

## 2. Creating and Managing Greenway and Trail Organizations

### Forming the Organization

An agency or non-governmental organization (NGO) may take the lead on a greenway or trail project, or citizens may band together to form an *ad hoc* committee to start the process. Either the manager assigned by the agency, staff of the NGO, or a volunteer from the grass roots level will need to provide leadership from this stage onward. Leadership is the key ingredient in transforming vision into reality.

The ideal candidate for project leader will have strong communication skills and ability to foster teamwork. He or she will have knowledge of how government works and an understanding of local politics. The leader will also be a person who is sensitive to the needs and desires of many different types of users and who has tenacity and patience. The leader must be open to continual learning.

Duties will include but not be limited to: understanding the vision and the overall process and articulating them to others; guiding planning to accomplish each step; obtaining commitments and support; building relationships and partnerships; and building an organization or coalition of organizations. The leader will also conduct meetings and make presentations.

No one person is likely to have all the abilities and personal resources to carry an entire greenway or trail project single-handed. The most important thing to realize is that much of the work will be done by a team of interested people from all walks of life and in cooperation with professionals from numerous agencies. To do that, the leader must concentrate on building the organization and effective partnerships.

The organization, agency, team, or coalition engaged in the project will need to recruit other people with the necessary talent and commitment to undertake specific tasks at each stage of the project. Some of those tasks are listed below.

**Recruiting Initial Support** - In a citizen-led effort, the person or persons with the original vision may spread that vision informally among friends, colleagues, and families. Often fellow members of an existing club or organization are recruited as the first enthusiastic supporters. Begin by gathering to discuss the possibilities. Take a trip together through or along the corridor, being careful not to trespass. Discuss your vision of what you could be looking at. Accept input from everyone. If people begin to contribute their own ideas at this early stage, they are more likely to remain involved with the project.

**Forming a Steering Committee** - When a project is being led by an existing agency or NGO, form a steering committee. While you will welcome all those with

interest in the project as supporters, and possibly as members in an organization, “hand pick” the steering committee members based on their talents, abilities, resources and commitment. Try to recruit representatives of all the communities along the corridor and representatives of potential user groups. Be sure to include residents in the neighborhood of the corridor and individuals in the business and civic communities as well.

The management agencies for any independently managed properties such as preserves, parks, and state forests in the corridor should be invited to steering committee meetings.

**Defining a Purpose** - A very important task at the first meeting of the Steering Committee is to define a purpose. Is your mission to convert a rail line to a trail, turn it over to the county recreation department and then disband? Is it to foster and promote greenways throughout a certain geographic region indefinitely?

The one who convenes the meeting may continue to act as chairperson or a chairperson may be elected. A recorder or secretary should be appointed. Although informal steering committees most often operate by consensus in making decisions, some decisions are important for future reference and should be recorded in minutes.

**Choosing a Name** - Another early job of the steering committee is to select a name for the greenway or trail. Name selection is important since it will distinguish the corridor from others, and will often be the very first words anyone hears about your project. It will denote the function of the corridor and connote something of local history, culture, and landscape. Begin using the name as soon as possible to build an identity for the corridor.

**Obtaining Non-profit Status** - If an existing not-for-profit group or government agency does not take the lead on a greenway or trail project, a separate non-profit organization will need to be formed to raise funds by charitable contribution, receive grants, and hold titles and easements. Section 501(c)(3) of the US Internal Revenue Code of 1986, defines and limits the activities and benefits for directors and officers of not-for-profit organizations. For more information visit the IRS website at <http://www.irs.ustreas.gov>.

Your organization will need to file articles of incorporation and adopt formal by-laws. You should obtain legal advice to guide you in the process. The organization formed may be a trail conservancy, a land trust, or an alliance of other organizations. You may consult with the other not-for-profit organizations in your area for advice, but there are some basic reasons for organizing as a corporation. One very important reason is so that the organization members are protected from personal liability in the operation of the facility and so that liability insurance can be obtained where necessary. You will also need to be a corporation to hire personnel, enter into contracts, and borrow money for development or operations.

Tax-exempt status begins with filing under Sections 170(h) and 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. To receive tax-exempt status, earnings must not accrue to the directors, officers, members, or anyone else. Certain types of lobbying and political activities are also regulated. To file, you should request Forms 1023 and 1024 as well as Publication 557 from the IRS. Publication 557 will guide you through the necessary forms. Beware of using the word *foundation* in your application or as part of your organization name. Foundations do not enjoy all the tax benefits that public charities do. The IRS awards tax-exempt status retroactively to the date of filing. You should be able to

start accepting deductible donations as of this date, but confirm this with your lawyer or the IRS.

**Sharing Your Vision** - Sharing the vision means reaching out to key members of the community and to the general public with information about your proposed project. This may involve introducing these persons to the concept of greenways and trails for the first time and educating them about their benefits. Support will ultimately come primarily from those who intend to use the greenway or trail, but non-users can also be important allies. Community leaders and individuals with an interest in overall quality of life and the economic development potential of the community may provide key support without having a personal interest in using the facility.

## **Building, Strengthening, and Managing Your Organization**

Building, strengthening, and managing your organization effectively involves not only attracting and maintaining members, but also deciding on a management structure for the organization and developing and implementing a strategic plan. Most greenway and trail groups handle these diverse tasks by finding individuals to take the responsibility, or by forming subcommittees. The paragraphs below include information on key tasks.

**Recruiting Supporters, Members, and Volunteers** - The minimum level of individual support is simple approval of your concept and endorsement of your plan. At a higher level of support, you want people to join a greenway or trail organization, and participate in meetings and events. At the most enthusiastic level of support, citizens will become active volunteers and provide sustained efforts in making the vision a reality.

It takes time, energy, and money to recruit supporters, members, and volunteers. Interested citizens can demonstrate their support by attending public meetings and writing letters. Membership dollars and donations can provide operating capital, and volunteers can provide labor on all types of activities and connections to the community. Potential supporters, members, and volunteers may be solicited through articles in the paper, interviews on radio and TV, and presentations to clubs and organizations. Volunteers may be recruited from agencies such as the Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP), the Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE), and the Environmental Alliance for Senior Involvement (EASI). Consult your local telephone directory for contacts.

### **Holding On to Supporters, Members, and Volunteers**

- If it takes effort to recruit citizens to your cause, it takes even more to hold on to them. The cost of initially recruiting a member and processing the membership may be such that no net income is realized by the organization until that member renews or is persuaded to give at a higher level.

**Public Relations/Marketing** - Writing, editing, layout, and design; photography and videography; publishing; public speaking; and creating audio and video tapes are capabilities that will be needed by the organization. An individual or individuals with media experience or public relations training should be recruited to lead this effort.

**Fundraising** - Grant writing, charitable foundation work, organizing fundraising events, and designing and marketing logo-bearing merchandise are required for the organization to succeed. A well-known community fundraiser should be recruited to lead this effort.

