

Roanoke Valley Greenways
Annual Report
2006

History of Greenways in Roanoke Valley

- 1907 Linear parks included in Roanoke's first comprehensive plan
- 1993 Valley Beautiful organized meetings featuring greenway speakers
- 1995 Open Space/Greenways Steering Committee appointed by Cities of Roanoke and Salem, Roanoke County, and Town of Vinton and sponsored by Fifth Planning District Commission
- 1995 Roanoke Valley Conceptual Greenway Plan completed
- 1996 Greenway Coordinator hired
- 1997 Roanoke Valley Greenway Commission established by the four localities



- 1997 Pathfinders for Greenways organized
- 1997 First greenway opened at Garst Mill Park



- 2006 Eighteen miles of greenway completed

Roanoke Valley Greenways Building Community Connections

We would love to recognize all the people who have been involved in the greenway program. The program began as an initiative of Valley Beautiful and has been led by citizens devoted to making Roanoke a better place to live. Building a greenway network requires linking together neighborhoods, finding connections, and protecting community resources. It requires the support and leadership of government staff and the help of local, state, and federal elected officials. It involves volunteers and corporations, users and builders, landowners and agencies. We paint below a few of the faces of people who have built the success of the greenway program.



Letter from the Chair of the Greenway Commission

While past years have seen a slow but steady progress in greenway construction, we have found 2006 to be a time of increased momentum. In April Novozymes Biologicals, Inc. announced it would donate \$250,000 for the Roanoke River Greenway over a five year period and the president would lead an effort to involve other businesses in financial support of the project. A few months later the Roanoke Women's Foundation announced its selection of Roanoke River Greenway for a \$30,000 construction award. Other groups and businesses have expressed similar support, leading us to set a goal of completing the Roanoke River Greenway within five years.



This momentum can be seen across the valley. In the City of Roanoke construction of the flood reduction project includes building the Roanoke River Greenway, and two miles of new trail were completed in 2006. The City of Salem has completed engineering for four miles of its section, and Roanoke County has completed plans for the greenway within Green Hill Park. Construction on these sections will start in 2007. Other greenway projects are also growing, as two miles of Lick Run Greenway opened this year, connecting downtown to Valley View, and an-

other half mile of Wolf Creek Greenway was built, connecting to the Blue Ridge Parkway. We now have over 18 miles of greenway.

Pathfinders for Greenways continues to work on the natural surfaced trails and helped with completion of the Mill Mountain Trail Plan, adopted by Roanoke City Council, and with construction and repair of five miles of trail at Carvins Cove. The Greenway Commission and Pathfinders are both fortunate to have dedicated individuals on their boards and many volunteers, who have donated over 4,500 hours of service projects within the past year.

With the able guidance of the Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Commission, we initiated an update of the 1995 Greenway Plan. At two well attended public meetings citizens voiced preferences for greenway routes as well as concerns about the need for speedier trail development. There was almost unanimous support for a focus on the Roanoke River Greenway. LandDesign of Charlotte developed an organizational analysis to take inventory of the Greenway Commission's strengths and weaknesses, suggesting strategies and actions to increase momentum and ultimately build more greenways faster.

None of the above accomplishments would be possible without the leadership of the Greenway Coordinator, Liz Belcher, and the support and commitment of the four local governments. Elected officials and staff have been generous in their time and support of the greenway program. This regional cooperation will benefit the entire Roanoke Valley as we pursue the goal of completing the Roanoke River Greenway by 2012.

Lucy R. Ellett

Chair FY07, Roanoke Valley Greenway Commission

Greenway Office

When the greenway program began, it was housed in the Fifth Planning District Commission office, now known as the Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Commission. In 1997 Roanoke County offered to house the Greenway Coordinator and serve as fiscal agent, and the office moved to the Roanoke County Administration Center. The County provides free space, and the Commission pays other operational expenses. In November 2005 the office moved to the County Parks and Recreation building on Kessler Mill Road. Now the office is on a greenway, as Hanging Rock Battlefield Trail is right outside the door.



Greenway Staff

Liz Belcher, the Roanoke Valley Greenway Coordinator, is staff to the Greenway Commission.

Roanoke Valley Greenway
Commission
1206 Kessler Mill Road
Salem, VA 24153

540-387-6060
540-387-6146 (Fax)

Assisting with Greenway Conferences and Statewide Initiatives

Since hosting the first Virginia Greenway Conference in Roanoke in 1999, the Greenway Commission has continued to support statewide greenway and trail initiatives.



