

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

At the edge of Atlanta's sprawl, 60,000 acres of rolling hills, trickling streams, and stately farm houses appear destined for harvest by developers of treeless subdivisions, fast-food restaurants and big-box shopping malls; a harvest that would likely create a dearth of greenspace and transportation options other than the car.

This sparsely populated region of South Fulton County known as the Chattahoochee Hill Country will likely escape the dozer's wrath thanks to the efforts of the *Chattahoochee Hill Country Alliance*, a non-profit group who has carefully planned a different development course for the area which will preserve its rural character. An integral part of their development master plan is to preserve a network of green corridors prior to any further development. This document represents the plan for this labyrinth of greenspace and connecting trails.

The Hill Country stakeholders helped compile a list of important places to be connected within the Hill Country. Many of the desired destinations were outside the 40,000 acres designated as the Hill Country, so the planning endeavor was expanded to include portions of Carroll, Coweta, and Douglas Counties.

Connecting the desired destinations while preserving and even enhancing the natural environment became the fundamental goal of the plan. As a result, the proposed 98-mile trail system is dominated by narrow, gravel surfaced, 'farm road' trails that minimize impact to the landscape and maximize the rural experience.

The Chattahoochee River corridor will serve as the spine of the proposed trail system, which will criss-cross the River on four new bridges, two pedestrian-scale ferries, and two existing highway bridges. The River Trail will be intersected with 'spoke' trails to existing parks, historic places, and population centers.

The Hill Country trail system will cost an estimated \$26 million to build, an average of \$50 per foot. Much of the cost can be attributed to the scores of bridges that will be needed to cross the Chattahoochee River and the tributaries that feed into the river.

To move this project forward, each county must adopt this plan as the official master plan for Hill Country trails. This will lay the foundation for raising public and private funding and set the stage for establishing corridors for the trails proposed. Each county should then select a trail segment as their demonstration trail and focus their energy and resources on building a model for future trails in each county.

The implementation process would benefit from a stakeholder-controlled 'Design & Construction Oversight Committee' who could encourage uniformity from county-to-county and help guide the project as it matures. Respected community leaders and elected officials must accept the challenge of assembling the corridors to insure the connections remain viable.

It would be unfortunate if the stakeholders and visionaries in the Hill Country let this opportunity slip away. The framework for preserving the rural character and natural beauty of the Hill Country is already in place. The job of creating a unique and wonderful way of traveling through it is about to begin.



## TERMS & DEFINITIONS

(As used in this document)

ADA Americans with Disabilities Act, a guide for creating accessible facilities for disabled persons.

AIA American Institute of Architects.

Aggregate Trail Four to eight foot wide, permeable surfaced trail of crushed rock such as slate fines, granite fines, or recycled concrete, densely packed to form a hardened surface suitable for biking and jogging.

Base Map Map of the study area with basic geographical information that is used as a basis for overlaying future improvements such as trails and trail related amenities.

Chattahoochee Hill Country Alliance A 501 (c)(4) organization formed of property owners in the Hill Country seeking to protect their natural areas and ensure economic growth. The mission of the Alliance is to coordinate a comprehensive land use model that emphasizes ecological health, and optimizes property value and quality growth in the project area.

Chattahoochee Hill Country A triangular-shaped, 40,000-acre landmass, bordered to the west by the Chattahoochee River, to the south by the Fulton/Coweta County line, and to the east by Cascade-Palmetto Highway. The Chattahoochee Hill Country (CHC) is a traditional cultural landscape of striking beauty and is one of the last remaining agricultural landscapes in the metropolitan Atlanta area. This area is regulated by the adopted Chattahoochee Hill Country Overlay District.

Closed Loop Trail A trail segment that forms a circular loop rather than one which connects two or more destinations in a line. Loop trails are generally considered recreational amenities rather than transportation facilities.

Conservation Easement Voluntary but permanent legal agreement, which limits the use, treatment, and development of the land in order to protect its conservation values. Conservation easements are used to protect the physical elements, scenic character, ecological systems, or rare and endangered species found on a particular piece of land. It allows the property owner to retain ownership and continue using the land, as long as the activities are consistent with the agreement.

Corridor A strip of land that forms a passageway between destinations.

Easement Legal agreement pertaining to land which grants any specified rights or privileges to a party other than the owner (often without payment).

Edge The border or margin of a parcel of land.

GDOT Georgia Department of Transportation.

GIS Geographic Information Systems. A computerized system, which combines analyses and displays layers of geographic data to produce interpretable information.

Greenway a natural or landscaped corridor, often of relatively long distance, along creeks, utility easements, abandoned rail beds, and publicly owned property.

Greenway Trail A pedestrian/bicycle trail within a greenway, which serves as a transportation, recreation, and environmental conservation corridor.

Hill Country An abbreviation for the Chattahoochee Hill Country(CHC).

Inundation Covered with water.

MARTA Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority. For the purpose of this document, MARTA is referenced for it's bus stop in the City of Palmetto.

Out and Back Trail - A trail that is designed to dead end, thereby requiring a return trip on the same trail.

PATH Foundation A non-profit corporation, which plans, designs, builds, and maintains greenway trails in Georgia.

Right-of-Way Land, property or interest therein, often in a linear configuration, acquired for or devoted to transportation or utilities transmission purposes.

Riparian Buffer A strip of land defined by its proximity to a river or creek. Disturbance is restricted and vegetation and wildlife are protected or enhanced.

SR 16 State Route 16.

Trail Segment A length of trail, often defined between two destinations or trail junctions or combination thereof.

Trail System An organized system of trail segments, which provides numerous connections through and around an area, including numerous destination points.

Undevelopable Land Property which is restricted from normal development, often as a result of being in a floodway, floodplain, or within a utility right-of-way.

## INTRODUCTION

Planners in virtually every major city are spending countless hours trying to save the remaining scraps of urban greenspace for their citizens to enjoy. The demand from city dwellers for greenspace, greenways and trails has been extraordinary during the past decade. In most places, connected greenspace, suitable for commuting and recreating, ranks number one in public opinion polls as the vehicle they choose to enhance community livability.

Imagine if the urban planners of yesteryear could have known about this need and included a series of interconnected greenways and trails as infrastructure. Picture a community where a labyrinth of greenspace and trails was given the same priority and funding as roads and utilities. This is the opportunity that exists today in the Chattahoochee Hill Country. This document is the master plan for such a system of greenways and trails for a region that dares to develop differently than the metropolis nearby.

The rolling pastures and rural homesteads that make up the Hill Country will be criss-crossed with a network of “farm road” trails that will connect villages to schools and scenic river overlooks to pastoral open space preserved for its rural character. These trails will enable residents of the region to travel to a village or send their kids off to school without using a car. Visitors will have the pleasure of gliding on a bike near the Chattahoochee River or hiking for miles through towering forests.

The majority of the trails proposed in this plan will not be paved. Depending on usage and locale, the trails will resemble narrow farm roads and cow paths. Trail corridors will be cleared of invasive vegetation and excessive undergrowth and made park-like. The trail corridors will be maintained as linear parks with rest areas, educational and directional signage, and bridges and boardwalks for crossing creeks and wetlands. Each county will use these greenway trails as the launch point for new trails to population centers and new development throughout the region.

This master plan, when adopted by each county, will serve as the blueprint for preserving the surrounding sensitive landscape and natural amenities, or “Treasures” of the community and connecting greenspace for the Hill Country. This will be an experiment in planning for quality of life before “life arrives”. Imagine a community dedicating greenspace and a place for trails before development. This will be one of the legacies of the Hill Country.



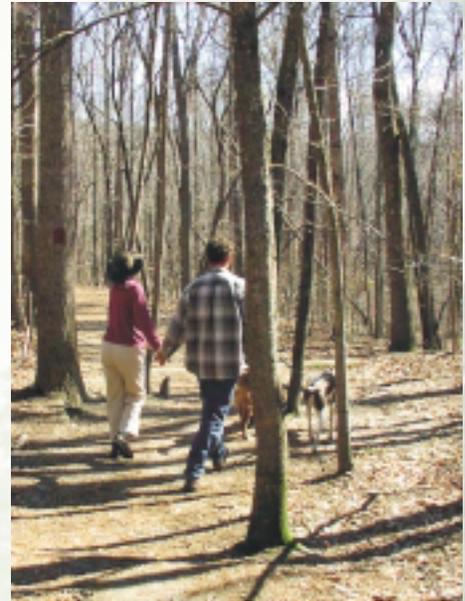
## AN EXTRAORDINARY OPPORTUNITY

The Hill Country is not an area packed with people starved for parkland and alternative forms of transportation. This is not a community trying to solve the problems of gridlock, accelerating tree loss or lack of recreational facilities. The Hill Country is not burdened with divisive infrastructure such as highways, rail corridors or dense commercial development areas.

The Hill Country *is* threatened by the current suburban form of development occurring throughout the Atlanta area. This form of development threatens the natural beauty, scenic character and environmental resources of the region.

There are visionary leaders in the Hill Country, public and private, who are protecting the area's rural character, cultural and sensitive landscapes and habitats, and are willing to set incentives for sustainable development and conservation practices. These leaders have identified the need for establishing a greenway trail system to allow for future connectivity between land uses and open spaces and overall improvement of the future quality of life in the Hill Country.

Within the master plan for a greenway trail system, extraordinary opportunities exist. Creating a network of preserved greenspace that will connect existing and proposed villages, parks, historic sites, and miles of scenic river vistas before development begins is essential. There is a need to determine where these greenways should go and to begin the process of setting them aside in perpetuity.



## BENEFITS OF GREENWAY TRAILS

The Chattahoochee Hill Country Regional Greenway Trail Master Plan lays the groundwork for connecting greenspace and preserving the rural character of the region. The greenway trail system proposed has been planned to allow the trail user an attractive, enjoyable way to experience the Chattahoochee Hill Country (CHC) and Chattahoochee River. Benefits of the trail system within the Hill Country include:

- Enhancing Quality of Life
- Increasing Property Values
- Creating an Alternate Transportation System
- Reducing Crime

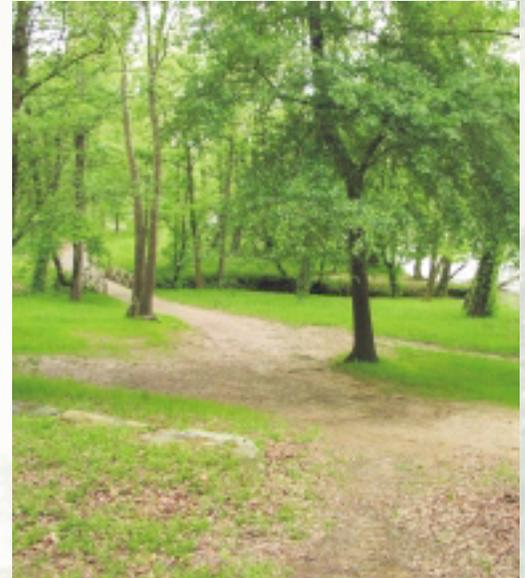
### ENHANCING QUALITY OF LIFE

What is it worth to be able to bike through the forest on a winding gravel trail or jog over the Chattahoochee at sunset on a bridge made for people rather than cars? How much will it change the lives of Hill Country residents to have this opportunity in their back yard?

The greenways and trails proposed in this plan will be close to everyone, touching many more properties than traditional parks, making it easy for residents to recreate together and travel about the region. The greenways will become part of the social fabric that knits the community together. Trails will be the travel mode of choice for trips to school, work, and picnics. Trips on the trail to the proposed Hill Country villages will contribute to a quality of life unsurpassed in the region.

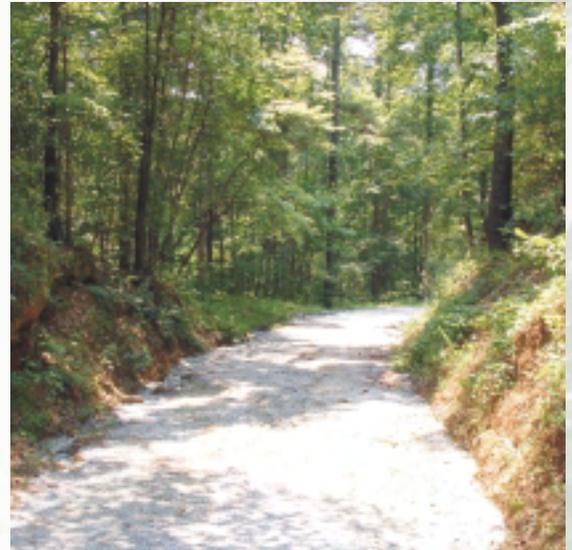
### INCREASING PROPERTY VALUES

There is overwhelming evidence that homes, businesses and vacant land adjacent to trails experience an increase in value as a result of their proximity to the trail. All residents polled along the Freedom Park Trail in east Atlanta feel the trail has contributed to the surge in real estate property value in the area. When surveyed, the clear majority of residents who bought their homes after the construction of trails in Omaha, Nebraska reported that the trail had positively influenced their purchase decision.



Similar studies nationwide indicate 80-90% of residents living near a trail believe the trail either increases or has little effect on their property value.

Living next to a trail is similar to living by a golf course or a lake. The added greenspace and positive activity associated with a trail are attractive amenities for homebuyers. The added fact that trails serve as connections to adjacent neighborhoods, parks, schools, and employment make trails and greenways the preferred amenity in most homebuyer polls.



### CREATING AN ALTERNATE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

We usually associate the need for alternate modes of transportation with smog choked cities, rush hour traffic, and multi-storied parking decks. The trails of the Hill Country will be used to visit neighbors, take bike rides to school, and for casual trips to the villages. As the villages develop, what better way to travel to work than on a meandering Hill Country Trail.

These trails and greenways are not being proposed as a solution to non-functional, conventional travel but rather as recreational facilities preserving the connections that may one day prevent the very problems plaguing nearby cities.

### REDUCING CRIME

The introduction of trails into a region either reduces crime or has no effect on criminal activity. In general, police departments see trails as a crime prevention measure. Atlanta Police view the Freedom Park Trail system as a deterrent to crime as more people venture outside to recreate together. Community Oriented Police units are based on the community acting as spotters and reporting suspicious activity. Trails also give police new vantage points from which to patrol.



Trails encourage outside activities, making it less likely for illicit activity to go undetected. DeKalb County Police regularly attend meetings where trails are proposed and testify to their value as a crime fighting tool.

It is difficult for criminals to commit their crimes when people are passing by on bicycles. Criminal activity depends upon the absence of witnesses. Trails offer no such environment.



## METHODOLOGY FOR CREATING THE MASTER PLAN

### INTRODUCTION

Planning greenway trails in the Hill Country is a dream project. The opportunity to create a labyrinth of connecting greenways and trails through an area as naturally beautiful as this, with almost no physical or natural barriers is remarkable.

The stakeholders guiding this project have a vision of preserving green connections between the exciting destinations dotting the region rather than waiting for traditional development to dictate the connections. This plan was developed based on desirable connections, the preservation of natural features, and what appears to be feasible corridors for trail development.

### ESTABLISHING GOALS AND MELDING VISIONS

The greenway trail plan for the Hill Country began by having a stakeholders' visioning meeting where the stakeholders identified the places they wanted to connect and the trails they envisioned to make those connections. Previous studies on the Chattahoochee River corridor and the Hill Country were acquired and reviewed. Considerations while selecting the destinations included:

- Connecting existing towns, parks, and other recreational facilities
- Providing access to historic, cultural and naturally beautiful sites
- Connecting prominent equestrian facilities
- Linking future villages and parks
- Providing “respectful” access to the Chattahoochee River
- Connecting to existing trails
- Establishing a link with public transportation (MARTA)



Specific destinations identified by the stakeholders to be connected were:

- Carroll, Coweta, Douglas, and Fulton Counties
- Chattahoochee Bend State Park
- McIntosh Reserve
- Dunaway Gardens
- Communities of Roscoe and Rico
- Cities of Palmetto and Whitesburg
- Three villages proposed by the Hill Country
- Cochran Mill Park and Nature Center
- Foxhall Farms
- Dog River Reservoir and County Park
- Blue Circle County Park
- Sweetwater Creek State Park
- The Atlanta Trail System
- Metro Atlanta Softball Complex

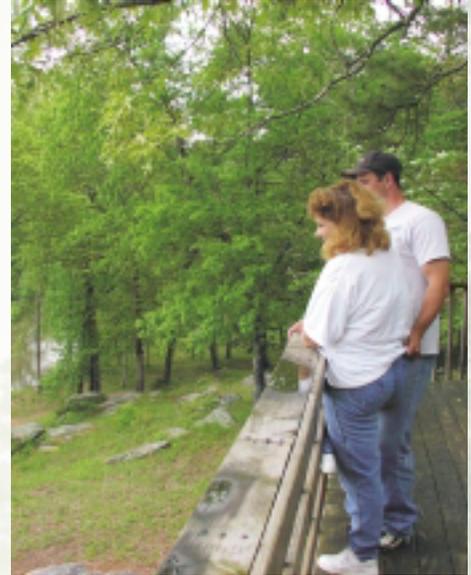
Based on the stakeholder's meeting and mapping, potential routes to connect the chosen destinations were identified using the following guidelines:

- Minimizing the number of property owners involved
- Minimizing conflicts with wetlands and other natural barriers
- Utilizing flood plains and paralleling creeks
- Maximizing views and “respectful” access to the Chattahoochee River
- Maintaining privacy for existing residents
- Maximizing the trail experience for the trail user

## DATA COLLECTION

Many of the stakeholders wanted to participate individually to make certain their ideas and knowledge of their respective areas were reflected in the plan. Weeks of meetings with county officials, volunteers, and interested individuals took place that contributed greatly to the proposed plan.

