



Tobacco Heritage Trail Management Plan

Roanoke River Rails to Trails, Inc.

Adopted January 26, 2009

Tobacco Heritage Trail Management Plan

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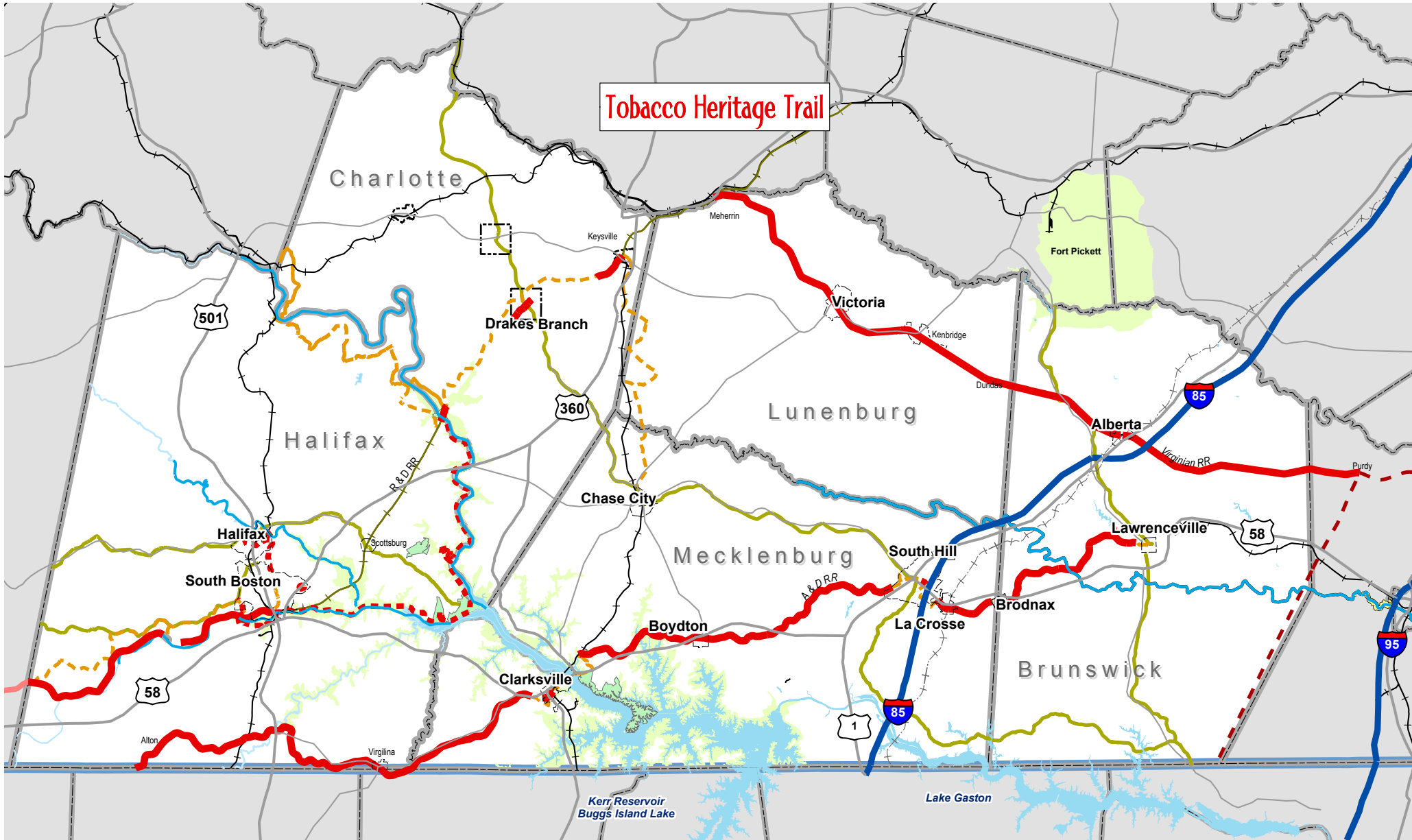
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Tobacco Heritage Trail



	Blueway		OffRoad Non-Rail		Bike Route		Lakes
	Rail-Trail		Potential Trail with Rail		Rivers		State Parks (DCR)
	Existing Rail-Trail		VA Beach Pipeline		VA Scenic Byway		ACOE / DOD Property

Tobacco Heritage Trail Management Plan

Chapter 1: Introduction

A. Purpose of Plan

The purpose of this Management Plan is to establish a management framework for the Tobacco Heritage Trail. The Plan will serve as a policy document, and provide guidance on future trail construction, management, maintenance, and operations. The Plan will also identify tasks, parties responsible, design standards and policy guidelines, and provide model agreements to formalize the roles and responsibilities of the RRRT Board, local jurisdictions, and Friends Groups in managing the trail.

B. Background

In 2004, **Roanoke River Rails to Trails, Inc.**, a consortium of Southern Virginia localities, organized to facilitate acquisition and development of the abandoned railroad rights-of-way in the area in order to create a major long distance off-road recreational trails network. The group has formed as a 501 (c) 3 corporation with representation from the region’s localities. In recognition of the importance of the tobacco industry to the development of Southside Virginia and its agricultural history, the trails network will be known as the *Tobacco Heritage Trail*.

Roanoke River Rails to Trails Mission:

- To enrich Southside Virginia’s communities and countryside by creating a regional network of public trails from former rail lines and connecting corridors.
- To develop plans for the establishment and development of recreation, transportation, historic preservation, economic revitalization, open-space conservation and wildlife preservation trails for the enjoyment and use of the general public.

C. Related Documents:

2007 Virginia Outdoors Plan

Overall Tobacco Heritage Trail Master Plan

Easement Agreement between RRRT & DCR

Southside PDC Bike/Pedestrian Plan—Brunswick, Mecklenburg & Halifax Counties

D. Member Jurisdictions *September 2008*

Town of Alberta	Town of Boydton	Town of Brodnax
Brunswick County	Town of Chase City	Charlotte County
Town of Clarksville	Town of Drakes Branch	Halifax County
Town of Halifax	Town of La Crosse	Town of Lawrenceville
Lunenburg County	Mecklenburg County	Town of South Boston
Town of South Hill	Town of Victoria	

Chapter 2: Trail Use Policies

A. Permitted Uses:

(1) All non-motorized trail uses will be allowed including walking/jogging, bicycling, horseback riding, strollers and rollerblades. Towns may decide to implement limitations on some of these uses within their boundaries where higher rates of usage are anticipated.