At the 2005 state greenway conference in Richmond attendees saw several greenways along the riverfront and the economic development these facilities have helped spur.



The Va. Dept. of Conservation and Recreation has been assisting communities such as Keyesville and Danville with local workshops. In Danville parks staff has constructed over six miles of greenway along the river using recycled pavement millings. A New River greenway conference is planned for May 2007.



In July 2005 the International Greenway Conference was in Minneapolis, where there are over 300 miles of greenways.

Roanoke Valley Greenway Commission

The Roanoke Valley Greenway Commission was established in 1997 with the signing of an intergovernmental agreement by the City of Roanoke, Roanoke County, City of Salem, and Town of Vinton. The Commission's purpose is to promote and facilitate coordinated direction and guidance in the planning, development, and maintenance of a system of greenways throughout the Roanoke Valley. The Commission has been instrumental in developing greenway master plans and securing grant funding for greenway construction.

The Commission is comprised of three members appointed by each of the four local governing bodies, plus one member appointed by the Metropolitan Planning Organization (the regional transportation planning agency). Ex-officio members of the Commission include staff from the governments' planning and parks departments, plus representatives of interested organizations and user groups.

Members of the Roanoke Valley Greenway Commission FY 2006

Appointed Members:

City of Roanoke

Barry Baird (vice chair)
Lucy Ellett
Foudr Kemper

Roanoke County

Charles Blankenship
Butch Kelly
Don Witt (chair)

City of Salem

Mac Johnson
Jim Phipps
Gardner Smith

Town of Vinton

Carolyn Fidler
Amanda Grose/Debra
Hagins
Barbara King

Metropolitan Planning Organization

Lee Osborne

Ex-Officio Members:

City of Roanoke

Steve Buschor - Parks & Recreation
Donnie Underwood - Parks & Recreation
Jacques Scott/ Ian Shaw - Planning

Roanoke County

Pete Haislip/ Lon Williams - Parks & Recreation
Janet Scheid - Community Development

City of Salem

John Shaner/ Teri Atkins - Parks & Recreation
Joe Yates/ Ben Tripp - Planning

Town of Vinton

Anita McMillan - Planning

Other Groups

Carol Davit/ Sarah Baumgardner- Western Virginia
Water Authority
Barbara Duerk - Blue Ridge Bicycle Club
John Bolling - Mountain Biking at Explore
Helen Smythers - Pathfinders for Greenways
Dick Clark - Roanoke Appalachian Trail Club
Bob Whitehurst - Roanoke Valley Horseman's Asso.
Bill Richardson - Star City Striders
George Simpson - Stormwater Management

Greenway Commission's Activities



Canoe Trip

In 2000 the Greenway Commission began offering an annual canoe trip to allow elected officials and staff to see the Roanoke River from a boat and envision the greenway and blueway. In 2006 the trips were frustrated by low water (we went to the New River that day) and storms. Finally in July we were able to float from Salem to Wasena Park and exit at the new canoe parking lot.

Annual Picnic

At the annual picnic in October 2006 bicyclists, walkers, joggers, and neighbors descended on Washington Park via the newly completed Lick Run Greenway. This greenway now connects Valley View mall to Hotel Roanoke. Delegate Onzlee Ware spoke about the importance of greenways in connecting neighborhoods and building social communities.



Southeastern Equestrian Trails Conference



August 3-5, 2006
Roanoke, Virginia

Hosted by the Virginia Horse Council in partnership with
The Federal Highway Administration,
The Virginia Horse Industry Board,
The Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation,
Supported by Virginia Cooperative Extension.

Trail Conferences

In August 2006 the Southeast Equestrian Conference was held in Roanoke. Horseback riders from across the east coast gathered to learn from experts and discuss issues with management partners. Rick Potts amazed the group with stories of mule packing and bridge building in the Bob Marshall Wilderness. Rick returned to the region in November to teach equestrian Leave-No-Trace.

Planning and Technical Expertise

The Greenway Commission assists with bicycle, pedestrian and trail planning throughout the Roanoke Valley. Members of the Greenway Commission serve on a variety of boards and committees that provide linkages from the Commission to other groups in the community. The Greenway Coordinator also serves on the Transportation Technical Committee, the Roanoke Valley Urban Forestry Council, and the Boards of Western Virginia Land Trust, BikeWalk Virginia, and Roanoke Appalachian Trail Club.

