

Roanoke River Partners, Inc



Congratulations! Ginger Travis completes paddle of the whole Roanoke River

By: Ginger Travis
May 21, 2024

May 21st was a very big day for me. I finished the last six miles - from Plymouth to the Albemarle Sound - of my goal to paddle the Roanoke River 125 miles from Weldon, NC to its mouth. This flatwater stretch starts below the last rapid at Weldon. I did it in three sections with different paddling friends over several years and then this coda, the last six miles, with Cathy Packer, who stopped my dithering and got me out there. The mouth of the Roanoke turned out to be unexpectedly beautiful. I love this river!

Thanks to the three true paddling friends who were with me in this quest: Dawn Dickie Stewart (Scotland Neck to Hamilton), Ingrid Haddon (Hamilton to Plymouth), and Cathy (Weldon to Scotland Neck and Plymouth to the Sound). And thanks to Roanoke River Partners, Inc. for the camping platforms that make river travel so inviting - and for their map that got me dreaming. And IF I COULD DO IT, ANYONE CAN!



Pictured: Ginger Travis



Pictured: Cathy Packer

Ways to Connect:

We invite you to join Roanoke River Partners and become a MEMBER today!

- To join RRP click on Membership at www.roanokeriverpartners.org.
- Or contact us! LIKE us on FACEBOOK.
- DONATE by PayPal

<https://www.paypal.com/us/webapps/mpp/givingfund>

PayPal Giving Fund helps people support their favorite charities online.

- Keep us in mind: We'd be happy to send notice to your friends and loved ones for any donations for: memorials, birthdays, anniversaries, or other special events!
- Volunteer Time: If you are interested in volunteering on the Roanoke River State Trail email us at contact@roanokeriverpartners.org. (We can always use help with river clean-up, campsite maintenance, event help, and spreading awareness.)

Recent Publicity

Gear Patrol:

<https://www.gearpatrol.com/outdoors/adrenalin-e-pumping-adventures-north-carolina/>

Local and Area Newspapers - Press release - First fully designated state trail.

Atlas Obscura - Production of 4 video listicles Unexpected Adventures in North Carolina; promoted on Atlas Obscura's media channels.

<https://www.instagram.com/reel/C6wkuiducIC/>



Holladay Island Campsite



Conine Campsite

Campsites

Since October 2022, Roanoke River Partners, Inc. has redecked/renovated 92 percent of the campsites for the Roanoke River State Trail at a cost of \$222,000 from funds of the NC Complete the Trails Fund.

RRP is in the development phase of new campsites on the Roanoke River. We are appreciative of the landowners that have shared their property for so many years with users of the Roanoke River State Trail. We would like to add sites that will shorten the paddle distance between long- distanced sites. Contact us if you are a Roanoke River landowner and would be interested in additional information.



Weldon Outtake

Stay tuned! The Town of Weldon is renovating their waterfront. A new outtake has recently opened at the NC Wildlife Resources site on the Roanoke River located above the rapids at the foot of the Hwy 301 bridge in Weldon.

Roanoke River State Trail Historic Achievement

On July 10, 2024 the Secretary of Natural and Cultural Resources, Reid Wilson, signed his approval to designate the final 43.6 miles of the Roanoke River State Trail. **The RRST became the first North Carolina State Trail to be officially designated for its entire length.** RRP has been working on the designation process since it was authorized as a NC State Trail by the General Assembly in November 2021.

The paddle trail begins in Roanoke Rapids, N.C., and follows the river to the Albemarle Sound, extending northward to additional accesses in Chowan County. There are 15 designated access points along the approximately 215-mile scenic wilderness trail. Each state trail has a designated managing partner, and for RRST, that is the nonprofit organization Roanoke River Partners, Inc. (RRP), which includes members from each of the six counties in the Roanoke region — Halifax, Northampton, Bertie, Martin, Chowan, and Washington. It is supported by 15 municipalities along the river and also operates and manages over 20 paddle-in camping platforms on the river.

