



**Primary Northern Rural Route:** From Lake Brandt along an abandoned railroad corridor through Summerfield and Stokesdale in Guilford County and around the southwest end of Belews Lake in Forsyth County; along the Dan River in Stokes County through Danbury; through Hanging Rock State Park and along the Sauratown Trail; through Pilot Mountain State Park in Surry County and along the Yadkin River through Elkin; continue along the Yadkin River in Wilkes County; turn north along the Roaring River; continue up the East Prong of the Roaring River, the Big Sandy Creek and Widows Creek to join with the existing MST trail in Stone Mountain State Park.

**Primary Southern Urban Route:** From Lake Brandt along the proposed Piedmont Regional Greenway through Oak Ridge in Guilford County; through Kernersville in Forsyth County and around Salem Lake; along Salem Creek through Winston-Salem; up Muddy Creek through Winston-Salem, Bethania and Tobaccoville; along Old Pond Creek; along the Yadkin River through Pilot Mountain State Park in Surry County; and continuing on as described in the Northern Rural Route above.

**Alternate Routes** (Listed from East to West): 1) From Haw River State Park in Rockingham County through Reidsville and Wentworth, follow along the Dan River with a spur to Eden and another spur up the Mayo River to connect with the Mayo River State Park; 2) From the Dan River along an abandoned railroad corridor through Walnut Cove in Stokes County and Rural Hall and Tobaccoville in Forsyth County; 3) From Triad Park to Belews Lake; 4) From northern Kernersville to Belews Lake; 5) From the south-west end of Belews Lake along an abandoned railroad corridor to Walnut Cove; 6) From the confluence of Salem Creek and Muddy Creek down the Muddy Creek to provide a spur connector with the Yadkin River in Davidson County; 7) from Muddy Creek through Lewisville to the Yadkin River and north along the Yadkin River; 8) from Muddy Creek along Mill Creek and Grassy Creek through Rural Hall and continuing north along an abandoned railroad corridor and various small creeks to connect with the Sauratown Trail in Stokes County; 9) from the Yadkin River north along the Fisher River through Dobson in Surry County and connecting with the Blue Ridge Parkway in Alleghany County; 10) From the Yadkin River north along the Mitchell River and connecting to the Blue Ridge Parkway in Alleghany County; 11) from Elkin north along an abandoned E&A Railroad corridor paralleling US21 and following various small roads and streams to connect with the eastern end of Stone Mountain State Park; and 12) from Elkin north along Elkin Creek to connect with the eastern end of Stone Mountain State Park.

This section of the North Carolina Mountains-to-Sea Trail map was developed in cooperation with:

NC Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Division of Parks and Recreation

Friends of the Mountains to Sea Trail | State Trails Program Recreational Trails Program Grant | Piedmont Triad Council of Governments

## North Carolina's Mountains-to-Sea Trail



*Craggy Gardens - Blue Ridge Parkway*

North Carolina has set the goal of creating a statewide trail that when complete, will link Clingman's Dome along the western edge of the state in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park to Jockey's Ridge State Park on the outer banks – a distance of over 900 miles. This ongoing effort known as North Carolina's

Mountains-to-Sea Trail (MST) was first announced in 1977. Nearly 30 years later the dream of building a cross-state trail is alive and well. Thanks to the collective efforts of countless volunteers, public land managers and private property owners, there are currently over 450 miles of trail constructed and open for public use crossing both public and private lands and linking cities and counties from the mountains to the sea.

In 2000, the North Carolina General Assembly enacted legislation (G.S. 113-44.1) authorizing the State to acquire and manage lands for the MST and directing the NC Division of Parks and Recreation to promote, encourage, and facilitate the establishment of dedicated trails through lands and easements managed by other entities to form a continuous trail across the state. With no funding specifically provided by the General Assembly for the MST, the Division has focused its efforts on partnering with local governments and volunteers along the proposed trail route.



*Clingman's Dome*

Partners across North Carolina are planning and building the MST to link our State's communities together and to serve as the backbone for a growing system of land and water trails. As new sections of the MST are completed they provide regular access points and trail heads offering safe, convenient entry for residents and visitors to enjoy as they travel through the natural, historic and scenic areas of our beautiful state. Please join in supporting this exciting effort as the MST advances its way through your community.



