



Roanoke Valley Greenways: Local Perspectives on Developing a Greenway Program in Virginia

July 13, 2005

Presentation at Marshall, VA

Liz Belcher

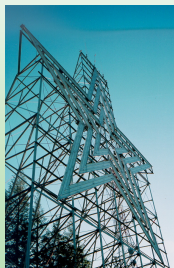
Roanoke Valley Greenway Coordinator

Purpose of This Session

- To give you the history of our greenway program as an example
- To explain how our program evolved and the many partners involved
- To give perspective on implementation through project examples
- To give perspective on the politics, time frames and costs

The Roanoke Valley in 1996

- City of Roanoke
- County of Roanoke
- City of Salem
- Town of Vinton
- 4 water systems
- 3 school systems
- 3 parks departments
- 2 national parks, 2 nat. forests
- 2 civic centers
- 2 chambers of commerce
- 5 economic development organizations



Population
~200,000



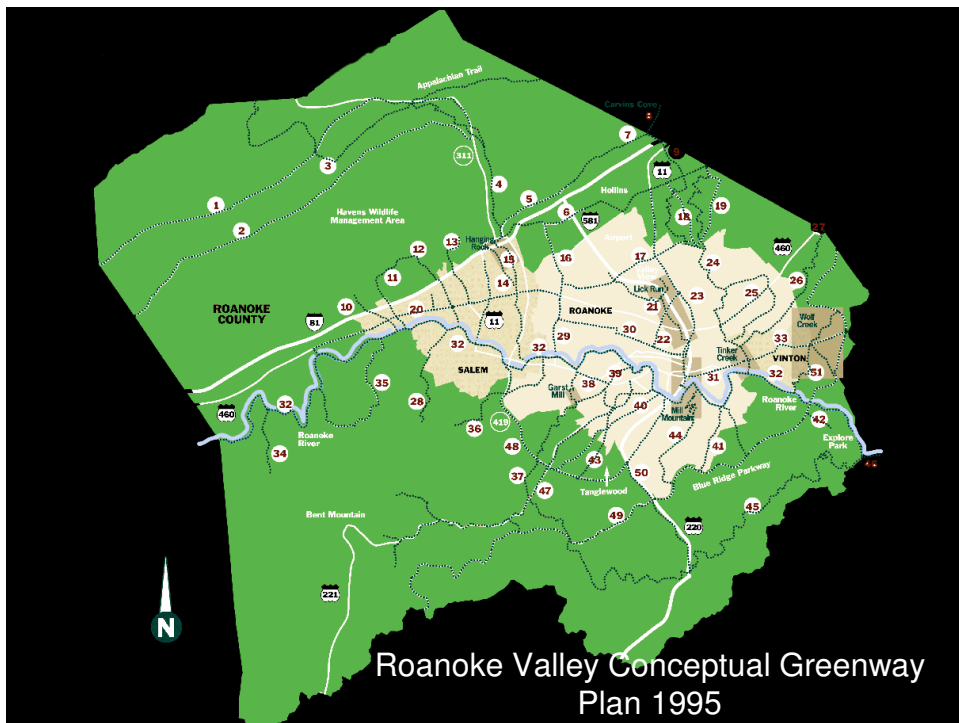
History of Roanoke Greenway Program

- 1907 - Greenways included in Roanoke Comprehensive Plan
- 1993 - Greenway advocates request construction of greenways in conjunction with sewer project



Sewer construction 1998







Earth Day 1997 – Signing of the Intergovernmental Agreement
Establishing the Roanoke Valley Greenway Commission