The destinations were located on a base map. GIS mapping was used as a reference to show natural and man-made features that may affect the routes chosen for trails. These features included floodplains, rivers, creeks, utility easements, existing and abandoned railroads, open space and existing land use. The base map, including GIS information, was used to identify potential trail connections.



## FIELD WORK

Each route on the map was subjected to a preliminary investigation in the field to make certain it was reasonably feasible. The base map was altered based on the trips to the site and the invaluable data obtained from the stakeholders and interested residents. At least one feasible route was identified to connect each of the destinations. The determination of feasible routes benefitted greatly from the past experience of the authors.

Additional field work was completed after the public meetings to research new opportunities and to include Banning Mill as a destination. Additional site visits to McIntosh Reserve were accomplished as a result of input from the public meetings described below.

## PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

The preliminary concept map of the CHC Regional Greenway Trail Master Plan was favorably received by the stakeholders group prior to the public work sessions. The counties advertised and scheduled two public work sessions. The first meeting held was for Fulton and Coweta Counties and the second meeting held was for Douglas and Carroll Counties.

PATH presented the preliminary concept map and feasibility plan. Citizens were asked to provide input and were given the opportunity to sign-up for steering committees which will form for each trail segment in the future.



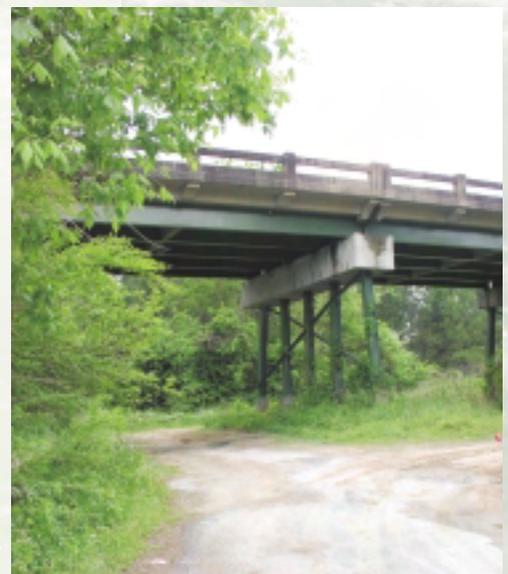
Representatives from Carroll County suggested adding a trail from Banning Mill along the Snake Creek corridor to the Chattahoochee River. A suggestion was also made to extend the Whitesburg Reach Trail along the Chattahoochee River on the Carroll County side to connect with the Banning Mill Trail. These suggestions were incorporated into the plan.

### OPPORTUNITIES AND OBSTACLES

When planning a greenway trail system through a rural, undeveloped area, the opportunities are endless. The goal becomes providing the best experience for the trail user to appreciate the greenspace and character of their surroundings while preserving and protecting the environment. The single most sought-after experience for the Chattahoochee Hill Country was identified as the Chattahoochee River. With vast tracts of private land ownership, existing opportunities to experience the Chattahoochee River are limited. Without experiencing the river, the community is separated from its most precious asset. One goal of the trail system is to bring the community and trail users to the river so they could experience its importance to the CHC, and the need for protection and restoration.

In addition to the Chattahoochee River corridor providing an opportunity for the regional greenway trail system, various tributaries were identified as candidates for trails and greenspace preservation corridors. The greenspace would provide a buffer to the tributaries and allow the trail user to experience the unique environmental qualities of the area. Tributaries that were identified as greenway trail corridor opportunities were: Snake Creek, Cedar Creek, Little Bear Creek, Bear Creek, Dog River, and Sweetwater Creek.

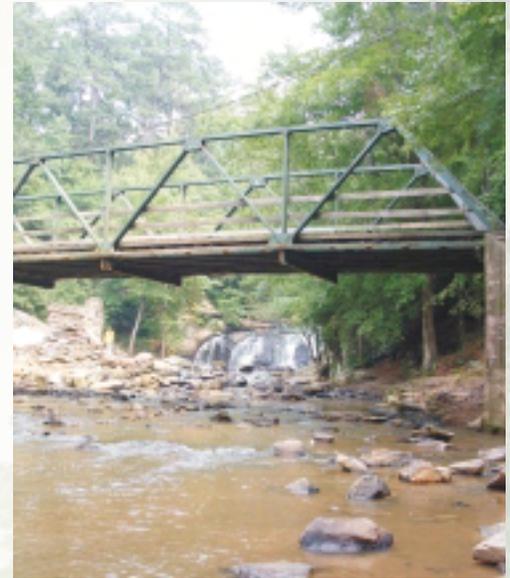
Gas easements, overhead power easements, sewer easements, and pipeline easements were also identified as corridor opportunities within the project area. The easements have already made an impact on the land and are regularly bush-hogged to provide access for maintenance of the utility. These easements may be owned by the utility company or by the adjacent property owners.



In order to build greenway trails on such easements, an agreement must be negotiated with either the utility company or each property owner (see Appendix B). The fact that these long, open, undeveloped corridors exist make them prime for consideration and further study.

The opportunities sought out during the formulation of the trail master plan are presented below:

- Undeveloped land
- Abandoned roads
- Gas, power, water, and sewer easements
- Planned road projects
- Existing bridges



Other than physical obstacles, there are two additional issues that prevent many trails from being developed: the lack of understanding of how trail constructions' impact on the environment can be mitigated, and the potential for crime and lower property values if trails are built.

Trail proposals need overwhelming support from the community in order to succeed. All the money in the world combined with an extraordinary opportunity will not build a trail if the community does not support it. The CHC Regional Greenway Trail system, to date, has been enthusiastically supported by the community.

Other constraints associated with building the CHC Regional Greenway Trail system included:

- Regulations limiting the distance between the trail and the Chattahoochee River
- New road construction of the South Fulton Parkway (currently not including a box culvert for the trail to pass under the parkway)

At least one possible right-of-way has been identified for every trail segment proposed. The routing depicted on the maps appears to be the most logical and feasible route for developing a trail between two desired destinations. Future design, acquisition processes, cost analysis, and public process will likely result in alterations to the plan.

# CHATTAHOOCHEE HILL COUNTRY REGIONAL GREENWAY TRAILS

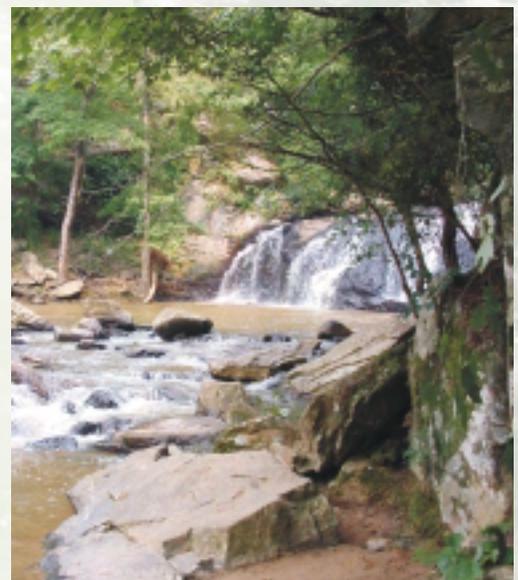
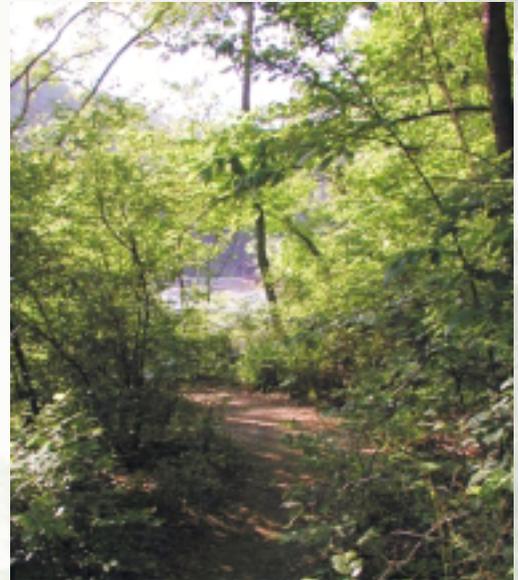
## DESCRIPTION OF TRAILS

The greenway trail system for the four county regional area, referred to as the Chattahoochee Hill Country (CHC), has been developed to preserve greenspace, provide opportunities to experience the natural character of the region by trail, and to allow alternative access to the wonderful points-of-interest that are located within the region. With the greenway trail system in place, the region will have an extraordinary asset for the community and visitors to enjoy. All trail segments identified have taken advantage of the unique opportunities of the CHC. It is the wish of the Chattahoochee Hill Country Alliance that every trail segment be unique in character and provide an enjoyable experience for the user.

The system will connect two State Parks, four County Parks, privately owned gardens and equestrian facilities, rural communities, the City of Palmetto, and the proposed villages of the CHC. The resulting trail system will be a regional greenway trail along the Chattahoochee River with connections into Carroll, Coweta, Douglas, and Fulton Counties. Within Fulton County the greenway trail system will loop into the proposed CHC Villages, to the City of Palmetto and back to the Chattahoochee River (see centerfold). Given the rural/agricultural character of the land, equestrian trails have been incorporated into the plan, connecting several equestrian facilities.

## COST ANALYSIS

A preliminary cost estimate to build each segment of the trail system is presented on the following pages, with a summary of the estimates on page 46. The estimates are based on unit costs to construct similar trails during 2003. These estimates do not include costs associated with acquisition. The following unit costs for major cost components were used to compile the estimates:



<b>Cost Component</b>	<b>Estimated Cost Per Unit Shown</b>
Preconstruction ..... (design/engineering, etc)	\$2.50 linear foot
Concrete trail .....	\$3.50 per square foot
Aggregate trail .....	\$1.50 per square foot
Bridges (metal) .....	\$800.00 per linear foot
Bridges (timber) .....	\$375.00 per linear foot
Culvert crossing .....	\$2,500.00 per crossing
Rest areas .....	\$2,000.00 each
Signs .....	\$550.00 each
Trash receptacles .....	\$350.00 each
Benches .....	\$450.00 each
Landscaping, seeding and strawing .....	\$3.00 per linear foot
Contingency .....	\$3.00 per linear foot

Details regarding the materials and specifications used to compile these estimates are included in Chapter VI - Design Standards.

The unit costs above represent an average cost. Culverts vary in length, bridges vary in width, and amenities vary at rest areas. This data is presented in order to form preliminary estimates for the purpose of prioritizing implementation and fundraising. The cost of each trail segment may vary significantly from the data presented as planning and design progress.

### INDIVIDUAL TRAIL MAPS

Individual trail segments for the Chattahoochee Hill Country Regional Greenway Trail System are presented on the following pages. Below is the legend used for all trail maps.

**MAP LEGEND:**

<p> Proposed Walking/ Biking Trails</p> <p> Proposed Walking/Biking and Equestrian Trails</p> <p> Chattahoochee River</p> <p> Other River or Creek</p>	<p> Major Roadway</p> <p> County Border</p> <p> River Crossing</p> <p> State/County Park Or Area of Interest</p>
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# RIVER TRAIL - MCINTOSH REACH



Acquired by Carroll County in 1978, McIntosh Reserve contains part of the Chief William McIntosh, Jr.'s plantation known as "Lochau Talofau," or Acorn Bluff.

Starting at the Chattahoochee Bend State Park property in Coweta County, the *River Trail-McIntosh Reach* crosses the Chattahoochee River on a new bridge to the McIntosh Reserve/Carroll County Park. From McIntosh Reserve the trail parallels the Chattahoochee River within Carroll County north to the SR 16 bridge. The bridge is scheduled for replacement and the old bridge has been identified as a river crossing opportunity for the regional trail system.

In a preliminary discussion, the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) will consider leaving the old bridge to be utilized by the greenway trail. The old bridge can be enhanced to allow for viewing areas, benches, fishing areas and a bicycle/pedestrian trail.

## RIVER TRAIL - MCINTOSH REACH

Links: Chattahoochee Bend State Park with McIntosh Reserve/Carroll County Park

Points of Interest along the Trail: Chattahoochee Bend State Park, McIntosh Reserve, Chattahoochee River, DNR boat ramp

Trail Segment Connections: Connection south from Chattahoochee Bend State Park to future Heard County Trails along the Chattahoochee River; River Trail-Whitesburg Reach; Dunaway Garden Trail; Banning Mill Trail; River Trail-Hill Country Reach

Approximate Length: 11.9 miles

Recommended Width: 8 feet

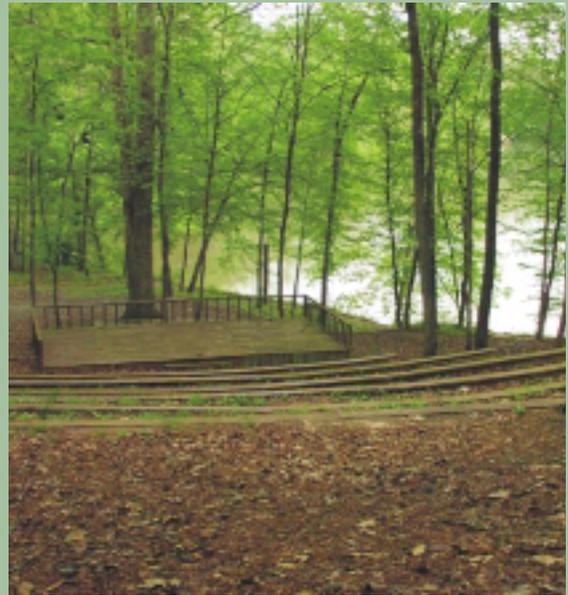
Proposed Surface: Aggregate

Estimated Cost (w/o R.O.W.): \$2,755,560

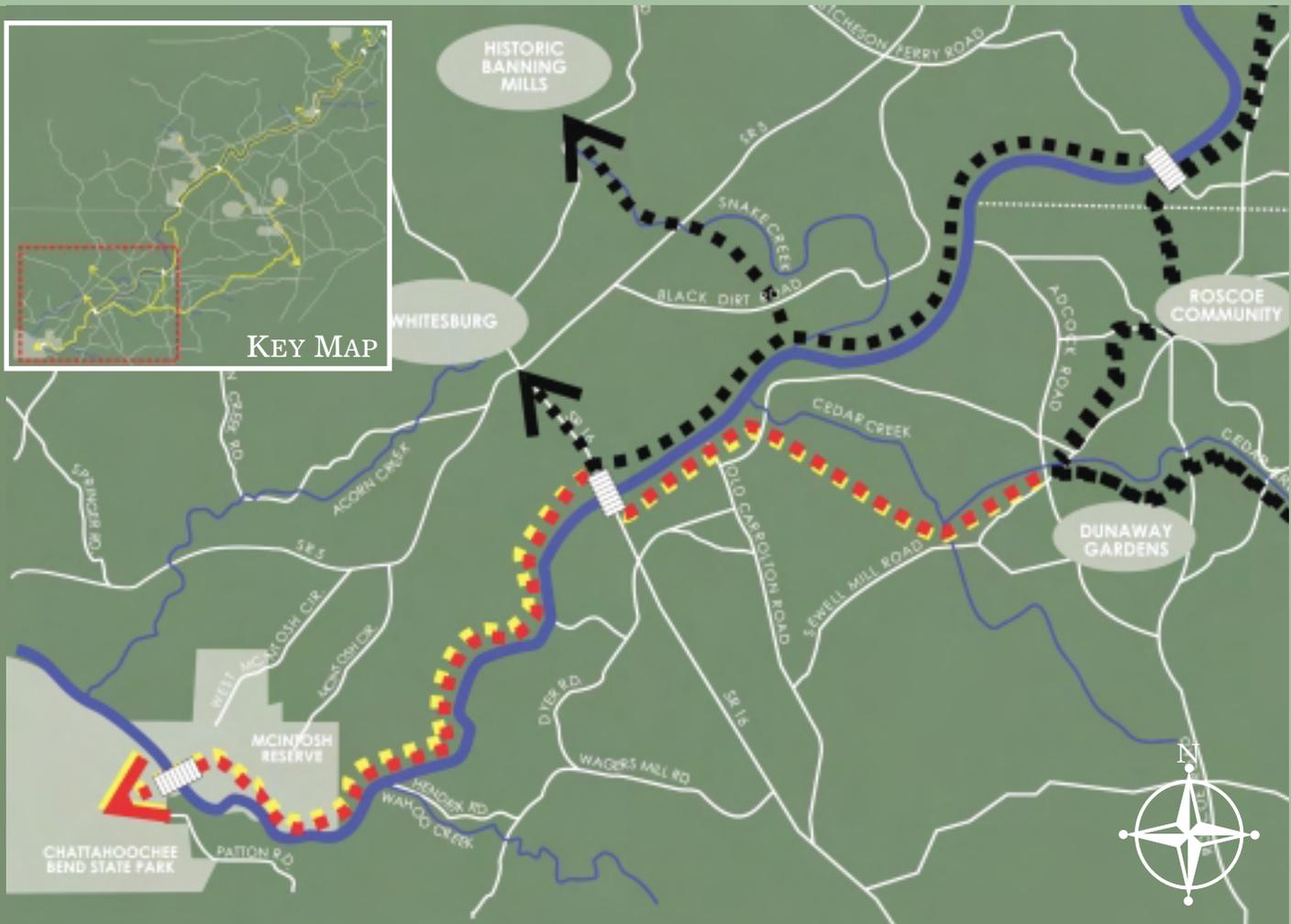
Comments: Over 14 miles of multi-use trails wind through McIntosh Reserve and alongside the Chattahoochee River, which forms the southern boundary of the park.

