

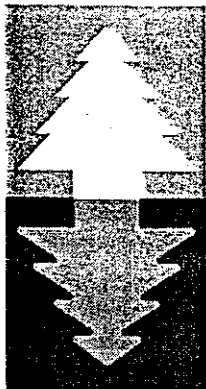
National and Local Impacts of Greenways: Examples from the East Coast Greenway and Anne Arundel County, Maryland Trails.

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National Impacts – The East Coast Greenway, A Worldwide Destination

East Coast



Greenway

Imagine touring the East Coast on a path that takes you along the Atlantic Ocean, through the countryside and into the cities, on a journey that celebrates the diversity, the beauty, and history of America. You can travel at your own pace by foot, bike, horse, on in-line skates, wheelchair or any other mode of non-motorized travel. Along the way you could visit a lighthouse, tour a battlefield, enjoy a Broadway show, visit an art museum or renew your spirit in the peace and quite of the country. And you will have a full range of accommodations to choose from. You could be pampered at a historic bed and breakfast, rough it in a campground, or relax at a hotel. Whether you plan a long trek or a weekend excursion your destination is an adventure on the East Coast Greenway.

The East Coast Greenway Alliances is identifying and designating a safe, esthetically pleasing, 2600 mile off road trail between Calais, Maine and Key West, Florida. To understand the scope of this project think of the Greenway as an urban version of the Appalachian Trail with one important difference. The Appalachian Trail is a wonderful way to escape the high paced energy of modern life. The East Coast Greenway will escort us right into the heart of American life and give us opportunities to explore our culture, and our history and our cities in a direct personal way. The Alliance is using waterfront esplanades, park paths, rail to trail conversions, canal towpaths, and parkway corridors to link these facilities into the nation's first long distance, city-to-city, multi-modal transportation corridor for cyclists hikers and other non-motorized users.

The East Coast Greenway has achieved real credibility. Our trail is moving steadily toward completion and we are confident of reaching our goal of a continuous, 80% off-road route by the year 2010. Currently more than 500 miles of trail are designated and additional trail segments are being

completed all the time. Projects like the Overseas Heritage Trail in Florida, the American Tobacco Trail in North Carolina, the Down East Sunrise Trail and the Eastern Trail in Maine, have all benefited by an association with our project.

Becoming a segment of the East Coast Greenway has many advantages to a local trail. Each segment gains national publicity and the use of the ECG logo to mark the trail. They also get support from the Alliance in seeking funding from foundations, state and federal transportation funds, and other sources of construction and operations funds. Each segment can request technical assistance and the Alliance shares information from other successful trail segments in such areas as design, trail construction, maintenance, operations, and community involvement. Each segment is included in a sophisticated GIS database/mapping system that is being developed by the Alliance for the entire trail. Finally, and, perhaps most importantly, each segment benefits from the value gained from being part of a continuous national trail which brings increasing tourism to the area.

Local Impacts – Volunteerism at Anne Arundel County Trails, Maryland

“Build a Trail in the community and then build the community into your Trail.”

Anne Arundel County, Maryland is developing a comprehensive trail system to meet the recreation and transportation needs of its citizens. Anne Arundel County Trails, a unit of the Department of Recreation and Parks, manages the trail system. The cornerstone of our success has centered on our efforts to “build the community into the trail.” We have developed comprehensive volunteer programs that encourage our citizens to love the trails they own. We recruit young people to complete service projects on the trail; Trail Blazers to assist the Park Rangers with patrol, special event management and safety issues; and gardeners to adopt the 100 flowerbeds built by Eagle Scouts. Currently 350 people are actively engaged in volunteer programs at Anne Arundel County Trails.

The volunteers at Anne Arundel County Trails have donated millions of dollars in time and services to Anne Arundel County Trails. The programs that generated this level of trail stewardship were based on some very simple truths and observations about volunteers. First, Americans love to volunteer. Volunteerism is woven into the social fabric of our nation. Second, volunteers need to be assigned meaningful tasks, not busy work. They do not mind being challenged and stretched by an assignment. Third, volunteer programs must be actively managed. Volunteers need to be recruited, trained, evaluated and rewarded just like the paid staff. Finally, the rewards and the results can be terrific for everyone.



The Friends of Anne Arundel County Trails is one of the most successful volunteer organizations in our County. Their mission is to promote, protect and enhance our trails. They work closely with the staff to secure grants and complete a variety of projects that have gained the trails national and international recognition.

The Friends have restored a derelict commercial lot along a trail and transformed it into a formal garden and concert-site called Hatton-Register Green. The Glen Burnie Millennium Green project landscaped two miles of trail that passes through a trailside community and set up

a volunteer organization to maintain the flowerbeds and plantings. The Friends are adding sculpture to several sites along the trail system through the Millennium Art program set up with the National Endowment for the Arts. The Friends most ambitious project is the Planet Walk.



The Planet Walk is a scale model of Earth's Solar System that will be installed along a 4.5-mile section of the Baltimore & Annapolis Trail Park. Each planet station will feature a sculpture that interprets the unique characteristics of the planet as well as storyboards that will provide information to visitors. The Friends have secured grants, hired an artist and a landscape architect, and recruited a variety of corporations and professionals to donate services, property and funds. The project is designed to encourage half-day field trips by students who will walk through the solar system and record their observations. NASA has recently joined the project as a partner and is creating the web-based curriculum and teaching guides for schoolchildren, as well as providing graphics for the storyboards and other technical support. The Sun Station is scheduled to open in June of 2004 and the entire project will be finished by 2007.

Conclusion

Building a trail in the community will have an immediate and positive impact on that community's quality of life. The same trail that provides our citizens with recreation opportunities, transportation alternatives and personal health enhancements can also inspire our citizens to think beyond the boundaries of their community. The East Coast Greenway and the Friends of Anne Arundel County Trails are examples of the impact trails can have both nationally and locally.