**Work Projects** - Clean-ups, preparing large mailing,

distributing materials, construction projects, staffing events, and assisting with inventories will require special effort to organize and execute. Scouting groups, RSVP, and civic organizations, such as the Jaycees, can be recruited to assist with specific projects.

**Managing the Organizational Structure** - Managing the organization involves tasks such as convening meetings, providing information, raising operating funds, maintaining an office, and offering membership services. You will want the most efficient management possible so that valuable resources can be focused on the greenway or trail project itself.

Consider hiring a consulting firm for management, or cooperating with an existing non-profit group. This may be more cost-effective than establishing your own office and staff and will take advantage of the contacts and expertise of people already in the field.

**Creating the Strategic Plan** - If you are building an organization, it is useful to develop a written strategic plan. When your members, partners, and other stakeholders see that a firm plan to undertake specific actions is in place, their enthusiasm can be turned into active participation. The plan should come from the stakeholders with the aid of an experienced facilitator.

**Creating the Vision** is the process of determining what the organization should be in the future.

**The mission statement** is the first step in a strategic planning process. It states how the common interest of those involved is intended to be turned into action.

**Defining goals** is the second step in the process. Goals may include acquiring land, creating interpretive programs, strengthening the organization, making the public aware of the benefits of greenways and trails,

and connecting to other organizations. A goal is a specific and measurable accomplishment that fulfills part of the mission, and should be written as a statement such as: *“To educate the community about the health and fitness benefits of trails.”*

**Setting objectives** is the third step that can be undertaken to achieve each goal. One objective for the above goal could be: *“Five hundred participants at the May Fitness Fair will be able to describe the health benefits of a trail.”* Before adopting a set of objectives, check that adequate resources are available to carry out each objective. Also, it is important to identify at least one person responsible for implementation of each objective.

The **action plan** is the fourth step in writing a strategic plan. For the above example, action items could include: *“Contact the health fair organizers to schedule a presentation. Write a script for the presentation. Prepare a fact sheet about the health benefits. Give the presentation and distribute fact sheets.”* Develop a timetable and estimate costs for each set of action items as part of the plan.

**Evaluation** is the last step in developing a strategic plan. This is the design of an ongoing evaluation process to assess whether or not each objective has been met. This process should include the collection of evidence or documentation. In the example above, one could give a quiz to the participants at the health fair and if 500 of them can actually describe the health benefits of greenways and trails, you know that the objective has been met.

## **Greenway and Trail Ownership**

### **Alternatives**

At this point in your planning efforts, determine who will own and operate the corridor in perpetuity. The ultimate ownership/management structure often will not be known at this point. This is an important factor to address during the corridor planning process. The owner or controller of the property need not be the same entity that operates and maintains it, if appropriate agreements are drawn between the owners and operators. Consult legal counsel for assistance in designing the appropriate instruments if responsibilities of ownership and operations are split. There are advantages and constraints inherent in each of the possible forms of ownership some of which are discussed below.

**Local Municipal and County Governments** - Local municipal or county governments may take ownership. Where multiple municipalities are involved, each would likely own and operate their section according to agreed upon standards. An advantage to municipal ownership is that an existing parks or recreation department can be assigned to manage the corridor and, if the department has a good reputation, public doubts about maintenance and security will be alleviated.

**Non-profit Associations and NGOs** - A separate non-profit association or council may take ownership or control of a greenway or trail property. A non-profit organization often has freedom and flexibility in responding to public concerns and interests, and can be successful in bridging the gap between agencies and municipal governments. Local land trusts may secure a corridor until a managing organization is established.

**State and Federal Government Agencies** - Government agencies may be appropriate title holders.

For example, if the greenway is primarily for scenic or agricultural conservation purposes, the Virginia Outdoors Foundation (VOF) could retain the easement or hold title to the land. The Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) owns and manages many greenways and trails as part of its State Parks. Be sure that the agency's goals are consistent with yours and have written assurances as to how the land will be managed.

**Private Landowners** - Private landowners may open their land to recreational use by formal or informal agreement, and may sell or donate conservation easements while retaining other rights to the land. A corridor can remain in private ownership with a conservancy holding easements, or with simple access agreements from the landowners. The liability of landowners who allow the public to use their land is limited by Virginia Code §29.1-509 (see Appendix XI).

## **Obtaining and Using Public Input**

Although a core team of the most dedicated individuals will outline the vision for a greenway or trail and develop the mission statement and initial concepts, they should be careful to keep their process open to the broader public. At certain points, particularly as the intended uses and alternative locations for the proposal begin to take shape, public input should be sought. Public input from the community is important for two reasons: first, showing a sincere desire to be sensitive to public concerns can build trust and engender goodwill; and, second, residents will have information that should prove beneficial.

**Conducting Interviews** - Adjacent landowners and public officials are key contacts. Members of potential user groups and neighbors in the general vicinity of your project should also be given the opportunity to give input. Getting their input through person-to-person

interviews is recommended, and can double as education and outreach if the interviewer provides information about the project to the respondent. Interviews may be conducted by appointment, canvassing door-to-door, phone, or approaching passers-by in a public place, such as a mall or park. Another approach is to conduct group interviews by attending civic or social organization functions.

**Using Questionnaires** - A survey distributed by mail or printed in a local newspaper is less labor intensive than interviews, although the validity of the results of the latter may be questionable. Questionnaires and the material accompanying them may make the public more aware of your project if accompanied by a cover letter explaining who you are, what your project is about, why you want public input, and how it will be used. Include a copy of your mission statement or brochure.

**Reporting Results** - After collecting all data, convene a team to compile and analyze it. The results may be given in tables and graphs or reported in text. The information provided in your survey is one means to reach conclusions and make recommendations. The results, conclusions, and recommendations should be compiled as a formal report. This report will help to demonstrate both the need for your project when you apply for funds, and public support when you approach public officials and private corporations. The report, or at least an executive summary of the important findings, should be distributed to the media, your partners, public officials, and potential funders.

The results of simple "yes" or "no" questions should be tallied and reported as a percentage of total respondents. For example: "73 percent of the surveyed population had not heard of our project before." If demographic data is available, results can be broken down to give a more detailed picture (e.g., "35 percent of respondents

under age 35 rollerblade while only 5 percent of those over age 35 rollerblade”).

For factual data, the results of open-ended questions might simply be reported as a list. The question, “Please name someone who may know about the history of the rail line,” Will generate a list of names. The results may also be condensed using a count of the frequency with which respondents use key words or phrases. In an attitudinal survey, for example, one might report that , “30 percent of the respondents used language judged to be supportive of the proposed trail”, according to criteria established in advance.

**Using Public Input** - Your team may draw conclusions from the data collected. For instance, “Since 80 percent of the respondents indicated that a greenway was desirable to protect Cobble Creek, and only 20 percent thought the area had recreational value, we conclude that the community prefers a protective buffer without recreational facilities along the creek.” The results of the survey should be presented at an initial public meeting.

