BRINGING RECREATIONAL TRAILS TO YOUR COMMUNITY

Brian R. Rushing
Director of Economic Development Initiatives

Photo Credit: Joe Watts

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA*
Communities throughout the Southeast and across the United States are investing billions of dollars in parks, green spaces, and trail networks.
Atlanta’s Beltline

- 33 miles of trails / 1,300 acres of greenspace
- Parks, trails, transit, affordable housing, street-scape improvements, neighborhood redevelopment
- $450 Million in public & private funding spent, resulting in $3 Billion in private development investment within corridor
- Total project cost by 2030 estimated to be $4.8 Billion
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Chattanooga Greenways & Trails
• Implementing a 100 mile greenway master plan
• Parks and trails are a major component of a concerted revitalization effort that has created one of the South’s most vibrant cities
• Over $200 Million in public and private funds invested thus far
Implementing the 52-mile Swamp Rabbit Trail as part of a comprehensive community redevelopment effort.
THE OUTDOOR RECREATION ECONOMY IN THE UNITED STATES
bicycling, camping, fishing, hunting, motorcycle riding, off-roading, snow sports, trail, water sports, wildlife viewing

★ $ 887 Billion in direct consumer spending in 2017
★ 7.6 Million jobs depend upon outdoor recreation
★ 145 million Americans regularly engage in outdoor recreation

Source: The Outdoor Recreation Economy / Outdoor Recreation Association
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A Powerful Economic Sector

ANNUAL CONSUMER SPENDING

- Education: $278B
- Gasoline and fuels: $354B
- Household utilities: $313B
- Motor vehicles and parts: $485B
- Pharmaceuticals: $462B
- Financial services and insurance: $878B
- Outpatient health care: $921B
- Hospital care: $931B
- Outdoor recreation: $964B

Source: The Outdoor Recreation Economy / Outdoor Recreation Association
THE OUTDOOR RECREATION ECONOMY IN ALABAMA IN 2017

- bicycling, camping, fishing, hunting, motorcycle riding, off-roading, snow sports, trail, water sports, wildlife viewing

- $14 Billion in direct consumer spending
- 135,000 direct jobs
- $3.9 Billion in wages and salaries
- $857 Million in state and local tax revenue
- 55% of Alabamians participate in outdoor recreation each year

Source: The Outdoor Recreation Economy / Outdoor Recreation Association
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**Economic**
✓ Publicly accessible open space and trails generate economic activity

**Health**
✓ Increased rates of physical activity
✓ Reduces obesity and obesity-related disease
✓ Reduces health care costs

**Community / Quality of Life**
✓ Increased physical connections increases social connections
✓ More activities available makes for happier people

**Environment**
✓ Trails create choices for getting from point A to B
✓ Conservation lands can contain recreational areas and trails
Economic Benefit

✓ Consumer spending
  • Local behavior
  • Recreational tourism
  • Events!!
✓ Increased property values
✓ Attracting business & talent
Economic Benefit: Consumer Spending

Anniston: Coldwater Mountain
• 4,083-acre Forever Wild tract
• IMBA Bronze-level Ride Center for mountain biking
• 34 miles of completed trail / total of 75 miles when completed
• 2012 Jacksonville State University study found a $4,000,000 annual economic impact
Economic Benefit: Consumer Spending

Piedmont & Jacksonville: Chief Ladiga Trail

- 32.5 mile paved bicycle-pedestrian trail
- $2,000,000 project
- $50,000 / year to operate
- 2015 Jacksonville State University study found a $1,500,000 local annual economic impact
Economic Benefit: Consumer Spending

Phenix City & Columbus, GA: Chattahoochee Whitewater Park

- World’s largest urban whitewater park
- $23,000,000 project
- $42,000,000 local annual economic impact
Economic impacts studies of direct consumer spending around trails are underway (or will be soon) at:

- Several Alabama State Parks
- Ruffner Mountain Nature Preserve, Birmingham
- Shades Creek Greenway, Homewood
- Blackwater Creek Blueway, Walker County
- Alabama Scenic River Trail (statewide)
- Stoney Lonesome OHV Park, Cullman
Economic Benefit: Increased Property Values

- Value of properties near trails may be as much as 20% higher than comparable properties further away.

