



The Tale Twister

Cullman Lions Club

April 27, 2026

Program

Lion Randy Kraft introduced Cathy Sloss from Rails to Trails Conservancy (RTC) as our speaker. She was accompanied by MS. Bonita Chambers. This organization is one that many of us, including myself, were not aware of, but there are many interesting facts associated with it.



Lions Delane Ray and Randy Kraft flank our speaker, Ms. Cathy Sloss who presented a program on the Rails to Trails Conservancy.

A key concept underlying RTC's work is "railbanking," a legal mechanism that allows unused railroad corridors to be preserved for possible future rail use while being temporarily converted into trails. This idea emerged from amendments to federal legislation in the 1980s and became a cornerstone of the organization's strategy. Railbanking ensures that land remains intact rather than fragmented or sold, making it possible to serve both present recreational needs and potential future transportation uses.

RTC's mission goes beyond simply building trails. The organization seeks to "build a nation connected by trails," emphasizing accessibility, safety, and community impact.

It envisions a country where people of all ages and backgrounds can walk, bike, and engage with nature close to where they live.

Over the past four decades, RTC has helped catalyze the development of tens of thousands of miles of multiuse trails across the United States. These trails serve a wide variety of purposes, from daily commuting routes to tourism destinations. According to RTC, the country now has more than 25,000 miles of rail-trails, with thousands more miles planned or under development. The organization has also contributed to a larger network of more than 42,000 miles of multiuse trails nationwide, demonstrating the scale of its impact. There is a national project underway to connect Washington DC to Washington State with a trail path. This super trail path is now 50% complete, largely in the eastern half of the country. When completed, it will be one of the longest multiuse trails in the world and a landmark achievement in American infrastructure.

Alabama is heavily involved with 7,847 miles of rail-trail paths in all 67 counties. The most notable of these is the Chief Ladiaga trail stretching from Anniston east to the Georgia state line where it joins the Georgia Silver Comet Trail all the way to Atlanta. Other notable trails in north Alabama include trails in Huntsville and Elkmont. Current planning calls for connecting the north Alabama trails to Tennessee trails which will then connect to the national east west trail. Recently, Alabama Public Television did a feature documentary, "Blaze, The Trails of Alabama." It can be viewed at the following link: [Blaze: The Trails of Alabama - Alabama Public Television](#) .



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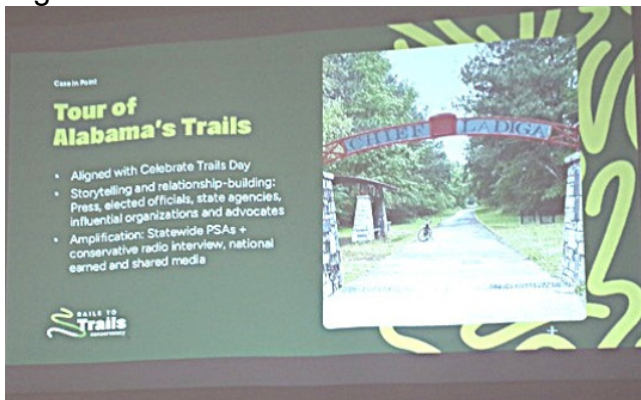
Lion President Delane Ray announced years of service anniversaries.

The New-Member Orientation, Roundtable Discussions met.

In addition to physical trail development, RTC provides valuable digital resources to the public. Its TrailLink platform, launched in 2000, offers maps, photos, and user reviews of trails across the country. This tool has made it easier for millions of people to discover and use trails, further expanding the organization's reach and influence.

Upcoming Programs and Events.

May 4: Cullman Power Board Director Allison Bright will be our program speaker.



Ms. Sloss' presentation included many slides with maps & photos showing RTC's reach across the Country and in Alabama specifically.



C.E.O. Allison Bright
Cullman Utilities Board

May 11: Ms. Lillian Sheffield of "Knap Sacks for Kids" will be our program speaker.

In conclusion, the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy has transformed an innovative idea into a nationwide movement with lasting impact. By preserving abandoned rail corridors and converting them into public trails, the organization has created new opportunities for recreation, transportation, and community connection.

Other Business

Lion Javon Daniel, who has a heart condition, remains in stable condition, but is currently limited to restricted activities. Continue praying for him



Ms. Lillian Sheffield

May – June ??: Agriplex Teaching Kitchen Opening Ceremony – TBD at 5:30 PM. Club meeting & meal on this night will be at



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Agriplex, not at Commission on Aging building.

June 15: Club Officer Installation at the Church of Christ on Child Haven Road.

June 29: Club Family Picnic at the Fairgrounds at 5:30PM. Also, a group photo will be taken of all Lions present. Be there in Lion vests or Lion T-shirts.

Tale Twister Input

If you need something special or to report a correction in the *Tale Twister*, see Lions Carey Thompson or Don Smith at the meetings. Lion Carey can be reached at 256-426-3207 (C). Lion Don can be reached at 256-737-7433 (H) or 256-426-7722 (C).