



## **CATAWBA COUNTY TALKING POINTS**

*As of September 15, 2008*

- The Carolina Thread Trail is one of the largest and most exciting projects ever planned for our region. Its legacy will permanently celebrate this region's history, beauty, and diversity, while conserving local lands and providing a broad range of community benefits.
- The Thread will link more than two million citizens with hundreds of miles of pedestrian and bicycle trails that wind through fifteen counties in North and South Carolina, connecting points of regional significance.
- All counties and communities in the 15-county region are invited to participate; local communities will decide if, when and how to do so.
- Beyond the requirement that they connect with their neighbors, communities will self-determine the location and character of their trail system.
- The Thread Trail will focus on corridors that provide the connecting legs of a regional trail system. It will link individual local greenway and blueway projects (paddling trails) through a "green interstate" network. Not every splinter greenway in a community will be part of The Thread—only key legs.
- Guiding principles of the Carolina Thread Trail include connectivity, collaboration, accessibility and inclusiveness to all citizens and respect for the land and land owners.

- Regional trails provide multiple benefits to citizens, all of which contribute to an enhanced quality of life:
  - Economic development,
  - Conservation of land
  - Enhancement of water quality
  - Cleaner air
  - Alternative transportation
  - Health and recreation
- There is national attention being given to the health benefits of outdoor play for children and a renewed interest in connecting them to nature. Additionally, the idea of weaving communities together brings opportunity to connect diverse neighborhoods and enhance social interaction.
- The Carolina Thread Trail is being led by the Catawba Lands Conservancy in partnership with The Trust for Public Land and many non-profit and government organizations. Foundation For The Carolinas (FFTC) has provided catalytic leadership and funding.
- Ruth Shaw, retired Duke Power President of the Carolinas, brings her passion, experience and regional knowledge to the Carolina Thread Trail as the Chair of the Governing Board. The Governing Board and Advisory Council include leaders from throughout the region who are steering the project. From Catawba County, Mary George is serving on the Advisory Council.
- It will take the involvement of many leaders and organizations in Catawba County to optimize this opportunity to create The Thread and deliver its many benefits to our citizens.
- The Thread will be financed with both private donations and from state and federal public funding sources. The project's funding model was developed following two years of planning and study of regional greenway projects in the US.
- The funding model starts with a pool of private dollars that will be given as grants to local communities. These dollars will stimulate planning, design, land acquisition and construction of greenways that

will eventually link all 15 counties in the region to each other and to other greenway systems outside the region.

- These funds will be accessible to Catawba County Thread projects through the Carolina Thread Trail grants process. While Thread grants will provide a great catalyst, we will need to access additional funds from federal, state and local sources to make The Thread a reality in Catawba.
- The first step is to engage in a countywide greenway master planning process which will be led by a community planning consultant of the steering committee's choosing from a short-list of firms. The goal of this process is to have the county and municipalities work together to develop a plan that identifies trail corridors, designates the backbone of the network as the Carolina Thread Trail, and outlines an action plan for implementing prioritized segments of The Thread. This process will engage many leaders and involve public input.
- When the master plan is developed, it will be taken to the county and participating local jurisdictions for adoption. Once a plan is adopted, prioritized segments of The Thread can apply for additional grants.
- Questions: Contact Ann Browning, Project Director at [ann@carolinathreadtrail.org](mailto:ann@carolinathreadtrail.org) or call her at 704-376-2556. Visit our web site – [www.carolinathreadtrail.org](http://www.carolinathreadtrail.org) for more information.