



HOUSE BILL 361: Coastal Crescent Trail/State Parks System.

2017-2018 General Assembly

Committee:	House State and Local Government II	Date:	April 5, 2017
Introduced by:	Reps. Shepard, McElraft, White, Strickland	Prepared by:	Nicholas Giddings
Analysis of:	First Edition		Committee Counsel

OVERVIEW: *House Bill 361 would require the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources to add the Coastal Crescent Trail to the Mountains-to-Sea State Park Trail.*

[As introduced, this bill was identical to S244, as introduced by Sen. B. Jackson, which is currently in Senate Agriculture/Environment/Natural Resources.]

CURRENT LAW: The State Parks Act defines the types of units in the North Carolina State Parks System to include State Parks, State Natural Areas, State Recreation Areas, State Trails, State Rivers and State Lakes. All of these types of units are subject to the requirements of the State Parks Act, including planning responsibilities and the requirement for new units to be authorized by the General Assembly.

BILL ANALYSIS: House Bill 361 would require the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources (DNCR) to add the Coastal Crescent Trail (CCT) to the Mountains-to-Sea State Park Trail (MST) unit of the State Parks System. The CCT would include public and private lands as authorized by G.S. 143B-135.98. DNCR must work with the staff and volunteers of Friends of the Mountains-to-Sea Trail to plan and develop the Coastal Crescent route. DNCR must also amend the State Parks System Plan to reflect the addition of the CCT to the MST by October 1, 2017.

EFFECTIVE DATE: This act is effective when it becomes law.

BACKGROUND: A State Trail is a linear corridor on land or water, separated from vehicular traffic, providing public access for non-motorized recreation or transportation. Currently there are five authorized State Trails: the French Broad River State Trail, the Yadkin River State Trail, the Mountains-to-Sea State Trail, the Deep River State Trail, and the Fonta Flora State Trail. See the handout included with the House Bill 361 materials for more information on State Trails.

The CCT runs through Johnston, Sampson, Cumberland, Bladen, Pender, and Onslow counties, and was originally established as a temporary detour around portions of the MST that have not yet been constructed. Currently, the majority of the CCT route is on road shoulders, not along a traditional off-road trail separated from vehicular traffic. According to DNCR, the CCT counties and communities have expressed interest in developing a separated trail for the CCT, and would like technical and financial assistance from Division of Parks and Recreation (DPR) in developing a regional off-road trail in the southern coastal plain.

Adding the CCT to the State Parks System would make it eligible for the State share of funds from the Parks and Recreation Trust Fund and for the State Trail portion of the Connect NC Bond funds, and would make DPR responsible for overall planning and coordination for the trail. However, DPR would not be responsible for constructing and operating the entire trail.

Karen Cochran-Brown
Director



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Legislative Analysis
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