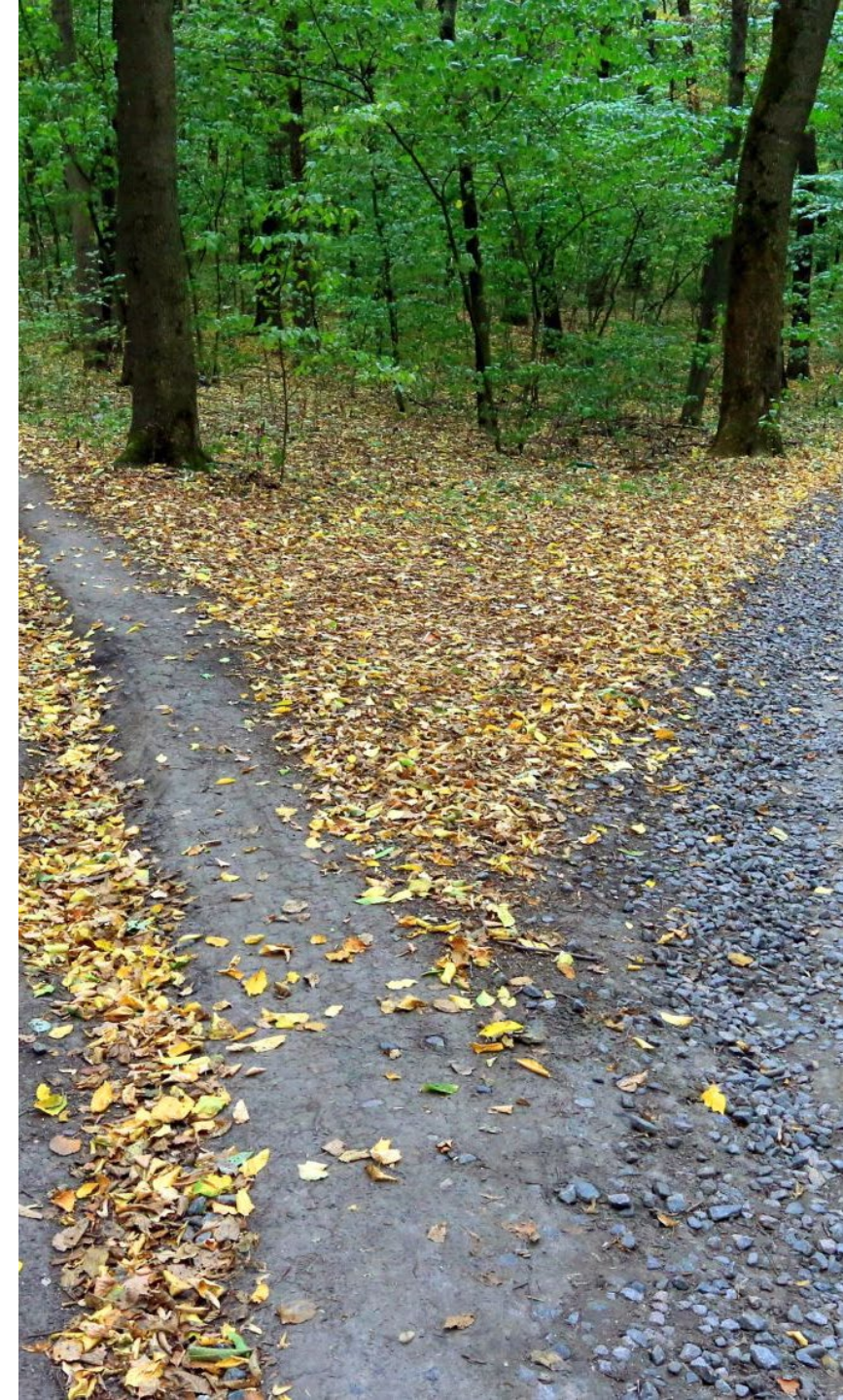


CHATHAM  
COUNTY TRAILS  
AND OPEN SPACE  
UPDATE



# TODAYS PRESENTATION

- General Chatham County trail efforts
- State trails
- Greenways
- Open Space projects
- Questions



