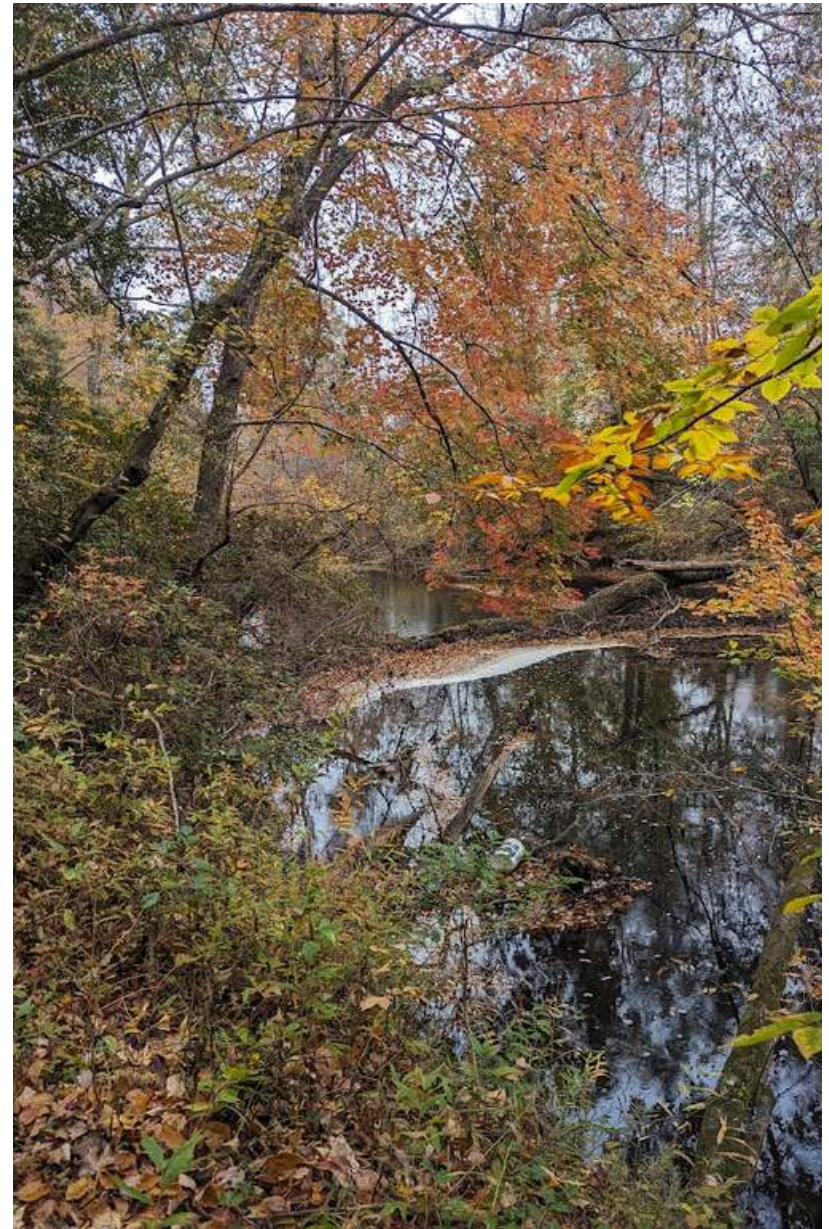


Plans for future trails, blueways, and greenways can serve both to protect natural areas along streams and floodways and to provide important non-motorized transportation linkages. When trails provide safe off-road routes that cater to multiple user groups, the option to walk or bike can replace a choice 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.

Primary concerns related to the protection of streams and rivers are:

**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 stormwater 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.



## Social Benefits

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 and river access:

- 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. 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 borders of our area with trails such as the Mountains-to-Sea Trail and Beaches to Bluegrass Trail. Educational opportunities abound with a well-planned network of trails and access to the river that link children and adults with nature. These same outdoor recreational assets can be designed and located to tell the stories of our area's rich heritage.