(2) Horse drawn wagons or carts will be allowed, provided that they are drawn by teams of one or two horses. The use of larger wagons drawn by 4-horse teams will only be allowed by Trail Use Permit. [Chapter 3, Trail Policy Administration & Permits]

(3) The only motorized use allowed on the trail is for emergency access, police patrol or maintenance vehicles. Any event that requires support from motorized vehicles will require a Trail Use Permit. [Chapter 3, Trail Policy Administration & Permits]

B. Prohibited Uses

(1) Motorized vehicles, other than those for maintenance, police, fire, and rescue, are prohibited from using the trail.

(2) Overnight camping and campfires are prohibited except in designated areas.

(3) Hunting on the trail right-of-way is prohibited.

(4) All new road crossing and utility crossings are prohibited, unless they meet the requirements in Section D below.

C. Grandfathered Use (Existing Crossings)

This clause is to allow current property owners to continue to access their property across the trail right-of-way. Grandfathered lots include any lot recorded prior to June 26, 2006, that is currently accessed via a private drive over the trail right-of-way. The property owner may continue to use the driveway for access, unless the property is subdivided, or there is a change in the use of the property. The private access drive must also remain in its current condition and not upgraded to accommodate a larger volume or higher speed on the roadway. If any of the above conditions occur, the action will be considered “new road construction” and the property owner must request a permit as specified in the following section. (See Section D. New Crossing/Access)

D. New Crossing / Access Policy

For the safety and enjoyment of the trail users, the policy of the RRRT Board is that there be as few crossings of the trail corridor as possible. RRRT may consider extinguishing one or more existing crossings in exchange for a permanent driveway crossing, and/or apply conditions for use when issuing permits. RRRT recognizes that there may be extenuating circumstances in which a trail crossing may be necessary, however, any new crossing must meet the requirements of this section as described below.

1. No new roads, driveways, farm access, above ground or below ground utility will be allowed to cross the trail right-of-way unless the following conditions are met.

(1) it is proven to the RRRT Board that there is an absolute need for the road or utility in order to address a public health, safety or welfare concern, and

(2) it is proven to the RRRT Board there is no feasible alternative, and
(3) it is proven to the RRRT Board that all possible planning has been carried out to minimize adverse and harmful effects to the trail corridor which would result from such roads or utility.

2. RRRT Board retains the right in the case of a proposed private road, to allow crossing the trail right-of-way if there exists in the judgment of the RRRT Board an overwhelming need for access arising from a compelling claim of "right by necessity" or "right by prior use."
3. In all cases where a road crossing is permitted, the road must be designed and built by the sponsor of the road project to standards approved by the RRRT Board and at no cost to RRRT. In addition, at its sole discretion, RRRT may grant approvals for new or improved road projects in "exchange" for the elimination or substantial upgrading of an existing road, provided the net result is an overall gain in trail function or usefulness.

E. Agricultural/Forestry Policy RRRT Board will work collaboratively with adjacent property owners that are actively engaged in agricultural or forestry operations to ensure that trail activities do not disrupt historical agricultural uses, and that adjacent uses will not interfere with the recreational use of the corridor. As additional sections of trail are constructed, RRRT Board will work collaboratively with property owners to identify reasonable locations for agricultural and forestry equipment to cross the trail corridor. RRRT may establish seasonal or time limitations or other conditions in order to address potential safety concerns.

F. Hunting Policy

As specified in Chapter 2, Section B., hunting will not be allowed or permitted on trail corridor land, however RRRT recognizes that hunting may occur on private property adjacent to the trail. Hunters that hunt on adjacent properties will be allowed to cross over the trail, but all firearms must be unloaded prior to crossing the trail property. In order to effectively and equitably implement this policy and manage hunting activity near and/or adjacent to the trail corridor, RRRT will take the following actions:

1. RRRT Board retains the right to allow use of private vehicles on the trail right of way through issuance of a trail use permit based on conditions negotiated with the Board, in order to access hunting land, and/or retrieve and release dogs. The permit will be issued annually, and may be revoked if conditions of the permit are violated. The permit will specify the days and time of day that vehicles will be permitted on the Trail.
2. RRRT will enlist the advice and work with the Virginia Game Warden to develop best practice guidelines in collaboration with hunt clubs and methods for expanding outreach and education to both hunters and trail users.
3. To ensure trail policy is effectively communicated to trail users, hunters, adjacent property owners and the general public, trail policy and safety guidelines will be posted at trailheads, included on the trail website, and distributed through other means and communication networks.

G. Trail Events

A “Trail Event” is defined as a presentation, program or activity that is recreational, entertaining, or celebratory in nature, such as bike rides, walks, tours, etc., or any gathering or activity which attracts the public i.e. festivals, concerts, etc. Trail events are allowed on the trail however the convening party of any large events or activity involving a significant number of participants should contact and coordinate with local jurisdictions. Local contact information may be found in Appendix C.

H. Hours of Operation:

The THT will be open from dawn until dusk, seven days a week throughout the year. RRRT will work with law enforcement entities in each jurisdiction to enforce trail policy and ensure the trail is adequately patrolled. Any temporary closer due to storm damage, hazardous conditions, or other activities on the trail will be posted at trailheads and information provided on the trail website.

I. Encroachments and Non-Conforming Uses

The following process will be used to address any encroachments or non-conforming uses found to impact the trail right-of-way.

(1) The RRRT Board shall take reasonable steps to periodically inspect the trail corridor to ensure compliance with the policies outlined in this Management Plan.

(2) If an encroachment or other condition is found that appears to be in violation of the trail uses permitted, the RRRT Board will notify the Department of Conservation and Recreation and request a formal review and determination of compliance, as well as any recommended corrective action(s).

(3) In the event that a circumstance of non-compliance is found (based on a joint review by RRRT and DCR), the responsible party shall be sent a notice of non-compliance via certified mail and demand corrective action be taken to restore the trail corridor to its previous condition. The responsible party will be given ninety (90) days from the receipt of the notice of non-compliance to comply, or request an extension if deemed appropriate by the RRRT Board.

(4) All measures to negotiate a voluntary corrective action will be taken. If the encroachment or non-conforming use is not corrected voluntarily, within ninety (90) days or the end of the granted extension period, the RRRT Board may take appropriate legal action.

Chapter 3. Trail Permits and Policy Administration

Unless properly managed, some allowed trail uses may present a concern for the health, safety, and welfare of trail users and/or the general public. The RRRT has developed the following Trail Use Permit process to manage these activities. The process, procedures, roles and responsibilities for managing these uses are outlined in the following section.