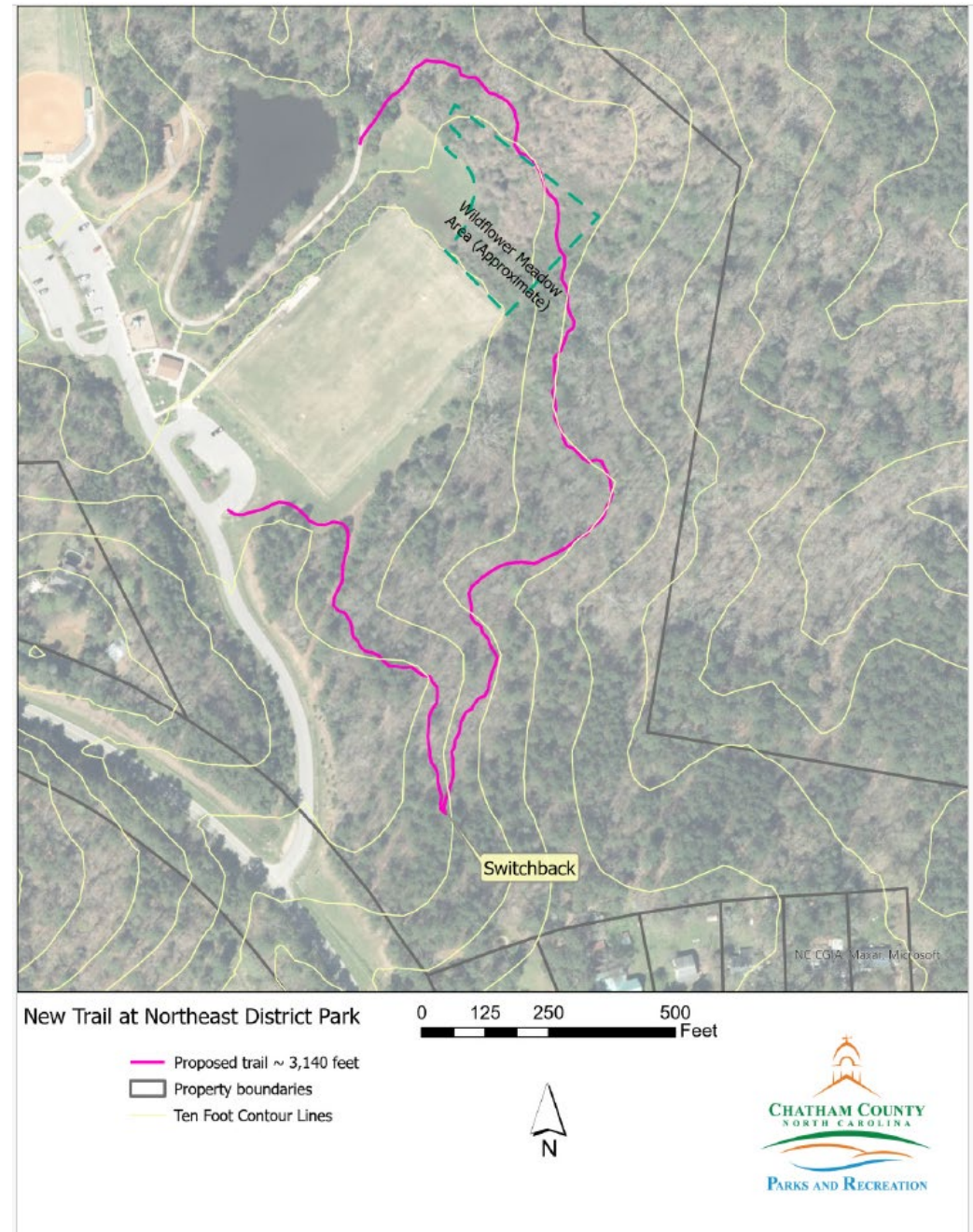


# GENERAL CHATHAM COUNTY TRAILS

- Expand trail network at all county parks to provide more walking and hiking opportunities.

# GENERAL CHATHAM COUNTY TRAILS

- Expand trail network at all county parks.
  - Northeast District Park
    - Planned George Pauly Nature Trail made possible via a donation from Haw River Assembly in memoriam of George Pauly.
    - Approximately 3,150 ft natural surface trail.
    - Walking trail will meander through a wildflower meadow and successional hardwood forest.



# GENERAL CHATHAM COUNTY TRAILS

- Expand trail network at all county parks.
  - Park at Briar Chapel
    - Pokeberry Tributary Trail
      - approximately 3,870 of natural surface trail
      - Project requires two 45' bridges and 40' of boardwalk
    - Freese and Nichols surveying for bridges and boardwalks
    - Bundled with Northeast Park trail project, RFB should go out in August



Proposed Pokeberry Tributary Trail  
The Park at Briar Chapel

0 125 250 500  
Feet

#### POINTS

- ◆ irrigation head
- climbing turn
- small drainage
- stream bed - bridge needed

