



**Ecotourism & Economic Development  
along the Roanoke ~  
Carol Shields, RRP Executive Director**

# Roanoke River Partners

## Background

- Grassroots response to the economic downturn of mid 90s
- Diverse group of public/private partners from the 5 NC counties that border the Roanoke River came together to develop a shared vision to stimulate new enterprise
  - County & Town officials
  - Tourism Professionals
  - Community Organizations
  - Small Businesses
  - Conservation Partners
  - A host of Community Advocates

# Roanoke River Partners

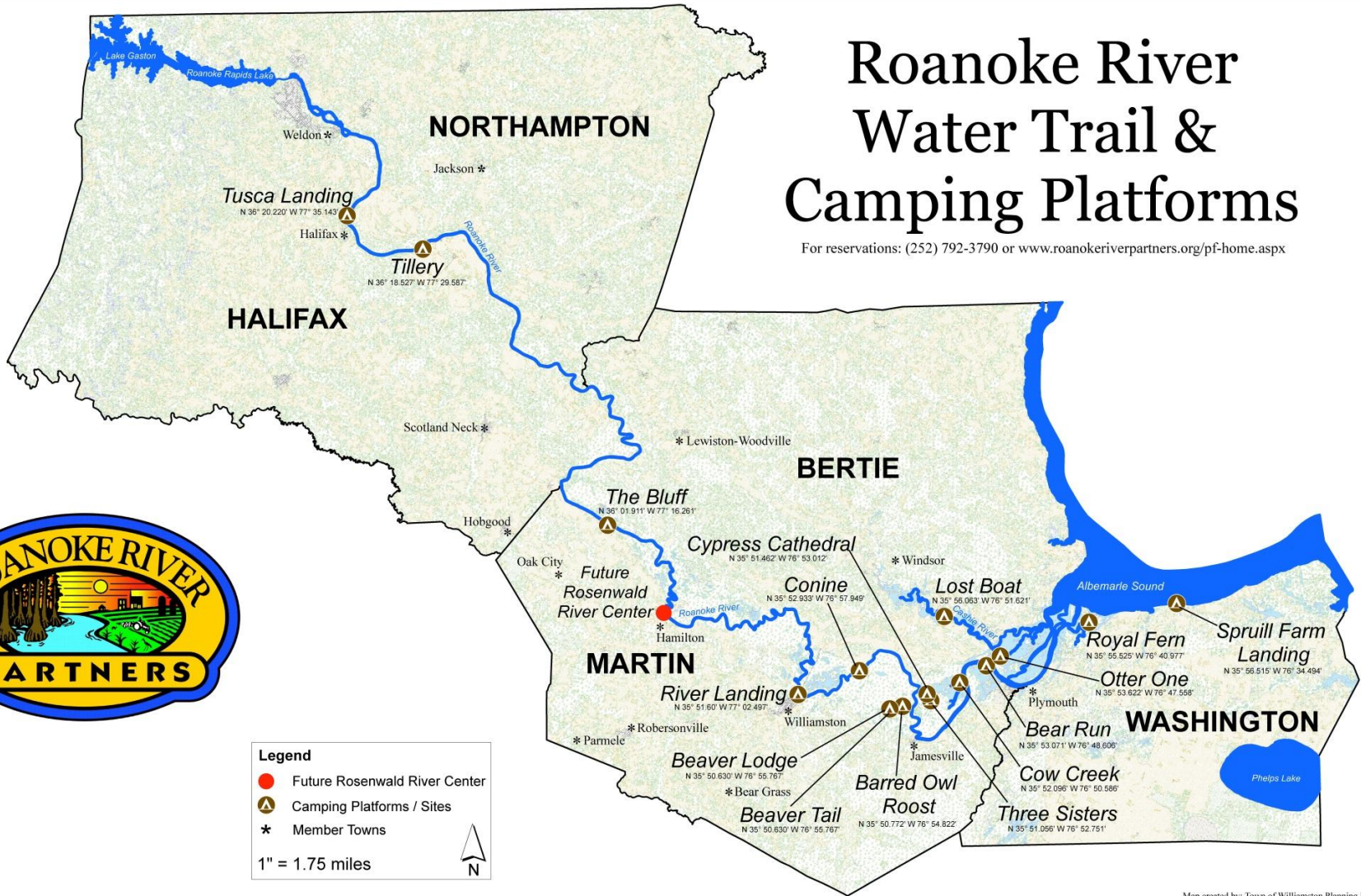


# Signature Accomplishment since incorporating in 1997

- 200+ mile water trail which features 16 rustic river platforms/campsites across 5 counties as well as some from neighboring counties
- Believed to be the 1<sup>st</sup> of its kind, our trail system of camping platforms has served as a national model of similar development capitalizing on natural/cultural assets

# Roanoke River Water Trail & Camping Platforms

For reservations: (252) 792-3790 or [www.roanokeriverpartners.org/pf-home.aspx](http://www.roanokeriverpartners.org/pf-home.aspx)



**Legend**

- Future Rosenwald River Center
- ▲ Camping Platforms / Sites
- \* Member Towns

1" = 1.75 miles













# RRP's New Development

- Preservation of the old **Hamilton Colored School**

- One of the historic **Rosenwald Schools**

- Historic School to be repurposed as the **Rosenwald River Center**

- River/Community Center

- Interpretive site for our **Rosenwald & UGPP**



# From Colored School to Warehouse to ROSENWALD RIVER CENTER

## HAMILTON ROSENWALD PRESERVATION PROJECT (MARTIN COUNTY) NORTH CAROLINA

### A (Colorful) Story to Tell The Return of a Rosenwald School

The significance of the Rosenwald Schools in eastern North Carolina runs much deeper than just buildings that housed a classroom for African Americans, and now a movement has begun to preserve their legacy.

By Carol J. Shields  
Photography by Paul Galie