**Planning an Initial Public Meeting** - In the initial stages, the greenway or trail group should hold at least one public meeting. If your project has more than two or three municipalities involved, plan to hold several meetings, in convenient locations, to assure that each community has an opportunity for access to the information.

**Conducting Public Meetings** - An experienced facilitator should conduct the meeting. A recorder should note all comments and questions on an easel pad. Have a stenographer record the proceedings if you intend to use this meeting to satisfy a public input requirement established by an agency providing public funds for your project.

## **Agenda Items and Tips**

- 1. Registration (use a sign-in roster; hand out agenda and materials)**
- 2. Begin meeting (moderator summarizes the purpose of the meeting, introduces sponsors, reviews agenda, and states ground rules)**
- 3. Introductions (participants give name and affiliation)**
- 4. Presentation (speaker, videotape, or slide show on greenway and trail basics)**
- 5. Opportunity for questions and comments on presentation**
- 6. Overview of specific project (use slides, maps, charts)**
- 7. Opportunity for questions and comments on overview**
- 8. Discussion (participants give information, input and discussion on project, possibly in break-out groups or in workshop format)**
- 9. Summary (report from groups on points of discussion)**
- 10. Closure (moderator introduces next step in process and invites interested citizens to continue participation)**

Be as open as possible but carefully choose which questions to answer. For instance, you should decline to answer questions of a confidential nature, such as those relating to parcels that are under consideration or under negotiation.

If it seems that participants have more questions and comments than time allows for, discuss the possibility of hosting a follow-up meeting in the near future.

## **Working with Landowners and Neighbors**

While you will be directly involved in negotiations for sale or lease of land or easements with the owners of property needed for the corridor, it is also important to consider the adjacent landowners, since they may be affected by your actions. As you begin research to determine parcel ownership within the corridor, also gather information on adjacent landowners. This section gives information on identifying landowners and abutters, communicating your vision to them, understand their needs, and obtaining permission to enter their property to continue your research.

**Identifying Landowners** - To identify landowners, go to the tax assessor's office for copies of the tax parcel maps for each parcel of land in the project corridor. These maps will also show the boundaries of individual parcels. While at the tax office get the current owner's address, and the parcel number, which will be used to check the chain of title on each separate parcel.

If the proposed corridor is not under the ownership of a single entity, collect documents on each individual parcel. Start a file on each property in and abutting the corridor. Include a print-out of the tax map and the owner's name and address in each file. Keep copies of all correspondence with the owner, and any additional information gathered about the parcel.

**Making Initial Contact With Landowners** - The next step is to contact and arrange to meet with each landowner to introduce the group, and its mission and vision. This will help to establish a positive relationship and open lines of communication. During this meeting, ask for more information about their land and request permission to conduct further research on their property.

On a cautionary note, keep in mind that at this stage, it is unknown if the whole project is feasible. It would be premature to ask for donated land, an easement, or to enter into any kind of negotiation. If asked about the conveyance of land, answer openly and honestly that additional research of the property is needed and that a master plan must be developed. Inform the owner that consideration will be given to alternative alignments for the corridor. Be careful not to jeopardize any future bargaining position or to give the landowner false expectations.

**Obtaining Permission to Enter the Property** - A major goal of the initial meeting is to obtain the landowner's permission for the investigative team to enter and cross the property. They will need to research the historical and natural features to see of the parcel should be included in the corridor alignment. The landowner will probably be concerned with accepting liability for accidents. Virginia Code §29.1-509 protects landowners from liability for granting permission for this access. The code, a sample permission form, and liability waiver are included in the Appendices. Offer to sign one each time you enter the property. Enter the property only on dates and at times prearranged with the landowner. When scheduling sessions for property research, invite the landowner to see what is being done. This will satisfy his or her sense of curiosity, continue to build a sense of trust, and promote interest in the project.

**Identifying Neighbors** - Neighbors can be identified by using the tax maps. In addition to landowners who hold adjacent property, identify tenants, both residential and nonresidential, of those properties. This is best done by having local supporters identify property owners or by touring the area and knocking on doors.

**Making Initial Contact with Neighbors** - Plan to meet with neighbors individually, if there are only a few, or invite them as a group to a special “neighborhood meeting” to inform them of the proposal and to listen to any concerns and suggestions. Doing so will go a long way toward ensuring their cooperation and lessen the likelihood of neighborhood opposition.

**Understand Landowner Concerns** - The landowner may have a number of concerns, fears, and misconceptions. The biggest misconception of a landowner is that their land will be taken or otherwise reduced in value. They may fear that the trail or greenway will impose conservation restrictions that will somehow limit future opportunities to sell or develop land for profit. Another major concern is the landowner’s sense of privacy and security. Open communication can address these concerns and dispel fears and misconceptions.

## **Working with Public Officials and Non-Governmental Organizations**

This section presents an overview of the function of various governmental and non-governmental entities as they relate to greenway and trail development. Federal, state, and local entities will likely be involved in your project. Some have a regulatory function and need to be fully informed to discharge their duties to protect and serve the public. Others will be potential resources to be used by the greenway and trail group. Some will

have only a peripheral involvement at certain stages of the project. Others will be involved from start to finish through the life of the greenway or trail.

### **Local and State Government Agencies**

Greenway and trail groups will most often start with contacts at the local government level and work with regional, state, and federal agencies later. One rule of thumb for working with government agencies: virtually every agency, at every level, stresses that they need to receive basic information about new greenway and trail projects as soon as possible in order to be of most help.

**Parks and Recreation Departments** - These agencies develop and maintain facilities for formal and informal recreation, run programs, and promote recreation. They may conduct an assessment of the community’s needs and may have plans and budgets for acquiring additional land for parks and recreation.

**Planning Departments and Commissioners** - Planning for greenways and trails may be assisted or facilitated by the planning department and planning commission. These local entities guide development in order that community infrastructure, such as streets, water supply, and sewers are adequate, and that development is consistent with adopted future land use plans, density goals, the need for housing, business, recreation and industry, and the need for protection of natural resources. They can also recommend capital improvement projects, such as acquisition of land for conservation and recreation. The planning director will know whether there are current proposals to develop land needed for the greenway or trail corridor and adjacent properties, which could influence your designs.

The locality should have a comprehensive plan that outlines how it will guide growth and protect resources. A proposed trail or greenway should be consistent with

the comprehensive plan. If not, a greenway or trail group should request that a revision to the plan be considered to incorporate the greenway or trail.

**Engineering/Public Works Department** - A locality may have an engineer or engineering department, or may contract for engineering services with a local firm. Local government engineers and landscape architects can be good resources for technical assistance.