## 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 eco-tourism 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



## BENEFITS OF OUTDOOR RECREATION

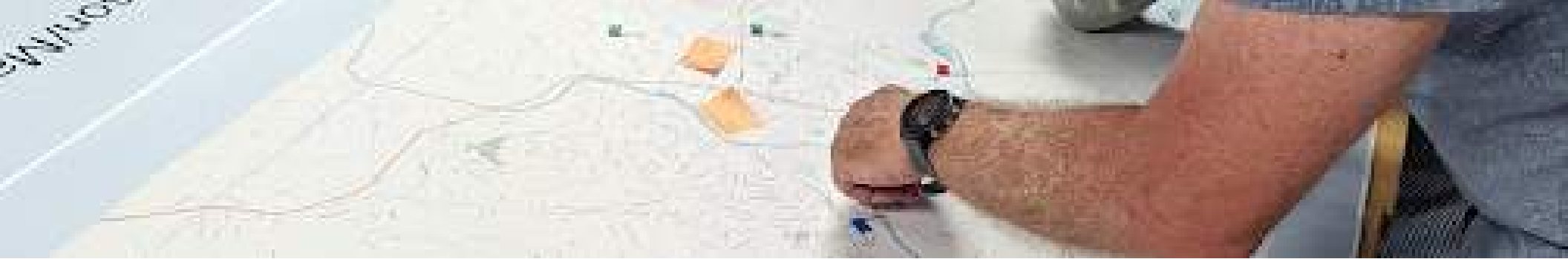
While increased tourism must be managed to avoid damage to the landscapes and ecologies that people come to visit, this same growth creates significant opportunities for both conservation and local community benefit. Ecotourism can provide much-needed revenues for the protection of natural areas, revenues 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 Rockingham 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 creates jobs in food service, accommodation, transportation, and other industries.

Ecotourism also provides a powerful incentive to protect the environment. 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.





## Public Input

Although experienced outdoor recreation professionals are able to identify recreational needs in local communities, citizen input is required when designing an inclusive Master Plan and helping to prioritize these needs.

Reaching out to community citizens is time-consuming, yet it is critical to recognize that public money is being spent to build outdoor recreational assets. Public input combined with professional knowledge and expertise in guiding that input, is what ultimately makes a Master Plan successful.

Public participation contributes to better decisions because decision-makers have more complete information – in the form of additional facts, values, and perspectives obtained through public input – to bring to bear on the decision process. They can then incorporate the best information and expertise of all stakeholders. Decisions are more implementable and sustainable because the decision considers the needs and interests of all stakeholders, including vulnerable/marginalized populations, and stakeholders better understand and are more invested in the outcomes.

As a result, decisions that are informed by public participation processes are seen as more legitimate and are less subject to challenge. Decision-makers who fully understand stakeholder interests also become better communicators, able to explain decisions and decision rationale in terms stakeholders understand and in ways that relate to stakeholders' values and concerns.

Another major result of sustained public participation in decisions and their implementation is the development of capacity for managing difficult social problems. This capacity includes improved relationships and trust between decision-makers and the public, and among different stakeholders themselves. Once stakeholders are invited into the decision process, it becomes more difficult for them to merely stand to the side and say “no.”

The importance of public participation in the process cannot be overstated. The very first trails and river access locations were a result of direct requests to county and city government by citizens in Rockingham County.

Through a variety of public meetings and one-on-one discussions over the past three years, the master plan development team has received invaluable input on the improvement of existing projects and the development wishes for new infrastructure.

Many of the original trails and river accesses were developed based on direct input from the public. Community involvement in the planning process has been ongoing since the first Pathways Master Plan was developed in 2014. As people became aware of the projects and began to utilize the economic and physical benefits their desire for additional projects grew.