After crossing the river on the SR 16 bridge, the *McIntosh Reach* passes the existing Department of Natural Resources (DNR) boat ramp on the Coweta County side of the river. This area has been identified for parking and access to the trail system.

In Coweta County, the *McIntosh Reach* continues north parallel to the river. The trail intersects an existing gas easement and follows the easement east, away from the river, ending at the intersection of the Dunaway Gardens Trail along the Cedar Creek corridor. For the 11.9 miles of the *McIntosh Reach*, the trail will be primarily an eight-foot (8') wide aggregate trail with only 4,000 linear feet of the trail being poured concrete. Amenities along the trail will include bridges, rest areas, signs, trash receptacles and benches.



McIntosh Reserve Park is a 527-acre facility operated through the Carroll County Recreation Department.



# RIVER TRAIL - WHITESBURG REACH



Existing trail with footbridge along the Chattahoochee River.

*The River Trail-Whitesburg Reach* starts at the SR 16 bridge with a concrete spur trail to Whitesburg, allowing for future trail connection opportunities into Carroll County. The trail continues north, parallel to the Chattahoochee River on the Carroll County side, over Snake Creek and to the proposed ferry river crossing at Hutcheson Ferry Road.

The trail will be 7.6 miles in length with the primary portion of the trail a four-foot (4') aggregate trail and 8,000 linear feet of concrete trail (8' wide). The unique feature of this trail segment will be the proposed ferry river crossing at Hutcheson Ferry Road. The ferry crossing will be seasonal and a scheduled crossing for trail users.

## RIVER TRAIL - WHITESBURG REACH

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Links: The commercial area in Whitesburg to the SR 16 Bridge at the Chattahoochee River and along the Carroll County side of the Chattahoochee north to the proposed river crossing at Hutcheson Ferry Road.

Points of Interest along the Trail: Whitesburg, Chattahoochee River, Snake Creek, and the ferry river crossing at Hutcheson Ferry Road

Trail Segment Connections: River Trail-McIntosh Reach; Banning Mill Trail; River Trail- Hill Country Reach

Approximate Length: 7.6 miles

Recommended Width: 4 feet

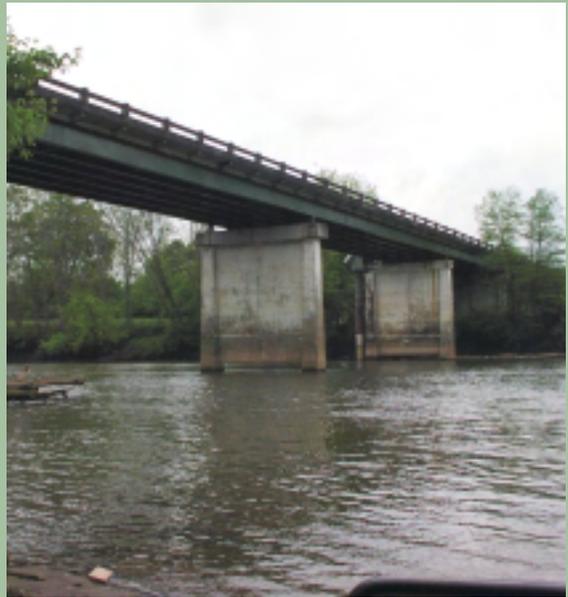
Proposed Surface: Aggregate

Estimated Cost (w/o R.O.W.): \$1,893,666

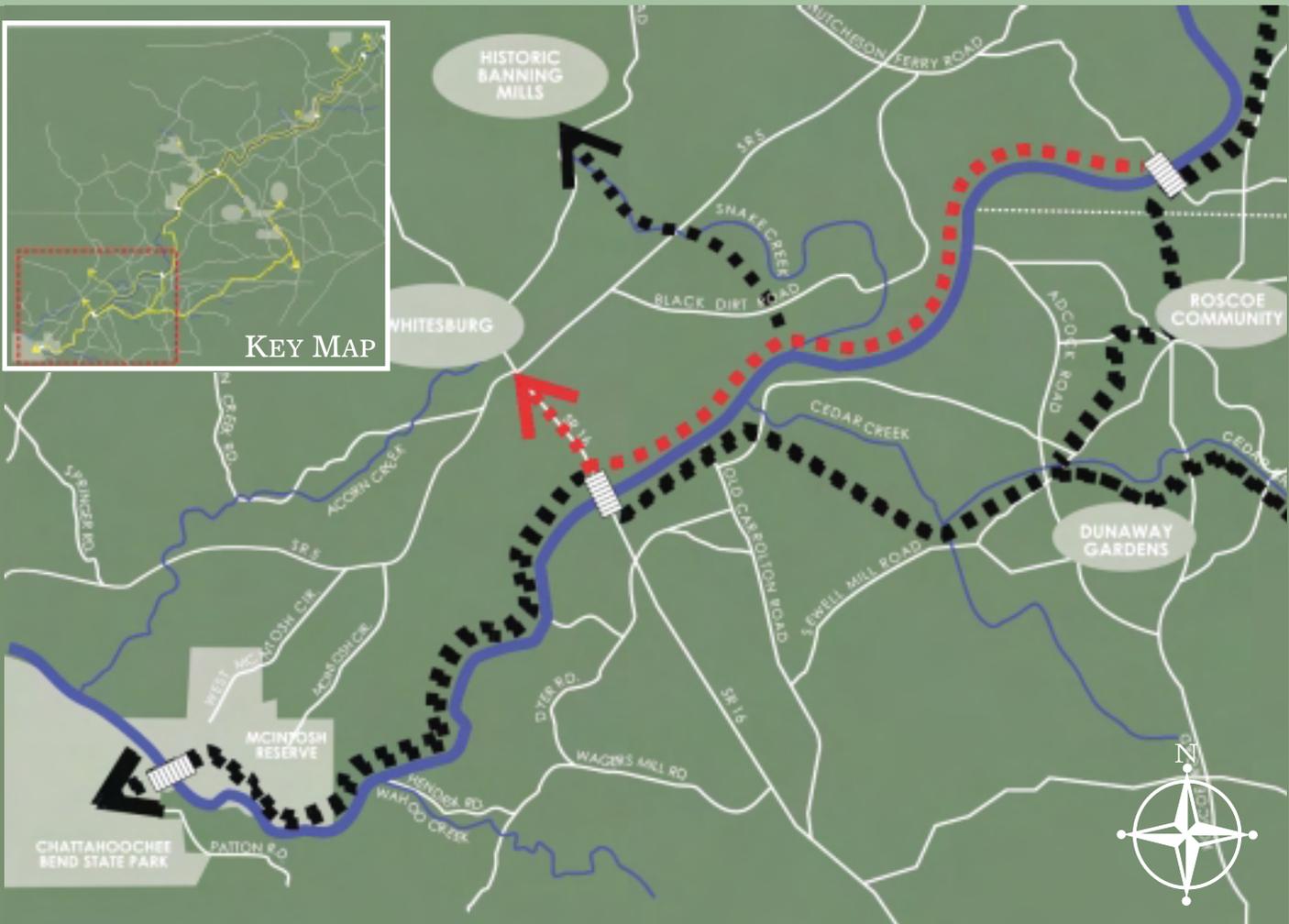
Comments: Important connection to commercial district in Whitesburg where trail users can refresh. Includes ferry river crossing at Hutcheson Ferry Road.



View of the Chattahoochee River in Carroll County.



View of the SR 16 bridge from the Coweta County boat ramp at the Chattahoochee River.



# BANNING MILL TRAIL



Banning Mill is a 42,000 square foot pre-civil war textile mill. The old-three story building on the banks of Snake Creek is an awesome sight.

The *Banning Mills Trail* will connect the Historic Banning Mills to the Chattahoochee River along the Snake Creek corridor. The trail will be aggregate surfaced except for approaches to bridges and roads. The 4' wide trail will be 3.5 miles long. Carroll County will likely extend the trail further west.

Banning Mill is located on a portion of Snake Creek where the creek falls 60 feet in less than two miles. The mill was built of brick and stone sometime between 1855 and 1860 by William Amis and has been said to have made the thread from which Confederate Uniforms were sewn. Currently the Historic Banning Mills has a bed and breakfast, country inn, and corporate retreat. It will serve as a place to stay while enjoying the regional greenway trail system with many amenities for trail users.

## BANNING MILL TRAIL

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Links: Historic Banning Mills south along Snake Creek to the Chattahoochee River

Points of Interest along the Trail: Banning Mill and Snake Creek Corridor

Trail Segment Connections: River Trail- Whitesburg Reach

Approximate Length: 3.5 miles

Recommended Width: 4 feet

Proposed Surface: Aggregate

Estimated Cost (w/o R.O.W.): \$897,210

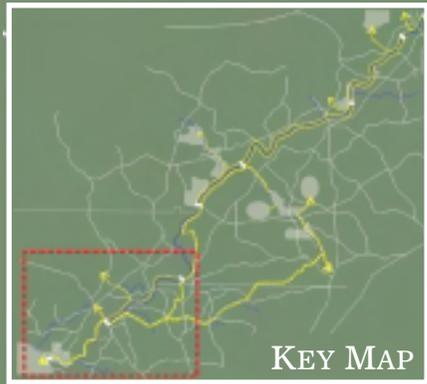
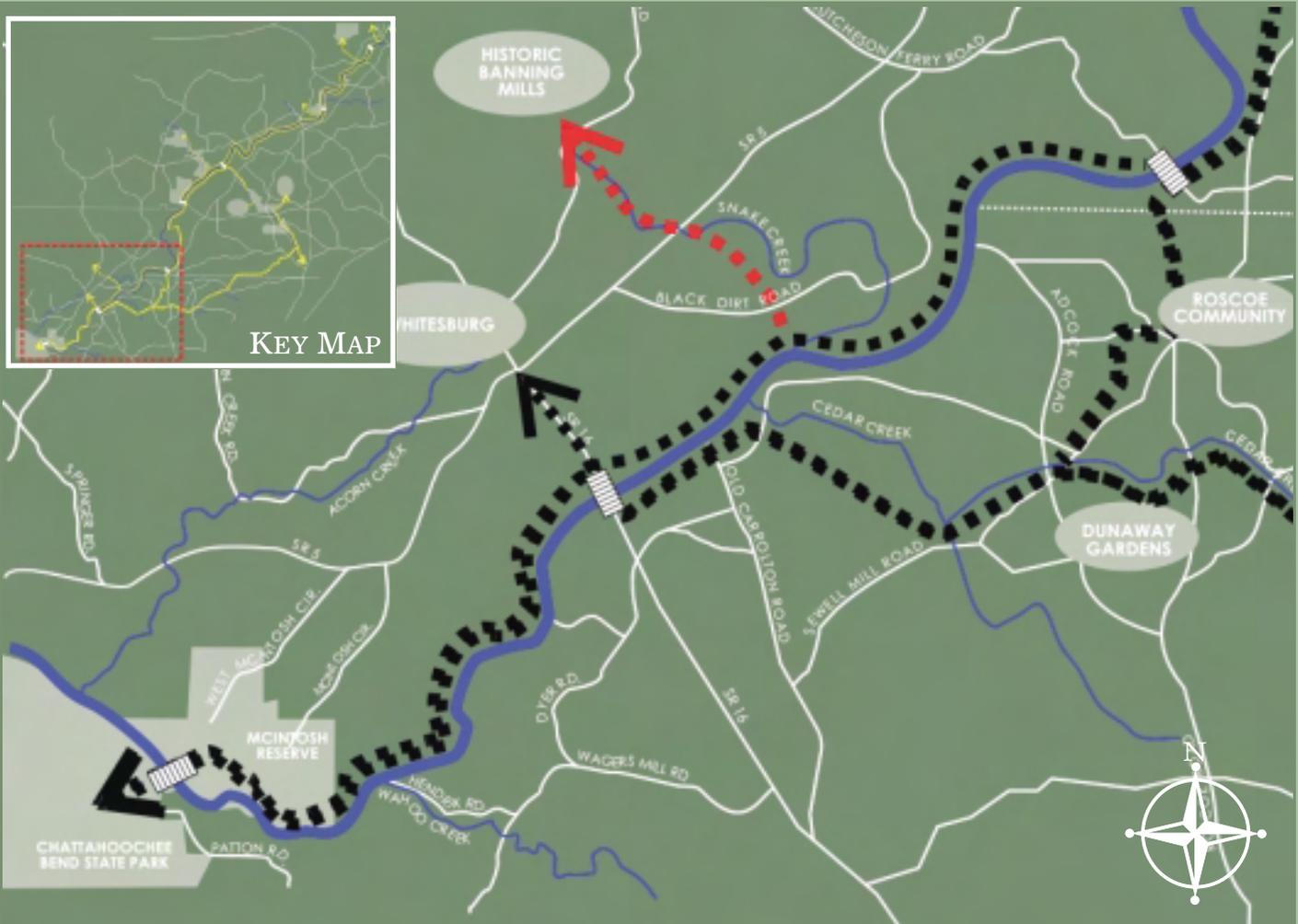
Comments: This trail segment provides future opportunities for trail connections into Carroll County.



Historic Banning Mills offers miles of wooded hiking trails along and across the Snake Creek.



Banning Mills is an area rich in history and home to the Country Inn, Historic Banning Mills.



# DUNAWAY GARDEN TRAIL



Dunaway Gardens was a theatrical training ground for producers, directors and performers of the arts during the golden years of the 20's, 30's, and 40's.

The *Dunaway Garden Trail* connects from the River Trail-McIntosh Reach and the River Trail-Hill Country Reach to the City of Palmetto. The trail follows the Cedar Creek corridor and connects through Dunaway Gardens. A unique factor of this trail segment is at Dunaway Gardens where trail users experience wetlands that are currently under restoration. The wetlands provide an opportunity to teach the trail user about their environmental importance. Within this area, the trail becomes a boardwalk in order to eliminate the trails impact on the wetlands.

Within Fulton County the trail passes the proposed Palmetto Reservoir and Georgia Baptist Children's Home.

## DUNAWAY GARDEN TRAIL

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Links: Dunaway Gardens along the Cedar Creek corridor from Coweta County to Fulton County ending at the City of Palmetto

Points of Interest along the Trail: Dunaway Gardens, Cedar Creek, wetlands, Palmetto Reservoir, MARTA bus line, and the proposed trailhead/park in Palmetto

Trail Segment Connections: River Trail-McIntosh Reach; River Trail-Hill Country Reach; Cochran Mill Trail

Approximate Length: 10.6 miles

Recommended Width: 6 feet

Proposed Surface: Aggregate

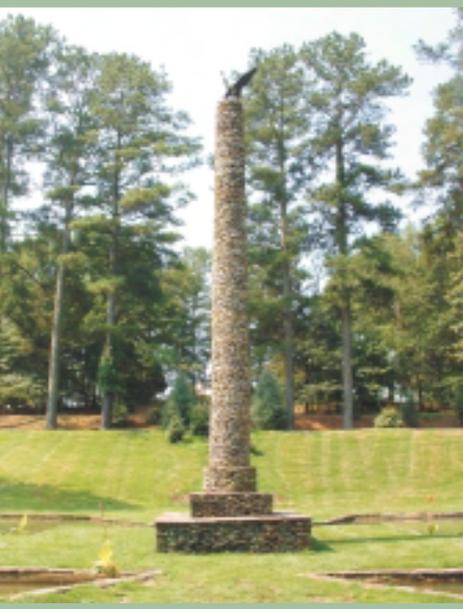
Estimated Cost (w/o R.O.W.): \$1,993,790

Comments: Includes a boardwalk across wetlands at Dunaway Gardens and connection to a proposed trailhead/park in the City of Palmetto.

The trail travels within the Little Bear Creek corridor, to the Cochran Mill Trail and Downtown Palmetto.

In Palmetto, the trail connects to the existing MARTA bus line and ends at a proposed community center within the city limits of Palmetto, which has been identified as a trailhead access point for the trail system.

The *Dunaway Gardens Trail* is 10.6 miles long with an aggregate trail surface except for 5,000 linear feet of trail proposed as concrete. This trail has a paralleling equestrian trail the entire length of the Cedar Creek corridor.