In 2006 Greenway Commission members, staff, and volunteers provided input on:

- Update to the Roanoke Valley Conceptual Greenway Plan
- Roanoke County's Park Master Plan
- City of Roanoke's Mill Mountain Trails Plan produced by Parks and Recreation as part of the Mill Mountain Park Management Plan
- Blue Ridge Parkway draft trail plan
- Regional mobility map
- Rural Bike Plan produced by the Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Commission
- Virginia Outdoors Plan produced by the Dept. of Conservation and Recreation
- Various road projects planned by Va. Dept. of Transportation
- City of Roanoke's update to the Parks Master Plan
- Carvins Cove management plan
- Private developers building greenways
- Trees Virginia Workshop
- BikeWalk Virginia Workshop



Greenway Users

Update to the Roanoke Valley Greenway Plan

In 2006 the Roanoke Valley Greenway Commission and Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Commission joined forces to update the 1995 *Conceptual Greenway Plan, Roanoke Valley, Virginia*. They obtained a grant from the Virginia Department of Transportation to help fund the project, and set up a Steering Committee with representatives from the City of Roanoke, Roanoke County, City of Salem, and Town of Vinton.

The update had two components:

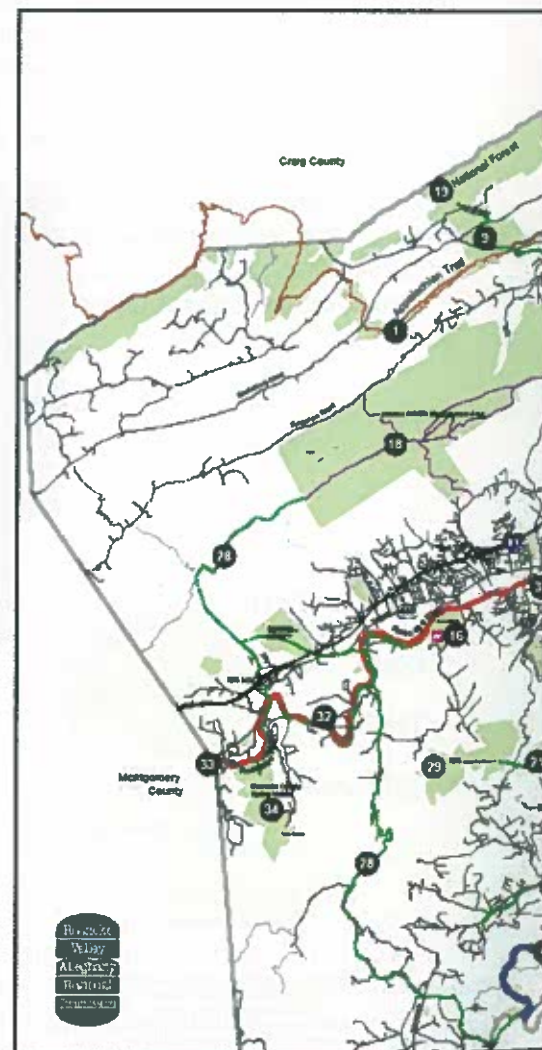
- An update to the routes included in the 1995 Plan and prioritization of those routes. The Steering Committee directed this effort and the results are available on-line at www.rvarc.org/greenways. The update has a summary of progress on greenways, issues, prioritization, and implementation strategies.
- An organizational assessment of the roles and responsibilities of the various partners. This was completed by a consultant, Land-Design, Inc., and is encapsulated in a separate volume.

DRAFT Roano

LEGEND

- Roanoke River (Priority 1)
- Proposed Off-Road Greenways (Priority 2)
- Other Off-Road Greenways (Priority 3 or 4)
- Proposed Greenway for Horse Use
- Appalachian Trail
- Existing Greenways
- Existing Trails
- Equestrian Facility
- ② Greenway Number

