

The One NC Naturally Initiative will not be a large scale state buyout of land in North Carolina. Over the next 10 years, the Million Acre Initiative will provide incentives and information for voluntary land preservation and acquisition. Successful existing programs of open space preservation will be further supported, and coordination between state and federal agencies, local governments, private organizations, and individuals will be enhanced and encouraged. Open space protection throughout North Carolina will occur in a manner appropriate for each town, county, region, and participating land owner.

The City of Raleigh's Comprehensive Plan of 1989 envisioned a Neuse River Corridor Regional Park. The Neuse River Corridor Master Plan provides the basis for implementing the original vision. The Master Plan provides clear direction and strategies to guide the creation of a new linear river park and should extend as a regional facility south into Johnston County, and north into Durham County and the Eno River State Park. Though sponsored by the City of Raleigh, the project is regional in nature and encourages a partnership of communities including Raleigh, Wake Forest, Wake County and Knightdale, each implementing their respective segments to achieve the entire vision presented by the Master Plan. There are four essential elements that comprise the Conceptual Framework for the Neuse River Corridor: 1) Greenway Corridor, 2) Greenway Trail System, 3) Arrival and Gateway Parks, 4) Parkway Road System.

The concept for a regional park is built upon the conservation of the 100-year flood plain and the provision of trails along both sides of the river wherever feasible. The plan uses existing park sites as core facilities and identifies key upland sites suitable to expand traditional recreation facilities. Private, quasi-public and public properties in other jurisdictions are identified as potential partners in structuring and providing access to this regional park. The Corridor Master Plan is built on a strong foundation of existing policies and public land holdings which support and make feasible its development.

The Mountains-to-the-Sea Trail (MST) is a proposed 900-mile trail comprised of footpaths, roads, state bike routes and paved trails extending from the North Carolina mountains to the Outer Banks. The trail was begun in 1973 when the North Carolina General Assembly passed the North Carolina Trails System Act. In the Triangle region, the trail extends through Orange, Durham, Wake and Franklin counties. Within Wake County, the trail will extend along Falls Lake on the pedestrian footpath that has been created by the Triangle Greenways Council and its partners. This natural footpath along the shoreline of Falls Lake provides county residents with access to scenic landscapes that are far away from the hustle and bustle of urban living. With the prospect of a connection to a state-wide network of trails from the mountains to the sea, residents of Wake County are linked to an outdoor experience that is unique in North Carolina.

## Neuse River Corridor Plan



## Mountains to Sea Trail



## East Coast Greenway



The East Coast Greenway (ECG) extends more than 2,600 miles from Calis, Maine to Key West, Florida, and will pass through the heart of the Triangle region in North Carolina. The trail is intended to be the urban equivalent of the Appalachian Trail, winding through suburbs, cities, villages and the American countryside. The Greenway is viewed by its supporters as a “linear park” for the east coast region of the United States. People of all ages and abilities will be able to use the Greenway for recreation, tourism, fitness, and transportation. The Greenway is currently being promoted and developed through a unique public-private partnership among the East Coast Greenway Alliance, a national non-profit organization, and local, state and federal government agencies.

In the Triangle region, the first leg of the East Coast Greenway, a six mile stretch of the American Tobacco Trail in Durham, was dedicated and designated in 2000. In Wake County, future completed sections of the American Tobacco Trail will become designated sections of the ECG. Additionally, portions of Raleigh’s Capital Area Greenway system and Cary’s Greenway system will comprise elements of the East Coast Greenway. The Falls Lake Trail that is currently part of the Mountains to the Sea Trail will also eventually become part of the East Coast Greenway. Thus, for residents of Wake County, our region is quickly becoming a crossroads for two of our state's most significant long distance trails.

## Circle-the-Triangle Trail



The Circle-the-Triangle Trail is a project originally envisioned by the Triangle Greenways Council to link the communities of Wake County, principally, Wake Forest, Raleigh and Cary, with communities in Durham and Chatham counties. The project is estimated to extend more than 140 miles and would roughly follow the alignments of the following trail corridors: Falls Lake Trail, Neuse River Greenway Trail, Walnut Creek Greenway Trail, Swift Creek Greenway Trail, White Oak Creek Greenway Trail and American Tobacco Trail. The trail is envisioned as an off-road and on-road multi-purpose facility. Some sections of the trail will be footpaths, others will be paved trails that support cycling and in-line skating. Most importantly, the trail will connect some of the county's most scenic landscapes, including Falls Lake, the Neuse River, Walnut Creek, Lake Raleigh, Lake Johnson, Swift Creek and White Oak Creek. Miles of the trail are already in existence throughout Wake County and many more miles are scheduled to come on-line in the coming years.