Dunaway Gardens is a treasure of the past that is indeed a treasure of the future. Restoration of this memorable site began in the summer of 2000.



# COCHRAN MILL TRAIL



The Cochran Mill Nature Center is located on 50 privately-owned acres adjacent to Cochran Mill Park.

The *Cochran Mill Trail* is a major “feeder” trail segment within Fulton County's Chattahoochee Hill Country. Many visitors to the CHC trails will likely begin their activity in the city of Palmetto and follow the *Cochran Mill Trail*.

From the end of the *Dunaway Gardens Trail* at the city limits of Palmetto, the Cochran Mill Trail will follow Little Bear Creek to Cochran Mill Park and Nature Center, the proposed Chattahoochee Hill Country (CHC) Villages, and the Chattahoochee River. The trail connects through the CHC South Village and crosses the undeveloped portion of the South Fulton Parkway. To insure that the parkway does not become an obstacle to the trail system, coordination of a separated trail crossing is critical. It is proposed that a box culvert be incorporated into the road project to provide a separated crossing under the parkway for the trail.

## COCHRAN MILL TRAIL

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Links: City of Palmetto, the proposed CHC villages, the Community of Rico, Cochran Mill Park and Nature Center, Wilkerson Mill Garden, along the Bear Creek corridor to the Chattahoochee River

Points of Interest along the Trail: Trailhead/park in Palmetto, MARTA bus stop (to Atlanta), Cochran Mill Park and Nature Center, proposed reservoir along Bear Creek, Community of Rico, and the CHC Villages

Trail Segment Connections: Dunaway Garden Trail; River Trail-Hill Country Reach; River Trail-Fulton Reach

Approximate Length: 11.3 miles

Recommended Width: 8 feet

Proposed Surface: Aggregate

Estimated Cost (w/o R.O.W.): \$2,349,012

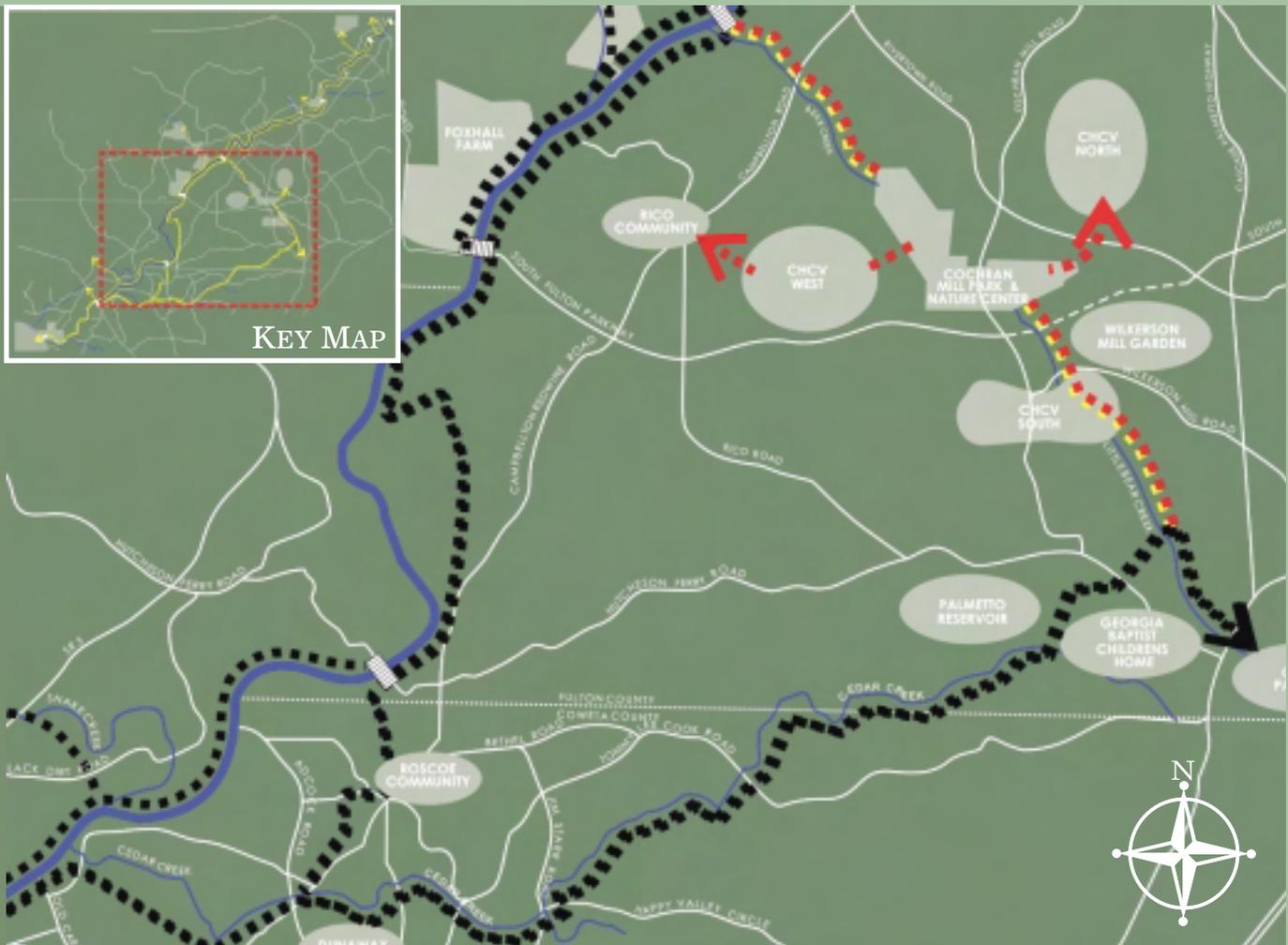
Comments: This trail will likely be the main access point into the Hill Country Trail System since it links with MARTA and major highways connecting to Atlanta. Cochran Mill Park and Nature Center is already a popular destination.

Once connecting to the Cochran Mill Park and Nature Preserve, the *Cochran Mill Trail* connects to both the North and the West CHC Villages. From the West village a spur trail continues to the Community of Rico. The final length of the *Cochran Mill Trail* follows Bear Creek from Cochran Mill Park and Nature Center to the Chattahoochee River. There are plans for a new reservoir to be constructed along Bear Creek, which would require rerouting the trail segment around the reservoir prior to reaching the Chattahoochee River.

With 11.3 miles, the *Cochran Mill Trail* is proposed as an eight-foot (8') wide aggregate trail except for within the villages where the trail is proposed as an eight-foot (8') wide concrete trail due to the anticipated usage.



Existing trail system within the Cochran Mill Park and Nature Center.



# RIVER TRAIL - HILL COUNTRY NORTH REACH



Existing roadbed opportunity for the Regional Greenway Trail along the Hill Country North Reach.

The *River Trail-Hill Country North Reach* connects from the River Trail-Hill Country South Reach parallel to the Chattahoochee River, past the Metro Atlanta Softball Complex, ending at the river crossing on the existing gas easement from the Atlanta Industrial Park to the Douglas County side of the Chattahoochee River north of Sweetwater Creek.

This is a continuation of the Hill Country-South Reach, separated only to facilitate the scale of the map on the opposite page. Specifications below are for the entire Hill Country Reach.

## RIVER TRAIL - HILL COUNTRY NORTH REACH

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Links: Douglas and Fulton Counties with three proposed river crossings to provide access to the Blue Circle County Park and the Metro Atlanta Softball Complex

Points of Interest along the Trail: Chattahoochee River, Metro Atlanta Softball Complex, Blue Circle County Park

Trail Segment Connections: River Trail Hill Country South Reach; River Trail Blue Circle Reach; River Trail Fulton Reach

Approximate Length: 26.2 miles (entire Hill Country Reach)

Recommended Width: 8 feet

Proposed Surface: Aggregate

Estimated Cost (w/o R.O.W.): \$9,383,008 (entire Hill Country Reach)

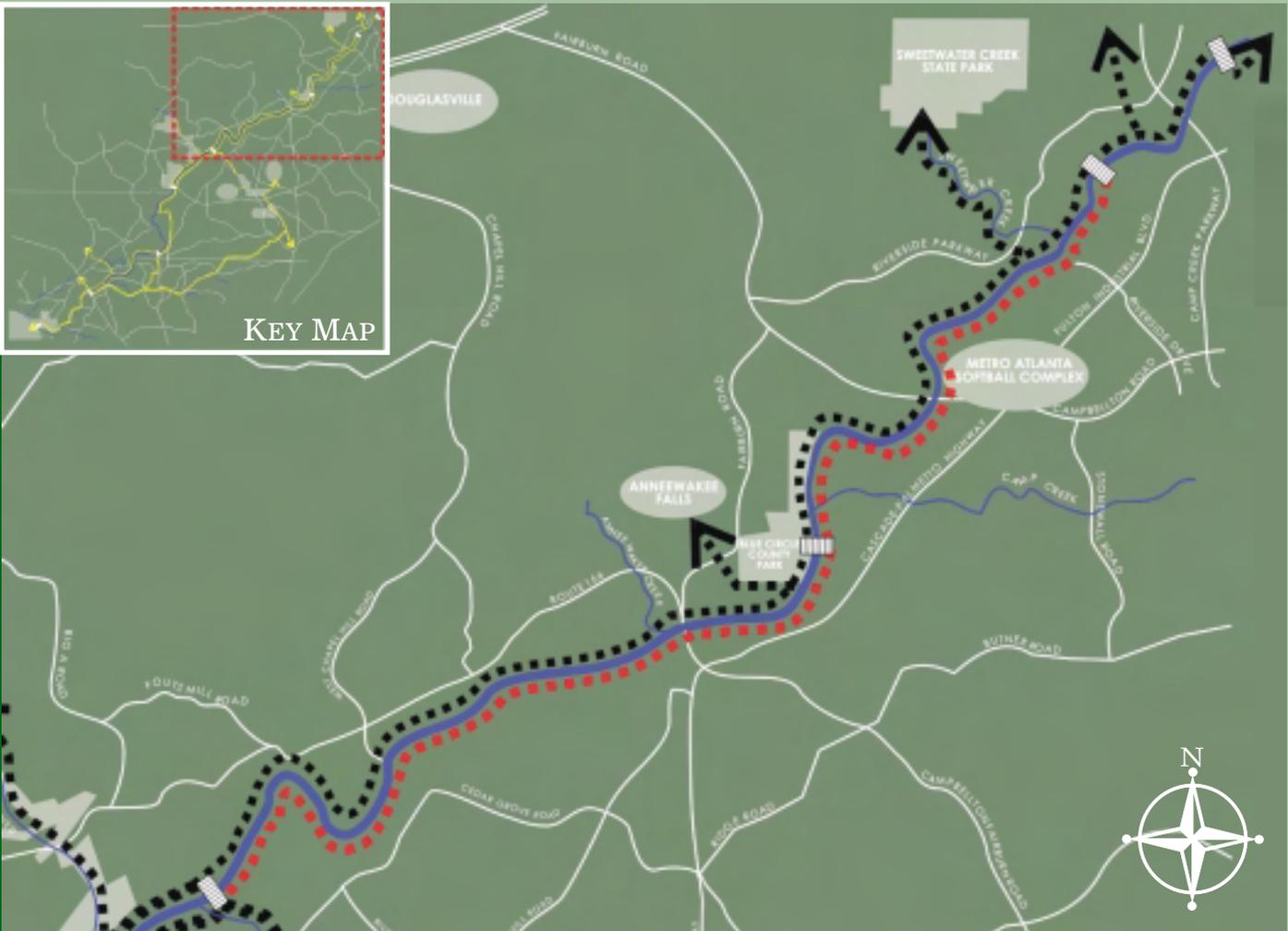
Comments: This trail utilizes existing easements within the Atlanta Industrial Park and crosses the river along an existing gas easement.



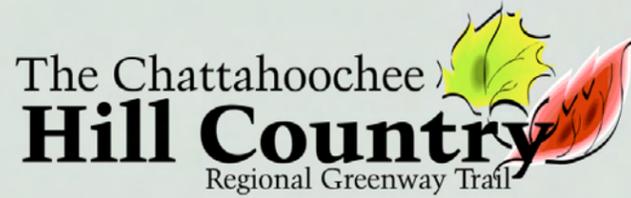
The Metro Atlanta Softball Complex located adjacent to the Chattahoochee River at Campbellton Road.



Proposed river crossing from Fulton County to Douglas County along an existing gas easement.

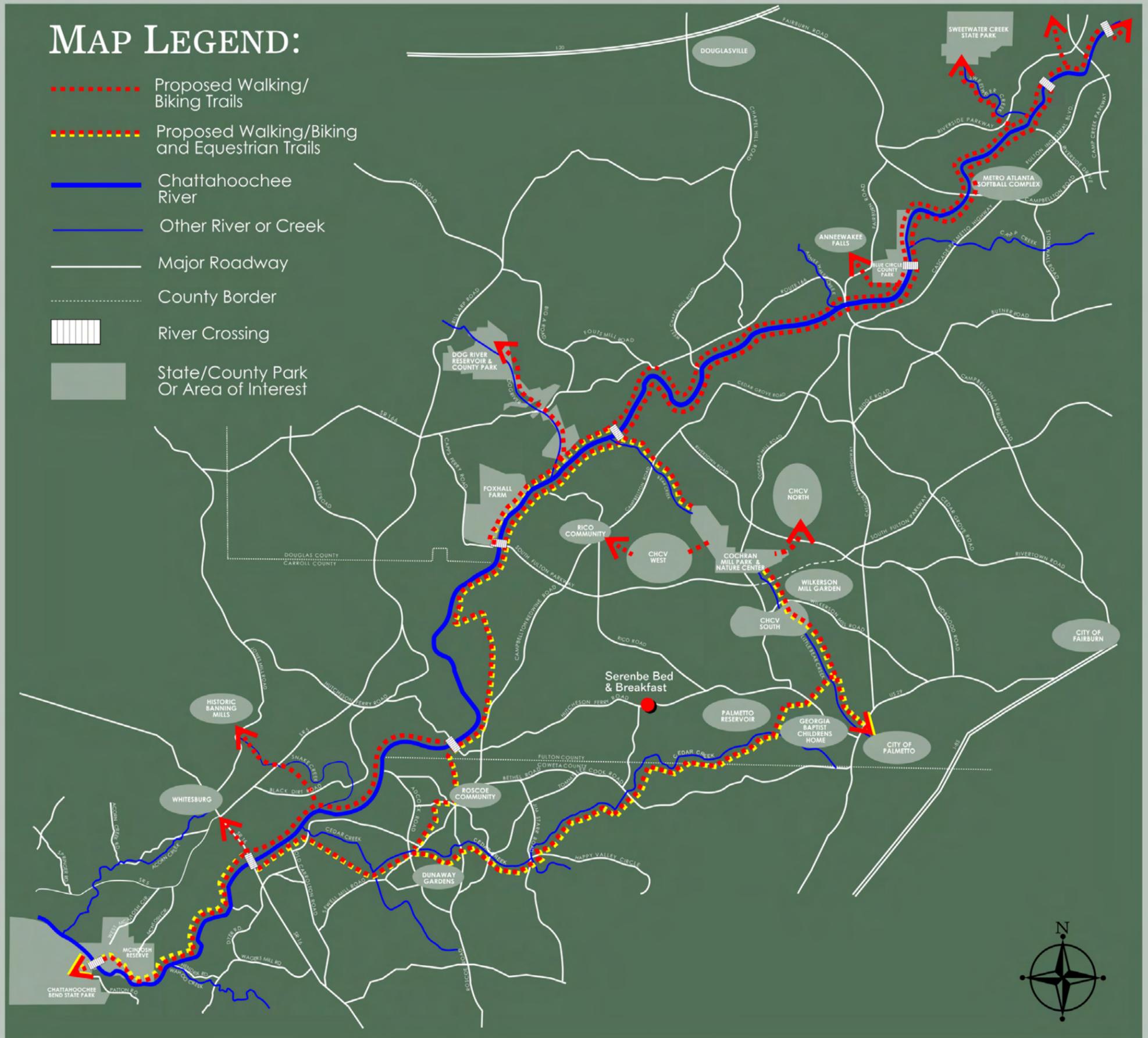


# HILL COUNTRY TRAIL MAP



## MAP LEGEND:

-  Proposed Walking/Biking Trails
-  Proposed Walking/Biking and Equestrian Trails
-  Chattahoochee River
-  Other River or Creek
-  Major Roadway
-  County Border
-  River Crossing
-  State/County Park Or Area of Interest



# RIVER TRAIL - HILL COUNTRY SOUTH REACH



View of the Chattahoochee River from the DNR Boat ramp at the Metro Atlanta Softball Complex.

The *River Trail-Hill Country South Reach* connects the intersection of the Dunaway Gardens Trail and the River Trail-McIntosh Reach to the river crossing north of the confluence of Bear Creek. The proposed trail continues north to the Chattahoochee River corridor connecting through the Community of Roscoe and past the proposed ferry river crossing at Hutcheson Ferry Road. For a short distance the trail parallels the Chattahoochee River until it intersects a gas easement, following the easement north and back parallel to the Chattahoochee River.

