



Chatham County, NC

Legislation Text

File #: 22-4585, **Version:** 1

Vote on a request to approve the 2023 Year of the Trail Proclamation

Action Requested: Motion to approve the 2023 Year of the Trail Proclamation

Introduction & Background: In 1973, the North Carolina Trails System Act marked the beginning of NC's trails program. 2023 is the 50th anniversary of this, and with that, 2023 has been officially designated as the "Year of the Trail" in North Carolina, the Great Trails State. The Great Trails State Coalition is charged with helping North Carolinians and visitors alike to get out, celebrate, and utilize the thousands of miles of greenways, paddle trails, singletrack, bridle paths, and other trails already in the state. Alongside that, the aim of the campaign is to increase funding for trail maintenance and new construction projects and to raise awareness of the many benefits trails can and do bring to communities for both the health of those who live there as well as the economy.

Discussion & Analysis: Trail use has increased more than 300% in some places in the last year. The pandemic has demonstrated how eager North Carolinians are for safe places to be outside in nature. Outdoor recreation is a \$28 billion dollar industry and will be an important part of our economic recovery from covid-19. New trails can help build both physical and economic connections and allow us to capitalize on NC's natural beauty, warm people, and rich history. Off-road trail networks help people safely get to their destinations. Each year more than 3,000 pedestrians and 850 bicyclists are hit by vehicles in North Carolina, making NC one of the most dangerous states in the US for walking and bicycling. Trails have a significant return on investment: Every \$1.00 spent on trail construction generates \$1.72 annually from local business revenue, sales tax revenue, & benefits related to health and transportation.

How does this relate to the Comprehensive Plan: Provide recreational opportunities and access to open space

Budgetary Impact: None

Recommendation/Motion: Motion to approve the 2023 Year of the Trail Proclamation