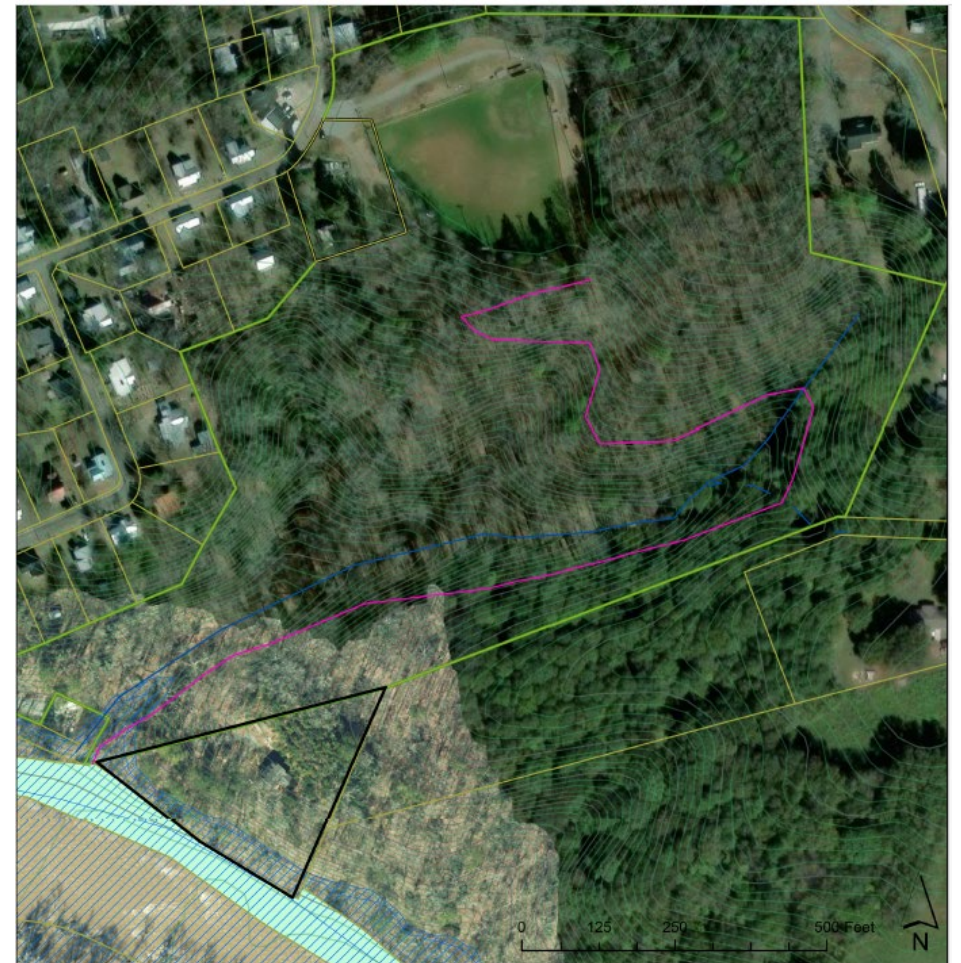
#### PROPOSED TRAIL

- bench cut
- raised tread
- boardwalk



# GENERAL CHATHAM COUNTY TRAILS

- Expand trail network at all county parks.
  - Earl Thompson Park
    - Planned Haw River Connector Trail
    - Approximately 2,400' in length
    - 2.5' wide tread, single track, back county trail
    - Permitting underway
    - Requires State Parks approval as it connects to the SNA