Roanoke Valley Greenway Commission

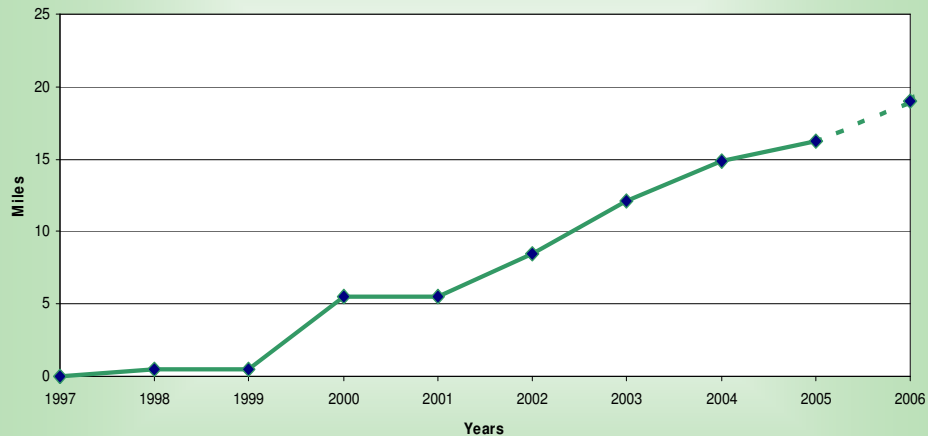
- Intergovernmental Agreement, 4 govt.
- Membership
 - Voting members
 - 3 appointed citizens from each locality
 - 1 appointed from Metropolitan Planning Organ.
 - Non-voting members
 - Parks and planning directors from each locality
 - Pathfinders and Western Virginia Land Trust
 - Others added later – user groups, Water Authority

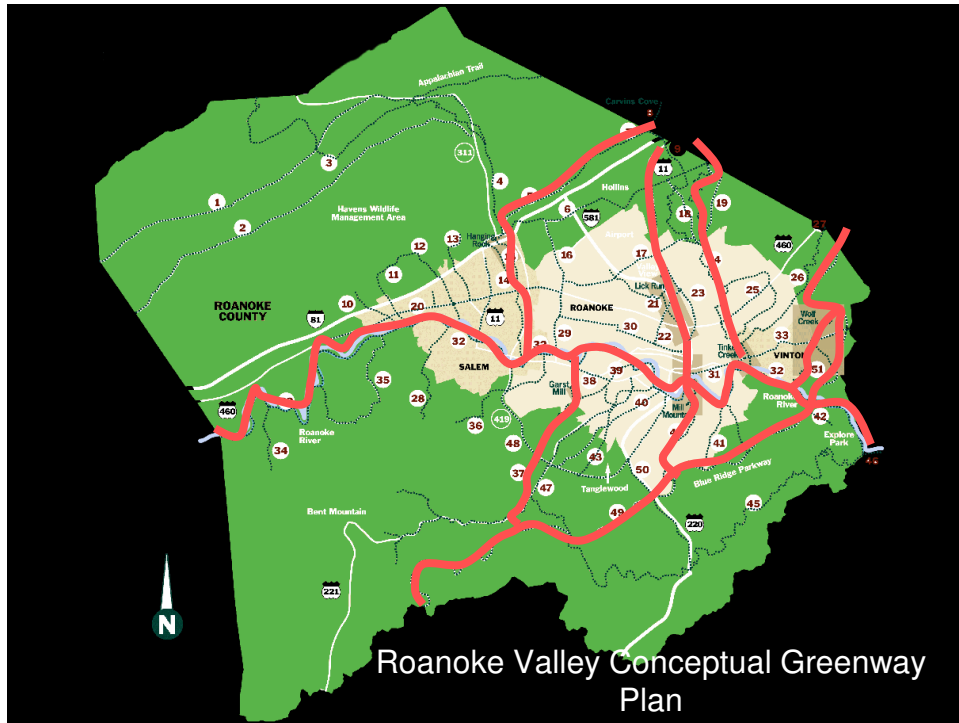
Greenway Accomplishments

- 16.5 miles trail on 9 greenways
- Master plans completed for 30 other miles
- Funding commitment of \$9.4M
- 3-5000 hours of volunteer service per yr.



