



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







The MST is primarily a natural surface footpath built and maintained by volunteers.





It follows back  
roads to connect  
trail segments.







It includes a  
paddle  
segment on  
the Neuse &  
Yadkin  
Rivers.



The route  
goes through  
37 counties  
and 41 towns.



*Downtown Elkin*



Most MST users are day-hikers and weekend travelers out to explore new parts of North Carolina.







**More and more people are completing the entire 1,175-mile trek across North Carolina.**



# MST Status

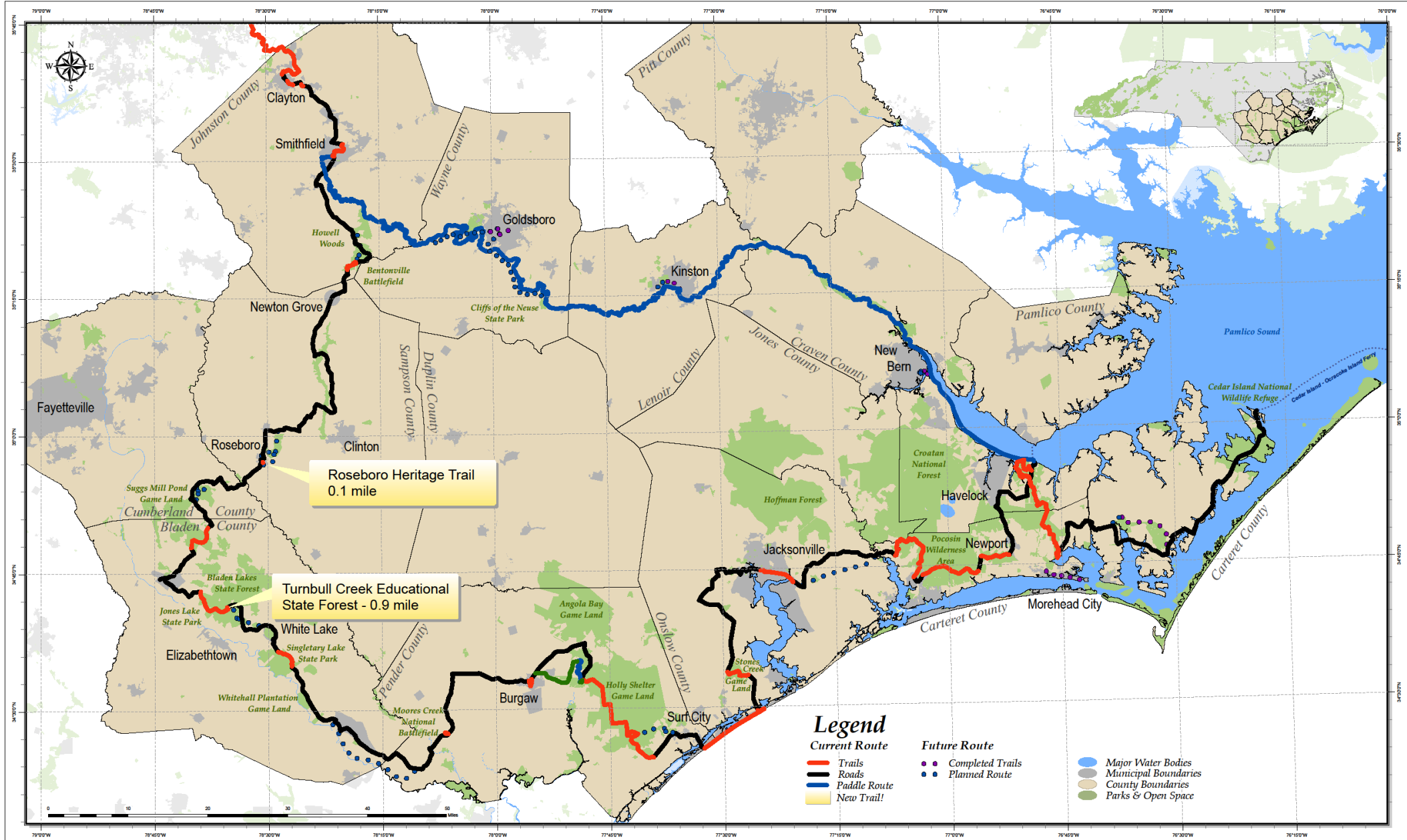
- ❖ 1,175 miles
- ❖ 725 miles of trail, unpaved forest road, beach
- ❖ 450 miles of roads
- ❖ Neuse paddle route is 208 miles and reduces trail length to 1,010 miles
- ❖ Goal is that the MST be 100% on trail



# Mountains-to-Sea Trail

## Coastal Plain

North Carolina  
2023





# Friends of the MST

## ❖ What is Friends?

- 501(c)(3) nonprofit founded in 1997
- Five full-time and one part-time staff
- 1,100+ volunteers

## ❖ Volunteers build & maintain 530 miles – 44,000 hours in 2022

## ❖ Primary source of information about trail both online and in print

## ❖ Working with partners to improve trail route (e.g., planning, design, land acquisition, developing camping and hiker support, etc.)

## ❖ Raise money and advocate for trail



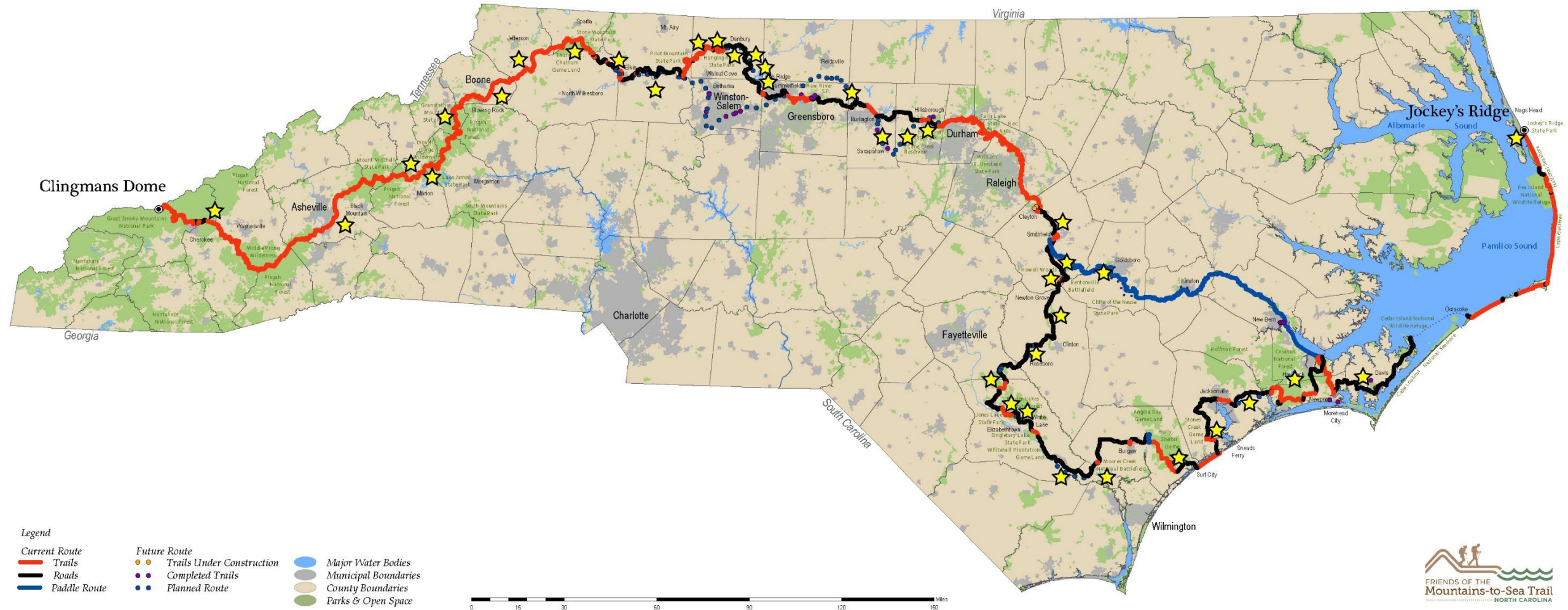
The background is a light blue topographic map with white contour lines. There are two small white crosshair symbols, one in the upper left and one in the lower left. A dashed white line runs diagonally across the map from the upper left towards the lower right.