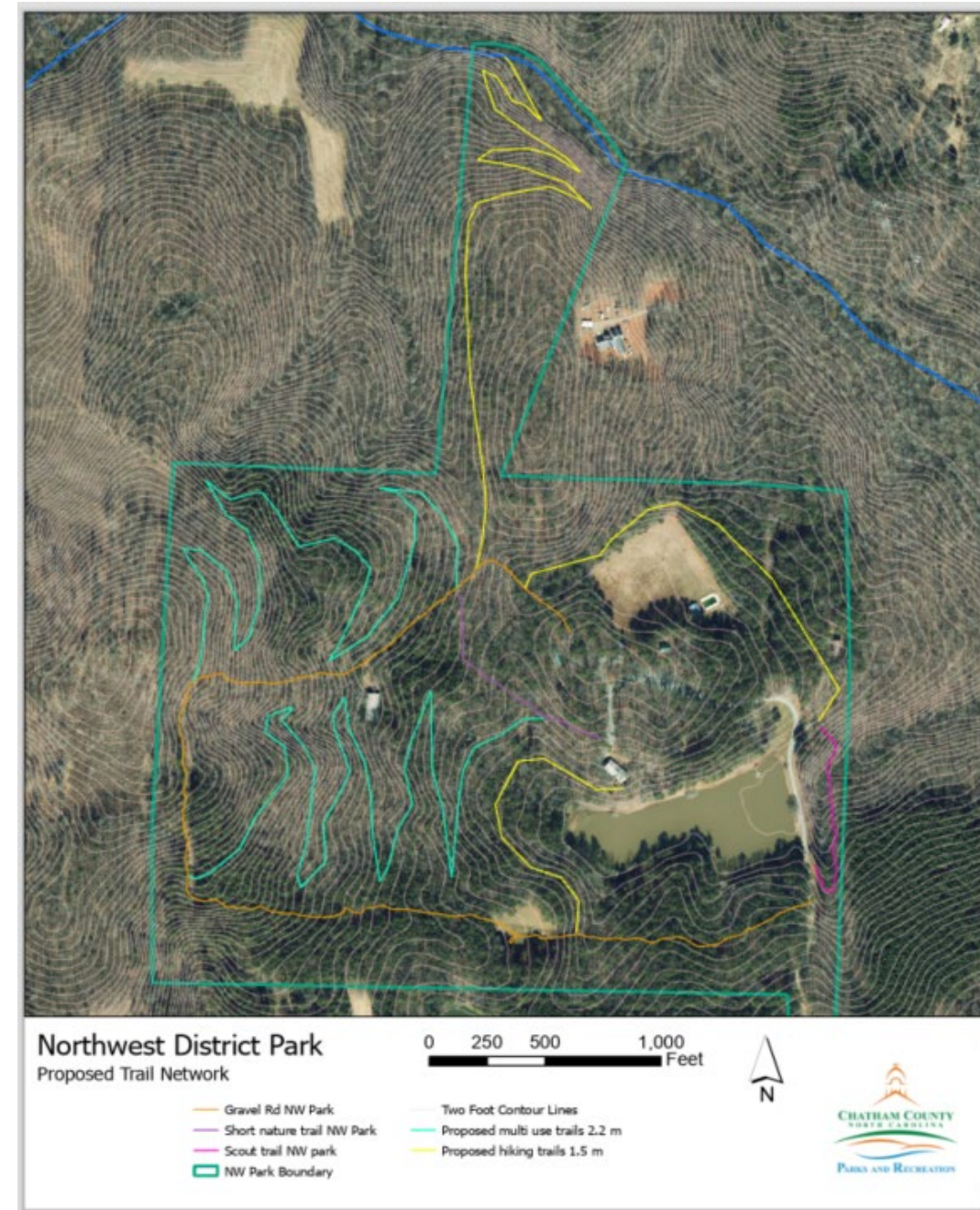


Proposed Connector Trail at Earl Thompson Park

- |                                |                             |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| — Proposed Trail Aprox. 2,406' | — Parcel Lines              |
| — Two Foot Contour Lines       | ▨ Flood Hazard Areas (2022) |
| — Ten Foot Contour Lines       | — Blue Line Creek           |
| ▨ Lower Haw SNA                | - - Unmapped Creek          |
| ▭ Earl Thompson Park Boundary  |                             |

# GENERAL CHATHAM COUNTY TRAILS

- Expand trail network at all county parks.
  - Northwest District Park
    - Planning a parkwide trail network
    - Total of approx. 3.7 miles additional trail.
    - Lines are conceptual and will likely shift as adjustments are made in the field
    - Seeking input from walking group and equine community
    - Shorter hiking trails could be volunteer built, longer trails will need to be contracted out.



# GENERAL CHATHAM COUNTY TRAILS



- Parkers Ridge Park Development
  - Approximately 8,200' of planned bike and hike trails
  - Approximately 11,200' of planned mountain bike only trail
  - Pump track



# GENERAL CHATHAM COUNTY TRAILS

Developing kiosk signage for all new trails

## THE GEORGE PAULY NATURE TRAIL at the NORTHEAST DISTRICT PARK

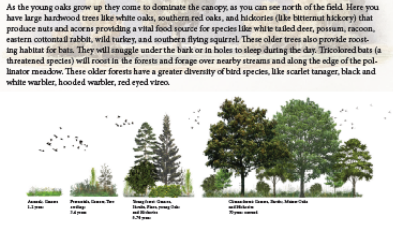


### Northeast District Park Ecology: Stages of Forest Succession

As you walk this trail you will meander through ecosystems in different successional stages. From a pollinator meadow, which is managed to keep it from growing into forest, to a young pine and hardwood forest, and mature hardwood forest with large, majestic oaks. Each successional stage is supporting a diversity of species and is part of the natural progression of ecosystems in the Piedmont of North Carolina.

Walking through the forest dominated by young pines, sweet gums, and American hollies, you'll notice less sunlight penetrating to the ground. These shady forests often have less plant diversity overall because sunlight is needed to support the growth of flowers and bushes, and other herbaceous species. As the pines and sweet gums grow older they'll die off, creating gaps in the canopy that lets sunlight into the forest floor and to the young oaks waiting for their turn to grow. These young forests provide habitat for birds like Cardinals as well as weasels, mockingbirds, chickadees, downy woodpecker, pine warbler, and small mammals like mice, voles, squirrel, big brown and red bat, and raccoons.

As the young oaks grow up they come to dominate the canopy, as you can see north of the field. Here you have large hardwood trees like white oaks, southern red oaks, and hickories (like Bitternut hickory) that produce nuts and acorns providing a vital food source for species like white-tailed deer, possum, raccoon, eastern cottontail rabbit, wild turkey, and southern flying squirrel. These older trees also provide nesting habitat for bats. They will scurry under the bark or in holes to sleep during the day. Inhabited bats in thinned sections will roost in the forests and forage over nearby streams and along the edge of the pollinator meadow. These older forests have a greater diversity of bird species, like scarlet tanager, black and white warbler, hooded warbler, red eyed vireo.



### A Native Wildflower Meadow:

With a diversity of colors, forms, and blooms extending from spring through fall this native wildflower meadow provides food and cover for a myriad of birds, insects and critters. Below are just a few of the many benefits of native meadows.

