



Deep River State Trail

Newly Authorized Unit of the North Carolina State Parks System

The Deep River State Trail, a new unit of the North Carolina state park system, is a regional project designed to protect the natural and cultural resources and enhance the recreation potential of the Deep River corridor in Guilford, Randolph, Chatham, Moore and Lee Counties.

Establishing the trail as a unit of the state parks system will unify regional efforts and enable the N.C. Division of Parks and Recreation to coordinate and facilitate a project involving a partnership of state agencies, local governments, land conservancies, nonprofit organizations, private landowners and recreation interests.

As envisioned by the state parks system, the Deep River State Trail would emerge primarily as a paddle trail with land-based access sites and recreation facilities along the river and its tributaries. This trail could become the backbone of an extended regional trails system with connections to Greensboro,

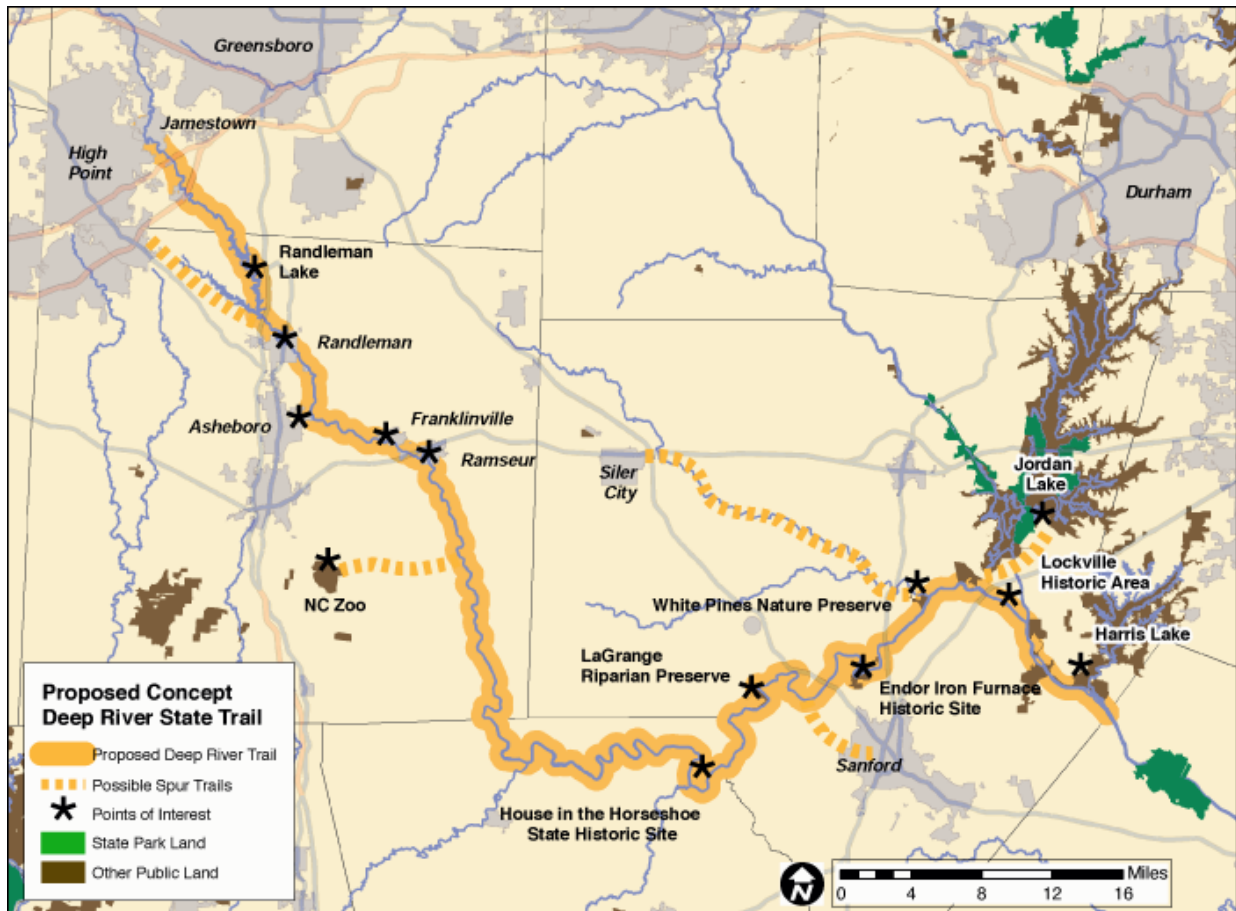
Asheboro, the N.C. Zoological Park, and Jordan Lake, and could eventually be extended down the Cape Fear River to Raven Rock State Park and beyond.

