

Chattahoochee Hill County Regional Greenway Trail

Partnering with the PATH Foundation

In 2003, the Chattahoochee Hill Country along with the PATH Foundation and Carroll, Coweta, Douglas and Fulton Counties all came together with members of the community to develop a regional greenway trail system. Community meetings were held all over the four county area from January to September as the Trail Master Plan was developed. This community driven plan was adopted by each county commission by January of 2004 and work began to implement the plan. The following is information from the PATH Foundation on their trails

Environmental Issues

PATH builds trails to provide respectful public access to naturally beautiful areas while enhancing the sustainability of these areas.

- All applicable federal, state, and local ordinances governing work near streams, wetlands, and floodplains are followed
- PATH uses the least invasive machinery to build trails through environmentally sensitive areas
- Vegetative debris is mulched and recycled within the trail corridor
- Where possible, trails are built utilizing previously cleared areas such as old roadbeds and utility easements
- Trail surface material can be altered in sensitive areas
- Invasive and noxious species will be replaced with native species where applicable
- Tree protection and protection of other desirable features such as rock outcroppings and specimen trees will be installed during construction
- Erosion control will be installed and monitored throughout construction
- Trails are generally constructed to lay with the land rather than to alter existing drainage patterns, as does road construction.
- Trails are designed to maneuver around special trees, habitat, and wetland, etc.
- Introducing a trail to a forest creates “edges” that attract birds
- Trails serve as educational tools by visiting environmental points-of-interest often serving as “Classrooms”
- Trails often bridge or tunnel under highways and waterways providing needed connections so that wildlife can maintain or even expand their habitat.



PATH Trail in Dekalb County



Existing trail in the Hill Country

Chattahoochee Hill County Regional Greenway Trails

Maintenance

No trail will be built by PATH without an adequate maintenance program in place! Many trails in metro Atlanta are maintained using the PATH Maintenance Endowment Fund. PATH hires professional landscapers to keep the trail corridors in peak condition. The PATH Adopt-a-Trail program is a group of volunteer “Trail Rangers” who donate their services to enhance the beauty of the trails. Maintenance has never been a problem with PATH built trails.

Safety Issues

There is no evidence locally or nationally that crime rates are higher in the proximity of trails. Trails are largely “secured” by public activity. Greenways and trails bring people together outside. Their presence increases surveillance and discourages criminals.

Acquiring Property for Trails

Trail development requires that a narrow strip of property be in public ownership or public easement. A public interest in the land is necessary to transfer liability to the local government and to insure the trail will remain open for public use. Every attempt is made to minimize acquisition of property.

When private property is needed for a trail, the process below is followed:

- The property needed is surveyed and a legal description is prepared
- The property owner is approached and asked to either donate the area to the government entity sponsoring the trail or propose compensation or mitigation in exchange for the needed property
- The property can be transferred fee simple or as an easement in favor of the government entity. Either method can be written with stipulations for crossing the trail or moving the trail if needed
- The property owner may receive tax credits for donating the property and may receive tax relief from the county for transferring rights to the property
- Reversion clauses can be included in the agreement to transfer property whereby the property donated for the trail will revert to the property owner if the trail is ever abandoned
- If the property in question is used as an easement for a utility, the easement may be modified to include provisions for a trail



Cochran Mill Park



Safety Features for Road Crossings along trails



Typical 10 feet wide PATH trail in a rural area