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MEDIA ADVISORY

Organization Creating Long-Distance Urban Trail to Meet in Wilmington May 17th and 18th

Leaders of a national movement to connect cities and towns from Maine and Florida with a 3000-mile multi-use trail, known as the East Coast Greenway, are coming to Wilmington this weekend to meet and explore area trails.

East Coast Greenway Alliance staff, Trail Council and Board of Trustees will join local trail advocates and regional planners at the Grand Opera House from 9:00-5:00 on Saturday, and at the Sheraton Suites from 9:00-3:00 on Sunday for their semiannual meetings. Both meetings are open to the public.

During the meetings, the Greenway advocates will designate new trails as part of the East Coast Greenway (ECG) trail system, develop and vote on trail policy issues, discuss ways to strengthen partnerships with the agencies, organizations and people responsible for building the trails that comprise the ECG, and ensure that the Alliance is on track with annual trail development goals for each state.

ECGA staff and volunteers from throughout the east coast will experience Wilmington's bicycling and walking culture by joining in the City Life/Grand Prix Block Party, viewing the Grand Prix Bike Parade and Awards Ceremony, taking a walking tour of the Wilmington Riverwalk, and holding a dinner in the Riverfront Market.

The East Coast Greenway is already making a big impact in Delaware. Bobbi Britton, ECGA's Delaware State Committee Chair says, "The East Coast Greenway provides a vision for a spine running perpendicular to our natural trail corridors and one that goes right to and through downtown Wilmington. Responding to that vision brought a "Who's Who" in trail and transportation planning together and caused us to shift our focus slightly. That small shift had a large impact. Suddenly we were providing access where more people lived and providing connectivity that more people could use. With each element of the East Coast Greenway that comes on line, the collective wisdom of such a broad group of participants becomes more and more evident."

ECGA is a non-profit organization formed in 1991 and based in Wakefield, Rhode Island. Its purpose is to create a 3,000-mile, traffic-free, multi-use, city-to-city trail that links Calais, Maine with Key West, Florida. While the ECGA itself does not build trail, it supplies the vision for connecting local trails and provides strategic assistance for states, counties and municipal

jurisdictions which own, build and manage trail segments. The entire route will be publicly owned and operated and free for all to use.

Nationally, about a fifth of the 3,000 miles of planned off-road are currently in place and designated as official East Coast Greenway. This includes three trails in Delaware: the Christina Riverwalk in Wilmington, the New Castle Riverfront Greenway, and the James F. Hall Trail in Newark.

For more information about the East Coast Greenway, please visit: www.greenway.org

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