Natural and cultural resources on the Deep River

Long popular with paddlers and fishermen, the Deep River offers a corridor with tremendous potential for linking conservation lands, cultural resources and recreation opportunities, and it presents an opportunity to build destination tourism in a five-county region.

The river is considered nationally significant for its biological resources including a globally rare species of fish (Cape Fear shiner) and mussel (Atlantic pigtoe). Along the river's edge, scenic bluffs and rock outcrops alternate with areas of high quality floodplain forests. Its low-density development

(Continued)



offers opportunities for valuable wildlife and riparian corridors.

The Deep River was significant in the history and development of piedmont North Carolina and retains evidence of a 19th century mill economy, a 19th century canal/lock system for navigation; the Endor iron furnace, the Deep River coal field (site of the 1925 Coal Glen mine disaster) and the House in the Horseshoe state historic site, an 18th century plantation.

A state trail unit of the state parks system

A state trail is a recognized type of unit of the state parks system, but differs significantly from a traditional state park, such as at Hanging Rock or Morrow Mountain.

When the General Assembly authorizes a state trail as part of the state parks system, it defines an area often larger and more linear in scope than a traditional state park. The intent is to create an area jointly planned, acquired, developed and managed by the Division of Parks and Recreation, other state and federal agencies, local governments and nonprofit organizations.

Establishing the Deep River State Trail as part of the state parks system authorizes the Division of Parks and Recreation to:

- Collaborate with local governments, landowners, nonprofit organizations, and other stakeholders to develop a comprehensive plan for the Deep River State Trail.

- Acquire and manage some of the lands necessary for principal public access areas and support facilities along the trail corridor. Management of division lands would be similar to that of state parks and state natural areas, under the direction of a park superintendent with assistance from state park rangers.

- Promote, encourage and assist the establishment of trail segments and access areas on lands managed by other government agencies and nonprofit organizations in order to create a recreational corridor along the Deep River.

Development of a state trail

The Deep River State Trail will likely begin as a canoe/paddle trail, with a series of public access sites, reaching from near the new Randleman Lake Dam downstream to the confluence of the Deep River and Haw River near Moncure in Lee County. The N.C.

Department of Environment and Natural Resources now manages 996 acres along the Deep River. The N.C. Department of Cultural Resources manages over 400 acres, (including the House in the Horseshoe state historic site and the Endor Iron Furnace property). And, the Triangle Land Conservancy owns 583 acres (including White Pines Nature Preserve and La Grange Riparian Preserve). At least some of these lands could serve as the first public access areas on the Deep River State Trail.

As plans are jointly developed and land is acquired, the potential exists for longer distance trails and greenways that could connect High Point and Jamestown to Jordan Lake State Recreation Area.



Initial steps in establishing the Deep River State Trail

The Division of Parks and Recreation is bringing together involved local governments, nonprofit organizations, landowners and interested citizens to begin developing a comprehensive plan for the Deep River State Trail. Participation in the project will be voluntary and private property rights will be respected.

Funding sources for land acquisition will likely include the Parks and Recreation, Natural Heritage and Clean Water Management trust funds. Facilities on state parks system lands would qualify for support from that portion of the Parks and Recreation Trust Fund dedicated to state parks' capital projects. Additionally, some trail and access projects developed by local governments could qualify for funding through the trust fund's local matching grants program.