A. Uses and Activities Requiring a Trail Use Permit

The following activities will require a Trail Use Permit issued by RRRT.

1. New access or upgrades to existing access - roads, driveways, farm use
2. Easements – under- or above-ground utilities, parking
3. Crossing for timber harvesting or farming
4. Hunting - access to lands adjacent to the trail for hunting and/or use of motorized vehicles to retrieve and release dogs
5. The use of horse-drawn wagons drawn by a team of 4 horses or larger.
6. The use of motorized vehicles, other than those used for emergency response or police patrol, to support special trail events such as trail or bicycle rides involving a significant number of participants.
7. Any other uses not specifically allowed by use or special exception will be considered case-by-case.

B. Trail Permit Scope and Content

The permit will specify the details of the activities allowed under the permit, any restrictions or conditions, and effective date of the permit. Permits for road crossings and easements will be reviewed and issued on a one-time basis. Permits for timber harvesting or to access adjacent hunting areas will be issued on an annual basis, and will specify specific day of the week and/or times of day in which access will be permitted. Permits may be revoked if conditions of the permit are violated.

C. RRRT Policy Review Teams

Four “Policy Review Teams” will be established by the RRRT Board, based on jurisdictional boundaries, to administer the policies outlined in this Plan. The committee approach will allow for a more timely review of applications, and more efficient use of the RRRT Board meeting time. The role of the Policy Review Team (PRT) will be to review Trail Use Permit applications and make recommendations to the full RRRT Board of Directors, as to approval or denial of the permit. The teams will consist of RRRT Board members (or their designee) and advisors, as follows:

PRT #1: Brunswick County: Board Members representing: Brunswick Co., Lawrenceville, Brodnax, Alberta

PRT #2: Mecklenburg County: Board Members representing: Mecklenburg Co., South Hill, Boydton, Clarksville, La Crosse, Chase City

PRT #3: Halifax County: Board Members representing: Halifax Co., South Boston, Halifax

PRT #4: Lunenburg and Charlotte: Board Members representing: Lunenburg Co., Charlotte Co., Victoria, Drakes Branch

RRRT Board Advisors: VDOT, DCR, DOF, DGIF, Planning and or Zoning Directors from local jurisdictions

D. Trail Policy Review Process

(1) Any individual or organization requesting an activity or use of the trail right-of-way that requires a permit, should submit a Trail Permit application to the RRRT Board. Permit applications must be received at least 30 days prior to the next quarterly Board meeting.

(See Appendix A, Trail Permit Application Form)

(2) The permit application will be forwarded by the RRRT Board Chair (or designee) to the Board Member representing the jurisdiction where the site of the permit is requested; and RRRT Board Chair (or designee) will also notify the committee of the application.

(3) For each permit request, the Board Member representing the jurisdiction where the site is located, will serve as Acting Committee Chair, and convene a meeting and site visit to review, assess, and develop a recommendation for consideration by the full Board at their next meeting. A minimum of 3 committee members must participate in the permit review process. Other advisors may be consulted, as needed.

(4) The Committee Chair will submit the committee's report and findings to the Board with a recommendation of approval or denial. The Committee may offer suggestions for conditional approval. Final action will be taken by the board and recorded in the Board Meeting Minutes. A copy of the Policy Review Team report will be filed in the Board's organizational documents.

E. Application Fee

There is no cost associated with applying for a Trail Permit.

Chapter 4: Trail Design Standards

A coordinated approach to trail corridor design is essential, in order to maintain a uniform identifiable appearance for the Tobacco Heritage Trail. Under certain circumstances variations may be desirable to highlight unique cultural or physical characteristics. The following section provides general standards for final design of the trail corridor including amenities, signage, and trail access.

A. Trail Dimensions

Unless otherwise stated, the Tobacco Heritage Trail is intended for multiple user groups to include, at a minimum, pedestrian, bicycle and equestrian use. Therefore the trail surface, width and clearances are set accordingly.

(1) **Trail Surface Width:** The off-road Tobacco Heritage Trail surface will be a minimum of 10-foot wide. A 12-foot-wide trail width is recommended in higher traffic areas if space is available; 14-foot-wide is preferred where use is expected to be of high volume.

(2) **Trail Clear Zones:** Vertical and horizontal clear zones for trails are required above the trail surface and along the edges of the trail. The off-road Tobacco Heritage Trail shall have a minimum 2-foot clear zone on each side of the trail, although 3 feet is more desirable. Vertical clearance is also required to prevent trail users from hitting overhanging objects such as tree limbs or signs. Since the trail is being designed to accommodate equestrians, the vertical clearance will be 12-foot. If possible, to retard grass and underbrush growth, trail area should not be cleared more than 3-foot on each side of trail surface (16').

B. Trail Surface

If the railroad ballast is still present, additional sub base may not be needed. Standard construction is 1" surface material (#10 stone) compacted to 95% over 6" of VDOT #21-A stone over compacted sub-grade or existing railroad ballast.

Final Trail Design Standards

Component	Design Standard
Vertical Clearance	10 feet; 8 if for bicycles only
Trail (Surface) Width	10 minimum; up to 14' if needed
Horizontal Clearance beyond trail width	2' minimum trees/rocks; 3' limbs/brush
Grade	3 - 5 %; maximum sustained. 8 – 10%
Tread Surface	Relatively smooth; fine or compacted material: See cross sections in Appendix B, Design Guidelines.

C. Traffic Control

(1) Bollards—Bollards and or other mechanism to prohibit unauthorized access by motorized vehicles must be provided in accordance with the standards shown in Appendix B. Design Guidelines. A center locking or retractable bollard or some other method to allow emergency access is required. See Appendix B Design Guidelines, Figure 17 for recommended placement and construction.

(2) Regulatory & Warning Signs: Crossings of state maintained highways must meet VDOT minimum requirements for signage.

D. ADA

There are currently no official ADA guidelines specifically for trails. To accommodate wheelchairs and those with mobility limitations, a firm stable surface is needed for accessibility. Hardened gravel surfaces such as the THT trail and parking areas will be are considered to be ADA compliant. Braille signage and sensory enhanced trail components such as fragrant plantings may be added and would be encouraged as club or volunteer projects.

E. Trail Amenities

(1) Restrooms: Restroom facilities should be developed at primary trailheads. In more rural areas, SSTs (Sweet Smelling Toilets) should be considered as funding becomes available, particularly in areas without access to commercial facilities that provide water, phones and restrooms. Restrooms are currently available to trail users at the Prizery in South Boston.