**What's next for the MST?**



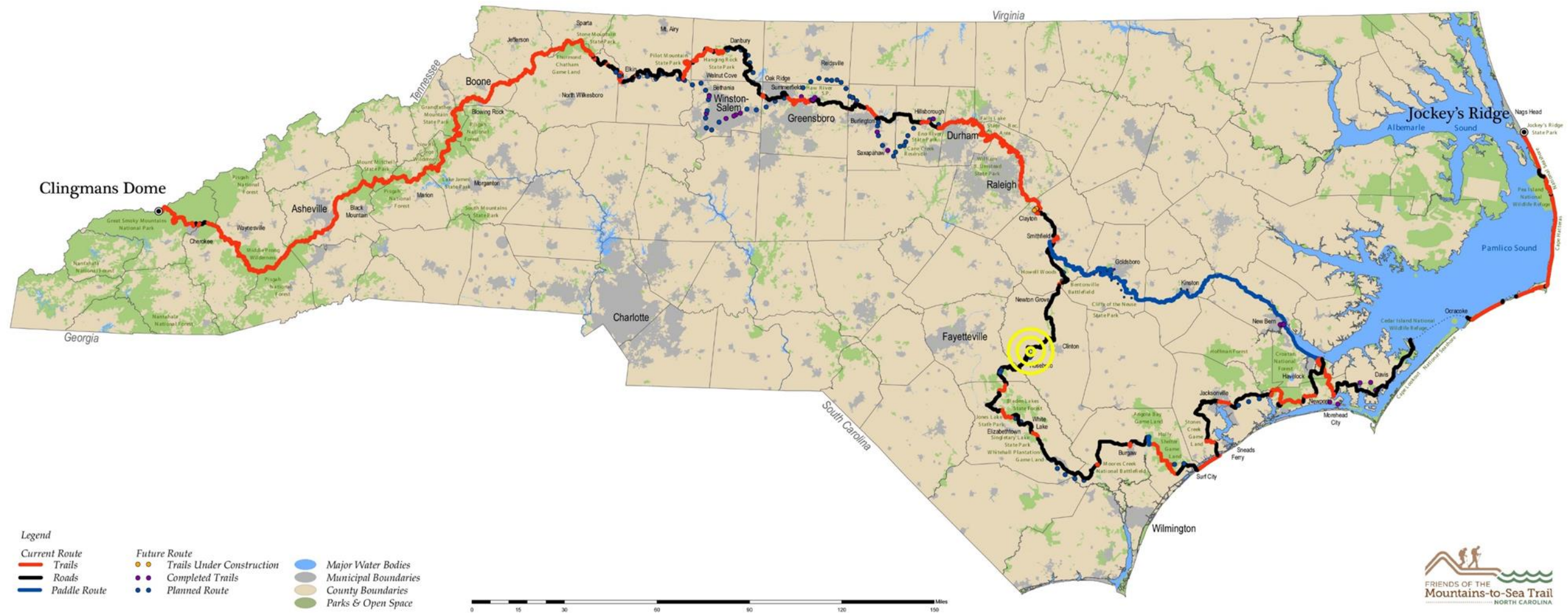
## COMPLETE THE TRAILS FUND

### PROPOSED MST PROJECTS ★





# ROSEBORO & THE PONDBERRY BAY PRESERVE



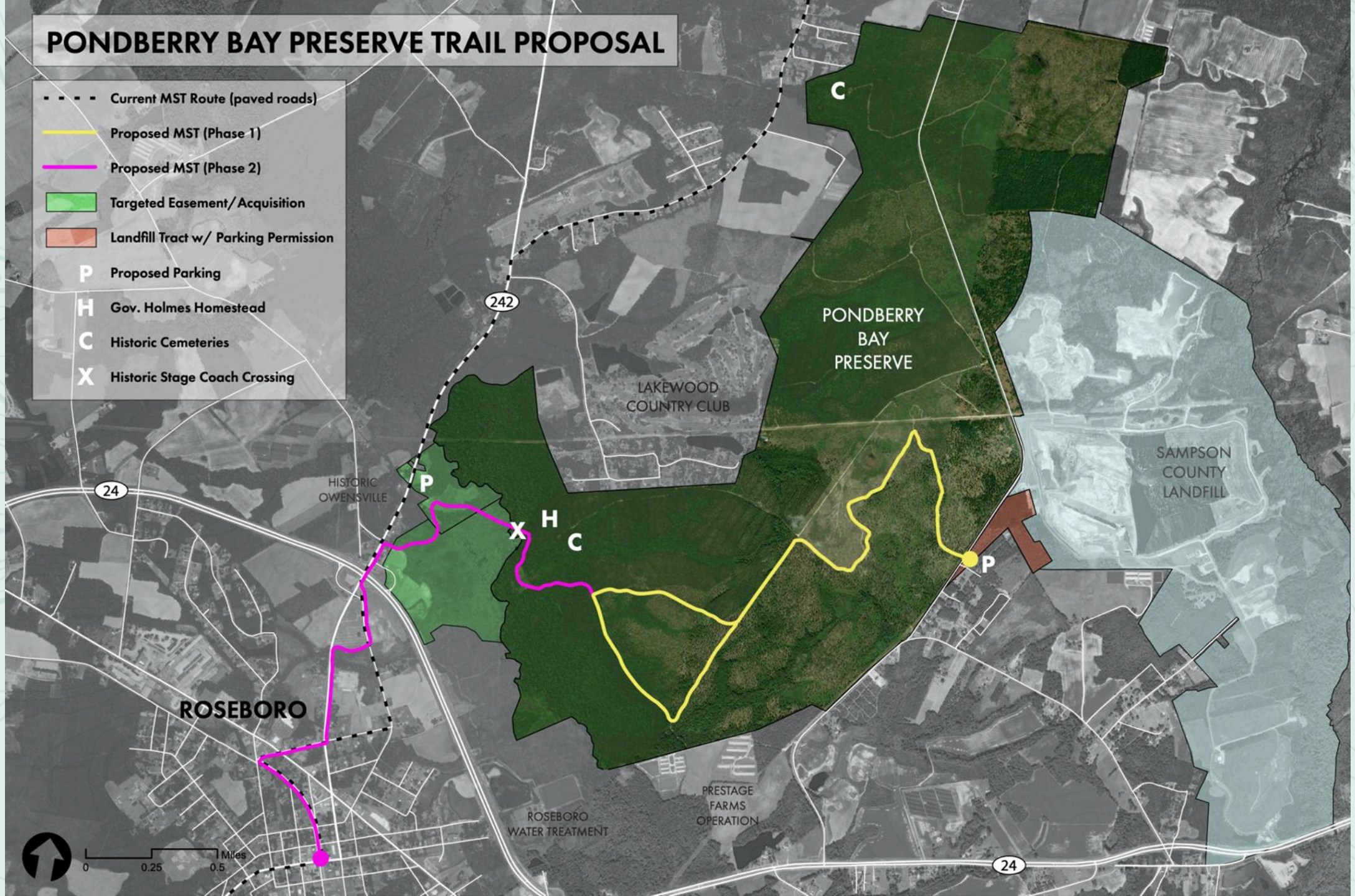






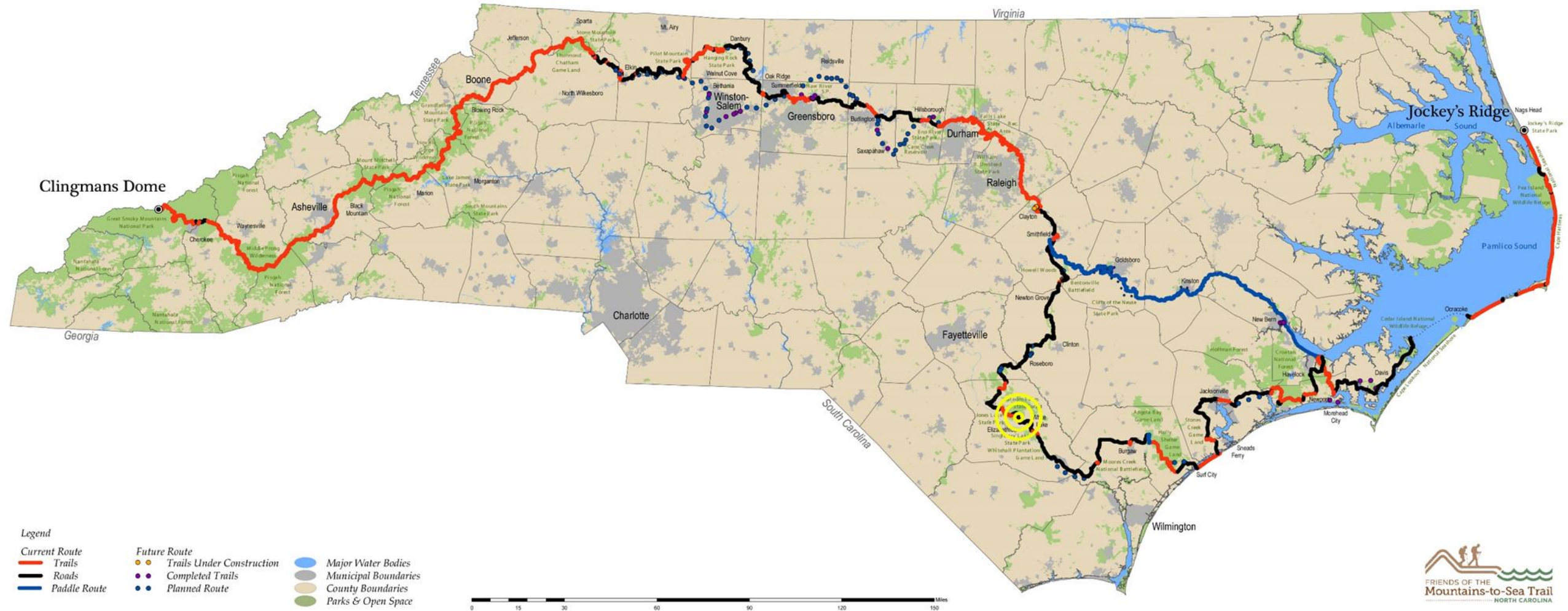
# PONDBERRY BAY PRESERVE TRAIL PROPOSAL

- - - Current MST Route (paved roads)
- Proposed MST (Phase 1)
- Proposed MST (Phase 2)
- Targeted Easement/Acquisition
- Landfill Tract w/ Parking Permission
- P Proposed Parking
- H Gov. Holmes Homestead
- C Historic Cemeteries
- X Historic Stage Coach Crossing