Fun Fact

The North Carolina state parks system welcomed more than 20.1 million visitors in 2023 and acquired over 2,890 acres of new land, according to the N.C. Division of Parks and Recreation. Visitation at state parks increased by 4% — more than 755,000 — from 2022.

Awards



Roanoke River Partners, Inc. gathered with local and state leaders in March 2024 for a check presentation of \$200,000 from the Complete the Trails Fund for trail amenities awarded in the NC State Budget Fall 2023. These funds will further our Rosenwald restoration efforts.

L-R: Parmele Mayor Jerry McCrary, Brent Lubbock, Hamilton Commissioner William Freeman, Hamilton Mayor Ervin Williams, NC Representative Shelly Willingham, Hamilton Commissioner Larry Jackson, Bear Grass Mayor Charlotte Griffin, Anne Lunsford, Martin County Commissioner Chair Dempsey Bond, and Robersonville Mayor Tina Brown

A \$20,000 grant from Dominion Charitable Foundation was awarded to Roanoke River Partners, Inc. in June 2024. More than 4.5 million customers in 13 states energize their homes and businesses with electricity or natural gas from Dominion Energy (NYSE: D). Through its Dominion Energy Charitable Foundation, as well as EnergyShare and other programs, Dominion Energy contributed \$46.7 million in 2023 to community causes. The Foundation supports nonprofit causes that meet basic human needs, protect the environment, promote education, and encourage community vitality. Please visit www.DominionEnergy.com to learn more.



L-R: Charlotte Griffin, Katherine W. Wade, Brent Lubbock, Chase Conner, and Anne Lunsford



L-R: Chase Conner, Charlotte Griffin, Anne Lunsford and Palmer McIntyre



Roanoke River Partners, Inc. received an Impact Award at the Great Trails State Conference on Sept 13, 2024 as the first North Carolina State Trail to be officially designated for its entire length.

The Great Trails State Conference was held in Winston-Salem September 11-13, 2024. The conference brought together more than 300 trail planners, designers and builders, recreational professionals, community and elected leaders, tourism partners, and others from across the state to learn and share best practices to advance trail and greenway development and promotion throughout North Carolina. Chase Conner, Charlotte Griffin and Anne Lunsford were able to represent RRP at the conference due to the generous donation from UPLIFT.



Rosenwald River Center

The Roanoke River Partners, Inc. has been set on “GO” since 2023 to begin renovations of the circa 1920 Hamilton Rosenwald School for use as the headquarters for the Roanoke River Partners, Inc. and the Roanoke River State Trail and as a multi-purpose event site. RRP received an award of \$20,000 in June 2024 from Dominion Charitable Foundation. The cumbersome process for the previously awarded CBDG grant required an environmental review which has FINALLY been completed. The review by the NC Department of Commerce and HUD is being completed. If approved, the next step is RFP, Request for Proposal to solicit bids from qualified contractors. We are closer to our goals as work can be done in phases based on funds available. Our tireless champion, Town of Bear Grass Mayor Charlotte Griffin, continues to push this project forward.

In Memory of Ross M. Steckley - Early Trailblazer



Roanoke River Partners, Inc. and the community is deeply saddened and mourns the loss of early founder, Ross M. Steckley, 67, of Ontario, Canada, who was involved in a single car crash on Highway 17 North of Washington, NC on October 8, 2024. Troopers say the car went off the Ontario highway in a curve.

Crystal Baity, Jamey Gerlaugh, Jeff Horton and Mikki Sager (early RRP board members) shared the following:

Ross was an early architect, a trailblazer, and he really initiated focus on river tourism through the potential he saw in the region which later developed and became the Roanoke River Paddle Trail. He worked in Weldon and was contacted by a group of blind English canoeists that wanted to start in Weldon to take a week to paddle to the Albemarle Sound. Ross set about contacting people along the river to put together a tour for the group. The successful trip was well-received! Ross was instrumental in having the vision and putting people together in our five-county region to explore ecotourism possibilities and infrastructure needs on the Roanoke River. He was such a positive and eager leader in the critical first years of RRP with energy, a smile, and a can-do attitude that was never put off by barriers. He was always encouraging with ideas that were critical in helping shape the trail and also many projects in the towns especially Weldon. Thank you Ross, our friend, for your vision and spirit. May his legacy continue to guide our work.