## RIVER TRAIL - HILL COUNTRY SOUTH REACH

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Links: Community of Roscoe to the Chattahoochee River and two proposed river crossings to allow for connection from Fulton to Carroll Counties to Fulton and Douglas Counties

Points of Interest along the Trail: Community of Roscoe, Chattahoochee River, ferry river crossing at Hutcheson Ferry Road.

Trail Segment Connections: River Trail-McIntosh Reach; Dunaway Gardens Trail; River Trail-Foxhall Farms Reach; Cochran Mill Trail

Approximate Length: 26.2 (entire Hill Country Reach)

Recommended Width: 8 feet

Proposed Surface: Aggregate

Estimated Cost (w/o R.O.W.): \$9,383,008 (entire Hill Country Reach)

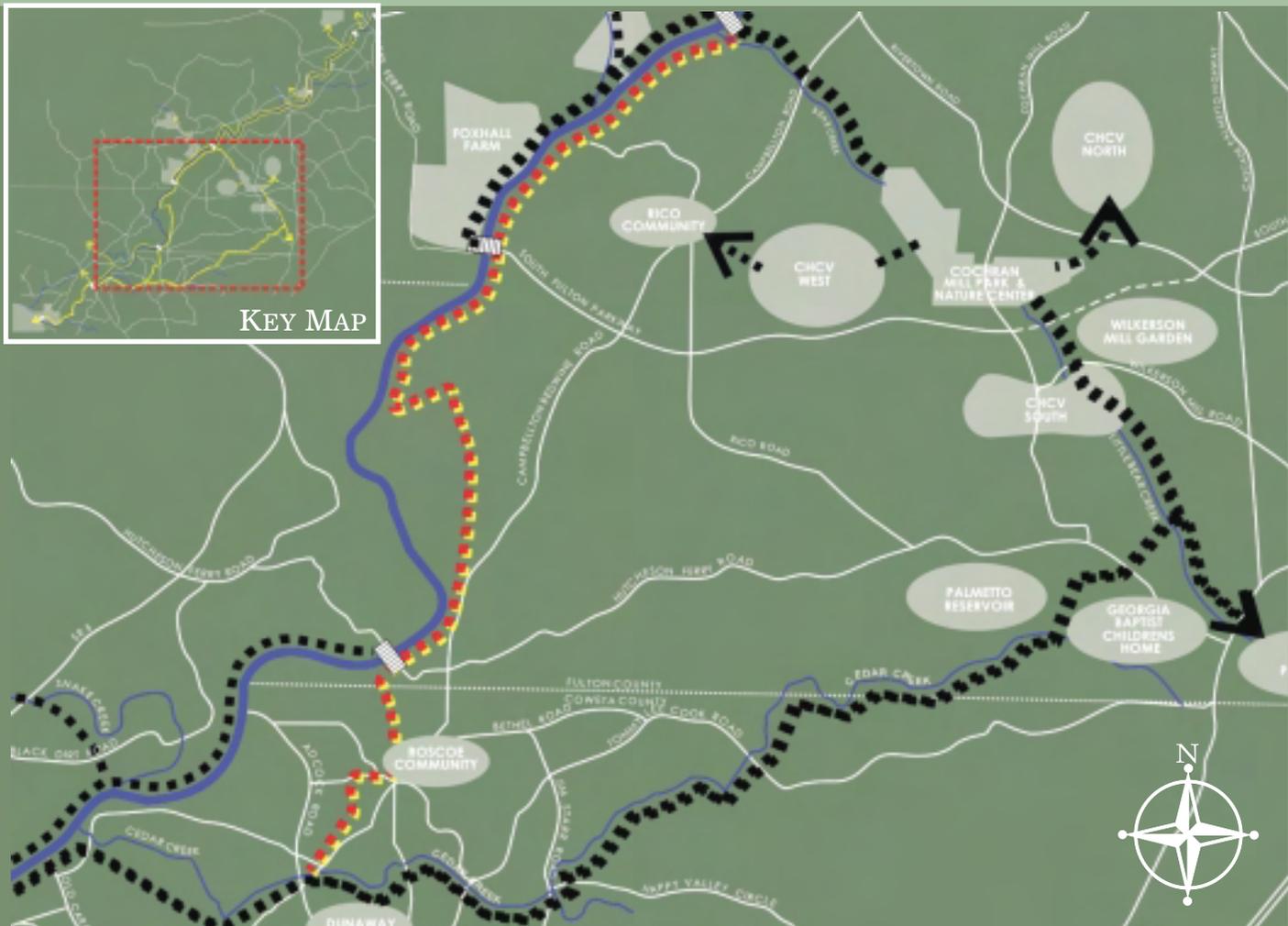
Comments: This is the south spine trail of the Hill Country Reach Trail System. All other trails feed into the Hill Country Reach as it meanders along the Fulton County side of the Chattahoochee River.

The trail route continues along the river corridor passing the river crossing at the South Fulton Parkway and ending at the river crossing at the intersection of the Cochran Mill Trail.

The proposed trail is eight-foot (8') wide with an aggregate surface. *The Hill Country South Reach* is divided from the North Reach only to maintain a reasonable scale on the enclosed maps. Specifications are presented for the entire Hill Country Reach on the summary sheet on page 46.



Abandoned roadbeds are opportunities for the trail along the Hill Country South Reach.



# RIVER TRAIL - FOXHALL FARM REACH



Roots & boots reign at the annual Foxhall Cup and the annual Foxhall flower show hosted by Foxhall Farm.

The *River Trail-Foxhall Farm Reach* connects the river crossing at the South Fulton Parkway through Foxhall Farm parallel to the Chattahoochee River to the river crossing at the intersection with the Bear Creek and the River Trail- Hill Country Reach. The trail segment is four miles in length and includes a paralleling equestrian trail facility. The trail is primarily a four-foot (4') wide aggregate surface trail with only 1,000 linear feet of eight-foot (8') concrete trail.

## RIVER TRAIL - FOXHALL FARM REACH

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Links: Foxhall Farm along the Douglas County side of the Chattahoochee River.

Points of Interest along the Trail: Foxhall Farm, Chattahoochee River

Trail Segment Connections: Dog River Trail; River Trail-Hill Country Reach; River Trail-Blue Circle Reach; Cochran Mill Trail

Approximate Length: 4.0 miles

Recommended Width: 4 feet

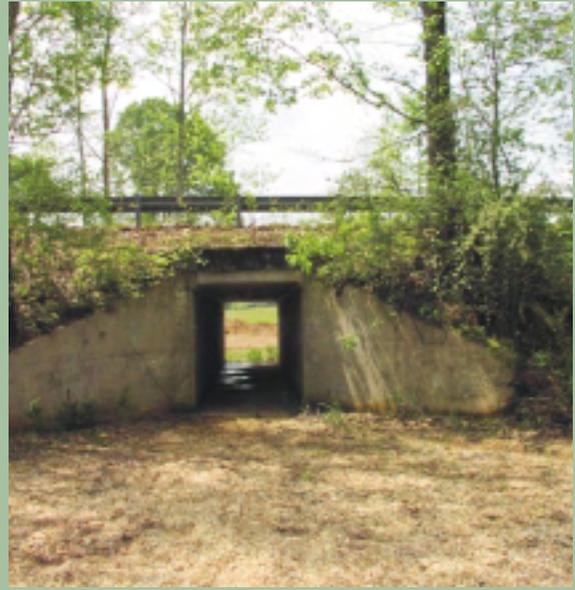
Proposed Surface: Aggregate

Estimated Cost (w/o R.O.W.): \$981,740

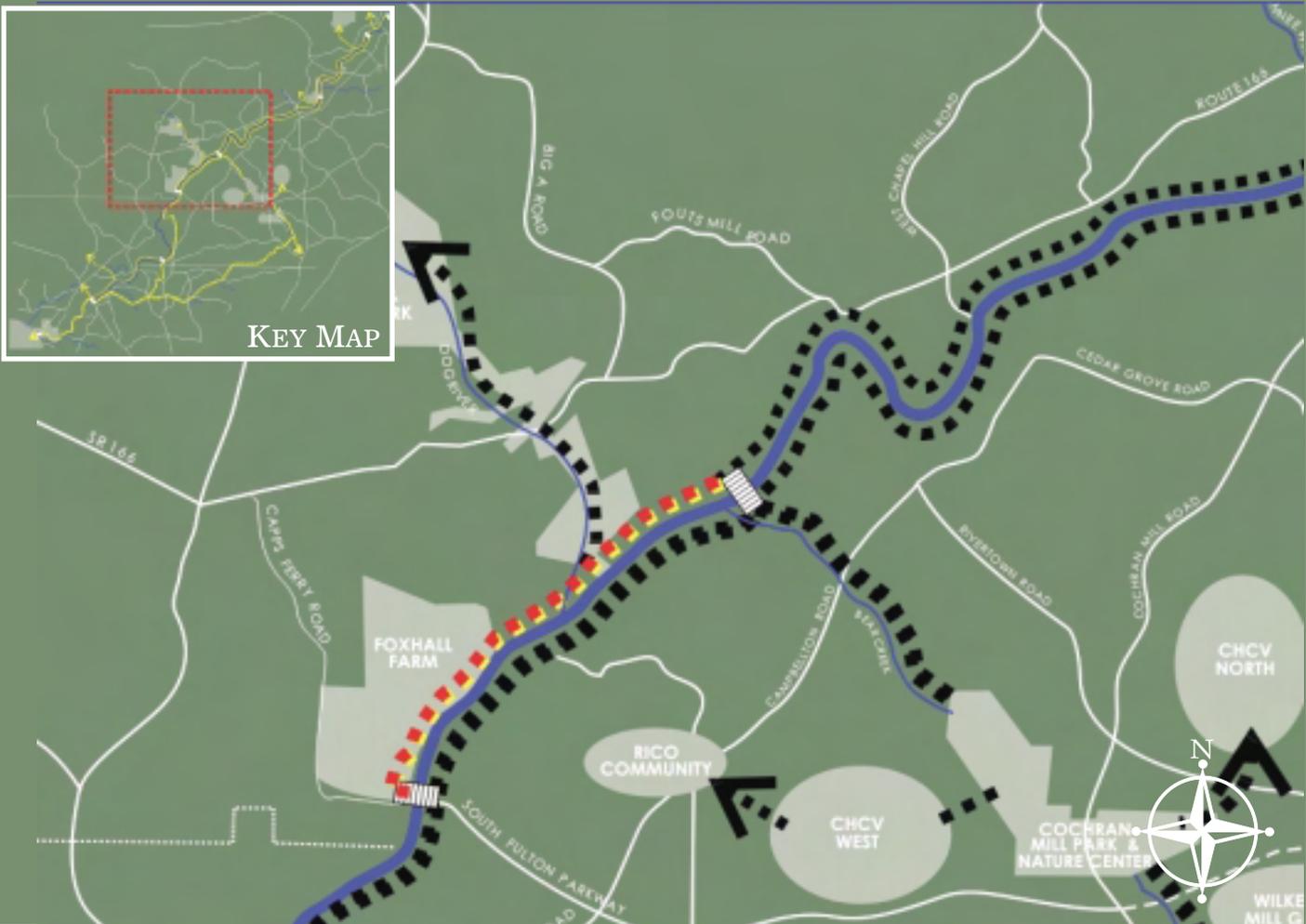
Comments: The trail segment includes a multi-use and equestrian trail.



Old roadbeds present unique opportunities for the routing of the Hill Country Regional Trail System.



Existing box culvert allows for a separated trail crossing of Capps Ferry Road from Foxhall Farm.



# RIVER TRAIL - BLUE CIRCLE REACH



The Blue Circle County Park at the Chattahoochee River. Proposed crossing point to connect Douglas and Fulton Counties.

The scenic *River Trail-Blue Circle Reach* connects from the Foxhall Farm Reach to the Fulton Reach. The trail segment follows the Chattahoochee River corridor north for 13.1 miles. Along the route it passes through the future Douglas County Park located on the Blue Circle property.

Along the route, the *Blue Circle Reach* passes over Anneewakee Creek, through the future Douglas County Park located on the Blue Circle property and over Sweetwater Creek. A spur trail is proposed from the Blue Circle County Park to the new residential development of Anneewakee Falls.

## RIVER TRAIL - BLUE CIRCLE REACH

Links: The proposed river crossing north of the Dog River parallel to the Chattahoochee River, through the Blue Circle County Park across the Sweetwater Creek confluence with the Chattahoochee to the river crossing along the gas easement connection to the Fulton County side of the river. A spur trail connection to the newly developed Anneewakee Falls subdivision.

Points of Interest along the Trail: Chattahoochee River, Douglas County Park at the Blue Circle Property, Sweetwater Creek

Trail Segment Connections: River Trail-Foxhall Farms; Sweetwater Trail; River Trail-Fulton Reach

Approximate Length: 13.1 miles

Recommended Width: 4 feet

Proposed Surface: Aggregate

Estimated Cost (w/o R.O.W.): \$3,064,936

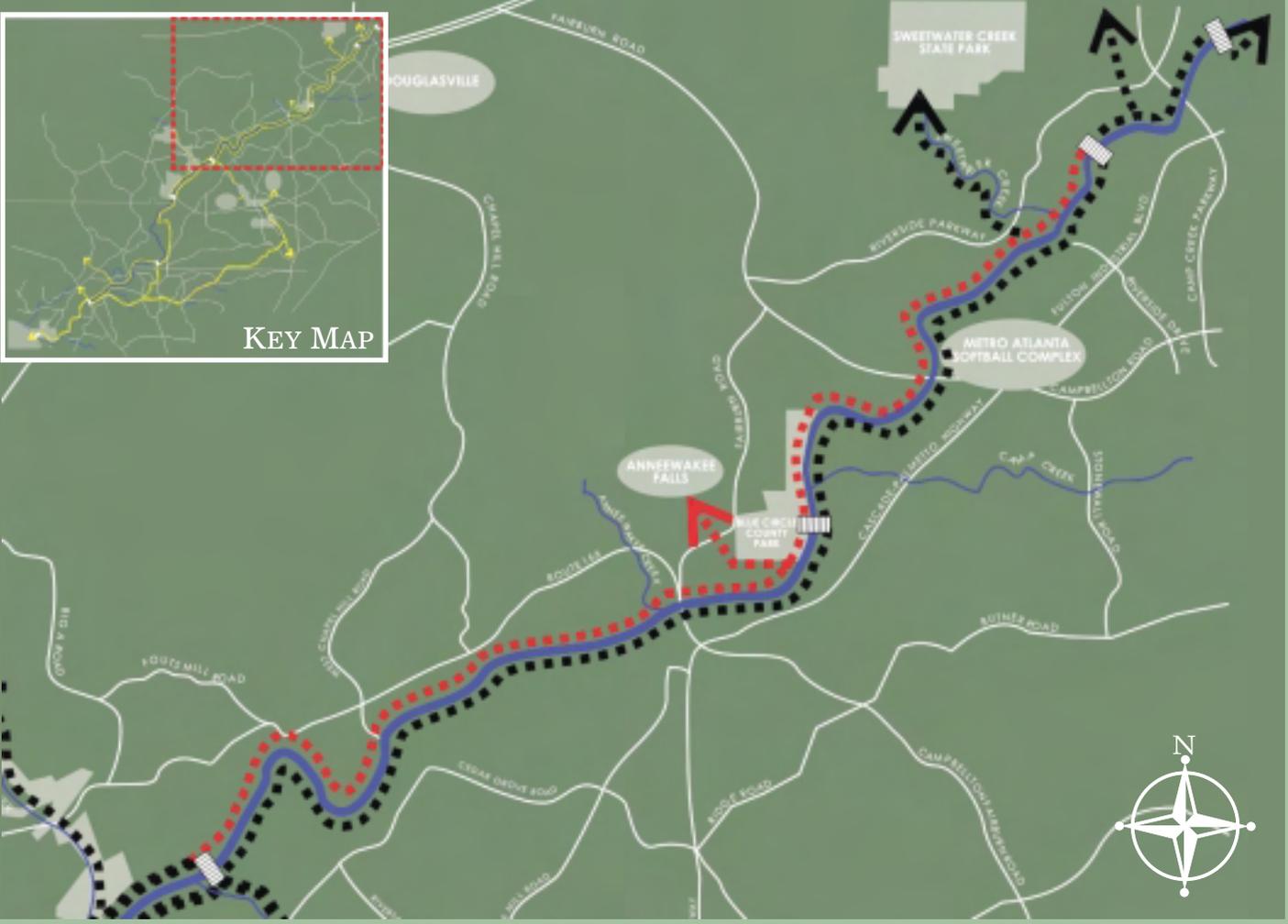
Comments: Within the city limits of Douglasville, the trail segment is proposed along the existing sewer easement corridor.

North of Sweetwater Creek, there is a river crossing opportunity to the Fulton County side of the river and connect back to the River Trail-Hill Country North Reach.

