

# Closed Campground Reopens as a Trail, Thanks to Grants

by Sarah Peace

From quaint residences to international stages such as Olympic sites, abandoned facilities are often overgrown and degraded by natural forces the longer they remain that way. For many of these sites, it is easy to feel the loss of fond experiences and glory as they deteriorate. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers staff at the Center Hill Lake project in Lancaster, TN felt the same way about the Hurricane Bridge Campground. This once popular site was closed in the early nineties, but thanks to a grant from the DeKalb County Tennessee Health Department some restoration of the old campground has been made possible. At one time, Hurricane Bridge Campground offered twenty-five camping sites, but only the picnic areas and two launching ramps remain since its closure. The former campground area had become an equipment storage area. Center Hill Lake's resource staff knew the campground could still be utilized, but were not sure how or if funding would be a possibility.

The solution came from Mr. Michael Railing, the Public Health County Director for the Upper Cumberland Region of Tennessee. "DeKalb County Health was awarded a \$10,000 Rural Access to Health and Healthy Active Built Environments (RAHHABE) grant," said Railing. "The grant focuses on improving health outcomes by enhancing access to free physical activity, and we were looking for areas in DeKalb County that meet that qualification."

**"The new trail is proof that great things can happen by working together and creating partnerships,"- Kevin Salvilla, Resource Manager, Center Hill Lake**

The lake staff jumped at the chance to create a new community partnership while simultaneously restoring the campground. Approximately \$7,000 of the RAHHABE grant was set aside to clear overgrowth and develop a one-mile long paved trail. The new trail is the lake's first tobacco free area and was subsequently granted additional funding from the health department, which was used to install two new benches.

This development has brought new life to the community. Visitors and community members will now have a free, safe, paved trail to enjoy. Local volunteers will join lake staff on National Public Lands Day, Sept. 30, to install bulletin boards, trash cans, mile markers, and trail signage along the trail. National Public Lands Day will also serve as the official grand opening and trail name revealing.

"We wanted this to be a trail for the community, and the best way was to get their involvement in the beginning," said Kevin Salvilla, Resource Manager for Center Hill Lake. "One way of getting interest was through our Facebook contest, 'Name that Trail.' This contest allowed the public to vote for the name of the trail. Another way to create interest was including it in National Public Lands Day. These volunteers will be able to say that they helped make this trail possible."

Rejuvenating the forgotten Hurricane Bridge Campground into a trail would have only been a dream if not for the partnership with the Tennessee Health Department," added Salvilla. "The new trail is proof that great things can happen by working together and creating partnerships," said Salvilla.



**Before**



**After**

**New Trail at Hurricane Bridge  
(previously a campground)**

**New Trail at Hurricane Bridge**