**Tourism Promotion Organizations** - Tourism promotion organizations take a comprehensive approach to promoting tourism and developing attractions within a region. These organizations can help market a greenway or trail beyond the locality and contact potential greenway and trail supporters and users, such as hotels, restaurants, travel agencies, and bus tour operations stimulate interest in the region.

**Soil and Water Conservation Districts** - The Soil and Water Conservation Districts can assist greenway and trail groups with technical expertise and information about soils, erosion, farming practices, land use, habitat improvement, and wetlands protection. The Districts may also manage agricultural easement programs. Check your local phone book or contact the Virginia Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts for listings (see Appendix XXII: Green Pages).

**The Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation** - In addition to operating and maintaining greenways and trails within the state parks, DCR supports greenway and trail development through technical assistance and a special grant program. The Virginia Recreational Trails Fund program provides funding for public and non-profit projects. In the fiscal years 2000 and 2001, grant funding for this program will be approximately \$1 million each year. The match requirement is 20% of the total cost of in-kind services.

Grant applications are due on January 31 each year. In 1999, funding in the amount of \$1,254,163 was awarded to trail projects. See the Green Pages for contact information on this grant program and for technical assistance. DCR also provides guidance for property owners seeking property tax abatement for lands designated for long-term or permanent open space use.

**The Virginia Department of Transportation** - The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) oversees design, construction, and maintenance of most of Virginia's roads and bridges. VDOT also supports alternative transportation infrastructure other than railroads and public transit systems. Planning for most VDOT-funded projects in urbanized areas is initiated by local governments and made part of the regional transportation system through the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) process. Planning for transportation in areas not covered by an MPO is accomplished by local governments working directly with VDOT district offices. Each year a Six-Year Improvement Program is adopted by the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) which includes all approved and funded projects. In addition, the CTB holds nine District Preallocation Hearings throughout the state each spring to solicit public input for the Six-Year Improvement Program.

Greenways and trails can be incorporated into local transportation plans when they have strong local support. Pedestrian and bicycle improvements can also be included in street reconstruction projects and the development of new roads, especially when dedicated supporters consistently make their wishes known at local planning commission and governing body meetings and hearings.

In the meantime, before your greenway or trail organization has its own major project to promote, you

may advance your interests by affecting the design of roadway projects already slated for development. When the local government or VDOT prepares initial plans for transportation improvement projects they normally conduct a public information meeting. In that meeting they explain the need for the project and ask that ideas and concerns held by the public be stated for consideration in the project development process. When a group enters the process at this stage, they can cause bicycle and pedestrian improvements to be given greater consideration in the location and design of the new facility. Later, as the project plans are developed and refined, additional public meetings or hearings will be held to keep the public involved. The greenway or trail organization must attend these subsequent meetings to monitor progress and to ensure that their recommendations are included in the roadway plans.

The Green Pages (Appendix XXII) contains a complete listing of VDOT administered federal funding programs that can be applied for financing trails. Two well-funded federal programs can be successfully applied in Virginia localities for a wide range of pedestrian and bicycle improvements; The Transportation Equity Act for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Enhancement Program (TEA-21) and Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ). TEA-21 provides substantial funding for enhancements to road and highway projects administered by VDOT. TEA-21 replaces the ISTEA program which has funded pedestrian and bicycle projects since the early 1990's. TEA-21 should be even more advantageous to greenway and trails organizations because it includes more money that can be applied towards a wider range of transportation enhancements. CMAQ funding can be obtained for development of alternative transportation such as new routes that would enable commuters to walk or cycle instead of driving to work.

Your organization should be prepared for technical challenges in working with district engineers. They are trained and experienced in the application of widely accepted standards for roadway design and safety and will expect your organization to submit well thought-out and detailed plans. Those plans will be expected to meet or exceed the many complex criteria and standards that are well established in the field of transportation engineering. Particularly challenging situations can occur where a trail runs along the edge of the roadway, where a trail crosses a road, where an entrance to a parking area is located, and where a trail is on a roadway bridge. If a greenway or trail facility is expected to increase traffic or congestion on a road, VDOT may require improvements to the roadway to prevent degradation in the level of service for roadway users. In any case, when a trail is within a road right-of-way under the jurisdiction of VDOT, it is prudent to contact the local government and/or the applicable district engineer early for advice and direction.

**Virginia Code Commission** - The Virginia Code Commission codifies the laws and regulations of the Commonwealth and publishes them as sets of volumes, updated periodically. The *Virginia Code* includes the laws and the *Virginia Administrative Code* included the regulations. Each regulation is assigned a number consisting of a "title" number, which identifies the issuing agency, and a chapter and section number. For example, regulations promulgated by DCR appear in Title 10.1-200 - 400. Whole sets and individual volumes may be obtained from publishers in book or electronic form, as can periodic updates. Some public libraries and local government offices maintain copies of the documents. Both codes can be viewed from the General Assembly web page at <http://leg1.state.va.us>.

**The Virginia Outdoors Foundation** - The Virginia Outdoors Foundation (VOF) works with landowners to define scenic, cultural, and natural resource areas on their property that are appropriate for conservation, and serves as a repository for conservation easements donated to the state. The VOF currently holds 570 easements on 103,000 acres.

**Virginia Department of Forestry** - The Virginia Department of Forestry offers funding through the Urban and Community forestry Assistance Grants. This program encourages tree planting and education about sustainable urban forestry at the local level. A limited number of grants have been awarded that combine trail and urban forestry interests. Grants may be awarded to local governments, approved non-profit organizations, educational institutions, and others. The filing deadline is June 1, and awards are announced by July 1. See Green Pages for contact information.

**Virginia Department of Environmental Quality** - The Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) administers Virginia's Coastal Zone Resources Management Program, which includes federal matching grants to local governments in Tidewater Virginia for a wide variety of programs to enhance and protect coastal resources. Grant funding is available for development of public access to coastal resources and for habitat improvement generally.

**Virginia Department of Historic Resources** - The Virginia Department of Historic Resources (DHR) is the state repository for all information related to archaeological and historic structures in Virginia. DHR records may be searched for information related to cultural resources and DHR staff prepare and review environmental assessments for state sponsored projects and grant applications.

**Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries** - The Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (DGIF) conducts research and provides information on game and non-game wildlife and habitat in the Commonwealth. DGIF biologists and managers conduct educational programs and prepare interpretive material for state facilities and for use in habitat management on private land. DGIF also develops boat ramps, piers, and other water access facilities around the state.

**Virginia Marine Resources Commission** - The Virginia Marine Resources Commission (VMRC) issues permits for construction and other activities that could affect such resource areas as submerged lands under tidal waterways and streams, beaches, and sand dunes. VMRC provides guidelines on how improvements in these resource areas must be implemented to be eligible for a permit. VMRC habitat and construction specialists should be contacted early in the planning process for any facility which could impact a stream, tidal shore, or beach area.

