

Martin County Pursuing a North Carolina Recreation Trail Program Grant to Develop a Horse Trail at Kehukee Park in Partnership with Various Agencies

Martin County has been working with various partners to plan for a horse and nature trail project on part of the Kehukee Park property where trees were timbered in the fall of 2018. This involves an approximate 85 acre tract that has recently undergone a clear-cut forestry operation on approximately 66 acres.

The development of a horse and nature trail would provide an educational benefit and provide an opportunity for collaboration between Martin Community College, the NC Forestry Service, Martin County Cooperative Extension, Martin County Soil and Water Conservation and other partners. The development of a horse trail would provide an asset for local trail riders. Meetings with various partners have been ongoing.

Martin County plans to submit a grant application to the NC Recreational Trail Program (RTP). The RTP grant program provides grants for sustainable, “shovel-ready” projects to meet recreational trail needs in an effort to provide low infrastructure economic development opportunities through natural resource tourism.

The RTP grant application is a two-stage process: the pre-application and the final application. The maximum grant award is \$100,000. A 25% local match is required. The pre-application requested general information and scope of the project. The application deadline for the pre-application was March 15, 2019. Martin County’s pre-application was approved, and the county was invited to submit a final application. The final application requires more technical and in-depth verification of the project's status. The final application deadline is August 2, 2019.

If Martin County receives a grant, trailhead facilities are planned to be constructed via upgrades to the USDA-Agricultural Service Center and Public Works Maintenance facility and parking areas. A new equine trail will be constructed beginning at this trailhead and connecting to the Martin Community College Equine facilities.