**T**o tell the story for this story, I would like to share just a few details that the Rosenwald School are and why their preservation is important to our region.

After the year of the 20th century (early 1900s), education for colored children was, by general consensus, neglected. In addition, the South, through its laws, the Atlanta Education Board, and the Tuskegee Institute, and later Rosenwald's financial support, provided financial resources to the construction of new schools. These schools, which were to be known as Rosenwald Schools, were built across the South.

From 1917 to 1932, over 5,137 public schools, shops and teacher houses were constructed with the support of Rosenwald funds. These buildings ranged from Maryland to Texas, with over 800 such structures built in North Carolina. Of these built in North Carolina, nearly 600 were the only a small fraction of the original Rosenwald Schools erected today.

Being the only building which has become an important preservation effort. In fact, in 2001, the National Trust for Historic Preservation listed all Rosenwald Schools in its list of endangered historic places.



The Rosenwald River Center in Hamilton County, North Carolina, is the first step in renovating and restoring the historical school. Now, the school is set for restoration for many years before the Hamilton River Partners, Inc. get involved in preparing an important part of our past.



Working with the local community to preserve the historic site, the Hamilton River Partners, Inc. is working to restore and renovate the historical school. Now, the school is set for restoration for many years before the Hamilton River Partners, Inc. get involved in preparing an important part of our past.

In 2010, approximately 100 of the sites that were added to the list were a Rosenwald School. Some were in excellent condition, some were in poor condition, and some were in need of major restoration. It was not until 2008 that the first Rosenwald School was added to the list of endangered historic places. It was the Hamilton River Partners, Inc. who were chosen to lead the restoration effort. The school was built in 1917 and was the only one of its kind in Hamilton County. It was the only one of its kind in Hamilton County.



Through the efforts of the Hamilton River Partners, Inc. the Hamilton River Partners, Inc. is working to restore and renovate the historical school. Now, the school is set for restoration for many years before the Hamilton River Partners, Inc. get involved in preparing an important part of our past.