- Food for Songbirds and Wildlife**
  - Diverse meadows provide insects and seeds for songbirds and wildlife.
- Habitat for Pollinators**
  - Habitat is where something lives, so it goes beyond just offering pollen to native visitors. Many native plants are hosts for native pollinators, providing habitat to adults and larvae through out the year.
- Increased Water Filtration**
  - Many of these plants have deeper root systems compared to traditional lawn grass. A variety of root types and different ways they occupy space in the soil means greater capturing of nutrients and pollutants. This root matrix also helps hold soil in place, reducing erosion during heavy rainfall.
- Lower Maintenance Costs**
  - Native meadows only need to be mowed once a year to prevent them from reverting back to forest. This saves time and costs, but also helps to reduce Chatham County Parks and Recreation's environmental footprint.
- Drought Tolerance**
  - Native species tend to have a better tolerance for heat and drought than most common landscape plants. This helps to conserve water and makes for a more resilient landscape.
- Carbon Sequestration**
  - Because of their long root system these plants are particularly good at moving carbon in the soil. This improves the overall health of the soil, making this ecosystem resilient to various extremes such as drought and flooding.



### PARK REGULATIONS

- Park Hours:** The park opens year round at 8am. February thru November the park closes at 9pm. December thru January the park closes at 7pm.
- Share the trail.** Run/walk in single file and allow others to pass.
- Dogs are welcome on leashes.** Owners are responsible for disposing of pet waste.
- Place all trash and dog waste in trash receptacles provided.**
- No alcoholic beverages allowed.**
- Remove nothing from the park.** This includes wildflowers, please leave them for the pollinators and everyone to enjoy.

Emergency and Park contact info

**About the George Pauly Nature Trail**

- This trail is approximately 3,150 feet in length, or 0.6 miles.
- It is a natural surface trail, which means there are some roots and rocks in the tread surface. Please be aware of small tripping hazards.
- This trail is rated as an easy hike, and should take about 15-20 minutes if walking straight through.
- This is a pedestrian only trail, please no bikes or wheeled vehicles of any type.
- Please stay on the trail. This reduces impact to the surrounding environment.
- Please respect the wildlife. Birds, snakes, deer, turtles and other animals all call the forest their home. If you encounter any of them please give them a wide berth.

**PLEASE... DON'T FEED THE TICKS!**

**TO AVOID TICKS:**

- ☑ Walk on paths.
- ☑ Wear light colored clothing to make spotting ticks easier.
- ☑ Wear a long-sleeved shirt, long pants, and socks.
- ☑ Tuck shirt into pants and pants into socks.
- ☑ Use bug repellents according to label directions.
- ☑ Check yourself and children several times a day for ticks.
- ☑ The sooner you find a tick, the less chance it will have to bite.

**TO REMOVE TICKS:**

- ☑ Hold the tick with tweezers or forceps.
- ☑ Pull slowly and steadily until the tick lets go. Do not twist.
- ☑ Wash the tick and your hands with soap and water.
- ☑ Wipe down the dial and wash for any tick-like signs during the next 3 weeks. See a doctor if you feel sick.
- ☑ Tick socks, tick mats, knee caps, etc. will not make a tick go.

For more information contact:  
Your county health department  
North Carolina Department of Environment, Health and Natural Resources  
Public Health Pest Management Garden at (919) 733-1500

*This space reserved for Bulletin*

Funding for this trail and kiosk was provided by the Hare River Assembly in memory of George Pauly, a Chatham County conservationist who helped create the Northeast District Park, and envisioned this nature trail for the public to enjoy.

# GENERAL CHATHAM COUNTY TRAILS

- Trail workdays with Parks and Rec staff
  - Learning basic maintenance techniques to address common trail issues
  - Held a few workdays, more to come at Southwest and Northwest
- Developed Chatham County Trail Standards for design, construction and maintenance of natural surface trails in the county.