# BLADEN LAKES STATE FOREST





# TRAIL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

## MOUNTAINS-TO-SEA TRAIL - SEGMENT 13

The Three Lakes: Phase 2  
Ruskin Rd. to Sweet Home Church Rd.



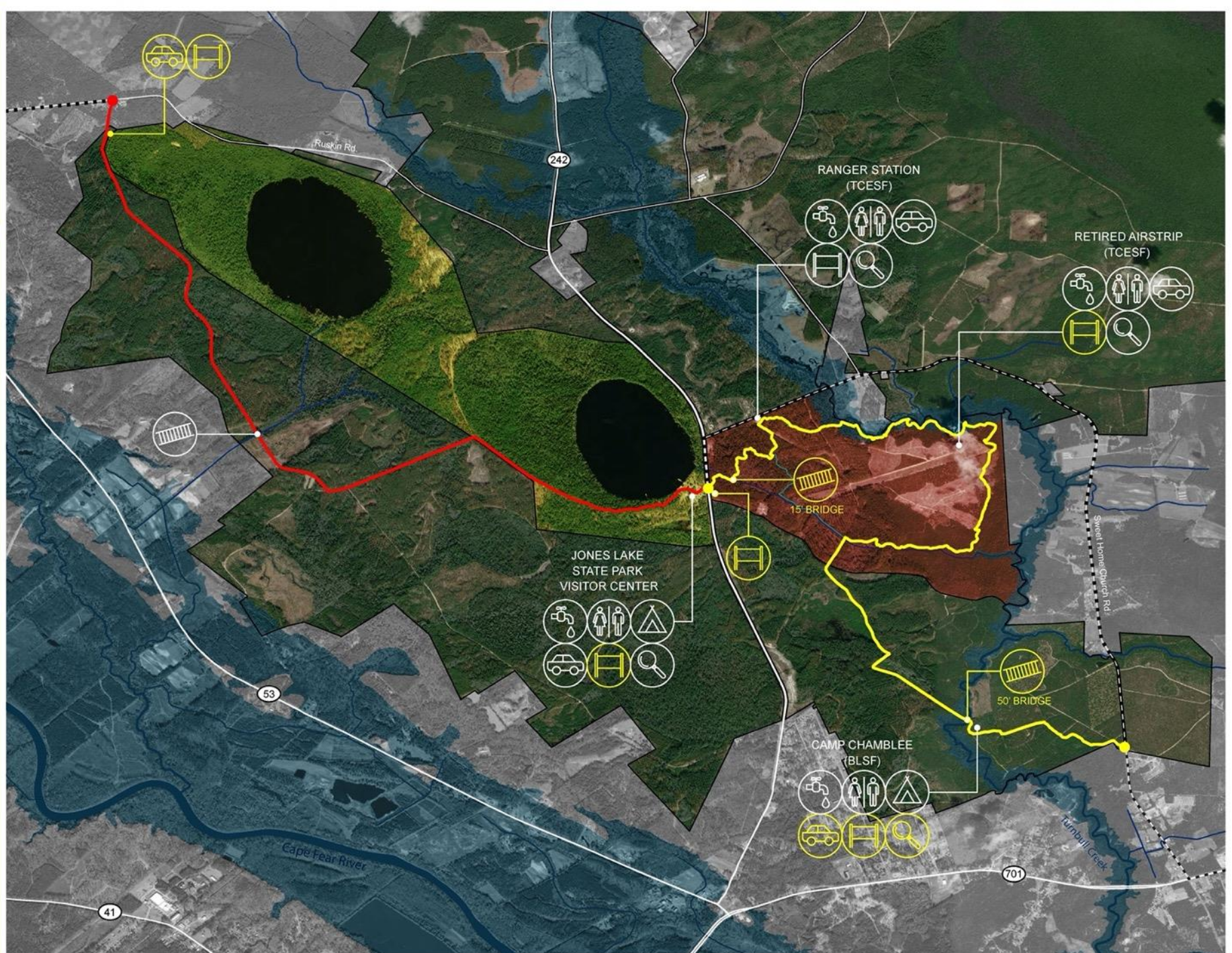
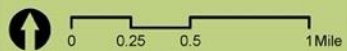
### LABELS

White = Existing  
Yellow = Proposed

-  Bridge Structures
-  Water Sources
-  Restroom Facilities
-  Camping Facilities
-  Parking Areas
-  Trail Kiosks & Wayfinding
-  Educational Opportunities

### LEGEND

-  Current MST Route (Road)
-  Current MST Route (Trail) - 5.1 mi.
-  Proposed MST Route (Trail) - 7 mi.
-  Bladen Lakes State Forest
-  Turnbull Creek Ed. State Forest
-  Jones Lake State Park
-  100 year Floodplain