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This is a small collection of historical school photos from the Hamilton River Partners, Inc. who were chosen to lead the restoration effort. The school was built in 1917 and was the only one of its kind in Hamilton County. It was the only one of its kind in Hamilton County.

The restoration has been a long process. It has involved many people, including the Hamilton River Partners, Inc. who were chosen to lead the restoration effort. The school was built in 1917 and was the only one of its kind in Hamilton County. It was the only one of its kind in Hamilton County.



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### ROSENWALD RIVER CENTER WALDO STREET, HAMILTON, NC



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Hamilton Rosenwald Preservation Project (MARTIN COUNTY) NORTH CAROLINA

CAROL J. SHIELDS, MA  
GAIL JONES BRIDGES, MA  
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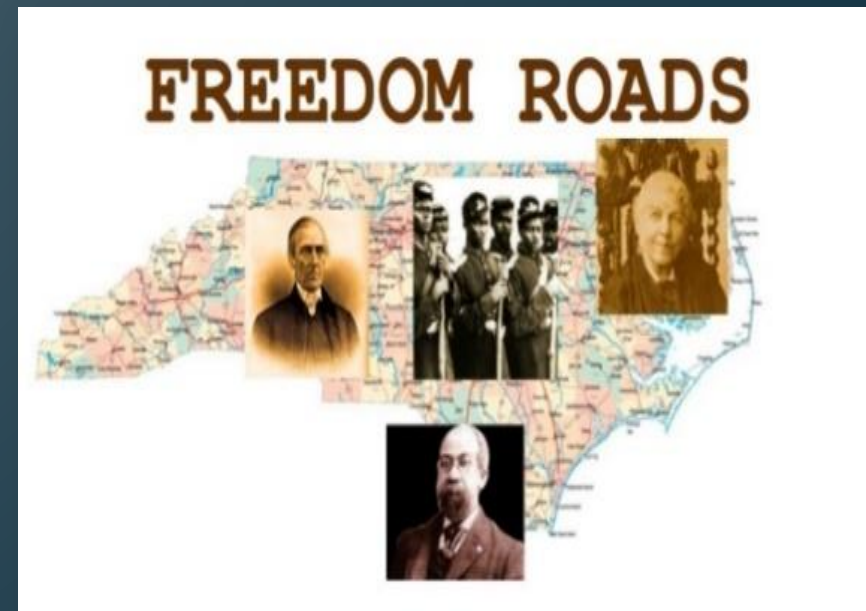
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Since 2008, the **Roanoke River** has been nationally recognized as an important part of the Underground Railroad



# The Roanoke River Mayor's Association

## One of our most valued Roanoke River Partners

- Since 2008, we have been collaborating to ~
  - Develop a shared vision
  - Identify investment to support an emerging cultural heritage & ecotourism industry for our region.
  - Cultivate partnerships to support regional development
  - Establish internal regional market/Cross-promote regional events
  - Extend our reach to attract a larger outside market
  - Expand and enhance our overall regional voice & brand

# Hamilton ~ A Roanoke River Partner

Hamilton Rosenwald  
School, St. Martin  
Episcopal Church &  
Fort Branch  
re-enactors