Roanoke River Partners, Inc. and the community is deeply saddened and mourns the loss of early founder, Ross M. Steckley, 67, of Ontario, Canada, who was involved in a single car crash on Highway 17 north of Washington, NC on October 8, 2024. Troopers say the car went off the highway in a curve.



Roanoke River Partners, Inc.
Post Office Box 488, Windsor, North Carolina 27983-0488
252-792-3790
contact@roanokeriverpartners.org

MEMBERSHIP FORM

Thank you for your interest in Roanoke River Partners (RRP). Through our development and operation of the Roanoke River Paddle Trail and our partnership with small towns along the Roanoke River Region, our organization is furthering its mission of encouraging sustainable economic development in our region through eco-tourism. Would you like to support our actions?

As a member of Roanoke River Partners, Inc. at any level, you'll receive our newsletter and periodic invitations to events.

Complete this form & mail with your check made **payable to: Roanoke River Partners, Inc.** to the above address. If you prefer, you may pay for your membership online by visiting **www.roanokeriverpartners.org**.

Name: _____

Contact Person: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Telephone No: _____ Email: _____

Please select one of the following membership levels (please check one):

- MEMBER.....\$35.00**
- FAMILY MEMBERSHIP.....\$50.00**
- SMALL BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION.....\$100.00**
- COMMUNITY PARTNER.....\$250.00**
- CORPORATE/TDA TOURISM PARTNER.....\$500.00**
- FRIEND OF THE ROANOKE.....\$1,000.00**
- Special Donation for ROSENWALD River Center Project\$_____**

ROANOKE RIVER TOWN Memberships are available with fees based on population.

- **Gift Idea - Contact us! Gift Certificate starting at \$25 dollars?**
--- \$25 for 2 campers for one night; Fees increase \$10/camper per night.
- **We'd be happy to send notice to your friends and loved ones for a donation for: memorials, birthdays, anniversaries, or other special events!**
- **Your tax-deductible donation to RRP of an item that you are no longer using could be a win/win. (old boat, car or truck?)**

Upcoming Regional Events

Bertie County, Windsor

- Roanoke Cashie River Center: paddles on the river - join group paddles or schedule your own. <https://www.partnershipforthesounds.net/roanokecashierivercenter>
- Hoggard Lights in Downtown Windsor - Rascoe Street (new location) - Saturday, November 30, 2024 - Tuesday, December 31, 2024 - 5-9 pm.
- Windsor Christmas Parade - Thursday, December 5, 2024 - 3 pm.
- Historic Hope - Christmas Candlelight Tour - Saturday, December 7, 2024 - 5-8 pm.
- Historic Hope - Open House - Sunday, December 8, 2024 - 1-5 pm. <https://historichope.org/>

Chowan County, Edenton

- Kick-Off To Christmas: Downtown Tree Lighting & Flotilla - Saturday, December 7, 2024 - 3 pm.
- Christmas Candlelight Tour - December 8-9, 2024 - 4-8 pm.
- Pilgrimage Tour of Historic Homes and Sites - April 11-12, 2025 - 10 am-4 pm. <https://visitedenton.com/plan-your-visit/calendar-of-events/>

Halifax County, Halifax

- Friday, December 6 "Yuletide by Lanternlight at Historic Halifax" 4-8 pm. Tickets go on sale Nov. 1st. (252) 583-7191 halifax@ncdcr.gov. <https://www.visithalifax.com/upcoming-events>