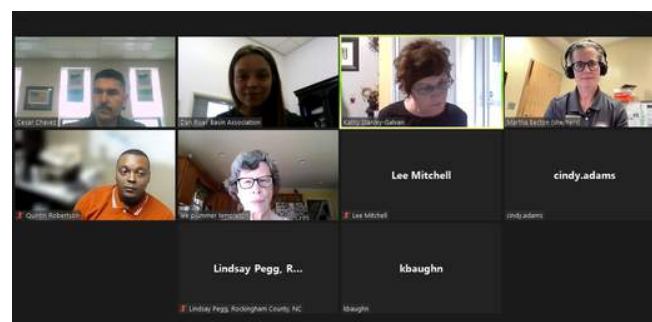
An outdoor recreation plan for rivers and trails truly is a public document developed with the highest importance on community input. This plan utilized many strategies to engage public input including Advisory Board Meetings, focus groups, personal interviews, and surveys. Over 500 people contributed their input to this Master Plan, including 10 advisory board meetings, 20 personal interviews, and 4 public meetings with a combined attendance of over 50 individuals.

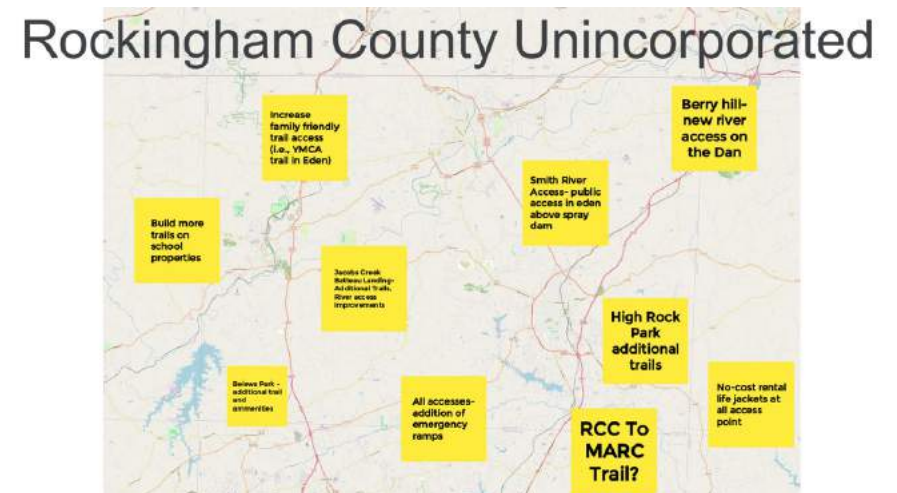


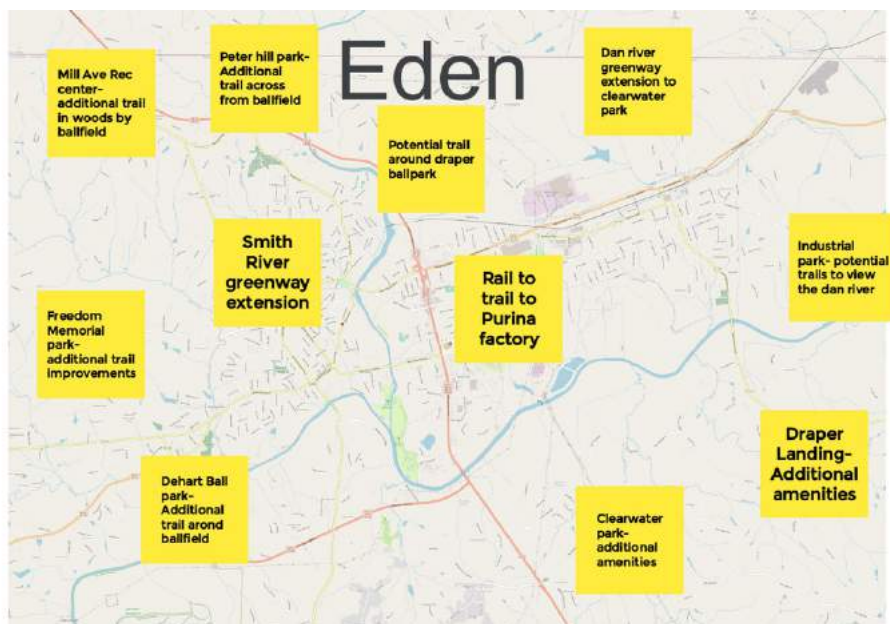
## Master Plan Public Input

The public meeting agenda and presentation were designed by the Master Plan Stakeholder Committee and distributed in person at personal interviews and public meetings. It was also made available online through two scheduled Zoom meetings where the individuals were able to input their wish list of items onto a Jam Board session, where they could place virtual sticky notes on different boards that had the map of each municipality with current assets listed, along with additional comments from previous meetings. In total, the public meetings accounted for over half of the listed projects in the proposed section of the plan.

While stakeholders and citizens were able to add their thoughts in person to the physical maps at the public meetings, online participants were able to utilize a JamBoard where they were able to share ideas and comments about outdoor recreation in our community.







PUBLIC INPUT

## North Carolina Outdoor Recreation Plan

Local public input was heavily used during the development of this plan. However, statewide public input was also considered when shaping the projects and facility enhancements of this master plan. Key findings of the NC Outdoor Recreation Plan were considered when determining priority projects. This plan's contents and format are shaped by the planning guidelines of the LWCF Act. The major requirements are comprehensiveness; an evaluation of the demand for and supply of outdoor recreation resources and facilities in the state; a wetlands priority component; a program for implementation of the plan; ample public participation in the planning process; and a description of process and methodology. The plan has been prepared to both meet requirements for continuing LWCF eligibility and meet the need for meaningful evaluation of state and local government public outdoor recreation projects.

This plan includes North Carolina's outdoor recreation setting, public demand for outdoor recreation, the current supply of outdoor recreation resources, partners in the state's need for outdoor recreation, trails, and their benefits, along with detailed notes about each of the key findings in needs including goals, issues, objectives, and initiatives. This statewide plan has set the blueprint for what North Carolina outdoor recreation will be guided by on the state level until 2025 when it is revisited to continue working for North Carolinians and federal Land and Water Conservation Fund standards.

