

Tenth Annual FMST Conference of Task Force Leaders

**Presented Saturday, February 2, 2008
Bur-Mil Park
Greensboro, North Carolina**

2007 FMST President's Report

January 1, 2008

In accordance with the Friends of the Mountains to Sea Trail (FMST) By-Laws under Article IV, Section 5, an annual report shall be made on the status of the FMST as it works on the Mountains-to-Sea Trail (MST).

The year of 2007 was a banner year for the FMST as we continued to support the MST with existing task forces and the formation of new ones. The FMST celebrated its 10th year as a non-profit looking after design, construction, and maintenance of the MST. On November 3, 2007, the FMST board voted to hire our first Executive Director, Kate Dixon, who started work on January 7, 2008. The year of 2007 brought two thru-hikers across the state on the MST: Glenn Strouhal of Denver, CO and Bruce Wisely of Raleigh, NC. Others continued to section hike the MST across the state. As each day goes by, the FMST grows stronger in membership and its dedication to the MST. There were more contributions made by corporations in 2007 than ever before.

Calendar Year of 2007

The FMST hosted several workdays at two areas of major new trail construction: along the Blue Ridge Parkway – NC-16 to US-321 with the South Ashe Task Force, and at Falls Lake from NC-50 to Rolling View with the Falls Lake Task Force. The FMST hosted statewide trail days on June 3 (National Trails Day) and September 30 (National Public Lands Day) to construct, maintain, or research the MST. The FMST hosted the Annual Conference of Task Force Leaders on February 3, 2007 to continue our organized support of the MST. The FMST Board of Directors held three meetings and several conference calls throughout the year to address the administrative needs of the MST. Each task force continued to host additional workdays for citizens wanting to assist the MST. Almost every weekend in 2007, work was taking place on the MST somewhere in

the state. During the weekend of November 2-4, 2007 the FMST Board underwent a strategic planning session to develop goals for 2008 and beyond.

2007 Trail Projects with Government Agencies (west to east)

The Carolina Mountain Club (CMC) continued its diligent work from Balsam Gap (south) to Soco Gap, working under the guidelines of the Blue Ridge Parkway (BRP).

The Chargers and ReChargers flagged and prepared the MST for archeological studies from south of US-421 for approximately 12 miles. This is a new task force that will oversee the construction and maintenance of this section. Plans are to start trail construction in Spring 2008.



Workers take a break after building the MST along the Blue Ridge Parkway.

The South Ashe Task Force started trail construction along its section of the Blue Ridge Parkway from NC-16 south towards US-421.

Approximately four miles were constructed in 2007 as workdays were held monthly on this section.

On November 4 to November 8, 2007 the FMST arranged for Steven Kidd, US Park Service archaeologist, to inspect 8.5 miles from Callaway Gap

south to US-421 on the South Ashe Task Force section, and 11.1 miles south from US-421 to the community of Aho on the Chargers and Rechargers Task Force section. This leaves only about 4 miles south to Blowing Rock for completion of archeological studies on the required 57 miles.

On October 13, 2007, the North Ashe Task Force celebrated the opening of 15.1 miles of the MST from NC-18 to NC-16. Volunteers with this task force worked throughout 2007 to prepare this section for designation by the NC Division of Park and Recreation. This is the newest section of the MST to be opened to the public for hiking.



Volunteers look on as Allen de Hart cuts the ribbon to open 15.1 miles of the MST.

In February 2007 the NC Division of Parks and Recreation with other government agencies released the MST trail options from Stone Mountain State Park to Greensboro. Workshops with local government agencies and volunteers will continue into 2008. The FMST Board supports and endorses the original MST trail concept that would take the

trail from Stone Mountain State Park through Pilot Mountain State Park and to Hanging Rock State Park which would connect three state parks.

On January 6, 2007, trail construction started at Falls Lake Trail from NC-50 west to the dead end of Boyce Mill Road. Workdays were held ever month except for July and August. The flagged route was approved to Rolling View State Recreation Area in May 2007. The Falls Lake Task Force constructed 11 miles of trail from NC-50 to Rolling View throughout the year. Approval for the MST from Rolling View to Patterson Road (approximately six miles) will be approved in early 2008.

The FMST assisted the Carteret County Wildlife Club and the US Forest Service in the Croatan Forest by hosting workdays on the Neusiok Trail/MST in November.



Volunteers take a lunch break at Falls Lake with a great lake view.

