

You asked: When can I hike it?

By JOE MILLER
STAFF WRITER

Give you folks more than 100 miles of greenway trails, and what do you want? More.

Last month, we updated a handful of in-the-works outdoors projects and

take it outside

asked you to drop us a line about any others you were wondering about. A number of such projects appear to be on your collective radar.

That said, let's get to your questions.

1. Third Fork Creek Greenway, Durham

Reader Dale McKeel wasted little time — he called around 8 a.m. the morning the aforementioned story appeared — inquiring about this long-awaited trail that would link Durham's Woodcroft subdivision with a section of the American Tobacco Trail (23 miles proposed, 13 completed) that currently runs from downtown south to near Interstate 40. This 6-mile trail (including spurs) has been plagued by everything from disputes over how to handle storm-water runoff and negotiations with 65 separate landowners, to pesky beavers. But rejoice, Dale, for Durham planner Cherri Smith brings good tidings.

"We hope to have that out to construction bid by February," Smith says.

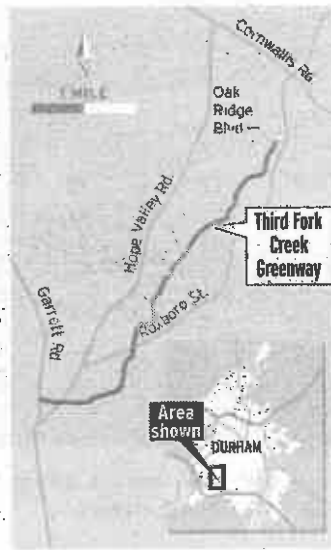
What that means in the when-can-I-walk-it? scheme of things is: Durham should be able to award a contract during the spring, construction should take nine months.

"Hopefully," Smith says, "it will be open this time next year."

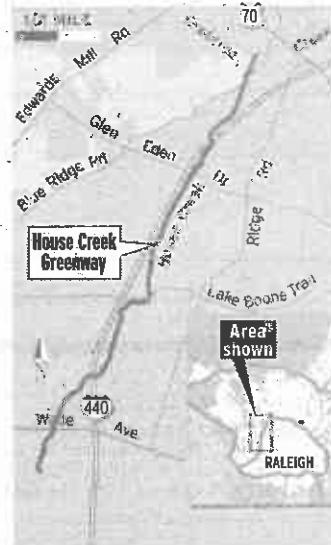
One caveat: That's only Phase 1 of the project, a 3.5-mile stretch from Garrett Road Park northeast to Southern Boundaries Park. Phase 2, the remaining 2.5 miles from Southern Boundaries to the ATT, is yet to be funded.

2. House Creek Greenway, Raleigh

Several of you expressed interest in this project, which would link the existing greenway along Crabtree Creek with the new Reedy Creek Greenway, which runs through Meredith College, over the nifty new I-440 pedestrian bridge to the N.C. Museum of Art. That stretch (basically paralleling the Beltline and connecting behind Crabtree Valley Mall) would run from near WakeMed northwest to near Duraleigh Road. It's a stretch of particular significance because it



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would provide a greenway link from trail on the east side of Raleigh with trail on the west.

"House Creek is currently in the design phase," reports Raleigh greenway guru Vic Lebsock. Construction likely would begin in nine months to a year, he says, and the 1.6-mile greenway would likely be finished a year after that.

Roughly mid- to late-2007, for those of you without a calendar handy.

3. Crabtree Creek Greenway, Raleigh

Lynn Pritchard had a two-part question on the greenway that now runs along Crabtree from near WakeMed northwest to near Duraleigh Road.

First, she wants to know, will the proposed behemoth 42-story multi-use Glen Tree skyscraper proposed at Edwards Mill and Glenwood affect the existing greenway that runs nearby?