(2) Benches: Benches should be provided along the trail at intervals of 1 mile to 1 ½ miles. The bench type should be sturdy, low maintenance and vandal resistant. Benches should be located well away from the trail edge (6-10' minimum).

F. Signage

Signs shall be installed in accordance with the Tobacco Heritage Trail Overall Master Plan, and content and appearance approved by the RRRT Board or sub-committee. To enhance the Trail experience, signs should be kept to a minimum consistent with safety, visual quality, and the requirement for providing regulatory, warning vocational, directional, and interpretive information for users. Signs located at primary accesses shall provide information regarding whom to call in the event of crime, accident, or illegal dumping.

(1) Kiosks or vertical enclosed information boards should be located at primary access points and rest areas, and contain a detailed map of the trail, a summary of regulations, safety advice, location and directional information, emergency telephone numbers, and management telephone numbers. A suggested design for kiosk structures is attached (Trail Design Appendix B).

(2) Waysides/Interpretive Signs may be installed to provide information on the natural and cultural features along the corridor.

(3) Trail Mileage Markers will be installed to indicate trail mileage at intervals of at least one-quarter mile along the corridor. The point of origination (mile marker 0) will be located at Lawrenceville for the former A&D or NF&D railroad corridor, at South Boston for the R&D corridor, and at Purdy for the former Virginian corridor.

G. Trailhead Access Design

Trailheads are defined as access points to the trail that also include one or more amenities, such as identification signs, display maps, information kiosks, parking, benches, picnic table, and landscaping. Trailheads serve as focal points for the trail, adding to the aesthetic character of the trails while providing information and a place for trail users to take a break. The varied types of trail users must be remembered when providing amenities. These should include bike racks. For the equestrian user, facilities may include, hitching posts, water troughs, and corral area. Parking areas that will include horse trailers must be sized appropriately.

At a minimum all trailheads must have identification signage, posted rules, and emergency contact information. If trailhead is located in an area served by garbage pickup, trash receptacles should be provided. Otherwise the THT should be a “Trash Free Park” or “Trash in, Trash out.” See the THT Overall Master Plan for specific guidelines.

(1) Trailhead Levels

The level of trailhead facilities will determine type or quantity of facilities/furnishings provided and minimum requirements.

- Level I or Primary Trailhead sites are points with well-developed trailhead access i.e. safe ingress/egress from primary transportation corridors, parking, and site services. They are sites that will have the highest levels of use from trail users, and high visitor traffic numbers for other uses such as fishing, birdwatching, boating, heritage education, or picnicking.
- Level II or Trail Access Area sites are access points with developed parking areas but will have less usage than priority one sites due to their locations or services (i.e. not on primary roadway; limited or no services). The primary visitors will be trail users. These sites are still important as they are near heritage attractions or other important natural/cultural features.
- Level III or Community Access sites are access points that will receive low usage, have poor parking facilities, are difficult to find, and/or serve only local communities rather than tourists.

Existing Trailheads:

Name/location	Trail segment served	Facilities	Level
The Prizery, South Boston	R&D Greenway	Parking, showers, restrooms, information; Future parking at Cotton Mill Park—Level II	I
Regional Airport Road	A&D Trail	Horse trailer parking, vehicular spaces	II
La Crosse Town Parking lot/Centennial Park	A&D Trail	Paved parking shared weekdays with Virginia Quilting. Future additional parking and restrooms to be provided at La Crosse Hotel	I
Lawrenceville Water Treatment Plant	A&D Trail	Temporary parking facilities. Permanent facilities to be provided at Turntable Park—Level I.	I

The location of additional trailhead access points and the types of facilities and amenities offered will be decided by the RRRT Board and local jurisdiction partners during future planning and site development phases. See the THT Master Plan for potential trailhead locations.

Chapter 5. Trail Development Process and Phasing

The Tobacco Heritage Trail is a long-term and far-reaching initiative to improve the quality of life for all the citizens of Southside Virginia. In the short term, RRRT will focus on completing Phase I trail segments to demonstrate on-the-ground success. Once Phase I trail segments are operational, RRRT will expand its focus to new segments and work throughout the region to market the concept of an interconnected system linking the towns and other areas.

The following chapter provides guidelines and a process for trail development. The underlying principle is to develop local project successes within each planning region, evaluate the use and community support, and then proceed accordingly with additional fundraising, trail planning and trail construction for remaining trail sections. A process and guidelines for designating interim trail is also provided.

A. Partnerships with Local Governments

The THT travels through numerous local jurisdictions, each with their unique mix of assets, capabilities, needs, goals, and political priorities. Trail development strategies must be sensitive to local conditions, responsive to community needs, and flexible, since “one size will not fit all.” In order to maintain and enhance communication with local stakeholders, the following approach is suggested.

Upon completion of the Tobacco Heritage Trail Master Plan, RRRT Board members will:

- 1.) Make presentations to their local elected leaders and governing bodies to update them on progress and re-iterate the local benefits to communities
- 2.) Offer to work with county staff and elected leaders to incorporate the THT Master Plan into town master plans and county comprehensive plans
- 3.) Invite suggestions, comments, and on-going dialogue on local needs/interests, trail benefits and opportunities for partnership
- 4.) Work collaboratively with elected officials, boards and commissions, citizens and non-profits to identify and prioritize trail segments in their region; and assist with trail development and coordination tasks including:
 - a) Identify funding opportunities in the form of grants, donations, or capital improvement funding.
 - b) Work with the PDC to conduct research on legal ownership and/or existing easements and resolve issues related to trail right-of-way for each trail section.
 - c) Identify individuals or entity interested in constructing and/or maintaining trail segments.
 - d) Coordinate with entities responsible for law enforcement and emergency services for each trail segment.

