

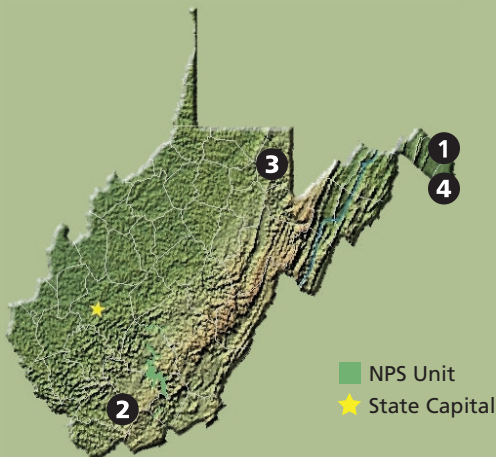


# West Virginia News



Someone is having way too much fun on the Upper Cheat River Water Trail! Photo: Amanda Pitzer

## PROJECTS AND PARTNERS 2013



### CURRENT PROJECTS

- 1. Canal Towns Heritage Tourism**  
Canal Town Partnership, Chesapeake & Ohio Canal Trust, Chesapeake & Ohio Canal National Historical Park
- 2. Great Eastern Trail - West Virginia Section**  
Great Eastern Trail Association
- 3. Preston County Trail Development**  
Friends of the Cheat
- 4. Ranson-Harpers Ferry Trail Loop**  
Eastern Panhandle Trailblazers, Inc.

Find out more about each project starting on page 2.

## Recent Successes

### Meadow River Rail-Trail: Acquired!

After four years, with RTCA assistance, the 17-mile Meadow River Rail-Trail property has been acquired and railbanked by the Fayette & Greenbrier County Commissions. The former rail line runs along the scenic Class III+ whitewater Meadow River between Rainelle and Nallen, WV. It also links to a 15-mile long previously abandoned section of rail line to the west, within the Gauley River National Recreation Area boundary, some of which is still in private ownership. The RTCA role was to assist the project leadership team with guidance on the acquisition process, fund-finding, and community involvement strategies early on to assist with the appraisal and mapping of the rail right-of-way. A \$4,500 NPS Challenge Cost Share grant helped early on to finance the appraisal and mapping. The WV Department of Transportation has been managing the \$330,000 ARRA Stimulus grant and a \$80,000 Rec Trails grant, matched with \$86,000 in local funding, used to used to purchase the line for \$128,400 and conducting a Soil

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### ABOUT US

The Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance (RTCA) Program is the community assistance arm of the National Park Service. RTCA staff provides 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.

# Current Projects

## 1. Canal Towns Heritage Tourism

Project Partners: Canal Town Partnership, Chesapeake and Ohio (C&O) Canal Trust, C&O Canal National Historical Park  
RTCA Contact: Beth Porter  
Location: Communities along the C&O Canal National Historical Park, including: Hancock, MD; Sharpsburg, MD; Cumberland, MD; Williamsport, MD; Point of Rocks, MD; Brunswick, MD; Shepherdstown, WV; Harpers Ferry, WV  
Congressional Districts: MD - 6, WV - 2

### Project Goal

For the 184-mile C&O Canal and its historic Canal Towns to serve as a nationally recognized and promoted network linking park users with scenic, historic, and recreational resources and high quality visitor services in the towns.

### NPS Role

Provide organizing, planning, and technical assistance to the Canal Towns and their partners as they build an independent, high-functioning organization that promotes heritage tourism programs and activities in relation to the C&O Canal and towpath.

## 2. Great Eastern Trail - WV Section

Project Partner: Great Eastern Trail Association  
RTCA Contact: Peggy Pings  
Location: Mercer, Mingo, Raleigh, Summers, and Wyoming Counties  
Congressional District: WV -

### Project Goal

Develop a 1900-mile long-distance hiking trail from Florida to New York state, paralleling the Appalachian Trail, and filling the 245-mile gap in the WV region.

*“RTCA has helped our rail-trail and water trail committees focus on vision and actions, and has encouraged individuals to take on new endeavors for the project.”*

- Amanda Pitzer, Executive Director, Friends of the Cheat

### NPS Role:

Assist with building trail support in WV by holding town meetings; develop strategies for building partnerships with state agencies and landowners.

Water Trail, guidance on water trail development and rail-trail acquisition.

## 3. Preston County Trail Development

Project Partner: Friends of the Cheat  
RTCA Contact: Peggy Pings  
Location: Kingwood, Tunnelton, Rowlesburg, Parsons in Preston County  
Congressional District: WV - 1

### Project Goal

Complete 2 rail-trails and 1 water trail project: Cheat River Rail-Trail (7 miles), Kingwood Northern Rail-Trail (10 miles), Upper Cheat River Blueway (38 miles).

### NPS Role

Assist with public involvement and designation strategies for Cheat River

## 4. Ranson-Lower Harpers Ferry Loop Trail

Project Partner: Eastern Panhandle Trailblazers Association  
RTCA Contact: Anne O'Neill  
Location: Ranson and Jefferson County  
Congressional District: WV - 2, 3

### Project Goal

Develop a regional trail system connecting communities, parks and natural resources, and advocate for the protection of natural and cultural resources.

### NPS Role

Facilitate stakeholder and partner involvement, build community support, and develop organizational capacity building.



Walkers enjoy the Kingwood Northern Rail-Trail corridor during a Preston Rambles hike.  
Photo: Teresa Neel



## We're Here For You.

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



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## 2012 Nationwide Partnership Success

2,154 Miles of Trail Developed

1,074 Miles of River Conserved

70,385 Acres of Open Space and  
Parkland Protected

94% Percentage of Community  
Partners Satisfied

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



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## Recent Successes cont.

Analysis, leaving about \$317,600 to construct the first phase starting in Russellville. An additional \$412,500 was awarded in January 2013, through Recreation Trails and Transportation Enhancement grants, and local match, to be used for trail construction. Excitement is mounting, as the communities are gearing up to develop volunteer programs, including the involvement of the Boy Scouts of America while they attend camp programs at The Summit, the new National Scout Jamboree site nearby. Local businesses are being encouraged to develop services for trail users and local communities, creating a great new destination in southern WV.

### Cacapon River Water Trail

The Cacapon and Lost Rivers Land Trust completed a map and guide for the Cacapon River Water Trail extending 65 miles to the river's confluence with the Potomac River. Along the Cacapon River Water Trail, paddlers will travel through the most biologically-diverse area in the Potomac watershed, a major tributary to the Chesapeake Bay. Experiencing the Cacapon's abundant wildlife, bucolic farmland, and large tracts of mature forests, users will become more active stewards of the region's natural resources. Beyond building a strong community stewardship ethic, the water trail will bolster local economies and support the conservation of important aquatic and riparian habitats. The Cacapon River Water Trail has recently been designated as a state water trail by the West Virginia Recreational Trail Advisory Board. Development of the trail was supported by National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, West Virginia Stream Partners Program, blue moon fund, Friends of the Cacapon River, and the National Park Service RTCA.

### WV Trailblazers: The City of Ranson-Lower Town of Harpers Ferry Loop Trail

RTCA staff participated as a member of Harpers Ferry National Historic Park's Alternative Transportation Study, representing interests and ideas connected with community-park trail connections. RTCA also planned a series of walks with community stakeholders to scope potential loops for the Eastern Panhandle Recreational Trail with community stakeholders. As a result, Harpers Ferry NHP, the Eastern Panhandle Trailblazers, and other community stakeholders are working to create phased trail enhancements.



The undeveloped Meadow River Rail-Trail is fine for horseback riding, and affords great views of the river. Photo: Skip Heater