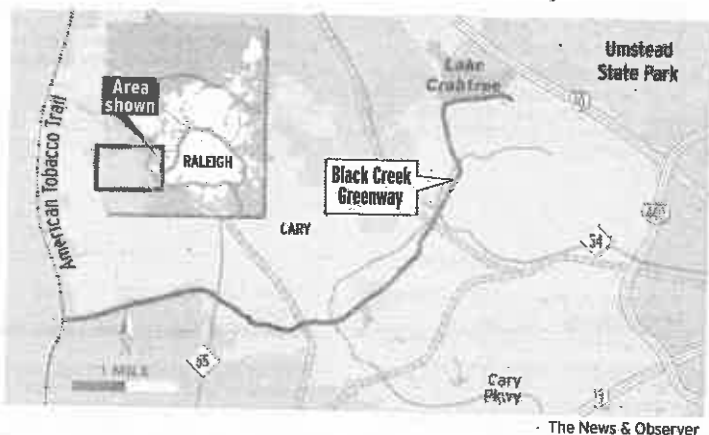
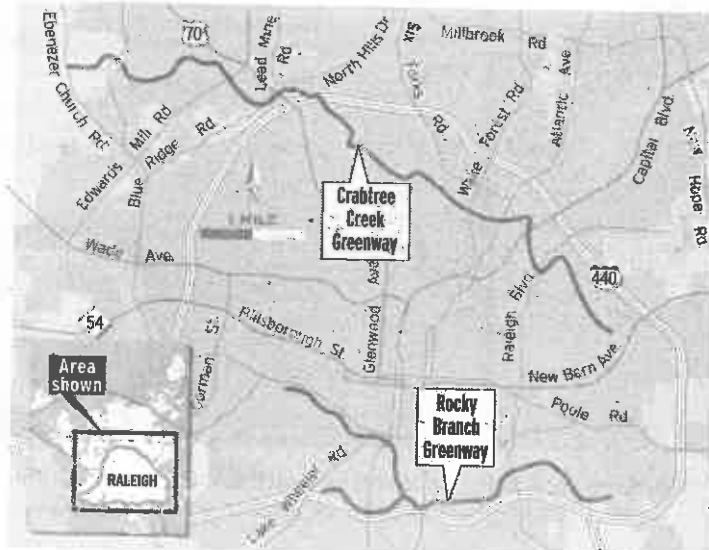
"No," says Lebsock.

Next question, Lynn?

"When is the portion of the same trail anticipated to be completed

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so it joins up with Umstead Park? This would be the 1.5 miles from Duraleigh on up Crabtree to Umstead State Park.

The problem is that much of this section runs through a quarry where a stalemate was reached in trying to gain access. The city and quarry are now involved in a legal tussle.

"The lawsuit is still pending," Lebsack says.

4. Black Creek/White Oak Creek greenways, Cary

Bob Seroka was also curious about the Crabtree Trail, in part because it's part of a plan that would make it possible someday to ride greenway from east Raleigh, up Crabtree, through Umstead then on to Cary greenway that eventually will hook up with the American Tobacco Trail, which will run from western Wake County north to downtown Durham.

Part two of his question: When will the Cary end be completed?

At present, 3.5 miles of greenway exists from Umstead up Black Creek to Godbold Park, at the intersection of N.C. 54 and Maynard Road. From Godbold to Bond Park — a distance of about four miles —

Cary greenway planner Joe Godfrey reports the trail will be completed in four phases. Some of that trail is on the ground; all of it should be within two years, he says.

From Bond Park west will re-

quire about seven miles of greenway; 3.5 miles is down, near the Bond Park end, and two more miles is expected to be bid for construction from N.C. 55 to Green-level Church Road within the next two months. Godfrey says the "wild card" is a tricky crossing of railroad tracks near Davis Drive, which could hold things up.

5. Rocky Branch Trail, Raleigh

Dale, who earlier asked about Durham's Third Fork Trail, also wonders: "Do you know if there are plans to connect the Rock Branch Trail and the Lower Walnut Creek Trail in Raleigh?"

Why, yes there are, says Raleigh's Vic Lebsack.

For the uninitiated, Rocky Branch Trail runs along Western Boulevard from east of Avent Ferry Road southeast to Wilmington Street. Lower Walnut Creek Trail runs along its namesake creek in South Raleigh from Rose Lane west to just past Hammond Road. Lebsack says that link currently is being bid. It's part of a two-mile project that will continue the Walnut Creek trail to the Farmers Market area off Lake Wheeler Road.

From there, the plan is to use yet-to-be-built trail on N.C. State University's Centennial Campus to link with existing trail farther west tying into Lake Johnson. ■

Reach Joe Miller at 812-8450 or jmiller@newsobserver.com.

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