B. Interim Trail Designation Requirements

Some segments of the THT network are in good condition (or could be upgraded with minimum cost), have local community support, and could be developed and maintained at a minimum standard to allow for safe use by the public. In these situations, the RRRT Board may grant approval for a trail segment to open under an “Interim Trail” designation. The RRRT Board may waive some of the design standards identified in this management plan, provided the trail meets the following minimum requirements:

1. Environmental Compliance: Interim trail segments must follow proper E&S procedures when/if grading or filling.
2. Trail Access: Parking/trailhead must be provided if interim trail is not connected to an existing trail segment and trailhead, so as not to impact adjacent property owners.
3. Safety and Security: The trail segment must be secured with gates at the trailhead locations (with or without bollards) to only allow non-motorized activity on the trail. Local police, sheriffs departments, and/or emergency response must be advised of the trail opening, and have must have access to any gated areas of the trail.
4. Maintenance Agreement: A signed agreement between RRRT and the trail maintainer(s) must be completed that identifies the party or parties responsible for maintaining the trail segment. In the event that 2 parties are involved in maintenance (e.g. a local jurisdiction and a friends group, civic organization or interested citizen) a 3-way agreement between RRRT, the local jurisdiction, and the third party may be used (sample attached).
5. Inspections: The trail segment must be periodically inspected to ensure there are no surface hazards i.e. wash-outs, down trees, etc, the corridor will be mowed and vegetation on the sides of the trail will be trimmed to maintain a cleared pathway.
6. Signage: Signs must be installed that identifies the trail as an “interim” segment of the THT. Any required regulatory signs (stop signs at road crossings) will be placed on the trail prior to opening.
7. Trail Maintenance Standards: The trail segment must be maintained to a minimum design standard defined as a cleared path on the existing rail bed surface, as specified in the table below:

Interim Trail Design Minimum Standards

Component	Design Standard
Vertical Clearance	10 feet
Trail (Surface) Width	10 minimum; up to 14’ if needed
Horizontal Clearance beyond trail width	2’ minimum trees/rocks; 3’ limbs/brush
Grade	3 - 5 %; maximum sustained 8 – 10%
Tread Surface	Stable, natural surface, free of holes, ruts; stubble cut flush with ground surface.

C. Trail Designation Process

The RRRT Board may consider requests on a case-by-case basis from public, private, or non-profit entities to construct a segment of trail in an interim status. The trail must be maintained in a safe and satisfactory condition and comply with minimum design standards as outlined in this chapter. In order to maintain an accurate record of opened trail segments, and parties responsible for maintenance, the following process has been established. In addition, a checklist has been developed for use by the RRRT Board to ensure all issues have been addressed prior to opening interim trail segments (See Appendix A Trail Designation Checklist)

1. The Board receives either a verbal or written inquiry from a citizen or organization, expressing interest to open a segment under an “interim trail designation.” The requestor is provided a copy of the Trail Designation Checklist (Appendix A) as well as the name and contact information for the appropriate RRRT Board member representing his/her jurisdiction.
2. Should the requestor decide to apply for interim trail designation, he/she will work with the RRRT Board representative to complete the interim trail designation checklist and prepare a summary for the RRRT Board’s review. Task may include the following:
 - a) Conduct a site visit with the RRRT Board rep to provide a better understand of the setting, access, and other conditions impacting trail operations;
 - b) Meet with trail maintainer(s) to determine compliance with trail design standards and maintenance requirements;
 - c) Seek advice from the RRRT Board, county/town planners, VDOT, and/or state agency staff to resolve any issues related to interim trail requirements.
3. Once all issues have been adequately addressed, the RRRT Board rep will place the applicant’s request on the agenda of the next Quarterly RRRT Board meeting. The RRRT Board will vote on the request taking into consideration the recommendations of the RRRT Board representative.
4. If the request is approved, the applicant will be notified that he may proceed with plans to clear/construct and open the trail. The RRRT Board member jurisdiction rep (or designee) is responsible for establishing a timetable for trail construction tasks with the applicant, and notify the RRRT Board when the trail is officially opened.
5. Promotional materials, website, and other communications will clearly identify “interim” trail segments so that visitors will be aware of and prepared for conditions found on the trail.
6. The RRRT Board member jurisdiction rep (or designee) is responsible for conducting an annual review of all opened trail segments to ensure compliance with interim trail standards, and completing an Annual Review Form for the file.

Note: If the request is not approved, the applicant will be provided information on why the application was not in compliance with interim trail requirements, and will be offered the opportunity to address those issues and re-apply.

Chapter 6. Trail Maintenance

Due to the extensive geographic area that the trail covers, day-to-day operations will require decision-making close to the ground, while complying with the broader vision and image of the regional network. In order to accomplish this task, the RRRT Board will work closely with local jurisdictions, partner groups, and citizens to conduct trail maintenance activities as specified in this plan. This chapter discusses resources and responsibilities for maintaining trail segments, establishes an Adopt-A-Trail Program to assist in maintenance tasks, and provides minimum trail maintenance standards.

A. Trail Maintenance Resources and Partners

1. Local Governments: The towns of La Crosse and Lawrenceville, and South Boston, have all offered to maintain the segments of trail within their boundaries and in some cases, nearby adjacent segments. The trail segments are viewed as town amenities, and the towns have the capability to utilize town staff, equipment and supplies already available for maintaining other parks and public areas. For segments of the THT located outside of the town, in adjacent counties, opportunities should be explored for partnerships with the towns and/or other private or non-profit entities.

2. Prison Labor: Numerous communities have been able to take advantage of inmate crews to perform trail construction or maintenance tasks. Localities may coordinate these efforts with the local sheriff or prison superintendent. Community Service Restitution Programs (i.e. community service hours required by the judicial system) is another avenue for volunteer labor.

3. Department of Defense Programs

The Army Corps of Engineers and National Guard may be a potential resource for construction expertise.

4. Volunteers / Civic Groups: There is a wealth of volunteer interest in supporting trail maintenance tasks such as mowing, pruning, and trash pick-up. The Friends of Lake County Trails, Southside Saddle Club, and Halifax Friends of the Trail are some of the groups that have expressed an interest in assisting with the Tobacco Heritage Trail in their areas.

As new segments of the trail are established, the RRRT Board will continue to explore new partnership opportunities and tap into the various civic groups and community organizations through out the region including the following:

- Girl and Boy Scout troops
- Youth groups and sports leagues
- School Groups service-learning programs, honor pro grams,
- Senior groups (AARP, Retired Executives, Retired Teacher Associations)
- Churches and religious organizations
- Service organizations such as Ruritans, Rotary and Lion's Clubs
- Trade and Professional and Business Associations
- Small business and corporations
- Chamber of Commerce
- Local Colleges and Universities
- Hiking, biking and equestrian riding groups

AmeriCorps programs

B. Community Liaison / Point of Contact

Each RRRT Board member (or designee) will serve as liaison to the surrounding community. The liaison is responsible for responding to community concerns and other management and maintenance issues as they arise, i.e. graffiti, drainage issues, storm damage/blow-outs. The liaison will determine the nature of the complaint and work with the RRRT Board and or trail maintenance party on corrective actions. Contact information may be found in Appendix C.

C. Adopt a Trail Program

The Tobacco Heritage Trail “Adopt a Trail” Program has been developed as a mechanism to allow both individuals and groups to assist with trail maintenance.

