

December 2018

Dear Friends of the American Tobacco Trail,

Season's greetings and happy holidays from Triangle Rails-to-Trails Conservancy (TRTC)! It's almost the end of the year and we would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your help in the past, keep you up to date on what we have been doing this year, and ask you for your continuing support. Any amount you can spare will be welcome as we continue to maintain selected ATT facilities and to promote and improve the American Tobacco Trail and local rail-trails. Here is some of what we have been doing in 2018 with your donations and support:

Special Projects: We continued our long term advocacy for expanded parking at Scott King just east of the trail crossing on Scott King Road. ATT user parking along the road and at Herndon Park has seen a steady increase for several years and additional capacity is clearly needed. Due to staffing limitations, the City of Durham only begun their site planning for this facility in October 2015, even though funding became available in July 2014. TRTC and the NC Horse Council continued to push the City on this vital project and bids were received in early 2018. Construction began in early July and this new lot was opened for use in mid-September. The lot has spaces for ~20 cars and 3 horse trailers and has seen increasing use during the Fall. A durable access path for equine users is still to be put in by early in 2019.

Trail Safety: We continued efforts to seek improvements at the O'Kelly Chapel Road crossing to make crossing this very busy road safer for trail users. Our previous requests to Chatham County in 2015 & 2016 to provide funding for user activated signal lights were unsuccessful. During 2017, we continued our contacts with the Town of Cary and NCDOT and very late in 2017 the Town agreed to install user activated signal lights at this crossing. These lights are similar to those at several Cary crossings and at Morrisville Parkway but have signals about 400' from the crossing as well as at the crossing. After some delays by Cary in acquiring the equipment these light were installed in the Fall of 2018. Our advocacy and involvement in getting this improvement began in April 2015.

Trail Maintenance: We maintained the Pittard Sears parking lot including plumbing support needed to open the water fountain in early April and shut it down for the winter in late November. Funds from donations were used to pay the monthly water bill for this very popular ATT amenity. Our Pittard Sears lot saw lots of use this year and provided a safe (and legal) alternative to parking on O'Kelly Church Road. Donations to TRTC and funds from the Tobacco Road Marathon were key to allowing this long term ATT facility to happen.

Major Upgrade at Pittard Sears Parking Area: In the Fall of 2016 we were notified by NC DOT that this lot is not in compliance with requirements of the federal Americans with Disabilities Act (commonly referred to as the ADA). The construction approvals we received in 2012 did not specify the need to have 2 paved parking spaces and a hard surface trail from the trail to the lot and from the paved parking spaces to the fountain. During 2017 we cleared a 175' long area where a new hard surface connector trail was constructed in 2018. This involved cutting down 10 pine trees, grinding the stumps to ground level, and installing a 20' long culvert on the west side of the trail where the new connector will access the ATT. During 2018 we completed detailed specs for the hard surface parking and connector trail and our contractor broke ground in late November. As of mid-December grading was completed, and all of the concrete is in place. Weather permitting, additional landscaping of the disturbed areas should be completed by the end of the year. A few volunteer work sessions will be scheduled in the Spring to do additional tidying up.

Trail Maintenance of ATT and Upgrade of Eagle Spur Trail:

We held nine targeted workdays this year. These included work at the trail north and south of Scott King Road where we swept or shoveled sand and blew off sand and pine needles several times to augment the somewhat irregular sweeping done by Durham. We held several on the 2.2-mile Eagle Spur rail-trail south of Stagecoach Road which leads to Jordan Lake. This land is now managed by the NC Fish and Wildlife Commission and is popular with fishermen, hunters and hikers. In January 2017 we held a workday to carry in 3 very large plastic culverts to be installed as replacements for three badly damaged drainage culverts crossing this trail. These culverts will improve user safety and allow trail usage even in very wet conditions. Since then we have held several smaller workdays to remove stumps and other materials that will allow these new culverts to be installed. During 2018 our efforts were continuing nicely until very large storms in August, September and October raised Jordan Lake to levels far higher than this trail and stalled our efforts for the balance of 2018. Our remaining efforts will be large and involve substantial digging and covering that will need numerous volunteers. We hope to install 2 culverts in 2019 and the final one in 2020.

Outreach Events: TRTC volunteers once again manned a rest stop at Bikefest, an annual fund raising event put on each August by the Carolina Tarwheels.

Maps: Printable PDF files for the 2015 ATT maps were made available on our site early in the year. During 2018 we provided over 1500 copies of our maps to users via the ATT map boxes at Scott King, O'Kelly Chapel and at the New Hope Church trailhead and at the Cary and Durham REI stores and several other outlets.

Trail Support Summary: In summary, we continue to work as volunteers to make the American Tobacco Trail (and its little sibling the Eagle Spur Trail, originally part of the same rail line) great places to get out and enjoy the outdoors. Your donations help us to build connector trails, do maintenance, create and print trail maps, fund important special projects and provide water for trail users. All of us at TRTC thank you for your continued support. Please consider us in your holiday giving, by purchasing or renewing a membership and making a tax-deductible donation to TRTC.

You can donate online by going to www.triangletrails.org/membership and paying via PayPal, or you can send us a check payable to Triangle Rails-to-Trails Conservancy Inc. (TRTC)

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If you have any questions about joining or making a tax-deductible contribution to TRTC, or if you have any questions about your existing or past membership, please contact our TRTC Treasurer at: michaelforte@hotmail.com

With thanks for your support,

Curt Devereux

President, Triangle Rails-to-Trails Conservancy



View of Parking Space, Aisle and Connector at Pittard Sears Shortly After Concrete was Poured in early December 2018