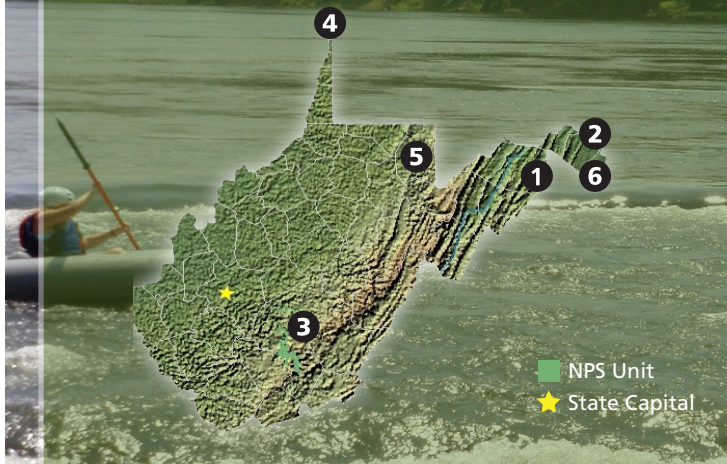




# West Virginia News



Groundwork Wyoming County Green Team members are led by an NPS Ranger on the New River Gorge National River. Photo credit: Joel Tucker, GWWC.

## PROJECTS AND PARTNERS 2012

### CURRENT PROJECTS

1. **Cacapon River State Water Trail**  
Cacapon and Lost Rivers Land Trust
2. **Canal Towns Heritage Tourism**  
Canal Town Partnership, C&O Canal Trust, C&O Canal National Historical Park
3. **Meadow River Rail - Trail**  
Fayette & Greenbrier County Commissions
4. **Ohio River Trail**  
Ohio River Trail Council
5. **Preston County Trail Development**  
Friends of the Cheat
6. **Ranson-Harpers Ferry Trail Loop**  
Eastern Panhandle Trailblazers, Inc.

Find out more about each project starting on page 2.

## 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.

## Recent Successes

### Great Eastern Trail – KY-WV-VA links

Starting in the early 2000's, an idea birthed from hiking groups -- to link existing hiking trails into a long-distance trail system that parallels the Appalachian Trail. RTCA has helped with the formation of this trail project and the Great Eastern Trail Association. From 2009-2011, RTCA worked with partners to focus on identifying a Great Eastern Trail route through the 300-mile gap between Kentucky, West Virginia, and Virginia ([www.GreatEasternTrail.net](http://www.GreatEasternTrail.net)). In West Virginia, a VISTA volunteer

continued on page 3



Hiking team scopes the future route of the Great Eastern Trail near Pipestem State Park

# Current Projects

*"We've been extraordinarily lucky to have Peggy Pings' involvement in this initiative...what has happened this year would never have even begun without her."*

-Tom Johnson, President, Great Eastern Trail Association

## 1. Cacapon River State Water Trail

Project Partner: Cacapon and Lost Rivers Land Trust  
RTCA Contact: Wink Hastings  
Location: Hardy, Hampshire, and Morgan counties, West Virginia  
Congressional District: WV-2

### Project Goal

Water trail map and guide to strengthen environmental stewardship, increase public awareness of the Cacapon River and the Land Trust, promote recreational tourism, and seek State designation.

### RTCA Role:

Guide collaborative public/private partnership development, facilitate broad-based community support, and leverage funds.

## 2. Canal Towns Heritage Tourism

Project Partners: Canal Town Partnership, 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, PA-18, 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.

### RTCA 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.

## 3. Meadow River Rail-Trail

Project Partner: Fayette & Greenbrier County Commissions  
RTCA Contact: Peggy Pings  
Location: Meadow River in Greenbrier and Fayette counties, West Virginia  
Congressional District: WV-3

### Project Goal

Acquire and convert 16.7 miles of abandoned rail corridor to trail.