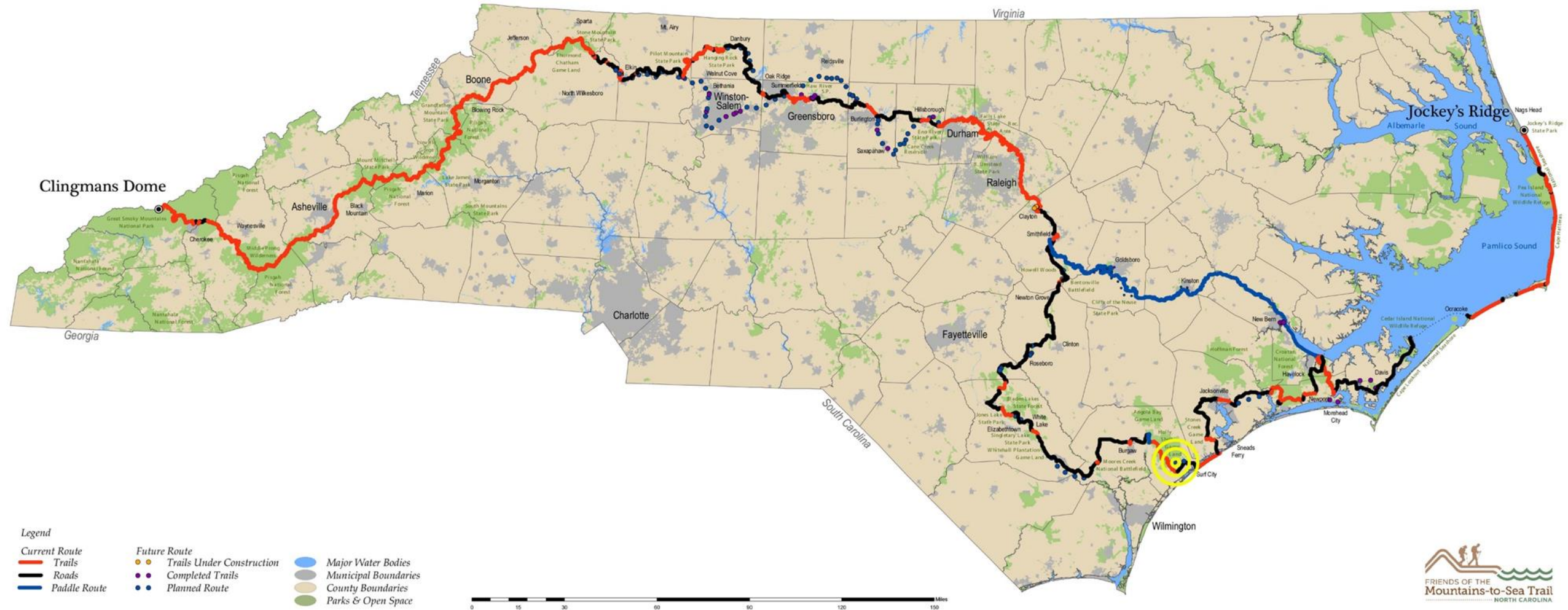


# TURNBULL CREEK





# HOLLY SHELTER GAME LAND

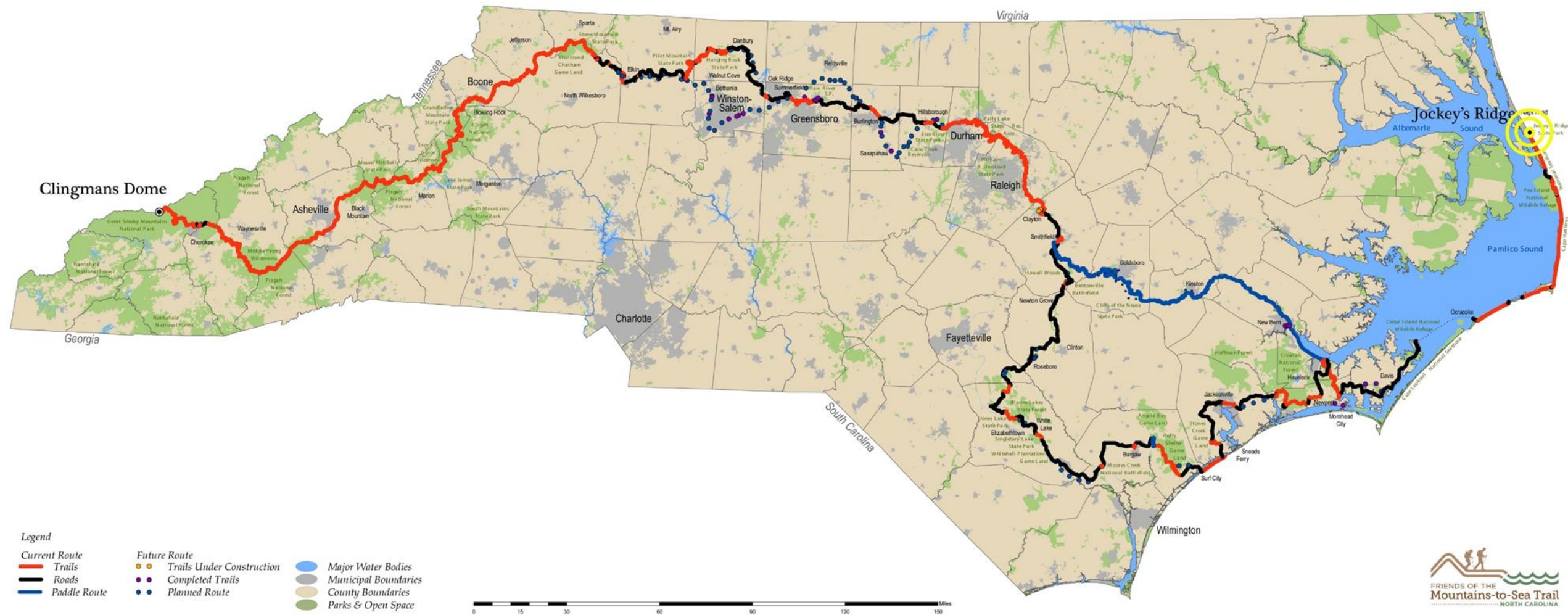




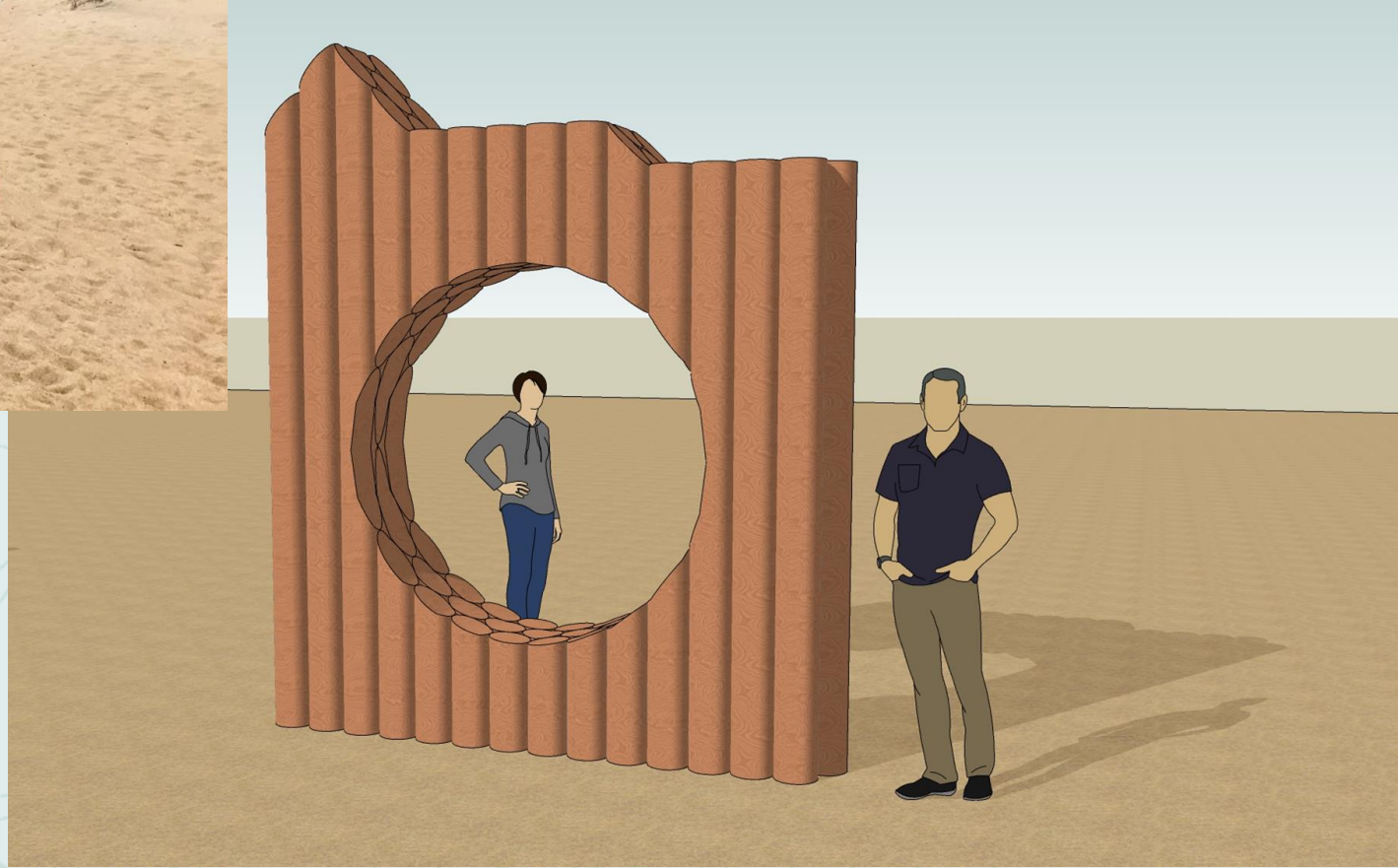
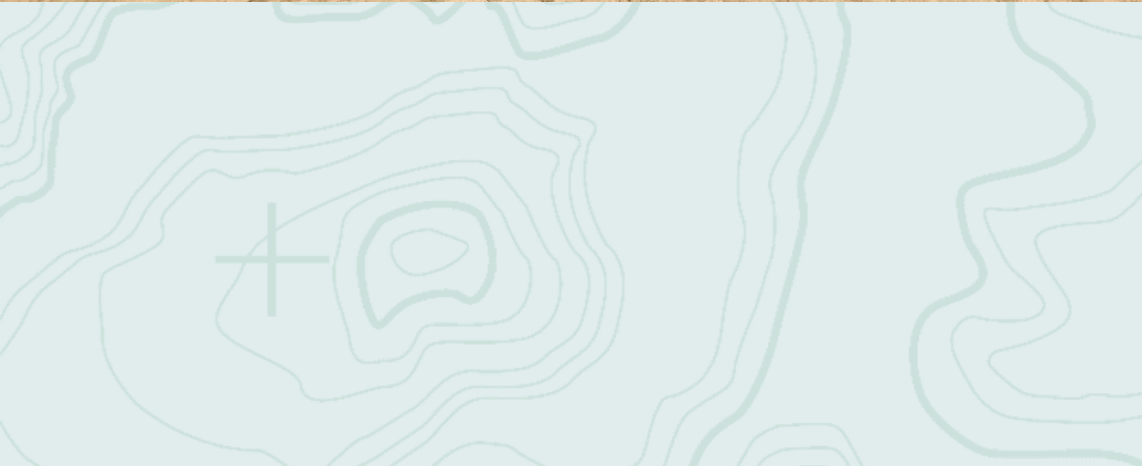
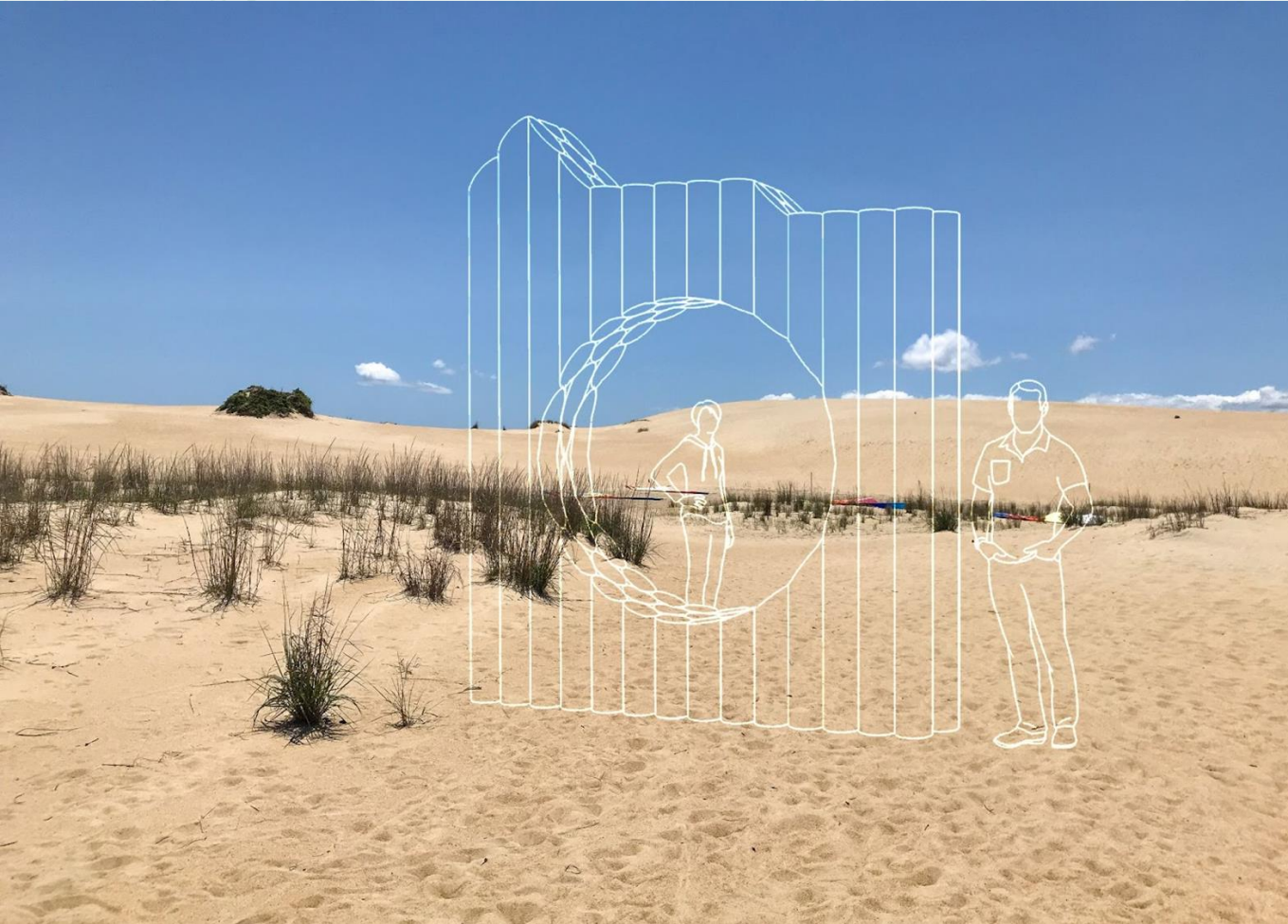




# JOCKEYS RIDGE STATE PARK









# Why is outdoor recreation important?

- Mental and physical health
- Help preserve outdoor spaces
- Connectivity to communities and neighborhoods



# Why is outdoor recreation important?

- 56% of all North Carolinians Participate in Outdoor Recreation
- \$28 Billion in annual spending in the outdoor industry
- The outdoor industry supports 260,000 jobs
- \$8.3 Billion in wages and salaries
- \$1.3 Billion in State and Local Tax Revenue

\* Data from NC State Parks



# Building the GREAT TRAILS STATE





2023

The main graphic for 'Year of the Trail'. The words 'YEAR OF THE TRAIL' are in a large, teal, rounded font. 'OF THE' is smaller and positioned between 'YEAR' and 'TRAIL'. Two yellow dashed arrows form a circular path around the words 'OF THE'. The top arrow points from 'YEAR' to 'OF THE', and the bottom arrow points from 'OF THE' to 'TRAIL'. The word 'TRAIL' has a location pin icon on the dot of the 'i'.

