

# MEMO

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TO: Executive Committee  
FROM: Trails Committee  
DATE: December 15, 2004  
RE: **Trail Policy on Spine Route**

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On November 12, 2004 the Board of Trustees met and adopted the following policy to clarify our trail vision.

**The problem:** Some sections of the permanent ECG corridor (both existing completed trail and projected future route) have two or more route options. In most areas one has been identified as the spine but in a few areas we have not determined which is the spine route.

There appear to be four areas where this routing problem faces us today, although others may crop up in the future:

- a. The route through New York City
- b. The route between NYC and NJ
- c. The route through Delaware
- d. The route through the Raleigh-Durham area

**Staff has requested that a spine route be determined for two immediate and compelling reasons:**

- a. In order to complete our benchmark exercise of sizing up where we are on completing the ECG by 2010.
- b. In order to chart out our *Interim* Route, which is meant to follow closely the permanent route.

**The following resolution was adopted by the Board of Trustees on November 12, 2004:**

**ECG is a spine route. The ECGA shall establish which among the various routes where the ECG is braided is the spine route. Other routes will be given descriptive names rather than being called “alternative” routes.**

## **A. Criteria for Determining Permanent Primary Spine Route**

The spine route is subject to change over time as significantly superior route options become available. Local officials must be advised that designation of a local trail as the spine route is subject to change. However, the ECGA will not remove such segments from the ECG route system unless there is substantial reason to do so – for example a continuous route cannot be established.

1. There are no sections where travelers cannot pass through today. (e.g. water crossings without a bridge open to bicycles and pedestrians or without ferry or transit alternative that accepts cycles)
2. Route will maximize off-road travel experience
  - a. Route promising the greatest % of route off-road by 2010.
  - b. Quality of the trail: surface, width, security, was designed to accommodate bicycles
  - c. No links are either closed at normal travel times of day or seasons of year
  - d. Fees for transport links such as ferry, rail or bus are moderately-priced
3. Quality of the tourism experience: what one sees and experiences
  - a. Offers the traveler the “best” experience in terms of
    - 1) Goes to the local “downtown”
    - 2) Variety in landscape
    - 3) Access to key points of interest
    - 4) Scenic and appealing travel route
    - 5) Considered as best in terms of personal security and rider safety
  - b. Best services and amenities like food, accommodations, bike repair services
4. Directness: shortest route between two points

## **B. Criteria State Committees must meet in order to Recommend Routing to the BOT**

- 1. Most ECG State Committees are unaffiliated entities for the ECGA.** Only Pennsylvania and Maryland have signed a Memorandum of Agreement with the ECGA to establish a formal relationship.
- 2. State Committees play an important role in the ECGA process of defining route.** They *recommend* ECG corridor and spine route to BOT. They *recommend* interim route to BOT. They *nominate* completed trail for designation by BOT.
- 3. The Alliance Board of Trustees makes all final decisions regarding the ECG route.** Determination of future permanent route corridors, determination of spine route, determination of *interim* continuous route.

**4. For the ECGA Board of Trustees (BOT) to accept route recommendations or designation nominations from a given ECG State Committee the following criteria must be met by that committee:**

- a. State Committee recommendations to the BOT must be submitted in the form of a resolution adopted by the State Committee
- b. The resolution report to BOT must be documented by stating the date and time of the SC meeting, which might have been a face to face meeting, a conference call or an electronic virtual meeting.
- c. The names of all current SC members must be appended
- d. The names of those participating in the meeting
- e. The vote pro and con with the names and affiliation of any dissenting members and any dissent report or short statement of reasons for dissent
- f. The Secretary or State Chair must sign the report to the BOT.

**5. State Committees should strive to be representative of the various stakeholders in the state:** geographic locations along the route; key government entities like state DOT, Parks, Local Government (Mayor, Council, agencies), bike clubs and advocacy groups, key trail or environmental organizations, local trail friends or advocacy groups, trail managing agencies.

**C. Process for completing adoption of a primary spine route**

- a. Trails Committee should review braided sections of the ECG route where there is lack of consensus on the spine and evaluate the route options against the above-adopted criteria and recommend to the BOT which route is the spine. BOT will review and act on this recommendation with expediency to allow the benchmark assessment to proceed in February of 2005.