Growth of the Greenway Network





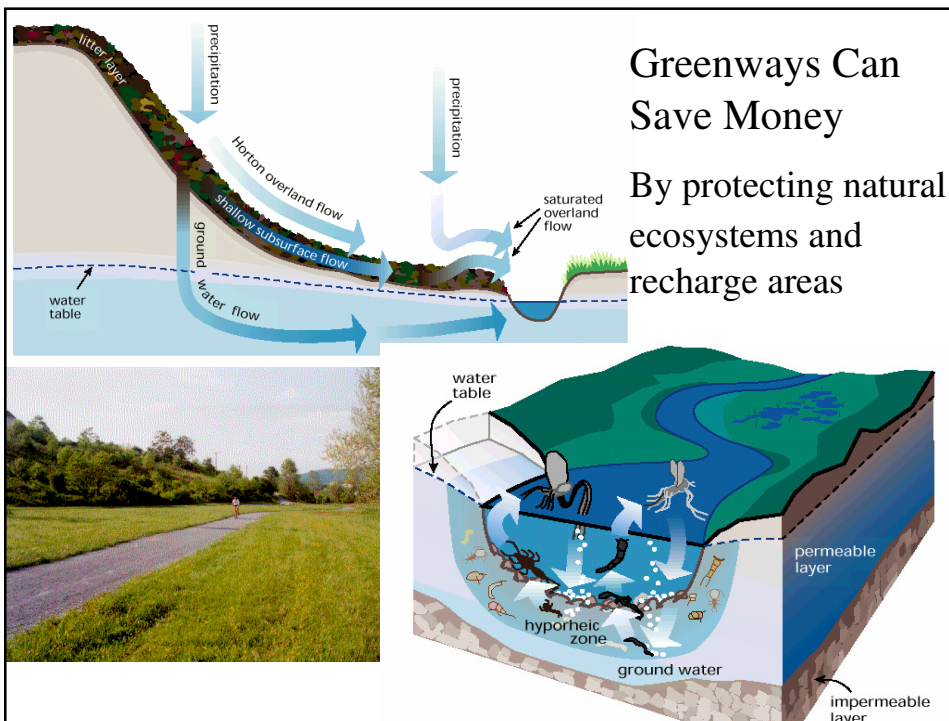
Steps Along the Way

- Education

What is a Greenway?

Linear corridor of natural or open space:

- following land or water features such as streams, rivers, canals, utility corridors, ridgelines, or abandoned rail lines and
- managed for conservation, recreation, and/or alternative transportation
- including a bicycle/ pedestrian trail



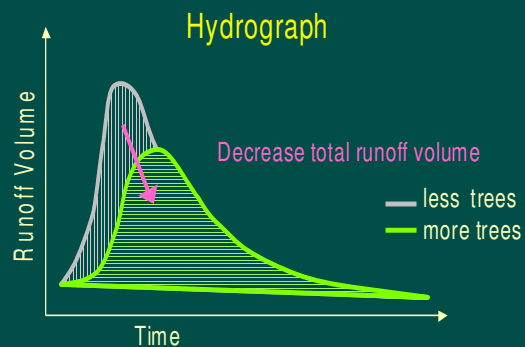
CityGreen Study by American Forests

Roanoke Valley	1973	1997	Loss/Gain
Acres >50% trees	314,337	240,353	-24%
Acres 20- 50%	48,931	33,082	-32%
Acres <20%	399,419	489,252	23%
Stormwater Value	\$2.46 billion	\$2.04 billion	-\$419 million
Air Removal	\$48.7 million	\$40.5 million	-\$8.2 million

Trees can reduce
stormwater
runoff and
flooding



Tree Effects on Runoff



Steps Along the Way

- Education
- Marketing – logo, newsletter, Web page, slide show presentation to civic groups, public meetings, news coverage



Steps Along the Way

- Education
- Marketing – logo, newsletter, Web page
- Develop standards



Different Surfaces Accommodate Different Users



Crushed stone surface is popular among walkers.



Natural surface is good for mountain biking, hiking, and horse back riding



Steps Along the Way

- Education
- Marketing – logo, newsletter, Web page
- Develop standards
- Set up non-profit – Pathfinders for Greenways
- Set up Western Virginia Land Trust



Steps Along the Way

- Education
- Marketing – logo, newsletter, Web page
- Develop standards
- Set up non-profit – Pathfinders for Greenways
- Develop funding sources

Sources of Greenway Funding in Roanoke Valley

- | | | | |
|-----------|-----|---------------------------|-----|
| • Federal | 58% | • Construction | 93% |
| • State | 8% | • Operations/
Planning | 7% |
| • Local | 30% | | |
| • Private | 4% | | |

