

# Group hopes to add hundreds of miles of walking, hiking and biking trails in the New River Gorge

By Sarah Plummer, Register-Herald Reporter

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Bikers ride along the Cranberry River, a tributary to the Gauley River. The New River Gorge Trail Alliance has received a \$140,000 planning grant from the Appalachian Regional Commission for a feasibility study of a regionally connected bike trail system in Fayette and Nicholas counties.

Photo submitted by Mike Boyes.

The New River Gorge Trail Alliance has received a \$140,000 planning grant from the Appalachian Regional Commission for a feasibility study of a regionally connected bike trail system in Fayette and Nicholas counties.

Working in partnership with West Virginia Connecting Communities, the Trail Alliance will spend the next year planning how to build a regional network of trails in the two counties.

“Our vision is to join together successful existing bike trails, such as the Tri-Rivers Trail, the Meadow River Trail and the White Oak Trail, into a larger network of trails,” said Bill Wells, president of the Trail Alliance. “By connecting the Monongahela National Forest to the New River Gorge National River, our region’s status will continue to grow as an East Coast adventure recreation destination.”

“We believe that a new network of bike trails will increase tourism, provide new jobs and job training, spawn new businesses, encourage the relocation of professionals, and improve outdoor recreation opportunities for locals,” said Andy Forron, board member of the Trail Alliance and owner of New River Bikes in Fayetteville. “We hope to create a 350+ mile trail network by building 100 miles of new connector trails with this and future grant money.”

Project partners include the Hatfield and McCoy Trails, Division of Highways, National Park Service, U.S. Forest Service, Fayette and Nicholas county governments, Active Southern West Virginia, West Virginia Connecting Communities, various city governments and many private businesses.

The New River Gorge Trail Alliance is a non-profit organization. For more information, connect with the alliance on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/NRGTA](http://www.facebook.com/NRGTA).

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