*Jockey's Ridge State Park*

## Regional MST Route Planning

The proposed routing of the MST across North Carolina and the state's three trail planning regions is illustrated on the map below.



**WESTERN MOUNTAIN REGION:** Running from Clingman's Dome in the Great Smokey Mountains National Park to Stone Mountain State Park in Wilkes County - the western portion of the MST is about 332 miles in length. Most of the planning for this region is complete. Over 240 miles of trail are currently open with the remaining 92 miles being planned, partially completed, or awaiting formal MST designation by the State. This segment of the MST affords hikers spectacular views of North Carolina's scenic mountain ranges.

**CENTRAL PIEDMONT REGION:** The central piedmont MST planning region runs from Stone Mountain State Park to the Falls Lake Dam north of Raleigh. A primary alignment and several alternate alignments for the eastern half of the region from Greensboro to Raleigh were established in 2006. Planning efforts to identify the most promising trail corridors in the western section of the piedmont region between Stone Mountain State Park and Greensboro were completed in 2007. Two primary routes were established – the Northern Rural Route and the Southern Urban Route. Multiple alternate alignments were also identified.



*Stone Mtn. State Park*

**EASTERN COASTAL PLAIN REGION:** From Falls Lake Dam in Wake County to Jockey's Ridge on Cedar Island in Carteret County. A conceptual routing for this region was completed in 2004. Wake County and the City of Raleigh plan to extend the MST down the Neuse River from the Falls Lake Dam to the Wake/Johnston County line. In addition, several planning efforts are currently underway to extend the MST through Johnston County to Smithfield, from Smithfield to Goldsboro and from the Croatan National Forest through Carteret County to Cedar Island.

## Western Piedmont Section- From Concept to Reality

MST planning and development efforts have recently been focused in the western section of the central piedmont planning region. In May of 2007 local and state government staff and citizen volunteers met to identify and prioritize potential trail alignments. Two existing sections of the MST served as anchor points for the planning session – the Stone Mountain State Park Trail System in eastern Wilkes County and the Northern Greensboro Lakes Trail System in Guilford County. Workshop participants defined routing options and set route priorities to connect these two existing MST anchor sections using the following criteria: support from local governments, landowners & advocacy groups; public ownership; water quality benefits; and connectivity to existing parks, trails, and scenic, natural & cultural resources.

**WORKSHOP RESULTS:** Participants identified two primary MST routes and twelve alternate or spur routes as shown on the map on the reverse side of this document. Completion of primary and alternate or spur trail routes will provide a robust regional trail system with multiple loop-trail opportunities throughout the western piedmont

**IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES:** Local government representatives in the western piedmont are encouraged to undertake the following actions:

1. Review and refine the draft Western Piedmont MST Route Map.
2. Share the draft map with local advisory boards & elected bodies for their consideration - request for State Trails Program support if needed.
3. Encourage local government advisory boards and elected bodies to formally acknowledge the draft map by taking the following actions:
  - Pass a Resolution of Support endorsing the draft map – request a draft resolution from the State Trails Program if needed.
  - Adopt the draft map or a modified version of the map as a component of their local trails and greenways system plan.
  - Determine which segments of the proposed MST trail system identified in the draft map are most important to their jurisdiction.
  - Resolve to plan, acquire land, design, build and manage specific top-priority MST segments within their jurisdiction

**NEXT STEPS:** As local government entities accomplish these recommended actions, a strong foundation will be laid for linking local and regional trail plans to the proposed statewide Mountains-To-Sea Trail network. The Division of Parks and Recreation will forward these local and regional plans and resolutions of support to the Secretary of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources for approval as key components of the State's first regional trails system plan. Inclusion in this regional plan may provide priority funding status for the Adopt-A-Trail and Recreational Trails Programs and other State funding sources. The Division intends for this innovative planning effort to be replicated in other regions of the state and for the trails identified within these regional plans to become the basis for a Statewide Trails System Plan for North Carolina.



*Fields near the South Shore Falls Lake Trail*