### **Working With Federal Agencies**

Many federal agencies provide resources and other support for the development of greenways and trails. Often the federal programs are administered by a state agency, as in the case of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Coastal Zone Resources Management Program which is administered in Virginia by DEQ. Other supporting federal programs and agencies include:

**American Heritage River Initiative** - The Potomac River and the New River have been designated by President Clinton as an American Heritage Rivers (AHR). The AHR designation will have a significant impact on local governments, non-profits and businesses that are located or operate within the Potomac River and the New River basins. The primary purpose of the

AHR designation is to streamline local access to additional federal funding and technical support. A River “Navigator” has been appointed with the sole responsibility of assisting local groups in accessing federal resources.

The Potomac River nomination outlined a variety of local projects and programs that will benefit from the AHR designation, with recreation being a major component. The Friends of the Potomac (FOP) is currently organizing its administrative functions, and will serve as the liaison between the local communities and the Potomac River Navigator. Three councils will be formed to assist local communities in their participation in the AHR initiative. Interested parties should join the appropriate council to insure representation in the development of program priorities.

The three councils include: State and local government; business and agriculture; and non-profit. In addition there will be a Potomac Congressional Caucus, consisting of all members of Congress whose districts are located wholly or in part in the Potomac River Basin.

**National Park Service** - Within the National Park Service (NPS) is the Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program. This program provides technical assistance to communities and acts as a clearinghouse of essential information, researching and publishing useful information such as the guidebook *Economic Impacts Of Protecting Rivers, Trails and Greenway Corridors* (see Bibliography). Staffing the program are planners, landscape architects, communication specialists, and natural resource managers. The NPS Mid-Atlantic Regional Office, located in Philadelphia, serves seven states, including Virginia, which makes it a valuable partner in any project crossing state lines.

To obtain assistance from the NPS, contact a staff person as early in your project as possible for a consultation. They will help determine needs and what type of assistance the NPS should provide. Follow this consultation with a formal letter of request including your case statement. The Philadelphia Mid-Atlantic Regional Office receives approximately 100 requests per year, but can usually provide resources to only 25 different projects at any given time. All projects are undertaken as partnerships on a cost-share basis. Any in-kind efforts and expenditures can count as cost sharing.

**The US Army Corps of Engineers** - The US Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) is an agency that undertakes large construction projects for flood control or river navigation. The Corps cannot acquire land primarily for conservation or recreation but can include trails in designs for flood control projects, such as the walks along the flood wall in Richmond.

At the district level, the Corps conducts reconnaissance studies that define problems and opportunities related to water resources and identifies potential projects. Then, if the federal government and a local non-federal cosponsor agree on a potential project and commit to cost-share arrangements, a full feasibility study and environmental impact study are conducted. After approval by the Secretary of the Army or Congressional authorization, the district completes design and engineering for the project. Project construction is completed by private contractors under Corps supervision. Once created, management of facilities may be turned over to local authorities or retained by the Corps.

Corps civil works in Virginia are divided between four offices on the basis of major river watersheds. The Potomac River watershed is served by the Baltimore

District office, the New River watershed is under the Huntington, WV District office, the Pamlico River watershed is administered by the Wilmington, NC District office, and the balance of Virginia is under the Norfolk District office. Local facilities operated by the Corps, such as Philpott and Kerr reservoirs, are staffed by project managers who may be a resource in specific regions within Virginia. Greenway and trail groups should contact the Corps through local project managers where applicable. The Corps may help with consultation on trail design, construction, and maintenance. Technical assistance is available on floodplain management for greenway and trail groups owning properties located in a floodplain.

**United States Forest Service** - The United Forest Service (USFS) manages 1.5 million acres in Virginia's Jefferson and George Washington National Forest. These lands are managed for multiple uses and contain a number of trails and conservation corridors. The USFS will cooperate and collaborate on trails and greenways connecting to the forests. Its Forestry Sciences Lab conducts research on the best management practices and the health of forests. The USFS also publishes information that may be of interest to greenway and trail groups managing substantial areas of conservation land.

**Surface Transportation Board** - The Surface Transportation Board (STB), formerly the Interstate Commerce Commission, is the federal agency charged with overseeing rail line abandonments. All railroad companies that wish to abandon unprofitable lines must file with the STB. Greenway and trail groups can request notification of any such filings in their area of operation. Once aware that a rail company wishes to part with a line, the group may begin negotiations directly with the railroad for conversion of the corridor to trail use.

Although the STB may grant an abandonment, it will still seek to preserve the corridor intact for future transportation needs. A rails-to-trails group that can assume financial liability for the line may petition the STB to order that the line be set aside for rail banking. Rail banking allows for interim trail use while keeping the corridor intact for possible railroad reconstruction and reactivation. The STB may also be petitioned to impose a limitation on how the railroad disposes of a line. This is known as a Public Use Condition and can provide a reasonable period of time for your group to conduct research, create a plan, raise funds, and begin negotiation with the railroad for the eventual purchase.

More information about the abandonment process and about rail banking is included in *Secrets of Successful Rail-Trails* (see Bibliography).

**Department of Labor** - The Federal Disaster Displaced Workers Program, of the US Department of Labor, is designed to provide temporary jobs for workers displaced by disasters, and is a potential source of labor for greenways and trails groups during construction.

**Virginia Trails Association (VTA)** - The mission of VTA is to foster the appreciation, management, and establishment of trail systems. This is accomplished through coordination, education, advocacy, and community empowerment. VTA provides technical assistance, resource and referral information, education, and advocacy.

**The Conservation Fund** - The Conservation Fund produces publication lists and fact sheets on greenways and trail development and offers a grant program for advancing greenways.

## **Non-governmental Organizations**

There are a number of national and state-level non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that are active on greenways and trails. Key groups are briefly described here. Contact information appears in the Green Pages (Appendix XXII). NGOs may provide technical assistance on a variety of subjects. Some may be able to participate as partners in greenway and trail projects and other may be advocates at the state and national level for policies and funding initiatives that support greenway and trail efforts.

**The Rails-to-Trails Conservancy** - The Rails-to-Trails Conservancy (RTC) is a national organization which acts as a clearing-house, providing numerous useful publications, and organizational and technical assistance on acquisition and development of rail-trails. The group is an advocate for rail-trail policies and provides education about the general benefits of rail-trails. If you are working on a rail corridor, the RTC should be contacted very early in the initial stages of project development.

**Local and regional land trusts and conservancies** - There are 23 individual land trusts and conservancies in Virginia (see Green Pages). These organizations hold land and conservation easements, and some specialize in the preservation of historic and cultural resources, farmland, and open space. All actively raise money for purchase of lands and seek donations of land and easements. They are experienced at title searches, property research, property management, and related tasks.

Trusts and conservancies may contribute to greenways planning and may conduct county or municipal open space inventories. They may also work with municipalities on planning and zoning to encourage preservation of open space.