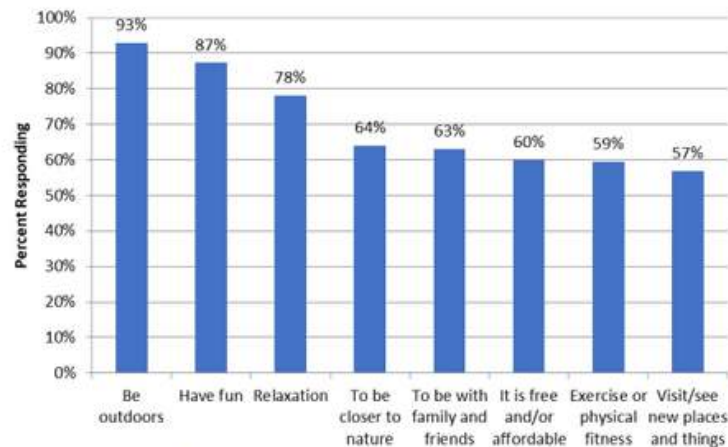


Figure 2.2 Why North Carolinians Recreate Outdoors

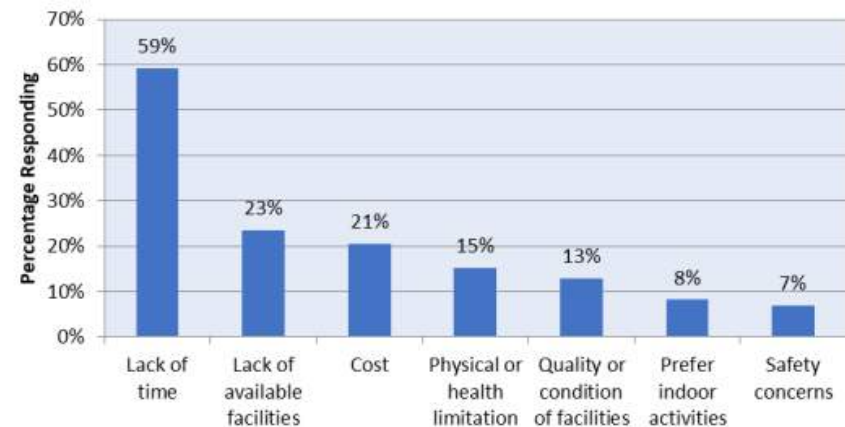


Figure 2.5 Barriers to participation in outdoor recreation

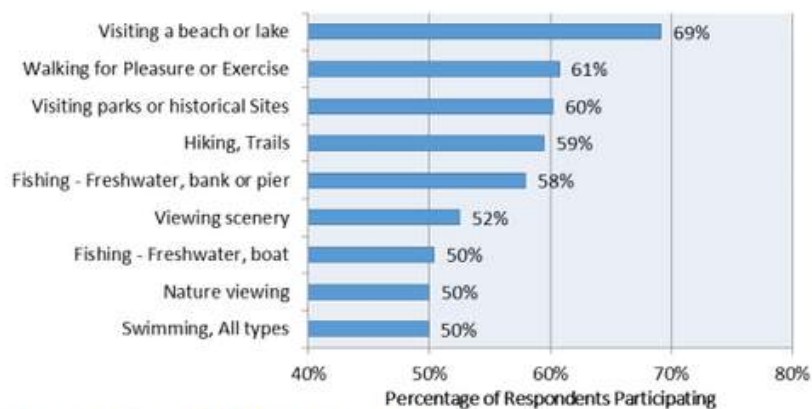


Figure 2.1 Most popular outdoor recreation activities

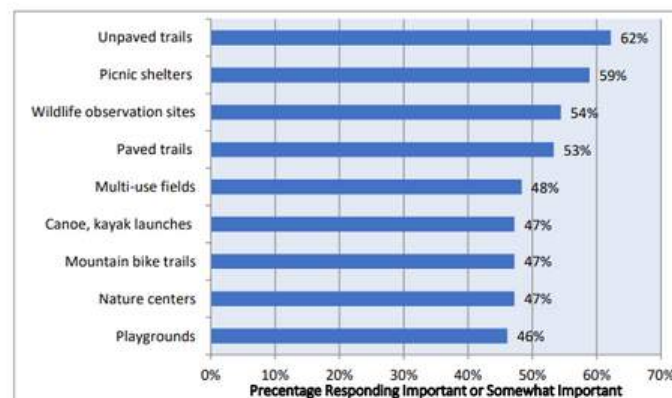


Figure 2.12 Priorities: Types of Facilities Currently Needed

THE NORTH CAROLINA OUTDOOR RECREATION PLAN HIGHLIGHTS THE IMPORTANCE OF CREATING A RIVERS AND TRAILS MASTER PLAN. CITIZENS NOTE HIGHEST USE OF OUTDOOR RECREATING IS WALKING FOR PLEASURE, THE NEED FOR UNPAVED TRAILS, AND THE MANAGEMENT OF PIEDMONT TRAILS WEIGHING HEAVILY ON LOCAL PARKS.

