

Over the past two years, ESLC has been proud to partner with the National Park Service's Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance (RTCA) Program to lay the foundation for a transformative regional initiative: the Maryland Eastern Shore Trail Network (MESTN).

Thanks to an RTCA Technical Assistance Grant, ESLC has worked closely with National Park Service staff and a dedicated group of regional partners to develop a strategic plan, mission, vision, and values statement for MESTN. The Eastern Shore Trail Steering Committee—chaired by Owen Bailey, ESLC's Director of Land Use and Policy—has played a central role in guiding this process. With valuable input and collaboration from committee members representing diverse communities and interests across the Shore, this effort has been a true regional partnership from the start.

This vision is not just about trails—it's about building stronger, healthier, and more resilient communities. We are deeply grateful to the National Park Service for their guidance and support, and to the many community members, planners, and advocates who have contributed their time and passion to this effort. Together, we are creating a legacy of connectivity, health, and opportunity for the Eastern Shore.

Thanks to MESTN, official Trails Day proclamations have been declared in:

Trails Day Proclamations

TOWNS	COUNTIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cambridge• Centreville• Chestertown• Denton• Frederick• Galena• Millington• Preston• Ridgely• Salisbury• Snow Hill	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Caroline• Dorchester• Kent• Queen Anne's• Somerset• Talbot• Wicomico• Worcester

MESTN was born from a shared regional priority: the need for better access to trails that serve both recreational and practical purposes. Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plans from every county on the Shore note trails as a priority. These communities and the MESTN envision a trail system that will:

-  **Encourage physical activity and healthy lifestyles**
-  **Provide safe, equitable access to jobs, schools, and daily needs**
-  **Expand greenspaces and wildlife corridors**
-  **Preserve the rural and agricultural character of the region**
-  **Attract visitors seeking outdoor recreation and nature experiences**
-  **Support economic development through agribusiness, agritourism, and new local enterprises**

What's next?

On **NOVEMBER 4**, MESTN will gather supporters and stakeholders to celebrate the progress made and chart the path forward. This gathering will be an opportunity to share trail successes, reaffirm our shared goals, and discuss the next steps in bringing the trail network to life.

Contact ESLC's Owen Bailey for
more information