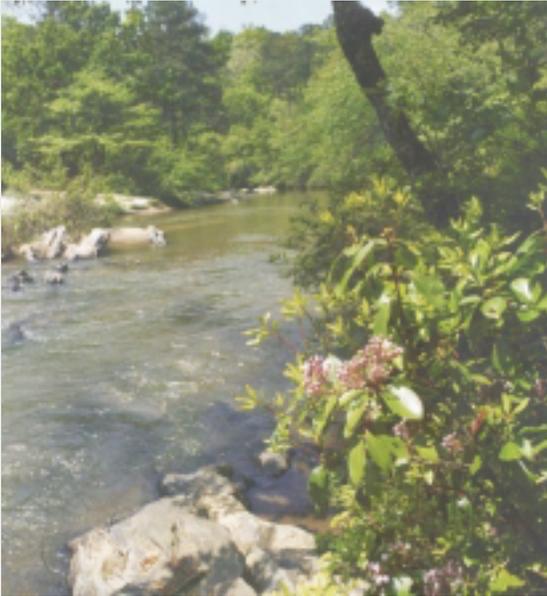
The park will provide amenities and an access point with a trailhead in the future. Once past the Blue Circle property the *River Trail- Blue Circle Reach* continues north into the city limits of Douglasville at the Chattahoochee River. An existing sewer easement follows the river corridor within the city limits and is proposed as the trail corridor to the end of the *Blue Circle Reach* at the river crossing to the River Trail-Hill Country Reach at an existing gas easement.



Newly acquired Blue Circle property to be developed as a future Douglas County park.



# DOG RIVER TRAIL



Mountain Laurel in bloom along the banks of the Dog River.

Douglas County has recently acquired 800 acres along the Dog River from the Chattahoochee River to the Dog River Reservoir. The *Dog River Trail* will be a spur trail from the River Trail-Foxhall Farm Reach, passing through the County property and around the reservoir to allow for future trail connections from Douglas County into the CHC Regional Greenway Trail System.

The length of this trail segment is 4.4 miles and is proposed as an aggregate surfaced, six-foot (6') wide trail. Sixteen hundred (1,600) linear feet are proposed as an eight-foot (8') wide concrete trail.

## DOG RIVER TRAIL

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Links: The Chattahoochee River to the Dog River County Park and along the Dog River Reservoir with future opportunities for trail connections into Douglas County.

Points of Interest along the Trail: Dog River Reservoir, Dog River County Park, Chattahoochee River

Trail Segment Connections: River Trail- Foxhall Farm

Approximate Length: 4.4 miles

Recommended Width: 6 feet

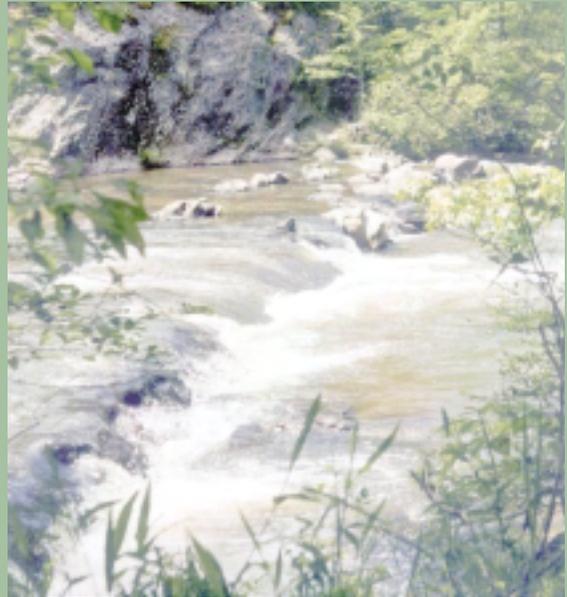
Proposed Surface: Aggregate

Estimated Cost (w/o R.O.W.): \$1,054,110

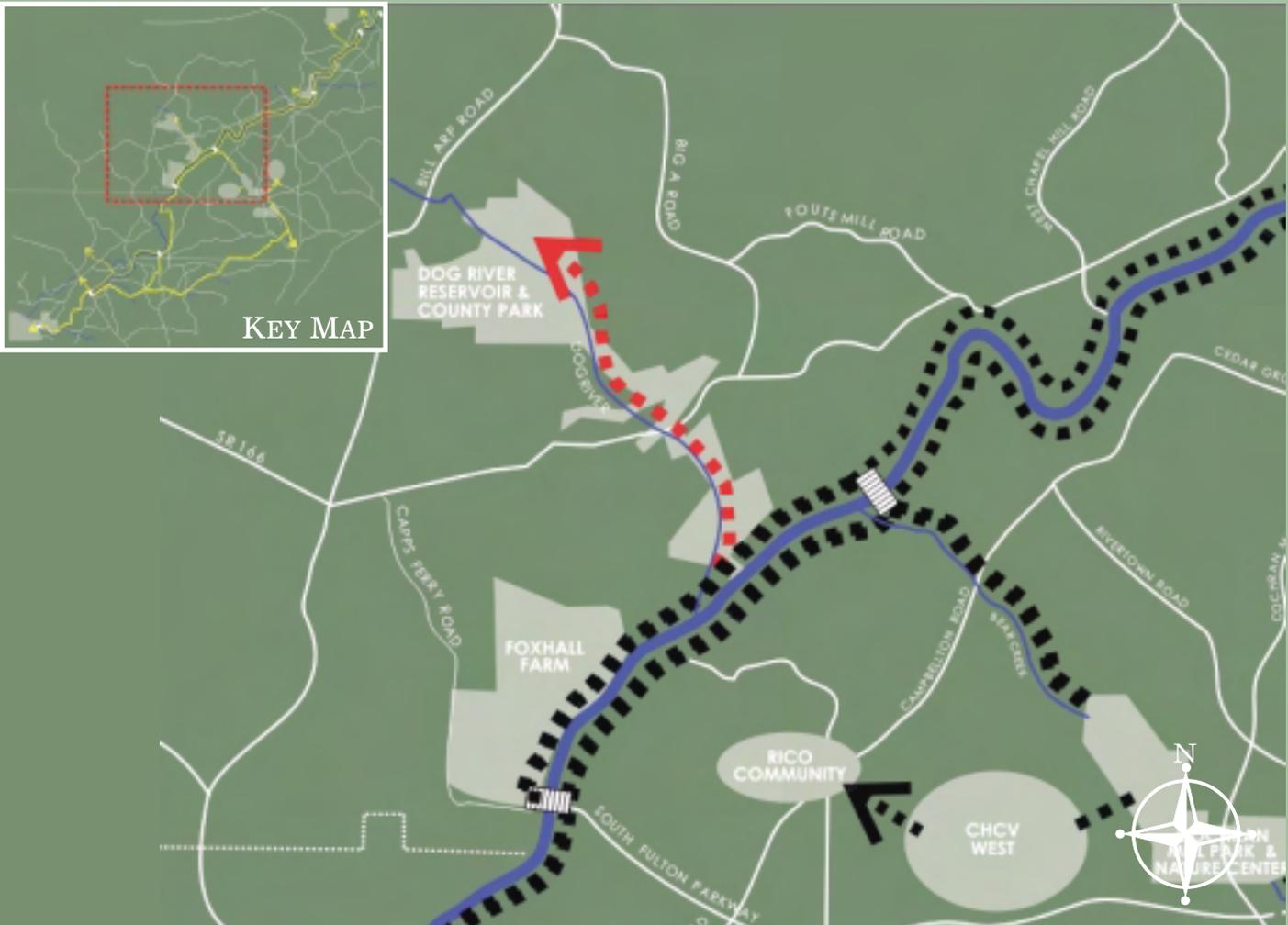
Comments: Opportunity for future trail connection into Douglas County.



Native vegetation is commonly found throughout the Hill Country along the Greenway Trail System.



The rocky shoals of the Dog River provide unique scenic views to be enjoyed by trail users.



# SWEETWATER CREEK TRAIL



A wooded trail follows the free-flowing Sweetwater Creek to the ruins of the New Manchester Manufacturing Company, a textile mill burned during the Civil War.

The *Sweetwater Creek Trail* connects from the River Trail-Blue Circle Reach at the Chattahoochee River along Sweetwater Creek, to the Sweetwater Creek State Park in Douglas County. The property for the trail corridor is currently owned by the Department of Natural Resources. This trail segment would allow for expansion of the existing trails within the park connecting along the *Sweetwater Creek Trail* into the CHC Regional Greenway Trail System. A spur trail will connect into the east side of Sweetwater Creek State Park along the existing sewer easment past Echo Lake. This trail segment along with the Blue Circle Reach will allow for a closed loop trail.

The trail is proposed as a six-foot (6') wide aggregate trail, with 1,000 linear feet being an eight-foot (8') wide concrete trail.

## SWEETWATER CREEK TRAIL

Links: Sweetwater Creek State Park to the Chattahoochee River along Sweetwater Creek with a spur trail from the Chattahoochee River past Echo Lake to the east boundary of Sweetwater Creek State Park.

Points of Interest along the Trail: Sweetwater Creek State Park, Echo Lake, Sweetwater Creek, Chattahoochee River, and New Manchester Township

Trail Segment Connections: River Trail-Blue Circle Reach; River Trail-Fulton Reach.

Approximate Length: 2.6 miles

Recommended Width: 6 feet

Proposed Surface: Aggregate

Estimated Cost (w/o R.O.W.): \$661,090

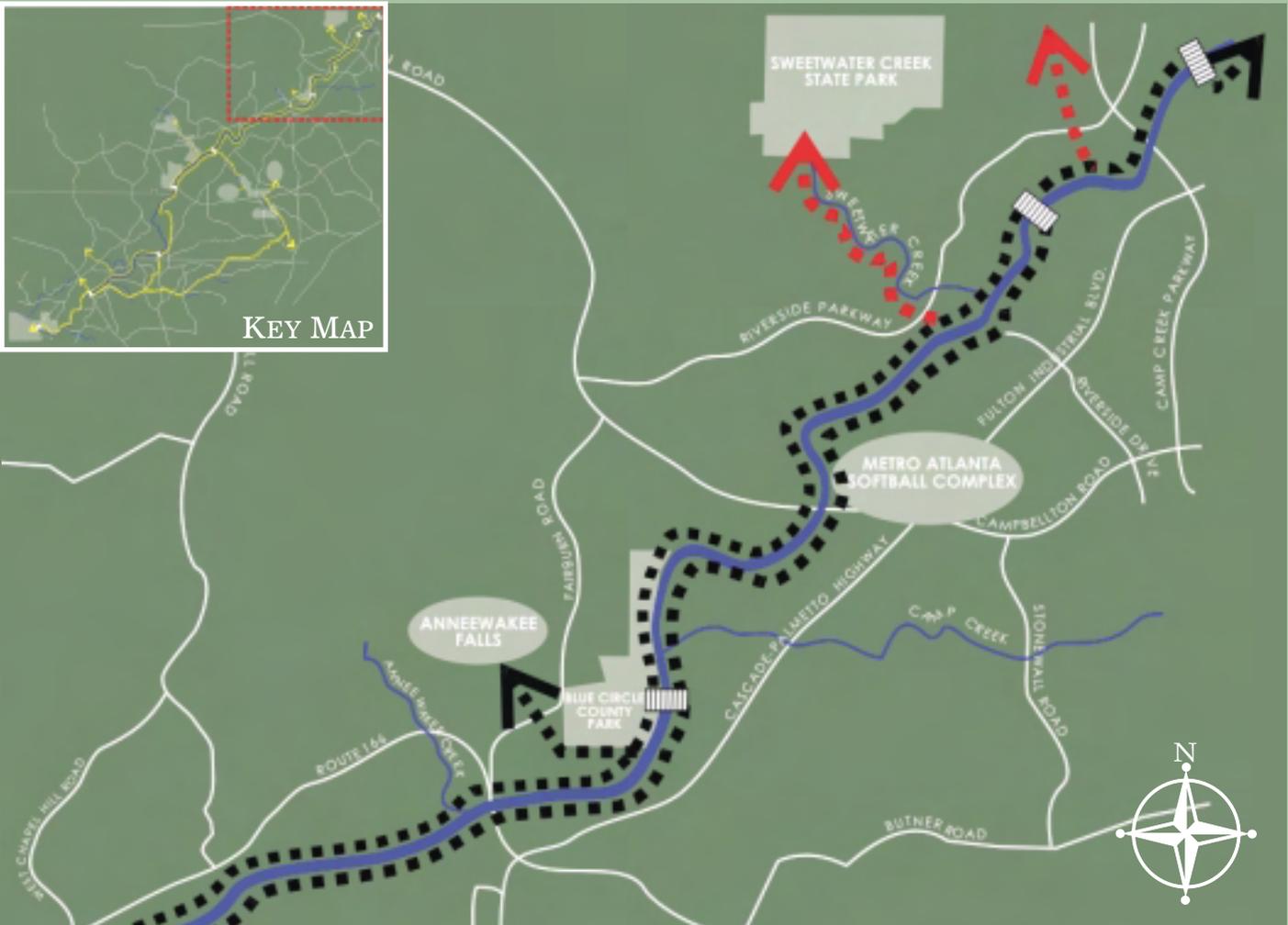
Comments: This trail segment is proposed to connect to the existing trails within Sweetwater Creek State Park. The trail along Sweetwater Creek is proposed as a spine trail through the future New Manchester Development.



View of the shoals of Sweetwater Creek within Sweetwater Creek State Park.



View of Sweetwater Creek from a rest area along the trail with Sweetwater Creek State Park.



# RIVER TRAIL - FULTON REACH



A ferry crossing is proposed to connect the Hill Country Trail system and the Tri-County Greenway Initiative at Buzzard Roost Island.

The *River Trail-Fulton Reach* is the northern most trail segment of the CHC Regional Greenway Trail System. It will connect from the river crossing at the River Trail-Hill Country Reach and the River Trail-Blue Circle Reach along the Douglas County side of the Chattahoochee River to the proposed ferry river crossing at Buzzard Roost Island.

The *Fulton Reach* represents the connection between the CHC Trail System and the Tri-County Greenway Initiative Trail System currently under development.

## RIVER TRAIL - FULTON REACH

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Links: The Chattahoochee Hill Country Regional Greenway Trail System to the City of Atlanta Trail System beginning at the river crossing along the gas easement, following the Chattahoochee River corridor north to the proposed ferry river crossing at Buzzard Roost Island to Fulton County.

Points of Interest along the Trail: Chattahoochee River, and Buzzard Roost Island

Trail Segment Connections: Sweetwater Trail; River Trail-Hill Country Reach

Approximate Length: 3.6 miles

Recommended Width: 8 feet

Proposed Surface: Aggregate

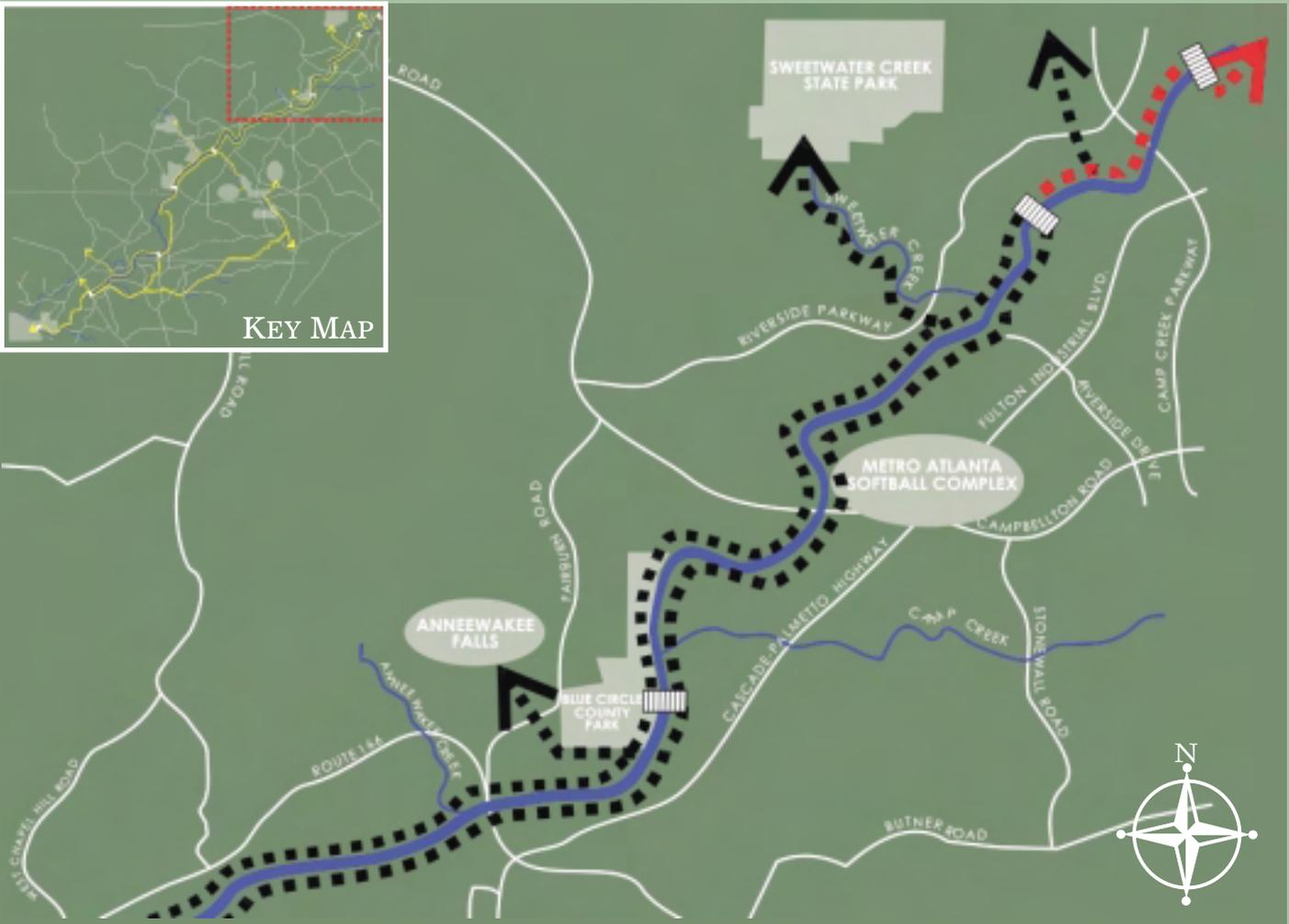
Estimated Cost (w/o R.O.W.): \$1,142.664

Comments: Connection to the Tri-County Greenway Initiative Trail System.

