



# North Carolina News



A section of the Topsail Beach Kayak Trails. photo by Liz Van Der Clute

## PROJECTS AND PARTNERS 2015



### CURRENT PROJECTS

- 1. Hickory Nut Gorge Trails Coalition**  
Carolina Mountain Land Conservancy
- 2. Topsail Beach Kayak Trails**  
University of North Carolina Wilmington
- 3. Outer Banks Group Regional Water Trails**  
Outer Banks Group

Find out more about each project starting on this page

### ABOUT US

The Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance program is the community assistance arm of the National Park Service. Program staff provide 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.

## Recent Successes

### Topsail Beach Kayak Trails, UNC Wilmington Graduate Students

In partnership with the Town of Topsail Beach, graduate students from the Environmental Studies Department at the University of North Carolina Wilmington recently completed proposals for developing cost effective / low maintenance interpretive signs for three paddle trails surrounding the island of Topsail. The proposals call for a series of buoys with metal QR code tags attached as a method for allowing paddlers to access real-time navigational and educational materials online via smart phone or other code reader device. Use of QR codes provides for ultimate flexibility in implementing and adapting these materials to current trends and updated interpretive material.

## Current Projects

### 1. Hickory Nut Gorge Trails Coalition

Project Partner: Carolina Mountain Land Conservancy

NPS Contact: Charlotte Gillis

Location: Gerton, Hendersonville, Asheville, and Lake Lure

Congressional Districts: NC - 10, 11

#### Project Goal

Plan, build, manage, protect, and promote 50+ miles of public recreational trails in the Hickory Nut Gorge. Hickory Nut Gorge Trails Coalition is a proposed coalition of land conservancies, community organizations, government agencies, trail building

## We're Here For You.

Could your project benefit from NPS Staff Assistance? Contact us to find out.

### Charlotte Gillis

404.507.5692

charlotte\_gillis@nps.gov

### Bill Lane

404.507.5690

bill\_lane@nps.gov

## 2014 Nationwide Partnership Success

3,278.74 Miles of Trail Developed

2,046.25 Miles of River Conserved

9,411.06 Acres of Open Space and Parkland Protected

Find more information online at  
[www.nps.gov/rtca](http://www.nps.gov/rtca)



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# Current Projects cont.

and hiking clubs, small businesses, private landowners, and interested citizens and volunteers working collaboratively for the sustainable development and management of the Hickory Nut Gorge trail system and further protection of its abundant and unique natural resources.

### NPS Role

Assist the Carolina Mountain Land Conservancy in assessing and engaging partners and stakeholders, setting priorities, building consensus, developing an organizational structure, and designing community outreach and participation strategies.

## 2. Topsail Beach Kayak Trails

Project Partner: UNC Wilmington

NPS Contact: Bill Lane

Location: Town of Topsail Beach

Congressional District: NC - 7

### Project Goal

Develop a conceptual plan for developing three kayak trails, water trail interpretive signage, and educational outreach material for local school systems. Through both outreach material and interpretive water trail signage, the project will provide the public with a greater understanding of the fragility and economic importance of a threatened estuarine ecosystem.

### NPS Role

Assist professors and graduate students at UNC Wilmington in developing an interpretive plan for the proposed kayak trail surrounding Topsail Beach. Develop a local "friends of the trail" group in order to gain long-term support for the project.

## 3. Outer Banks Group Regional Water Trails

Project Partner: Outer Banks Group (Cape Hatteras National Seashore, Fort Raleigh National Historic Site, Wright Brothers National Memorial)

NPS Contact: Charlotte Gillis

Location: Dare and Hyde Counties

Congressional District: NC - 3

### Project Goal

Develop a conceptual plan for establishing the first water trails system linking Fort Raleigh National Historic Site, Cape Hatteras National Seashore, and the surrounding communities; develop, designate, and improve existing launch sites and access areas. This project will enhance the connection between the various communities in the region while also promoting the development of related recreational opportunities for economic development.

### NPS Role

Provide support and expertise to reach the following anticipated outcomes for the outer banks region of North Carolina in Dare and Hyde Counties: a coalition of water trail partners to support a regional water trail system; a concept plan; new launch sites and improvements to existing launch sites and access areas; standard signage for launch sites; a maintenance and management plan; and a safety/water rescue plan.



UNC Wilmington graduate students working on final project proposal for Topsail Beach Kayak Trails.

Photo: Liz Van Der Clute