SECOND DRAFT

East Coast Greenway Alliance
Strategic Action Plan
May 2008

Introduction/Overview

This Strategic Action Plan for the East Coast Greenway Alliance has been prepared to set goals and aobjectives and to guide actions, activities and programs of the organization for the next five years (2009-2013). This Plan anticipates development of the entire 3,000-mile Greenway as an 100% off-road route, and defines specific goals and objectives for planning, building, marketing, operating and managing, and protecting the Greenway for the five-year period. This Plan has four primary purposes:

1) To focus the work of the Alliance during the next five years by clarifying roles, responsibilities, and priorities;
2) To consider actions necessary to strengthen the Alliance both internally and externally, including seeking partnerships with outside agencies that can further the vision, mission, goals and objectives of the Alliance;
3) To define and articulate a plan of leadership transition;
4) To offer a guide for the year-to-year activities of the Alliance.

Plan Process

This Plan was prepared by the Board of Trustees for the East Coast Greenway Alliance, under the leadership of Board Chair Chuck Flink and Executive Director Karen Votava. The process for preparing the Plan involved circulating a series of Draft Plans, developed by the various board committees, to the entire Board for comment and contribution during 2008. Review and discussion occurred during monthly teleconferences and at Board meetings in May and October. The Board adopted this Strategic Plan at its Annual Meeting.

Vision

The East Coast Greenway is the nation's premier long-distance, inter-urban, multi-user trail network. This 3,000-mile spine route with 1,500 additional miles of alternate routes will:

- Link together cities, suburbs and countryside of the East Coast from the Calais, Maine border to Key West, Florida;
- Overlay a national identity on a series of local, regional, state and federally owned and managed trails linked to form a single continuous spine network of trails, and easily identified and used by the public through signage, maps and user guides;
- Strive to be an off-road tourism, transportation, recreation, health and fitness route serving local and long distance users;
- Serve and connect major population centers along the East Coast directly and by adjoining feeder trails;
- Promote tourism and strengthen local economies, improve public health and the environment, and encourage Americans to become less car-dependent.
- Improve public health and wellness, and the environment.
- Strive to accommodate all non-motorized modes of travel and provide access for trail users with varying mobility.

The East Coast Greenway Alliance ("the Alliance") exists to promote the establishment and stewardship of the Greenway, and its safe use and enjoyment by the general public. This mission will be accomplished through collaborative efforts of the Alliance, federal, regional, state and local committees, as well as the local, state and national organizations and government agencies that support the planning, building, management and operation of the Greenway. The Alliance is dedicated to promoting the Greenway throughout the nation and worldwide.

Mission

The mission of the East Coast Greenway Alliance is to promote the establishment and use of the East Coast Greenway trail network by: defining the route and recognizing individual trail segments; helping states, regions, localities and support groups complete the East Coast Greenway trail network; promoting the preservation and improvement of the East Coast Greenway trail network through advocacy for high quality management; and publicizing and promoting the use of the East Coast Greenway trail network through events and communication, maps and guides and signage.

Organization

The East Coast Greenway Alliance has recently undergone a significant transformation in organizational structure. In 2004, the Alliance redefined its framework in order to be a more "strategic organization" that would focus on expanding partnerships, raising funds, putting more trail on the ground, increasing staff capacity with regional staff positions, and taking other actions necessary to complete the 3,000-mile network of trails, linear parks and other non-motorized connections between them. To accomplish this, virtually every aspect of the organization was examined and recast. A description of the organizational components is graphically depicted in the following attachment.

Board of Trustees

The Alliance Board of Trustees is a relatively small, strategically and financially focused board with a membership of not less than eleven (11) trustees. Simply put, the Board defines the policies, programs and overall direction of the Alliance. The execution of those policies, programs and direction are entrusted to the Executive Director and ECGA staff. Additionally, the Board works with the Alliance Trail Council to achieve the trail development goals of the organization. A National AdvisoryBoard provides strategic input and guidance to the Board on matters of national interest as they relate to the mission of the organization. The board is subdivided into six committees: trail council, executive, finance and personnel, governance, marketing, and development. Members of the board serve a three-year term, with terms staggered, up to a maximum of three terms.

Committees of the Board

The following are the committees of the Alliance Board of Trustees. All Trustees are a member of at least one committee. All committees of the Board are appointed by the Chair subject to the general authority of the board of trustees. The Chair of each committee is also appointed by the Board Chair.

Executive Committee

The Executive Committee consists of, at a minimum, the chair, vice-chair, secretary and treasurer of the board and trail council chair of the board, along with the executive director. Currently, the executive committee has included all members of the board, serving as a "committee of the whole." Generally, the executive committee deals with the routine operations of the organization, assists the executive director in decision making on an as needed basis, sets the agenda for all board meetings, and attends to other governing business of the organization. The executive committee is the chief coordinating committee for the board, mapping out how the board's business should be conducted and organizing the activities of the other committees. The Executive Director often brings to the executive committee problems in need of quick resolution.

