



TRIANGLE GREENWAYS COUNCIL

N E W S
Winter 2014

- **-MISSION STATEMENT:**

The mission of the Triangle Greenways Council is to promote greenways and trails in the Triangle through public information services, to advocate for the creation of interconnected greenways that will serve all Triangle residents, and to preserve land for future greenway corridors.

- **TAX LAW CHANGES IMPACT TGC EFFORTS AT THE END OF THE YEAR**

Recent changes to tax laws brought a December 31st end to State tax credits for land conservation. Property owners hurried to take final advantage of a tax credit program that had been used to conserve NC properties for the past 30 years. The TGC facilitates property owner donations of land for conservation and now holds about 750 acres. Among the end-of-year transactions, was the acquisition of an additional 33.6 acres along Walnut Creek on the south side of Raleigh. This acreage is slated to eventually become incorporated into the local greenway systems. About 190 acres of TGC land is located along Walnut Creek, 120 acres along Crabtree Creek, 57 acres along Chunky Pipe Creek, 75 acres along Little Lick Creek, 24 acres along Lick Creek, and 79 acres along the Neuse River.

Property owners who donate property are still eligible for Federal tax benefits. North Carolina was the first state to establish a tax credit program. The incentive resulted in the conservation of approximately 238,000 acres statewide. The North Carolina program became the model for South Carolina and many other states. The tax credit programs in other states are expected to remain in effect.

• PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Mixed feelings accompany both the close of 2013 and the beginning of 2014. This is understandable, appropriate, and encouraging. It is the thirty-first such transition for your Triangle Greenways Council (TGC), and another year worth celebrating for its continued progress toward more complete local greenway systems and regional interconnections.

2013 Collaboration: Several years ago the TGC assisted Clayton with a grant application and then with accumulation of the right-of-way for its 4+/- mile greenway trail along the Neuse River. It was completed and dedicated last year, and Raleigh has since connected its system to it at the Wake/Johnston County line.

2013 Networking & Outreach: The TGC shared the greenways message and info with the public at numerous events, including the Planet Earth Celebration and Bug Fest at the NC Natural Sciences Museum, and the Festival In Motion at the Walnut Creek Wetland Center and adjoining greenway. Once again the TGC opened its annual monitoring visits to its [then 32] conserved properties to the public; and sponsored a bicycle ride and hike on greenways on National Trails Day. Further, the TGC promoted and actively participated in Raleigh's Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources System Plan update process that will be finalized this year.

2013 Land Trust: With the demise of the NC Conservation Tax Credit (NCCTC), the TGC's land trust activity was all consuming. Eleven transactions were concluded, which is three times the TGC's annual average, with eight of those closing in December. Approximately 150 acres, which is twice TGC's annual average, were conserved for future greenway corridor and public use in Wake and Durham Counties. Time and effort was also expended on stewardship of TGC's 750+/- acres of conserved lands, as well as responding to incidents of illegal dumping on several of these properties.

2014 Challenge: This will be a year of evaluation and reset of the TGC's business model. The loss of the NCCTC is expected to have a profound impact on land trust activity, and conservation grant funds have been diminished in recent years. Another approach for accumulating greenway corridors, parcel by parcel, will have to be found.

Beyond land conservation, the TGC will attempt to make progress on doing a better job of serving and expanding its membership, fundraising capacity, and other support functions. As an all-volunteer nonprofit corporation, there is no staff/office to handle these basic requirements. Past, present, and future members willing to share their time, talents, and fiscal support to advance and improve greenway creation are needed. Please contact trianglegreenways@gmail.com to investigate how you can make a difference in your community's and the region's future.

- **UPCOMING TGC PROPERTY MONITORING HIKES**

Visit Triangle Greenways properties on Saturday hikes this spring. Triangle Greenway Council monitoring hikes are enjoyable activities where members meet and view acquired properties [now 43]. Some hikes are easy, others more difficult. The schedule will be announced on the TGC Facebook site. Alternatively, send your email address to trianglegreenways@gmail.com to keep up with hike details.

- **GREENWAY CONSTRUCTION AND OPENINGS**

Neuse River Trail Construction

On January 7th, the Raleigh City Council approved the contract for the construction of the final Wake County portion of the Neuse River Trail. This segment of trail extends from the WRAL Soccer Center on Perry Creek Road to Louisburg Road. The Wake County Neuse River Greenway corridor extends 27 miles from the Falls Lake Dam to Johnston County.