1) Roles and Responsibilities: The roles and responsibilities of both the trail manager and volunteer group will be specified in the Adopt-A Trail Agreement (sample attached). The primary duties and obligations are as follows:

- Prior to undertaking any activities, the Trail Adopter must complete and sign a Volunteer Maintenance Agreement that specifies work to be completed, location and times of activities. Typical activities include light maintenance work, such as litter pickup, mowing, brush control, cutting, trimming, planting, maintaining vegetation, leveling of the trail area and minor repairs of signs, trail markers, kiosks and other trail facilities.
- The Trail Adopter will oversee all activities of volunteers working on the trail, and ensure that minors (ages 12-17) are supervised at all times.
- Each participant must read and sign a Volunteer Liability Waiver and Safety Checklist. The Trail Adopter is responsible for providing a first aid kit, mobile phone, and adequate drinking water during trail activities.
- Hand tools and other required materials will be provided by the Trail Adopter. Work that requires heavy machinery (including chainsaws) or cutting of trees larger than 6 inches in diameter will require special approval by RRRT. RRRT will supply trash bags and arrange for trash disposal and recycling.
- The volunteer agreement may be cancelled at any time by the Trail Adopter or RRRT, with 30 days written notice to the other party. The agreement may be renewable as long as the Trail Adopter has functioned in accordance with the previous agreement.

2) Monitoring and Recording Hours: The Trail adopter will be responsible for tracking hours, maintaining a volunteer log, filing volunteer waiver forms, and reporting the accomplishments of each volunteer activity. (forms attached Appendix A)

3) Liability: See Chapter 5, Section E.

D. Minimum Maintenance Standards

The RRRT Board has established the following minimum maintenance standards to ensure the trail property is maintained in a consistent manner throughout the corridor.

Minimum Maintenance Standards	
Trail inspections	Formal—Annual inspection; monthly during active season—March through September; every other month remainder Informal—Ongoing in conjunction with other trail maintenance tasks.
Turf mowing	As needed during growing season. Monthly suggested.
Bank mowing	Annually
Litter	Trail clean-ups will be done monthly or as needed to maintain trail appearance.
Graffiti removal	Within 24 hours if offensive; within 14 days if not offensive.
Tree brush removal	Immediately in emergency situations; constant evaluations during inspections
Trail surface, Drainage/shoulder repair	As needed; constant evaluation during inspections
Signs	Replaced as needed due to age or vandalism
Trail amenities	Monthly inspections, repairs as needed
Landscape areas	Monthly inspections and routine upkeep as needed based on vegetation requirements
Trash pick-up	Schedule to be established locally based on jurisdictional procedures

Chapter 7. Trail Management Structure

Management of the Tobacco Heritage Trail will be accomplished through a cooperative management structure, requiring the resources and assistance of numerous collaborating entities. The Roanoke River Rails-to-Trails Board will provide oversight and coordination, with day-to-day operational and administrative tasks performed by local governments and/or volunteer groups. This strategy will allow for leveraging the financial and labor resources of various agencies to manage multiple lengths of the trail. This will also allow local jurisdictions the flexibility to address site-specific conditions, while accomplishing the overall goal of a unified trail system.

A. RRRT Board Roles and Responsibilities

- 1) Policy Administration: The RRRT Board will serve as the final authority on all matters related to administration of the trail. The Board will provide a venue for discussion and decisions related to matters of polices outlined in the THT Management Plan.
- 2) Central Authority/Liaison: The RRRT Board will be the entity responsible for requesting assistance from state or legal authorities when needed.
- 3) Coordination: The RRRT Board will also serve as a forum for information exchange, and reviewing progress among the various agencies involved in trail management. If necessary, the Board may organize ad-hoc or standing committees to address management and operational issues as they arise. The RRRT Board will continue to coordinate multi-jurisdictional operations, when feasible, to take advantage of economies of scale (i.e. bulk ordering signs, major capital outlays for infrastructure such as bridges or underpasses, etc).
- 4) Funding and Fiscal Management: The RRRT Board will continue to take the lead in applying for and managing grants to construct the trail. The RRRT Board will also be responsible for identifying additional sources of funding for trail maintenance and operations through volunteers, corporate partners, or partnerships with local governments.
- 5) Central File Management: The RRRT Board will serve as the central clearinghouse and official document repository for all decisions related to the trail. Copies of interim trail designation reports, permits issued, and policy decisions will be maintained for future reference. As the miles of opened trail increases, the Board may need to hire a Trail Manager/Administrator to manage this process, as well as serve as the key point of contact for trail information.

B. Volunteers

Volunteers bring a wealth of skills, enthusiasm and commitment to assist in accomplishing routine trail maintenance, clean up, and visitor service functions, as well as deterring criminal activity. RRRT will utilize volunteer programs, in an effort to provide the best level of service and safety to users of the trail. Volunteer activities may be through a friends group or an individual that wishes to lend support to trail outreach, maintenance, and operations. Potential volunteer projects may include:

Trail Maintenance and Enhancements

- Routine maintenance, mowing and trash clean-up

- Landscaping and weed control
- Amenity construction and installation (i.e. signs, bollards, trail markers, benches, landscaping, etc)
- Trail building

Trail Operations and Programs

- Trail bike patrols
- Youth liaison/programs
- Organizing trail events and interpretive programs
- Serving as field trip leader
- Volunteer management

Office / Administrative Projects

- Fundraising and grant writing
- Development of a trail newsletter and promotional materials
- Exhibit preparation
- Research/data collecting
- Creating GIS maps and graphics
- Maintenance of the trail website
- Membership outreach

C. Legal Issues

1) Liability

The following is an excerpt from the 2007 Virginia Outdoors Plan and the text of the Virginia Recreational Use Statute (Code of Virginia, Title 29.1-508) is included in Appendix D.

Liability can be a major concern for landowners who consider allowing public access to their property. However, the Commonwealth of Virginia has a Recreational Use Statute, also known as the Landowner Liability Law, which protects landowners who allow public recreational use of their property. Also included is a provision that limits the liability of private landowners who enter into a lease agreement with agencies of the Commonwealth. In 1994, the code was amended to include easements for access to public parks, historic sites or other public recreation.

This legislation provides that *“a landowner shall owe no duty of care to keep land or premises safe for entry or use by others...”* for a variety of recreational uses, including and not limited to hiking, horseback riding, and bicycle riding. It limits landowner liability with the exception of *“gross negligence or willful or malicious failure to guard or warn against a dangerous condition, use, structure or activity.”* A landowner who receives a fee for the use of their property would not be exempt from liability, as outlined in the code.