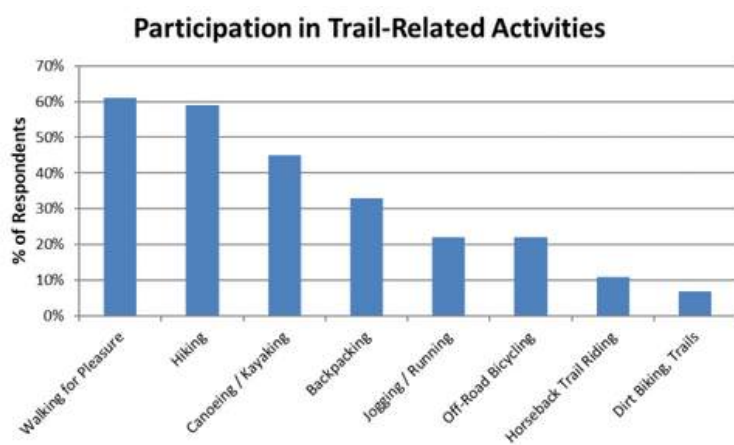


Figure 5.2 Participation in Trail Activities



Figure 3.3 Trails (All types) by Region

## Additional Resources

IMBA: Trail Solutions: IMBA's Guide to Building Sweet Singletrack

<https://www.imba.com/resource/trail-solutions>

North Carolina Outdoor Recreation Plan

<https://files.nc.gov/ncparks/north-carolina-state-parks-statewide-comprehensive-outdoor-recreation-plan-2020-to-2025-for-public-comment.pdf>

Mountain Bike Trail Development: Guidelines for Successfully Managing the Process

<https://www.gmrptcommission.org/mountain-bike-guidelines.html>

NC Land And Water Fund

<https://nclwf.nc.gov/>

Recreational Trails Program

<https://trails.nc.gov/trail-grants/apply-grant>

PARTF

<https://www.ncparks.gov/about-us/grants/parks-and-recreation-trust-fund>

# Frequently Asked Questions

## **How long will it take to build new trails and river access?**

Funding and expertise will determine individual efforts and facilitate linkages. Starting with “pilot projects,” the Plan is expected to take 5-10 years.

## **How is land acquired for the development of trails?**

A guiding principle of the Master Plan is “respect for the land and respect for the land owners.” As communities determine the location of new trails and river access points, they should begin looking at routes that include public lands or property owned by willing landholders.

## **Are trails safe for my neighborhood?**

Evidence supports the notion that greenways and trails may discourage crime and vandalism in many areas. These areas no longer serve as places for people to 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.

## **Can't trails just go along the roads and public roads?**

This is a 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 an hour's drive of Rockingham County, would you load up the family, or even go by yourself, and travel that hour to walk along the side of the road?

## **Who is liable if someone gets hurt on a trail?**

Liability related to trails is covered in NC General Statutes. 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 landowner is not typically liable.

# Acknowledgments

## **Whose Land Are We On**

The Saura Indians, also known as the Cheraw, were one of a number of small Siouan tribes in the colonial backcountry (modern-day Piedmont) of North Carolina. Saura Indians were important to the history of the Dan River as the river was a source of resources for them, from fish weirs to farming, the Dan River provided for them. It is important that we share this history of our native people for their use of the river before settlers came and preserve the impacts they had on the development of this area.

## **To Our Partners**

Community engagement and support are integral to DRBA's Mission; including this Master Plan. Thank you to all of our partners and citizens for making this plan possible. Countless hours of meetings, discussion, and pen-to-paper created this plan with your support. Thank you.

## **Stakeholder Committee for the Outdoor Recreation Master Plan**

Rockingham County Tourism - Lindsay Pegg

Rockingham County - Ronnie Tate

City of Eden - Cindy Adams

Town of Madison- Kevin Baughn and Amy Roberts

Town of Mayodan - Kathleen Patterson and Cesar Chavez

Madison - Mayodan Recreation - Lee Mitchell

City of Reidsville - Quintin Robertson

Town of Stoneville - Kathy Stanley Galvan, Perry Webster

Stoneville Recreation - Dillon Brown

Town of Wentworth - George Murphy and Yvonne Russell

Friends of the Chinqua-Penn Trail - Lee Templeton

Dan River Basin Association - Tiffany Haworth

Dan River Basin Association - Prepared by Anna Wheeler

## Notes



The Dan River Basin Association (DRBA) was founded in 2002 with the mission to protect and promote the natural and cultural resources of the Dan River Basin through recreation, education, and stewardship. The Dan River Basin covers 3,300 square miles and reaches 16 counties in Virginia and North Carolina. DRBA protects the quality of our region's drinking water, provides educational opportunities for thousands of students, and builds trails and river accesses so people can get outdoors and get healthy.

Learn more at [danriver.org](http://danriver.org)