

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2021**

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HOUSE BILL 936

Short Title: Support for North Carolina Trails/Greenways. (Public)

Sponsors: Representatives Arp, Blackwell, Clampitt, and Paré (Primary Sponsors).
For a complete list of sponsors, refer to the North Carolina General Assembly web site.

Referred to: Appropriations, if favorable, Rules, Calendar, and Operations of the House

May 12, 2021

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT TO SUPPORT ACCESS TO THE SCENIC BEAUTY OF NORTH CAROLINA'S
ENVIRONMENT FOR THE CITIZENS OF NORTH CAROLINA BY PROVIDING
DEDICATED FUNDS FOR SUPPORT OF STATE AND LOCAL TRAILS.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

SUPPORT STATE TRAILS

SECTION 1.(a) Trail Funds. – The sum of ten million dollars (\$10,000,000) in nonrecurring funds for the 2021-2022 fiscal year and ten million dollars (\$10,000,000) in nonrecurring funds for the 2022-2023 fiscal year is appropriated from the General Fund to the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources to be allocated to the Parks and Recreation Trust Fund to provide funds for the project types specified in this section. One-half of the funds shall be allocated for natural surface trails and paddle trails as detailed in subsection (b) of this section, and the remaining one-half shall be allocated for paved trails as detailed in subsection (c) of this section.

SECTION 1.(b) Natural Surface and Paddle Trails. – Notwithstanding any provision of G.S. 143B-135.56 to the contrary, funds allocated for natural surface trails and paddle trails may be used by the State Parks System, State recreational forests, local governmental units, or public authorities for the following:

- (1) Land and easement acquisition for natural surface and paddle trails.
- (2) Construction of natural surface trails, bridges and boardwalks, and trail facilities such as trailheads and camping sites.
- (3) Rehabilitation of degraded natural surface trails, bridges and boardwalks, and trail facilities.
- (4) Design and related environmental assessments for natural surface trails and paddle trail facilities.
- (5) Up to fifty percent (50%) of the required match for federal grants for any of the purposes set forth in this subsection.

No more than twenty percent (20%) of the funds allocated by this subsection may be used for the purposes set forth in subdivisions (4) and (5) of this subsection.

SECTION 1.(c) Paved Trails. – Funds allocated for paved trails shall be used for paved trail and greenway projects conducted by municipalities and rural transportation planning organizations (RPOs) in economic development tier one and tier two counties. Notwithstanding G.S. 143B-135.56, the local match for these projects shall be one dollar (\$1.00) in local funds for every four dollars (\$4.00) in State funds. To the maximum extent possible, the North Carolina



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Parks and Recreation Authority will partner with the Department of Transportation to leverage any federal funding available for paved trails and greenways.

SECTION 2. Maintenance and Trail Signage. – The sum of three million dollars (\$3,000,000) in nonrecurring funds for the 2021-2022 fiscal year is appropriated to the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources to be allocated for grants for trail maintenance and for trail signage on components of the State Trail System. Where practicable, the Division will enter into Memoranda of Agreement with local governmental units or nonprofit organizations receiving funding under this section for support of all or part of component trails of the State Trail Systems that will include the creation of short-term plans of three to five years in length for the maintenance of each trail. For purposes of this section, maintenance shall include the installation of water bars, relocation of eroded trail segments, and other activities that will mitigate or prevent future erosion or deterioration of trails.

SECTION 3. State Trails Coordinator. – The sum of one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000) in recurring funds for the 2021-2022 fiscal year is appropriated to the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources for support of a State Trails System coordinator position to provide support and oversight for the components of the State Trails System and for other local and regional trails connecting to or complementing the State Trails System.

SECTION 4. Plan. – The State Trails System shall develop a master plan for coordination and integration between the Departments of Natural and Cultural Resources and Transportation in order to prioritize and coordinate paved trail project planning and funding in a manner that will maximize the drawdown of federal funds for paved trail and greenway construction in a manner that will not compromise federal funding for road construction or maintenance activities. The System shall report to the chairs of the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Agriculture and Natural and Economic Resources no later than December 1, 2022.

PAVED TRAILS AND GREENWAYS PLANNING

SECTION 5.(a) Planning Funds. – The sum of five hundred thirty thousand dollars (\$530,000) in nonrecurring funds for the 2021-2022 fiscal year is appropriated from the Highway Fund to the Department of Transportation to be allocated to the Integrated Mobility Division's Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning Grant Initiative to be used as set forth in subsection (b) of this section.

SECTION 5.(b) Eligibility and Match. – Planning funds appropriated by this section are available to municipalities and RPOs located within counties defined as development tier one or two areas under G.S. 143B-437.08. Eligible entities may submit projects for consideration for funding of a feasibility study, which will be evaluated based on community support, overall concept, and contribution to larger planned or existing trail networks. Feasibility studies funded under this subsection will include, at a minimum, recommended alignments for each proposed trail segment, preliminary design and construction cost estimates, easement acquisition strategy, and documentation of community support. A local match of five percent (5%) shall be provided by the municipality or RPO.

SECTION 6. This act becomes effective July 1, 2021.