Approximately 1,000 yards of boardwalk were installed along with regular trail maintenance on this 21-mile section.

Hours Worked in 2007

As in the past, volunteers have shown an impressive record of work on the MST during the year of 2007. Some of the examples are:

Task Force Name	Hours Worked
Carolina Mountain Club	4,919
Central Blue Ridge Task Force	617
Bald Knob Task Force	154
Chargers and Recharges Task Force	461
South Ashe Task Force	1,004
North Ashe Task Force	705
Alleghany Task Force	96
Sauratown Trails Association	675
Greensboro Task Forces	174
Falls Lake Task Force	3,733
Croatan Task Force & Carteret Wildlife Club	198

Grand Total: **12,736 hours** of documented work on the MST

In our report to the National Recreation Trails Funding Program managed by the NC Division of Park and Recreation, the FMST gave a total of **12,736** recorded hours of service from January 1, 2007 to December 31, 2007 which represents **\$127,914.00 dollars** wage value.

Corporate Support in 2007

Great Outdoor Provision Co. supported the FMST in 2007 in many ways. First, the company gave the FMST with a \$1,000 dollar check on National Trails Day from The North Face. In conjunction with Patagonia, Great Outdoor Provision Co. presented a check in the amount of \$3,200



Neusiok Trail/MST – boardwalk construction



Falls Lake volunteers getting ready to pull out tools from our new trailer.

dollars for the purchase of a trailer for the Falls Lake Task Forces to store tools. They have also sponsored breakfast at a variety of workdays across the state.

News/Press

Bob Benner's work as the leader of the Central Blue Ridge Task Force was honored with the Presidents Volunteer Service Award in May 2007 in Boone,

NC. EPA Administrator Stephen Johnston presented the award to Bob for his 35 years of work with the MST and work with State Parks and Recreation.

In June 2007 Bruce Wisely was presented the American Hiking Society Mid-Atlantic Volunteer of the Year Award. Only eight awards of this kind were given out across the United States on National Trails Day.

The MST received considerable press in several land trust association newsletters. The Eno River Association has been purchasing land along the Eno River in Durham and Orange Counties, and the association often reported that the land will be used in the future corridor of the MST. With the recent trail construction in Durham, the local media has successfully brought in new volunteer support.

The MST has received considerable press in the American Hiking Society Magazine, Our State Magazine, and Backpacker Magazine. Backpacker's publication has introduced a calendar of events page which allows the FMST to post selected work trips on the MST. The Raleigh News and Observer and the Charlotte paper covered the hiring of our new Executive Director, Kate Dixon.

The FMST continued its support as an Alliance Member of American Hiking Society's Southeastern Trails Coalition by assisting in the planning and execution of the 2007 American Hiking Society Southeast Trail's Festival Conference at Montreat Conference Center in Black Mountain, NC during May 3-6, 2007.



MST Thruhiker – Glenn Strouhal



MST Section hiker – Bruce Wisely

The FMST continued its membership in the Land Trust Alliance on a national level. We know that in order to complete the MST we must engage in the Land Trust community.

The FMST Web site (www.ncmst.org) has proven to be an effective way to inform the general public about the MST, and the physical Web site doubled its size in 2007. Approximately 2,500 people visit the MST Web site on a daily basis. Several hikers have listed their MST adventures on Trails Journals (www.trailjournals.com), which has also raised public awareness of the MST. One example is the journal that Glenn Strouhal kept on his recent thru-hike on the MST. His journal was full of MST trail conditions and photos of his adventure across North Carolina. The FMST e-mail distribution list of approximately 1,100 people is a quick and cost-effective communication tool.

Support by the NC Division of Parks and Recreation and Other Government Agencies

An application for the MST to become a National Recreation Trail was submitted to the US Forest Service for sections of trail that traverse their lands. The application was quite time consuming and required several documents of support.

The NC Division of Parks and Recreation (DENR) and Piedmont Triad of Governments have led the effort for planning the MST corridor from Stone Mountain State Park to Greensboro.

The FMST was also the recipient of Adopt-a-Trail (\$5,000) and RTP (\$30,000) grants in 2007. The Adopt-a-Trail grant assisted the MST in archeological studies along the Blue Ridge Parkway. The RTP grant assisted the entire MST with tools to help construct and maintain the trail.

The MST is an on-going project that relies on volunteer efforts to move it forward as the flagship trail across North Carolina.

Submitted by: _____

Jeff D. Brewer, FMST President

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