Finance and Personnel Committee

The Finance and Personnel Committee is responsible for monitoring the fiscal health of the ECGA on a monthly basis and for preparing and presenting the annual operating budget and any mid-year budget modifications for Board approval at the fall meeting. The Committee also recommends financial policies, procedures and controls to the EC and/or Board for approval. This committee also serves as the audit committee and personnel committee for the ECGA. And, it reviews job descriptions and recommends salary ranges for all staff to the board, and evaluates the Executive Director, and handles grievances when board involvement is necessary.

Development Committee

The Development Committee is charged with developing and executing strategies to raise funds that support the vision, mission, goals and objectives of the ECGA. As such, the development committee seeks both internal and external advice and

counsel on fund raising opportunities to achieve this purpose. This committee has primary responsibility for ensuring that the Alliance is adequately funded to carry out its mission. It oversees the planning and coordination of fund-raising efforts including corporate sponsorship, foundation and government grants, membership, annual appeals and major donor campaigns and other fund raising efforts. The Membership Committee is also included as an element of the Development Committee to examine the categories of membership in the organization and to recommend strategies for recruiting and retaining Alliance members.

Governance Committee
The Governance Committee identifies, screens and recommends the best candidates to fill vacancies on the Board of Trustees. These nominees are presented for election by the members (normally at the fall Members meeting.) It also nominates a slate of officers for election by the BOT at the fall Board Meeting. The Committee also develops a recruitment and orientation program and materials for new directors and for officers. It also makes recommendations to the Board Chair and Trustees for membership on the Trail Council and the Advisory Board. This committee also is responsible for by-law changes via a subcommittee on by-laws. And, it has primary responsibility for strategic planning.

Marketing Committee
The newly formed Marketing Committee is responsible for guiding the development of a marketing plan for the ECG. It subsumes the previous Branding Committee. It also guides ECG policies and actions as they impact our brand, including the copyright protection of ECGA products. The work of the Marketing Committee will feed into the strategic plan and also into ongoing programs being implemented by staff.

Trail Council

Technically, the Trail Council is another committee of the Board. Rather than having its membership derived from the Board, membership on the Trail Council is open to many different individuals and organizations that support the mission of the ECGA. The Trail Council helps "get the trail on the ground" by building the partnerships necessary to meet the ECGA's objective of completing a fully off-road route. It carries specific responsibility for reviewing and referring to the Board for adoption new trail designations. as part of the ECGA trail system; for resolving policy issues related to the trail or trail signage; and is mandated to provide, via quarterly progress reports from staff, the oversight necessary to ensure that we complete our 5-year plan of objectives. One of the principal current efforts of the Trail Council is the Close-the-Gaps Campaign, which is described in greater detail later in this action plan.

Trail Council members are voting members of this body. Members of the Council are asked to attend up to 3 weekend meetings each year to be held at different locations along the corridor, participate in periodic conference calls; and take specific responsibility as part of a committee or as an individual point person for some aspect of the Council's

work. Participation on the Council promises to be as challenging as it will be rewarding in bringing the ECG vision to reality. Council members must assume their own travel costs for Trail Council meetings.

The Trail Council is further divided into four subcommittees or working groups:

Trail Designation Working Group:
Responsible for processing pending trail designations for approval at scheduled Trail Council meetings, and for continually encouraging and soliciting further segments for designation. Also work with staff on reporting current trail status.

Trail Policy Working Group:
Revision of ECGA Trail Designation Manual and ECGA Signage Manual. Addressing new trail policy issues.

Skills Development Working Group:
Aid ECGA staff and associates in development of skills related to advocating for, planning, designing, building, funding, maintaining, and promoting the trail. Formats may include (but not be limited to): speakers and training sessions, resources and materials, technical assistance, regional meetings, conferences.

Strategic Partnering Working Group:
Focused effort placed on building, federal, state, regional and local strategic relationships advantageous to trail construction; critical contacts with those who plan and build the trail. This includes promoting and working with active State Committees along the route of the ECG. Key partners include: local trails, cycling and walking groups, municipalities and MPOs, county and state DOTs and recreation agencies, and the National Park Service.

The Chair of the Trail Council is also a member of the Board of Trustees. Each Trail Council member is expected to serve a three-year term. The Trail Program Coordinator is the principal staff person assigned to work with the Trail Council.

National Advisory Board

The National Advisory Board is comprised of respected and noteworthy individuals who both individually offer strategic input and guidance to the Board on matters within their area of expertise which support the mission of the organization. Membership on the National Advisory Board is a three-year term, and all terms are staggered.

State Committees

The ECGA has encouraged the establishment of State Committees in each of the 15 states and the District of Columbia to lead state and local efforts in planning, building, managing and operating the East Coast Greenway Trail Network. State Committees are not officially part of the Alliance but are invited to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding with the Alliance that defines the operating relationship between the ECGA and the State Committees.