STATE  
TRAILS IN  
CHATHAM  
COUNTY

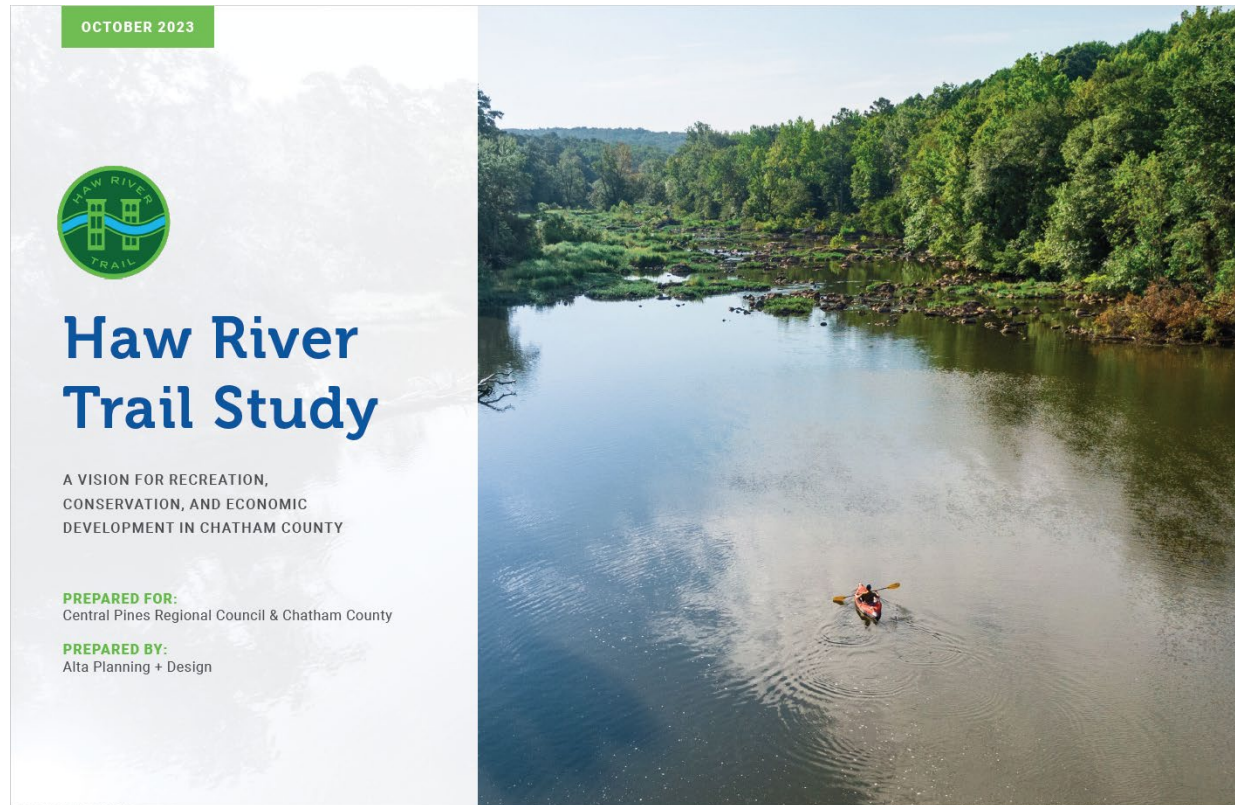


HAW RIVER  
STATE  
TRAIL

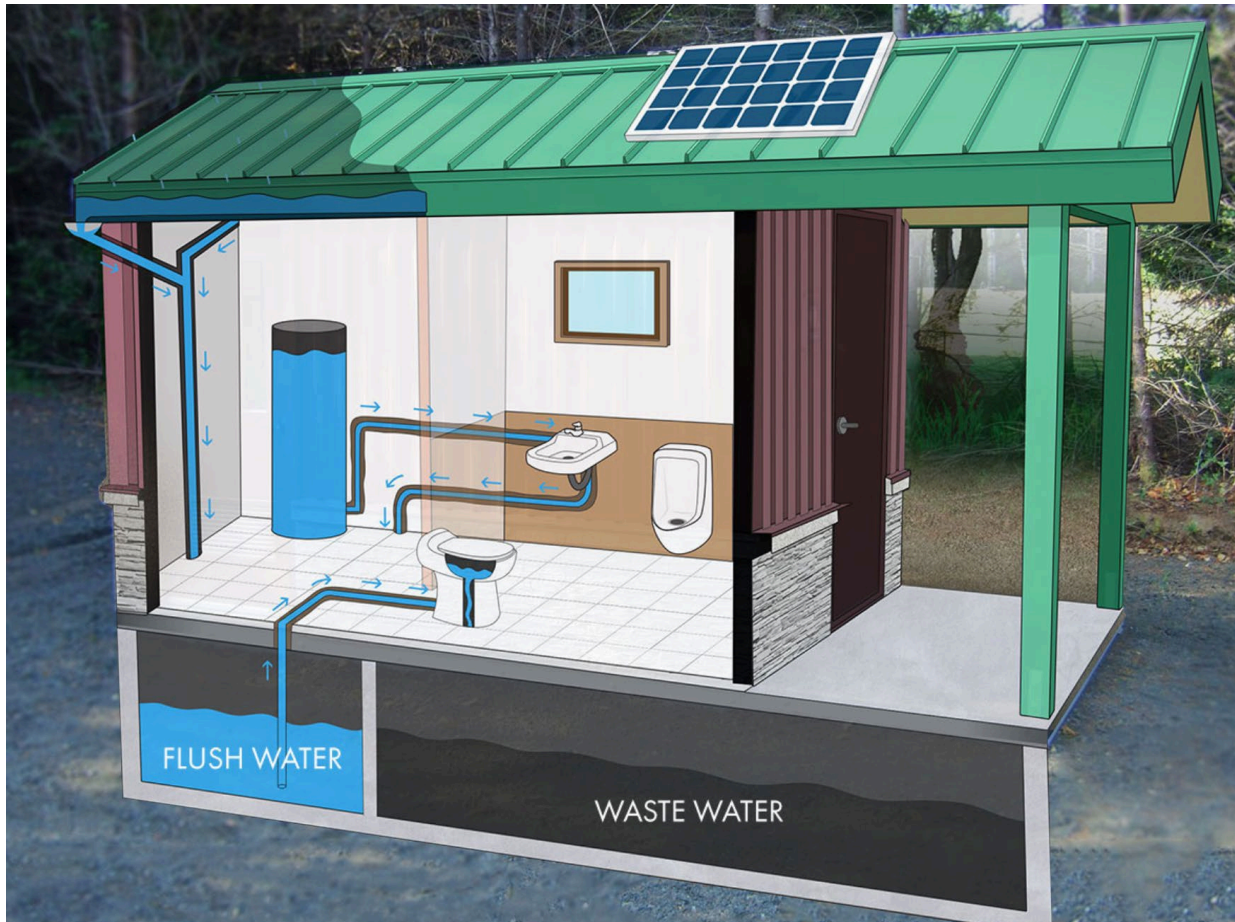


DEEP RIVER  
STATE  
TRAIL

# HAW RIVER STATE TRAIL: FEASIBILITY STUDY



- Identified numerous near-term opportunities.
- Steering committee continues meeting, established 3 subcommittees to carry out various recommendations.



## HAW RIVER STATE TRAIL: NEAR TERM OPPORTUNITIES

- Most opportunities identified for either private land or State Natural Area
- Projects proposed for county owned lands:
  - Earl Thompson Connector
  - Restrooms at 15/501 and 64 river accesses
    - Greenflush restrooms
    - Project included in 2024 CIP
- Meeting with State Parks recently identified the Pegg Tract as potential project for upcoming Great Trails State program grant funding
  - Planning and construction grant would encompass multiple improvements
    - Improve or relocate the paddle access
    - Develop a sustainable trail network out of floodplain and sensitive habitat
    - Relocate trail head and install restroom at parking lot
  - Potential to partner with numerous agencies and organizations to plan and implement this project.



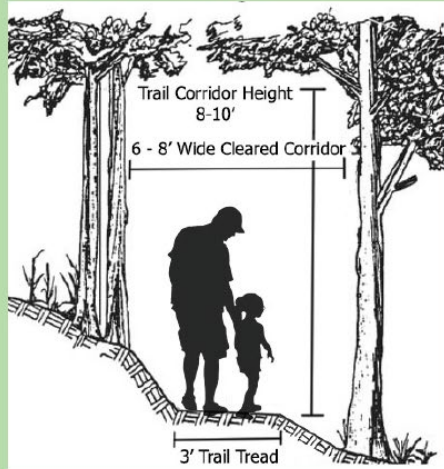
## Visualizations of the Proposed Trail Corridor



As a natural surface hiking trail, the intention of the Haw River State Trail is to provide recreational access along the river while having minimal impact to the environment.

The single-track trail tread will be a maximum of 3 feet wide, while the total corridor clearing will not exceed 8 feet in width. Efforts will be made to locate the trail where minimal tree and vegetation removal will be necessary.