### RTCA Role

Provide project guidance and expand public participation and awareness with groundbreaking and ribbon cutting events and brochure and map development; develop basic Trail Management Plan

## 4. Ohio River Trail

Project Partner: Ohio River Trail Council  
NPS Contact: Peggy Pings  
Location: Ohio River in Pennsylvania, Ohio, and West Virginia  
Congressional District: WV-1

### Project Goal

Develop 41 miles of parallel bike trail and water trail from Coraopolis PA to 'Point of Beginning' (PA-WV-OH line), and develop a vision for a linking system of over 100 miles of land and water trails in PA-OH-WV. Some trailheads will be shared due to concurrent planning.

### RTCA Role

Assist with identification and completion of a short, on-the-ground section of trail based on prior feasibility studies; organizational development of a tri-state trail umbrella organization.

## 5. Preston County Trail Development

Project Partner: Friends of the Cheat  
RTCA Contact: Peggy Pings  
Location: Kingwood, Tunnelton, Rowlesburg, and Parsons in Preston County, West Virginia  
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 (33 miles).

### RTCA Role

Guide rail-trail acquisition processes, assist partners in the state water trail designation process, and engage the public in the development of management plans.

## 6. Ranson-Lower Harpers Ferry Loop Trail

Project Partner: Eastern Panhandle Trailblazers Association  
RTCA Contact: Anne O'Neill  
Location: Ranson, West Virginia  
Congressional District: WV-2

### Project Goal

Enhance densely populated, diverse communities' connections to parks, greenways, trails, and waterways to improve close-to-home recreation and natural resource conservation.

### RTCA Role

Assist by identifying resources, navigating the planning process, and bringing ideas to action with the goal of having a finite and funded trail plan by Fall 2012 for the Ranson-Harpers Ferry Loop trail.



## We're Here For You.

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



**Peggy Pings**  
304.293.7528  
peggy\_pings@nps.gov



**Chris Niewold**  
202.690.5153  
christopher\_niewold@nps.gov



**Beth Porter**  
202.690.5169  
beth\_porter@nps.gov



**Anne O'Neill**  
202.360.9715  
anne\_o'neill@nps.gov



**Wink Hastings**  
410.260.2481  
WHastings@chesapeakebay.net

## 2011 Nationwide Partnership Success

1,991	Miles of Trail Developed
1,925	Miles of River Conserved
33,230	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)



EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA™

## Recent Successes cont.

(Volunteers In Service To America) was employed to lead the community-based effort, based in Wyoming County. The TuGuNu Trail Club (Tug-Guyandotte-New Rivers) was formed, and routes started to get firmed up and ground-truthed. In 2012, a new VISTA volunteer will continue the effort, which is located within the National Coal Heritage Area.

### Groundwork Wyoming County

Starting with an application in 2006 to become a pilot Groundwork USA Trust community, Groundwork Wyoming County (<http://groundworkwc.org>) has come into its own. In 2010, GWWC formed their nonprofit organization, and hired Megan Smith, their first Executive Director. Current projects include Horse Creek Lake Revitalization, rehabbing the old Itmann School, and expanding their Green Team program. The Green Team hosted a service project within the New River Gorge National River in August 2011, conducting a stream cleanup, learning about the environment and job opportunities, and capping it off with a rafting trip on the New River. Major project partners include Upper Guyandotte Watershed Association, West Virginia University Department of Landscape Architecture, and Wyoming County 4H. RTCA assisted GWWC throughout the 5 year process.

*“Groundwork Wyoming County greatly benefited from working with RTCA. RTCA staff helped build the capacity of our organization, which resulted in a strong feasibility study that outlined the creation of our organization. They helped make us a more viable organization so that we can serve the people of Wyoming County.”*

-Megan Smith, Executive Director, Groundwork Wyoming County



Groundwork Wyoming County Green Team prepares to paddle the New River.  
Photo credit: Joel Tucker, GWWC.