North Carolina Mountains-to-Sea Trail
Western Piedmont Section
Central MST Planning Region
From Lake Townsend to Stone Mountain State Park

Primary Northern Rural Route: From Lake Brandt along an abandoned railroad corridor through Summervale and Shadydale in Guilford County and around the southwest end of Belews Lake in Forsyth County; along the Dan River in Stokes County through Danbury; hanging Rock State Park and along the Saugatuck Trail; through Pilot Mountain State Park in Surry County and along the Yadkin River through Elkin; continuing 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 Walden 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 Oakridge in Cabarrus County; through Kennesaw in Forsyth County and around Salem Lake; along Salem Creek through Winston-Salem; to Muddy Creek through Winston-Salem, Bethel, and Tanglewood; to Belews Lake; to Belews Lake; to the southwest end of Belews Lake along an abandoned railroad corridor to Walnut Cove; to the confluence of Salem Creek and Muddy Creek along the Muddy Creek Trail; to the east end of Stone Mountain State Park; 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 Winston-Salem; follow along the Dan River with a spur to Eden and another spur up the Yadkin 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 Towacoville in Forsyth County; 3) From Triad Park to Belews Lake; 4) From the south-west end of Belews Lake along an abandoned railroad corridor to Walnut Cove; 5) From the confluence of Salem Creek and Muddy Creek down the Muddy Creek Trail to Belews Lake; 6) From the south-west end of Belews Lake along an abandoned railroad corridor to Walnut Cove; 7) From the south-west end of Belews Lake along an abandoned railroad corridor to Walnut Cove; 8) From the south-west end of Belews Lake along an abandoned railroad corridor to Walnut Cove; 9) From Belews Lake through Winston-Salem and the Yadkin River; and continuing north along an abandoned railroad corridor and various small streams to connect with the Saugatuck Trail in Stokes County; 10) From the Yadkin River; continuing along the Saugatuck Trail and connecting with the Blue Ridge Parkway in Alleghany County; 11) From the Yadkin River north along the Linville River and connecting to the Blue Ridge Parkway in Alleghany County; 12) From Eden north along Eden.311,040, connecting with US 21 and following various small roads and streams to connect with the eastern end of Stone Mountain State Park; and 13) From Eden north along Eden.
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 Region**
- Running from Clingman’s Dome in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park to Stone Mountain State Park in Wilkes County - the western portion of the MST is about 320 miles in length. Most of the planning for this region is complete. Over 240 miles of trail are currently open with the remaining 30 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 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.

**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 Croatian National Forest through Carteret County to Cedar Island.

**Western Piedmont Section—From Concept to Reality**

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 500 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. Thank 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.

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.

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 Greenhills 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.
- 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 over the South Shore Falls Lake Trail**

**Legend**
- Green = MST Route
- Red = MST Route
- Brown = MST Route
- Light = MST Route
- Yellow = MST Route
- Blue = MST Route

**Points and Trail Heads**
- Clingman’s Dome
- Stone Mtn. State Park

**Regional Route Planning**

**Participants**

- Ross Baskin, Hiking筆記
- Sarah Strong, Hiking筆記
- Tom Siler, Hiking筆記
- Jennifer Bond, Hiking筆記
- Mark West, Hiking筆記
- Jim Smith, Hiking筆記
- Jane Doe, Hiking筆記

**MST Easement**

- Landowners & Advocacy Groups
- Public Ownership
- Water Quality Benefits
- Connectivity to Existing Parks, Trails, and Scenic, Natural & Cultural Resources

**MST Planning Regions**

- Western Region
- Central Region
- Eastern Region

**Designated Points**

- Stone Mountain State Park

**Thank You**

- To all participants for your hard work and dedication.
- To the Division of Parks and Recreation for supporting this effort.
- To our partners across North Carolina for their commitment and support.

**Contact Information**

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**Additional Resources**

- Draft MST Route Map
- MST Planning and Development Project

**Draft MST Route Map**

- Western Region
- Central Region
- Eastern Region

**Stakeholders**

- Local Governments
- Landowners
- Advocacy Groups
- Public Agencies
- Non-Profit Organizations