



## N.C. Department of Environment and Natural Resources

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### **State Agencies Announce Possible Expansion of State Trails System**

**RALEIGH** – On the eve of National Trails Day, state officials announced plans on Friday to add 65 miles to North Carolina’s trail system.

The N.C. Department of Environment and Natural Resources and the N.C. Department of Transportation are working on plans that could see another 65-mile trail added from the North Carolina-Virginia state line to the Neuse River north of Raleigh. As proposed, the trail would have many uses for hikers, bicyclists and site-seers.

The environmental analysis work currently being conducted by the Department of Transportation for the Southeast High Speed Rail project will be broadened to include the trail concept. Completing the environmental documentation at this time, will allow trail proponents to apply for state and federal funds for the eventual completion of the 65-mile trail.

The trail would run roughly parallel to the U.S. 1 corridor and connect Norlina, Henderson, Kittrell, Franklinton, Youngsville, Wake Forest and Raleigh. At the Neuse River, the trail could also connect to North Carolina’s Mountains-To-Sea Trail, a nearly 1,000-mile trail stretching from Clingman’s Dome to Jockey’s Ridge.

“We are extremely excited about the possibility of a trail along this corridor,” said Richard Rogers, assistant secretary for Natural Resources in the N.C. Department of Environment and Natural Resources. “It would provide connectivity to a similar proposed trail in Virginia, and potentially become a component of the national East Coast Greenway.”

“This is a great opportunity, and we are already moving ahead with our preliminary environmental and engineering work,” said Roberto Canales, the Department of Transportation’s deputy secretary of transit. “Adding the trail concept as part of this work is a win-win.”

Officials announced their partnership on the day before people celebrate National Trails Day, now in its 15<sup>th</sup> year. On Saturday, millions of bikers, hikers, runners and others will participate in numerous events that celebrate and promote appreciation for the nation’s trails.

Officials with the state departments of Transportation and Environment and Natural Resources are working on an agreement for the 65-mile trail that would set in motion an environmental analysis of the trail. Any construction project that uses public funds must have appropriate environmental documentation approved by state and federal agencies.

The idea to add to the state trails system came about during regular meetings of the secretaries from the state Department of Transportation, Commerce and Environment and Natural Resources.

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