

For immediate release
February 26, 2009

Georgia Coast Rail-Trail launched

68-mile paved trail to stretch from Riceboro to Kingsland

A newly formed nonprofit group announced plans this week to transform a 68-mile railroad bed in coastal Georgia into a trail for use by hikers, bikers, joggers, dog walkers, bird watchers, and parents with strollers. The Georgia Coast Rail-Trail will run from Riceboro to Kingsland, extending through Liberty, McIntosh, Glynn and Camden counties on a raised railroad bed formerly used by CSX.

Some 10 miles inland, the trail will wind through unspoiled coastal marshland and forests. It will cross 43 rivers, tidal creeks, and streams – including the Altamaha, Satilla, Little Satilla, and Crooked rivers. It will cross the Altamaha on century-old railroad trestles at Altamaha Regional Park in Glynn County.

Fred Freyer, who chairs Coastal Georgia Rails to Trails Inc., said the trail “will be unique in the country because of the wetlands. Nowhere else in the nation can you enjoy a 68-mile trail through tidal marshes and creeks in an undeveloped coastal environment.”

The city of Woodbine has already built a trail on a 1 ½-mile stretch of the railroad bed. Opened in 1998, the 10-foot-wide trail has proved popular with locals looking for exercise or a place to walk their dogs.

Freyer said the group hopes to see the trail completed by 2015. “The first step is to acquire all of the rights-of-way,” he said. “We sent letters to the 17 landowners along the trail this week, sharing our vision and seeking their cooperation.”

Total cost for the project is estimated at \$49 million. Coastal Georgia Rails to Trails, which is a 501(c)(3) (pending) nonprofit organization, will begin immediately to solicit memberships and to raise both private and public funds.

“We hope to engage the whole community in the effort, because the trail will be an exciting recreational asset for all of coastal Georgia,” Freyer said. “Rail-trails typically bring valuable economic rewards, such as opportunities for new businesses, a boost for existing businesses, higher property values, and increased tourism throughout the region.”

Coastal Georgia Rails to Trails has overall responsibility for developing the Georgia Coast Rail-Trail. The organization comprises a group of citizens, community leaders, elected officials, and advocates from all four counties.



The Coastal Regional Commission provides project management. In 2007, the CRC, under contract to the Georgia Department of Transportation, which encourages pedestrian trails as part of its strategic plan for the state, produced a feasibility study for the trail.

The Atlanta-based PATH Foundation will design and build the trail. PATH recently completed the 60-mile Silver Comet Trail in northwest Georgia. Locally, the organization is completing an extension to the Island-Wide Trail System on the north end of St. Simons Island for the St. Simons Land Trust and Glynn County.

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