Administration and Staff

The East Coast Greenway Alliance is operated on a daily basis by a professional staff. The Executive Director is charged with running the day-to-day operations of the organization in accordance with the policies, programs and activities set forth on an annual basis by the Board of Trustees. The Executive Director directs the activities, responsibilities and duties of the following staff: trail program coordinator, deputy trail program coordinator, regional trail coordinators, office manager/nookkeeper/membership coordinator, communications coordinator, volunteer coordinator, membership assistant and donor program coordinator, and such other full-time, part-time or contractual staff as the Board may authorize.

Five Year Strategic Goals, Strategies and Benchmarks

With the organizational and operating structure of the organization defined, the remainder of this strategic action plan will focus on the five-year goals, strategies and benchmarks of the organization.

Goal # 1: Build Organizational Capacity (**Governance Subcommittee**)

1) 5-year staffing plan (strategies and benchmarks)
2) Board and leadership transition (strategies and benchmarks)
3) Costs and benefits of moving Alliance headquarters (strategies and benchmarks)
4) Recommendations for strengthening State Committees (strategies and benchmarks)
5) Recommendation for achieving National Long Distance Trail Designation status through the National Park Service (strategies and benchmarks)
6) Strategic partnerships plan

Goal # 2: Close the Gaps Campaign: complete the 3,000-mile spine route (**Trails Counci**l)

1) Annually update benchmarks and Blueprints for Action for all 15 states and the District of Columbia that set trail development goals for each section of the Greenway.
2) Recommend 100-mile regional trail segments for each of the four regions (strategies and benchmarks)
3) Complete continuous (on and off-road) route
4) Move on-road sections off-road to achieve an 80% off-road route where 80% of the people live
5) Reroute or identify public transportation options through unsafe sections
6) Upgrade on-road bike-ped accommodations as needed
7) Mark 50% of the route
8) Develop user map for 25%
9) Undertake routing studies for all "gap" areas to define off-road routing and move them into development

Goal # 3: Raise Funds to Support Our Mission (**Finance & Development Subcommittees**)

1) Increase operational funding to cover projected staff, operating and program needs (strategies and benchmarks)
2) Establishment of an endowment for the Alliance (strategies and benchmarks)
3) Funding state committees (strategies and benchmarks)
4) Funding of local trail initiatives (strategies and benchmarks)

Goal # 4: Promote and Market the ECG (**Marketing & Membership Subcommittees**)

1) Increase awareness of the ECGA and its mission (strategies and benchmarks)
2) Increase public use of the Greenway (strategies and benchmarks)
3) Brand strategy – protect our product (strategies and benchmarks)

Goal # 5: Provide Support to State and Local Trail Initiatives (**Trails Council**)

1) Provide support to establishment and operation of State Committees (strategies and benchmarks)
2) Encourage all State Committees to sign MOU with Alliance (strategies and benchmarks)
3) Promote the official adoption of the East Coast Greenway on each state's transportation plan and SCORP document.
4) Sign-up ECGA as a member of all local trail projects so we can support each initiative that is along and important to the Greenway.

Goal #6: Monitor the Fiscal Heatlh of the Organization:

1) Ensure a fiscally responsible organizational size dictated by funding (strategies and benchmarks)
2) Implement cost containment strategies as may be appropriate (strategies and benchmarks)
3) Develop back up cost reduction contingency plans as appropriate (strategies and benchmarks)
4) Develop a plan for more and permanent, on-site financial staffing as organization grows (strategies and benchmarks)
5) Establish a financial policy and procedure manual to ensure consistence in how bookkeeping and accounting is done over time. (strategies and benchmarks)

Implementation Plan

(This section will identify key next steps)

Implementation of Goal #4 (submitted by Don Fisher)

1) Regional and State Marketing Programs
    a. Define "local" marketing programs and standards to be used by regional and state committees during 2H 2008
    b. Incorporate bi-lateral (National/local) aggregation and syndication protocols
    c. Publish standards and plans by year-end 2008

    d. Get adoption and performance by 25% of committees each year at each level
    e. Refine and publish programs on an annual basis
2) Establish annual marketing planning cycle
    a. Review and refine "national" marketing program for execution by Staff
    b. Create annual planning cycle including budget metrics during 3Q 2008
    c. Begin annual planning cycle during 4Q 2008
    d. Mentor and assist in recruiting and development of staff
3) Identify and promote partnerships with ECGA among professional services firms to provide pro-bono services
    a. Establish "database" of contacts and disciplines during 2H 2008
    b. Solicit 1-2 key partnerships to assist with marketing items 1 and 2 during 2008
    c. Perform semi-annual review and update of database
4) Create clearinghouse for promotional partnerships during 2009
    a. Define areas of partnership (e.g. charity events, sponsorships, etc.)
    b. Define standard relationships
    c. Publish and roll-out to regional and state committees
    d. Increase participation in each segment on an annual basis

This Strategic Action Plan is effective this ___ day of November 2008.

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Charles A. Flink
Chairman, Board of Trustees
East Coast Greenway Alliance

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Karen Votava
Executive Director
East Coast Greenway Alliance