The trail will naturally undulate, following the contour of the land in an effort to minimize steep grades and maximize drainage of water from the trail tread.



## HAW RIVER STATE TRAIL: STEERING COMMITTEE SUBCOMMITTEES

- **Land and Easement Acquisitions**
  - Landowner outreach
    - Draft trail easement developed
    - FAQ developed
    - Trail corridor rendering developed
    - Online map for internal use to track properties, landowner contact and trails and easement progress
    - Outreach has been mostly word of mouth, and these efforts are opportunity based.
    - Have contacted a few landowners and started conversations

## HAW RIVER STATE TRAIL: STEERING COMMITTEE SUBCOMMITTEES

- **Grants and Funding**
  - Identify funding sources and match them with projects.
    - Applied for 3 grants to fund digital safety signs
    - Submitted letter of interest to Jandy Ammons foundation for restrooms
    - RTP grant awarded for Trail Crew Leader Training Workshop
  - Looking into local funding options for trails based on successful efforts from other towns and counties across NC and beyond





## HAW RIVER STATE TRAIL: STEERING COMMITTEE SUBCOMMITTEES

- **Trail Construction and Maintenance**
  - Training workshop held in February at Northwest District park.
    - 6 CCPR staff, 3 volunteers
    - Time split between classroom and field
    - Built around 300' of trail to reroute a bad section of scout trail
  - Developing GIS Hub site to coordinate outreach and track volunteer hours.
  - We now have a cache of hand tools for trail work thanks in part to local Lowes 15% discount.
  - Volunteer projects to include Earl Thompson connector trail and new trails at Northwest.