Some land trusts and conservancies have staff that may include planners, landscape architects, resource conservation experts, and development and fund raising personnel. They may be able to advise, consult, and partner with greenway and trail groups. Land trusts may also provide management services to a greenway or trail group that does not yet have Section 501(c)(3) status or that wishes to share the burden of administrative work. Management services may include hosting meetings, creating proposals, and handling finances. Land trusts can help coordinate networking and are usually experienced at public relations.

**Chambers of Commerce** - A chamber of commerce is an association comprised primarily of businesses and industries, usually serving a single locality or region. There are other business associations, such as downtown merchants associations, that can be active in promoting greenways and trails. Concerned with the economic vitality of their service area, they may be interested in the quality-of-life benefits of greenways and trails and may point them out to executives looking to relocate their firms to a particular region. Others may seek to spur redevelopment in small towns.

Chambers may be able to assist greenway and trail groups in a number of ways. They may help with community contacts, host presentations about your projects, and provide contact with leadership in the business community to assist with fundraising and political support. They also can introduce greenways groups to developers to encourage the accommodation of greenway connections and open space in their plans. If the chamber in your area has an environmental or land use committee, they maybe willing to collaborate on your project.

## Marketing and Publicity

The number of marketing techniques that can be used to gain exposure and name recognition for greenway or trail is limited only by your imagination. Methods to promote your project include special promotional events, brochures, fact sheets, guidebooks, and tangible products. This section provides general information about marketing and publicity, followed by tips on specific activities. Additional information can be found in the *Guide to Public Relations for Nonprofit Organizations and Public Agencies* available from the Grantsmanship Center (see Green Pages).

**Creating a Marketing and Publicity Plan** - After you have formed the greenway or trail group, and made your initial outreach to the public and to your partners, you should put together a formal marketing and publicity plan. Keep in mind the various audiences anticipated. One set of messages should be crafted specifically to appeal to key information providers, donors, and potential partners. A different message should be targeted to the general public and potential trail users.

Appoint a publicity committee or an individual skilled as a spokesperson, or a good writer, as soon as possible. If you do not have volunteers with skills in this area, consider bringing in an expert to train the committee and to oversee specific tasks. Use a professional employed by a partnering agency or hired from a publicity firm. A media or communications department at a local college is also a good source of volunteer expertise. The employee or public relations specialists of a local firm may also be recruited for pro bono work.

**Establishing an Identity** - People need to know what the mission of your organization is. Communications experts call this “establishing an identity.” The goal is to get the message across and make it stick in the minds of your audience. The mission statement should be short and easily understood. If not, reduce it to a single,

finely tuned catch phrase or tag line. A tag line might be “Connecting corridors for wildlife and people”, or “Community connections keeping the county green”.

In addition to the short tag line, it is helpful to construct a longer paragraph that explains, in reader-friendly language, your mission and current projects. This paragraph, called a standard paragraph or standard blurb, can provide a slightly more detailed picture of the organization. This should be included in every press release and can be used to summarize the mission when introducing the project.

A graphic artist can design a logo that will catch the eye and make a statement about who you are and what you are about. Use your name, tag line, and logo on all communications, including letters, press releases, signs, and promotional materials, such as T-shirts and refrigerator magnets.

**Getting Media Attention** - Media attention is vital to educate people about greenways and persuade them that your effort is worthy of support. Good media coverage includes announcement of activities before they occur and reporting on them after they are underway or complete.

**Writing an effective News Release** - To get the attention of editors and broadcasters you should periodically produce news releases. Based on information contained in the news release, reporters may call to get a story and prepare an article about project, or for information to be used in writing editorials.

For effective distribution of news releases, develop a database of newspapers, radio stations, television stations, and publishers of event calendars. In your database include the media outlets’ names, addresses, phone numbers, fax numbers, and e-mail addresses.

Note the lead time each media outlet needs in advance of deadlines. Add to your list the names, addresses and phone numbers of individual editors and key reporters.

A news release should cover a single event and be no more than two pages, double-spaced. Begin with a bold heading identifying your organization and large letters identifying the item as a news release. Provide a contact name and phone number. If the item covered is time-sensitive or should be published immediately, type “For Immediate Release” after the heading. Otherwise, advise the recipient of a release date: “For Release January 1, 2001.”

In the first paragraph, the one most likely to be read and printed verbatim, state your most important facts. This will be the familiar “who, what, when, where, and why.” Put supporting information and details in subsequent paragraphs. Be sure to include a paragraph about the organization, its mission, and its current project (standard blurb). If the release continues to a second page, include “~more~” at the bottom of the first page. To indicate the end of the release, include “~end~” or “-0-0-0-” at the bottom. If the release is to be mailed, send it 1st class and include only one news release per envelope. News releases may be faxed, e-mailed, or hand delivered for immediate attention.

**Writing an Effective Media Advisory** - The main function of a media advisory is to invite the media to attend your meeting or event. Use a format similar to that of a news release, but clearly mark it as an “alert” or “advisory,” and use the key phrase “you are invited to cover this event.” Time the media advisory to arrive just a day or two in advance of the event. It, may be faxed or hand-delivered to gain immediate attention. Specify the time and date and include a detailed agenda, if possible. Highlight opportunities for photography and videotaping. It is very effective to provide a time when

VIPs can be drawn aside from the proceeding to be questioned by reporters.

Submit information on your meetings and events separately to the community calendar or community bulletin board section of each media outlet for a free listing. This listing will be brief and limited to the event, time and place. It also should include a contact for additional information.

**Creating a Press Kit** - In advance of every event at which you expect media coverage, assemble a folder containing the case statement, contact information, photographs, fact sheets, and other material that could provide the press with substantive background information on the project. Add a detailed agenda for the event. Provide this press kit to reporters attending the event. They will not have time to get much background information before rushing off to their next story and will use the information later to check facts and amplify stories.

**Brochures** - A brochure is a promotional piece designed to be attractive, easy to read, and directed at a general audience. A brochure can be designed to be distributed by hand, picked up from a rack, or sent through the mail, and it may include an insert or tear-off section that the recipient can respond to you. A brochure may give membership information and ask for donations, or advertise the proposed greenway and trail to potential users.

Ways to widely distribute a brochure include arranging with a utility company to insert it in their monthly billing packet, or including it with a municipal newsletter. To advertise outside your area, take advantage of the brochure distribution service provided by many tourism promotion agencies. In your area, post the brochure on community bulletin boards in places such as grocery stores, municipal buildings, public libraries, and

community centers. There may be a bill posting service in your area that can be hired to place notices to the best advantage.

**Banners** - Banners can be hung across streets and from buildings, and window displays can be placed in storefronts to advertise your project or an event. Inexpensive vinyl fabric banners can be produced at local sign shops. Check with public officials about local ordinances governing display of banners and inquire about municipal or utility company assistance to hang them safely between street lights or utility poles.

