



Conservation Successes – July 2004

Willow Water Hole Park and Trails Groundbreaking

Houston Finds a Silver Lining in the Clouds of Past Floods

Houston, TX (May 26, 2004) -- The Willow Waterhole Greenspace Conservancy, supported by the National Park Service Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance program, is leading a broad-based coalition of grassroots groups and government agencies to develop trails and other amenities around new flood control facilities being installed in the wake of Tropical Storm Allison in underserved areas of Houston. With funding from the National Park Service Land and Water Conservation Fund, US Corps of Engineers, the State of Texas, the Harris County Flood Control District, City of Houston, and private foundations, this coalition is acquiring and developing park facilities around retention ponds which will alleviate future flooding in some of the hardest hit low-income areas of the city. Blighted and abandoned homes and businesses are giving way to new wetlands, habitat for birds and several species of threatened coastal prairie grasses. Trails, picnic areas, and outdoor recreation opportunities are replacing piles of trash and debris.



Ancient live oaks and native grasses will be preserved as part of the Willow Water Hole flood control effort. Photo courtesy Harris County Flood Control District.

In addition to Land and Water Conservation Fund support, the National Park Service provided organizational development, outreach, and technical planning support for what will become a 250+ acre regional park. Speaking at the groundbreaking ceremony under the branches of an ancient oak, Howard Sacks, president of the Willow Waterhole Greenspace Conservancy said, *"(We are) grateful for the relationships we have successfully forged with our partners which assure (us) a prominent and active role in working to secure the future of this outstanding project. We are likewise grateful to the National Park Service, for our organization's strength and vitality are very much the reflection of their guidance and expertise."* For more information, please contact Steve Bonner, Community Planner, at steve_bonner@nps.gov or 512-916-5163.

Surplus Military Parcel Completes Park Ownership

Onslow County gains last parcel within their regional park



Hubert By-Pass Park, November, 2001.
Photo courtesy Bill Huie.

Jacksonville, NC (April 19, 2004) – The National Park Service's Federal Lands to Parks program transferred, at no cost, a 0.99-acre former Marine Corps fire tower site to Onslow County, North Carolina, for public park and recreation use. The property will be maintained as open space to expand the County's popular Hubert By-Pass Park. This parcel, valued at \$14,000, was the only part of Hubert By-Pass Park which was not under County ownership. In 1976, 38 acres was conveyed under the Federal Lands to Parks Program to Onslow County to create Hubert By-Pass Park. The park has been developed with picnic areas, playgrounds, and nature trails. Camp Lejeune Marine Corps Base determined the property to be surplus to their needs and was

pleased when the NPS requested assignment of the property. The transfer was negotiated by NPS Federal Lands to Parks staff. For more information, please contact Bill Huie, Federal Lands to Parks Program Manager, at bill_huie@nps.gov or 404-562-3175.

Ribbon-cutting on Aspen Interpretive Trail

Glennallen Community Gathers to Celebrate "The forest in our backyard"

Glennallen, AK (July 2, 2004) - Residents of the Glennallen area gathered to celebrate the completion of the area's first community trail. The Aspen Interpretive Trail consists of two mile-long loops through mixed forest, wetlands, and meadows on a bluff overlooking the Tazlina and Copper river valleys. Local schoolchildren researched, designed, and built interpretive signs, assisted by the Wrangell Institute for Science and the Environment. Staff from the NPS Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance program worked with the community for two years to identify a good location for the trail, located on Alaska Bible College land, and to develop a cooperative management agreement. Public workshops demonstrated a critical need for summer walking trails off major state highways in this remote community. The project involved many organizations, including the local Chamber of Commerce, the Copper Valley Development Association's Resource Conservation and Development program, the State of Alaska Recreational Trails grant program, the BLM Glennallen field office, and Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve. The result -- a trail suitable for a pleasant walk, with trailhead parking, interpretive signs, and a trail map -- demonstrates how collaboration among community interests, with assistance from state and federal partnership programs, can enhance quality of life for residents and visitors alike. For more information, please contact Cassie Thomas, Outdoor Recreation Planner, at cassie_thomas@nps.gov or 907-644-3590.



Cooperators at Aspen Trailhead. Photo courtesy Cassie Thomas.

Overcoming the Dam

Friends of the West River Trail celebrate the impressive result of years of hard work



Ball Mountain Dam switchbacks. Photo courtesy Jennifer Waite.

Jamaica, VT (June 5, 2004) - Friends of the West River Trail had a momentous National Trails Day, celebrating the completion - after 7 summers' worth of work - of a switchback trail up the face of Ball Mountain Dam. Along with a new bridge over Cobb Brook, and a two-mile accessible trail south from Winhall Campground, the West River Trail now has 13 continuous miles. The new switchback trail on the dam provides a safe pathway for hikers, kayakers and bikers. The site is very popular with rafters and kayakers for exciting whitewater events during spring and fall dam releases. NPS Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance program assistance provided the start for the switchback trail, bridge, and accessible trail portions by working with the public landowners, facilitating the creation of a unified vision, and helping the Friends find funding and other resources for implementation.

Designed by Peter Jensen, hosted by the Army Corps, and built by the Vermont Youth Conservation Corps, the dam switchbacks are a work of art, and a critical link between the village of Jamaica, Jamaica State Park, Ball Mountain Reservoir, Winhall Campground, and the village of South Londonderry.

National Center for Recreation and Conservation programs: Federal Lands to Parks (FLP) - Hydropower Recreation Assistance (HRA) -
- Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) - National Trails System (NTS) - Partnership Wild and Scenic Rivers (PWSR) -
- Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance (RTCA) - Urban Parks and Recreation Recovery (UPARR) -

A plaque at the top of the dam switchbacks reads: *"These heroic and hardy teams made real what only could be imagined. With their bare hands, true grit, heartfelt passion and persistence, they created, stone by stone, inch by inch and bruise by bruise, a true work of art, as awesome as nature itself."* The renovation of an old railroad depot in South Londonderry, recently purchased by the Friends of the West River Trail, will eventually create a welcome center for trail users. For more information, please contact Jennifer Waite, Vermont Projects Director, at jennifer_waite@nps.gov or 802-457-3368 x21.

Allegheny Highlands Trail has ribbon-cutting event

Hosted by USFS and Highlands Trail Foundation

Parsons, WV (June 5, 2004) - On National Trails Day, over 30 people attended the ribbon cutting for the 2.6-mile extension to the Allegheny Highlands Trail. With this new segment, entirely within the Monongahela National Forest boundary, the 23.6-mile rail-trail now runs from Elkins to Hendricks WV, with a 1-mile gap in Parsons. The trail was constructed by the WV Division of Highways, in collaboration with the Highlands Trail Foundation, as part of the bike-ped mitigation for Corridor 'H' highway. Attending the ceremony were Highlands Trail Foundation board members, US Forest Service staff, and local elected officials. The Allegheny Highlands Trail is part of the Allegheny Highlands Trail Partners' (AHTP) concept plan to make trail linkages to the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail at Cumberland, and the Great Allegheny Passage at Frostburg MD. For the last 2 years, the NPS Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance (RTCA) program and Canaan Valley Institute have assisted the AHTP in organizational development, stakeholder identification, mapping, and preparation for a feasibility study. The project is also receiving support from the Appalachian Forest Heritage Area project. For more information, please contact Peggy Pings, NPS RTCA, at mpings@wvu.edu or 304-293-2941 x2446.

Conservation Successes informs Department of Interior staff, conservation partners, and friends about the program successes of the National Center for Recreation and Conservation. For more details, please contact the staff person involved with each project.

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