The proposed corridor for this trail segment is along an existing sewer easement. The *Fulton Reach* is a total of 3.6 miles and is proposed as an eight-foot (8') aggregate trail with only 2,000 linear feet being proposed as an eight-foot (8') concrete trail. The ferry river crossing at Buzzard Roost Island would be a seasonal/scheduled crossing for trail users.



Native vegetation to be rescued from the trail construction zone and replanted within the trail corridor.



## SUMMARY CHART OF TRAILS

Preliminary Name	Estimated Length (Miles)	Estimated Aggregate (Miles)	Estimated Concrete (Miles)	Prevailing Width (Feet)	Preliminary Cost Estimate	Cost Estimate per Lin. Ft.
River Trail – McIntosh Reach	11.9	11.3	0.6	8	\$2,755,560	43.86
River Trail – Whitesburg Reach	7.6	5.9	1.7	4	1,893,666	47.19
Dunaway Garden Trail	10.6	9.4	1.2	6	1,993,790	48.55
Banning Mill Trail	3.5	3.1	0.4	4	897,210	35.62
Cochran Mill Trail	11.3	10.0	1.3	8	2,349,012	39.37
River Trail - Hill Country Reach	26.2	20.9	5.3	8	9,383,008	45.37
River Trail – Foxhall Farm Reach	4.0	3.6	0.4	4	981,740	67.83
River Trail - Blue Circle Reach	13.1	11.6	1.5	4	3,064,936	46.48
Dog River Trail	4.4	3.9	0.5	6	1,054,110	44.31
Sweetwater Creek Trail	2.6	2.3	0.3	6	661,090	48.16
River Trail – Fulton Reach	3.6	3.0	0.6	8	1,142,664	60.11
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>98.8</b>	<b>85.0</b>	<b>13.8</b>	<b>---</b>	<b>\$26,176,786</b>	<b>\$50.18/lf</b>

## DESIGN STANDARDS

The Hill Country presents a unique opportunity for building a trail system that calls for a unique set of standards. The Hill Country master plan was conceived based on preserving the existing character and beauty of the land. The network of trails proposed should be built to blend in with the rural setting rather than to mimic urban trails.

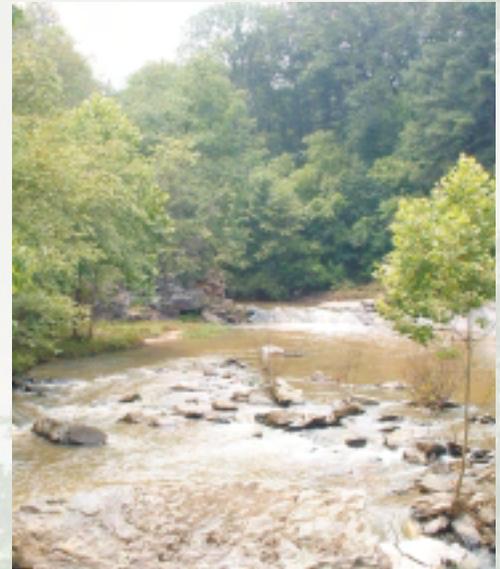
The vast majority of Hill Country trails proposed are unpaved. Although the base will be firm and the bed will drain, the trails will be constructed to resemble a road between a house and the barn. Depending on usage, the trail may grass over the center and become two cow paths. On more frequently used portions, the trail may be as wide as a small country road. In areas subject to inundation or cross drainage, the trail will need to be paved for durability.

As time passes and the villages of the Hill Country become centers for commerce, there may be a need to pave additional trail segments to facilitate commuting. The aggregate beds and drainage patterns proposed at this time will be compatible with future surfacing of the trails, should the need arise.

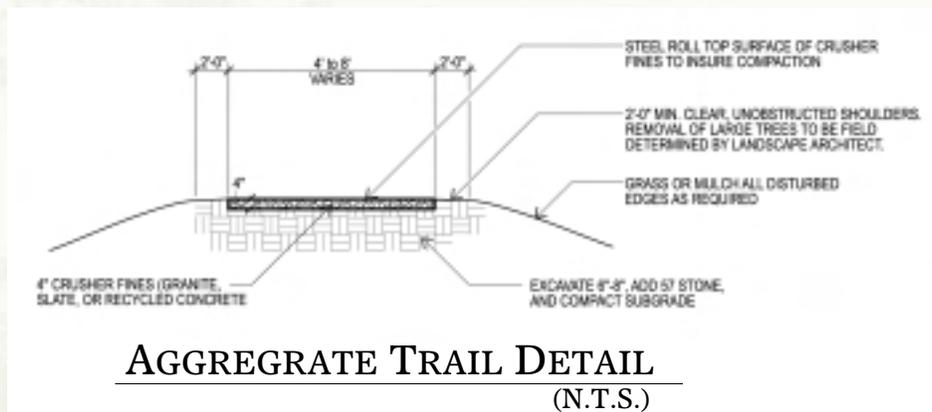
### STANDARD TRAIL DETAIL

Even though the aggregate trails proposed for the Hill Country are less intrusive to build than hard surfaced trails, there will be trees lost and temporary scars on the land as the trails are developed. Trails must be constructed as “mini-roads” for safety and drainage considerations. In addition, the trail corridor will be cleared of underbrush, vines, and vegetative debris to create a secure and maintainable facility.

Ideally, trail corridors that minimize tree loss and significant grading can be identified in the field and be acquired on an “as-built” basis rather than as lines on a map prior to beginning site work. Defining a uniform, narrow strip of land for a trail during acquisition may or may not result in trail construction that minimally impacts the environment.



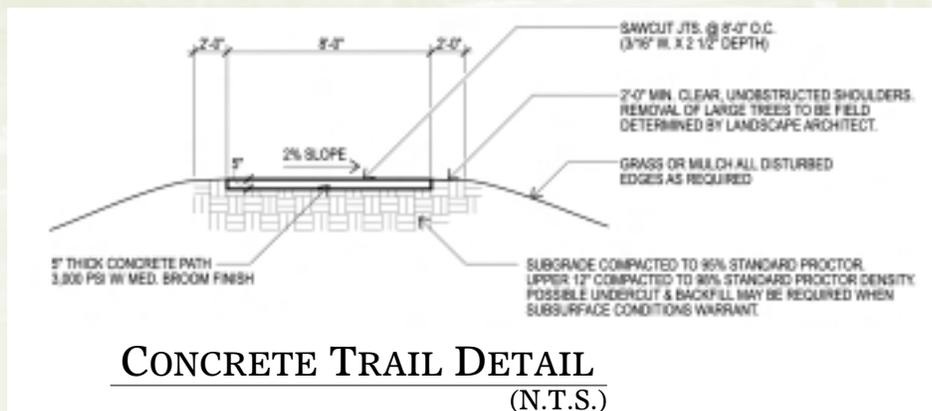
The cross section below is proposed as the standard cross section for Hill Country trails:



### HARD SURFACE TRAILS

Trail segments subject to frequent inundation or inherent drainage problems should be permanently surfaced. This includes approaches to bridges, slopes through cuts, and sloped trails traversing rugged terrain.

Concrete is the preferred surface over asphalt since eroding base material under asphalt trails can result in failure of the trail. The concrete trail standard proposed for the Hill Country is presented below:



### BRIDGES AND OTHER CROSSINGS

There will be an extraordinary number of water crossings in the Hill Country since trails are proposed paralleling the Chattahoochee River and other streams. Crossings will be designed to:

- Comply with Federal, State, and local regulations
- Withstand periodic flooding
- Provide safe passage for trail users
- Accommodate small vehicles such as pick-up trucks and emergency vehicles\* (some exceptions)

## PREFABRICATED BRIDGES

Prefabricated metal bridges are proposed for major crossings over rivers and larger tributaries. These bridges may also be used to span large ravines, railroads, and highways. Prefabricated bridges will accommodate a small truck and span two hundred feet or more. These bridges are expensive and require access for cranes and other heavy equipment for installation. Engineered abutments also add significantly to the cost of these structures. On the positive side, prefabricated bridges require little maintenance and become exciting amenities.



## BOX CULVERT FOR TRAIL

A box culvert of sufficient height and width can be the most economical way for Hill Country trails to cross roads. A ten foot by ten foot (10'x10') concrete box culvert is an inexpensive way to remove the hazard associated with an at-grade crossing. These “tunnels” must have lighting for safety and security. Ten-by-ten foot boxed culverts cost approximately \$2,000 per linear foot to build.



## CULVERTS FOR CREEKS

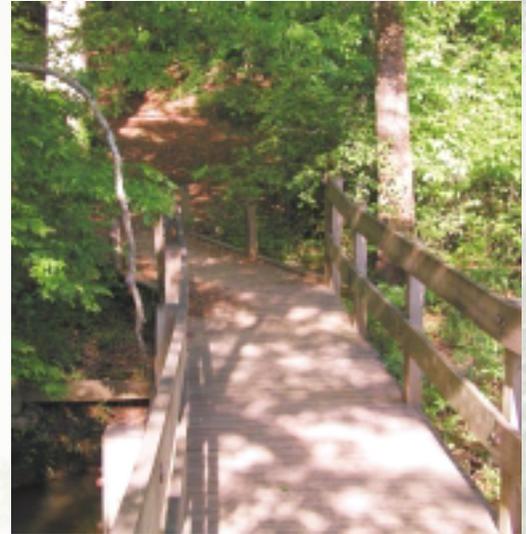
The typical Hill Country creek crossing will likely be a concrete pipe under the trail. These crossings are inexpensive and can be camouflaged with rocks and plants to blend in with the natural landscape. These too will need to be engineered and built to governing standards.

## TIMBER BRIDGES AND BOARDWALKS

Selected crossings within the Hill Country can be accomplished with timber bridges constructed on-site. Light weight, timber bridges can be used for short spans where vehicular access is not needed. Designs can vary from utilitarian to covered, curved, or slightly arched.

## BOARDWALKS

Boardwalks constructed of pressure-treated timber or recycled plastic lumber will likely be utilized to span wetlands encountered. The boardwalks can be constructed without the use of heavy equipment and offer unique educational opportunities. Both boardwalks and timber bridges will become slippery and therefore a safety issue when sun exposure is limited.

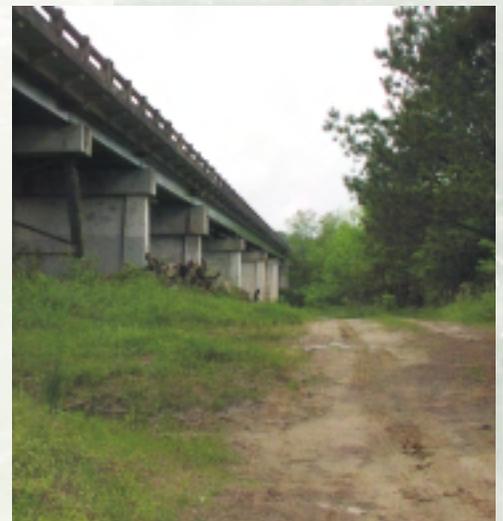


## FERRY CROSSINGS

There are two locations along the Chattahoochee River where a small ferry with cyclists and hikers could cross and provide a dose of “Huck Finn” to the Hill Country trail experience. The ferries could be operated by volunteers or retirees and be maintained by tolls collected from each rider. The ferries would likely operate during peak season, on weekends and holidays.

## EXISTING AND FUTURE ROAD BRIDGE CROSSINGS

At least one existing road bridge will soon be abandoned for a newly constructed bridge. It is possible for the Hill Country trail system to utilize the unused highway bridge to cross the Chattahoochee River at SR 16. Several other highway bridges may serve as crossings for hikers and cyclists. State and local Department of Transportations (DOTs) will be asked to restripe lanes on existing bridges and provide warning and informational signs to enhance safety for cyclists & pedestrians on these bridges.



## TRAIL FURNISHINGS AND SIGNS

### BENCHES, SIGN BASES, AND TRASH RECEPTACLES

All benches, trash receptacles, signs, and bike racks will be constructed of recycled plastic lumber, similar to the existing amenities on the Silver Comet Trail. These plastic products do not warp, rot, burn, or readily accept graffiti. Utilizing amenities made from recycled plastics will give citizens a good reason to recycle their plastic milk cartons and pop bottles.

### SIGNS

Signage for the Chattahoochee Hill Country Regional Greenway Trails will be consistent with the Municipal Uniform Traffic Code Division (MUTCD) for bicycle facilities. In addition, mile/kilo/elevation designation markers will be posted on each sign.

### TRAIL MARKINGS & INTERSECTIONS

Paved portions of the Hill Country Greenway Trails will be marked with a dashed, centerline stripe and stop-bar striping at intersections. Centerline striping encourages trail users to keep right, except when passing. Red concrete is proposed within twenty feet of street intersections to alert trail users to crossing vehicles. A rumble strip will be formed into the concrete at vehicular crossings to assist the visually impaired. Bollards and split rail fencing will be used to limit vehicular access.

### EQUESTRIAN FACILITIES

The master plan for trails in the Hill Country includes approximately 46 miles of trail for equestrians connecting the most prominent equestrian facilities in the region. During meetings with the stakeholders and the public, the desired equestrian path was a closed loop rather than an “out and back” course.

The trail for equestrians will either parallel or overlay the trail for other users, depending on the location. Improvements on the separated equestrian trail include removal of fallen trees and vegetative debris, minimal grading and graveling in spot locations, limbing of trees to appropriate height, clearing of small trees and brush as needed, trail markings and instructions, improvements to creek crossings (except where equestrians use walking/biking trail bridges), and seeding and strawing disturbed areas.

Rest stops along the combined multi-use/equestrian trail will be constructed between the two trails to serve both user groups. The rest stops will have hitching posts and watering troughs at rest areas near parking areas. Trailheads along the loop will be designed to accommodate horse trailer parking. Stakeholders with an interest in horseback riding, as well as riding clubs, will be consulted as the equestrian trail is designed and constructed.



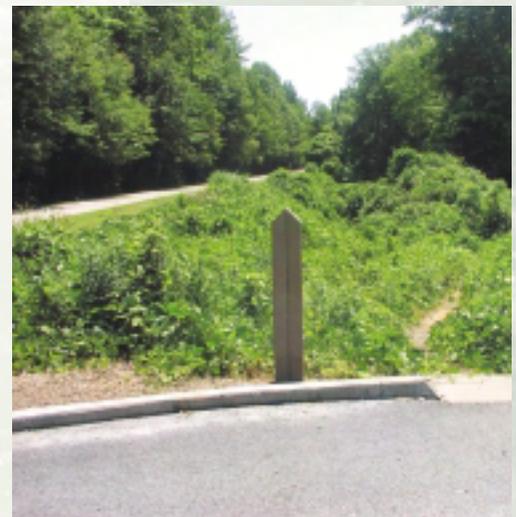
Terrain will often dictate a narrow corridor for the CHC trails. In these narrow corridors, equestrians will be riding a few feet away from other users. Where the corridor is wider, it is planned for equestrians to be ten to thirty feet from the walking/biking trail. Where possible, it is desirable to have a fifty-foot (50') wide corridor to accommodate both the equestrian trail and the multi-use trail.

#### TRAIL DEVELOPMENT AND THE ENVIRONMENT

The centerpiece for many greenways is a water feature, bordered by wetlands, floodplains, desirable plantings, and wildlife habitat. In urban areas nearby, similar land has been encroached upon by development, used for dumping, overgrown with Kudzu, and neglected by the public and public officials.

The vision of the Hill Country stakeholders is to preserve these corridors as greenspace with respectful access to encourage public stewardship. By setting these corridors aside and inviting the public to experience their beauty, the creeks and rivers of the Hill Country will escape the fate of their sister streams in town.