- 1-Appalachian Trail
- 2-Back Creek Greenway
- 3-Barnhardt Creek Greenway
- 4-Biomed Loop
- 5-Birding and Wildlife Trail
- 6-Blue Ridge Parkway Trails
- 7-Carvin Creek Greenway
- 8-Carvins Cove Trail Network
- 9-Catawba Greenway
- 10-Dry Creek Greenway
- 11-Explore Park Trails
- 12-Garden City Greenway (Garnand Branch)
- 13-Gish Branch Greenway
- 14-Glade Creek Greenway
- 15-Gladetown Trail
- 16-Green Hill Park Trails
- 17-Hanging Rock Battlefield Trail
- 18-Havens Wildlife Management Area Trails
- 19-Jefferson National Forest Trails
- 20-Lick Run Greenway
- 21-Long Ridge Trail
- 22-Masons Cove Greenway
- 23-Mason Creek Greenway
- 24-Mill Mountain Greenway
- 25-Mill Mountain Park Trails
- 26-Mudlick Creek Greenway (S. Garst Mill)
- 27-Murray Run Greenway
- 28-Perimeter Trail
- 29-Poor Mountain Reserve
- 30-Railwalk (O. Winston Link)
- 31-Read Mountain Trails
- 32-Roanoke River Greenway
- 33-Roanoke River Greenway Extensions
- 34-Spring Hollow Trails
- 35-Tinker Creek Greenway
- 36-Wolf Creek Greenway

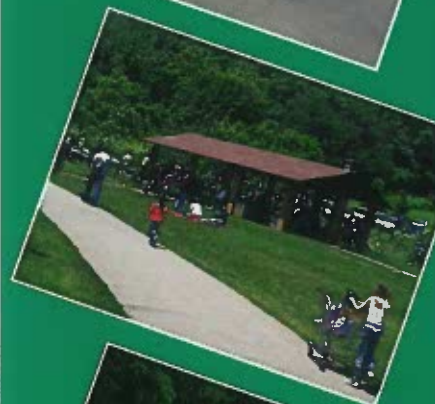
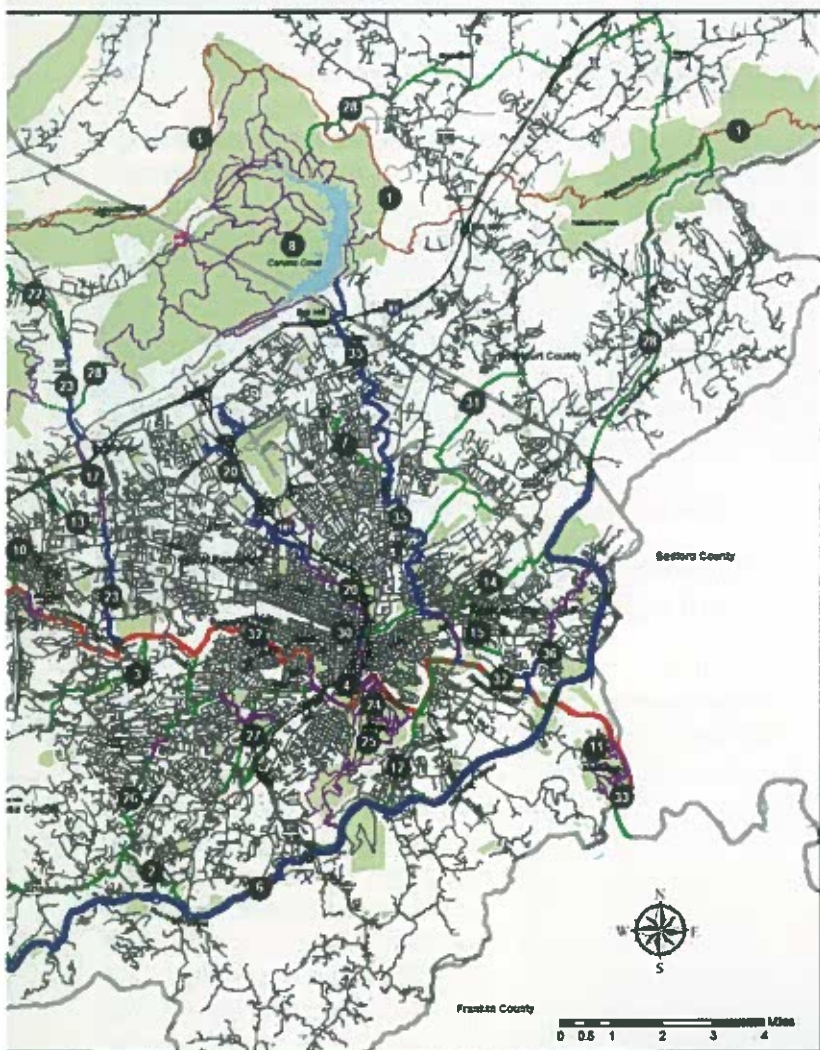


Greenway Users

Based on the public input and update process, the focus of the Roanoke Valley Greenway program for the next five years will be to finish the Roanoke River Greenway. Secondary priorities will be those north-south routes that are already underway and will provide connections from Roanoke River Greenway to other public lands like Carvins Cove and the Blue Ridge Parkway. The goal is to finish these in five to ten years. Other routes are listed but will be pursued only as opportunity arises.