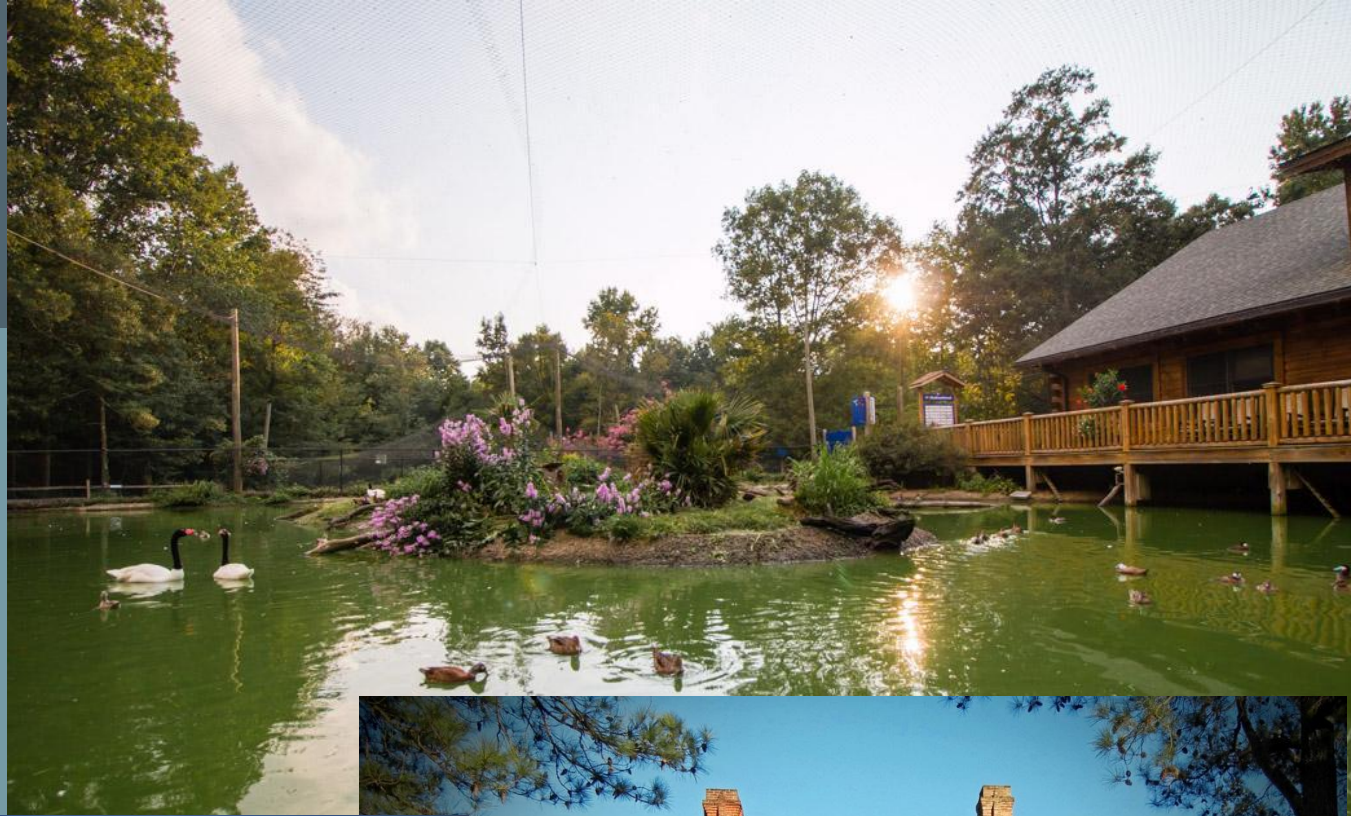
# Plymouth ~ A Roanoke River Partner

Plymouth Marina,  
Riverfront and  
regional boating  
events



# Scotland Neck~ A Roanoke River Partner

Sylvan Heights Bird  
Park & some beautiful  
historic hom





We have much more to attract visitors by working together than we will ever have by working independently & we want to bring additional supporters into this process



# It's All About **PARTNERS** ... and it always has been! Here's who **supports** and **benefits** ~

- Small Towns/Mayors
- Counties/Commissioners
- Co. Agencies/Officials
- Tourism/Chamber Pros
- State/National Officials
- Writers, Artists, Musicians
- Art & History Groups
- Photo/videographers
- Film makers
- Newspapers & Publications
- Advertising Agencies
- Local festivals and events
- Outfitters
- Construction pros/suppliers
- Restaurants & Banks
- Host of Businesses
- Regional Corporations (Kapstone & Domtar)
- Campgrounds & B&Bs
- Hotels/Motels
- Museums/Galleries
- Universities/Schools/Inter ns
- Churches/Community Groups
- Regional/National Funders
- Members & Volunteers ☺

