

Appalachian Transportation Institute (ATI) Research Project Description

Project Number: ATI TRP 99-11

Project Title: Maximizing Economic Benefits from A Rails to Trails Project in Southern WV - Case Study of the Greenbrier River Trail

Primary Investigator Contact Information:

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Project Objective: The objective of this project is to ascertain how the potential economic impact from the Greenbrier River Trail can be increased and to establish the procedures that need to be employed for other similar trails in the region and the US.

Abstract: This project will collect data relevant to a "rails to trails" project in Greenbrier County of Southern WV that can be used to help ascertain the maximum economic impact of this transportation corridor. The data collected will include an inventory of corridor infrastructure, points of interest in addition to user surveys designed to collect information that would help contribute to the design of a Traveler Information System.

Task Descriptions:

Task 1, 2, & 3. Identify and develop an inventory of all infrastructure serving the Greenbrier River Trail, historic and cultural sites, and human resources capable of marketing trails in the area.

Task 4. Initiate working relationships with the identified agencies and organizations.

Task 5. Develop and conduct a trail user survey.

Task 6. Identify and develop an inventory of existing related recreational activities in the Greenbrier River Trail corridor.

Task 7. Identify and develop an inventory of potential recreational opportunities that would provide growth for the tourist industry in the region.

Task 8. Conduct public meeting in both counties.

Task 9. Based upon the findings of the survey and the public meetings,

prepare a final document on the economic impact of the Greenbrier River Trail.

Milestones, Dates, Schedule: Start Date: Sep. 2000 End Date August 2001

Budget: \$82,356.00

Student Involvement: The project will provide employment support for at least 1 undergraduate and 1 graduate student. The student workers will support the Principal Investigator as project assistants. This project is anticipated to lead to at least one Master Thesis in Parks and Recreation Services.

Relationship to Other Research Projects: This project is related to ATI TRP 99-29.

Technology Transfer Activities: Final reports will be available on the ATI website. All, ATI Principal Investigators will present findings through the ATI Transportation Seminar Series to invited guests from WVDOT, USDOT, other ATI Principal Investigators, students and other invited guests. Other opportunities to present the project results will be explored including conferences and peer reviewed journals, etc.

Potential Benefits of this Project: The results of this project will become the model for identifying and expanding local economic impact of recreation trail systems in other West Virginia locations and for mobilizing community support in the marketing and promotion of such trail systems.

Keywords: Economic Benefits, Rails to trails, Greenbrier River, Trails