\$9.4 Million committed
to greenways



Sources of Greenway Funding

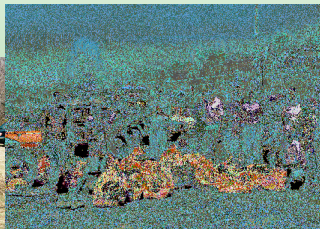
- | | |
|-----------------------------|------------------------|
| • Dept. Environ. Qual. | • Beirne Carter Found. |
| • Dept. of Forestry | • Dupont/Kodak |
| • Va. Environ.
Endowment | • Foun. Roanoke Valley |
| • Va. Rec. Trail | • Wal-Mart |
| • TEA-21 | • Ga-Pacific |
| • Local govt. CIP | • Corporations |
| | • Individuals |
| | • Private trusts |

Steps Along the Way

- Education
- Marketing – logo, newsletter, Web page
- Develop standards
- Set up non-profit – Pathfinders for Greenways
- Develop funding sources
- Partnering with support organizations

Other Partners

- Granting agencies and organizations
- State, federal agencies
- Local organizations with similar interests
- Media
- Civic leagues
- Scouts
- Schools
- User groups
- Businesses
- Volunteers



What Has Worked - Commission

- We are part of government
- Greenways are public infrastructure with parks oversight of maintenance
- Citizens continue to support greenways through planning processes and volunteering
- Locality staff are working on projects
- Elected officials understand greenways

What Has Worked – Multiple Fronts

- Citizen input to Comprehensive Plan updates
- Citizen supporters chairing planning committees
- Involvement on MPO, TTC
- Input to VDOT at every hearing
- Talking to elected officials

What Has Worked – Pathfinders and Volunteers

- Volunteer trail building
- Involvement of user groups
- Involvement of schools
- VAST

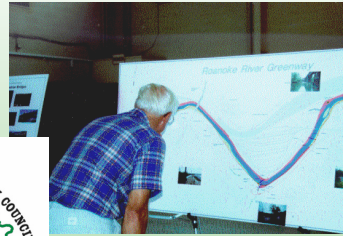


What Has Worked – Partners

- Statewide Conference
- DCR, RTCA, DOF initiatives
- Upper Roanoke River Round Table
- Western Va. Water Authority
- Carvins Cove Natural Reserve

Results

- Friendly competition among jurisdictions
- No partisanship on Commission
- Promotion of other environmental agendas
 - Water quality
 - Tree canopy
 - Quality of life
 - Eco-tourism



Multiple Benefits of Greenways

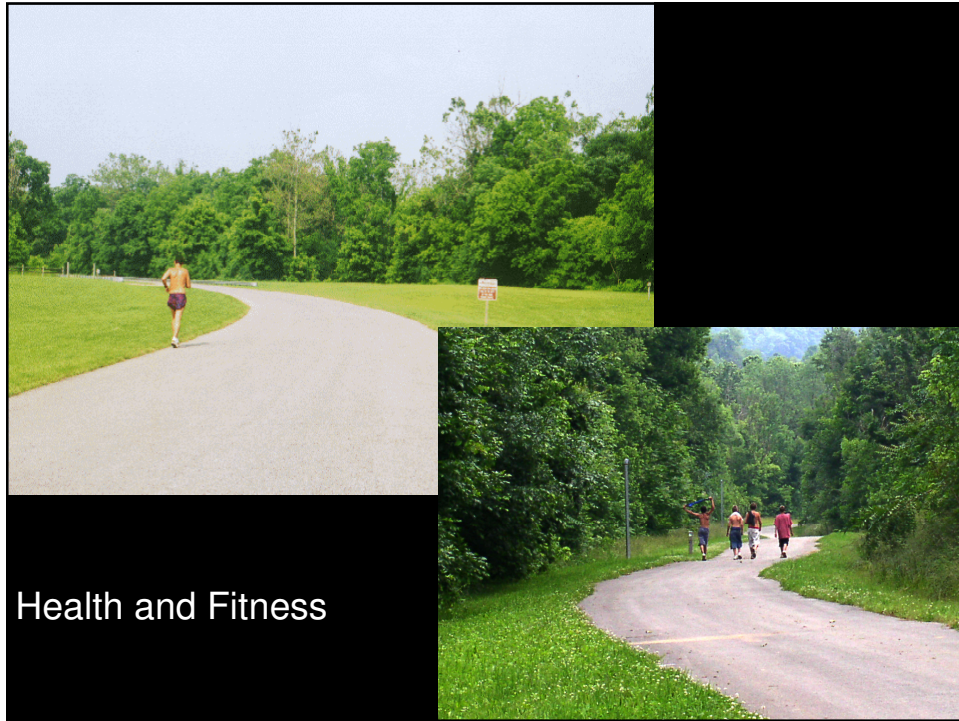
- | | |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| • Non-motorized transportation | • Scenic beauty |
| • Improvement in health | • Quality of life |
| • Recreation | • Economic development |
| • Park linkages | • Environmental education |
| • Water quality protection | • Biological diversity |
| • Air quality protection | • Bicycle/pedestrian access |
| • Wildlife habitat | |