A 2002 survey of recent home buyers by the National Association of Home Realtors and the National Association of Home Builders found that trails ranked second only to highway access.
Economic Benefit: 
Increased Property Values

Real estate listings that highlight proximity to the Silver Comet Trail
Economic Benefit: Attracting Business

In 2010, Volkswagen announced its plans to bring a manufacturing plant to Chattanooga. With it came 2,000 new jobs and $1 billion of investment in the regional economy. Volkswagen officials pointed to the city’s efforts to protect natural amenities, create a healthier city and improve quality of life as one of the drivers of their decision to select Chattanooga.

-Memphis Daily News
Alabama’s Obesity Epidemic

When Compared to the nation, Alabama has the:

- 5th highest adult obesity rate (36%)
- 3rd highest rate of diagnosed diabetes (14%)
- 2nd highest rate of high cholesterol (42%)
- 2nd highest rate of diagnosed hypertension (42%)
- 2nd Shortest life expectancy

Source: www.stateofobesity.org
Health Benefits

✓ **Increased rates of physical activity:** A group of studies reviewed by the American Journal of Preventive Medicine showed that “creation or enhanced access to places for physical activity combined with informational outreach” produced a 48.4% increase in the frequency of physical activity.

✓ **Reduces obesity and obesity-related disease**

✓ **Reduces health care costs:** A 2012 UAB study based upon citizen surveys of willingness to use trails, that implementation of Jefferson County’s 750-mile Red Rock Trail System would result in $21 - $43 Million in annual direct medical cost savings.
Bringing trails to your community

- Planning
- Federal Funding
- Design & Construction
- Maintenance & Operations
- Partnerships

FIVE MILE CREEK GREENWAY
Planning

- “Discovery” (needs, uses, connections, location, features, materials)
- Public stakeholder meetings*
- Preliminary engineering / cost estimates
- May be simple or elaborate, depending upon scope
- Design / engineering simple or elaborate depending upon scope
- Engage professionals / RFP process
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Planning Note: Public Stakeholder Meetings
- Sometimes multiple touch-points
- Identify needs / possible uses & amenities
- Understanding trail route
- Address questions & concerns
- Secure buy-in / public support
Federal Funding

➤ ADECA
  o Recreation Trails Program
  o Land & Water Conservation Fund
  o Appalachian Regional Commission
  o Community Development Block Grants

➤ ALDOT
  o Transportation Alternatives Program
ADECA: Recreation Trails Program

- Set-aside from the Transportation Alternatives Program that comes to states through the Federal Highway Administration
- Eligible Projects
  - Development and maintenance of recreational trails and trail-related facilities
  - Making trails ADA accessible
  - Trail assessment for accessibility and maintenance
  - Land / corridor acquisition
  - New trails across Federal lands where required by the SCORP
  - Educational programs that promote safety and environmental protection (training and publications)
- Eligible Costs
  - Design, engineering, construction oversight services up to 10% of construction cost
  - Project administration up to 5% of total project cost
  - Direct labor
  - Equipment rental
  - Construction / special tradesmen contracts
  - Materials
  - Signage
  - Land acquisition
ADECA: Recreation Trails Program (cont’d)

- Must comply with the ADA and ABA guidelines if designed for pedestrian use
- Eligible applicants: local, state, & federal governments/agencies only
- FY 2020 Funding Limits:
  - $200,000 non-motorized single-use (traditionally $35,000)
  - $400,000 non-motorized multi-use (traditionally $100,000)
  - $500,000 motorized multi-use (traditionally $330,000)
  - $87,489 for safety and environmental protection education
- Reimbursement program!!
- Local match requirement: 20% (in-kind and donated contributions are eligible)
- Application deadline is usually each December for funding the following fiscal year
- Application workshop usually held each October

Contact ADECA for technical assistance:
Shante’ Holley, (334) 242-5382 or shante.holley@adeca.alabama.gov
ADECA: Land & Water Conservation Fund

- Funding from the U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service
- 53 year program Expired at the end of FY 2018 and is currently not funded past FY 2020.
- Eligible Projects
  - Land & water acquisition for park purposes
  - Development and/or renovation of recreational facilities
  - Virtually all outdoor recreational facilities eligible if primarily dedicated to public use
  - Only on land under permanent control and permanently dedicated to public use
- Eligible Costs (same as RTP)
  - Design, engineering, construction oversight services up to 10% of construction cost
  - Project administration up to 5% of total project cost
  - Direct labor
  - Equipment rental
  - Construction / special tradesmen contracts
  - Materials
  - Signage
  - Land acquisition
ADECA: Land & Water Conservation Fund (cont’d)

