



July 1, 2008

Dear Trail Friends:

My name is Terry Eastin. Many of you may recognize me from my many long years of community advocacy for trails, grant writing, trails planning and construction. Currently, I am serving as: Co-Chair of the 2008 National Trails Symposium (to be held in Little Rock in November 2008), Executive Director of Mississippi River Trail, Inc. and Arkansas River Trail Consultant for the City of Little Rock.

Since early March, I have been working with two members of the Arkansas House of Representatives, Robert Moore (Arkansas City) and Lance Reynolds (Quitman) who are willing to sponsor a Bill to establish a \$2 million a year state-funded trail grant program during the 2009 legislative season. This grant program would be available to cities, counties, and nonprofits for funding new trail systems and expanding existing ones.

This legislation would provide an additional source of annual trail funding that would not be subject to federal economic conditions and budget cuts like the Arkansas Recreational Trails fund has been in years past. A draft of the Bill has been written and is in the process of being reviewed by several state officials.

Given the high demand for trails funding and the minimal resources available for trail funding grants, I strongly believe Arkansas needs to make more resources permanently available. Many of you have applauded the idea of a new source of trail funding. With this letter, I am attaching an **Arkansas Trails Funding Summary Report** and a **history of Arkansas Trails Funding**. These documents tell the story of Arkansas' demand for trail funding and the inability to meet the need with federal dollars only.

There will never be a better opportunity to request these funds from our state government than the one we have now. Many voices must be heard or the chances of establishing this new grant program will evaporate like the dew of an early summer morning. *Your support is needed to illustrate to Governor Beebe, the sponsoring legislators, and many others how important the need for alternate transportation systems and recreational trails really is in our state.*

Please write to me, individually or as representatives of organizations who support better health, improved quality of life, economic development, and conservation of our natural resources. Also, please prepare a letter from your mayor or city council to sign and send to me via email, or through the U.S. mail. All the letter needs to say is:

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I strongly encourage members of the Arkansas legislature and the Governor to make resources available to establish a \$2 million dollar a year grant program for cities, counties and nonprofits. I represent (your organization(s), (city), (county), etc. (if applicable).

Please address the letter to me as Co-Chair of the National Trails Symposium. My address is:

858 N. Jackson

Fayetteville, Arkansas 72701.

My email address(es) are teastin@lynks.com or terry@mississippirivertrail.org.

Time is of the utmost importance. All letters should be sent before July 21st.

Thank you for your help. I am putting this important decision in your hands. Based on the number of responses I receive, a decision will be made whether to continue pursuing this legislation, including finding additional co-sponsors and major supporters, and putting in place lobbyists who can guide the process. It will take **ALL OF US** to make this project happen and it is up to **ALL OF US** to decide how important this issue will be in 2009.

On a final note, we have the support of many in our state's medical community. **Heart Clinic Arkansas, Arkansas Blue Cross Blue Shield, St. Vincent Health Systems** have pledged their support through a generous donation to the National Trails Symposium and by agreeing to sponsor a reception for state leadership at the Arkansas Governor's Mansion Hall in conjunction with the National Trails Symposium.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Terry Eastin".

Terry Eastin

Co-Chair, 2008 National Trails Symposium