## American Tobacco Trail

The American Tobacco Trail (ATT) is a 23-mile rails-to-trails project located in the Triangle Region of North Carolina. The route crosses through the City of Durham; Durham, Chatham, and Wake counties; the planning jurisdictions of the Towns of Cary and Apex; and passes through the Lake Jordan project of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. This multi-use trail will traverse urban, suburban, and rural landscapes en route from downtown Durham at the site of the Durham Bulls Athletic park, to New Hill Road in western Wake County. At this terminus point, trail users will have the option to board the New Hope Valley Railway and take a train

ride to the community of Bonsal. A three-mile spur trail, part of the original railroad route from Durham to Duncan, provides a connection to Jordan Lake. This section of the Jordan Lake State Recreation Area, which is currently managed by the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission, is reportedly the largest summertime roost of bald eagles in the Eastern United States.

Wake County completed a master plan for its portion of the ATT in December 1999. The County opened its first 3.75-mile section, from New Hill-Olive Chapel Road to Wimberly Road, in 2003, and opened phase II of the Trail in July 2005, extending the length from 3.75 miles to 5.5 miles long.

The Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (CAMPO) finalized a complete inventory of pedestrian and greenway facilities in October 2000. This project was developed using a grant from the Governor's Highway Safety Program (GHSP). The purpose of the project was to establish an initial inventory, identify gaps in pedestrian facilities, and locate where to provide necessary improvements. By doing so, CAMPO hopes to promote more effective and efficient transportation coordination and planning throughout the capital region.

The Triangle Transit Authority (TTA) is a regional public transportation provider, offering a wide variety of transit services to North Carolina's greater Triangle area and outlying counties. The services include: a regional bus line with connector shuttles, van-pool service bringing commuters into the major work centers, rideshare matching service, and in the future, a regional rail system that will link the Triangle together. The principal goal of the TTA is to plan, facilitate, and promote, for the Greater Triangle Community, an affordable, customer-oriented public transportation network which provides mobility, promotes economic opportunities, and protects the environment. In eastern Wake County, the newly formed Easttrans Commuter Rail Alliance is working in conjunction with the Triangle Transit Authority to bring rail transit to areas currently under affected by sprawl in a direct effort to preserve open space, agricultural operations, and to promote denser development by expanding transportation opportunity and land use policies.

TTA through its services can help to promote the protection of the natural environment and a sustainable development pattern throughout the Triangle region and in Wake County. A sound, functioning transit system can be used to support the protection of open space. This can be accomplished by promoting more compact, less consumptive land development strategies which maximize the use of land. Clustering development around transit facilities can alter land development strategies and be used to promote walkable and bikeable neighborhoods and communities. Transit oriented development envisions the transit facility as the hub or centerpiece from which other land development radiates. Close to the transit hub would be commercial, retail, office, institutional and high density land



## CAMPO Greenway & Sidewalk Inventory

## Triangle Transit Authority

uses. Outside this core would exist residential development that can be interwoven with parks, greenways and open space. The outer core of land use could be reserved for agriculture, forestry and open space. This pattern is much different from the typical development pattern in Wake County and the Triangle during the past 30 years.

In Wake County, few examples of transit-oriented development have been built. Perhaps the best known is Carpenter Village in Morrisville, which promotes a compact urban form, walkable community and integrated open space network.

To highlight the unlimited cycling opportunities that North Carolina offers, the Division of Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation designated a system of Bicycling Highways. These routes generally parallel the major highways along which cyclists often wish to travel, but offer a more lightly traveled alternative than the busy, major roads. Nine different routes covering approximately 3,000 miles comprise the current system. Each route is described in a printed guide, which includes a series of segment maps with accompanying narrative that provides information on terrain, road conditions, services, and points of interest. In Wake County, there are two designated bicycling highways: Route 1 and Route 2.

### Carolina Connection - Route 1

Designated as a portion of US Bike Route 1, which runs from Maine to Florida, this route covers almost 200 miles of rolling terrain north-south through central North Carolina. San-Lee Park, Umstead State Park, and Kerr Lake State Recreation Area lie along this route, providing an opportunity to incorporate activities such as swimming, fishing, hiking, and nature study into the trip. Other points of interest include the Indian Museum of the Carolinas, Weymouth Woods Sandhills Nature Preserve, House in the Horseshoe State Historic Site, and the numerous historic sites and museums of the Raleigh/Capital City area.

### Mountains-to-the-Sea - Route 2

From Murphy in the mountains to Manteo on the coast, this 700-mile route traverses the state from west to east. On the way, you'll pass the loftiest peaks east of the Mississippi, traverse portions of the Blue Ridge Parkway, then drop 2,000 feet from the Blue Ridge escarpment to the rolling foothills of the Piedmont. Quiet rural lanes take you through lush farm country to most of the major cities in the state. Once past Raleigh, the flat land of the coastal plain makes the ride to the coast seem easy. Several miles from the end of the route, you have the choice of taking the ferry to Ocracoke and the Outer Banks or continuing to Manteo. Either way, wide Atlantic beaches are your reward at the end of the trip.

### Raleigh Bikeways Map

This map highlights a 150-mile system of signed bicycle routes. Nine cross-town routes connect neighborhoods, parks, schools and points

## NCDOT Bicycle Routes for Wake County



of interest. Four short recreational loop routes, one in each quadrant of the city, highlight good places for novice cyclists or families to ride. The system of off-road greenways and bike paths is also shown. A park matrix shows the facilities at 45 parks in the area. Comprehensive information on laws, safety tips and safe riding techniques is included.