- Must comply with the ADA and ABA guidelines
- Eligible applicants: local, state, & federal governments/agencies only
- FY 2020 Funding Limits:
  - $350,000 (traditionally $50,000)
- Reimbursement program!!
- Local match requirement: 50% (in-kind and donated contributions are eligible)
- Application deadline is usually each December for funding the following fiscal year
- Application workshop usually each October

Contact ADECA for technical assistance:
Shante’ Holley, (334) 242-5382 or shante.holley@adeca.alabama.gov
Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP)

- Required for state to be eligible for LWCF funding
- Important consideration for both LWCF and RTP applications
- Open Project Selection Process – RTAB & ADECA staff
- Identifies regional priorities for outdoor recreation
- 2013-2018 plan is being updated now
- 2008 State Trail Plan – Surveyed need
ADECA: Appalachian Regional Commission

- Limited to 37 northernmost counties in Alabama
- Eligible applicants: governments and nonprofit organizations working through Local Development Districts (regional councils of government)
- Eligible projects are broad and include those that strengthen community and economic development through leveraging the regionals natural and cultural heritage assets (trails infrastructure can qualify)
- Applications need to be consistent with ARC state plans and strategies
- Funding limit is usually $200,000
- Local match is on sliding scale depending on economic condition category in counties involved
- Application deadline is usually each October for funding the following fiscal year
- Application workshop usually held each September

Contact ADECA for technical assistance:
Kelly Chasteen, (334) 353-2909 or kelly.chasteen@adeca.alabama.gov
ADECA: Community Development Block Grants

• Funding from U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
• Limited to non-entitlement communities
• Projects must serve 51% low and moderate-income people
• Community Enhancement Fund
  • Can fund recreational projects such as trails
  • Grant ceiling is $250,000
• Planning Fund
  • Can fund planning for trails as part of regional development and revitalization efforts
  • Grant ceiling is $50,000
• Application workshops are held in the 1st quarter of the year where application deadlines are announced

Contact ADECA for technical assistance:
Shabbir Olia, (334) 242-5468 or shabbir.olia@adeca.alabama.gov
ALDOT: Transportation Alternatives Program

- Funding from Federal Highway Administration
- Eligible applicants: mostly governments and governmental agencies
- Eligible Projects include construction, planning, and design of on and off-road non-motorized trail facilities
- Trail projects should serve a transportation purpose, but may serve recreation too
- 50% set aside for MPOs based upon population, remainder is competitive statewide
- 20% local match, but no in-kind or donations allowed
- Reimbursement program
- Eligible Costs:
  - ROW acquisition in some cases, but now de-emphasized
  - Construction engineering
  - Construction
- Preliminary engineering is not eligible for reimbursement
- FY 2020 Funding limit: $640,000 (traditionally $400,000)
- Application deadline is usually May-June, with funding awarded the following fiscal year
- Early coordination with local transportation engineer is encouraged

Contact ALDOT for technical assistance:
Tina Milton, (334) 353-6441 or miltont@dot.state.al.us
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Design & Construction

• Type of materials can significantly affect maintenance needs
• Can reduce costs through donations of materials and services / doing work in-house
• Nature trails can be built with American Conservation Experience’s ConservationCorps or Volunteer Vacations through Sierra Club and American Hiking Trail Society
Maintenance & Operations

• A consideration as important as building the project – make sure you can properly maintain and operate what you build
• Monitoring, maintenance, and policing are critical for success
• ACE’s Conservation Corps a great option, along with Volunteer Vacations for nature trails
• Partnerships can help!
Public-private partnerships leverage everyone’s resources to build & maintain trails!

- **Local government**
  - Funding (tax revenue, bonds)
  - In-house equipment & labor

- **Businesses**
  - Funding
  - In-kind equipment & labor

- **Non-profit organizations**

- **Private foundations**

- **Individuals**
Brian Rushing
(205) 915-5402
brian.rushing@ua.edu