**Newsletters** - It is a good idea to produce your own newsletter to be distributed to supporters and contacts. If you do, it should be published on a regular (monthly or bimonthly) basis. Members and supporters need to hear from the organization as often as possible. A frequent, photocopied, single-sheet publication done with desk-top publishing software on a home computer can be more effective, not to mention a great deal less expensive, than a larger quarterly publication.

Avoid having to use envelopes by incorporating a mailing cover panel into the design of the newsletter. If you have Section 501(c)(3) status, you will qualify for a non-profit-organization bulk mailing permit with the U.S. Postal Service. The permit, obtainable at your local post office, allows significant savings over first-class postage rates. Contact your postmaster for details and restrictions.

Send the newsletter to members, but also send a complimentary copy to key people, such as public officials, friendly reporters, and cooperating partners. Run a few hundred extra copies to distribute as handouts at upcoming events.

**Holding Events** - Each event held requires publicity,

and each will provide exposure for your project. Events provide an opportunity for supporters to gather, socialize, and enjoy the fruits of their labors. The more cooperating partners involved in an event, the more successful it will be. If possible, hold events in conjunction with natural or cultural happenings. For example, conduct events and guided tours for the public on a solstice, equinox, or holiday. National Trails Day (the first Saturday of each June, sponsored by the American Hiking Society) provides an opportunity to attract attention to a proposed trail and to draw the public to a special event at an existing facility. River festivals during Virginia Rivers Month (June), organized walks and hikes on National Trails Day (the first Saturday in June), and Earth Day events (Earth Day is scheduled by local organizations and usually occurs in April) can also promote your project.

Races have become traditional events to promote trail values. Local running, bicycling, canoeing/kayaking clubs, and other civic organizations can help organize races. Add the suffix “a-thon” to any event and it doubles as fundraising and marketing. Clean-up activities, usually day-long events, are great ways to improve the greenway or trail, involve lots of citizens, and attract media coverage. Finally, breakfasts, luncheons, dinners, receptions, and formal dances are traditional events that can be used to draw attention to your organization and raise money. Numerous charities raise money with such events, and therefore it should be possible to recruit an experienced organizer within the community.

**Products** - A variety of products can be used to call attention to your project. These can include give-away items, such as bumper stickers and pins, or sale items, such as commuter mugs and water bottles emblazoned with the greenway or trail logo. Work with private enterprise to promote your project in other ways. For example, a local water-bottling company might produce a special label and provide water on the day of your

event, or a local winery might produce a commemorative label for a dinner event. Or, you may work with garment manufacturers to produce apparel with the project's logo. Arrange for local merchants to sell the clothing in their stores, providing royalties to the project, or sell apparel to your members and participants at events.

## **Finance and Funding**

There are a number of investments that must be made to run your organization effectively. This section discusses planning for income and expenditures, delineates some cost categories, and relates strategies for obtaining funding. Due to the nature of the process for creating greenways and trails, more funds will be needed in some years than in others. An annual operating budget should be prepared to plan for routine organizational revenue and expenses. A separate fiscal plan will be needed to plan for anticipated major, one-time project expenses and to identify potential funding sources for each expense.

If you are creating a new greenway or trail group for this project, develop a budget for ongoing operational expenses and balance those expenses with revenue. Grant makers are likely to require a copy of your budget as well as an audited financial statement, with a grant application. Having a balanced budget will give potential partners a reason to take the project seriously, and will help contributors appreciate the magnitude of the undertaking and the value of their contribution.

**Creating a Fiscal Plan** - Major project expenditures include the one-time cost of conducting the feasibility study and creating the master plan. To form a comprehensive program to meet these financial needs, the finance and fundraising committee should develop a fiscal plan and revise it as needed. Once the study and plan are completed, cost for acquiring and

developing the corridor should be known and maintenance and operating expense estimates should be available. Sources of funds to meet each expense must be identified and developed. The plan should include a time line showing major project expenditures to help keep fundraising activities on track.

A financial consultant, or a representative of an economic development organization, may be able to assist, as can a volunteer from SCORE. A small business development center associated with a local college may also provide planning assistance. Consult your local telephone directory for resources.

**Start-Up** - Start-up costs include expenditures to create an organization, set up an office, print initial brochures, recruit members, solicit donors, and conduct kick-off events. Small foundations and individual donors are often willing to provide seed money for start-up costs, hoping to catalyze additional investments in their community. As this money will not likely be renewed, it is critical to spend it in ways that will generate additional funds.

**Organizational Operating** - Few donors and grant makers are willing to contribute to annual operating expenses, such as rental office space, staff salaries, and overhead. Use membership contributions, conduct annual appeals, and hold fundraising events to generate operating revenue. An efficient organization will seek to minimize these costs by using subsidized office space, donated equipment, and shared staff.

**Promotional and Fundraising Activities** - Many organizations have difficulty obtaining initial funds to finance efforts to develop additional revenue. Money from memberships and individual donors should be earmarked for these efforts. Occasionally, individuals or businesses will underwrite the cost of promotional

materials. Local businesses may be willing to underwrite a fundraising event in return for positive exposure.

**Matching Funds for Grants** - For grants, a substantial local match is often required and commitments or pledges for these funds usually must be obtained, in writing, prior to application. Fulfillment of these commitments may be contingent upon a successful grant application. Municipal governments, corporations, and individuals may be solicited for these commitments.

**Feasibility Study and Master Plan** - Conducting a feasibility study and creating a master plan are major expenses that will require large sums of money. In Virginia, most greenway and trail groups raise local matching funds and apply for grants to fund these activities. Localities undertaking feasibility and planning studies typically fund them with general revenue from the annual operating budget. These funds are often augmented with grants. To undertake planning, as well as later acquisition and construction, localities may also devote money obtained from cash proffers or utilize “windfall” funds, such as bequests, fees from leasing public lands, or moneys from fines and settlements.

**Acquisition and Development** - Funds for acquisition and development are most often generated by a capital campaign. They may also be augmented by major grants. The efficient greenway or trail group will seek to minimize acquisition costs by obtaining land and easements through donations. Funds for acquisition and development are most easily obtained from public and corporate contributions. People are more likely to give when they see a tangible, “bricks and mortar” return. Keep in mind that donations of land can serve as a match for some state development grants. It is also possible to recoup some of this expense by reselling the land to a holding agency, such as leasing the land back to farmers,

selling rights to resources, such as standing timber, or realizing a profit from utility leases.

**Operation and Maintenance** - Ongoing operation and maintenance expenses can be covered by user fees, membership dues, contributions, or proceeds from product sales. Cost sharing among governmental and non-governmental organizations may be spelled out in a maintenance agreement. Business and industry, or local civic organizations, may adopt a section of the greenway or trail and maintain it. An endowment can be established, possibly through a community foundation, to hold funds raised through a planned giving campaign, large contributions or bequests.