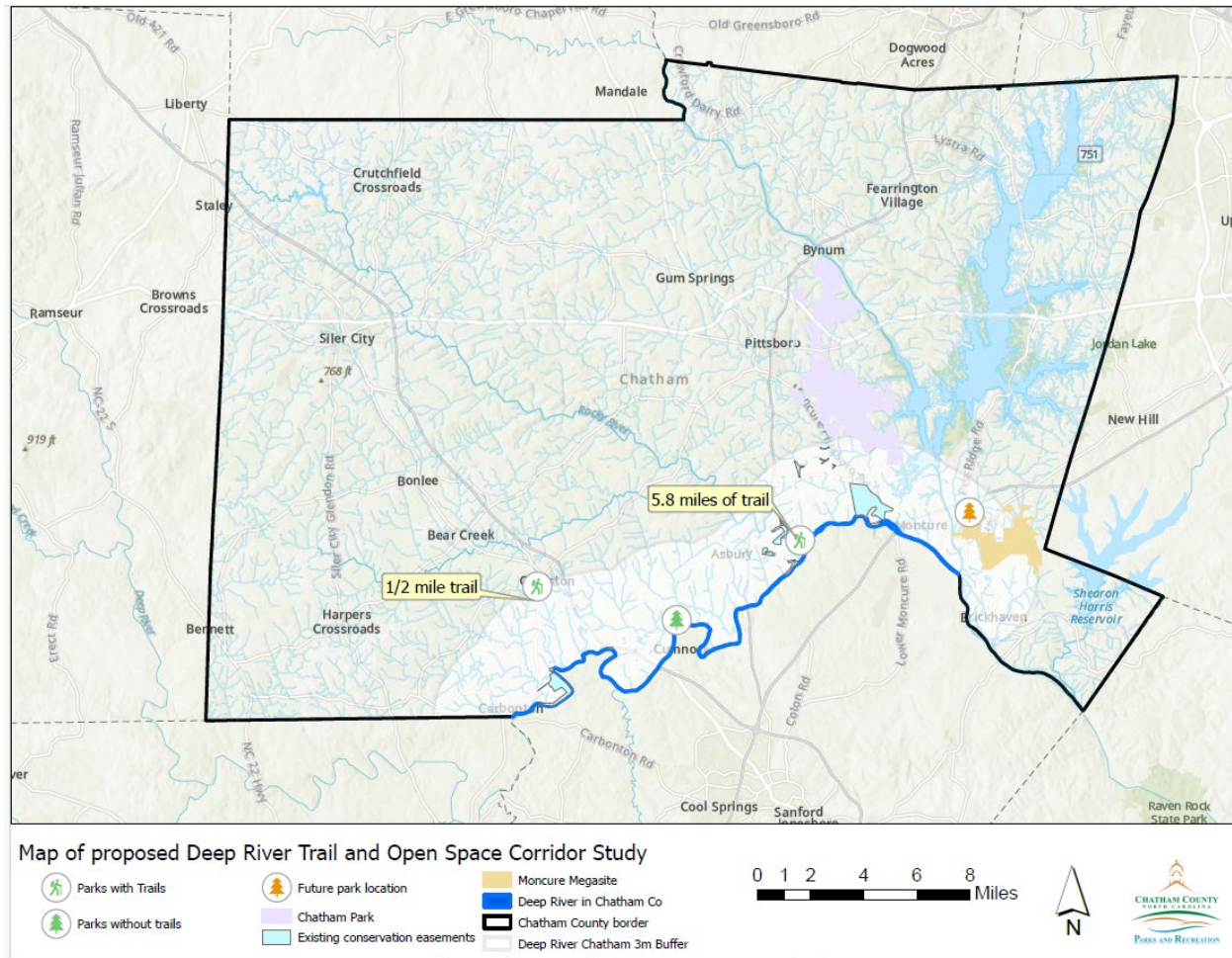






## HAW RIVER STATE TRAIL: HAW RIVER SAFETY COLLABORATIVE

- Effort funded via 2 year grant from Duke Energy Foundation to address safety along the Haw River in Chatham County.
  - Bridge signage for paddler/tuber wayfinding.
    - Permission granted by NCDOT division 8 bridge engineers
    - Worked with sign vendor to design signs to DOT standard
    - Signs are printed and in DOTs possession, will be going up soon.
  - Digital safety signs at 15/501 and 64 accesses.
    - Dynamic signage will display real time information pertaining to weather, water flow rates, swim safety ratings, heat index, etc.
    - 3 grants applied for and project included in Parks and Rec FY25 budget



## DEEP RIVER STATE TRAIL:

- Meet quarterly with DRST Steering Committee
- Feasibility study is highest priority.
  - Applied for 2 grants so far.
  - Plan to apply for GTS program in September.
- Looking at improving or relocating paddle access at TLC's McIver's canoe launch.
- Submitted application for State Trail designation of Deep River Park in Cumnock.

# GREENWAYS



Participate in  
development review  
meetings (TRC)

Savannah Ridge



Lower Jordan  
Greenway Corridor

Met with USACE and WRC  
regarding alignment  
Feasibility study needed



Upper Jordan Lake  
Corridor

Met with WIP to explore co-  
aligning pipeline right-of-way  
with trail  
Feasibility study needed



Partnerships

Working Thanh Schado to  
promote greenways and  
sidepaths proposed in 2019  
Master Plan

- Coalition of stakeholders
- Public Input



# OPEN SPACE PLANNING

- Riverbank erosion at South Bynum River Access Park
- Land Acquisition on the Haw River
- Disc Golf Course at Northeast
  - Working with Andrew George from rec advisory committee
  - Course development requires significant tree removal.
    - Recommending innovative approach to minimize soil disturbance/erosion into Jordan Lake reservoir.

QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS?