Transportation



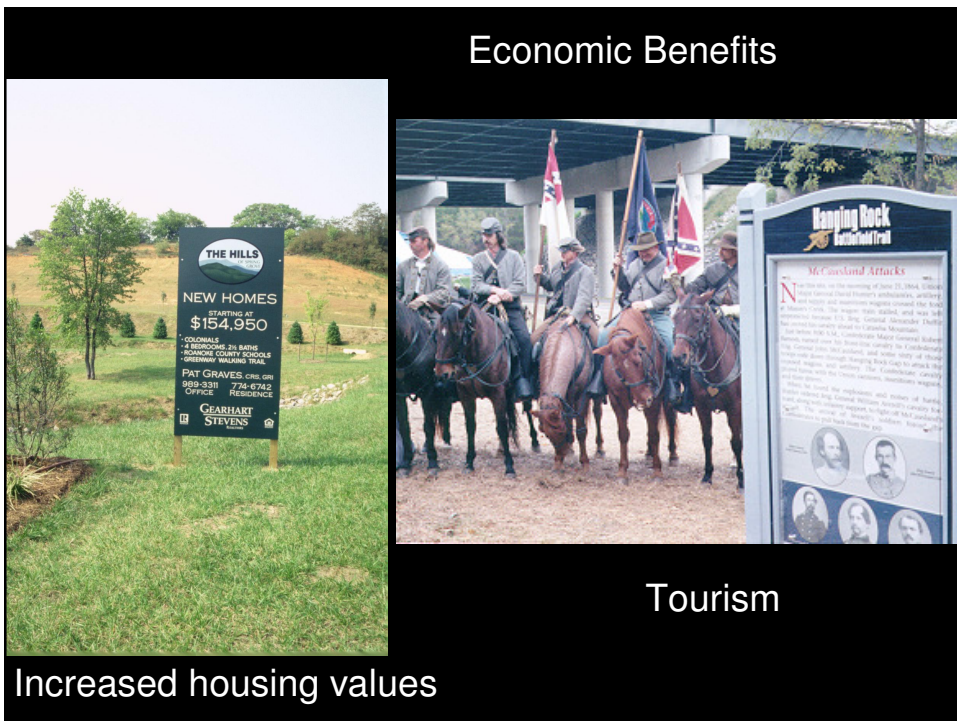
Recreation



Health and Fitness



Social Time





Environmental Education

Quality of life and a sense of place





Reduction of flooding losses

Air quality improvement
Roanoke faces non-attainment status



Shaded rivers provide a natural air conditioner



Habitat for wildlife and wildflowers



Better utilization of utility corridors and the flood project







Murray Run Greenway – Constructed by volunteers



Tinker Creek Greenway – 1 mile built on a utility right-of-way

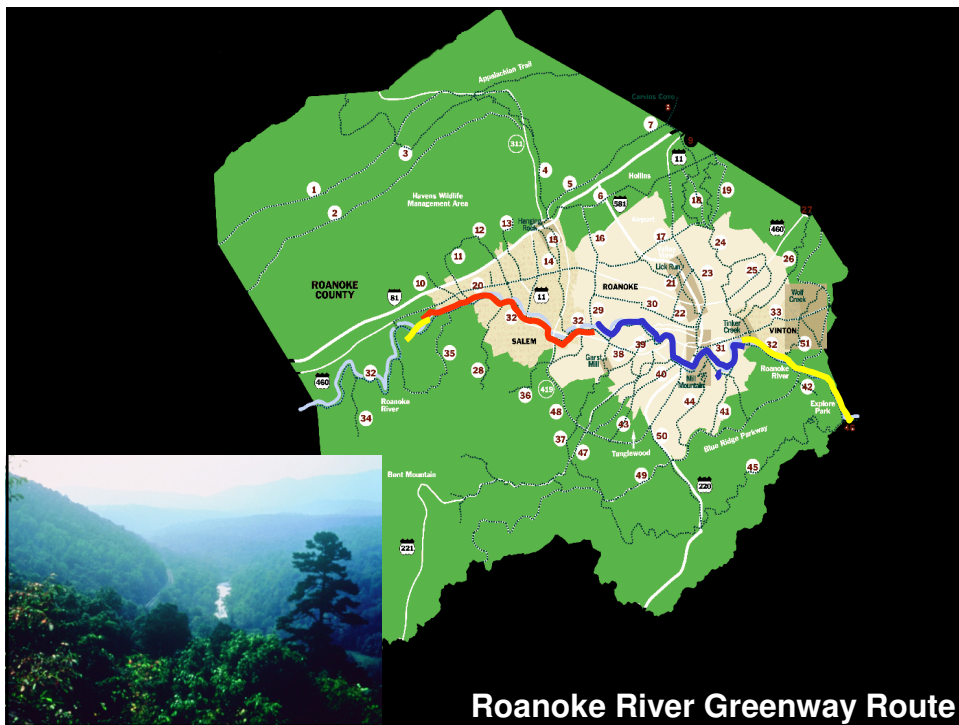


Mill Mountain Greenway:
connecting downtown to
Mill Mountain along
historic corridors



Partnering with the
Blue Ridge Parkway:
linking Parkway trails
to the greenway
network







The Little Things That Help

- Work sessions with elected officials
- Partnership with other organizations that repeat the message
- Canoe trips



Recognitions

- First Governor's Conference on Greenways and Trails, 1999
- Kodak Award, 2001
- Va. Environmental Stewardship Award, 2003





Three Statewide Greenway Conferences

One Mid-Atlantic Greenway Conference

Southside Greenway Conference in 2004 led to inclusion of \$3 million in Governor's budget for rail trails as economic development

Example of a Project Time Line

Mill Mountain Greenway

- 1996 - Pilot Project
- 1996, 1998 ISTEA
- 1998 City Bond funding
- 1999 Engineering
- 1999 Draft plans
- 2000 ROW acquisition