There are numerous other forms of potential open space not included in this plan including university and college landholdings, privately owned community and neighborhood open space, open space within corporate parks, and other privately held lands. The primary effort of this report is to identify the open space holdings of local governments.

On November 20, 2000, the Wake County Board of Commissioners unanimously approved a staff recommendation to proceed with the preparation of a comprehensive watershed management plan for Wake County. The Wake County Watershed Management Plan serves as the County's strategic plan for protecting and restoring the designated uses of Wake County's streams. This is critical to the community's desire to remain one of America's "Best Places" to live, work and raise a family.

Wake County's streams function to meet a number of important benefits and uses for the community, including water supply, recreation, and habitat for wildlife, aquatic organisms and endangered species. The County's groundwater resources also provide important benefits, including water supply and maintenance of base flow in streams during extended droughts. Land use and methods of land development, as well as people's daily activities on the land can impact a stream's ability to meet its intended uses for the community.

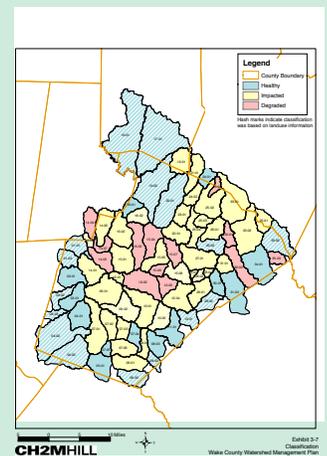
As of July, 2002, the State of North Carolina had designated an estimated 135 miles of streams within the Wake County Watershed Plan study area as impaired (approximately 8.8% of the County's stream miles). These streams do not meet their designated uses as classified by the Division of Water Quality and have been placed on the 2000 303(d) list and draft 2002 303(d) list, the official list of impaired water that the federal Clean Water Act requires each state to submit to EPA. These streams have been rated as impaired based on the following factors:

- Chemical Data
- Biological Data
- Habitat Data

If not managed properly, the future growth and development of the County, as well as the daily activities of the existing population, could lead to further impairment of streams within Wake County. If the miles of impaired streams increase, then the community will lose the uses and functions provided by those streams. Changes in behavior throughout all segments of the community may be needed in order to minimize the potential for future water resource impairment within the County.

## Private Open Space

## Wake County Watershed Master Plan



The Wake County Watershed Management Plan is a regional strategy for protecting and restoring the uses and functions of the County's streams in a manner that is consistent with the community's values for balancing economic development, environmental protection and natural resource conservation and management. The Plan identifies strategies to mitigate potential adverse impacts on streams that are associated with the future growth and development of the County, as well as the daily activities of the community's current population.

The Wake County Watershed Management Task Force adopted cost-effective and practical watershed management strategies that will be implemented uniformly and consistently throughout Wake County to protect and restore the uses and functions provided by the County's streams. The objectives of the Wake County Watershed Management Plan are as follows:

- (1) A safe, adequate and sustainable drinking water supply system that relies on both surface water and groundwater resources;
- (2) Management of storm-related stream flows to protect streambank stability, stream habitat and other physical characteristics of the County's streams, as well as to protect human life and property from flood damage;
- (3) At a minimum, compliance with state and federal regulations so that the levels of nutrients, sediment and other pollutants will not cause impairment or result in a loss of a stream's use and value to the community;
- (4) An educated community that:
  - a) Recognizes the importance of watershed management for protecting a stream's use and value to the community;
  - b) Understands how its daily activities and individual and collective decisions can affect the health of the community streams; and
  - c) Modifies its behavior to create stream environments that provide healthy habitats for wildlife, fish and other aquatic organisms and are free of trash;
- (5) A funding program that is supported by the public sector, private sector, and individual citizens to protect and restore the uses and functions provided by the County's streams for the benefit of current and future residents and businesses within the County. The funding strategy must provide sufficient and reliable sources of funds to implement the watershed management plan including ongoing operation and maintenance as well as an ongoing public education campaign;
- (6) A focused implementation plan that relies on the following guiding principles to establish priorities:
  - a) Maintenance and protection of streams that are meeting their intended uses for the community;
  - b) No further degradation of streams that have been identified as impaired and can no longer support their intended uses for the community;
  - c) Restoration of impaired streams where it is practical and cost effective.

Wake County government is undertaking its most serious considerations regarding future land use and the economic make-up of the community. The County is joined in this effort by a coalition of municipal governments, open space, park and greenway advocates, non-profits, business leaders, and experts in the fields of water quality management, open space preservation and greenway development. This chapter has defined the current status of open space, park and greenways resources in Wake County. It provides a snapshot of efforts to date in the area of park, open space and greenway resource protection and development. This chapter also illustrates that programs at the federal, state and local government level support open space conservation within Wake County. It is clear that residents of Wake County have a strong interest in conserving open space resources for recreation, water quality protection, water quantity management and aesthetic consideration.

## Summary and Conclusion