Martin County

- <https://exploremartincounty.com/things-to-do/>
- Williamston Christmas Parade - November 23, 2024 - 10am.
- Farm Heritage Day at Martin County Farmers Market - Nov. 23rd - 10 am to 2 pm.
- Jamesville Christmas Parade - Saturday, December 7, 2024 - 11 am.
- Bear Grass Christmas Parade - Saturday, December 14, 2024 - 10 am.
- Oak City Christmas Parade - Saturday, December 14, 2024 - 12 pm.
- Hamilton Christmas Parade - Thursday, December 5, 2024 - 4 pm.
- Meet-Up Paddle: Saturday, April 5, 2025 (rain date: Saturday, April 12, 2025) Meet at Williamston Boat Access, 746 RIVER RD, GPS: 35.8600, -77.0411 at 8:30 am to unload your own boat and then group members will help each other shuttle cars to Astoria Boat Access, 1333 Astoria Drive, Jamesville GPS: 35.8219, -76.9024. Paddle departure time 9 am from Williamston access. The group will paddle through Devil's Gut and end at Astoria Boat Access. Anticipated arrival at Astoria Boat Access 2 pm. 10 mile paddle. Bring your own boat/paddle, life jacket, food, drinks, sunscreen, and proper clothing. Contact person: Email Heather at hnelson1130@gmail.com or Scott at (252) 799-8408 for any weather questions the week of the trip.
- Bear Grass Chicken Mull Festival: - Saturday, October 25, 2025. <https://www.chickenmullfestival.com/>

Northampton County

<https://www.visitnorthamptonnc.com/events.html#lunty>

Washington County, Plymouth

- December 11-14, 2024: Bear Festival's Christmas Laser Light Show - Plymouth Airport - Link (below) for tickets and more information.
- Saturday, December 14, 2024: Bear Festival's "Jingle Bear Christmas Marketplace" - Roanoke River Maritime Museum, 206 W Water St., Plymouth - 8:30 am - 4:00 pm.

- Come for both events!



- North Carolina's only paddlewheel boat, the *Albemarle Queen* is scheduled to resume cruises on the lower Roanoke River from the Port of Plymouth beginning May 1, 2025. These cruises offer dinner and brunch cruises beginning on June 1st through the last cruise in October. <https://www.albemarlequeenevents.com/>
- Opening Spring 2025: New black bear-themed miniature golf course in Downtown Plymouth!
- June 7, 2025: National Black Bear Festival Visit: NationalBearFest.com
- Downtown Development Assoc. hosts a First Friday event each month with food, live music, drive-in car show and free pontoon boat rides in season. Follow them on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/downtownplymouthnc>

RRP Board Members

Dock Boone, Northampton County
Chase Conner, Martin County
Charlotte Griffin, Martin County
Brent Lubbock, Halifax County
Phil Hodges, Martin County
Joe Huff, Bertie County
Jerry M. McCrary, Martin County
Curtis Potter, Washington County
Sheila Powell, Mecklenburg County
Jean Richter, Bertie County
Bruce Tyler, Halifax County
Cathy Wilson, Bertie County
Connor Winstead, Halifax County
Martha Thompson, Emeritus Member, Bertie County
Crystal Baity, Advisory Member, Pitt County
Steve Biggs, Advisory Member, Martin County
Brian Chappell, Advisory Member, Chowan County
Tom Harrison, Advisory Member, Washington County
David M. Head, Advisory Member, Wake County
Jeff Horton, Advisory Member, Wake County
Aaron J. McCall, Advisory Member, Dare County
Lori Medlin, Advisory Member, Halifax County
Erienne Mizell, Advisory Member, Chowan County
Victoria Newcombe, Advisory Member, Northampton Co.
Bailey Phelps, Advisory Member, Martin County
Smith Raynor, Advisory Member, Wake County
David (Dave) C. Schwartz, Advisory Member, Pitt County
Carol J. Shields, Advisory Member, Halifax County

Staff

Anne C. Lunsford, Paddle & Financial Coordinator

Roanoke River Partners, Inc.

PO Box 488, Windsor, NC 27983
252-792-3790

contact@roanokeriverpartners.org
www.roanokeriverpartners.org

**We would like to send
continued prayers for
recovery efforts in
Western North Carolina!**