**Raising Private and Local Funds** - This section provides an overview of private and local funding sources for greenway and trails projects that can augment or provide local matching funds when seeking state and federal grants. *The Grass Roots Fundraising Book: How to Raise Money in Your Community* is a good source of detailed information on general fundraising efforts (see Bibliography).

**Fundraising Events and Sales** - The variety of fundraising activities is limited only by the imagination of your group. A few ideas have been mentioned in the preceding section.

**Attracting Members** - As the greenway or trail will provide direct benefits to the local community, fundraising efforts should begin with an appeal to the citizenry. People who subscribe to your mission should join the organization. Most greenway and trail groups charge a nominal membership fee, from \$10 to \$25. The usual strategy is to make membership affordable and build the membership rolls, then solicit members for larger contributions, in-kind donations, or volunteer

efforts. A higher fee is generally charged for businesses and agencies to affiliate themselves as members.

Members can be recruited through a brochure, a display, or an event. Most often, however, they are recruited by word-of-mouth. Once individuals are enrolled as members, they should be solicited for additional donations in an annual giving appeal.

In addition to monetary contributions, each member is valuable as an ambassador of the program. Be sure they are fully informed of the mission statement and all activities. Periodically remind them to help widen the circle of supporters by bringing guests to events, distributing membership brochures to friends and acquaintances, and providing referrals. Be sure to follow up and solicit each guest and referral for membership and additional contributions.

Members can be recruited to help raise funds in other ways. One successful strategy is to have member families host dinner parties at home for their friends on a certain night, and then convene everyone at a central location for entertainment, fundraising activities, and education.

**Creating a Corporate Giving Program** - A corporate giving program is an essential fundraising tool. Check your public library reference desk for directories of businesses. Begin by identifying corporations with a track record of community giving or a high stake in the quality of life in your community. Insurance companies, managed healthcare providers, and sporting goods manufacturers often see the benefits of supporting green way and trail activities. The Chamber of Commerce or other business associations may help identify good prospects.

Many corporations have a community relations officer or committee who controls a community gift or grant budget. Identify these individuals or committees and meet with them in person to present the case statement. Ask for a specific contribution and tell them how it will be spent. Often, once a corporation qualifies your organization for a contribution, they will automatically renew it in future years.

Many corporations match the charitable contributions of their employees. Ask donors if their employer has a matching contributions program and, if so, write to request a match. Corporations also support charities by sponsoring events.

**Recognizing Contributors** - Give some thought to how contributors will be recognized and rewarded. Common ways to thank and recognize individual members and donors include a pin, decal, newsletter subscription, member discounts at local cooperating merchants, and recognition in newsletters. Grantmakers and major donors may deserve a plaque at the project site or a certificate of appreciation to display in their home or office. Special members events (other than fundraising events) can be rewards as well.

One example of a successful recognition program is to have bricks embossed with the names of contributors, thereby becoming a permanent display and part of the construction material at a trail or greenway. Symbolic deeds and other tokens may be produced for similar campaigns.

**Seeking Foundation Grants** - Numerous large community, family, and corporate-foundations make grants to greenway and trail groups. Copies of directories of foundations can be found in local libraries. These directories provide information on each foundation's grantmaking history and philosophy.

One well known directory, *Environmental Grantmaking Foundations*, is published annually by Resources for Global Sustainability Inc. (see Bibliography). This organization also maintains a database of over 47,000 grant programs that can be searched by key words to determine the foundations servicing your area and type of project. Foundations can also be located by searching the Internet.

Small family foundations and charitable trusts are often managed by trust officers at local banks. A phone inquiry to the bank will suffice to identify these individuals. Arrange face-to-face meetings with trust officers to present your case and ask for assistance in identifying which trusts will fund activities related to greenways and trails.

Although there are too many individual foundations and grant programs to list here, a good example is the American Greenways Kodak Awards Program which is a partnership project of the Eastman Kodak Company, The Conservation Fund, and the National Geographic Society that provides small grants for the planning and design of greenways. The maximum grant is \$2,500. Applications are accepted between March 1 and June 1 of each year. Awards are announced in early fall. Contact The Conservation Fund for information (see Green Pages).

**Individual Donors** - Fundraising experts commonly say that 85 percent of all donations are from individual donors. Your board or committee should identify people who are prospective donors, and ask donors to help by contacting people they know. In contacting individual donors, ask questions to ascertain their interest in the project. Do they hike? Do they bike? How do they feel about wildlife? Cultivating donors may take months or years. There is a donor life cycle – from first contact, through small gift, large gift, and legacy.

## **Continuing the Mission**

Once your greenway or trail is operational, you deserve to settle down and enjoy the fruits of your labors. But, as a permanent part of the green infrastructure of your community, you are likely to find continuing opportunities to extend the mission and continuing challenges to the resources you are striving to protect. This last section discusses ways to extend the mission and assure continued protection of the resources you have chosen to protect.

**Continuing the Legacy** - As your greenway or trail becomes operational, your steering committee may evolve into a board of directors or a management team and shift efforts entirely to routine operations. Some serious matters will still need consideration.

As the greenway or trail becomes known in the community and beyond, user needs will change. Periodically conducting a user needs survey can keep you in touch with users and point to needed changes, repairs, or upgrades. The York County Heritage Rail Trail conducts such a survey and a sample is provided in the Appendix.

If leasing land, the management team must open negotiations for renewal before the leases expire. Other entities or individuals may come forward and offer conservation easements on additional land, for consideration by the steering committee. The potential for encroachments on your greenway or trail will require constant vigilance.

**Extending the Greenway or Trail** - If the team has the energy and enthusiasm, it can replicate success by initiating an extension of the corridor or creation of a new greenway or trail in another part of the region. Although it may never physically connect with the first trail, a second trail will add to the menu of regional

attractions. The second attempt can be easier than the first since the group already has established many of the necessary working relationships.

In trail extensions, a separate feasibility study and master plan are created for a major segment to be added to the trail. To do this, expand the current steering committee with members of communities in the area of the expansion, or create a separate steering committee for the new project and become a regional umbrella organization.

If a new goal is to create linkages around the region, a greenways opportunity map is a tool for visualizing corridor linkages and the potential for an integrated system of trails. You and your organization can also look forward to connecting with greenway corridors and linking trails statewide and beyond. There are several examples of multi-state greenway and trail corridors that include Virginia. For instance, the Appalachian Trail runs through most of the eastern states and the new East Coast Greenway is proposed to run north and south through the eastern half of Virginia. Also, national bike routes 76 and 1 both pass through Virginia.

**Sharing Your Skills** - As you master the process of greenways and trails planning, you will become a valuable advisor to others who wish to follow in your footsteps. Hosting or contributing to a regional conference on greenways and trails is one way to share information and resources. Conferences and forums have the benefit of attracting and educating the public and generating new supporters of the greenway and trail movement.