# Writers, Filmmakers, Conservation Groups & Publications

- NC Museum of Natural Science
- NC Rural Center
- The Conservation Fund
- The Nature Conservancy
- U.S. Fish & Wildlife
- NC Wildlife Commission
- USDA
- Garden & Gun Magazine
- Our State Magazine
- Canoe & Kayak
- Back Packer Magazine
- National Trust for Historic Preservation
- NC Rosenwald Schools
- N&O/Regional Papers
- Eastern Living Magazine

THE NORTH CAROLINA



100-word stories  
100-second videos  
on topics of intrigue

[MENU](#)[TRAVEL](#)

## GOING WILD!



*A series of 16 rustic camping platforms/sites provide unique opportunities for a "wild" retreat.  
(Photo courtesy of Art Howard)*

City dwellers have been flocking to the

## Featured Destination: Roanoke River Paddle Trail

**'A wild gem, a perfect destination for canoeists, kayakers, campers, and bird watchers'**

April 29, 2015 | By [Katie McKy](#)



The Roanoke River Paddle Trail is for the birds. Overflowed by 214 native and migratory birds, the floodplain at the terminus of the trail functions as a neotropical

THE ALL-NEW  
**TACOMA** *PLAY NOW*

# North Carolina's 6 Best Paddle-Camping Platforms

January 07, 2016 | By [CanoeKayak.com](http://CanoeKayak.com)



Photo by Thomas Briley / [ImpactMediaPhoto.com](http://ImpactMediaPhoto.com)



## MOST POPULAR

- 1 Intro to Rock Gardening: Rescues and Training
- 2 (Next) Best Paddling Towns: Ann Arbor, Mich.
- 3 'Beyond Definition': A Beautiful Urban Paddling Film
- 4 Why I am Paddling a Homemade Canoe through all 50 States
- 5 Gear Review: Old Town "NEXT"



This story is made possible by:



# 5 Under-The-Radar Kayaking Spots in North Carolina

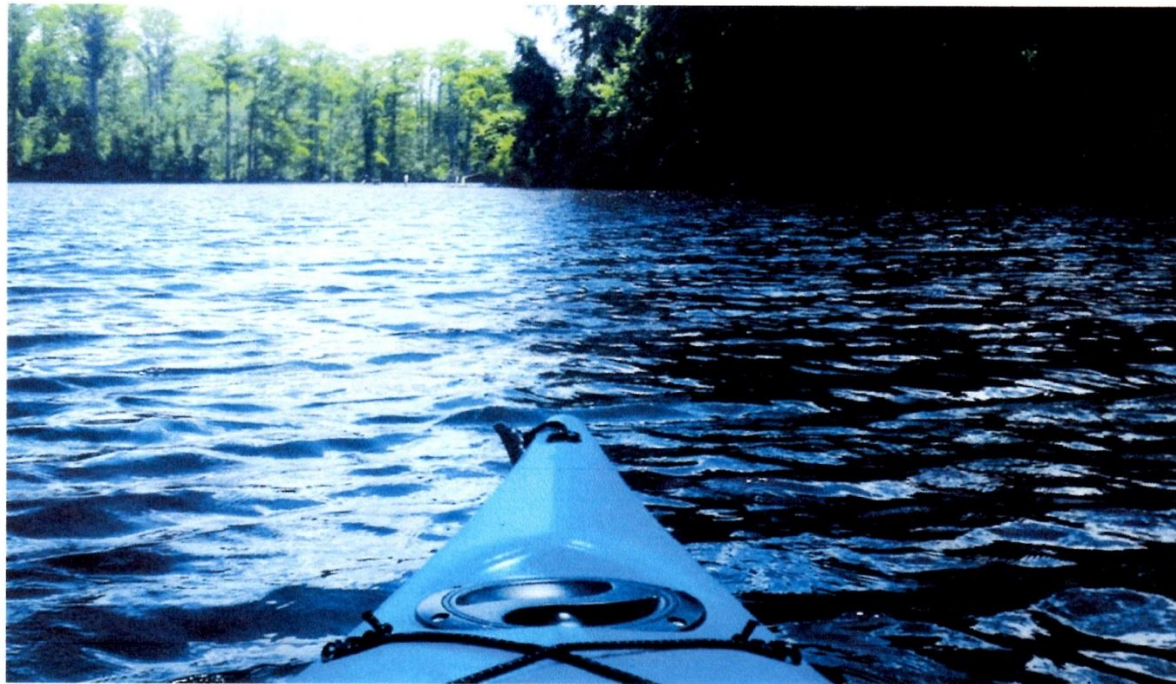
Explore the road — or river — less traveled with these five lesser-known kayaking spots from the mountains to the coast.