Implementation of this plan will require continued cooperation among the many partners and will offer opportunity for all of the community to be involved. The vision of finishing the Roanoke River Greenway has been a resounding theme echoed from the citizens and corporations of the valley. The dream is laid out and challenges all the partners to focus efforts, not on planning, but on implementation. At the same time each locality must grow its systems to manage the greenway network being developed.

Valley Conceptual Greenway Plan



Providing Trail Assistance

Pathfinders' trail crews provide assistance to a variety of federal, state, and local land managers.



Pathfinders' crews built sections of the new trail at Grassy Hill Natural Heritage Preserve.



The mid-week crew repairs a section of the Blue Ridge Parkway trail damaged by an up-rooted tree.



Pathfinders assisted the Town of Vinton with construction of a police fitness course along Wolf Creek Greenway.



Message from the President of Pathfinders for Greenways

Pathfinders for Greenways had a great year in 2006. Established in 1997, we are volunteers who believe strongly in the vision of establishing a first-class regional greenway network. Pathfinders is a non-profit, grass-roots organization which coordinates volunteers for construction of natural surface greenways and trails, donation of funds, development of educational materials, and marketing.

This year we purchased a Ditch Witch SK500 trail building machine that allows us to build quality trails more quickly. We were able to match a state grant for this equipment using generous donations from Pathfinders' supporters. We have provided training to develop skilled and safe operators. Also, we purchased a pickup truck and trailer for hauling the equipment.

In 2006 we logged 4,108 hours on 98 work days. With 296 volunteers in the database, we can easily send emails informing volunteers of upcoming trail work days and related events. Check out pictures at www.vast-network.org.

The three-mile Four Gorge Trail at Carvins Cove was finished this year except for one bridge, which will be built in 2007. The trail was built using "sustainable" techniques which will minimize future maintenance. Even without the bridge, it is already believed to be the most heavily used trail at the Cove. Pathfinders is working with the City of Roanoke on implementing its Mill Mountain Park Plan. Currently, we are working on Woodthrush Trail, which will provide connections on the Garden City side of the park.

In October we joined the Greenway Commission in celebrating the opening of the 2nd phase of Lick Run Greenway with our annual picnic to recognize greenway supporters and volunteers. We are excited about the donation from Novozymes and look forward to finishing the Roanoke River Greenway in five years, along with adding to the rest of the greenway system. Our crews are some of the most productive and highly trained in the region. We work on federal and state lands, in addition to local greenways, and enjoy the camaraderie of building natural surface trails. We plan to keep up the momentum into 2007 and increase the effort to expand the quality trail offerings in the Roanoke Valley.

Brian J. Batteiger

Pathfinders for Greenways Board of Directors 2006

Brian Batteiger
Linda Oberlender
Helen Smythers
John Renick

President
Vice-President
Secretary
Treasurer

Other Directors

Gary Adkins
Charlie Blankenship
Tim Cribbs
Fielding Douthat
Bill Gordge
Mark Hodges
Jeff Howard

Scott Perkins
Amy Powell
Warren Schimizzi
Kevin Speed
Dave Tompkins
Meredith Winn
Dan Wright

Advisory Board

John Bradshaw
Barbara Duerk
Jon Grace
Dave Oliver
Rusty Schundler

Pathfinders' Activities



In 2006 Pathfinders purchased a Ditch Witch SK500 for trail construction. Two training sessions gave operators safety and technical expertise in using the equipment to build sustainable trail. With the Witch and the Muck Truck 4-wheel drive wheelbarrow, purchased in 2005, volunteers can complete heavy trail work more easily and quickly.



Pathfinders got a grant to pay for installation of guardrail on Murray Run Greenway.



Pathfinders' volunteers participate in Clean Valley Day, Fall Waterways Clean-up, and other regional events such as Earth Day.