# YEAR OF THE TRAIL

**Celebrate North Carolina Trails**



# Year of the Trail Campaign Goals



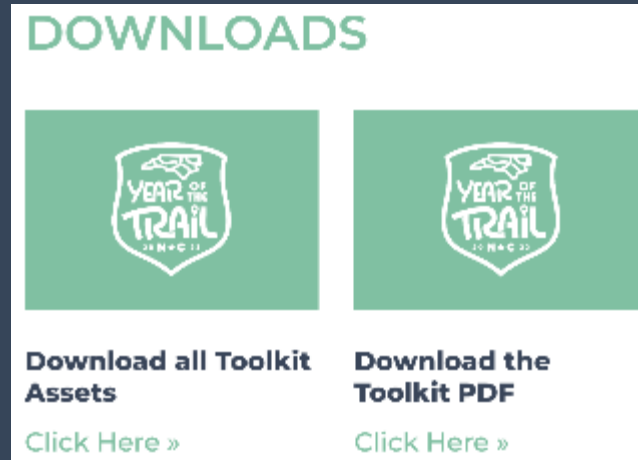
- **Inspire people** of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds to try trails
- **Demonstrate the importance of trails** to elected officials
- **Boost outdoor recreation tourism** across the state
- **Promote safe and responsible** use of trails, aligning with Outdoor NC Leave No Trace principles.
- **Advance diversity & inclusion** on trails.



# Year of the Trail Campaign

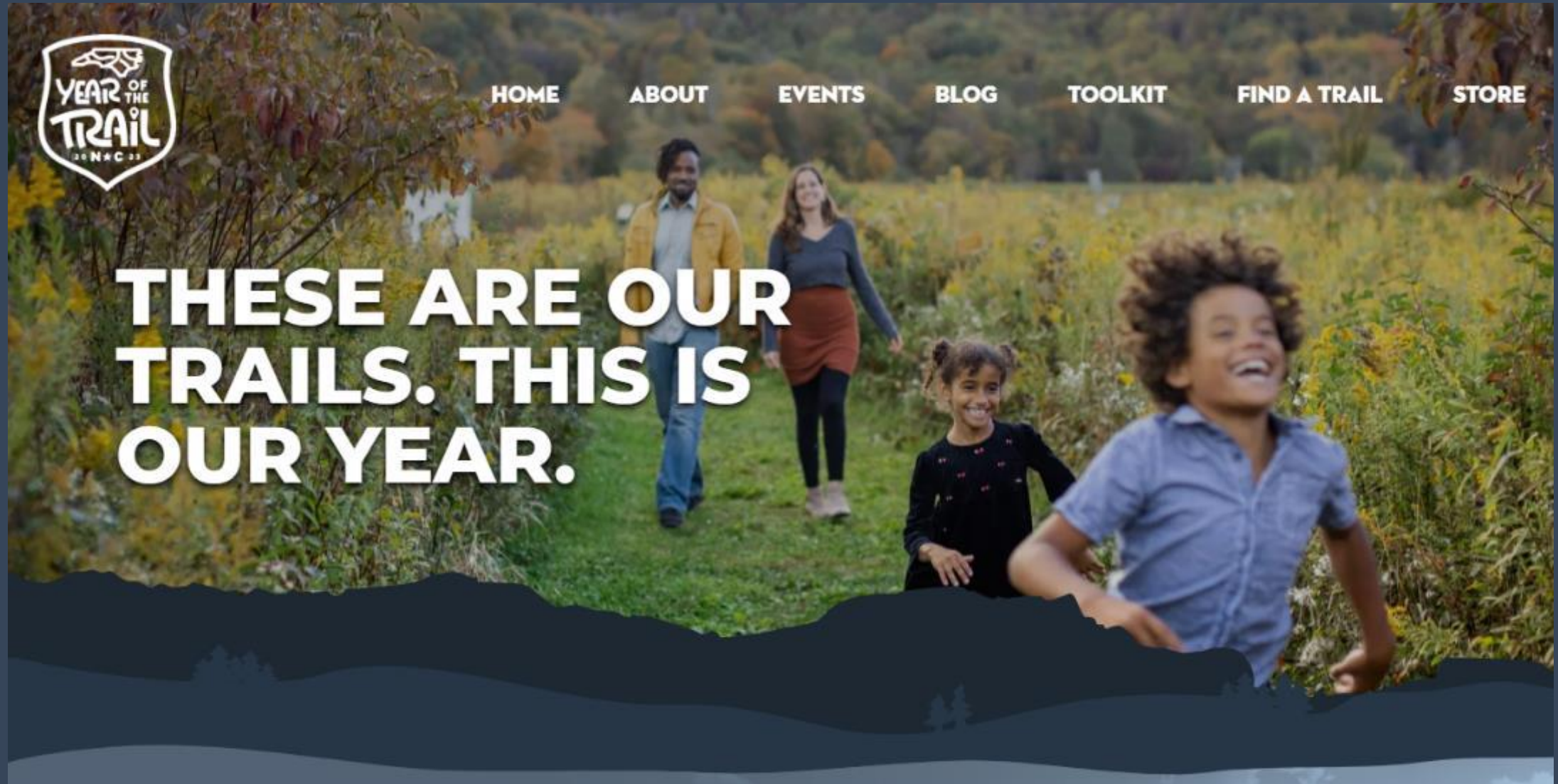


- Website/Social media
- Local toolkits
- Events
- Advertising:  
Outdoor/radio/digital
- Artists Program
- Merchandise
- PBS NC Partnership
- Conferences
- Measurement





greattrailsnc.com







## 2023 YEAR OF THE TRAIL PROCLAMATION

### TEMPLATE FOR LOCAL COMMUNITIES

WHEREAS, [NAME OF COMMUNITY]'s natural beauty is critical to its residents' quality of life, health, and economic wellbeing; and

WHEREAS, the trails that span across our community are an integral part of the recreational and transportation possibilities of our area and promote an enjoyment of scenic beauty by our residents and our visitors; and

WHEREAS, the parks, greenways, trails and natural areas in our community are welcoming to all and provide a common ground for people of all ages, abilities and backgrounds to access our rich and diverse natural, cultural, and historic resources; and

WHEREAS, [NAME OF COMMUNITY]'s natural assets and resources are integral to disaster recovery and resiliency to climate change for future generations; and

WHEREAS, [NAME OF COMMUNITY]'s nature trails vary from [DESCRIBE LOCAL TRAILS]  
[EXAMPLE IN THE DRAFT STATE PROCLAMATION: *less than a mile in length to the Mountains-to-Sea Trail that stretches more than 1,000 miles from the mountains to the coast; range from rugged footpaths on mountain ridges to bikeways along abandoned railway corridors, from canoe trails down our state's rivers to bridle trails in the rolling Piedmont, from trails through state parks to footpaths and greenways through local neighborhoods*]; and

WHEREAS, trails offer quality-of-life benefits to all as expressions of local community character and pride, as outdoor workshops for science education, as tools for economic revitalization, as free resources for healthy recreation, as accessible alternative transportation, and as sites for social and cultural events; and

WHEREAS, [SPEAK HERE ABOUT ANY SPECIAL LOCAL PROGRAMS YOU HAVE THAT IMPACT TRAILS]; and

WHEREAS, the North Carolina General Assembly designated 2023 as the Year of the Trail in North Carolina to promote and celebrate the state's extensive network of trails that showcase our state's beauty, vibrancy and culture; and

WHEREAS, North Carolina is known as the "Great Trails State;"

NOW, THEREFORE, I, [NAME], [TITLE], do hereby proclaim 2023 as "THE YEAR OF THE TRAIL" in [NAME OF COMMUNITY], and commend its observance to all people.