Furthermore, the statute limits the landowner’s liability when private individuals voluntarily offer trails or public access to water through their property. They may give an easement on a portion of their land or may allow access through an agreement with a governmental agency. (2007 Virginia Outdoors Plan, DCR, page 194)

In spite of the above discussion on Virginia Recreational Use Statute, which limits landowner liability, it is critical that RRRT carry liability insurance, as well as the local governments that have granted permission to RRRT for use of their lands for trail use. RRRT's policy is discussed in more detail below.

2) Insurance

RRRT has purchased General Liability and Directors & Officers policies. In general, the policies cover:

- Decisions of the Board
- Damages if awarded for bodily injury on premises (RRRT owned property are the premises). For easements the owners will be named as additional insured to extend the coverage to them (the property on which the easement applies).
- Consulting work/ decisions

Individuals—volunteers and/or trail users—should have their own personal medical coverage. Coverage does not cover medical expenses unless gross negligence was determined and they were awarded as a part of a suit.

3) Negotiating Easements and Agreements

RRRT will be responsible for negotiating with adjacent property owners and recording leases, easements, or other agreements based on jurisdictional requirements, and developing and managing any cooperative agreements developed with private and/or non-profit organizations for volunteer services or other services related to trail operations. Easements for trail use may be given to the appropriate local governments if they will accept. This gives the property owner additional liability protection.

D. Trail Management Plan Amendment Process

The Tobacco Heritage Trail Management Plan may be revised or amended and new policies and/or administrative procedures adopted by a majority vote of the RRRT Board of Directors. Any proposed amendment shall be presented in writing to the Board of Directors at a regular meeting. A majority vote of all Directors in attendance shall be required to adopt any proposed amendment to the Management Plan. Such an amendment shall not be acted upon at the same meeting in which it is introduced but shall be acted upon at the next regular meeting.

TOBACCO HERITAGE TRAIL

APPENDIX A

FORMS

**TOBACCO HERITAGE TRAIL
APPLICATION FOR TRAIL USE PERMIT**

Date of Application: _____

Requesting Party or Organization (if applicable): _____

Contact Name:

Address:

Phone:

Fax:

Email:

Location of Request: _____ town and/or county

Tax parcel(s) _____

Permit type (check one)

	New Access (drive, farm use,)
	Upgrade to existing access
	Easement (utility, parking,)
	Timber harvest
	Hunting –access to land
	Encroachment remedy
	Special Event related activity: specify: _____
	Other

Description of proposed trail use or activity:

Dates of Proposed Activity (if applicable) From _____ To _____

Attach plat, parcel map & location map.

NOTE: Applications for all permits must be received at least 30 days prior to Board meeting.

**TOBACCO HERITAGE TRAIL
TRAIL DESIGNATION APPLICATION AND CHECKLIST**

Applicant Information:

Contact Name: _____
 Address: _____
 Phone: _____

Trail Information

Location of Trail Segment: _____ (County/Town)
 Length of trail segment: _____
 Description of end points: Point A: _____
 Point B: _____
 Access: _____

Designation request: Interim Trail: maintain corridor to minimum operating standards
 (Check one) Permanent Trail: built and maintained to THT design standards

Attach a description and map or drawing of all proposed improvements. Be sure to address the items in the checklist below.

Trail Designation Checklist

- ___ 1. Ownership: Corridor must be owned by RRRT, local jurisdiction, or secured through easement.
- ___ 2. Trail Access: Trail must be located adjacent to an opened section, or have adequate access, i.e. parking, so as not to impact adjacent property owners. (Attach map showing trail segment including access.)
- ___ 3. Safety and Security: A letter from the police department must be submitted, demonstrating that all issues related to trail patrol, crime reporting and emergency access have been resolved. Identify any access control devices - bollards, gates, etc. - if needed to secure the trail from motorized vehicles.
- ___ 4. Trail Signage: Determine any needed regulatory signage, such as stop signs at road crossings, and trail identification signs. Indicate proposed sign locations on map.
- ___ 5. Maintenance Agreement¹: A signed agreement between RRRT and party responsible for maintaining the trail segment (i.e. local jurisdiction, friends group, citizen, etc.)

Trail Maintainer Organization: _____
 Contact Name: _____
 Address: _____

 Phone: _____
 Email: _____

Signature: _____ (RRRT Designee) _____ (date)

¹ For trail segments owned by local jurisdictions, a three-way agreement between RRRT, the jurisdiction and the trail maintainer will be required.

**TOBACCO HERITAGE TRAIL
ANNUAL REVIEW AND INSPECTION OF DESIGNATED TRAIL SEGMENTS**

(To be filled out by Roanoke River Rails to Trails Board representative)

Date of Annual Inspection/Review

Jurisdiction:

RRRT Board Member:

Trail Segments:

Findings:

Recommendations:

Signature: _____ (RRRT Board Member) _____ (date)

TOBACCO HERITAGE TRAIL
ROANOKE RIVER RAILS-TO-TRAILS, INC.

TRAIL VOLUNTEER REGISTRATION

PLEASE PRINT

NAME OF GROUP: _____

CONTACT NAME: _____

Home Phone: _____

Work Phone: _____

E-Mail: _____

Contact Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

2ND CONTACT NAME: _____

Home Phone: _____

Work Phone: _____

E-Mail: _____

Contact Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

NUMBER OF VOLUNTEERS _____ AGE RANGE: _____

What type of volunteer work would your group like to perform? (special projects, adopt-a-trail, trail ranger) _____

What kind of material or monetary donations is your group able to provide towards the project? _____

Do you prefer a specific trail segment/trail location? _____

Special interests, skills, qualifications: _____

REPRESENTATIVE: _____ **DATE** _____

2ND REPRESENTATIVE: _____ **DATE** _____

TOBACCO HERITAGE TRAIL
ROANOKE RIVER RAILS-TO-TRAILS, INC.

TRAIL SURVEY REPORT

Before performing any light maintenance work, contact your coordinator at _____ and let them know of your intentions to work. If any questions or concerns arise, please feel free to call your Trail Volunteer Coordinator. Keep us informed. We like to hear from you!

Name of Group: _____

Name: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Name of Park: _____

Name of Assigned Trail: _____

Damage Found (be specific) _____

Additional Comments (i.e., wildlife or plants observed) _____

Date Checked/Work Trip: _____

Number of Participants: _____ Time Spent: _____

Please return this form within ONE WEEK of checking your trail. Send to:

Roanoke River Rails to Trails
Trail Volunteer Coordinator
D. P.O. Box 150
South Hill, VA 23970

TOBACCO HERITAGE TRAIL
ROANOKE RIVER RAILS-TO-TRAILS, INC.