Pathfinders' volunteers specialize in trail construction. Here the mid-week crew celebrates completion of a culvert on Four Gorge Trail at Carvins Cove. In 2007 Pathfinders will finish a bridge on this trail, thus completing the connection from the Bennett Springs parking lot to the fire road and other Cove trails.



Developing the Volunteer Workforce

Pathfinders has worked with the Greenway Coordinator to utilize and train a variety of students and Scouts interested in service projects. Roanoke College, Faith Christian School, North Cross School, and the Governor's School have become regular greenway volunteers.



Faith Christian School provided over 1400 hours of service working on the Fern Park Trail and wildflower garden on Mill Mountain.



North Cross School provides three service days a year maintaining greenways.



Gray Gilchrist completed his Eagle Scout project building a bridge on the Roanoke River Greenway at Explore Park.

Volunteer of the Year

In 2000 the Greenway Commission established a Volunteer of the Year Award to recognize outstanding contributions of individuals working for greenways. This award was named after Dr. William N. Gordge. Bill Gordge has been an inspirational organizer of volunteers and has spent countless hours planning and exploring greenway corridors, laying out trails, building and maintaining trails, and spearheading the efforts of the mid-week crew. The winners of the award have been:

2000

William N. Gordge



2001

Lyndell and Peggy Bryant



2002

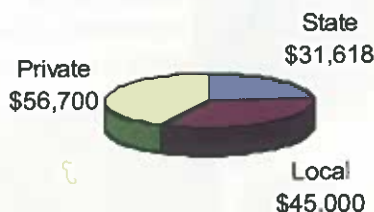
Horace D. Lackey



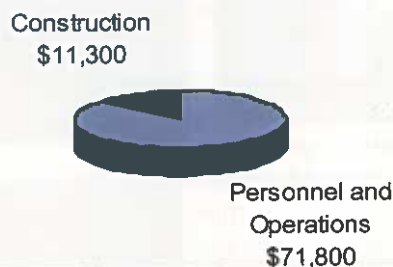
Funding

The Roanoke Valley Greenway Commission is funded by the City of Roanoke, Roanoke County, City of Salem, and Town of Vinton on a per capita basis under provisions of an intergovernmental agreement. The Commission also solicits grants for construction of greenways and for operational expenses. Most of the greenway construction funds are managed through the localities' budgets. Revenues in excess of expenditures are carried over for projects in FY 07.

Greenway Commission Revenue FY 06



Greenway Commission Expenses FY 06



Grants and Donations for Greenways 2006

Source	Recipient	Purpose	Amount Awarded
Transportation Enhancement Grant	City of Roanoke	Roanoke River Greenway in Ghent Park	\$ 175,000
Novozymes Biologicals	Greenway Commission	Roanoke River Greenway Construction - Green Hill Park	\$ 50,000
Women's Foundation	Greenway Commission	Roanoke River Greenway bridge within Green Hill Park	\$ 30,000
Foundation for Roanoke Valley	Greenway Commission	Update Greenway Plan	\$ 1,500
Private donations	Pathfinders for Greenways	Greenway projects	\$ 31,000
Neighborhood Partnership	Pathfinders for Greenways	Install wooden guardrail on Murray Run Greenway	\$ 5,060
Va. Dept. of Transportation	Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Comm.	Update Greenway Plan	\$ 71,000
			\$ 363,560

Highlights of 2006



Hundreds of people were involved in the update to the Roanoke Valley Greenway Plan.

Lick Run Greenway was completed, connecting Valley View Mall to the Hotel Roanoke and Visitors Center. The three mile trail provides a beautiful path through parks and wooded areas.



Ted Melnik, president of Novozymes Biologicals, stepped forward to show corporate support for finishing the Roanoke River Greenway. Novozymes committed \$50,000 per year for five years. Believing that the Roanoke River Greenway is critical to economic development, Ted has carried the greenway message to multiple groups and businesses, encouraging private support for completing the greenway.



Wolf Creek Greenway was completed to the Blue Ridge Parkway and will open when improvements to Mtn. View Rd. are finished.



The long awaited flood reduction project began, including construction of the Roanoke River Greenway in southeast Roanoke.

Volunteer of the Year

2003
Alan G. Soltis



2004
Faith Christian School



2005
Brian J. Batteiger



2006
Ted Melnik





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