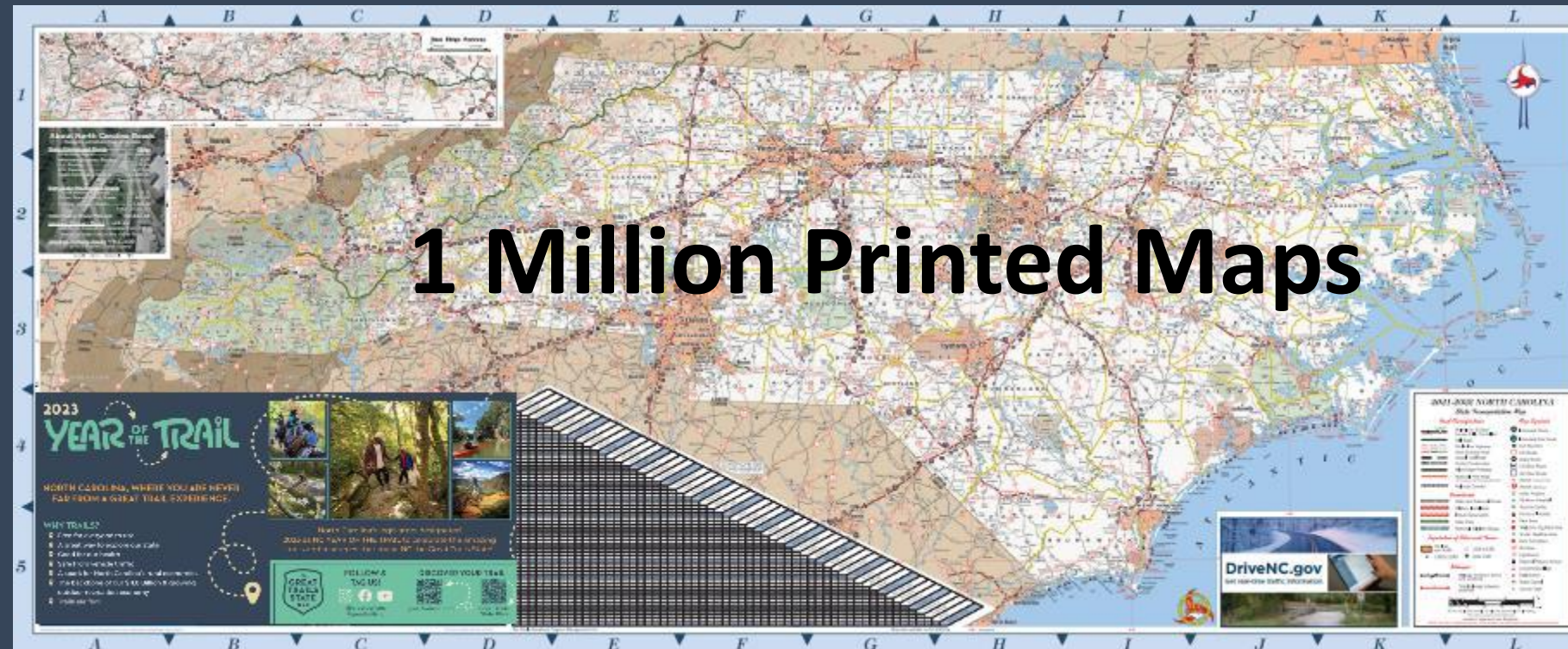
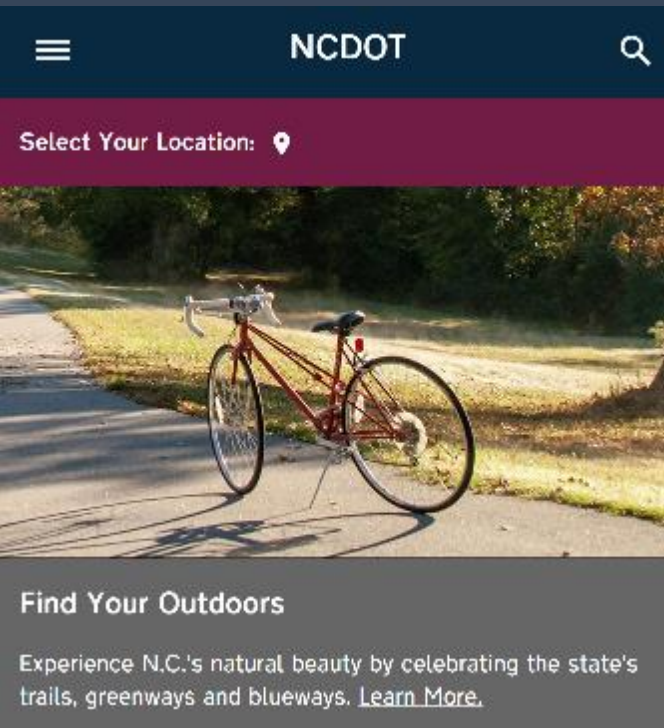


# Year of the Trail Proclamations:

## Dozens of communities participating



# Collaborations – State Agencies





# Collaborations – Private



GREAT OUTDOOR  
PROVISION CO.

BLUE  
BLAZE  
BREWING CO  
CHARLOTTE, NC

NC  
NORTH CAROLINA  
CRAFT  
BREWERS GUILD



State Employees' Credit Union®





# Collaborations – Local







## Pirate Hike!



## Celebrate THE YEAR OF THE TRAIL in Pender County



Hot Chocolate Hike	Jan.
Heart Healthy Hike	Feb.
Topsail Beach Top Secret Hike	March
Pirates Treasure Hunt Hike	April
Holly Shelter Game Land & MST	May
Blueberry Hike	June
Turtle Tracks Hike	July
Funky Fins Hike	August
Eleanor Roosevelt & Penderlea Hike	Sept.
Moore's Creek Hike	Oct.
Turkey Hike	Nov.
Christmas Lights Hike	Dec.

Call 910-789-2971 for details

Sponsored by Pender County Tourism



PLAY | SHOP | EAT | STAY | VISIT | EVENTS | BEACH WEEK | BLOG | ABOUT

# The Year of the Trail



# Reach & Impact

## Owned Content

**0 to 2,500,000+**

People reached since start of campaign  
through our owned digital content

**100,000+** people reached weekly

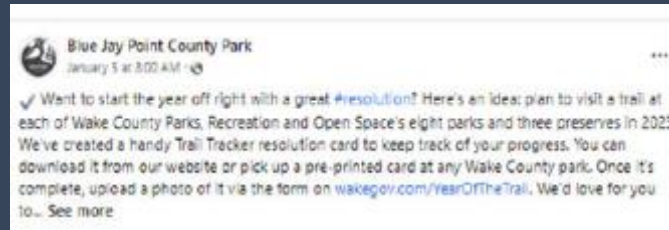
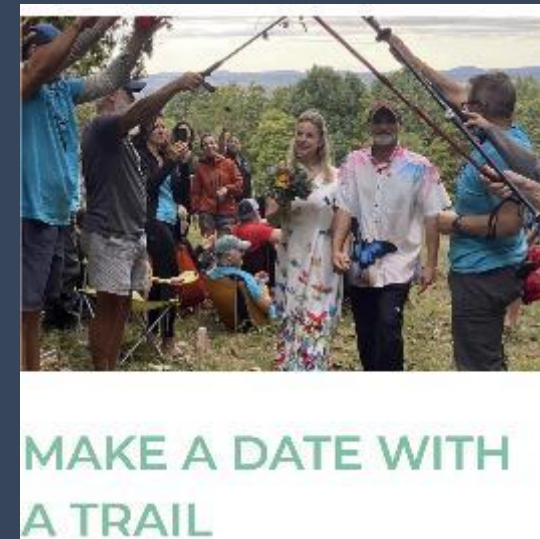
**90,000+** website visits

**1,500+** toolkit downloads

**450+** events on website

**400,000+** video views

**9,500+** newsletters





# Reach & Impact

## Earned + Paid Media

### Tens of Millions +

People reached since start of campaign through earned media & partnerships

**10+** billboards on major state highways

**80+** earned news/magazine articles

**300,000+** earned media reads

**32 million** earned media audience

**100 Counties** with radio coverage + podcasts

PBS NC Partnership

Carolina Country Partnership





# 2023 YEAR OF THE TRAIL

## SPONSORS



# SECU Foundation

PEOPLE HELPING PEOPLE®



Explore **ASHEVILLE**  
Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority







# WHY TRAILS?

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- Free to users
- Improved health and well being
- Safety from vehicular traffic
- Protect valuable natural resources
- Positive economic impact, especially for rural communities

Backbone of NC's \$11.8 billion growing outdoor recreation economy







## 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.

An [NC DOT study](#) of a one-time \$26.7 million investment in four NC shared-use paths created the following economic impacts:



**\$19.4 MILLION**

Estimated ANNUAL sales revenue at local businesses along the four greenways



**\$25.7 MILLION**

Estimated ANNUAL savings due to more physical activity, less pollution and congestions, and fewer traffic injuries from greenway use



**\$48.7 MILLION**

Estimated business revenue from greenway construction



**790**

Jobs are supported ANNUALLY through greenway construction



# Other States Going BIG on Trails



**State Funding Yields 5x in Federal Investment**



# Statewide Independent Bicycle and Pedestrian Funding Comparison

STATE DOT	ANNUAL BUDGET	POPULATION IN 2019 (IN MILLIONS)	BIKE/PED \$S SPENT PER PERSON	% OF BUDGET FOR INDEPENDENT BIKE/ PED PROJECTS
Georgia	\$1 million - \$5 million	10.62	\$0.09 - \$0.47	0.1% to 0.5%
Tennessee	\$10 million - \$50 million	6.83	\$1.46 - \$7.32	0.05% to 0.1%
Florida	\$10 million - \$50 million	21.48	\$0.46 - \$2.33	>2%
Montana	\$5 million - \$10 million	1.07	\$4.67 - \$9.35	1% to 2%
Louisiana	\$5 million - \$10 million	4.65	\$1.08 - \$2.15	0.5% to 1%
Arkansas	\$5 million - \$10 million	3.02	\$1.66 - \$3.31	
Virginia	< \$1 million	8.54	< \$0.12	>2%
Missouri	< \$1 million	6.14	< \$0.16	<0.05%
North Carolina	< \$1 million	10.49	< \$0.10	<0.05%

Source: Bench-marking Non-motorized Policies and Project Delivery, 2020





# Great Trails State Vision



- North Carolina is the Great Trails State, where each of our 100 counties enjoys the proven benefits of trails, including health, safety, economic development, tourism, transportation, and environment.
- Sustained, statewide investment in trails
- Values driven coalition



# Our Brand is All



## All STAKEHOLDERS



Non-Profits



Municipal



Agencies



Industry

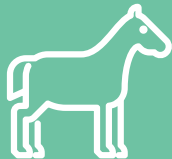
## All USES



Foot



Wheel



Hoof



Paddle



## All SURFACES



Natural

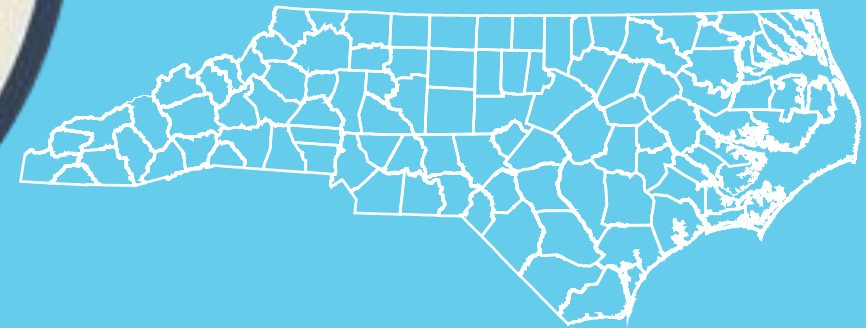


Water



Paved

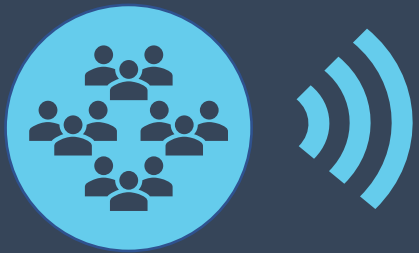
## All 100 COUNTIES



# ALL PEOPLE



# Core Strategies



**Speak with  
ONE Voice**



**Make the Case  
with Data**

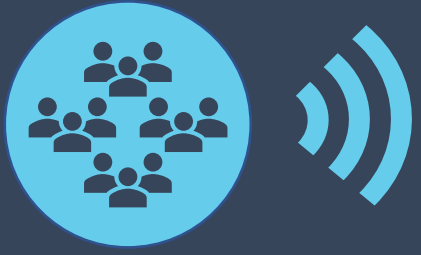


**Advocate for trails  
funding**



**Celebrate NC Trails**





# Coalition Members



**NON-PROFITS**



**INDUSTRY**



**LOCAL GOVERNMENT**



**AGENCY PARTNERS**

**79 Members and Growing**

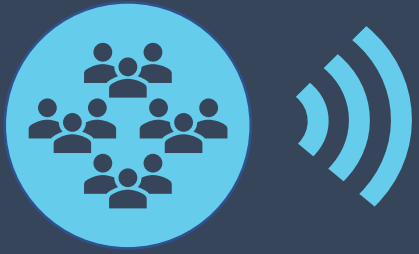




## NON-PROFITS







INDUSTRY







## LOCAL GOVERNMENT





# greattrailsstatecoalition.org

[About](#) ▾[Investment Ready Projects](#)[News](#)[Members](#)[Year of the Trail](#) ▾[Get Involved](#)[Join](#)

A broad-based group of diverse organizations, agencies, and supporters advocating for increased state investment in all types of trails in North Carolina – hiking, paddle, mountain bike, equestrian, paved.





## **2021** LONG SESSION SUCCESS

- 2023 Year of the Trail Designation
- Budget funding – first time ever specifically for authorized State Trails
  - \$29.15 M for the Complete the Trails Fund
  - Non-State Trails not eligible for funding





## 2023 LONG SESSION STRATEGY

- **Get Legislators out to Year of the Trail Events**
- **Great Trails State Fund**
  - Competitive grant program
  - All trail types
  - One time money – prove trails are a GREAT investment
- **Recurring funding for state trail nonprofits**
- **Recurring funding for feasibility studies**







# FIND YOUR TRAIL







## ENGAGE

[www.greattrailsnc.com](http://www.greattrailsnc.com)

[www.greattrailsstatecoalition.org](http://www.greattrailsstatecoalition.org)

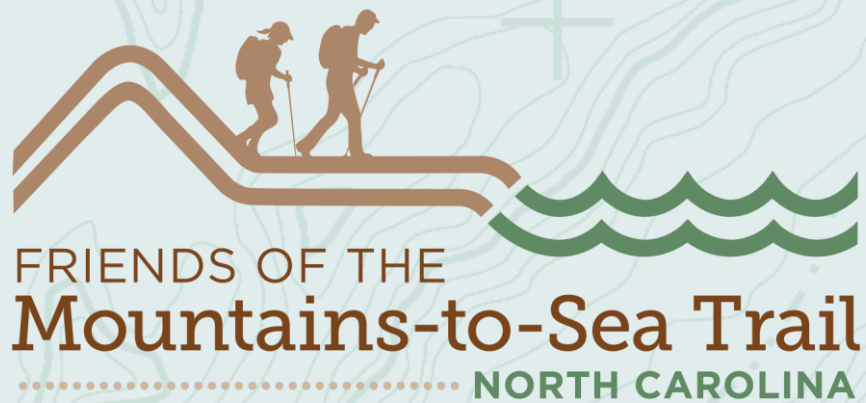
@greattrailsnc

EMAIL ADDRESS

[info@greattrailsnc.com](mailto:info@greattrailsnc.com)







# Thank you!

[blaurenz@mountainstoseatrail.org](mailto:blaurenz@mountainstoseatrail.org)  
[MountainstoSeaTrail.org](http://MountainstoSeaTrail.org)