

Riverwalk lets you enjoy Catawba River

Rock Hill's newest park is open, will have grand opening later this year

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By Ashley Barron



Riverwalk features more than two miles of paved trail along the Catawba River. ROCK HILL PARKS AND RECREATION

Last Sunday afternoon, my husband and I loaded our Labrador retriever into the car and headed for Rock Hill's newest park, Riverwalk.

A 10-foot-wide paved trail follows the Catawba River for 2 and a quarter miles. Then you turn around and head back to the parking area.

On a hot day with our old dog, we walked a mile out and a mile back. The trail offers beautiful views of the river we could previously see only in glimpses from the U.S. 21 bridge.

We watched osprey gliding and diving into the river, let the dog down the bank for a drink and enjoyed the view from well-placed benches and chairs carved from trees taken down along the trail.

The massive though short bridges that cross gullies and streams feeding into the river are obviously meant to hold up traffic from the bikers, walkers, joggers, rollerbladers, pet-walkers invited to share the trail and emergency vehicles and the golf carts used to take city Parks, Recreation & Tourism staff members along the trail.

We saw quite a few others enjoying the trail with and without their pets. A Parks, Recreation & Tourism staff member rode by in a golf cart and asked if we were enjoying the trail or needed anything.

We made use of the pet station's baggies for collecting what our dog left behind. There are restrooms at the trail head, and the trail is handicapped accessible. Near the parking area there's a canoe and kayak launch, where a dad and his son were trying their luck fishing when we were there.

Some short lengths of trail are in the sun; be sure to wear sunscreen or a hat. We didn't encounter mosquitoes but carried bug spray. We also brought bottled water from home for ourselves and the dog.

Be aware that the last short stretch of road to access the parking lot is unpaved, and right now there are manhole covers that rise several inches high.

The city has opened the park for use but will hold a grand opening this fall. Riverwalk is part of the Carolina Thread Trail, a network of trails and greenways that spans 15 counties in the Carolinas.

Riverwalk includes about 1,000 acres and is expected to be developed with additional trails, sports fields, a cycling arena or velodrome, and residential, commercial and retail use.

<http://www.charlotteobserver.com/2010/07/18/1566957/riverwalk-lets-you-enjoy-catawba.html#ixzz0uPohYQn8>