ADOPT-A-TRAIL REGISTRATION

Organization or Individual _____

Contact Person _____

Street Address _____

City _____ Zip _____

Phone (home) _____ (work) _____ (cell) _____

Email _____

Contact Person _____

Street Address _____

City _____ Zip _____

Phone (home) _____ (work) _____ (cell) _____

Email _____

Park _____ Trail _____

Date Of Initial Adoption _____ Date of Final Adoption _____

Anniversary Date _____

Will Anyone participating in the Adoption be under the age of 18? NO ___ YES ___

If Yes, there are special requirements that must be met.

We/I understand that the adopted trail will be surveyed and maintained at least once a month and a Trail Survey Report will be sent within one week of each survey.

We/I agree to abide by all of the requirements and guidelines of the Adopt-A-Trail program and bring to the attention of the Coordinator any concerns about the program and our trail.

Individual or Group Representative

Adopt-A-Trail Coordinator

Phone #: _____

TOBACCO HERITAGE TRAIL
ROANOKE RIVER RAILS-TO-TRAILS, INC.

TRAIL VOLUNTEER TIME and MILEAGE SHEET

Name of Group/Organization: _____

Name: _____ Phone: _____

<u>Date</u>	<u>Hours</u>	<u>Mileage</u>

<u>Date</u>	<u>Hours</u>	<u>Mileage</u>

Total Mileage: _____

Total Hours: _____

COMMENTS: _____

ROANOKE RIVER RAILS-TO-TRAILS, INC.

Assumption Of Risk And Indemnification Agreement

Participant: _____ Group Name _____

Activity: _____ Date: ____/____/____

The nature and scope of the activity listed above has been fully explained to me by Roanoke River Rails to Trails, Inc. (RRRT). As a participant in this activity, I recognize that there are risks and dangers associated with this activity including, but not limited to, serious injury and/or fatality. I understand that RRRT, its employees, volunteers, agents, heirs and assigns, operators, staff or instructors do not guarantee the safety of participants with respect to this activity. I also understand that each participant has the responsibility to exercise due care in the performance of the activity for the safety of himself/herself and of the other participants. In consideration of being permitted to engage in this activity, I assume all the risks and liability that may arise from my involvement and participation in this activity. I further agree to adhere to all Roanoke River Rails to Trails policies and regulations. I understand that these standards are intended to reduce the risks of injury to persons and destruction of property, but do not guarantee that personal injury or destruction of property will not occur.

I will hold harmless and fully indemnify the Roanoke River Rails to Trails Board of Directors, Mecklenburg County and Town of La Crosse, employees, volunteers, agents, heirs and assigns from any and all claims, damages, actions, liability and expense now and in the future, in connection with any and all personal and bodily injury and/or damage or theft to my personal property, be it foreseen or unforeseen.

This Agreement is severable. It is enforceable as to the remaining parts, if any part is deemed unenforceable by law.

Medical Release Form

I understand that participation in this activity is, by nature, physically demanding. Therefore, all participants must be free of medical or physical conditions, which might create undue risk to themselves or others who might depend on them.

1. What physical disabilities or any other condition does the participant have which might limit his/her participation in this activity? _____
2. Is the participant taking any medications at this time? (Including pain relievers, allergy medications) _____
3. Does the participant have any allergies? (i.e., penicillin, bee, food, dust, hay) If so, please indicate: _____
4. Does the participant have medication to take in case of an allergy attack? Yes _____ No _____

I have noted above any medical or physical conditions the participant has which might affect his/her activities and understand the nature of the physical demands of this activity.

In the event I cannot be reached in an emergency, I hereby give permission to the physician selected by the trip leader in charge to hospitalize, secure proper anesthesia, and to order injection, surgery or other medical treatment for myself as a participant or for my son, daughter or ward, as a participant.

I, therefore release any and all rights or claims for damages against the Roanoke River Rails to Trails, and all individuals assisting in instruction and conducting these activities, for any and all injuries, loss or damage suffered by the participant at, or in any way connected with, these activities.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: (home) _____ (work) _____ (emergency) _____

Med. Insurance Company _____ Dr. Name: _____

Participant Signature: _____ Date: ____/____/____

Signature of **Parent or Guardian**, (if under 18): _____

- - Please Fill Out Completely - -

TOBACCO HERITAGE TRAIL

APPENDIX B

DESIGN GUIDELINES

APPENDIX C

TOBACCO HERITAGE TRAIL ROANOKE RIVER RAILS-TO-TRAILS, INC.

CONTACT INFORMATION

www.TobaccoHeritageTrail.org

Member Jurisdiction	Trail Liaison Construction or Maintenance Contact—Name & Phone #	Event (Public Safety) Contact
Town of Alberta	Melissa Parrish 434-949-7443	Linda Helm, Town Clerk 434-949-7443
Town of Boynton	Jimmy Walters 434-738-6566	Shirley Williams, Town Clerk 434-738-6344
Town of Brodnax	Eugene Pierce or Red Tanner 434-729-3191 or 729-2612 (Eugene)	Woody Kidd, Town Clerk 434-729-3191
Brunswick County	Charlette T. Woolridge 434-848-3107	Sheriff's Dept. 434-848-3133
Town of Chase City	Joseph Epps 434-372-2793	Town Office 434-372-5136
Charlotte County	P.K. Pettus 434-390-2632	Sheriff's Dept.
Town of Clarksville	Melinda Moran 434-374-8177	Ricky Wilkinson 434-374-5473
Town of Drakes Branch	Roscoe Eubanks 434-568-3801	Town Office
Halifax County	Brad Ballou 434-476-3332	Sheriff's Office 434-476-3339
Town of Halifax	Carl Espy 434-476-2343	Town Office 434-476-2343
Town of La Crosse	Sandra Tanner 434-757-7438	Town Office 434-757-7366
Town of Lawrenceville	C.J. Dean 434-848-2414	Town Office 434-848-2414
Lunenburg County	Beverley Hawthorne 434-696-2763	Sheriff's Office
Mecklenburg County	Fred Forberg 434-689-2763	Sheriff's Dept. 434-738-6191
Town of South Boston	Marcus Hargrave 572-8909	Town Office 434-575-4241
Town of South Hill	Woodrow Kidd 434-729-3191	Chief of Police—447-3104 Town Manager—447-3191
Town of Victoria	Ken Patterson, Town Mgr. 434-696-2343	Ken Patterson, Town Mgr. 434-696-2343