

**Could your Project benefit from
RTCA Staff Assistance?
Contact us to find out.**

Tennessee

Rivers, Trails & Conservation Assistance
Program

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THE RTCA PROGRAM

The Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance (RTCA) Program is the community assistance arm of the National Park Service. RTCA staff provides technical assistance to community groups and local, state, and federal government agencies working to protect natural areas and water resources and enhance close-to-home outdoor recreation opportunities. We help communities plan, organize partnerships, and achieve on-the-ground success on projects they initiate. By investing in the protection of special places, recreation, tourism, and well planned development, local leaders can bring long-lasting economic and quality of life benefits to their communities.

Current Projects

1. Tennessee River Gorge Recreation and Trail Initiative

Project Partner: Marion County Chamber of Commerce
RTCA Contact: Jeff Duncan
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Project Goal

The Tennessee River Gorge Recreation and Trail Initiative is an effort by a committee of the Marion County Chamber of Commerce to enhance the quality of life of local citizens through the creation of greenways and trails. The Marion County Chamber of Commerce recognizes the importance of their natural assets to both local residents and those who seek to visit the region. Marion County is fortunate to claim within its boundaries a large contiguous section of the Tennessee River Gorge that is primarily owned by the Tennessee Department of Agriculture's Prentice Cooper State Forest, the Tennessee River Gorge Trust, and the Tennessee Valley Authority, each of which support the fundamental notion of increasing public access through trails.

Current recreational uses in the region include hunting, mountain biking, equestrian, trail running, hiking, rock climbing, kayaking, and ATV riding. Preliminary concept plans outline a trail connecting Marion County Park to the Chattanooga Greenway system and TVA's Raccoon Mountain to the Historic Marion County Memorial Bridge totaling approximately 70 miles of trail along the scenic Tennessee River Gorge. The trail will connect Hamilton and Marion counties, both seeking to celebrate their natural assets while enhancing



Campsite Located Along the Tennessee River Photo: Jeff Duncan

RTCA Role

RTCA is partnering with the Tennessee River Gorge Trust and Marion County Greenways and Trails Committee of the Marion County Chamber of Commerce to organize a permanent multiuse user group to make recommendations to public and non-profit land-owners along the Tennessee River Gorge for improved public access and new trail opportunities. This group will be tasked with developing and implementing the River Gorge Recreation Corridor Plan that emphasizes fairness to all user groups as well as public land managers charged with overseeing these lands.

The group will also work to develop a marketing program to promote the region's recreational opportunities, assist local recreation-based businesses to maximize economic returns from increased public use in the region. Assistance will be provided to business start-ups seeking to maximize newly created river gorge trail infrastructure such as canoe and kayak rentals, mountain bike rentals, equestrian center, and private campgrounds, etc.





TENNESSEE



Hiking trail, TN: Photo: Jeff Duncan

PROJECTS AND PARTNERS 2009



1. Tennessee River Gorge Recreation and Trail Initiative Marion County Chamber of Commerce

“The RTCA program in Chattanooga quite simply smoothed the path that led to the creation of Tennessee’s first watertrail- the Tennessee River Blueway. Their staff competently and professionally forged a group of unconnected organizations and individuals into a winning team whose dreams became a reality.”

*-Jim Brown, Executive Director
Tennessee River Gorge Trust*

Recent Successes

Raccoon Mountain Trail System:

In 2006, RTCA staff from the Chattanooga office helped the Southern Off Road Bicycle Association (SORBA) and its partners celebrate the grand opening of the Raccoon Mountain Trail System, an effort involving hundreds of volunteer hours. The all-volunteer effort to develop the trail system currently consists of 15 miles of quality single track that is open to hikers, trail runners, and mountain bikes, and the effort continues to add several more miles to the system.

Partners: Southern Off Road Bicycle Association, Tennessee Valley Authority, City of Chattanooga, Outdoor Chattanooga, International Mountain Bike Association



SORBA’s Greg Laudeman and RTCA’s Jeff Duncan ride the new trail on Raccoon Mountain