- 2003 Construction –1.5 mi. paved
- Cost ~\$900,000/

Mill Mountain Star Trail

- 1997 Council approval
- 1998 Parks approval
- 1998 Construction by volunteers, >700 hours
- 1999 Ribbon Cutting, 1.7 miles natural surface
- Cost ~ \$2,000

Keys to Roanoke Program

- Citizen initiative
- Citizen leaders
- Sensitive, caring staff
- Volunteers
- Donations of money, land, and time
- Started with non-controversial projects
- Disenchantment with sprawl and cars
- Cooperation and coordination



Keys to Roanoke Program

- Part of a big picture
- Cross-jurisdictional
- Cross-discipline
- Multi-level involvement
- Outside influences – new residents
- Realization of need for sustainable development
- Desire to protect cherished landscapes





Pros and Cons – Public

- Are official with significant resources
- Have government sanction but no one likes to give to government
- Have established policies and procedures which may be bureaucratic
- Have professional employees with practical experience but other obligations
- Have competing interests which makes it political

Pros and Cons - Private

- Have no authority but can be innovative
- Must raise money but people give to things they like
- Depend on energy of volunteers
- Have limited life cycle and resources
- Have focus and vision

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world: indeed, it’s the only thing that ever has.”

Margaret Mead



www.greenways.org