*written by* JASON FRYE

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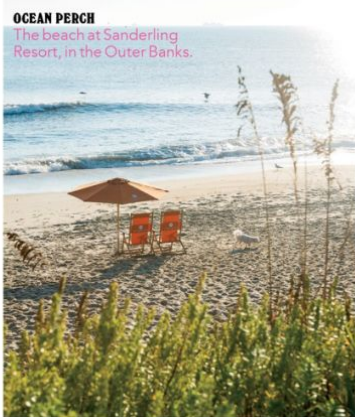
PHOTOGRAPH BY KATIE QUINE

Ozarks swimming hole hits all the marks on the fun-hog checklist. Waterfall cascading into an aquamarine pool? Check. Rock ledge to launch cannonballs off, just high enough to give you a split second on the way down to think about what you've done? Yep. Rope swing? Naturally. Plus hardwood forest surroundings, a fetchingly ridiculous name, and a location on Falling Water Creek just remote enough to discourage overcrowding even during a midsummer scorecher. (For the record, that's down a dirt road off Highway 16 southeast of the town of Ben Hur, roughly equidistant from Fayetteville and Little Rock.) You'll

expect Tom and Huck to arrive any minute.

**Outer Banks Getaway Sanderling Resort Duck, NC**

A former hunting lodge for a wealthy North Carolina businessman, the Sanderling retains one of the Outer Banks' wildest and most exclusive settings. The resort borders a 2,600-acre Audubon sanctuary of marsh and forest, egrets and ospreys. Last year's renovation brought a new fine-dining restaurant, two dune-side pools, and a beachfront bar, and the whole place has a laid-back coastal vibe. The property didn't get its first renovation until the eighties, and most people still explore the



**OCEAN PERCH**  
The beach at Sanderling Resort, in the Outer Banks.

adjacent village of Duck on foot or bicycle. [sanderling-resort.com](http://sanderling-resort.com)

**Paddle Trip Roanoke River North Carolina**

For an excursion that feels a lot like paddling back in time, say a thank-you to the Roanoke River Partners for a remarkable series of sixteen camping platforms along the river in north-

eastern North Carolina. Teahued water carries you downstream through some of the wildest cypress and tupelo swamp in the Carolinas, with clearly marked tributary campsites, some lined with massive old- and second-growth trees. Some platforms are built right on the banks. Others occupy bluffs

Galápagos found me.

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**NORTH CAROLINA**

**KAYAK THE LOWER ROANOKE RIVER PADDLE TRAIL**

The Conservancy has helped protect more than 94,000 acres of conservation lands along the lower Roanoke River, including what is now the Roanoke River National Wildlife Refuge. Here, the river slows and spreads, meandering through blackwater swamps on its way to the sea. The terrain is difficult on foot but glorious for visitors using the Roanoke River Paddle Trail, a collection of camping platforms built along 137 miles of river between the town of Weldon and Albemarle Sound. Spend up to a week floating through cathedral-like cypress swamps by day and camping on the platforms at night. Birders will delight in sightings of waterfowl and migratory birds—including Swainson's and prothonotary warblers. [nature.org/roanokeriver](http://nature.org/roanokeriver).