Bass Lake Outfall Greenway

NOW OPEN! The Town of Holly Springs is pleased to announce that the Bass Lake Outfall Greenway opened to the public. The paved greenway trail is 1.32 miles in length and connects Womble Park to Bass Lake Park. There are access points near Womble Park at Grigsby Ave. and off of the Bass Lake Park Lake Trail.

- **RALEIGH GREENWAY NEWSLETTER**

An additional source of information for Capital Area Greenway events and projects is now available via Raleigh email news. To subscribe to the news, go to www.parks.raleighnc.gov or contact them by phone at (919) 996-4776.

- **RAIL TRAILS ARE AT RISK**

From the American Planning Association (APA) - On January 14, the U.S. Supreme Court heard oral arguments in *Marvin M. Brandt Revocable Trust v. United States*, in which a landowner claims that federally granted rights-of-way terminate, and the land is to be dispersed to neighboring owners, after rail service ceases. APA and other amici argue that the rights-of way-revert to federal ownership, preserving the valuable public asset of a continuous corridor.

- **DURHAM SEEKS INPUT ON DOWNTOWN OPEN SPACE PLAN**

The draft plan for the Downtown Open Space Plan is now finished and citizens are invited to attend an open house to provide their comments on proposed new open space sites, improvements to existing parks and plazas, and policy recommendations. The open house is Thursday, February 6 from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. at The Temple Building, 302 W. Main St. Hosted by the Durham City-County Planning Department, this public meeting will include a presentation, followed by an opportunity for residents to ask questions and make comments. The draft Open Space Plan is now available for review on the City's website at: <http://durhamnc.gov/ich/cb/ccpd/Pages/dosp.aspx>.

- **UPCOMING CONFERENCES**

The **Parks for Life Symposium** sponsored by the Triangle J Council of Governments is scheduled for February 21, 2014. Find the agenda, session descriptions, speakers list and online registration form at tjcog.org/parks-for-life-symposium.aspx If you have questions, please contact Renee Boyette at rboyette@tjcog.org or 919-558-9403

Cities, Rivers, and Cultures of Change: Rethinking and Restoring the Environments of the Global American South. This conference is presented by The Center for Global Initiatives, the Center for the Study of the American South, and the Institute for the Environment at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, February 21-22, 2014. For more information go to: <http://globalsouth.unc.edu>



• GREENWAY NEWS LINKS

Raleigh. The impacts of the tax law changes on land conservation are analyzed: <http://www.newsobserver.com/2013/12/10/3450087/loss-of-tax-credit-may-cut-land.html>

Raleigh. Description of the highly active land conservation year for TGC <http://www.newsobserver.com/2013/12/16/3465669/triangle-greenways-council-busy.html>

Raleigh. The North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources announced a Departmental reorganization and the establishment of a new Office of Land and Water Stewardship: <http://www.ncpoliticalnews.com/?p=5177>

Holly Springs. A donation expands the Holly Springs greenway network <http://www.southwestwakenews.com/2013/12/16/3464314/holly-springs-gets-donated-land.html>

Washington: Donations and studies help “blue trails” move forward. <http://www.thewashingtondailynews.com/2013/12/05/waterfront-donation-a-blue-trail-fit/>
<http://www.reflector.com/news/council-ponders-consultant-river-study-2242653>

National. Studies indicate that exposure to nature cause people to formulate long term goals for conservation of natural resources: <http://conservationmagazine.org/2013/11/nature-makes-people-care-future/>

• TGC IS ON FACEBOOK



Triangle Greenways Council is on Facebook. “Like” our page to keep up to date on the latest TGC developments. www.facebook.com/pages/Triangle-Greenways-Council/323580024345402



- **JOIN TGC OR RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP NOW**

Get involved in the support of greenways in the Triangle region. Become a member of the Triangle Greenways Council. Complete the following form and mail it to the Triangle Greenways Council, 520 Polk Street Raleigh, NC 27604

Name: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____

\$50 donation: Greenway Corridor Conserver
\$100 donation: Greenway System Builder