There will be negative aspects to developing trails within the creek and river corridors of the region that will require mitigation. Clearing the path for Hill Country trails will involve tree loss and temporary scars to the land. Creek and River crossings will temporarily disrupt wildlife and invade vegetative buffers. The creation of safe, secure, maintainable trail corridors will alter the landscape and temporarily distract from its beauty.



The following procedures will be followed during the development of the Hill Country greenway trails to minimize negative impact to the environment:

- All applicable federal, state, and local ordinances and regulations governing work near streams, floodplains, and wetlands will be followed.
- Plant rescue operations will be encouraged to move desirable species from the path of construction (Georgia Native Plant Association has expressed interest in completing this task).
- The least invasive equipment will be utilized during all phases of work.
- All vegetative debris will be mulched and recycled near the trail corridor.
- Where possible, trails will be placed on terrain previously cleared for roads, fences, utilities, etc.
- Timber bridges and boardwalks will be built from the top, rather than with equipment alongside.
- Native species will be introduced to form and strengthen existing buffers for the creeks and rivers.
- Construction drawings for each trail segment should include specific plans to protect large trees, rock outcroppings, valued plants near the trail, etc.
- Impervious trail footage will be minimized.
- A standard erosion and sedimentation control plan that meets or exceeds state and local standards should be imposed on all contractors.

# MAINTENANCE & SECURITY

## MAINTENANCE

No trail should be built until a comprehensive, fully funded maintenance program has been established. Each city and county within the Hill Country must accept the responsibility for maintaining their trails by budgeting for the necessary equipment and manpower before they are built.

Typical maintenance issues will be:

- Occasional mowing and/or bush hogging
- Trash removal (from containers)
- Sweeping/blowing debris from concrete segments
- Leveling gravel/ correcting erosion
- Clearing debris from culverts
- Cleaning signs and rest area furniture
- Attending to planted areas
- Maintenance of portable restrooms
- Occasional removal of fallen trees/tree limbs

An adopt-a-trail program where local citizens or groups volunteer to assist with maintenance tasks should be instituted soon after the first trail segment is built. The Hill Country trails should never depend solely upon a volunteer program to address maintenance of the trails. Volunteers typically can serve best as:

- Spotters, advising maintenance crews of problems
- Landscapers, tending planted areas or trimming vegetation when needed.
- Removing trash along the trail
- Installing birdhouses, maintaining kiosks & bulletin boards, etc.

## SECURITY

The Hill Country trails will need to have police patrols on bicycles, ATV's, or by foot in order to give most people the level of security they desire. During the initial stages of development, each County should dedicate some patrol time to the trails. As the trail system develops, it may become feasible to establish the "Hill Country Ranger" unit funded by local governments or private donations to patrol and maintain the trails and parks in the system.

## IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM

Master plans for many great projects are filed away never to see the light of day. Without a comprehensive plan for implementation and an energetic champion to lead the charge, a master plan is just an expensive chronicle of what could have been.

This chapter is the most important part of the *Chattahoochee Hill Country Regional Greenway Trail Master Plan*. The measure of its success will be the miles of trails that are built rather than the effort spent on planning and design. Presented herein are the key elements for establishing a foundation for building the Hill Country Greenway Trails and a compilation of specific tasks associated with building individual segments of the system.

### LAYING THE GROUNDWORK

#### ADOPTING THE MASTER PLAN

- It is highly recommended that all jurisdictions and possibly some of the major stakeholders adopt this master plan as the official trail plan for the region and incorporate it into the respective comprehensive development plans. This will help reserve trail corridors as future infrastructure when overlying development is proposed.
- Adoption by counties and cities can be accomplished with a resolution that officially recognizes the trail plan. The resolution should include provisions for periodic amendments to the master plan with stakeholder participation.
- Adoption or recognition by primary stakeholders would be desirable as well. Many people support causes based on which groups support the cause. Letters of support from stakeholders can serve the purpose.

#### ADOPTING DESIGN STANDARDS

By adopting the plan, each jurisdiction agrees to build their segments to the standards set forth in this document. It is likely several stand-alone trail segments will be built in various jurisdictions before they link up to form the trail system proposed herein. Adoption of the design standards will insure compatibility and uniformity when the connections are made. It is better to build

fewer trails to the higher standard than compromise the standard for additional trails.

It may be helpful to establish a Design/Construction Oversight Committee to shepherd trail development. The committee could:

- Recommend or outright select consultants & contractors
- Review plans/inspect work for adherence to standards
- Recommend or outright accept final documents/trail segments
- Oversee proposed amendments to the master plan

The Committee would likely consist of representatives from each jurisdiction plus stakeholders and persons with knowledge/interest in the subject. The *Chattahoochee Hill Country Alliance* could assist as a coordinating entity to review plans and recommendations for each jurisdiction.

### STANDARDIZING PAPERWORK

Entities, public and private, who will be soliciting bids and administering contracts should assemble for the purpose of standardizing the following documentation associated with trail development in the Hill Country:

- Requests for Proposals
- Invitations to bid
- Contracts with consultants, engineers, contractors, etc.
- Environmental submittals
- Easement and Lease Agreements
- Payment request forms
- Change Order forms
- Final Inspection forms
- Ordinances against motor vehicles, firearms, etc.
- Trail Etiquette

Even though each jurisdiction has its own forms and many funding sources require certain forms be used, common language and specifications need to be incorporated into Hill Country contracts to insure uniformity and quality control.

The American Institute of Architects (AIA) has a collection of forms that works well in many cases. The Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) also has developed an extensive set of forms they require for GDOT funded projects.

Even on GDOT forms, there is the need to develop common language and uniform requirements before each jurisdiction sets out to build their trails.

### ORDER OF IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation should be based largely on opportunity. Once there is agreement that the plan proposed herein is the official plan, the order of implementation should be influenced by:

- Candidate for a model trail segment (See “Model Trail” below)
- Funding opportunity
- Right-of-way opportunity (i.e. property for trail is in public domain)
- Champion in place such as elected official or stakeholder
- Most bang for the buck; ease of building, more trail for less money
- Constituency support
- Opportunity to “piggyback” on another project

The Cochran Mill Trail is high on the implementation order since it meets the criteria for a model trail and has an existing funding opportunity.

### CHOOSING A “MODEL TRAIL”

The masses will not readily recognize the significance of developing the Hill Country master plan for trails. However, a trail on the ground will get the attention of the public, the philanthropic community, and those administering federal and state funding programs. A model trail in each jurisdiction should be the first order of business during the implementation phase.

Model trails should showcase the design elements and amenities proposed in the plan. It is not necessary that the model segments be connected. The plan will guide and encourage the connections.

This is the criteria for selecting a good model trail:

- Can its success be almost guaranteed due to the destinations it will serve ?
- Is it likely it will be a successful stand-alone trail?
- Is there money available to build it right?
- Will the trail showcase many of the amenities specified herein and the natural beauty of the region?
- Is there a funded maintenance program in place?

If any one of the above criteria cannot be met, a different trail should be chosen for the model trail. Model trails are used to develop constituency, convince prospective donors, and energize elected officials. They must be utilized, well built and maintained, and demonstrate the design standards and access to natural beauty. The implementation fire should be ignited in each jurisdiction. Model trails are the key to mass support and funding for the remainder of the system.

## HOW TO GET STARTED

Here is the outline associated with a trail building campaign in the Hill Country:

- Adopting the master plan by each jurisdiction and major stakeholder
- Creating a Design/Construction Oversight Committee
- Standardizing paperwork/ordinances/design features  
Selecting one or more trail components for early development (model trails)
- Soliciting community input through public meeting and field visits
- Employing a consultant knowledgeable in trail design
- Identifying the preferred alignment for model trails
- Acquiring right-of-way for model trails
- Identification of funding sources for model trails including in-kind services, etc.
- Establishing a maintenance program and source of funding for same
- Choosing a contractor to build the trails
- Monitoring construction via Design/Construction Oversight Committee
- Monitoring maintenance program to insure trail always looks its best

## ASSEMBLING CORRIDORS

### PUBLIC PROPERTY

Property owned by Authorities, Cities, Counties, the State or the Federal Government can be designated as trail right-of-way in the following manner:

#### AUTHORITIES, WATER DISTRICTS, SCHOOL DISTRICTS, ETC.

The jurisdiction governing the trail will need to acquire an easement agreement from the authority or district for the express purpose of building and operating a multi-use trail on a designated parcel of property, usually defined by a survey and/or a legal description. Generally, the governing body of the jurisdiction will pass a resolution authorizing this action. The term of the agreement must be twenty years plus a day if certain federal and state funds are to be used for improvements on the property. (It may not be wise to have an easement for less time anyway).

#### CITIES, COUNTIES

This is the easiest land to assemble since these governments are usually involved in building the trail. When a County is building a trail within City limits, it is important to involve the City Government from the get-go to ensure a successful assemblage. Occasionally, an inter-governmental agreement is necessary if City owned property is needed for a County or State sponsored trail.

#### STATE

The State Properties Commission must endorse converting state-owned property to right-of-way for a trail. However, in many cases, such as in State Parks, a license can be granted to the builder of the trail, which grants the right to build the trail, and the property remains state-owned. When dealing with GDOT, an Encroachment Permit from GDOT is generally all that is required. In summary, most state-owned parcels do not need to be acquired but do need to be permitted by the controlling state agency.

#### FEDERAL

Should a trail segment be proposed on federal property, the following procedure is recommended:

- Contact the appropriate federal agency with the request
- Federal agency will state their options for access
- Negotiate access using the agencies ground rules for access.

(The author is unaware of federally owned property in the Hill Country)

## PRIVATE

Right-of-way for a trail can be obtained from private property owners as an easement or in fee. The easement or property can be donated, sold at fair market value, or sold at a negotiated price. The Trust for Public Land, the Conservation Fund, and the Georgia Land Trust are all great resources for detailed information regarding the acquisition of private property for the public good.

Appendix B is a sample easement agreement that could be customized and used for the Hill Country Trails. All right-of-way acquired from the private sector should be acquired in the name of the local governing body.

The suggested steps to take while assembling right-of-way for the Hill Country Trails are as follows:

- Select a trail segment for development
- Obtain tax maps and draw anticipated route on tax maps to use in the field
- Obtain GIS or other maps showing terrain features/structures/etc.
- Armed with maps, camera, and possibly a design consultant, walk the proposed route
- Adjust route to:
  - 1) minimize the number of properties impacted
  - 2) Maximize footage on publicly owned property,
  - 3) take advantage of friendliest terrain,
  - 4) include the most attractive scenery and sites.
- Draft a very preliminary plan to use during visits with property owners
- Visit with property owners to request right-of-way for the trail. Owners should receive copies of proposed route, easement agreement, tax benefits for donating land, etc.
- Negotiate with property owners to assemble the right-of-way. Route adjustments may result from these negotiations.
- Execute easement agreements or contracts to acquire the property.
- The “art” of negotiating with property owners should be left to those with charisma and local identity. The first trail will be the most difficult to assemble. One successful segment will likely make additional assemblies easier.

## FUNDING THE PROJECT

Resources for acquiring and preserving greenspace and building trails have become more numerous during the past few years. In order to posture the CHC Regional Greenway Trail to receive maximum consideration for funding, the following steps should be taken:

- Upon selecting trail segments for development, each jurisdiction should develop conceptual plans and sketches for their trail.
- Applications should be made annually by each jurisdiction for a Recreational Trails Grant.
- Each jurisdiction should send a delegation to see their state legislators and apply for state funding.
- Each jurisdiction should approach their U.S. Senator and Congressman for federal assistance with their project.
- Each jurisdiction should budget “matching funds” for their project in anticipation of receiving state/federal funding.
- The CHC should launch a capital improvement campaign based on building certain trail segments. This campaign would target private sector funding. A professional fundraiser is recommended.
- The champions of this project should seek out on-going or proposed improvement projects such as roads, drainage, water/sewer lines, private utility lines, etc. that could be piggy-backed with a trail.
- Donations of in-kind services from property owners should be identified.
- Donations of product from material providers should be sought.

Funding a project of this magnitude will surely be a patchwork of public allocations and private donations. The toughest sell will be the first trail.

# APPENDIX A - PROPOSED ORDINANCE

## RESOLUTION Proposed Trail Ordinance

STATE OF GEORGIA

COUNTY OF \_\_\_\_\_.

**WHEREAS**, \_\_\_\_\_ County, Georgia, is establishing, developing and constructing multi-use recreational trails; and

**WHEREAS**, these multi-use trails are for non-motorized activities such as walking, jogging, inline skating, roller blading, skate boarding, bicycling and horseback riding; and **WHEREAS**, in order to provide for the safety of these trails, it is necessary to adopt certain ordinances regulating the use of same;

**NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS RESOLVED** by the \_\_\_\_ County Board of Commissioners as follows:

- 1) There is hereby created a new ordinance regulating multi-use recreational trails in \_\_\_\_\_ County, Georgia. A multi-use recreational trail is defined as follows:  
“Any trail or path designated by the Board of Commissioners to be used for pleasure or as an alternative mode of transportation for use by walking, jogging, inline skating, roller blading, skate boarding, bicycling or horseback riding.”
- 2) No one shall use a multi-use recreational trail from one hour after sunset to one hour before sunrise unless specifically authorized to do so by the \_\_\_\_\_ County Board of Commissioners.
- 3) No person shall operate a motorized vehicle over, through, across, or upon a multi-use recreational trail unless specifically authorized to do so by the \_\_\_\_\_ County Board of Commissioners.
- 4) No person shall operate a bicycle on a multi-use recreational trail in a manner that endangers other users of the trail.
- 5) No person shall ride a horse on a multi-use recreational trail in a manner that endangers other users of the trail.
- 6) No one shall consume, possess or be under the influence of alcoholic beverages or controlled substances as defined by the “Georgia Controlled Substance Act” while on a multi-use recreational trail.
- 7) No person shall dump, throw, leave or deposit trash or litter on a multi-use recreational trail or property adjacent to a trail. All trash or litter shall be placed in designated trash receptacles.
- 8) No person shall deface a multi-use recreational trail with paint, crayon or other substance.
- 9) No person shall disfigure a multi-use recreational trail by the use of force, fire or other means.
- 10) No person shall possess a firearm while on a multi-use recreational trail.
- 11) No person shall discharge a firearm or threaten the use thereof in such a manner that it endangers or frightens a user of a multi-use recreational trail.
- 12) Any person who violates any provision of this resolution shall be punished as for a misdemeanor. For a first offense, the offender shall be fined not less than \$100.00 nor more than \$500.00, or sentenced to serve 30 days in jail, or both. For a second or subsequent offense, the offender shall be fined not less than \$250.00 or more than \$1,000.00, or sentenced to serve sixty (60) days in jail, or both.

**SO RESOLVED**, this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2003

Chairman

\_\_\_\_\_ County Board of Commissioners

## APPENDIX B - EASEMENT ADDENDUM

In Re: Sewage Line Easement Executed to City of \_\_\_\_\_.

The undersigned property owner, having previously granted to the City of \_\_\_\_\_ ("the City") a sewer line easement, does hereby execute this addendum to the easement to convey, assign and authorize that said easement may also be used for the construction of the \_\_\_\_\_, which will run along the area of the easement upon the undersigned owner's property. This addendum shall also authorize access to the sewer line easement area, and a right of use for a total of fifty (50) feet from the centerline of the sewer line right-of-way for construction of the Trail. The general area surrounding the Trail construction will be restored at the end of the construction period. Once construction of the Trail has been completed, the construction easement shall end and the right-of-way width of the sewer line easement and Trail shall be thirty (30) feet throughout the easement area. Further, access is also granted for purposes of general maintenance of the sewer line and Trail, which said maintenance responsibility shall be borne by the City of \_\_\_\_\_, its designees, successors and/or assigns.

The undersigned property owner reserves the right to cross the Trail with driveways, utility lines, or similar easements across the property, provided that in the event the owner traverses the Trail, owner shall repair and replace all Trail improvements in as good a condition as they were before the construction of any easements by owner across the Trail.

The City, its successors, and/or assigns shall be solely and exclusively liable and responsible for any injuries and damages to persons or property that may occur as a result of the construction of the \_\_\_\_\_ Trail, its use after construction has been completed, the maintenance of the Trail, and any and all other activities conducted thereon.

The easement shall inure to the benefit of the City of \_\_\_\_\_, its successors and assigns and bind the owner, and owner's successors and assigns to any right, title or interest in and to owner's property.

Executed this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2003.

Owner \_\_\_\_\_

Owner \_\_\_\_\_

Signed, sealed and delivered in the Presence of:

\_\_\_\_\_

Witness

\_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX C - REFERENCES

Atlanta Regional Commission. Chattahoochee River from Peachtree Creek to West Point Lake Corridor Plan Study. July 1998.

DeKalb County. DeKalb's Greenway Trails A Master Plan for Multi-Use Trails in DeKalb County, Georgia. January 2000.

Fulton County Department of Environment and Community Development. The Chattahoochee Hill Country Community Guidelines. October 2002.

The Trust for Public Land. Tri-County Chattahoochee River Initiative. January 2003

**NOTES**