**NEVADA**

**DISCOVER THE CLEAR CREEK TRAIL**

The 10.5-mile Clear Creek Trail in Carson Valley opened in spring 2014, thanks to the donation of an 853-acre conservation easement to the Conservancy that allowed for the trail's completion. Perfect for equestrians, hikers and mountain bikers, the path passes through montane meadows, canyons and pine forests. [nature.org/nevada](http://nature.org/nevada).



# Life & Style

The Enterprise & Weekly Herald

Friday, Sept. 9, 2011

## Mayors along the Roanoke River

As many of you know, Roanoke River Partners is a network of groups and individuals who come together to draw visitors, and with them increased revenues, to our Roanoke River Region.

Among the diverse group of partners united in this mission are: our county governments; county tourism authorities; small towns; local businesses and organizations; and individuals who believe in, and support, this regional development.

Over the past eight years, the mayors of a growing list of small towns have become some of our most fierce allies in this work.

These mayors have banded together to form the Roanoke River Mayors Association (RRMA). Currently, 15 mayors from across our five-county region (and their representatives) are actively engaged in learning from each other, sharing re-



Carol Shields

sources and supporting Roanoke River Partners in our mission to develop and promote our region as a natural resource and cultural heritage destination.

While some of the small towns these mayors represent are located on the banks of the Roanoke, others are a good distance from the river.

Part of what connects them and the small towns they represent is

a shared cultural heritage which ties them to the river.

Historically, the Roanoke was the lifeblood that nourished all these communities by providing work and food - as well as a transportation system to export local products and import goods and materials from other places.

Today, Roanoke River Partners and the Roanoke River Mayors Association combine forces to market our region and to build a regional brand that is recognized throughout our region as well as far beyond our borders.

If your town is not currently active in our network - no matter how big or how small - we invite you to join us. Ideally, we would like to have all the towns in our five-county region come together in this effort.

Our five North Carolina counties which border the Roanoke include Northampton,

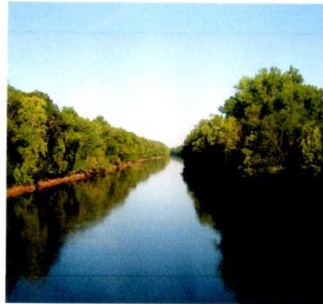
Halifax, Martin, Bertie and Washington.

If you have an interest in finding out more about our partnership to develop and market our region, please contact me through the contact info in my byline. I would love to share more about our efforts to positively impact our region's economy as well as to build community pride throughout our region.

Join us in building our Roanoke River brand and in welcoming those who come to experience what makes this region so special. We love to add you, your town, or your business to our growing list of partners. We are stronger together!

*Carol Jones Shields*  
the Executive Director  
Roanoke River Partners  
Inc. You can contact her  
at (252) 798-3920 or director@roanokeriverpartners.org. You can learn more about Roanoke River Partners at [www.roanokeriverpartners.org](http://www.roanokeriverpartners.org).

## Ecotourism in the Roanoke River Region: Impacts and Opportunity



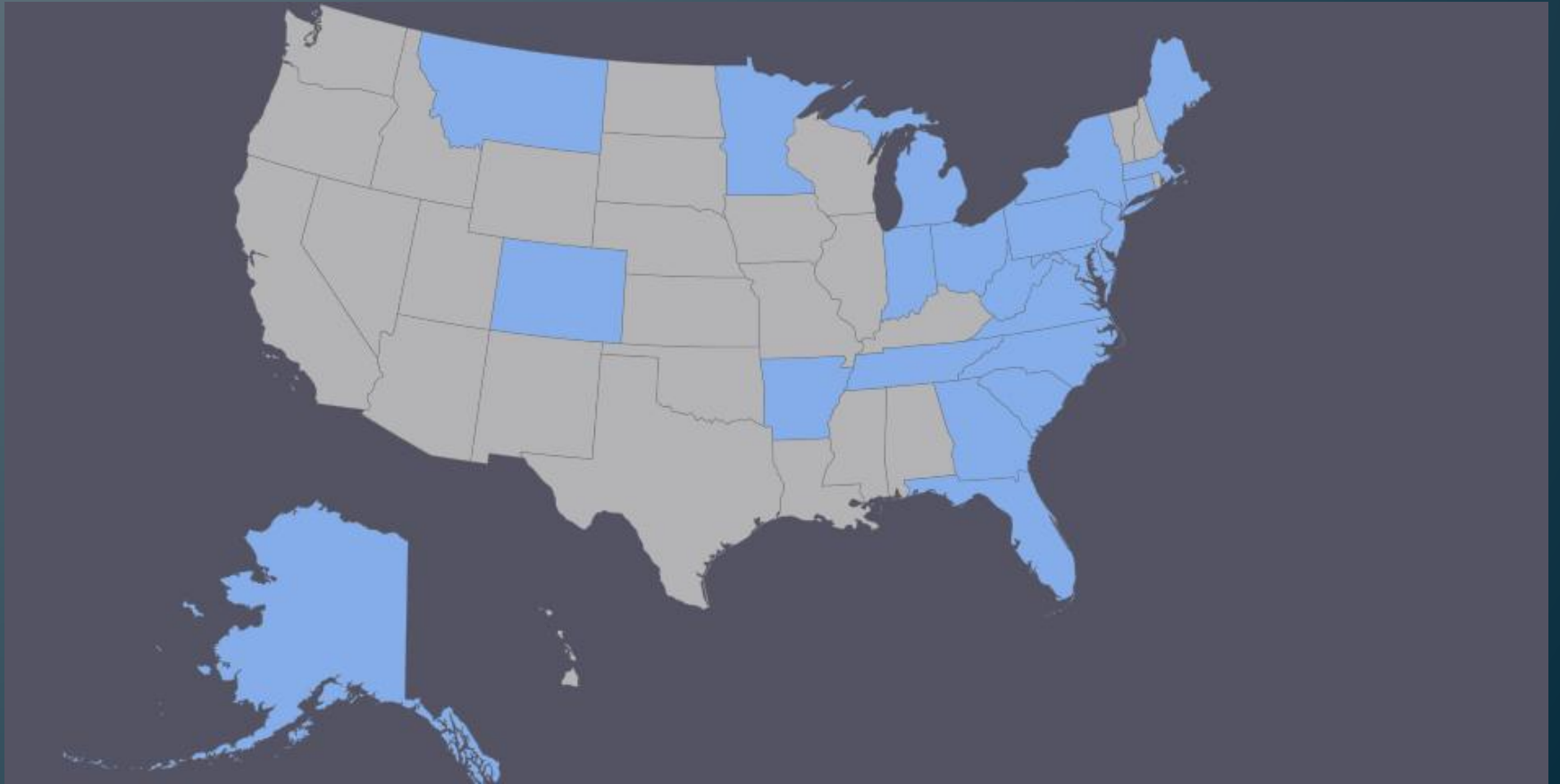
Kelvironta Harvey  
Carolyn Fryberger  
2016

NC rowth  
[www.ncgrowth.unc.edu](http://www.ncgrowth.unc.edu)



[www.roanokeriverpartners.org](http://www.roanokeriverpartners.org)

**OUTCOME ~ Overnight users from these 24 blue states between 1/1/14 – 12/31/15**



— CELEBRATING —



PROGRESS THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS